RENE GUENON

~ CORRESPONDENCE ~

BERSERKER
BOOKS

CORRESPONDENCE I

René Guénon

Excerpts from two letters from René Guénon to R. P. (1)

19 August 1947

[...] I come now to your question concerning the Masonry here: first there was an Egyptian Grand Lodge which once had a curious dispute with the Grand Lodge of France over the ownership of the Memphis rite (I can come back to this story another time if you are interested) - when the Scottish Sup.·. Cons.·. of Egypt was founded, this G.·.O.·. transformed itself into a G.·.L.·., renouncing all jurisdiction over the higher degrees. Subsequently, there was a split, due as always to rivalries
personal reasons, and above all to a certain hostility that existed between King Fouad and Prince Mohammed Ali (the brother of the former Khedive); since the death of the former, there was no longer any reason for this, and, on the orders of King Farouk, the 2G G.·. L L.·. were
merged into a single one, whose G.·.M.·. is one of his maternal uncles, Hussein Pasha Sabri. On the other hand, several L L. .·. from Lebanon who were part of the G.·.L.·. of Egypt have just separated from it in an attempt to reconstitute a Lebanese G.·.O.·. that already existed a dozen years ago, but which was short-lived at the time; it
It seems highly doubtful that it will be any more successful this time...

You may already have heard about the founding, under the auspices of the G.·.L.·. of France, of the L.·. "La Grande Triade" (you can easily see where this title comes from), whose Venerable Master is F.·. Ivan Cerf, G.·..

Please accept, T.·.C.·.F.·., my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Cairo, 4 December 1948

T.·.C.·.F.·.,

I received your letter of 4 November about ten days ago; it arrived relatively quickly this time.

I understand that some of our FF.·. from the Great Triad met F.·. Granger in Paris during the Convent; I hope that you will also be able to establish direct contact with them. Moreover, F.·. Maridort, currently Secr.·. of the At.·., sometimes has occasion to go to Lyon on business.

Regarding the Convent, the report of the Rituals Committee was even more successful than we had hoped; there was some concern that the ideas presented in it might seem a little too difficult for some who are not familiar with them, but fortunately this was not the case. We hope that the draft rituals for the 1st and 3rd degrees will be ready for review
by the L L.·. as early as next month; as for the second degree, which requires more work to finalise, this will probably not be possible until the spring.

At the G.·.O.·., the movement for a return to the traditional conception is naturally much less pronounced than at the G.·.L.·., but there is nevertheless a beginning in this direction, and, according to what Marius Lepage tells me [...].

René Guénon

1 — *Les Cahiers de l'Herne.*

Excerpts from letters from René Guénon to L.C. d'Amiens

L.C. d'Amiens
Cairo, 29 January 1933

Contrary to what happens with relative and conditioned states, the supreme state is not something to be obtained by any kind of "accomplishment"; it is simply a matter of becoming aware of what is. But then there can be no question of individuality, since individuality, as a transitory manifestation of being, is essentially characterised by separation or limitation (defined by the formal condition), so that one could say that it has only a separative existence, so to speak. [...]

As for the "fall" (mentioned in the Bible), I do not think we can see it as anything other than a way of expressing the distancing from the Principle, which is necessarily inherent in any process of manifestation. If we understand it in this way, we can say that the formation of the material world is a consequence of this (but, of course, we can also consider it on other levels, within this world itself, and more particularly for any given cycle); however, we must add that this world must come into being in this way, precisely because it represents a possibility of manifestation.

To L.C. of
Amiens, 17 November
1934

As for the possibilities of restoring the Western initiatory tradition, I am not saying that they do not exist despite everything, but it is not as simple as you seem to think. Indeed, apart from the recruitment of the first elements, which is not so easy, it raises a host of questions such as that of affiliation to an obedience and others that I would hardly be able to give you an idea of.

As for Sufism, there is nothing impossible about it "a priori", although I am not sure at the moment how it could be achieved; I will have to think about that.

It is also clear that observing rites such as Islamic rites in the conditions of Western society is in itself a rather complicated problem; and yet it is an essential basis for affiliation with any branch of Sufism.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 15 January
1935

It is quite certain that observing rites such as Islamic rites, under the conditions of existence that prevail in the Western world, is in itself a rather complicated problem; and yet it is indeed the indispensable basis for effective attachment to any branch of Sufism. (I am not talking about, that

goes without saying, fanciful organisations invented for the benefit of Westerners.)

As for the possibilities of restoring the Western initiatory tradition, I am not saying that they do not exist despite everything, but it is not as simple as you seem to think. Several people I know have had the idea for some time now of setting up a Masonic lodge with a truly initiatory character, but they have not been able to succeed so far; in fact, apart from the fact that recruiting the first members is not so easy, it raises a host of questions such as affiliation to an Obedience and others that I would find difficult to explain to you. Finally, if something like this were to happen one day, I would be sure to let you know; you are not the first person to whom I have made this promise... […]

Do not exaggerate my importance! For, ultimately, my work is only an "opportunity" to awaken certain possibilities of understanding that nothing else could give to those who lack them; but at least it is always a satisfaction for me to see that it is not a wasted effort, however few there may be who truly benefit from it...

To L.C. of Amiens
April 1935

... As for Catholic rites, it is true that, although they are purely religious and not initiatory in nature (and that under present conditions they can no longer even serve as a basis or starting point for initiatory realisation), their effects are far from negligible. However, on the other hand, we should not risk this becoming an obstacle to other possibilities that may arise in the future; this is what complicates the issue and makes me hesitate to answer in the affirmative...

In any case, there is no doubt that religious rites themselves, as long as nothing else is superimposed on them, are designed more to maintain the individual in his or her current state than to enable him or her to transcend it.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 17 May
1935

In truth, I must say that I do not fully understand the 'appeal' you are making to me, for I am nothing in myself; moreover, I have never made the slightest promise... except, if you like, to write everything I can for those who are able to benefit from it. That said, I will try to answer your questions; moreover, the answer is all the simpler and easier as I must refrain from influencing anyone's decisions, for it is up to each individual to choose the path that suits them best.

In short, you now have before you, without leaving Europe, the possibility of joining two initiatory organisations, one Western and the other Eastern. Those who wish to join Sufism would do well to contact S., who is now fully qualified to do so and who, I believe, is quite willing to

actively involved in it. On the other hand, those who wish to join Freemasonry need only contact another of our friends who intends to establish a Lodge in a truly traditional and initiatory spirit. I should add that there is no incompatibility between these two affiliations, and that, for the same person, they are in no way mutually exclusive.

Now, it is quite certain that, for any "realisation" undertaken along any path, the current atmosphere in Europe is not very favourable; however, this difficulty should not be considered absolutely insurmountable; it only requires that special precautions be taken to avoid as much as possible the danger that may result from external unrest. On the other hand, it seems to me that the path of Sufism can lead further than the other and give more reliable results, especially since, given the current state of Freemasonry, what I have just told you will necessarily have, to a certain extent, the character of an 'experiment'...

As for the help of the East, it goes without saying that it concerns Sufism and is, in short, acquired by the very fact of attachment to this traditional form. As for Masonry, everything logically depends on the results that can be obtained by establishing a Lodge such as the one I mentioned above; it would therefore be premature to discuss this at this stage.

The difficulty of practising Islamic rites in countries such as those in Europe is a frequently discussed issue; the prevailing opinion, which seems to me to be the most justified by the principles of Sharia law, is that there may indeed be exceptions for people living in non-Islamic countries, as their condition can be likened to a state of travel or war; but it should be added that this only applies to those who adhere to the exoteric point of view. For an esoteric "realisation", on the other hand, it should not be forgotten that observance of the rites is the necessary basis here; and it is obvious that those who want "more" must first, as a prerequisite, do "less" (i.e. observe the rites that are common to all).

On the other hand, I certainly see no harm in Freemasons availing themselves of the influence of Catholic rites, as you say; but it is
the Church, or at least its current representatives, who would probably see it that way; the solution to this question therefore does not depend on us in any way... In any case, it is not the Freemasons who must reject all religious rites, it is participation in Catholic rites that is refused to them, which is quite different; it is also understood that, for other religious rites, such as Islamic rites, there is absolutely no difficulty of this kind.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 6 June
1935

I am glad to hear that you have decided to follow the path of Sufism. It would be better for you to postpone your trip here until a little later, when you have already seen the results that can be achieved on this path... As for the very understandable difficulty

of observing all the rites in their entirety under European living conditions, rest assured that no one can ever ask the impossible of you; this may undoubtedly slow down the achievement of results to a greater or lesser extent, but in short, that is the only drawback to be feared.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 7 July
1935

I am very pleased with your decision regarding your affiliation with Sufism; I only regret the delay of two or three months, but that is a minor matter. Since B. has reassured you on the points that may have concerned you, you certainly have no reason to hesitate.

As for the methods drawn from other traditions, I think that B. was referring to things of an equally initiatory nature: for example, the Naqshabandiyah paths of India sometimes use tantric methods. When it comes to the religious and exoteric order, as is the case with Catholic rites, it is not quite the same thing; I do not mean, of course, that this can have "essential" disadvantages, but only that one must be careful to avoid "interference" from psychic influences that could be dangerous, or at least annoying. [...]

In general, I think there is no point in getting bogged down in grammatical details when trying to understand a language, as this also simplifies things and saves time. [...]

Al-Hallaj's doctrine is certainly orthodox at heart; the only reservations concern certain expressions that could give rise to ambiguity and be misinterpreted, and this is what ultimately cost him his life...

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 30
August 1935

Meditation is more important than reading, which can only provide a starting point, and it is generally advantageous not to overdo it in order to avoid distraction. Rituals are effective in themselves, but it is clear that attention and concentration significantly reinforce their effect. I would particularly recommend not neglecting the regular recitation of *the wird* (rosary), as this is what especially strengthens the bond with the tariqa. Finally, I believe that everyone should seek to use their natural tendencies rather than fight them; but, of course, there are as many different ways of doing this as there are individuals...

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 18 September
1935

[Regarding the states you experience during the rituals], I think you should not worry about these physical and psychological reactions. You have every reason

right not to want to go too fast, but when things like this happen without you seeking them out, it is also clear that they should not be dismissed... No doubt these states can only be considered "preliminary" in nature, but in any case, they surely indicate effective contact with the *barakah* of the Order; at least, I find it difficult to understand them in any other way.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 5 December
1935

I am used to hearing gossip about myself, but I wonder what "functions" could possibly be taken away from me by anyone, since I have never accepted any anywhere. […]

The Ramadan fast ends exactly at sunset, but begins 20 minutes before the *fajr* prayer, i.e. about 2 hours before sunrise. Naturally, all this is easier to observe exactly here in Cairo, where the time is announced by cannon fire, not to mention the watchmen who knock on doors to warn people that it is time to prepare the last meal; you would have to be a very heavy sleeper not to hear anything!

To L.C. in
Amiens Cairo, 31 December
1935

Rest assured about the alleged unrest in Cairo (reported in the French newspapers); we haven't noticed anything in our neighbourhoods, and I was stunned by the French newspaper clippings that a few people sent me! I can guess, moreover, where these deliberately exaggerated reports come from; in fact, they were nothing more than student demonstrations, in which the population took no part, and if things turned ugly, it was solely due to foreign interference, as you can easily imagine; it is exactly the same as what happens almost every day in India... [...]

As for my health, I have little to complain about at the moment; it is true that it has never been very good, but generally speaking, it is still better here than in France. However, there is one thing that intrigues me a little: you mention my astrological chart; where did you find the data for it? I must say, moreover, that all those who have tried to make sense of it so far have never achieved a satisfactory result; I'm not quite sure why that is! [...]

I am not at all surprised by what you tell me about the beneficial effects of fasting as you have observed them; in fact, I would have been more surprised if the opposite had been true, as this result is quite normal. As for what you say, that theoretical knowledge sometimes seems very close to real knowledge, that is also true; it is certain that the separation is not as clear-cut in reality as it seems when we talk about it, and that the transition can be made almost imperceptibly... Since you mention formulas to reinforce the states (of understanding) in question, I would suggest

especially the repetition of the invocation Ya Latîf; unfortunately, it is not possible to indicate the rhythm by letter...

As for the doctrinal question you raise at the end of your letter, I think that the matter is quite simple in a continuous and homogeneous environment. We can easily consider differentiation as being produced by a shockwave spreading from point to point starting from the point where the initial vibration that determines it occurs, without any transport of corpuscles as in atomic theory.

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 20 January 1936

The atomist theory is false, above all, because it admits the existence of indivisible corpuscles (which is the very definition of atoms), which is contradictory, because a body implies something extended, and therefore always and indefinitely divisible, so that in reality the indivisible can only be attained by leaving the corporeal order. Furthermore, by asserting that everything is composed exclusively of atoms, it denies that there is anything else that has positive reality, and consequently it can only admit a void between them, and not undifferentiated ether; but a void cannot have any place in the realm of manifestation. It can also be noted that if atoms were separated by a vacuum, they could in no way act on each other; yet the theory asserts that they attract each other, which is yet another contradiction. Others could even be found on more minor points, but this is enough to show you that it is not difficult to demonstrate its falsity.

But, on the other hand, I still do not see what prevents you from conceiving of vibration in a medium that is not composed of elements; there is simply a disturbance of this homogeneous and continuous medium itself, and this disturbance propagates from one point to another because of its continuity. Now, it is well understood that the initial disturbance must be caused by a cause of a different order; this goes without saying, moreover, if we note that the medium in question plays here, in relation to bodily manifestation, a role that is analogous (relative to that of Prakriti, i.e. a purely 'substantial' and passive role.

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 31 January 1936

I fully agree with your conclusions that greater caution should be exercised in the future when accepting new members into the tariqa, and it is certainly much better not to mention the possibility of initiation before having more guarantees. What you tell me about the other member of your group is truly extraordinary; it is hard to imagine such a combination of confusion and contradictions! Surely, such conditions are as unfavourable as possible for productive work; and it is obvious that, in addition to the question of qualification, it would be appropriate

consider the question of preparation, especially, as you say, if we take into account the Western state of mind...

As far as health considerations are concerned, I agree with you: there is no reason to make it an essential condition (for initiation) in general, but even so, in particularly serious cases, we could at least defer a candidate, especially since, in fact, they would then be unable to derive any real benefit from immediate admission. There remains the question of the astrological chart; C. is undoubtedly right to express reservations about the value of the results that can be drawn from it; but, despite this, I really do not see any disadvantage in using it as a guide.

Individual circumstances must be taken into account, since qualification itself depends on them; it is obvious that if it were only a question of personality, everyone would be qualified; the question arises only because a particular individual must be taken as the basis for the achievement, and the question is, in short, whether he or she is actually capable of it.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 14
February 1936

As for the question of "vibration," I do not see why it should be so difficult to conceive of a disturbance produced and propagated in a homogeneous and continuous medium; it is possible that these difficulties are due to certain habits acquired under the influence of modern scientific theories... In any case, it is certainly always useful to point this out to me, as I cannot perceive difficulties of this kind myself, and it is obvious that we must try to take them into account in a presentation. I have already noticed quite often, through comments made to me, that things that seemed obvious to me actually needed further explanation...

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 23
February 1936

The fact that Muslims pray with their eyes open seems to me to be quite natural when one considers that this is not a ritual in which one must isolate oneself, quite the contrary (the very necessity of facing a common centre indicates this sufficiently).

The use of singing in the sessions (which is not universal, incidentally) relates in short to the use of rhythm in its various forms.

Regarding the movements accompanying the *dhikr*, I must say that I do not like the use of the word "dance" here, because of the very profane confusion to which it inevitably gives rise (moreover, in Arabic, *raqs* is never used in such cases).

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 9 March
1936

You are very kind to keep me so thoroughly informed, and I believe that you are really the only one who can do so regularly without taking up too much of your time. […]

As for Ch., the improvement you have already noticed in him shows that it was in his best interests to remove him from his environment, and that performing the rites can only be very beneficial for him; it is true that this may not be the case in certain instances, as there may be, at least momentarily, certain more or less disordered psychological reactions in those who are not sufficiently prepared and whose temperament lends itself to this.

It is very true that I do not much like giving advice, especially "individual" advice; the case is not quite the same when it comes to matters that may have a more general significance... [...J

(You tell me that A.b.R., who is a Wahhabi, criticises Sufis for swaying during their incantations, saying that the Prophet recommended not swaying in order to distinguish themselves from the Jews.) I do not know if this tradition is authentic, but in any case, we would need to know exactly what it applies to, and it is likely that it applies only to prayer, because no one seems to take it into account for anything else; and moreover, as far as dhikr is concerned, swaying has more specific reasons.

On these issues, we must be very wary of all the opinions of the Wahhabis, who are declared opponents of anything esoteric. [...]

Obviously, doctrinal presentations, whatever they may be, can only ever be "preparatory" in nature, and they cannot have the direct effect that rituals have; but even so, I do not think that this is a reason to neglect them. As for the question of languages, it is certain that, in general, the translation of Sanskrit texts does not raise as many difficulties, nor of such a particular kind, as that of Arabic (and Hebrew) texts. As for the usefulness that knowledge of Arabic may have for each of you, that obviously depends on many circumstances; for yourself, if you are to take on the role of imam, this study has a more special raison d'être... [...1

As for the Tarot, I readily admit that it can give valid results; however, its use is perhaps not without danger, because of the psychic influences it certainly brings into play; I would say the same of certain other practices, such as geomancy, for example; but in the case of the Tarot, this is complicated by the question of its particularly dubious origin... I have no idea where one might find any information on this subject, unless it be among the Bohemians, for it must be said that outside Europe, the Tarot is completely unknown; indeed, all its symbolism is specifically Western in form. [...]

I recently learned that rumours were once again circulating that I was in Paris, which happens periodically, and that some people even claimed to have seen me there at a meeting. I also remember that eight or ten years ago, when

I was still in France, I was told that letters addressed to me were being delivered to a hotel in Bordeaux, where someone was actually receiving them. Putting all this together, I am tempted to believe that someone is really impersonating me, but who, and why? The only thing that is certain is that there are intentions behind this that are not benevolent; and I also note, in this regard, that the assertion that "I travel a lot" has already been found in writing in one of the most perfidious attacks ever directed against me; is this also just a coincidence? But what exactly does all this mean? I confess that I would not be upset if all this could be clarified one day or another...

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 22 March 1936

Regarding your question about the life of the Prophet, the most orthodox view is that all prophets are truly sinless, so that even if there is something in their actions that may seem shocking, it must be explained by reasons that are beyond the understanding of ordinary humanity (to a lesser extent, this also applies to the actions of all those who have attained a certain degree of initiation). On the other hand, the mission of a *rasûl*, by virtue of the fact that it is addressed to all men without distinction, implies a way of acting in which esoteric achievements do not appear (which, moreover, constitutes a kind of sacrifice for the one who is invested with this mission). This is why some also say that what would be most interesting from an initiatory point of view, if it were possible to know it exactly, is the period of Muhammad's life prior to the *risâlah* (and this also applies to the "hidden life" of Christ in relation to his "public life": these two expressions, in themselves, are entirely consistent with what I have just said and indicate this almost explicitly). It is well understood, moreover, that historical considerations are not interesting in themselves, but only insofar as they reflect certain doctrinal truths.

Finally, in a tradition that necessarily forms a whole, we cannot neglect what does not directly concern metaphysical realisation (and there are such elements in the Hindu tradition as in others, since it also involves, for example, legislation); rather, we must strive to understand it in relation to this realisation, which amounts to seeking its "inner meaning".

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 29 March 1936

A. did what he could to effectively connect with the Jewish tradition in terms of observing rituals, but he found it truly incompatible with his nature; now, he and his wife are determined to convert to Islam, and he will undoubtedly write to S. soon; and, according to what he wrote to me, it

it is likely that several others will follow. What he has against L. is above all that he finds him incapable of participating in group work; moreover, it seems that L. himself acknowledges that he prefers to work alone. Basically, none of this is very serious, and it is to be hoped, especially given their adherence to the same tradition, that it will not prevent them from getting along, each remaining naturally free to carry out their activities in the way that best suits their abilities... […]

It is commonly said here that anyone who desires Paradise or fears Hell is still far from being truly "mutazzawwuf"...

As for what seems to cause you some discomfort (in the performance of Islamic "devotions"), it must first be said that, naturally, a traditional form must be taken as a whole, exotericism representing a necessary point of support so as not to "lose ground"; and it is likely that, in a Christian initiatory organisation of the Middle Ages, you would have had much the same impression as you have now. On the other hand, as I have often said, we must not forget that what is essential is the initiatory connection and the transmission of spiritual influence; once this is done, each person must above all work for themselves, and in the way that suits them best, to make effective what is still only virtual. It goes without saying that it would be better to have a choice between a variety of methods that would allow everyone to be helped as fully as possible, but unfortunately this is not currently the case; in any event, what is intended to be a help must never become an impediment to anyone.

I would add that S. is very excusable for perhaps not sufficiently considering the adaptation that would be necessary for each individual, as it is obvious that this requires experience that he cannot yet have; and I see that you understand this very well; but it is to be feared that others may not understand it as you do... However, we must hope that all this will gradually be resolved; we must remember that this is, after all, a 'beginning', in conditions that have never been encountered before.

As for the swaying of the dhikr, we can say that it is generally linked to the question of rhythm and that, in addition, these movements themselves have a certain effect on the subtle centres.

I have no specific information about current events, but it is certain that the situation is far from reassuring, and there is a growing impression that the final period of the cycle may indeed not be very far off...

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 17 April
1936

So S. has returned to Paris; it may be less difficult for him to find a job there than elsewhere; unfortunately, it is to be feared that his neglect of external matters will cause him to miss opportunities, for I know that this has happened several times. It is regrettable that he is like this in everything; it is true that, from what I have been told, it seems that much of the fault lies with his mother... All the same, his failure to thank you when he left me astonishes me; this is certainly not an Eastern trait; here, we would tend to exaggerate in the

opposite! On the other hand, any shortcomings or haste in his preparation for his role would certainly be less serious if he had a little less confidence in himself, and especially if he did not have this tendency to ignore so many things that are nevertheless important... […]

When it comes to initiation ceremonies, it is true that certain Hindu organisations, and perhaps others too, take astrological influences into account; but this does not exist in Islamic organisations, or at least I know of no examples of it; this is obviously a question of different "modalities". In some cases, impeccability may be considered to be attached to a function rather than a degree, but it is clear that, at least for the jîvan-mukta (liberated while still alive), actions cannot have any consequences, and even at degrees far below that, the same is true of actions performed with perfect detachment; see the Bhagavad-Gîtâ on this subject. […]

How could S. have imagined that if you or others keep me informed of what is happening (in France and Switzerland), it is for the pleasure of telling stories? [...]

I don't think S. will go so far as to ask my opinion on all the candidates (for initiation), especially since it's not exactly easy for people we've never seen and only know through correspondence. It should also be understood that I have absolutely no desire to take the "lead" on anything, but also that when it comes to general guidance rather than individual advice, I cannot refuse to give it as far as possible; but first, it must be deemed appropriate to ask me for it...

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 27 April 1936

I didn't think things had deteriorated to the point where
S. would talk about 'dissolution'; frankly, I don't understand how that could be justified at all... Everything you're telling me is quite extraordinary and, I must say, unexpected; I thank you for that, because you're quite right to think that I need to be informed of what's going on, however unpleasant it may be. I had been counting on S.'s position to relieve me a little, but now the opposite is happening and it is only a source of new concerns for me!

To L.C. in Amiens
Cairo, 17 May 1936

I already knew two days ago, from a note from S., about the happy outcome of the latest incidents, which I must admit had me very worried. Finally, as you say, it is to be hoped that the lesson in caution that should be learned from this will not be lost on either side. […]

I hope for all of us that the 'atmosphere' is now less troubled and that we have truly reached the end of all these troubles!

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 27 June
1936

The restoration of Western-style initiatory rites seems highly improbable to me, and indeed increasingly so, as you say. In truth, I never really believed in it, but naturally I couldn't say so too openly in my books, if only to avoid appearing to dismiss the most favourable possibility out of hand. To compensate for this, there is no other way than to resort to another traditional form, and the Islamic form is the only one that lends itself to doing something in Europe itself, which reduces the difficulties to a minimum. When an opportunity arose, I immediately thought that it should not be missed, as it could be of general interest. […]

What you quote to me from your translation of the Qur'an, or rather from the accompanying notes, does not surprise me at all, for it is very much in the spirit of the Ahmadiyya, who are very "modernist" and clearly heterodox on various points. They engage in incredible propaganda everywhere; they have considerable funds at their disposal, most of which come from England.In America, they have managed to almost completely supplant the Bahá'í faith; this clearly shows the kind of people they are targeting and the concessions they have to make to the Western mentality.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 13 November
1936

I received your letter yesterday, and first of all, how grateful I am to you for the kind gift enclosed with it! You must realise that it is particularly welcome at a time when the fall in the value of the franc and its consequences are causing me much anxiety and concern; and I am very grateful to those who are trying to alleviate them and compensate for the loss resulting from these unfortunate circumstances. Your delay in writing to me is certainly excusable, given all the worrying events from every point of view. [...]

On the subject of dhikr, A. is obviously right in principle (when he talks about the importance of its accomplishment in relation to the attainment of higher states), but I think that, in practice, we should not exaggerate, and that daily sessions might be excessive. As for the invocation of the Supreme Name that you asked S. for, my opinion is that we should not go too fast, and that, all in all, it is best to proceed gradually...

The other news you give me about yourself seems very satisfactory indeed; of course, one must always be careful not to exaggerate the significance of certain results, but all the same, everything seems to be going perfectly "normally", so to speak. On the other hand, what you tell me about the way in which the solution to certain questions presents itself to you as if it were...

This also seems to me to be an excellent sign... Regarding the question of the "Primordial Point", concentration and expansion can be compared to the two phases of breathing (and those of the heartbeat); and all of this can naturally be applied at different levels. If we consider things at the level of Being, we could say that "diffuse" undifferentiation corresponds to its Unity, and contraction to its polarisation into essence (the point) and substance (empty space, pure potentiality). [...]

The presence of two points and their distance creates a space; this is obviously one of the conditions for the existence of the corporeal element, but it is not the only one that is necessary. I must say, in this regard, that I am very wary of the word 'concrete'; I have never been able to ascertain exactly how it is meant to be understood; in any case, it is always diverted from its true etymological meaning, which is none other than 'continuous'.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 15 January
1937

I was recently sent a long questionnaire on zakat, the types of investments that are permitted and prohibited, etc.; I answered it as accurately as I could, based on what is usually done here (in Egypt). It is certain that all this is only secondary, although a traditional form must be adopted in its entirety (I am not talking about things such as dress, etc., which are in no way obligatory); in any case, it must be recognised that all this is rather difficult to adapt to life in a European environment, especially with all its current complications, and I believe that one should not get too caught up in details, especially since the general rule in this regard is to always stay within the limits of what can reasonably be done. […]

The triad *Sat - Chit - Ânanda* is certainly, in Hindu doctrine, what has the most similarities with the Christian Trinity; however, I wonder if it is easy to establish a term-by-term correspondence: the Word, insofar as it is identified with Wisdom, would seem to be assimilated to *Chit*, which, on the other hand, constitutes the link between the other two terms, as it is said that the Holy Spirit is between the Father and the Son. It is, moreover, the question of the Holy Spirit in particular that constitutes a very obscure point and on which theologians themselves seem rather uncertain; in any case, it is difficult to draw anything clear from all that they say about it... It is clear that, depending on one's point of view, there can be a multitude of ways of considering the divine attributes that form a trinity, and that even when there is a certain correspondence, it may still be only partial and valid only in certain respects... On the other hand, it is true that there is an analogy between the distinction between divine attributes and that between the personalities of different beings in principle; one might even wonder to what extent these are not simply two aspects or two applications of one and the same thing.

There is certainly nothing in what I have written that contradicts Shankarâchârya's point of view. It must simply be understood that other points of view, such as that of Râmâniya, for example, while going less far and less

profound, are nonetheless true at their respective levels; the essential thing is always to know exactly where each thing should be situated. […]

Pantheism, a simple philosophical theory, relates solely to the manifested world and denies the transcendence of the Principle in relation to it; this is, in short, its very definition, and this is why it is, in essence, only a variety of "immanentism". When we place ourselves beyond manifestation, we are, by the same token, as far as possible from the point of view of pantheism, to which this domain is completely closed, so much so that one could say that the very fact of considering it implies the negation of pantheism.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 26 June
1937

On the question of al-Hallâj, Massignon's interpretation is highly questionable, since he always has the ulterior motive of seeing only
"mysticism" and Christian influences. However, regardless of interpretation, I would prefer a form other than that of al-Hallâj, which lends itself more easily to this kind of distortion; moreover, it was the imprudence or clumsiness of his expressions that caused his death... It is certain that there is no comprehensive exposition of Islamic esotericism, and that this is a very regrettable omission; but what can be done? I admit that I cannot achieve everything; I have always wanted others to be able to do work in the same vein, for this and many other questions; but, unfortunately, I have not yet seen anyone who both has sufficient data and can bring the necessary spirit to bear; who knows if this will happen one day or another?

There is certainly no disadvantage, from the point of view of meditation itself, in referring to the Vedanta or any other traditional form; one must only avoid mixing it with what is directly related to rituals.

Reading the Qur'an can certainly "open up" many things, but, of course, only if it is done in the Arabic text and not in translations. For this, and also for certain esoteric writings, it is something that has no connection with external and grammatical knowledge of the language. Just the other day, I was told about a Turkish man who had an admirable understanding of Mohyid-din Ibn 'Arabi, even though he had never been able to learn even basic Arabic properly. On the other hand, I know professors at Al-Azhar (Cairo) who cannot understand a single sentence! [...]

In Europe, it is not always possible (for a Muslim) to dispense with attending a foreign ritual, if only for reasons of simple politeness, as in the case of attending a wedding or a funeral, for example; in such a case, it is obviously sufficient to maintain a neutral attitude so that there are no serious inconveniences; but I do mean a neutral attitude, not a hostile one, which would firstly be pointless and secondly would be the best way to provoke unpleasant reactions, to say the least. But the case of Easter communion is something quite different, and in reality, the

question cannot even be raised, since there are conditions imposed by the Catholic Church that are impossible to fulfil.

To L.C. in
Amiens Cairo, 26 October
1937

Some of the things S. has told you show that he is still overly sensitive; this is undoubtedly what makes it so difficult to avoid unpleasant incidents. But what is currently most worrying (and he also seems very concerned about it) is what is happening in Mostaganem, which you have surely heard about from those who have been there recently. [...]

The mood in that area has changed for the worse, and so quickly that it is difficult to explain; if this continues, the tendency
will soon stifle any remaining spirit of initiation... Under these circumstances, S. is probably right to think that it would be best to reduce relations to a minimum. […]

I have the impression that it would take very little to bring about a complete break between Mostaganem and Basel, which would be best avoided if possible! [...]

The *dhikr* is always accompanied by rhythmic movements, but it is obvious that these should not be exaggerated and degenerate into more or less violent agitation, because then their repercussions are likely to be limited to mere psychological effects. […]

In any case, for the state that sometimes accompanies *dhikr* and where, as you say, everything is vibration, I would ask you to refer to my article "Verbum, Lux et Vita" (cf.: Insights into Initiation), as I had this state in mind when I wrote it.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 20 November
1937

The "disintegration" I referred to (in the article "On the confusion between the psychic and the spiritual") naturally relates to the individual being; it is quite obvious that it cannot refer to the "Self", which is immutable; but this total "loss" of the current state of manifestation of the being is no less serious, at least as long as one does not take the point of view of absolute totality, in relation to which everything else is necessarily null and void [...]

It is understood that no distinction should be made between possibility and reality; however, on the other hand, certain possibilities imply manifestation, and it cannot be said that this is always a transition from the informal to the formal, since there are also states of informal manifestation; would you please reconsider this?

L.C. from
Amiens Cairo, 4 April
1938

The winter has been exceptionally cold and long this year, resulting in colds and flu; but finally it is over, and apart from that, my health is not bad now; let us hope that it will continue that way... […]

I think you are right to continue to be cautious with D.. If he were to bring up the subject of an Eastern connection again, the best thing would undoubtedly be, as you say, to first point out the difficulties, which are very real; if he persisted despite this, there would still be time to see what should be done... [...]

As for what is lacking in Freemasonry, due to the fact that it has become merely "speculative", it is, in short, the means of moving from a virtual initiation (still valid as such) to an effective initiation; unfortunately, there is something here which, for many reasons (and even if the state of mind were more favourable than it is at present), seems rather difficult to restore in fact, although, naturally, the possibility still exists in principle; there are many points in the ritual itself that pose almost insoluble enigmas!

What you say about the abnormal and anti-traditional conditions of Western existence is certainly all too true, and it is clear that this is a source of additional difficulties that cannot be ignored. we must obviously try to 'neutralise' all this as much as possible, but I recognise that this is not always easy; only those who have already reached the goal would be entitled to consider themselves entirely free from all these contingencies...

As for going to live elsewhere, where circumstances are less unfavourable, this is not always feasible either, and there is also another issue, that of adapting to the environment, which in many cases can lead to difficulties of a different kind...

As for the states of concentration you mention, I agree with you that you should simply continue as you are, at least until further notice; moreover, there is rarely any advantage in trying to rush the results, and it is not for nothing that patience is so often recommended in the Qur'an!

As for your other question, there is in fact a great difference between the pitri-yâna (one who follows the "way of the ancestors") and those rather exceptional cases, as you say, of individuals who have led a life that is, in a sense, "backwards"; this difference is, moreover, formally indicated at the end of the fatihah (1^{era} surah), and you can refer to what I said on this subject in The Symbolism of the Cross (pp. 185-187).

In fact, it is the pitri-yâna which, especially in the conditions of the Kali-Yuga, corresponds to the case of the vast majority of men; "deferred" deliverance is the only one that could be envisaged for them if any deliverance could be envisaged; but what can you do, for example, with all those who are not effectively attached to any tradition, as is the case with most Westerners today?

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 26 April 1938

... As for what is lacking in Freemasonry, given that it has become simply "Speculative" refers, in short, to the means of moving from a virtual initiation (still valid as such) to an effective initiation; unfortunately, there is something here that, for many reasons (and even if the state of mind were more favourable than it is at present), seems quite difficult to restore in fact, although, naturally, the possibility still exists in principle; there are, in the ritual itself, multiple points that pose almost insoluble enigmas.

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 20 May 1938

As for Brother D.'s plans (to fill the current gaps in Freemasonry), I continue to believe that their implementation is likely to encounter many difficulties, the first of which will be to find six other Freemasons with the right mindset; this is not as simple as one might think, and, given the "occultist" mentality of the milieu where he undoubtedly hopes to find them, I very much fear that he will have great difficulty in completing the number... Secondly, it is certain that, in principle, a lodge can exist independently of any Obedience; but it is no less certain that, in fact, and under the current conditions, this situation faces almost insurmountable obstacles. As it is hardly possible to explain all this in detail by correspondence, I think it would be best for him to ask for an appointment with my friend H., whom I will inform, and who will be better placed than anyone else to provide him with all the necessary explanations. [...]

It is well understood that relations between organisations belonging to different traditional forms are never "legal" and cannot be "official" in nature, if one can use that word in such cases. Even the fact that there are common members may have no other consequences: here, for example, there are members of various turuq who are also Freemasons, but it does not go any further than that, and Freemasonry does not receive any support from the turuq as such. Moreover, it goes without saying that an organisation could only request any kind of support if it already had valid and serious results to present; it is therefore certainly far too early to consider this question and ask in what form such support would be possible.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 4 June
1938

... It must be understood that relations between organisations belonging to different traditional forms are never "de jure" and cannot be "official" in nature, if one can use that word in such cases.

Even the fact that there are common members may have no other consequences; here, for example, there are members of various turuq who are Freemasons at the same time, but this does not go any further, and Freemasonry does not have the slightest influence on them.

consequences; here, for example, there are members of various *turuq* who are Freemasons at the same time, but this does not go any further and Freemasonry does not have the slightest support from *the turuq* as such. Moreover, it goes without saying that an organisation could only ask for any kind of support if it had valid and serious results to show for itself.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 23 September
1938

Certainly, the current situation is far from reassuring; however, it is said that there has been some improvement in recent days, but for how long? I am happy to hear that you have succeeded in getting other people interested in my books, but above all I am happy to hear what you say (positive) about Mrs. C. (your wife), which must give you great satisfaction. However, I must caution you on one point: the restoration of primordial androgyny cannot result from the fusion of two different beings, but rather from the balance of the complementary aspects that each being carries within themselves (with one or the other predominating in the ordinary state); any external union can only be an image or a similarity, and nothing more; and any other way of looking at it is nothing more than "pseudo-mystical" reveries, which can sometimes be very dangerous...

It is certain that the question (of the revival of Freemasonry) is of little more than theoretical interest, and you are quite right in thinking that this clearly shows that there are no longer any real initiatory possibilities for the West outside the Islamic sphere.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 23 October
1938

Thank you very much for your new and important shipment, which arrived yesterday. Certainly, when we are able to have a house of our own, it will be one less thing for me to worry about; so I am very grateful to all those who are helping me to achieve this. Especially with the instability of the situation in Europe, it is unfortunately not unnecessary to take precautions in case communications are interrupted... Let us hope, however, since things have settled down this time, that it will continue to do so; but who can know for how long?

I am glad that my explanations on the subject of androgyny have satisfied you; in short, it is a matter of balancing yin with yang and vice versa, in all areas of life. Moreover, it is not so much physical balance that is to be considered (which can be achieved as a consequence rather than directly) as psychological balance, for men and women are no less different from each other in this respect; This does not, of course, refer to superficial and purely psychological differences, but to something that is inherent in the very constitution of individuality (which does not mean that complementary elements

do not also exist there potentially, since without them equilibrium would obviously be impossible to achieve).

For those who follow the pitri-yâna, we can undoubtedly speak, as you say, of a "descent into hell", at least in the general sense of the expression; but, to be more precise, we would perhaps need to make certain distinctions depending on the case, as this is a very complex issue with many aspects. In any case, it is obvious that in order to pass into another state of manifestation, the being necessarily leaves behind, like a kind of "psychic corpse", the elements that constitute its individuality, which would no longer respond to anything in the conditions of this other state.

For the effects of repeating a mantra, it is not necessary to know its meaning, but there must have been a transmission through which it was brought to life. Otherwise, and especially in the case of someone who belongs to another traditional form, if certain effects occur despite everything, they are likely to be rather harmful...

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 10 November
1938

I thought that H. had not given up on his project (relating to Freemasonry), but I understand that this way of envisaging its realisation in the distant and indeterminate future is not very encouraging for others. It is very good not to be in a hurry, and one could even say that he is right "in principle"; but what I don't quite understand is that, while continuing to keep this in mind if he believes that ultimately it should not be a wasted effort, he does not envisage anything else in the meantime, even if only for himself personally, since Masonic initiation has the advantage of being incompatible with no other... I think D. is not wrong in the conclusions he draws from all this, which are, moreover, very much in line with what I had already told you. We must therefore hope that he will succeed in putting himself in the right frame of mind to convert to Islam, as this would undoubtedly be the best solution; but it was still good to give him the opportunity to see for himself the possibilities that he could find elsewhere...

The news you give me about A. is really not good; while it is fortunate in a sense that he has been able to find a job, it is nevertheless very unfortunate that it is such that it does not even allow him to perform his religious rites. Like you, I hope that this impediment will not last, but life in a Western environment is definitely full of difficulties of all kinds! [...]

The phrase "the human condition is difficult to achieve" is often encountered, and can be easily explained if we consider its
"central" position in our state: a being that passes to another state, even a higher one, has little chance of finding itself in the corresponding position, and is much more likely to have a condition similar to that of animals or plants, hence the obvious disadvantage in obtaining deliverance from such a state. Without this, moreover, what interest would there be in keeping the being as long as possible in the posthumous extensions

of the human state "usque ad consummationum saeculi"? ...

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 30 April 1939

I too have just had a bad bout of flu accompanied by a severe sore throat, and although it has now passed, I still feel somewhat fatigued; this has not helped me to make progress with my work recently!

Apart from the physical causes that may have played a role, the detachment you mention does not seem to be a bad thing in itself, for there is surely always an advantage in "simplifying" in many respects; as for the tendency to increase the "operative" part (in the occupation of your time), I can only approve of it wholeheartedly.

It is true that books can serve as a medium for certain influences, especially, it seems, old books that previously belonged to other people who may have left something of themselves in them...

I accept (your offer to send me) the book on Abd al-Karim al-Jîlî, which I am not familiar with, and which I will gladly discuss in the "E.T.". [...]

As for the recitation of divine names (a given number of times), these numbers, which seem complicated (I have seen other examples), generally have some symbolic meaning, although it is not always easy to determine exactly what that meaning is; this is especially the case when they are composed of simple factors such as the one you mention (185856 = 29*3*112). Generally speaking, it is only in special cases that a name must be repeated a large number of times; otherwise, it is usually advisable not to exceed 1,000 times. [...]

As for D., I understand that, for the moment, he mainly wants to see if he can practise the rites on a regular basis, because otherwise I don't see what results he could expect under these 'provisional' conditions. As for getting rid of certain habits (such as alcohol consumption), many believe that it is better to do so gradually; but in this case, if any adverse reactions occur, it would be preferable to suspend the rites until further notice. [...]

To L.C. of Amiens
Cairo, 20 May 1947

As for the possible inclusion of my books in the Index, this does not affect me personally in any way; nor do I think that it is likely to significantly reduce the number of readers of my books (Index decisions do not make much of an impression today, even in ecclesiastical circles), or, on the contrary, to increase it significantly, as sometimes happens with works of a different kind (novels, for example, or historical works). Ultimately, it would only be unfortunate for the Church itself, in the sense that it would prove that the incomprehension of its current representatives is truly incurable; there have

certainly been many abuses of "jurisdiction" in the past, but they were less obvious than this one would be. Note, moreover, that I have intentionally taken care to clarify this question of "jurisdiction" at the end of chapter XLV of *Aperçus sur l'Initiation*. It goes without saying that I am certainly not the one who, in order to avoid a situation of this kind, would ever make the slightest concession to the detriment of doctrinal truth; it is true that, very often, it is enough to be skilful enough to find appropriate formulas, because, in short, all this is little more than subtleties of language: but, for my part, I have little taste for such subtleties. [...]

There are questions, mathematical and philosophical for example, that I really don't have time to deal with, since I don't even have enough time to deal with what I consider to be much more important, namely questions of a strictly esoteric and initiatory nature, to which I will undoubtedly be forced to limit myself more and more strictly... [...]

As for Meister Eckhart's proposition ("There is something in the soul that is uncreated and uncreatable; if the whole soul were such, it would be uncreated and uncreatable: and that is intelligence"), the connection you make with the notion of the "uncreated Sufi" is indeed quite justified; moreover, what this proposition expresses is certainly very true, and, from our point of view, it is only the use of the word
"soul" that could raise an objection, the word "spirit" being preferable in this circumstance. I believe that Eckhart's only fault was that he was sometimes imprudent in his expressions; surely, he cared little for the subtleties dear to ordinary theologians and philosophers! [...]

You ask whether it would be wrong, when speaking of man, to say "his spirit"; it would indeed be wrong, because the use of the possessive in such a case would imply a kind of reversal of the relationship between the spirit, as the very essence of being, and individuality, which is only a contingent manifestation of it. It would be, in short, the same error as that of speaking of the 'human mind', as if the mind could be 'specified', which is even more obviously false than in the case of the intellect (I say more obviously, because, of course, it is no less false for the latter than for the former: Buddhi, linking all manifested states, cannot be said to belong to any of them).

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 8 December
1948

In Islam, the *qiblah* was initially towards Jerusalem before being towards Mecca (both directions are still indicated in the first mosque, which still exists in Medina); some say that the first qiblah will be restored by Christ himself when, upon his second coming, he presides over prayer. [...]

Female initiation is not possible in certain forms of initiation, but not in all of them indiscriminately.

To L.C. of
Amiens Cairo, 17 October
1950

No one has or will ever have any document from me authorising them in any way to consider themselves my successor, which would seem to me to be completely meaningless. If I once said that the tariqa was "the sole outcome of my work" (which was true at the time), it must be understood that I was referring to the tariqa itself, which has absolutely nothing to do with "the work of H.H."; I still thought that it should be a "normal" tariqa, in which he should have had nothing else to do but fulfil the role of "transmitter" and strictly conform to traditional teaching, without introducing any innovations of a "personal" character.

Excerpts from letters from René Guénon to Mrs. de Lapasse

To Mrs Lapasse, the […]

... As for the question you mention, it can be said that the series of animal forms has, in a way, prepared the environment for the appearance of man, and it can also be admitted that man synthesises, so to speak, the other living beings, from an earthly point of view, in that he is their principle in a spiritual sense (because of his 'central' position in this state); but we cannot in any way speak of 'descendants', because a change of species is impossible; the text of Genesis is quite clear on this point. It is doubtful that "cave men" ever existed as we imagine them; it is true that there may have been cases of degeneration more or less comparable to that of today's savages, especially in the wake of certain cataclysms; but were the famous prehistoric caves dwellings... or sanctuaries? In any case, all traditions unanimously affirm that the human condition was perfect at the beginning of the cycle.

... As for the question of the intervention of saints, what must be seen above all is the action of spiritual influence... through them; there is no need for their true being to play a direct role in this; and this applies even to cases where the influence seems to take on the clearest appearance of a 'personification' (e.g. apparitions).

... Regarding questions about Hell, what you envisage seems quite accurate to me; the difficulty, at least in terms of expression, is that we are dealing with a duration that is other than time; we can undoubtedly speak of "memory" by analogy, although the ordinary meaning of this word relates more properly to time. But I do not see that there is necessarily an 'exit from Hell' for judgement, since it is a *state* that is involved, not a place (which is only a symbolic representation of that state). As for beings who have passed on to higher states, you are right, but it is understood that this does not imply a real "return" to the human state. Finally, as far as animals are concerned, I believe that all we can say is that they cannot be included in a judgement that concerns exclusively humanity, of which they are not a part...

... In Tibet, Shamballa is spoken of as an ancient spiritual centre that was located in the north and has long since disappeared, but which can be 'rediscovered' by those who attain a certain spiritual state. As for the last *Avatar*, what is remarkable is that nowhere is it actually stated that he must be "born" in the literal sense of the word... Finally, the story of the name Armageddon is completely absurd
; it has never been a place name, especially in Syria (the exact form is Al-Megiddo, but it has been "Hellenised") and is completely unknown in India and Tibet, whose languages it has nothing to do with...

Excerpts from letters from René Guénon to G. and/or G.T.

to G., 1 December 1936

... The truth is that the so-called Battle of Poitiers never took place and that more than two centuries later, the Arabs still occupied the entire south-eastern region, the Alps, Savoy and part of Burgundy; history has been singularly falsified... This is similar to the Gauls being portrayed as savages living in the forests.

in G., 5 May 1937

... From an Islamic point of view, these are essentially three successive stages of the same tradition, but the place of Christianity, intermediate between the other two, is related to its special character, which is that it does not strictly speaking have a "Shariyah".

To G.T., 16 July 1937

... I saw St Martin's footprint in Savoie (and even the imprint of his crook in the form of a round hole next to it); I was told that there were also some in other regions.

... Where can one find wolf and bear footprints? I had never heard of them; for my part, I have only seen those of horses and camels (the latter in Sinai, where the Bedouins attribute them to the camel of ...[?]); I also know that those of oxen (or buffalo) are known in India, and that's all (apart from human footprints, of course).

This question of footprints has always seemed very important to me, as well as very enigmatic; to my knowledge, nothing very serious has been written on the subject, because as for Marcel Beaudoin's fantastical interpretations, it is better not to mention them. Only Coomaraswamy has expressed an idea on this subject that is entirely consistent with my own: that they are essentially a representation of the "traces" of superhuman states in our world. This also fits with what you envisage, especially for human footprints; and it would also explain their attribution to people who possess, in some way, a superhuman character (it is only the more precise designation of these characters, such as St-Martin for example, that would still need to be explained in each particular case).

Now, this interpretation is further confirmed by something in Islamic tradition that also seems to relate to this.

Here, in fact, is as accurately as I can render it in English, this

that I have heard said here about the being who has passed beyond the 'barzakh' (this word is untranslatable: let us say, if you like, the being who has passed beyond individual limits, although there is still something more to it in a certain sense): "He is the opposite of ordinary beings (application of the 'opposite meaning'). If he walks on sand, he leaves no trace; *if he walks on rock, his feet leave their imprint*. If he stands in the sun, he casts no shadow; in the darkness, a light emanates from him... This kind of 'reversal' is also expressed in a saying attributed to the awliyâ: 'Our bodies are our spirits and our spirits are our bodies', which means, in other words, that for them, the
"hidden" has become the "apparent" and vice versa; this brings us back to the symbolism of light and darkness, and therefore does not, in reality, stray far from your considerations.

To G.T., 18 January 1938,

... The question of the place of origin of the Tantras is not very clear. In any case, I do not think that *Shaka-dwîpa* can be identified with Chaldea, as A. Avalon says; according to the most plausible interpretation, it would be Scythia, which would indicate, in short, a "northern" origin, passing through Central Asia. This would also explain why the Bönpo rites of Tibet, which predate Buddhism and were not influenced by India, bear similarities to Tantrism, as they would thus have a common origin.

With regard to Buddhism, some believe that the Shâkyas were originally Shakas (Scythians), who had been "Hinduised" at some point in the distant past. On the Western side, influences are less easy to determine, although it is certainly possible that there were some. The analogies you note with Hermeticism are undeniable, but the origin of Hermeticism itself does not seem to be found in the same direction; in this case, the common source would be much more distant... One could also say that all doctrines specially adapted to *the Kali Yuga* must therefore have something "Tantric" about them, in the broadest sense of the word.

René Guénon to A.K. Coomaraswamy.
(***based on 84 handwritten letters***) L1

Dear Sir,

Cairo, 5 September 1935.

I received your kind letter yesterday, and I thank you very much for sending the article enclosed, which I think will indeed be very suitable for Le Voile d'Isis; it will of course need to be translated, but that is not a very long or difficult task.

I was not surprised that you were unable to find copies of "The Esotericism of Dante" and "The King of the World", as both volumes have been out of print for quite some time now and are apparently very rare. Fortunately, in the last few days, I found a copy of each in some boxes of books, even though I thought I only had my own copies left. So it is with great pleasure that I will send them to you tomorrow.

Thank you for your very interesting comments, and I take note of your suggestions. On the question of "morality", we are, of course, in complete agreement in principle, but I believe we should find another word to avoid the confusion that can arise from the most common meaning of this one. What makes it a little difficult for me to address this point of view is that, in reaction to Western "moralism", I have often strongly emphasised in my books the relative nature of everything that is called morality. Obviously, there is a question of vocabulary to be determined in order to resolve this difficulty, and with some thought, it may not be impossible...

As for bhakti, you are quite right about the original meaning; but in more recent times, does not the meaning of "devotion" seem to have prevailed, with the predominance of the sentimental element that it implies, as you so rightly say? As soon as I have the opportunity, I will bring this point to the attention of our colleague Mr R. Allar, who has dealt with this question in particular.

Your remark about Indrâgni is very important and adds further confirmation to many other things of the same kind. Could we not also, from a certain point of view, envisage a connection here with the Nara-Nârâyana couple, themselves identified with Arjuna-Krishna, etc.? This would require further elaboration, but you certainly do not need it to understand what I mean... On the other hand, everything indicates that the two powers were not separated at the beginning, but only from a certain period onwards. However, it seems that we must consider a "prehistoric" revolt of the Kshatriyas; otherwise, how can we understand the role of Parashu-Râma?

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L2

Cairo, 22 October 1935

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to hear that my package reached you safely, and I thank you for your kind words on the subject. When circumstances allow for the reissue of these two books, I will likely make a number of important additions.

What you mention about the "ûrnâ" is very interesting, and it seems to me that the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive; I myself have spoken of the "solar" symbolism of the spider and its web (I believe it is in "The Symbolism of the Cross", although I cannot find it at the moment). Thank you in advance for the work on Angel and Titan that you have announced to me.

Your article has been translated; I don't yet know when it will be published, as there have been a number of delays recently, but it will probably not be long.

As for "bhakti", it is to be feared that, in French, the word "participation" will not be understood without rather lengthy explanations, especially since we must take into account the fact that certain "sociologists" have made unfortunate use of it in connection with that absurd invention they call "pre-logical mentality"; in any case, I will have to think about this some more...

On the question of "morality", we are in fundamental agreement, as I believe I have already told you; however, all these transpositions from one point of view to another always require serious precautions if we do not want to risk confusion or false assimilations. As for "science", I believe that we must always maintain a clear distinction between "traditional science" and "secular science", the latter being, moreover, only the product of a deviation.

For Indrâgni, etc., your remarks are entirely consistent with what I indicated in "Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power" regarding the single power from which both the spiritual and the temporal derive and which, consequently, predates their separation. it is well understood that there are aspects to all this which are, so to speak, at different levels of reality.

What you say about those who have accepted Western views and methods is unfortunately all too true, and not only in India, but throughout the East... As for the possibility of getting Orientalists to accept certain things, I must admit that I am a little surprised, because, for my part, I have never encountered the slightest sign of understanding in this world! --Thank you for pointing this out to me; I have already asked for this work by Mr Mus (whose name was completely unknown to me) to be sought out, and I have recommended Andrae's book to one of our colleagues who knows German, as I myself unfortunately do not. As for Lacombe, I know only too well what this is about, since it is something that is directed more specifically against me; Maritain's group has, for some time now, been engaged in a new kind of distortion of Eastern doctrines, misrepresenting them as "mysticism"; if you are interested in this question, I can discuss it with you at greater length another time.

Please accept my best regards.

R. G.

L3

Cairo, 6 November 1935.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your card, and I thank you for bringing this to my attention. As for what you say about "Kha" and "shûmpa", I entirely agree with you; I only wonder whether it is possible to consider space itself as a "substance", since it is ultimately only a "container" (as demonstrated by the homogeneity or "indiscernibility" of all its parts); I think that, like time, it is essentially a condition of existence. Naturally, all these questions will need to be revisited more thoroughly if I manage to complete the work I have been planning for some time now on the conditions of bodily existence.

Did I thank you for your last shipment of two articles? I can't remember whether I received them before I wrote to you or only since. If I haven't done so yet, please accept my apologies.

Mr Luc Benoist wrote to me that you had been kind enough to make some interesting comments on his article on Indian art; he intends to take them into account when printing his series of articles (which is not yet complete).

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L4

Cairo, 2 December 1935

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 7 November; I also received the Brooklyn Museum Quarterly a fortnight ago, and I thank you for it. H. J. Spinder's article does indeed contain some interesting views, and it seems to indicate, as you say, that there has been a change in the way some people see things. Let us hope that this understanding continues to grow...

The letter you sent me a copy of is also quite remarkable in this regard, and I must admit that I was somewhat surprised to receive it from a Westerner. I do not know Mr Hocart at all, not even by name; I mentioned it today to someone who may be able to find out more about him, but it is very difficult here to have any kind of relationship with the European world, which is completely separate from ours... Anyway, I will see what I can find out about him; thank you for telling him about my books and The Veil of Isis; perhaps he will write to you about it.

As far as I know, the gramophone records that exist here are all modern music and have been influenced by Western culture. Records had been made

reciting the Qur'an, but this was banned, and it seems that they can only be obtained in Germany.

Thank you for your explanations about the "ûrna", which are extremely interesting; all the connections you note seem entirely accurate to me. I had already heard of this West African "ananse", but I do not believe that it can be related to the Latin (or rather Greek) name for the spider, because, if I am not mistaken (I do not have a dictionary to check), it is "arachma" and not "aranca". -- Furthermore, I do not believe that the etymology of "çûfî" comes from "çûf", wool; like all the others that have been given, it is more of a phonetic connection made after the fact; this word is more of a "number", which, as such, has no linguistic derivation. -- The "mandorla" is also called "vesica piscis"; but I think this is solely because of its shape and that it would be difficult to draw any profound conclusions from this name, whereas the symbolism of the almond (luz) is, on the contrary, very important; This, of course, is without prejudice to the other symbolic relationships of the figure in question, either with the "Yoni" or with a geometric construction related to that of the equilateral triangle, and perhaps others as well...

I am pleased to learn that you are preparing an article establishing the non-existence of the idea of "reincarnation" in ancient, orthodox and even Buddhist texts; this is very important and very useful, because this crude interpretation has ended up becoming almost universally accepted; it should be noted that it is not found in the earliest translations, and the influence of theosophy has certainly played a large part in its spread; it is truly incredible that most Westerners seem incapable of understanding the essential difference between "transmigration" and "reincarnation"!

Despite what he claims, there are many very "modernist" aspects to Maritain, not only from an aesthetic point of view, as you have noted, but also in other respects. I have even recently learned some surprising things about his communist sympathies... In any case, if he and his followers took an interest in Eastern doctrines, I know it was solely to oppose me; it even seems that Lacombe is preparing a book that is intended specifically as a response to L'Homme et son devenir. In this regard, they are certainly engaged in a process of distortion which, although different in nature from that of the "official" Orientalists, is no less dangerous, and which I have good reason to believe is not unconscious...

You did not mention Albert Gleizes' work to me, but I had already heard about it elsewhere. I am also familiar with the author, and I know that he has many truly curious ideas, although he does not always succeed in clarifying and fully developing them. I will have to ask Mr. Luc Benoist if he is familiar with this, because, naturally, since it concerns art, it is something that falls more within his particular area of expertise.

I also take note of Heppner's work, which I was completely unaware of; perhaps I can find a way to obtain it... In principle, I am very wary of what missionaries write: it is rare, in fact, that their accounts are not distorted by their prejudices; but it must be acknowledged that there are exceptions

exceptions, and it seems, from what you say, that this is the case here. The same is true of Father Wieger's translations of Chinese texts; one simply has to ignore the more or less extraordinary reflections with which he accompanies them; but I have always wondered, in this regard, how one can correctly explain or translate something without having truly understood it at a deep level..

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

L5

Cairo, 14 December 1935

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter and card, which arrived today at the same time.

Your additional explanation of the meanings of "bhakta" helps me to better understand how they are related, and how the meaning of "devotion" came to be included.

As for the question of the "second death" and the "third birth," these expressions, which are traditional in nature and therefore cannot be changed, are exactly the ones I wanted to use in the article in question. It is understood that death (to one state) necessarily coincides with birth (to another state), so that death and birth are essentially the same thing seen from two different sides. The text of "Jaiminiya Upanishad Brâhmana" corresponds exactly to what I discussed in this article.

Thank you in advance for sending me a new article that will follow on from your "Darker Side of Dawn". The subject is of great interest, and I am delighted to hear that you will be covering it in more detail.

Please accept my best regards.

R. G.

L6

Cairo, 25 February 1936

Dear Sir,

I have just received your article "Angel and Titan" today, and I thank you very much for sending it. I was waiting for it in order to reply to your letter of 30 December, in which you announced it to me, and which I received last week. I see that this article is quite extensive; I will read it with great interest and, of course, write a review. It is indeed interesting that it was able to appear in an "Orientalist" journal, despite its traditional point of view; I believe that in France such a thing would be completely impossible!

Thank you in advance for your other article on "reincarnation", which I hope to read soon. I have often noticed the extraordinary confusion you mention regarding the translation of "âtman" and other terms. Moreover, it seems to me that Westerners today have no idea of any difference between the soul, the spirit, etc.; their conception of the constitution of the human being is so grossly simplified!

If Mrs. Coomaraswamy stops here on her return from India, I will be very happy to meet her, for it is clear that her case is one of those that represent an exception; and what you tell me about the conditions of her stay in India clearly shows this. It is just a pity that we do not have sufficient accommodation, for otherwise my wife would have been delighted to welcome her as best she could, despite the difficulty that the language barrier might cause, as she knows no language other than Arabic. Now, there is also the question of studying French, for which there are not many resources here. On reflection, I can see a possible solution, thanks to a lady we know (she is French, but she too is a real exception); but it all depends on whether her health and her commitments will allow it... She is moving house at the moment, and I believe her new home will be large enough; anyway, I will talk to her about it as soon as possible and keep you informed, or I will inform Mrs. Coomaraswamy directly at the address you give me. As for me, I must say that I know nothing about teaching languages; and although I have not lost the habit of writing French, because I do so constantly, I have completely lost the habit of speaking it over the last few years... Finally, without being able to say anything for certain, I do hope that the matter can be resolved in the manner I have just described to you; that would certainly be very good indeed.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

L7

Cairo, 11 February 1936.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your card dated 21 January, along with your translation of my chapter on "the crisis of the modern world". I would like to thank you very much for this, which I find truly perfect, and also for the very kind "introduction" note that you included with it! As I am unable to discuss it myself in "The Veil of Isis" because I am too directly involved, may I ask you to kindly send a copy to Mr A. Préau, 42, rue Etienne Marcel, Paris (2)? Thank you in advance.

A. B. Keith's sentence is very interesting, because the admission is unusually clear; and I will certainly make use of it when the opportunity arises... And your quotation from St Augustine is very appropriate to the circumstances!

I am currently reading a book by Mrs. Rhys Davids: "The Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism", and I see in it what you were telling me about recently: this confusion between "soul", "spirit", "self", etc., is truly frightening! And what can be said about her so-called "historical" point of view? Her "Sakya" seems to me to be, for the most part, simply a figment of her imagination due to her "anti-monastic" prejudice...

Mr. John Lennard tells me that he wrote to you, as I had encouraged him to do, to ask for a recommendation regarding a possible publisher for the translation of "Theosophism" in America (it seems to be completely unavailable in England), and that you recommended "The Open Court Pub-Co.", which he must have contacted by now; Let us hope that there will be a favourable outcome!

Please accept my best regards.

R. G.

L8

Cairo, 18 February 1936.

Dear Sir,

I have just seen the person I mentioned in my previous letter, and unfortunately there is no way of arranging things as I had hoped for Mrs Coomaraswamy. Furthermore, I still cannot see any other solution that would enable her to improve her French here; from this point of view, Paris would obviously offer many more resources... As for the possibility of making contact with Islamic circles, I have given it further thought, and I must say that, as these circles are very closed, I do not believe it is possible to do anything in this regard during such a short stay; as you are no doubt aware, the difficulty is even greater for a woman than for a man, and it would take her much longer to be accepted, at least other than as a foreigner, which would certainly not be of any interest...

Please believe me when I say that I deeply regret all these difficulties, but I think it is better to tell you how things stand, to avoid disappointment or a waste of time. It goes without saying that if any other possibility should arise, I would let you know immediately.

Please accept my best regards.

R. G.

L9

Cairo, 7 March 1936.

Dear Sir,

I received your card dated 4 February and, just today, your letter dated 20 February. Unfortunately, as you will see from my reply, my efforts have not yielded the results I had hoped for, and to my great regret, I have not yet been able to find any other solution that would satisfy Mrs Coomarswamy...

Thank you for the references to the books by Hocart, S. H. Cooke and C. W. Hopner.

Your "Elements of Buddhist Iconography" were never sent to me; no doubt they were taken by someone else, but I wonder if any report was ever made, as I have no recollection of it. If you would be so kind as to send me another copy directly, as you say, I would be very grateful, and I thank you in advance; and if there really has been no report, which I will check, you can be sure that I will not fail to make one.

Mr Lennard writes to me that he has not yet received a reply from The Open Court; it is true that perhaps not too much time has been lost yet...

Please accept my best regards.

R. G.

L10

Cairo, 14 March 1936.

Dear Sir

Thank you very much for sending me your article, which I have just received and read; it is an excellent idea you have had there! It will indeed be very appropriate to include something of this nature in the "Voile d'Isis" on the occasion of the centenary of Shrî Râma Krishna, who has too often been presented in such a distorted way by the "Westernised" interpretations of certain disciples... And, apart from this consideration, your article is in itself of the greatest interest; there is no better way to clarify this question of so-called "religious tolerance" against all vulgar, "syncretistic" or "eclectic" conceptions. -- It is understood that if this article also appears in English in India, there will be no problem, as the audience will certainly not be the same in both cases.

I have seen recently that Mr Paul Mus, whose work on Borobudur you brought to my attention, has recently made a presentation to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres on the symbolic meaning of the temple of Angkor Thom. If one now dares to speak of symbolism in such circles, it seems that something is really beginning to change...

Thank you again, dear Sir, and please accept my best regards.

R. G.

t

L11

Cairo, 2 April 1936.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 11 March; I also received your card earlier, and I thank you for bringing W. J. Evans-Wentz's new book to my attention (I have read the Tibetan Book of the Dead). I immediately asked Chacornac, as I always do in such cases, to request it for review. Let us hope that this request will be taken into consideration.

I am glad to see that you are satisfied with the translation of your article and also with the change of title of the journal, which everyone unanimously approves of. We have wanted this for a long time, but it was quite difficult to persuade Chacornac; you know how strong the force of habit is for some people!

I have been asked where your study "Angel and Titan" can be obtained, but the brochure only mentions the Journal of the American Oriental Society, without giving any address. I would therefore be very grateful if you could provide me with this information so that I can reply.

I have not yet received the article by Hocart that you said you would send me, but that is not surprising, as printed matter is almost always delayed. I thank you in advance, and it goes without saying that I will return it to you after I have read it.

I am very sorry that things could not be arranged for Mrs. Coomaraswamy to come here, but, as you well understand, this stay would have been

have been anything but a waste of time for Mrs. Coomaraswamy; has it now been decided that she will stop in Paris?

I had the opportunity to talk about you recently with Mr Felix Valyi, who knows you and who came to see me to ask for my collaboration on his new publication, Synthesis, the first volume of which has just been published. Have you heard about it? Until now, I only knew him by name, but it turns out that we have mutual friends here, and it was one of them who brought him to my house.

What should we think, as a publishing house, of Messrs. Gansh and Co. of Madras? We want to offer to publish an English translation of my "General Introduction", and I believe they have even published something of yours, which is why I am asking you this question. There was already a plan to publish this book in India about fifteen years ago, but unfortunately it never came to fruition.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards. R.G.

L12

Cairo, 11 April 1936.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your two letters dated 26 and 27 March, at the same time as Mr Lennard informed me that he had also received a letter from you and that he was writing to Harcourt Brace immediately. I thank you very much for your kind intervention in this matter, as I believe that no one is better placed than you to find a publisher in America for this translation of Theosophism.

I have not yet received anything from Mrs. Coomaraswamy, but if a letter arrives as you think it will, I will not worry, since I already have the explanation.

I received Mr. Hocart's article about a week ago; his attitude is interesting because of the contrast it makes with that of most Orientalists. He is certainly right to insist on the importance of the ritual element, but when he speaks of "priesthood" because of this, it is an inaccurate interpretation: he believes, like all Europeans, that the performance of rites should be the sole preserve of "priests", whereas in reality it is a question of the "sacred" nature that all functions and even all professions originally had. -- I am keeping this article so that I can devote a note to it in my reports; I will be sure to return it to you afterwards.

Your "Buddhist Iconography" has not yet arrived, but that is not surprising; thank you in advance.

Thank you also for the various items you have brought to my attention once again; I will immediately enquire in Paris whether the article from the Journal Asiatique is available.

I had never heard of Carl Hentze or his works; are they published directly in French, or are they translations? What you quote from the appendix of the first is truly remarkable; but I do not know who Herbert Kühn is either; I must admit that I do not know German... I will try to obtain the other work, "Objets rituels, etc.", which has just been published, but could you tell me who the publisher is? This information is

essential for me to be able to order it from Chacornac.

Regarding the connections you point out about "moon", which are indeed significant, do you think there is a need to distinguish between the two roots mâ and man, whose meanings seem very similar in any case?

I fully intend to compile my articles on questions concerning initiation into a single volume once I have finished them, as I still have a few points to cover. It is also possible that I will reuse other articles in works that I have had in mind for a long time; unfortunately, I never seem to have enough time to carry out all these projects.

Please accept my best regards.

R. G.

L13

Cairo, 22 April 1936.

Dear Sir

Last week I received your letter dated 1 April, and the day before yesterday I received your "Elements of Buddhist Iconography", which I was waiting for before replying, so that I could thank you at the same time. I have already read part of it; the point of view you take is very interesting and seems to me to be entirely correct; the symbols relating to the World Axis are particularly significant. The connection you point out between the trishula and the vajra is very noteworthy; I once mentioned the vajra in an article on "thunderstones", but I may have another opportunity to return to this subject. On the other hand, you have touched on a question that relates to a "prehistoric" mystery: that of the depictions of human and animal footprints; This is something I have never been able to clarify very precisely, but which seems important to me. Do you think you could develop this question separately? One point that is not entirely clear to me concerns the Yakshas. I have always thought that they were mainly associated with "underground fire", like the Kabirs, but is there something else? -- Surely, the title "Buddhist Symbolism" that you were considering would have better reflected the nature of the work, especially since it deals mainly with "aniconic" symbols. It is very curious that, in Christianity too, it was symbols of this kind that were used exclusively in the beginning...

On the subject of iconography and symbolism, I must not forget to mention something else: Mr. Charbonneau-Lassay, whose work I have often referred to, has completed the first part of his great work on the symbols of Christ; he too shows that most of these symbols are directly linked to ancient traditions. He has found a publisher, but because of the size of the work (there are to be two further parts), the publisher does not want to risk undertaking its publication without being assured of a sufficient number of subscriptions. As I thought that you might be able to find people around you who might be interested in it, I gave Mr. Charbonneau your address, among a few others; he will no doubt send you the prospectus containing a sample of the work shortly. In addition, I am returning Mr Hocart's article to you and enclosing a brochure of his which I still have several copies of and which, although it deals with a much more

special edition will also give you some idea of his work. I would like to draw your attention to this, as it would be very desirable for this edition to be published. If you have any useful addresses (of individuals or institutions), I would be grateful if you could send them to me, and I will forward them to him in any case. Thank you in advance for anything you can do in this regard.

Regarding Borobudur, I heard a long time ago that the bas-reliefs that are buried were not buried accidentally, but that this was planned in the original design of the building. Did Mr Mus also mention this issue?

I come now to what you mention in your letter concerning the doctrine of cycles. I must say that there are things here that seem to me to be very difficult to express, perhaps even more difficult than to conceive, and that is why, although I have often been asked to do so, I have never been able to bring myself to undertake a comprehensive study of this subject. First, it must be clearly understood that no traditional doctrine accepts the idea of general "progress", unless it is understood in the very limited sense of material development, for the latter is consistent with the very course of the cycle. Consequently, it is not at all necessary to assume such material development in early humans; what all traditions affirm is that they all possessed, spontaneously, a spiritual state that can only be attained with difficulty and exceptionally by humans today. It should also be noted that the remains discovered by palaeontologists are not necessarily those of early humans, especially if they lived on a continent that subsequently disappeared. It may be that there were already cases of degeneration in ancient times, especially among those who had escaped some cataclysm; moreover, there is no material evidence that can really be used to judge this. In any case, I have the impression that prehistoric caves were more like sanctuaries than dwellings... I do not know exactly to which period we could correspond what is indicated in chapter 6 of Genesis, which certainly deserves closer examination from this point of view. It may be that it can be applied in several ways at different levels, but the most immediate connection must be with what is said about the last days of Atlantis, which would only take us back to the Dwâpara-Yuga and would therefore still be a long way from the beginning of the Manvantara.

That said, I believe that in order to resolve the main difficulty you point out, we must clearly distinguish between two quite different things: on the one hand, what relates to the very course of a cycle, that is, to the sense of the development of a world; on the other hand, what concerns the beings who are manifested in this world, but who ultimately only pass through it without being essentially connected to it; the state of these beings must, in general, be in accordance with the conditions of the world in question at each moment, therefore more spiritual at the beginning and more materialised at the end. One could say that, at the beginning, a world is capable of providing a terrain of manifestation for beings who are truly more 'advanced' than those who will come later; I do not see anything contradictory in this. Moreover, the distinction I have just mentioned becomes clear if, for example, we consider the following: when we speak of the cycles preceding ours (it is understood that this must be understood analogically and not in a literal temporal sense), we represent them as

below or behind us; when we speak of beings preceding us in the cycle of rebirth, we necessarily represent them as above or ahead of us; and this naturally relates again to the opposition between the Devas and the Asuras... I must have written something in the past about these kinds of "cosmological" antinomies, something I never published, but which I will no doubt find among my papers, and which I may perhaps take up again one day.

The "Hells" seem to refer in reality to several things that need to be distinguished: either the lower states (previous cycles in the universal manifestation) themselves, or the "traces" of these states in the human state; and also "limbo", the realm of unrealised potentialities, which may correspond more particularly to what you have in mind; the "outer darkness", where the "rejects" of a cycle are ultimately cast, and which also corresponds, in Hindu symbolism, to the dark region beyond Mount Loka-Aloka, etc.

The Krita-Yuga may well have been on "earth", but that does not necessarily imply that the earth itself was then what it is now; one might even wonder whether it is not the changes in conditions that have occurred at certain times in the earthly world that prevent us from finding, through any research, truly "primitive" remains. I would also readily say that "on earth" does not mean exactly "on this earth"; Islamic tradition speaks very clearly of the "seven lands", manifested successively or alternately, which are, moreover, the same as the seven dwîpas of Hindu tradition. -- Of course, all this does not prevent considerations about origins from also being viewed in a more universal sense; but they must always be able, through appropriate transposition, to apply to all levels, including that represented by the history of terrestrial humanity.

Please let me know what you think of these few reflections, and also if they give rise to questions on more specific points...

One more thing I was going to forget about what you mention in your note 100: Er-Rûh is identified with the Metatron of Kabbalah; his "place" is at the centre of El-°Arsh, represented by a circular figure. The eight angels who support El-°Arsh correspond to the four cardinal points and the four intermediate points; but they also correspond, at the same time, to certain groups of letters of the Arabic alphabet, arranged in numerical order and distributed according to these same regions.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

L14

Cairo, 26 April 1936.

Dear Sir,

Almost immediately after writing to you, I received the new copy of your article (I note that I will keep Mallory's quote in its original text), as well as "The Taking of Toll" and "The Mystery of Mahâdîva"; then yesterday I also received the "Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts"; thank you very much for everything.

I forgot to ask you, regarding Mr. Hocart's article, where

the "Actas Orientalia", from which it is taken. I also wanted to ask you in which city "The Vishwabharati Quarterly" is published; I think it is in Calcutta, but I am not sure.

I have just read your article on the makara, which touches on some of the points I mentioned recently about the symbolism of fish (especially in the form of dolphins).- Thank you also for quoting me in it; the question of the relationship between Love and Death in symbolism certainly deserves to be dealt with in greater depth, but I find it rather difficult to explain clearly...

In the March issue of "Etudes Traditionnelles", you will see that I have included some observations on the lotus and other symbolic flowers that are very similar to those in your "Buddhist Iconography".

One more remark about this: the title of the Dhammapada has always made me think, in a somewhat natural way and without my being able to explain it, of the "traces left on the earth by the feet of the symbolic bull of Dharma"; you incidentally make a remark that seems to me to point in the same direction; do you have any more precise ideas on this subject? Please accept my best regards.

R. G.

L15

Cairo, 1 May 1936.

Dear Sir,

This morning I received your letter dated 13 April with your two articles. I cannot thank you enough for this new shipment, as your articles are always welcome! There may be a slight delay in their publication due to the August-September issue, which will be a special issue on Druidism; in any case, your article on Ramakrishna will certainly appear before that.

I must point out that, in the article on the "Nirukta", the exact place where note 8 should be placed is not indicated in the text, and that, in the article "Beauty, Light and Sound", at the end of note 6, on Oldmberg, two lines have been superimposed, so that I cannot read the last sentence: The discussion of... " ? Would you be so kind as to provide me with these two references? As you can see, I have already read these articles carefully and find them, as always, extremely interesting.

I would also like to ask you what these "Letters from Paulos" by Omikron are, which you quote and which I had never heard of before.

As I happen to be writing to Chacornac, I will ask him today to send you several copies of the issues containing your articles; this is only natural, and I thought he had already done so, but unfortunately he often forgets many things...

Thank you for your new book recommendations. I must admit that, of all of them, I am only familiar with Nicholson. I am wary of some of his interpretations, as they are sometimes biased, and from what I have heard here, where he spent some time, he is not always entirely sincere; he is also one of those responsible for confusing Sufism with "mysticism".

Chacornac tells me he has requested Evans-Wentz's book, so I hope I

will be able to get it by June.

Thank you again, dear Sir, and please accept my warmest regards.

R. G.

L16

Cairo, 7 May 1936.

Dear Sir,

This morning I received your two letters dated 20 and 24 April, which must have crossed paths with several letters from me, as well as your "Vedic Exemplarism", for which I am very grateful.

I will make the additions you indicate to your article "Beauty, Light, and Sound". -- Please do not forget to also give me the other information I requested.

Thank you also for the information concerning the publication of "Angel and Titan"; I will pass it on at the earliest opportunity.

Unfortunately, I have learned that Oxford University Press is refusing to send the Evans-Wentz book, claiming that the number of copies reserved for reviews is already exhausted!

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L17

Cairo, 16 May 1936

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 26 April; thank you for pointing out this passage from Casanova's memoirs. I now remember seeing it quoted in a Masonic work, but I cannot remember which one exactly; I think it must be a work by Ragon, but as I have not seen it for many years, I had forgotten about it... It does indeed give a very accurate idea of the secret of initiation; I will certainly be able to quote it, either in an article or when I compile my articles on initiation into a volume.

These days, I am being asked from various quarters what to think of Sri Aurobindo Ghöse, and I confess that I am very embarrassed to answer on this subject, not having had the opportunity to read his writings. What I do know is that he is surrounded by a whole group of French people about whom I have the worst information and whose role seems very suspicious; it is said that these people only allow those they like to approach him, and even that they are the ones who actually write what is published under his name. How is it that he can tolerate such an entourage? There is something here that I cannot explain; if you have any information on this, you would be doing me a great service by sharing it with me.

In my last letter, I must have forgotten to thank you for what you told me about Messrs Ganesh and Co. Today, I have just received a letter from Mr Mac Sur, who is translating the "General Introduction", telling me that he has not yet received a reply from them, even though he sent them a second letter on 9 March and

sent it by airmail this time; this silence seems rather strange...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L18

Cairo, 21 May 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your article on Jain painting, which I received this morning along with your card dated 6 May and your letter dated 8 May. Although I have only been able to skim through it so far, it seems to me to be a remarkable addition to the considerations set out in your Buddhist Iconography.

The vases depicted with eyes remind me in a singular way of the Mycenaean vases known as "owl-headed"; do you think it is really possible to establish some kind of "connection" here?

What you quote to me from Iadunath Sinha's book is entirely consistent with what I have said on the same subject; but why then avoid metaphysical considerations, which seems to me not only difficult but impossible, at least if one does not want to distort anything? I will ask Chacornac to try to obtain this book, as well as Carl Hentze's, now that I have the publisher's details.

Thank you in advance for what you can do for Mr. Charbonneau-Lassay's work; unfortunately, the publisher is dragging his feet and has not finished preparing the prospectuses. I do not know exactly what title will be chosen for this work, but I do not believe that the word "symbolism" will appear in it, which is perhaps more prudent so as not to hinder its distribution; at one point, there was talk of using the title "The Emblematic Iconography of Christ".

Regarding the word "Mâyâ", it is certain that "illusion" is very far from the original meaning; but, on the other hand, the use of the word "magic", at least in English, is really impossible, because of the other more common use of this same word, with which there would be inevitable and very unfortunate confusion; I admit that I do not see at the moment what satisfactory term could be proposed... Boehme's terminology is so specialised that it is difficult to borrow from it without having to accompany the terms with an explanation.

Thank you for your additional explanations on the question of "Vajra", which I intend to return to in a future article.

As for the "Vestigium Pedis", it would be very interesting if you could gather the references you mention; may I ask if it would be possible to turn them into an article for "Etudes Traditionnelles"? As for the prehistoric origin of this symbolism, we are in complete agreement; we can indeed think that there is a more specific relationship with the traditions of pastoral peoples; as for hunter-gatherer peoples, I think that there has never been anything other than a certain degeneration, and not something primitive. In any case, I have seen in France, on rock , a fairly large number of these footprints

prehistoric human footprints (which, under the influence of Christianity, are attributed by peasants to the Virgin Mary or various saints), as well as horse footprints; I also saw two camel footprints on Mount Sinai (which the Bedouins of the region attribute to Moses' camel). Furthermore, I seem to recall that in Christian iconography there are depictions of the Ascension in which, beneath Christ rising into the air, one can see the imprint of his feet on the mountain; there is surely some connection between all this...

I will pass on what you have told me about Mr Mus to Mr Luc Benoist and give him his address; unfortunately, it is very far from Paris, but he may have an opportunity to go there. At the same time, I will mention Don L. Baillol's book to him, as it seems to me to be particularly relevant to his field.

I had never heard of the magazine "Ijuk"; there are certainly many things of this kind that I am unaware of due to my lack of knowledge of German.

You will no doubt talk to me a little later about the questions concerning the cycles; in any case, I can see that you think exactly as I do on the points you refer to.

As for Yaksha, your explanation gives me a better understanding of what it is all about; it is unfortunate that your two books on the subject are out of print, but do you have any plans to republish them, adding the final summary you mention? Here, I doubt that they can be found anywhere other than at the American University, with which I am unable to establish contact, if only because of its "missionary" nature...

I know only too well how far we are from being able to do all the work we set out to do; I even admire that you have managed to write so much, whereas I despair of ever doing even a hundredth of what I have in mind! - Surely, all the interpretations of Orientalists would have to be revisited and corrected from start to finish; and such work would only be possible if a large enough number of people collaborated on it...

I agree with you that there is nothing that can be done to change Mr Rhys Davids' views, as they strike me as being so biased and self-conceited that he declares anyone who does not think like him to be incompetent in advance! There may be fewer preconceived ideas in America than in Europe, or they may be less deeply rooted there.

I am also convinced that some form of initiation must still exist among the American Indians; apart from that, as in Europe, there are surely no other authentic vestiges of this kind other than those found in Freemasonry, whose chances of restoration are unfortunately very doubtful. In the absence of Western-style initiation, something else would have to come from elsewhere to ensure the essential continuity of transmission, and it is very difficult to say at present to what extent this would be feasible...

Returning to the Yakshas, I have long hesitated to write anything on the subject of the Kabirs, which is closely related to this one (and also, of course, to that of the "Sons of God", or rather of the Gods, "Beni-Elohim", and the "daughters of

men"), as it seems so complex to me. Here, we also have, in relation to the "Yiuns", many things concerning the question of "underground fire" and "hidden treasures"; but all this is really very difficult to explain in a way that is intelligible to Western minds...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L19

Cairo, 30 May 1936.

Dear Sir,

Today I received your letter dated 9 May, along with your talk on "The Love of Art"; how true are the ideas you express in it!

I have made a note of your address for this summer, but I am still sending this letter to Boston, as it may arrive there before 15 June.

Thank you for the addresses of the journals.

No, you did not send me your article on "Khwaja Khizr and The Fountain of Life"; if you are able to send it to me, I would be very interested in reading it; thank you in advance for that as well.

I sincerely believe that your articles are excellent for E. T. and I know that everyone else agrees. As for the translation, due to lack of time, I had to ask Mr. Préau to take care of it, so that I only have to review it. As for the article on Shrî Râmakrishna, he tells me that he sent his translation to you at the same time as he sent it to me, so that you could also give him your comments. I hope it will reach you soon, as it would be desirable for it to appear in the July issue.

I understand that Chacornac was only able to send you three copies of the January issue, as it is almost out of print. The reason for this is that many copies were sent out as samples, because it was the first issue to appear under the new title, but naturally this will not be the case next time.

What you say about the true meaning of "Punar-mritym" and "Punar-janma" seems entirely correct to me and also corresponds well with what I think. The same goes for your remark about "infallibility".

As for what you quote from Hentze, it is indeed quite surprising; one must believe that something has changed! --I have requested his latest volume; I will have to see if it is possible to obtain the others as well...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L20

Cairo, 3 June 1936.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 16 May, and I thank you for the information concerning your two articles; I have immediately incorporated it into the text.

Thank you very much for everything you are doing to generate interest in my books, at Harvard and elsewhere!

Let us hope that Chacornac will be more successful with the Bruce Codex than it was with the Evans-Wentz book...

I agree with you that, in Nicholson's case, there are real limitations to his understanding, for which he cannot be held responsible. if I add that, moreover, he is not always entirely sincere, it is based on what I have been told by people who had the opportunity to discuss with him (while helping him with certain translations) during his stay here. Nevertheless, it is true that his translations are certainly better than many others; and it is also true, unfortunately, that Indian texts have always been particularly mistreated by translators!

This time I am addressing this note to Caratunk; I am sorry to hear that this stay is for health reasons, but I hope that the fresh air will enable you to make a full recovery; I also hope that Mrs. Coomaraswamy's journey will have ended happily.

Who knows if I will ever be able to go to America, or even simply return to Europe (for a short time at least)? I think it is more prudent not to make any long-term plans, and many reasons of all kinds, in the current circumstances, make it difficult for me to envisage any travel... But who knows if you yourself might not have some opportunity to come this way?

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L21

Cairo, 17 June 1936

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 2 June, which I received today. Although I see that you do not have direct and precise information on certain points either, I am nonetheless pleased to know what you think of Aurobindo Ghose. I once had friends who knew him, but that was a long time ago, when he was still involved in politics; he has certainly changed a lot since then... What you say about him, in comparison with certain other "great men" of today, seems to me to be quite accurate.

I have just learned that two of his books (though I do not know which ones) have been translated into French by someone I know a little, who is going to India next autumn to show him the translation.

As for Gandhi, I have always had the impression that many of his ideas were very Western in inspiration, but has this become even more pronounced in recent times?

I am glad to hear that Mrs. Coomaraswamy has returned safely from her trip and is now with you. What she told you about the current state of mind in India unfortunately coincides with the impression given to me by someone who spent a few months there about two years ago. It is indeed necessary, as you say, for darkness to spread everywhere before the Kali Yuga comes to an end, but in recent years this has been happening at an incredible pace!

Please accept my warmest regards.

R. G.

L22

Cairo, 27 June 1936.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your "Vedic Mono-Theism", which I have just received and read. I see that you have touched on the question of the meaning of "bhakti", which you had already mentioned to me; it is a pity that some deletions have been made, and also that there are so many printing errors throughout the article! A small comment on the word "Nenotheism": I have seen it used in relation to the Bible in a different sense from that used by Max Müller. According to some "critics", the people of Israel did not believe in one God (which would be "monotheism"), but worshipped one God among others (and this is what they call "nenotheism"). Of course, this theory is yet another example of their misunderstanding... I do not know whether they invented the word independently of Max Müller; in any case, it seems that he was the first to use it chronologically.

Mr. Préau wrote to me that he had received your reply regarding the translation of your article that he had submitted to you; everything will therefore be ready in time for it to be published in July, as I had thought.

Last week I received a letter from Mr. Charbonneau telling me that he had finally heard from his publisher; he had made an appointment with him and had to go to Paris for a few days, and he intended to write to you on his return. The title chosen for his work is: "The Emblematic Iconography of Christ. Book I: The Bestiary". As I thought, the word "symbolism" does not appear in it, so it does not seem likely to scare people off...

It seems that political events are causing problems in France at the moment; I am told that, because of the strikes, it is not yet known when the June issue of Études Traditionnelles will be able to appear!

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

L23

Alexandria, 12 July 1936.

Dear Sir,

My wife and I have decided to come and spend some time here for a change of scenery, which we really needed; we have been here for a week and do not yet know how long we will stay. So please do not be surprised if I am slow to reply to some of your letters at the moment, as I have no way of forwarding my correspondence during my absence.

Before my departure, I received (via Chacornac) a rather unusual letter from Carl Hentze: he says he has read my article on the "double spiral" that you pointed out to him, and declares himself pleased that my conclusions agree with his, but... he asks me to point out that he had already formulated these in his work published in 1932, which I can find at the Guimet Museum! This kind of claim to "priority" struck me as rather surprising, as I find it difficult to understand how a true and traditional idea

can be regarded as someone's property... In any case, in my reply, I took the opportunity to ask him to send me his latest book (which Chacornac had already requested from the publisher) and, if possible, the previous one that is at issue here, saying that in that case I would be very happy to discuss it, but otherwise my distance from any library prevents me from reading it. I was completely unaware of the name of Mr. Carl Hentze, as well as his works, before you mentioned them to me recently; however, one cannot expect someone who intends to take a traditional rather than an academic point of view to keep abreast of everything that is published! Anyway, I will keep you informed of the outcome of this story...

Your article on Sri Ramakrishna is due to appear in the July issue of "Etudes Traditionnelles", and, from what I have been told, I think that one of your two other articles may be published in the October issue.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

L24

Cairo, 29 August 1936.

Dear Sir,

It has been a long time since I heard from you; however, I would like to believe that this silence is not due to any unfortunate circumstances, and that you are enjoying your rest in the countryside.

As for me, I returned from Alexandria about three weeks ago, after spending a month there; the change did me good, but the only annoyance is that I found a lot of work waiting for me on my return, and above all an enormous amount of correspondence that I am having great difficulty catching up on!

Mr Préau recently sent me his translation of your article on the Nirukta, telling me that he was also sending you a copy at the same time; perhaps you already have it by now. This article will probably only appear in the November issue, as there are several others that have already been postponed for several months and will still have to be included in October...

I am told that several copies of the July issue have been sent to you; I had specifically requested that this not be forgotten this time.

As for the books you mentioned to me, there has been a real stroke of bad luck: the publishers have refused to provide the "Bruce Codex" and also C. Hentze's work. I have heard nothing more about the latter since I wrote to you in my last letter.

Mr. Luc Benoist is planning to write an article on Borobudur, based on the work of Mr. Mus; I understand that he wrote to you recently.

Could you tell me who Swami Yatiswarananda is, whom a friend of mine says he met some time ago? He belongs to the "Ramakrishna Mission", but seems to be more orthodox than is generally the case in that milieu.

Yours sincerely, R. G.

L25

Cairo, 13 September 1936.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 22 August, which crossed with mine; as you will see, I was a little concerned not to have heard from you, and, in fact, I see that unfortunately I was not entirely wrong. It was to be hoped that your stay in the country would help you recover from your fatigue; will you be extending it a little longer than you had intended? In any case, as you told me you would be staying there until 1 October, I am still sending this letter, as I think it will reach you before that date.

I thank you very much for your new article, which I have just read and find very interesting, as always; it provides very important details on the question of the distinction between traditional art and secular art. What you say about the "vestigium pedis" also sheds a lot of light on this point; and as for the meaning of "mârga", I must say that I had thought about it quite often, but without being able to find a sufficiently clear explanation. I take note of what you say about the possibility of publishing the article in two parts; this will naturally depend on the space available; it is annoying to be so limited by the number of pages, for reasons that are all too easy to understand!

In recent days, I have written an article on "symbolic" weapons for the October issue, in which I had the opportunity to refer at some length to your Buddhist Iconography, concerning certain aspects of the symbolism of the Vajra.

The three articles you mentioned sending me have not yet arrived, but that is not surprising, as printed matter almost always takes longer to arrive than letters; I will probably receive them in the next post. As for the two books that the publishers are to send me, I have not yet received them either; it is true that publishers are often slow in sending such items, so much so that recently I thought that books that had been announced to me must have been lost, and yet they finally arrived. However, if I still haven't received anything in a while, I will let you know so that you can remind them in case it was an oversight, which is always possible...

For your article on reincarnation, what you propose to do seems to me to be very good, and will surely be very useful work. As for the substance of the question, the impossibility of returning to the same world stems from the fact that it would imply a limitation of the multiplicity of worlds (or states of existence, which are essentially the same thing) and, consequently, a limitation of universal possibility itself. This, of course, concerns the true being, and amounts to saying that it cannot manifest itself twice in the same state; this is, in short, only a special case of the impossibility of any repetition in universal manifestation, precisely because of its indefiniteness. Now, this does not mean that there is nothing that can "reincarnate", if we insist on using that word, but these are simply psychic elements, which no longer have anything to do with the true being (which has then passed into another state), and which become integrated into the manifestation of another being, as do bodily elements; strictly speaking, therefore, it is not a question of "reincarnation" but of "metempsychosis" (as for the word "transmigration", it properly refers to the passage from one state to another).

strictly speaking, it is not "reincarnation" that is involved, but "metempsychosis" (as for the word "transmigration", it properly refers to the passage to another state, which does apply to the true being). This transfer of psychic elements explains the so-called "cases of reincarnation" or "memories of past lives" that are sometimes observed (besides, what could "remember", since, even in the reincarnationist hypothesis, it would always be a new individuality taken on by the being, and memory obviously belongs to the individuality as such?). -- For the rest (leaving aside, of course, the sentimental reasons invoked by moderns, which are of no doctrinal interest), belief in reincarnation can be considered as due in part to a misunderstanding of the symbolic meaning of certain expressions. Although the comparison may be bizarre, I am thinking here of another fact that has exactly the same cause: the belief in the existence of certain monsters and fantastic animals, which are nothing more than ancient misunderstood symbols; for example, I know people here who firmly believe in "dog-headed men"; Pliny's "natural history" is full of similar confusions... -- I have dealt at length with this question of reincarnation in "The Spiritist Error", also pointing out the distinctions that need to be made between the different constituent elements of the manifested being. --Since it is an impossibility, it is understood that there can be no exceptions; moreover, where exactly would they end? In this regard, I would like to point out something rather curious: Mrs. Blavatsky herself initially refused to accept reincarnation in general; in Isis Unveiled, she only considered a certain number of exceptional cases, reproduced exactly from the teachings of the H. B. of L., to which she was affiliated at the time. -- One possibility, which is only an apparent exception, is the case of a being who, no longer really subject to death (a jîvan-mukta, therefore), would for certain reasons continue his earthly existence (he would not return as the so-called "reincarnated") by successively using several different bodies; but it is obvious that this is a case that is completely outside the conditions of ordinary humanity, and that, moreover, such a being can no longer really be said to be "incarnate" in any way.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

L26

Cairo, 21 September 1936.

Dear Sir,

Only today did I receive a package from you containing the offprint of three articles, which I believe to be the one you mentioned to me; thank you!

Your reply to Mrs Rhys Davids is quite right and entirely consistent with the criticisms I made of her some time ago. Since you have addressed the question of "rebirth" on this occasion, while awaiting the other work we discussed, I must say that your view of it seems to me to be very accurate; "transmigration" and not "reincarnation" are precisely the terms I used in my last letter.

Your article on beauty reminded me of some of the considerations you

develop in one of those that are to appear in the "E. T." -- as for the article on the two passages from Dante (where I thank you for quoting me), I need not tell you how much I agree with you!

I will discuss all these articles in my November reviews.

On another note, I have just learned that your book "Patron and Artist" has been received at the address of "E. T."; this means that it was probably not sent to me directly, but this will only cause a slight delay, as I have of course asked for it to be sent to me immediately.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L27

Cairo, 5 November 1936.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of 22 October arrived at the same time as the package you mentioned in your previous letter; thank you again! Mr Préau tells me that he also received a package from you containing several articles.

What you tell me about "Patron and Artist" and Harvard is really interesting, and indeed fortunate, but I understand that you yourself are a little surprised. I still wonder how things like this should be interpreted: should we see them as signs of a certain change in attitude, which would be very welcome, or is it simply a misunderstanding of the true significance of certain things?

Your study on "Khwâjâ Khadir" (here we say "Seyidna El-Khidr") is very interesting, and the connections you point out are entirely accurate from a symbolic point of view; but I can assure you that there is much more to it than mere "legends". I would have a lot to say on this subject, but it is doubtful that I will ever write about it, because, in fact, this subject is one that affects me a little too directly... -- Allow me to make a small correction: El-Khidr is not precisely "identified" with the Prophets Idris, Ilyâs, Girgis (Saint George) -- (although, of course, in a certain sense, all the Prophets are one); they are only considered to belong to the same Heaven (that of the Sun).

Since you mention Saint Bernard, you are probably unaware that I myself have written something about him; I was asked to do so for a collection of saints' lives, and it was subsequently published as a separate booklet, a copy of which I am enclosing with this letter. Given the constraints imposed on this work, I was hardly able to do anything other than provide a kind of historical summary; however, I did manage to include a few allusions which, for those who understand them, may give an idea of the true character of the man. Indeed, for me, this character is truly initiatory and not simply mystical; the connections you envisage therefore seem to me to be entirely justified.

On the question of "memory", your view is quite correct; it is certain that memory, in the ordinary sense, is something that belongs exclusively to this world and cannot follow the being into another state, and is therefore among the elements that, upon passing into that state, it must leave behind;

Moreover, it is impossible to understand how this memory, as such, could be found in a state whose character is no longer temporal; only that which corresponds to it "timelessly", so to speak, can remain, and which is therefore no longer a "memory".

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L28

Cairo, 20 November 1936.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter and the references it contains. The works on the Royal Asiatic Society's list are better known than the others; I must even say that until now I had never seen the name A. R. Nykl anywhere; do you know who this translator is?

I think I mentioned in my last letter that I had received your Mirror of Gesture; I have already reviewed it, along with Patron and Artist, and I think they will be published in December.

At the same time as your letter, I also received one from Mr Charbonneau-Lassay, who is a little bored with all the successive delays caused by the publisher in launching his book; the note published in the "E. T." has already cancelled a few subscriptions.

Did I mention that I haven't heard from Mr Carl Hentze since I replied to his letter? This story is really quite strange...

Don't thank me so much for mentioning you in connection with the "Vajra"; it was only natural! -- Following on from this article on weapons, I wrote another on the symbolism of horns; there is obviously a connection between these two subjects.

The symbol you mention, which I was not familiar with, is truly very curious, and I think that the connection you suggest with the double spiral and other related symbols is entirely justified. -- The other day, I happened to come across a brochure on the prehistoric monuments of Malta; there too, the double spiral is one of the most frequently encountered symbols. -- On the subject of pottery, I noticed a very enigmatic symbol on some ancient Greek pottery or , which is generally associated with various forms of the swastika. Do you have any idea what it might mean? I haven't been able to find a satisfactory explanation...

What you say about the "reincarnation" of elements corresponding to the meaning of "heredity" is quite correct. In China, there is also a commonly used phrase that goes something like this: "You will live again in your thousands of descendants", which obviously has exactly the same meaning. -- As for "transmigration", in addition to the entirely "universal" meaning that you envisage, it might be worth considering more specifically the passage of a being through its multiple states; but, fundamentally, the two things are very closely related, the second aspect being, if you like, a "specification" of the first. -- Finally, as for "regeneration", this last point seems a little less clear to me, but I understand that you will be able to elucidate it more fully in the study you are currently working on.

I am very pleased with your planned article on the "Supreme Identity" in the

Vedic texts; thank you in advance!

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L29

Cairo, 14 December 1936.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 21 November, and I am glad to hear that my letter reached you safely, and also that we are in agreement regarding Saint Bernard; your study of the idea of "Deification" promises to be very interesting.

What you tell me about this small group of goodwill at Harvard indicates that there may be something to be done in this milieu, although, naturally, we should not expect the majority to ever be in such a frame of mind, so contrary to the general academic spirit in all countries!

As for "Khwâja Khizr", I suspected that you had not been able to express your full thoughts, without knowing the nature of the journal in which your article appeared, as this is the first time I have seen anything from it.

Regarding the passage from Plotinus that you quote, it seems quite clear that there can be no question of "memory" in the "eternal present", and that, even if we extend its meaning beyond the temporal modality, it can in any case only exist for a being who is still conditioned by some mode of succession. Understood in this way, the memory of previous states, for the being who has not yet attained Liberation, is undoubtedly not impossible, and the use you envisage for this "recovered memory" would, in short, be entirely legitimate. However, as far as Buddhism is concerned, there is something that may give rise to doubt about such an intention: its apparent denial of the permanent "Self". This is, moreover, a point on which there seem to be contradictions that are difficult to resolve, and I have never found any satisfactory explanation of the true attitude of Buddhism in this regard.

We are beginning to consider the choice of a subject for the special issue of "Etudes Traditionnelles" in 1937, although it will not be published until August-September as usual, which still gives us time to think about it. Among the subjects being considered, I have been told that Yoga and Tantrism are being considered; I have not yet had much time to think about it, but I would be very happy to hear your opinion on the matter. Naturally, if one of these subjects were to be chosen, we would ask for your collaboration. -- Taoism is also proposed, but it is feared that it may be more difficult to obtain enough articles on this subject.

I would not have thought that there could still be such large open spaces in America; in this respect at least, it is very different from Europe, where one has the impression that everything is so cramped!

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

L30

Cairo, 9 January 1937.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter and card dated 18 December this morning, along with the book you mentioned, Burning and Malting, for which I am very grateful. Please do not apologise for the faulty binding, as even so, I am very happy to have it; I was completely unfamiliar with this Persian poem.

Thank you also for the photo of the woods in Maine, which really do give the impression of a very beautiful country. What a pity that it is so far from here and that we are not very keen travellers, otherwise it would be possible to visit you there! My wife in particular would be afraid to travel even as far as Europe...

I am translating your "addendum" and sending it straight away, thinking that this way we will no doubt be able to place it after your other article, which is due to appear shortly (in the February issue, as it seems that the translation could not be quite ready in time for the January issue). -- I think we can keep the note, which, as you say, is not without interest in clarifying the meaning of the quoted text.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L31

Cairo, 27 January 1937.

Dear Sir

I have just received your letter of 7 January, and I thank you for your kind offer to contribute to an issue on Tantrism; I think it would indeed be very interesting. The main difficulty with this project seems to me to be finding a way to define the scope of what should and should not be considered Tantric; this question is much more complicated than is generally assumed in the West! In any case, I also think that this is not a "late" development, unless we understand this word in the sense that it is specific to the "Kali Yuga", which would still push its origins back quite far... --In any case, it is above all the way in which one could formulate a kind of general definition of Tantrism that seems rather embarrassing to me; would you mind telling me what you think about it?

Thank you also for the passage from Stzgowski, which is indeed interesting; I shall try to find an opportunity to quote it. It seems that these people are compelled, as if against their will, to recognise certain truths, without, of course, being fully aware of their significance; this is nevertheless a rather remarkable "symptom"...

What you explain to me about anattâ seems much more "normal" than the usual interpretation, which raises endless difficulties and even contradictions. -- Should we conclude that Buddhism, at least in its Hīnayāna form, subsequently became much more heterodox than it was originally? And if so, when and how did this later deviation come about?

The note you sent me can, as I thought, be included after your article in the February issue.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L32

Cairo, 15 February 1937.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me "The Indian Doctrine of Man's Last End", which I have just received. Is this an article that appeared in a journal? As there is no indication of this, I think it must be a lecture. No doubt you will tell me in your next letter. In any case, the similarity between the ideas of "deification" in the Hindu and Christian traditions is explained very clearly and seems to leave no room for misunderstanding.

At the same time, I also received the issue of The American Review containing your article on "The use of art", with a letter from Mr Geoffrey Stone. This review, which I was not familiar with until now, seems to be oriented in a fairly clearly "traditionalist" direction, at least, and it seems to me, based on various allusions in several articles, that the tendency must be mainly Catholic; is that correct? I would be grateful if you could tell me a little more about it, so that I can better understand what it is exactly.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L33

Cairo, 28 March 1937.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 5 March, as well as for the series of broadcasts that I also received yesterday, in which I found your lectures published as articles in the American Review. Thank you also in advance for sending Asia.

Last week, I also received Mr Graham Carey's pamphlet, The Majority Report on Art, which I will of course mention in my forthcoming reviews. I am pleased to note that your views on art seem to be gaining ground...

I agree with you on Fascism and other similar regimes today, which seem to oppose "democracy" but are, in essence, equally devoid of true principles.

Thank you very much for continuing to promote my books whenever you have the opportunity.

I will pass on to Mr Préau the details of the German publications on Tantrism, which he will no doubt be able to use (unfortunately, I do not know German myself). I will also mention Mircea Eliade's book to him; I am not familiar with it and have not seen it mentioned anywhere before, but I have heard favourable things about the author.

The question of "Shamanism" has never seemed very clear to me; I even

the impression that this name is often given to very different things, brought together more or less artificially under the same label; basically, what exactly is meant by this, and what is the original meaning of the word? Some people also want to equate "Shamanism" with "Sabéism", but the meaning of the latter term is not much clearer, especially since it is attributed multiple etymologies...

We would be very grateful if you could provide us with an article on the symbolism of the arrow and the sword or sabre; what you say about it in your letter and in the card you enclosed is very interesting, and it seems that the subject of symbolic weapons is almost inexhaustible. Curiously, the "wooden sword" is also found in Islamic ritual: it is held in the hand of the person who pronounces the Friday "Khotbah" and is regarded as representing the power of speech (a similar meaning is also given to the sword in Freemasonry). I have heard that, until very recently, there were companies of archers in certain regions of France (especially in the north) who had a kind of initiation ceremony, but I have never been able to obtain any definite information about the nature of the symbolism they used. It is likely that it was not unrelated to what is found elsewhere...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L34

Cairo, 8 April 1937

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your article "Symbolism of the Sword", which I received this morning. I see that the content of the note you sent me previously on this subject is incorporated into it; the question I asked you about this is therefore no longer relevant. -- I wonder whether it would be better to translate "sword" here as "épée" or "sabre", as the word has both meanings in English, as indeed does "sîf" in Arabic; it depends on the exact form of the weapon in question; would you be so kind as to give me some guidance on this?

The other article you have in mind, on the symbolism of "archery" (I cannot remember the equivalent French word at the moment), will surely be very interesting too. Regarding what I wrote to you the other day, I have since remembered that it was Clémenceau who, during one of his terms in office, dissolved the last remaining archery companies in France, which he criticised for being "secretive"; this is therefore a very recent development.

Thank you also for sending me your article on "Parâvritti", which I received a few days ago; it touches somewhat on the question of "Tantric" symbolism that we discussed. -- On this subject, it seems that we should definitely stick with the idea of Tantrism for the special issue of "E. T.", which will be the August-September issue as usual: I would therefore like to remind you of the article you kindly promised us in this case, although it is not yet entirely urgent... The most troublesome issue at present for the success of this project is that Mr Préau says he is having difficulty finding a Tantric text that is both

interesting and "translatable"; if you could suggest any ideas, it would be a great help to us! -- Thank you in advance for all this.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L35

Cairo, 6 May 1937.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your two letters dated 19 and 22 April, as well as the brochure on Shamanism; thank you very much. I will of course return the brochure as you requested; I only hope that it is not too urgent, as I will no doubt have a few things to note down, and I may even find some ideas in it that I can use for an article.

The disadvantage of broadening the meaning of the word "shamanism" is that, for many people, it is almost synonymous with "witchcraft". This assimilation is undoubtedly unjustified, and there is more to shamanism itself than that; one might wonder, however, whether, in its current state, it does not represent a certain degeneration, and whether rites such as those you mention have retained their original significance. It often happens, in fact, that vestiges of very ancient traditions can be more or less distorted; in the case of certain African peoples, for example, this seems beyond doubt. I will naturally think about all this some more...

Another question that is also quite enigmatic is that of Tibetan Bön; some people want to equate it more or less with shamanism, but what do we really know about it? Everything I have seen on the subject gives only rather vague indications.

Thank you in advance for "The Secret of Ana'l-Haqq" that you mentioned, but which I have not yet received; should I return it to you as well?

According to your explanation, the word "épée" is indeed the correct translation for "sword" in your article.

I will pass on your suggestion about "Kâma-Kâla-Vilâsa" to Mr Préau.

The issue on Tantrism has now been finalised, so we are counting on the article you kindly promised us. As for me, I do not yet know exactly what subject I will cover; as I am always busy with urgent matters, I have not had time to think about it much so far... Finalising an Italian translation of "Man and His Becoming" has been very difficult for me lately, but at last it is almost finished now. On the other hand, Chacornac would like me to send him the completed text of The King of the World without delay, for the reissue he plans to publish before the end of this year, and I have not yet been able to start working on it...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L36

Cairo, 23 May 1937.

Dear Sir

I received your two letters dated 30 April and 4 May at the same time, and I thank you very much for them. Your article for the special issue is very good as it is; the subject could certainly be developed further, but what you have said is essentially the most important points and contains everything necessary to correct the biased or tendentious interpretations that are widespread in the West. I will ask if it will be possible to send you a proof, but I fear that we will not be able to get one in time for that. Chacornac tells me that now, with the application of the new labour laws, we can no longer get anything from the printers, and that the May issue will be delayed. In any case, as there is still time before the special issue goes to press, it might be best, if the translation is ready early enough, to send it to you before printing, as we have done for other articles. -- Of course, I will insert the two additions enclosed with your second letter in their place.

Thank you also for your note on Saint Bernard; we can easily publish it as a separate short article.

I also received "The Secret of Ana'l-Haqq" that you mentioned; without having read it entirely yet, I can see that there are some very interesting things in it; it is just a pity that the expression is often rather flawed, and also that the Arabic quotations are transcribed in a way that disfigures them terribly...

Your article on "Folklore and Popular Art" also arrived safely last week. Is the author of the note entitled "The Illuministic Sufis", which precedes yours on the Vîna, not a Syrian Christian? In any case, he seems to accept entirely the historical views of Westerners, which are clearly opposed to traditional data.

I will ask Chacornac to find "Cumaea Gates", whose subject seems very interesting (if it is not treated in a purely "literary" manner); perhaps we will have more luck this time than with some of the other books you previously mentioned to me...

The stories of Mrs. Bailey, which I have been following for some time now, seem very strange to me; I wonder what exactly lies behind them, perhaps without her knowledge, and what her so-called "Tibetan Master" might be; all this does not inspire confidence in me!

I am returning the brochure on Shamanism, having used some of the information for one of my articles in June, as you will see. What I say at the end of this article refers to the story of the "seven towers of the Devil", which I have already mentioned in relation to W. Seabrook's book on Arabia; this is another of those questions on which it is very difficult to express oneself fully...

Once again, thank you very much for everything, and please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L37

Cairo, 4 July 1937.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter received the day before yesterday, and also for the way you quote me at the

beginning of your article on "The Vedic Doctrine of Silence".

The "Kitâb Dawâ El Arwah" is very interesting; unfortunately, the English translation is rather flawed. The author must have realised this himself, since he describes it as "somewhat tentative"; and it must be acknowledged that it is very difficult to render into a European language; but, above all, it requires a "key" that is inevitably lacking in anyone who is not a "mutaçawwuf"... I do not know Mr. Arberry otherwise; could you tell me who he is?

I had previously received the collection of lectures "What use is Art anyway", sent by the publisher; it arrived just in time for me to mention it in my reviews in the July issue of "E. T. ." -- The June issue should contain your article on "folklore and popular art"; I say "should" because I haven't seen it yet; apparently the printing was very late, and there were even fears that this time it would not be ready before the end of the month...

As for the issue on Tantrism (August-September), as I suspected, it will unfortunately not be possible to send you the proofs of your article; but I have asked that at least the translation be sent to you before it goes to press, if it can be ready in time; I hope that things can be arranged in this way for the best.

Are you going to leave Boston for the summer as you did last year? I believe you had already left by this time last year. As for me, I will probably not be away this year; we have just moved completely out of the city, to a place where there is no noise, but where communications are nevertheless easy. I apologise for writing this letter in the midst of the chaos of a move that is not yet complete...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L38

Cairo, 10 August 1937.

Dear Sir.

Mr. Lénnard writes to me that he has sent the manuscript of his translation of "Theosophism", which is now complete, to Harcourt Brace and Co. in New York, which you kindly suggested to him as a possible publisher; he must also have written to you about this. I would be very grateful for any support you could give us with this publisher, as it is all the more desirable that this venture should succeed because, for reasons you are aware of, it is hardly possible to publish this book in England. For my other works (as there are several currently being translated), there are no such difficulties, and it is still too early to concern ourselves with them, since publishers generally want to see a complete translation before giving an answer...

On the other hand, I am pleased to learn that you think you can find several subscribers for Mr. Charbonneau-Lassay's work. In this regard, I would like to make a request: please send the subscriptions to Chacornac, as the significant discount he will receive will benefit the magazine, which needs it more than ever due to the enormous increases in the cost of paper and printing in France in recent times.

printing in France. Thank you in advance for all this!

Mr Préau tells me that he is currently working on the translation of your article for the issue on Tantrism, and I think he will no doubt write to you in the near future. Unfortunately, it is likely that this issue will be published with a considerable delay, as Chacornac informs me that the printing press will be closed for 20 days for the holidays; this is something we have never seen before!

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L39

Cairo, 21 September 1937.

Dear Sir,

I apologise for my unintentional delay in replying to your recent letters: since I wrote to you, I have suffered such severe rheumatic pain that I have been completely immobilised for nearly a month; and, although I am much better now, I still feel a certain fatigue that will only gradually disappear... Naturally, this has put me so far behind in all my work that I am not sure how I will ever catch up; I had to start by working on my articles for October, and I managed to send them off on time, but it was not without difficulty!

The first time I was able to go to the post office, I found your letters of 27 July and 9 August, as well as the one containing the notes to be added to your articles, the American Review, the Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, your article on The Vedic Doctrine of Silence, and Ancient Indian Coins; I thank you very much for everything.

These symbols appearing on ancient coins are indeed very interesting and deserve to be studied closely; approximately when do they date back to? The last one on page 9 is reminiscent of the one you told me about some time ago, and it is also clearly related to the swastika and the double spiral. There are certainly connections between all these symbols, which I have long intended to write about; perhaps one day I will get round to it... -- I am very interested in what you propose to do on the question of the "7 rays of the Sun"; what intrigues me about the figures shown here is that most of them have only 6 rays, and that, although the first one does have 7, one of them differs from the others in that it does not end in a "Trishûla" . How can this be explained? -- I also notice, on the same page, a figure (the eighth) that is exactly similar to one of the forms of the Christian symbol of the "Signaculum Domini" studied by Mr. Charbonneau-Lassay.

As for Mr. Arberry's article, it is indeed the text itself that is most interesting; I even thought that, if I had the time, I might try to make a more accurate translation... and above all one that is more in keeping with the spirit of the text itself.

Thank you for informing me of the publication of "Cultural Heritage of India"; I have asked Chacornac to request a review copy, and I hope to receive it that way. What you say about it is very satisfying indeed, for it was to be feared that "modernist" tendencies would predominate in it; but, according to what I was told some time ago, it seems that in the Ramakrishna Mission

itself there is a certain movement back towards Tradition; do you know to what extent this is true?

Mr. Préau wrote to me that he had sent you his translation of your article; I hope you will receive it in time for your comments to reach him before he has the proofs to correct; I believe, moreover, that these will be somewhat delayed, as the printing press was closed for a fortnight last month.

I see that your work on "reincarnation" will take much longer than I thought, as I believed it was simply a short article. I hope you will be able to finish the entire volume you are planning without too much delay, as it will certainly be very useful in correcting many misconceptions...

- This reminds me of Mrs. Rhys Davids: I recently learned that she is very interested in "psychism", not to say spiritualism; this surely explains many strange things that I had noticed for a long time in her writings!

I note your suggestion to write something about the real position of Islamic doctrine on the question of avatars; the opposition is only apparent and is much more in form than in substance; but I must say that this is one of those subjects I am very hesitant to tackle, not only because it is difficult to explain accurately and in a way that can be easily understood, but also because it is likely to provoke particularly hostile reactions from various quarters (and especially, of course, from the Christian side).

I must tell you about a letter I received last week from Mrs. (or Miss?) Dorothy Norman, who writes to me on your behalf, she says, and outlines her plan for a magazine she wants to start, asking me if I would be willing to contribute. If you have the opportunity, would you be so kind as to let her know that I have just been ill and that, because of this, I will probably be a little late in replying to her? This is true, but I would also like to hear your thoughts on this project before I reply, as it seems rather 'confused' from her description and its focus is not entirely clear... She says that you have already agreed to contribute to a special issue on symbolism; perhaps I could also contribute something, at least for this occasion, provided there is enough time for me to work on it and, of course, on condition that I am given complete freedom as to how I approach the subject. Among other things, I am a little concerned that this journal may have a fairly pronounced political slant, although I am not entirely sure which way it leans... You would be doing me a great service if you could give me some details about all this; I must admit that I always find it a little worrying to agree to contribute to a magazine that has not yet begun publication; but it goes without saying that, in this case, it is above all what you tell me that will determine my response.

I think you may already be back in Boston by now; hopefully you will be able to carry out your plan to move out of the city, especially since it must be much more hectic and tiring there than in Cairo... As for us, we plan to build a small house on a plot of land we own, very close to where we now live, as soon as

we have sufficient funds to undertake the construction; it is so much more pleasant to truly be "at home"!

Please accept, dear sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L40

Cairo, 23 October 1937.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 5 October, and I thank you for your kind wishes for my recovery. I continue to get better and better, but I still feel a certain fatigue, especially when I sit for too long to write, which prevents me from making as much progress as I would like with all my backlogged work...

Harcourt Bruce's refusal is unfortunate, as neither I nor Mr Lennard believe that any English publisher will dare to publish this book. In any case, I will pass on what you have told me to Mr. Lennard (who is now in Santiniketan, as you may know), and if he thinks it would be better to try another American publisher, I would be very grateful for anything you can do in this regard.

Thank you for the information concerning Mrs. Dorothy Norman and her magazine project; I will reply to her, based on this and for the reasons you mention, agreeing in principle, but, of course, without committing myself to regular collaboration, for which I would probably not be able to find the time. It is quite certain that, apart from a journal of a very special nature, it would be difficult to find one whose spirit and tendencies correspond exactly to what we might wish for...

I have just received the issue of "E. T." on Tantrism; it was very late, mainly due to the negligence of the printers, from whom it is becoming increasingly difficult to get what one wants, but at least it looks quite satisfactory. Do you have any addresses of people who might be interested in receiving it?

Your explanation of the seven rays seems entirely satisfactory to me; in short, the symbol is thus equivalent to (see figure) when considered as representing a septenary, counting the centre; moreover, wherever there is mention of the "seven" directions of space, the seventh (or first) is also the centre. Regarding the shape of the rays, there is also another rather remarkable feature in medieval depictions of the sun, where the rays are of two kinds, alternately straight and wavy (this was pointed out to me by Mr. Charbonneau-Lassay); it seems to me that this duality can be understood as that of light and heat, but it is possible that it has other meanings as well.

Regarding mâtrâ and "matter", you are undoubtedly correct if we stick to the etymological meaning of the latter word; but if we do not want to risk any misunderstandings, are we not also obliged to take into account everything that modern physicists and others have accumulated in this concept of "matter", which completely changes its meaning?

ambiguity, are we not also obliged to take into account everything that modern physicists and others have accumulated in this notion of "matter" and which completely changes its meaning? I do not see that everything that is "measurable", that is to say, in short, everything that belongs to the domain of quantity (more precisely, of continuous quantity), is necessarily "matter" in the modern sense of the word; it is this latter sense, of course, that has no equivalent in any traditional doctrine, nor even in ancient philosophy. I must also say that I find the use of the words "matter" and "form" in scholastic language very troublesome, for neither has its current meaning there, and this results in frequent confusion; the translation of mâtrâ as "matter" seems to me to have the same disadvantage.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L41

Cairo, 19 December 1937.

Dear Sir,

I am truly embarrassed to have taken so long to reply to your three letters (and I have just received a fourth, dated 30 November), and to thank you for the items you mentioned sending me, which I have now received. The one containing "White Sahibs in India" was, in fact, very late, so much so that I began to wonder if it had been intercepted en route; but in the end it arrived too... -- I have also just received the three volumes of "The Cultural Heritage of India", which I had requested on your recommendation.

My health has not yet allowed me to catch up on all my backlogged work; however, my pain continues to slowly subside, and it is only recently that I have finally been able to sit for most of the day without too much discomfort; I therefore hope you will excuse me for not having replied to you sooner.

You will find my review of The Higher Learning in America in the January issue of E. T. The author's attitude is remarkable for an academic; do you think his ideas have any chance of being accepted?

I read with interest your review of P. Mus's work, in which you pointed out several particularly important points.

Mr. Préau told me some time ago that he had sent you his translation of your article on the "symbolism of the sword"; I hope you will have time to examine it and send him your comments so that the article can appear in the January issue.

Returning to White Sahibs in India, it is quite certain that the publisher who has published such a book will not be able to raise objections to "Theosophism" of the kind we fear. I therefore agree with you that it would be a good idea to propose this to him, and I will mention it to Mr Lennard the next time I write to him. It is true that in England, as in France for that matter, one can publish anything; but in fact, most publishers are easily intimidated; in France there are some who would not dare to publish any book of mine, and there are even bookshops that have been prevented, by threats, from selling my

books or take them on consignment! -- As for Luzac, Mr Lennard reminded me that he had already approached him at the beginning, which I had completely forgotten; he had even taken care to point out to him that this work was not suitable for Rider, who had already published Man and His Becoming, but whose clientele was largely Theosophists; however, Luzac replied not only negatively on his own behalf, but also advised him to contact Rider!

As for the "7th ray", I see that we are in complete agreement; as for the question of straight and wavy rays, I wonder if the respective correspondence with fire and water, as you indicate, can really apply in all cases, firstly because there is also the symbol of the "flaming sword", whose shape is identical to that of the wavy ray, and yet which relates to fire. Furthermore, the two shapes seem to correspond exactly to two Hebrew roots: ar, meaning straight movement and fire as light; ash, meaning curved movement and fire as heat. I would be grateful if you could tell me what you think about these different relationships. It is nonetheless true, of course, that the wavy line is also used to represent water, as in Egyptian hieroglyphics and the astrological sign of Aquarius: ♒

Your drawing of the "solar spider" is very curious; I wonder if the two snakes that accompany it might have some connection with those attached to the winged disc of the Egyptians, although their arrangement is quite different...

As for the use of the word "matter", I believe that, all in all, it is an example of the ambiguities that can arise from the imprecision of Western languages, and that it is best to avoid it as much as possible, although this is certainly not always easy (scholastic terminology itself has not succeeded in all cases, and has notably created terrible confusion between "essence" and "substance"). The most unfortunate thing is that, when using words, we cannot always dispense with taking into account everything that has been added to their original meaning; this is especially true of the word "matter"; strangely enough, "materials", which is directly derived from it, does not seem to me to raise the same objections, perhaps because it has not been "manipulated" by philosophers or physicists...

I almost forgot to tell you that an English translation of "Orient and Occident" is currently underway, as well as that of "The Crisis of the Modern World", but they are not very far along yet. Based on what you say, I wonder if it might not be better to publish these two books in America, if they can find enough readers there.

I replied to Mrs. Norman's letter some time ago, but I have not heard from her since; you mention an article which, if I understand correctly, you have already given her for her magazine; is this project to be realised in the near future?

Thank you for your comments on my recent articles; to translate srishti, I would prefer to use "production" (in English, one could also say "sending forth"); I am well aware that it is almost impossible to avoid any inaccurate spatial imagery, but at least this way we can avoid the suspicious philosophical associations of "emanation" (I do not have enough precise data on

the use of this word by Saint Thomas to be able to say anything definite about it). -- Eckhart's distinction between "separate" and "united" creatures reminds me of something in Kabbalah, but I can't quite put my finger on it at the moment... --For praja, it seems to me that "offspring" is a fairly accurate equivalent in English; it is more difficult to find something entirely satisfactory in French.

As for the cave, I think we are in complete agreement; you will see more on this subject in my subsequent articles. -- I know of only one initiation ritual where the opening of the cave is in the vault: that of the 14th degree of Scottish Masonry (Grand Scottish of the Sacred Vault); moreover, in these high degrees there are many elements of very diverse origin that are often difficult to determine...

As for the text of the "Matherantî", there is only one apparent exception to the necessity of initiation, and that refers to abnormal conditions; but the difficulty lies in finding a way to explain this clearly; I have been preoccupied with this for a long time, because of an article that we would like to reproduce, but which touches on this question and to which we would have to add a note providing sufficient clarification so that there is no risk of it being misunderstood.

I hope I have not forgotten anything important, but there was so much to cover this time that I am not entirely sure...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards, along with my best wishes for the new year that is about to begin.

R. G.

L42

Cairo, 9 January 1938.

Dear Sir

A few days ago, I received the first issue of Twice a Year; I haven't had time to read it yet, especially since it's quite a thick volume... -- For my part, as I told you, I sent Mrs. Norman the translation of the chapter "Individualism," removing only the words that refer to various places in the previous chapters of the book. I sent it to the address I had noted when I received Mrs Norman's letter (1160 Park Avenue), but then I realised that the magazine has a different address. However, I hope this will not cause any problems, especially as it was sent by registered post.

Mr. R. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, from Tinnevilly, wrote to me on your behalf, sending me two volumes of his work. Naturally, I will review them as soon as I have had a chance to read them, and, as he requested, I will send him the issue of "E.
T." in which this review will appear.

With my best wishes for the new year that has just begun, please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L43

Cairo, 24 January 1938.

Dear Sir

Mr Lings, who is translating "East and West", writes to me that he has sent a copy, with the first part of the translation, to Messrs Luzac and Co., and that "They replied that they could not undertake the cost of publication themselves, but they thought that the book "should have a fairly good sale" and that they would be very pleased "to do their best for it" if I would pay for the printing. However, he cannot cover the costs of this edition himself, but one of his friends would be willing to take care of it, not only for this book, but also for "The Crisis of the Modern World". I would be happy to know what you think of this solution; still thinking about what you wrote to me some time ago, it does not seem to me that this would prevent these books from being distributed in America; but there is something else to consider. In France, when a publisher has not covered the costs of publishing a work, it loses all interest in it, and, moreover, books published under these conditions are completely disregarded by booksellers. I hope that this is not the case in England, but it would be important to be clear on this point; do you have any information in this regard? Otherwise, I don't know anyone who could give me any information...

I recently received a new book (published by Luzac) by Mrs. Rhys-Davids, "To become or not to become"; naturally, it is still about the meaning of the word "bhava"; I have not yet had time to read it, but after everything I have already seen of her work, I have a pretty good idea of what her views on the subject might be...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L44

Cairo, 31 January 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 9 January and your card of 11 January, which I have just received.

The British Museum manual has not yet reached me, but I hope that this is simply a delay, as on previous occasions, and I thank you in advance.

On the question of the "rays", we are in complete agreement: there is no doubt that the straight rays represent light; as for the wavy rays, representing fire or water, or both, we could, given the opposition between these two elements, fire and water, see this as another case of the "double meaning" of symbols. I will be very interested in what you have to say about the symbolism of the "flaming sword".

The question of exceptional individuals finding themselves in an environment where there is no longer any initiation is indeed rather embarrassing in some respects; in some cases at least, this situation may be remedied by equally exceptional circumstances; but the truth is that this does not fall within the jurisdiction of the "Qutb", but rather within that represented by the function of El-Khidr, as master of the "Afrads".

As for "emanation", the texts of St Thomas that you refer to do indeed seem to be open to interpretation in the sense that you suggest. One thing that surprises me somewhat, given that St Thomas spoke of "emanation" in this way, is the general aversion of Catholic theologians to this word, which seems to inspire them with almost terror...

I was not aware of the meaning of "relinquere" that you point out to me. It is certain that the same word cannot always be translated in a uniform manner, for there is never a perfect equivalence between terms in two different languages. I simply think that we should avoid as much as possible words which, even if their original meaning raises no objection, have taken on a special meaning through their use by Western philosophers, from which it has become almost impossible to separate them.

What you tell me about the question of 'education' in America is nevertheless a fairly favourable sign, and I admit that I would not have expected it; perhaps there is less 'official' routine in the universities there than in Europe; but the association of these views with fascist tendencies is not very easy to explain... On the other hand, I have just received the Christian Social Art Quarterly, with Mr Graham Carey's lecture; this movement undertaken by nuns has also surprised me somewhat...

Thank you for your suggestion to first give Mrs. Norman the translation of a chapter from The Crisis of the Modern World. Which one do you think would be most suitable? Only three chapters have been translated so far.

Now that your article on the symbolism of the sword has been published, may I remind you that you kindly promised us one on archery?

I am being urged to arrange for the reissue of The King of the World, and I still can't find the time to do it!

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L45

Cairo, 6 February 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me "The Nature of Buddhist Art", which I have just received along with your card dated 18 January. I see that you have rightly referred to, among other things, the question of "archery" which I mentioned in my last letter; I hope you will be able to give us an article on this subject soon.

This year's special issue of "E. T." (August-September) will most likely be devoted to Islamic tradition; in this regard, I have another request to make of you: could you provide us with your article on El-Khidr for this issue, adding certain considerations which, as you told me, would not have been appropriate for the journal in which it was originally published, but which would be entirely appropriate for "E. T. "? If this were possible, I would be all the more pleased as there have been calls from various quarters for some time now for something

something on this subject, but for many reasons I would prefer it to be dealt with by someone other than myself...

I have been asked a question that I am unable to answer: are Oxford University Press and Clarendon Press two separate companies, or are they one and the same company under two different names? Perhaps you could enlighten me on this point...

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L46

Cairo, 17 February 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me your article on "Janaka and Yâjnavalkya", which I received last week.

Today I received your letter dated 26 January, to which I would like to reply immediately. I will ask "Geticus" for more detailed information at the next opportunity, but without wishing to be too assertive, I believe there is a very simple explanation and that it is in fact nothing more than a noble title, comes, which should be translated here as count. It remains to be seen what the "Siculi" might be; it is highly unlikely that it refers to Sicily (which was a kingdom and not a county); the name "Szekler" that you mention, which I was not familiar with, seems to me to make much more sense; it is on this point in particular that I will try to obtain clarification.

In this regard, the double meaning of the word comes has been used in the names or titles taken by certain figures who played a role in initiatory organisations. Thus, the name "Comte de Saint-Germain", which is probably a collective "hieronym", should be translated as "companion of the Holy Brotherhood". I also remember an interrogation of Cagliostro, where, when asked about his title of count, he replied in an apparently enigmatic way, but the meaning was clear that this title had nothing to do with those of the secular nobility. However, in the case you mention, I think that this is not the case, and that it is simply a noble title with no meaning whatsoever.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L47

Cairo, 26 February 1938.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your two letters dated 7 and 8 February, as well as your article from The Hindu. First of all, I would like to thank you very much for kindly writing to Luzac immediately, which will certainly make them take the matter seriously. What you tell me is very reassuring, and I will pass it on to Mr Lings. It was he, not I, who contacted Luzac; I am not in a position to intervene directly, as according to the contracts, the French publisher alone has the right to negotiate translations. -- Furthermore,

I have just received a letter from Mr. John Levy, Mr. Lings' friend, confirming what Mr. Lings had told me about his intention to cover the publishing costs; I therefore believe that everything will work out for the best.

I have just read your article, which I find very good; I admire your ability to present this subject in such a way, because I must admit that I am completely incapable of presenting things in a way that is sufficiently accessible to the "general public" (which is why I find it so difficult to write in non-"specialised" journals); and I really cannot see what could be changed or added. I still have not heard from Mrs Norman since I wrote to her.

What Mrs. Rhys Davids wrote to you does not surprise me much, as her references to her "psychic" experiences are quite clear; but it seems that this even extends to vulgar spiritualism; it is truly unfortunate to see so many people allowing themselves to be taken in by such illusions!

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L48

Cairo, 11 March 1938.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I received your two letters dated 17 and 21 February. Thank you for kindly sending the manuscript of Theosophism to another publisher; let us hope that the outcome will be more favourable this time! Mr Lennard wrote to me recently saying that, based on what I had told him, he would submit it to Martin Secker, but of course we must now wait for a response from the other party first. -- As for the other volumes, I have informed Mr. Levy of what you told me about the Luzac edition; I have not yet heard anything further since then.

I take note of what you say about the chapter on "The Crisis of the Modern World" that could be given to Mrs. Norman; only four chapters have been translated so far, but Mr. Osborne seems to be making fairly rapid progress.

As for your article on Vedanta, it is understood that, as you requested, I will only mention it once it has been published in The American Scholar.

Did I mention that I never received the British Museum handbook that you said you would send me some time ago?

Thank you for thinking about future articles for the E. T. Of course, I know only too well from my own experience that it is often impossible to get something done by a specific date. As for the article on El-Khidr, I hope that, despite everything you have told me, you will decide to give it to us anyway. it goes without saying, moreover, that it is not a question of dealing with the subject in a comprehensive manner, which is quite impossible. I will try to see what suggestions I can make to you on certain points; naturally, it will be quite unnecessary to mention that they come from me...

What you tell me about Clarendon Press confirms what we thought; I see that the name was still used for Miss Getty's book. Regarding your review of it, I have always thought that there is

some connection to be made between the form of Ganesh and that of Kuvera; how do you think this connection could be explained, which would seem to indicate a closer link than the general "Shivaite" character common to both?

As for the "World Tree", inverted only under the Sun, this seems normal to me, and I would be happy to hear the results of your research on this subject. I think you must also have noticed the frequent representation of the sun itself as the fruit of the Tree; certain Chinese characters in particular give a very clear meaning in this regard.

I do not think we can say that the Earthly Paradise is strictly "supra-cosmic", since it is in any case below the Heavens; its summit "touches the lunar sphere", as St Augustine, among others, says; but if we say that it is virtually 'supra-cosmic', meaning that the being who has reached this summit (which is at the same time the 'centre' of the human condition) is now removed from changes of state and can from there pass 'beyond the cosmos' by the direct and 'axial' route, this is indeed perfectly accurate.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

L49

Cairo, 30 March 1938.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of 3 March last week and was very sorry to hear of Houghton Mifflin's negative response. I am very grateful to you for agreeing to try another publisher. If that is unsuccessful, we could undoubtedly approach Martin Secker.

I have just received Geticus' reply regarding the Siculi, which I was waiting for before writing to you. Here it is: "Of course, they are not Sicilians, but a tribe from Transylvania, of Hungarian descent, known as Sacui in Romanian, Szekely in Hungarian, and Szekler in German. They inhabit two eastern counties (former counties) of Transylvania (Odorhei and Trei-Scaou), on the border with Moldavia. They are said to be older than the Hungarians, being the remnants of the Huns, while the other Hungarians only came to Europe with Arpad in the 9th century. It seems to me that this clarifies the matter completely. At the same time, he entrusts me with a task that bothers me a little, but which I must nevertheless carry out: he has formed a small study group with a few friends, but they find themselves very isolated and in an unfavourable environment; they cannot obtain any of your works (sending money abroad is prohibited, as in Germany). I know that, like me (there are some people who have found this difficult to understand), you do not have your own books; but if you could at least send them some of your articles that have been reprinted and of which you still have copies, they would certainly be very happy. I apologise for sending you this request, and I thank you in advance for whatever you can do... The address of "Geticus" is:

Mrs. Vasile Lovinescu,

6, Str. Avram Iancu,

Bucharest (4°)

I also received the brochure you sent me about the Canadian mystic nun a few days ago. When I encounter cases like this, I always ask myself the same question: to what degree can these things actually correspond to real knowledge? With the mode of expression used by mystics, it is certainly very difficult to tell. On the other hand, their attitude of "passivity" always strikes me as something very dangerous...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

Mr. Préau told me that you sent him a note on "The Milky Way"; please do not forget the "E. T."

L50

Cairo, 9 April 1938.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 24 March, and I thank you very much for your article, which is indeed perfectly suited to the "E. T.". I do not think it necessary to mention that it has already appeared elsewhere; however, if you think this might be a problem, please be so kind as to let me know.

Regarding the book "Lost Atlantis", when I saw the less detailed note you sent me previously, I already thought it might be interesting to review it in "E. T. "; so I wanted to ask Chacornac to do so, but he has just informed me that he cannot find the address of the publisher Cobden-Sanderson anywhere; if you know it, would you be so kind as to let me have it? Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L51

Cairo, 28 April 1938.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of 7 April the day before yesterday, and at the same time I received the British Museum publication "The Babylonian Legends of the Creation"; thank you for writing again to have it sent to me. -- Regarding the solar symbol, a question: the shape of the wavy rays is indeed, as you told me, the one generally used to represent water; there is, in this respect, a difference to note with the representations of the Western Middle Ages, where these rays end in points as well as the straight rays with which they alternate, that is to say, their shape is exactly that of the flaming sword. I also see other curious symbols here, but unfortunately they do not all seem easy to interpret; the Chaldean tradition is, in essence, almost as enigmatic as the Egyptian tradition, although certain similarities with the Hebrew tradition may nevertheless shed some light on certain points...

It was indeed the shape of Ganesh's belly that I had in mind when I spoke of a connection with Kuvera, and consequently with the Yakshas. As for the question of head changes, I admit that I had not considered what you point out; no doubt this would also apply in the case of Daksha. But there is one point that is not entirely clear to me: the new head is of a different kind from the old one, which makes a difference to the sacrificial rite; how can this be interpreted?

I am pleased that you agree with what I have written about the cave; it is certainly one of those questions that can never be dealt with exhaustively; I will consider a few other points relating to it in the next two or three articles; when I started, I did not think it would take on such proportions, and I must say that your comments have had something to do with it.... Regarding the stupa as both a dwelling and a tomb, this same dual meaning is given in Christian churches to the tabernacle placed on the altar, but I do not know if it has ever been extended to the entire church, which in any case would seem logically justified.

The word "dîkshâ" is certainly the one that corresponds exactly to "initiation" in the strictest sense; as for "upanayana", I have often asked myself the same question as you in this regard: it seems to me that, because of the exclusion of the Shudras, as you say, we can also speak of initiation in this case, in a broader sense, but it would certainly be preferable to use two distinct terms; The difficulty in finding another term here is that, in short, upanayana has no equivalent, even approximate, in traditional Western forms...

I have your article on El-Khidr in front of me so that I don't forget it, and I will write to you again shortly on this subject; time is passing so quickly that we will soon have to start thinking about preparing this special issue!

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L52

Cairo, 12 May 1938.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 25 April, along with your note indicating the deletion to be made in your article. I am forwarding this information to Mr Préau, who, according to what he told me in his last letter, must have already translated the article by now. I believe he will send you his translation as usual.

Thank you for Cobden-Sanderson's address; I am sending it to Chacornac so that he can request "Lost Atlantis" this time; even if this work is not very important, it will certainly always be possible to say something about it.

I am also sending Mr Préau the reference for the Journal Asiatique, in case he has an opportunity to see it, as it is naturally impossible for me to do so here; but since he lives far from Paris, he is almost as disadvantaged as I am in this respect...

Regarding Ganêsha, I tried to request Miss Getty's book; Clarendon Press responded with a refusal, as usual, on the pretext that there were

no more copies available for the press service.

In replying to your last letter, I must have forgotten to tell you that I mentioned in Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power the relationship between Ganesh and Skanda to which you alluded.

From your question about the manuscript of Theosophism, I gather that there is little hope of finding an American publisher; if this is the case, the best course of action would probably be, as we said, to approach Martin Secker and Warbury. I hear that they have published works of a rather mixed character, including those of D. H. Lawrence, which I was not aware of until now; but then this is the case with most publishers, so one cannot be too choosy in this respect... -- It has been quite some time since I heard from Mr. Lennard, but I believe his address is still the one he last gave me, which is as follows: Hazrat Shaheedullah Sahib, c/o Major Said Ahmad Hasheni, Sadiq Garh Palace, Dera Nawab, Bahawalgwr State (India) (do not put any other name on the address).

However, I wonder if it would be less complicated to send the manuscript directly to Martin Secker and Warburg, provided, of course, that Mr Lennard writes to them first. What do you think?

As soon as I have finished my work for the June issue of E. T., which will be in about a week, I hope to be able to write to you again about El Khidr.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards. R. G.

L53

Cairo, 1 June 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letters of 5, 10 and 13 May, which have just arrived all at once. Thank you also for kindly sending books and articles to Mr Lovinescu, who will surely be very happy to receive them.

I gave you Mr Lennard's current address in one of my recent letters, so I regret that you have already sent the manuscript of "Théosophisme" to London, but it is true that his parents and younger brother are still there, so there is little fear that the parcel will be lost.

All the points you mention in connection with the exit from the cave are still very interesting; perhaps I will be able to use this additional information. What you tell me about the "Kiva" of the American Indians was unknown to me, for I must confess that I have never had the opportunity to see much of importance concerning their traditions; but I am not surprised that these are in reality much better preserved, even now, than is commonly believed. It would certainly be very desirable for this subject to be covered in the "E. T.", if someone competent could be found to do so; do you have any ideas in this regard? -- I do not fully understand the word "louere"; it seems to me that the meaning must be roughly the same as the French "lucarne", but I am not very sure.

Mojallâna's ascent is also very remarkable: it is evident that it

follows the "axis of the world", which is indeed the "sûtrâtmâ" as it directly connects all states of existence.

As for the wheels marking the Buddha's feet, your interpretation seems entirely correct to me; I would just like to ask you for a clarification on this point: I have always seen the footprints of the two feet depicted side by side; are there examples where one is placed at the top of a ladder and the other at the bottom?

Thank you for clarifying the "solar" nature of the new head with which the sacrificial victim is resurrected. Speaking of severed heads, I am also reminded of Kîtu and Râhu; it does not seem that this can be linked to the same symbolism, unless it is, in a certain sense, an opposite aspect; what do you think?

Your quotation from A. W. Shorter is really typical of a certain mentality; I always wonder what these people get out of their study of antiquities, and also what kind of interest they can possibly find in them under these conditions!

Mr. Préau told me in his last letter that he had sent you his translation of your article on "Pantheism"; it would be desirable for it to reach you early enough for you to have time to send him your comments so that it can appear in the July issue.

I have just been looking at your article on El-Khidr today, and first of all I must say that, contrary to what you thought, I do not find it too long as it is; in fact, this is a special issue covering two months (August-September), which normally has about twice as many pages as a regular issue. On the other hand, it would be interesting to be able to reproduce Figures 1 and 2 as illustrations; do you think this would be possible despite the reduction required by the format of the journal? We would only remove Figure 3 (and, consequently, the reference to it in the text, towards the middle of page 178). --For the title, I think it would be sufficient to use: "Khwâjâ Khadir and the Fountain of Life", without adding the rest, given that it is not the "artistic" aspect of the issue that deserves special attention.

As for the article itself, after further reflection, I find that it would ultimately be difficult to make additions without taking it too far. It would therefore be better to leave it more or less as it is, modifying only those parts that might raise objections or be interpreted in a way that would be at odds with Islamic orthodoxy. I can say that I have carefully examined every word from this point of view, and here are the changes I would like to propose:

P. 173. -- At the beginning: "In India, the Saint and Prophet known", and after "Râjâ Kidâr", add in brackets: "(in Arabic, Seyidnâ El Khidr)".

Note 1: "In accordance with the meaning of his name, from akhdar 'green'."

At the beginning of the second paragraph: (illegible) "... can be inferred, at least partly, from his iconography..."

P. 176. -- At the beginning: "he is the guardian of the Water of Life, and corresponds in this respect to Soma and Gandharva in Vedic mythology, and even to Varuna himself; though it is evident that he cannot, either from the Islamic or from the later Hindu point of view, be properly identified with a 'deity', he is, none the less, the

direct expression or manifestation of a high spiritual power. We shall find these general conclusions amply confirmed by further examination of the Islamic texts concerning al-Khadir."

Line 6, replace "The legend" with "The narration".

Delete note 12, as Bahrain here is simply the combination of bahr, "sea", and (illegible text). The expression Madjina al Bahrain means exactly "meeting of the two seas".

Line 10: "This story can be compared with three others belonging to older traditions, the Gilgamesh epic,..."

Note 13, at the beginning, delete "Islamic legend".

Line 25, delete "in human form".

P. 177. --note 18: "The prophet Elias, who is considered as belonging to the 'spiritual family' of Khizr." (Their identification is, in fact, only an inaccurate interpretation by Orientalists.)

P. 178. At the end of the first paragraph, a reference could be added in a note to my article Quelques aspects du symbolisme du poisson (Some aspects of the symbolism of fish) (February 1936), in which I discussed precisely what is referred to here.

Line 31: "That Andreas here is a distortion of the Indris..."

Line 32: "Whom Islamic Tradition identifies with Enoch and Hermes and considers, like Elyas and also Saint George, as having a close spiritual affinity with al-Khadir."

P. 181. -. At the beginning: "As to the resemblance between al-Khadir and Saint George, it is in this connection..."

Line 11 "To some European parallels", and delete the end of the sentence.

Lines 13 and 14: delete "Khadir belong to the Wandering Jew type". (This sentence could only be retained if followed by lengthy explanations, as it raises a "dangerous" question that is best avoided, especially because of Gustave Meyrinck's novel, "The Green Face", which uses this assimilation throughout, but presents it in a caricatural way, and whose inspiration is clearly anti-initiatory.")

Line 33: "All these iconographical types..."

I hope you will accept these changes, which are all important, although the reasons for some of them may only be obvious to someone who lives in a strictly Islamic environment...

In addition, it might be a good idea to add a few lines at the end with a meaning similar to the following: "We have considered here only one aspect of al-Khadir; there are, of course, others, particularly those relating more specifically to his initiatory role, which are in perfect harmony with this one, but which would give rise to other considerations that could not be included within the scope of this study."

I hope you still have a copy available, on which the corrections could be made easily, which would save you the trouble of making a copy (and also because of the illustrations). Once this is done, I would ask you to kindly send it directly to Mr Préau, in order to avoid any delay, as he will naturally need time to translate it. I do not think I have forgotten anything, and

I thank you very much in advance for all this.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L54

Cairo, 4 June 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your article on "The Pilgrim's Way," which I have just received. The symbolism of travel is still a very important issue, and it seems to me that it is found in all traditional forms. In this regard, there is a very significant phrase in English Masonic ritual: "That I may travel in foreign countries"; these "foreign countries" are interpreted as other worlds, states that lie beyond the realm of the senses.

After writing to you a few days ago, I realised that I had forgotten to respond to a point in your letters concerning how "upanayana" could be translated. It seems to me that, as you say, "on leading" would convey the meaning well in English, but I confess that I am at a loss to find a French equivalent for this word. I think "confirmation" should be avoided because of the confusion it might cause, as it would almost inevitably bring to mind the meaning given to it in Christianity (I should even say the two meanings, because among Catholics and Protestants respectively, it refers to things that are not at all equivalent), and, as you yourself have rightly pointed out, such an assimilation cannot be made. The word "induction" would not have the same disadvantage, but I think it would be difficult to understand; it already has two other uses, one in logic, as the opposite of "deduction", and the other in physics, to refer to a certain category of electrical phenomena... On the other hand, from a strictly etymological point of view, "induction" does not lend itself to any objection, and there is a certain similarity in meaning between this word and that of "initiation"; "induction" perhaps has, if one may say so, a more "passive" nuance...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L55

Cairo, 18 June 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me your brochure "Asiatic Art", which I have just received.

A few days ago, I also received the prospectus for the Journal of Parapsychology; I had already seen a few articles on these "ESP" experiments. It is rather curious to see that academics are beginning to take an interest in these questions, other than to deny everything; however, I do not believe that the methods they use will ever get them very far...

Mr Préau tells me that he received your reply regarding the translation of your article on pantheism and that he immediately sent it to the journal; I therefore think that the article will be able to appear in the July issue.

I hope you will soon receive my comments on the article on El-Khidr,

if you have not already received them.

I understand that Mr Lovinescu has received the package you kindly sent him; I believe he has already thanked you himself.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L56

Cairo, 4 July 1938.

Dear Sir,

I have just received "The Story of the American Indian" by Dr Paul Radin. I assume that you were kind enough to send it to me, and I thank you very much for doing so. The information I find in this book will undoubtedly enable me to write something on the subject you mentioned in one of your recent letters.

One of our colleagues, Mr Burckhardt, is planning to write a doctoral thesis on medieval sculpture, and he has asked me where he might find information on the following point: "It is beginning to be assumed, albeit very vaguely, that Romanesque sculpture and architecture were based on geometric sciences of Arabic origin, the remains of which are much discussed in the famous 13th-century Album of Villard de Honnecourt." Naturally, given that this is a thesis, he would need to be able to cite specific references in order to discuss this subject. Unfortunately, I have no information on this, but I thought it possible that you might have some, in which case I would be very grateful if you could kindly share it with me so that I can pass it on to him.

On the other hand, I am also asked a question that I find rather embarrassing: under what circumstances was the prohibition against the faithful receiving communion in the form of wine introduced in the Latin Church in the 13th century? I have never seen any information on this anywhere; it seems to be one of those obscure points that are so common in the history of Christianity. Do you happen to know of any texts or documents relating to this fact? I apologise for asking you so many questions, and I thank you in advance for anything you can tell me about all this.

What has become of Mrs. Norman's magazine project, which I haven't heard anything about since? I am thinking about it again at the moment, firstly because we have reached the time when, if I remember correctly, the journal should have started to appear, and also because Mr. Osborne has just sent me the translation of the two chapters of The Crisis of the Modern World, one or other of which, following your suggestion, I could have given to Mrs. Norman.

I recently received a letter from Mr Lennard asking me if I had heard any more news about the publication of Theosophism; so the manuscript had not yet reached him when he wrote to me; moreover, he has changed his address again, so there is perhaps no need to regret that you did not receive the one I gave you in time...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L57

Cairo, 6 July 1938.

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you the day before yesterday, and today I received your letter dated 20 June. I trust that your hand injury is now completely healed, as it must be very inconvenient for someone who always has so much writing to do, as is the case with us!

I thank you very much for accepting all the proposed changes to your article; at the same time, I have just received a note from Mr Préau telling me that you have informed him that you have sent it to him. As, according to what he tells me, you thought he was already aware of the changes in question, I will send him the copy I have kept right away, so as not to delay his translation.

I would like to thank you once again for Radin's book, since it is indeed thanks to you that I received it, which I realised as soon as I got it.

One more question: how can we interpret the fact that Sanatkumâra, who is considered in a way to be the supreme Guru, is sometimes (though not always) identified with Skanda? I have been thinking about this since yesterday without being able to find a truly satisfactory explanation, because there is something here that does not seem to fit very well with Skanda's own role and his relationship with Ganêsha...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards. R. G.

L58

Cairo, 12 July 1938

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 25 June and for sending Mr Préau your article with the indicated changes; I hope that he will still have time to do the translation within the required deadline.

Thank you also for the photograph enclosed with your letter, which is indeed very clear and which I had not seen before; I will return it to you, as you requested, at the earliest opportunity. It would be interesting to be able to reproduce it with an article dealing with the subject in question; unfortunately, the cost of photographs has become so high, at least in France, that we can only rarely afford to do so. -- It seems that, for the rungs, the meaning of the number 14 must be related to that of "Loka", which is in line with your interpretation. As for the original meaning of "seven-league boots", I think you are absolutely right; so many things have been preserved in this way without those who repeat them being aware of what they really mean!

I am very surprised that Mr Lovinescu has taken so long to write to you, because, as I must have told you, I learned some time ago that your letter had reached him.

I suspect that most studies on American Indians must be done from a conventional "ethnographic" point of view; it is already something when, in such cases, the facts are reported without distorting them to fit certain preconceived theories... In any case, the few examples you cite are very significant and perfectly consistent with all other traditional data.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L59

Cairo, 26 July 1938

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me your article "Ushnîsha and Chhatra", which I have just received. I was expecting it, as some time ago I received your card indicating a correction to be made. I see that there are several points here that relate quite closely to the issues we discussed recently, particularly with regard to the cosmic cave and its vault. The solar chariot with a square or rectangular body and a domed roof (page 16) corresponds exactly to the forms that Chinese symbolism assigns to the earth and the sky, respectively. But, on the other hand, I notice something about Chinese coins that seems to be an anomaly in relation to the interpretation given on page 17, towards the end of note 1: although the coin itself is round, the hole in its centre is generally square; how can this be explained? It seems that, in this case, another interpretation should be considered: the part pierced by the sky...

Last week, I also received the issue of the India Bulletin that you sent me; I had no idea that a publication of this kind was published in England itself...

In his last letter, Mr Préau told me that he had received your article, as well as the two photographs intended for the illustrations; thank you!

I am returning the photograph of Bharhut in this letter, and I apologise for having to reuse an old envelope, as I was unable to find one of the right size... There is one thing that intrigues me: the hands that can be seen at the bottom left; they do not seem to belong to the figures below them, and in fact they look more like imprints; but what do they represent? I would be very grateful if you could enlighten me on this point...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L60

Cairo, 2 August 1938

Dear Sir

Thank you for sending me "Prehistoric Rock Pictures", which arrived at the same time as your letter of 8 July. I have not yet had time to examine it, but it seems to me that there are some very curious things in it...

Your explanation of "luffer" or "louver" is now perfectly clear to me; but I wonder if there is a corresponding word in French; if there is, I do not know it. In any case, the word "Louvre" has nothing to do with it, as it is derived from "loup", which is apparently quite different.

What you tell me about the tumulus and its connection with the shape of the skull is very interesting; I make a connection between this and the name Golgotha, translated into Latin as Clavarium, both words also meaning "skull". According to a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages, but whose origins may go back much further, it is the skull of Adam that is said to have been buried in this place, and which is often depicted at the foot of the cross; there is an obvious symbolic meaning here. On the other hand, I even wonder if the many places that have names derived from clavus mons, or the equivalent in some other language, might not also have some connection with the same thing; if a tumulus exists or once existed in these places, it would be quite easily explainable under these circumstances.

I did indeed receive the J. I. S. O. A., and I had already noticed the articles you mention in particular; it is a pity that Strzygowski's ideas are presented in a way that is not entirely clear, at least to those who are not familiar with his work as a whole. Since receiving the J. I. S. O. A., I have no idea what is happening with Mrs. Kramrisch: in my letter acknowledging receipt, I asked her if she would allow me to publish the French text of my article in the "E. T." and also requested that she send a copy to Mr. Préau. I never received a reply to this letter, and Mr. Préau never received anything, nor did Mr. Mac Iver, to whom she herself had promised to send a copy...

I have just learned that Mr. Lennard's father has received the manuscript of "Theosophism" and will submit it to Martin Secker and Warbury; so all is well, and we can only hope that we will finally have better luck on that front...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L61

Cairo, 8 August 1938

Dear Sir

I have just received your letter of 19 July; thank you for agreeing to consider the questions I raised with you. Regarding Arab influences on Romanesque sculpture, Mr Luc Benoist sent me some references a few days ago, but you may of course find others, especially in English or American works...

In my last letter, I told you the news I had received about "Theosophism"; perhaps Mr Lennard will have written to you as well.

If Mrs Norman appears not to have given up her plan for a journal, I could send her one of the two chapters we discussed; However, I have noticed that there are a number of passages referring to what has been said in the previous chapters; don't you think it would be a good idea for me to modify them so that it looks like a complete article rather than a simple extract from a book?

At the same time as your letter, I received another one that puts me in a bit of a quandary: it is a questionnaire sent by Mr August H. Wagner, who commends himself to you, which makes it difficult for me not to reply; but, on the other hand, I really do not see how to deal with the question from the point of view in which it is presented, for each person is asked to expound 'his own philosophy', whereas, in fact, I can only speak of traditional doctrines. It is true that we may not be obliged to respond in the manner suggested (I suppose it is the same letter that must have been sent to everyone indiscriminately); but will a non-'philosophical' response be found satisfactory? Furthermore, there is another annoying thing: in the list of people who have already sent their responses, there are well-known agents of "counter-initiation" (Mr Alexander Cameron, H. Spencer Lewis, Nicholas K. Roerich); given my very particular situation, I wonder whether it would be "right" or "wrong" for my name to appear alongside theirs. In any case, I will not do anything until you have kindly told me what you think.

I thank you for what you tell me about Sanatkumâra; but to what extent can Skanda be assimilated to Agni? Does he not represent above all an aspect of "Kshatra", which brings him closer to Indra than to Agni? It is only this point that seems to me to give rise to some difficulty...

On the question of the rainbow, I think you are absolutely right to distinguish it from the "Bridge" considered as an aspect of the vertical axis, which is naturally the "direct path" from Earth to Heaven; but nevertheless, can the rainbow not also be considered a bridge, albeit of a different kind? Indeed, in China, it is the sign of the union of Heaven and Earth; in the Hebrew Genesis, it is the sign of God's covenant with men, which ultimately amounts to the same thing. On the other hand, if we see it as connecting "the two horizons" (according to the ancient Egyptian expression) of East and West, it is also a bridge in this sense, but, of course, it does not go beyond the "roof of the world"... There are also traditions that identify the rainbow with the "celestial serpent", but I cannot find what I must have noted on this subject; I will try to look for it again.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L62

Cairo, 22 August 1938

Dear Sir

Thank you for sending me your two articles, which I have just received and which you mentioned in your letter of 28 July, which arrived a few days ago.

As for the Katha Upanishad, it is understood that I will only discuss it once I have received the other parts. As for the symbolism of the dome, I may discuss it in a special article, as the subject is very important and is also related to those I have been dealing with recently. -- I see that, in the same article, you mentioned the question of "archery" in passing; might I ask you to arrange this in the form of a separate article for the "E. T." (like the article on the symbolism of the sword), as you kindly promised me? Thank you in advance.

Thank you also for the information about Villard de Honnecourt; I have passed it on

to Mr Burckhardt.

I am glad to hear that Mr Lovinescu has written to you; you will certainly make him very happy if you can send him a few articles from time to time.

A question suggested to me by the reflections of a correspondent: how could the Hindu symbolism of the cow be presented in a way that is easily understandable to people who have no particular doctrinal knowledge? This is of some importance, because, as you know, it is one of the points that Westerners particularly strive to caricature and ridicule; it was in relation to a work by Abbé Rousselle that this was brought to my attention recently.

I am delighted to hear your good news; it must be very pleasant for you to be in the countryside now. It would certainly be my great pleasure to accept your kind invitation to visit you there, but I must admit that I cannot see myself undertaking such a long journey; although, of course, one never knows what might happen one day or another...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L63

Cairo, 26 August 1938

Dear Sir

I have just received your letter of 10 August, and I am quite surprised at how quickly it arrived this time...

Thank you for what you told me about handprints and their different meanings. As protection against evil influences, the same custom still exists here as in India. When a sheep is slaughtered, either for Eid al-Adha or for any other occasion such as a wedding, the construction of a house, etc., the hand is dipped in blood and the blood is smeared on the walls. Wouldn't the red colour of the prints, even when obtained in other ways, be intended to recall the blood of the sacrificial animal? As for the Muharrain processions you mention, this is an exclusively Shiite custom that is unknown here.

Regarding the concept of a "signature," I have heard that ancient Arabs, in order to make a commitment inviolable, would cut their fingers so that blood would flow, and then press their hand onto the document; I do not know if the same practice existed among other peoples....

Apart from all this, it must be said that there is also a "sinister" meaning to handprints, related to black magic practices: they represent above all the imprint of the forces from below, and are thus the exact opposite of the footprints we have mentioned. I would even add that there is a very striking relationship, which is certainly not "coincidental", between the latter case and the frequent manifestations of isolated hands in psychic phenomena of the lowest order (witchcraft and spiritualism).

It seems that posthumous trepanation in Neolithic burials was fairly widespread; I know that examples have also been found

examples in Europe, particularly in prehistoric sites in the south of France; I had just intended to point this fact out to you; its interpretation as the opening of the "brahma-randhra" has always seemed quite obvious to me.

I see that we are in complete agreement on the meaning of the shape of Chinese coins; the circular shape of the opening in the case of "jei" jades confirms this even further.

What is "Zalmoxis"? I had never heard of this publication before...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L64

Cairo, 10 September 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me the second part of your "Mediaeval Aesthetic", which I received today.

I have received some very unfortunate news: a fortnight ago, Mr Préau suddenly suffered an attack of appendicitis and had to undergo emergency surgery. I am told that fortunately everything went well and that he was doing as well as could be expected, but there is always the risk of complications from the operation and the resulting weakness, especially in his case, because even before that, his health had been poor for quite some time, so I am quite concerned...

The person who asked me the question I mentioned to you about the origin of communion under the single species of bread in the Latin Church told me that she had found a discussion of the Council of Trent on this subject in a theological dictionary. What she reported to me makes a rather lamentable impression: it seems that doctrinal considerations were entirely set aside and sacrificed to mere contingencies, which would indicate that, even within the Church, the traditional spirit was already greatly weakened at that time! On the other hand, what is really strange is that there is no trace anywhere of any ordinance relating to this same question prior to the Council of Trent; it is this point in particular that would be interesting to clarify.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L65

Cairo, 26 September 1938

Dear Sir,

A few days ago, I finally received a letter from Mrs. Kramrisch. I was right to write to her again, as it seems that my first letter never reached her. Her authorisation arrived at just the right moment, as I was in the process of preparing the October issue of "E. T.", and this will allow us to publish my article on cosmic cycles in that issue, which will also feature your article on "pantheism".

At the same time, Mrs. Kramrisch asks me if I could give her for the

J. I. S. O. A. an article already published in French, which she would translate. I would like to oblige her, but I find myself somewhat embarrassed, as I cannot see that there is much in my articles that has any direct connection with art; would you be so kind as to give me some suggestions on this subject?

I was pleasantly surprised to receive a letter from Mr. Préau, who reassured me that he was now well on the road to recovery. It is true that he complains that his strength is returning rather slowly, but that is to be expected after an operation...

Last week I received the August-September issue of "E. T." and noticed that your article lacked references to the illustrations. According to what Mr Préau told me,
Mr Préau, I understand that this is because the information he had requested from you on this subject did not reach him in time; but in any case, I do not think this will have any major impact on the clarity of the article, and apart from that, everything else seems fine to me...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L66

Cairo, 11 November 1938.

Dear Sir,

Your two letters dated 5 and 13 October arrived at the same time last week, and I have just received the one dated 27 October. I was very happy to hear from you, as I was beginning to fear that you were unwell. It is better that your silence was due to nothing more than your busy schedule, which I understand only too well. it is really very difficult to manage to do everything one would like to do, even while allowing oneself as few distractions from one's work as possible!

Mr Préau seems to be doing much better. He has left Savoie for Landes, and he can hope that the much milder climate in this region will be more favourable to his health. His new address, in case you do not already have it, is: "Clair Logis", Soustons (Landes).

I am glad that you were satisfied with the way your article on El-Khîdr was presented, despite what happened with the illustrations, which is not really a big deal. I believe you have received the October issue, which contains your article on "pantheism"; thank you in advance for the "archery", when you find the time to arrange it.

Thank you for sending me the last two parts of the "Katha Upanishad", which arrived just in time for me to mention it in the November reviews; as you will see, I have only highlighted a few of the most important points, as I must say that I have no objections to raise; it seems to me that we are in complete agreement on all these questions, some of which I may have to return to in more detail in my articles, as I am currently doing with those relating to the symbolism of the dome.

I also received a copy of the journal Parnassus, which I believe was sent to me on your recommendation. -- Also the note from Dr Heinsch, which, at least in

this brief form, is somewhat enigmatic; there is surely something in all these stories of "prehistoric orientations", but unfortunately, among those who are concerned with them, everyone seems preoccupied with making them fit in with particular theories that they have constructed and which are often quite fanciful...

The translation of "The Fifth Veda", with the introduction by Mr. Mac Iver that you mention, appeared in the August issue of "Visna-Bharati Quarterly". As for the publication that appeared simultaneously in "Indian Culture", it was Dr. Manilal Patel who took the initiative without informing anyone; I do not know how he was able to justify this somewhat unusual course of action to the "V. B. Q.", but in any case, neither Mr Mac Iver nor I had anything to do with it.

Thank you for all the explanations concerning the various points I mentioned in my successive letters. Regarding the cow, what you say is indeed the simplest way to understand the matter. As for Skanda, there are certainly multiple aspects, but the connection with Agni seems to give the fundamental meaning. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word reb, which is the exact equivalent of the Sanskrit Kumâra, is applied by the Kabbalists to Metatron, who has the attribute of "everlasting youth", which is also the very meaning of the name Sanatkumâra.

As for the possibility of "entering" through the rainbow, it seems to me that you are right and that one could indeed say that this path does not pass through the Gate itself. I am also thinking in this regard of a passage from the Qur'an which refers to "two halves of a rainbow" (corresponding to El-Haqq and El-Khalq), the point where they meet being located "at the highest point of the horizon"; this would need to be examined more closely...

I see that you think exactly the same as I do about Mr Wagner's questionnaire, and in fact I suspected that it could not be otherwise. In any case, like you, I wonder if I will be able to find the time to do anything, as I still have a lot of work to catch up on; and, what is more, I have no idea what kind of answers he would like to receive...

Thank you for your suggestions regarding articles that might be suitable for Miss Kramrisch; when in doubt, I always wrote "Mrs." until now; with the ones you have suggested, there will still be enough to last for a while... As for Mrs. Norman, I think there is still time; has she (illegible) published anything? I haven't seen anything so far... You forgot to tell me whether you thought it would be better for me to make changes to my chapter so that it reads as a complete whole; please bear this in mind next time, so that I can arrange it if necessary and send it to her.

In the last few days, I have received a letter from a Mr Jean Chevalier, a schoolteacher in Vienne (Isère), who says he is a friend of A. Gleizes and corresponds with you. What he writes to me does not give me a completely clear idea of his point of view; he strikes me more as someone who is well-meaning but not quite "up to speed"; if you know him better, perhaps you could tell me what you think of him... He also mentions Eric Gill and asks if I know him; to be honest, the name is not unfamiliar to me, but I have no idea who might have mentioned him to me

, and in any case I have never read anything by him.

I have not yet seen Mrs. Rhys Davids' new book; however, it is still possible that we will receive it, if it has been published by Luzac like the previous ones. -- The use of the word "dîkah" for Buddhist ordination is indeed interesting. -- As for the question of the number of elements, your interpretation would essentially reduce it, as you say, to a matter of terminology; however, I wonder if it would be valid for all schools, as some of them seem to equate âkâsha with shûnya.

What you point out to me about the "numerical" writing of the Indus Valley seems very interesting to me, and I would be happy if I could have more details on this subject. What I do not quite understand is the "Indonesian" connection, unless this word is used here in a different sense from its usual meaning...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L67

Cairo, 29 November 1938.

Dear Sir,

Last week I received your letter dated 3 November; the book you mentioned in it has just arrived, and I thank you for it. Of course, I will be sure to mention it in my reviews. What you say about the spirit in which it is written does not surprise me in the least, for there are very few people in the West who are capable of seeing beyond this particular and narrow perspective!

The news you give me about the "crisis in the modern world" is indeed very interesting, and quite unexpected, I must say, at least for me; I cannot imagine anything like that happening in a French university!

I am very pleased to hear what you say about the additions that my article on the dome makes to yours. What you quote from the article in Ars Islamica is also interesting in this regard. I believe, moreover, that these are subjects that are virtually inexhaustible...

I recently received the prospectus for Twice a Year, from which I see that the first issue is only now due to appear. What worries me a little are the "democratic" assertions in the programme, as I fear that this may not be easily reconcilable with the nature of what I have to offer...

I have asked for the issues of "E. T." containing the articles you indicated might be suitable for her to be sent to Miss Kramrisch. I hope they are not out of print, because otherwise I will have to make copies of the articles, and I never have enough time to do everything!

Mr. Préau is definitely unlucky when it comes to his health: he writes to me that, since moving to his new home, he has caught a cold that has left him feeling very tired for another three weeks. The climate in this region of the Landes is mild, but it seems that, especially in the evening, there is humidity, no doubt due to the proximity of the sea, which is something to be wary of...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L68

Cairo, 6 December 1938.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me your study on "The Inverted Tree", which I received a few days ago and have just read. It contains some very important points, and although I have already spoken quite often about the symbolism of the tree, I think it would be appropriate to return to the subject on this occasion. -- From the point of view you are considering more particularly, it is interesting to consider a pattern such as the one with three branches and three roots, which is very common; it can be seen in both directions, so to speak, especially as it is related to a whole series of symbols, all of which imply consideration of the "opposite meaning" of the analogy.

On the other hand, in connection with what you say about the "burning bush", there is a very significant passage in the Qur'an (sûrat En-Nûr): the "central" tree (literally in the text: "neither eastern nor western") is here an olive tree, which is directly associated with light (it produces oil that is used for lighting); this too is therefore related to Agni... -- Finally, I will see if I can coordinate all this for a future article.

Allow me to point out a minor inaccuracy (p. 14), which, incidentally, does not affect the substance of the matter: the oak is the symbolic tree of the Celts; but for the Scandinavians, it is actually the ash tree; Yggdrasil is an ash tree, not an oak.

In the case of the apple tree, there is something curious about the word apple and its similarity to the names Apollo, Aplun, Belum (and hence the double meaning of the name of the island of Avalon); the allusion to the "solar" nature of the tree is unmistakable here. I had often wondered how the word ashwattha could be explained, and had found nothing satisfactory until now; but with your explanation, the matter becomes quite clear...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L69

Cairo, 9 December 1938.

Dear Sir,

I wrote to you a few days ago about The Inverted Tree, and I have just received your letter of 21 November. Thank you for the note that accompanied it; I am forwarding it immediately to E. T. so that it can be included in the reviews in the January issue. -- It is indeed worth mentioning; the only slightly annoying thing about it, which you are probably unaware of, is that Miss Brosse is a Theosophist. I have seen several articles by her in "The Blue Lotus"; but, as this time it is a work published in a medical journal (of which I was completely unaware), it is naturally possible to mention it without drawing attention to this particularity, which is much preferable...

Regarding the "Presse Médicale", something rather unusual happened to me a few months ago: the editor of this publication asked Chacornac for my

articles on psychoanalysis; then, after some time, she sent them back to him saying that they had been reported to her as dealing with the subject from a medical point of view, but that, as this was not the case, she was unable to publish them. We never found out what really happened, but it is likely that some influential psychoanalysts intervened to ensure that the matter was hushed up!

I only know Mr Filliozat by name. Who exactly is he, and what kind of work does he do? I am all the more unaware of this because all the 'Orientalist' publishers, Geuthner and others, always take great care not to send us any of their publications...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L70

Cairo, 17 December 1938.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of 28 November with your article, the card in which you give me information about Mrs. or Miss Kramrisch, and the Journal of the Royal Society of Art. Thank you for everything, and especially for the article on the meaning of the term "Mâhâtmâ", which is indeed very appropriate for the "E. T. ".

Thank you also in advance for the forthcoming article you mention on Mrs. Rhys Davids' latest book; we have not yet received it, but if it is sent to us, I now know that there will be no need for me to mention it in the reviews, so as not to duplicate your article.

I also thank you for your explanations regarding "âkâsha" in Buddhism; the equivalence "âkâsha" = "chaos" is indeed correct, since it is the primary undifferentiated element; this "chaos", of course, is not "emptiness" in the metaphysical sense; it can only be called "void" in a certain relative sense, as the Hebrew expression in Genesis (whbw wht) is rendered in the Vulgate as "iuanis et vacua". It remains to be seen exactly what the concept of "shûnyatâ" means in the different Buddhist schools; on the other hand, the Jains are also generally regarded as denying "âkâsha" as an element; do you have any details on this last point?

The name "Indonesia" is usually, I believe, given only to the Malay islands; that is why it did not make me think of Easter Island, which still represents an enigma that seems quite difficult to solve.

I am currently working on my contribution to the January issue of E. T. As soon as I have finished, I will make a copy of the chapter on "Individualism", making the changes you suggest, and send it immediately to Mrs Norman. The translation of The Crisis of the Modern World is now completely finished, as is that of East and West, but I have not yet had time to review everything.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Mac Iver, who is now in Basel; he tells me that he has received a card from you and that he asked Mr. Lennard, before his departure from India, to send you the reprint of the Visva-Bharati Quarterly; if this does not

If you have not received it, he will send you another copy. -- You are right about the publication in Indian Culture; our only concern was that it might cause some discontent on the part of Visva-Bharati Quarterly.

Eric Gill's article shows me that there must surely be many points on which he agrees with you; as for what he said to you about Hinduism, it is indeed quite remarkable, and very far from the attitude of a Maritain, for example; but I understand that he might be embarrassed to say so publicly...

From the way Mr Chevalier spoke to me about his correspondence with you, I did not think it had been so limited until now; he told me, too, that he intended to write an article about my works; he has already published one on A. Gleizes, which he said he would send me, but which I have not yet received.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L71

Cairo, 22 January 1939.

Dear Sir,

Your three letters dated 30 December, 3 and 4 January arrived at the same time. -- Thank you very much for the article enclosed with the last one, which is very interesting as always and seems to me to sum things up very well.

I also thank you for the suggestion, which I have already passed on to Chacornac, to propose an exchange of the "E. T." with the publications of the Royal Asiatic Society, which are undoubtedly easier to obtain in this way than through the publishers! I agree with you that it is always possible to find interesting information in publications of this kind from a "documentary" point of view, which can serve as a starting point for further consideration...

The identity of the "triple tree" diagram with the double vajra is indeed very clear; I will no doubt return to this in a future article, because, although I have already written one on the tree, in which I mainly discuss the study you have devoted to it, the subject is still far from exhausted. I also intend to address another question that is closely related to this, namely the symbolism of the ladder, which I have so far only mentioned incidentally in "The Esotericism of Dante".

As for a book that provides a proper introduction to astrology, I confess that I am at a loss, for I know of nothing truly satisfactory in this regard; modern authors who deal with such subjects generally demonstrate an almost complete lack of understanding and interpret everything according to their own ideas. In any case, I have asked the question, and I hope to obtain some information, which I will be sure to pass on to you as soon as I receive it.

What you quote to me from Eckhart, "size without size", reminds me of an Arabic expression whose exact origin I cannot say, as it is used quite commonly: "fî zamâni ghayri zamân, wa fî makâni ghayri makân" = "in a time without time, and in a space without space".

I am glad to hear that Mr. Mac Iver has written to you and sent you copies of the offprint.

More boring news about "Theosophism": Mr Lennard writes to me

that Martin Secker has also given a negative response. He says he now intends to try Hodden and Stonghton; I am not familiar with this publishing house and have no idea what kind of books it publishes. Perhaps, as he says, it will be easier to get "Theosophism" accepted by a publisher once some other book of mine has already been published in English... I do not know if I have told you that Mr Lennard also intends to produce a new translation of Man and His Becoming, as the existing one is very flawed and, moreover, is now apparently out of print.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L72

Cairo, 1 February 1939.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 5 January and the information concerning the word "louver" or "luffer" and its equivalents. I was completely unfamiliar with the old French word "lovier," and I do not believe there is a current equivalent; but of course, I am far from knowing all the local dialects and patois, which have often preserved many terms that have disappeared from the "official" language.

The texts you quote in relation to "suddenness" and "instantaneity" are indeed very significant and are in line with my remarks on this subject. I hope, based on what you have told me, that you will be able to do something about this question and that of the "lightning bolt", which is indeed the obvious symbol of sudden illumination.

Mr Préau tells me that he has sent you his translation of your article "Mahâtmâ". In the same letter, regarding the symbolism of the parasol, he tells me that in certain texts there is mention of a world in the shape of a parasol (or mushroom, as the word "chhatra" has both meanings); he mentions Yogarâja's commentary on Abhinavagnpta's "Paramârtha-sâra", an explanation of the word "bhuvana" in the 5th Kârikâ; what exactly does this refer to?

I think the same as you about Tilak's "Arctic Home"; but I wonder if he deliberately limited himself to the interpretation directly related to the subject he had in mind, or if he really saw no other meaning than that in the Vedic texts, which would seem quite surprising...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L73

Cairo, 10 February 1939.

Dear Sir,

When you wrote to me about Tilak, I immediately thought of the question of the "Seven Rays", and I even believed that this was what had particularly inspired your reflection; I had not considered that the December issue of "E. T." had not yet had time to reach you... In any case, the same question still arises: if he deliberately limited himself to this "naturalistic" interpretation, why did he not make it clear

at least indicated that this was not the only or even the main meaning? -- Regarding Tilak himself, I noticed that among those who knew him personally, opinions varied greatly: some go so far as to consider him a "jîvan-mukta", while others claim that he was never anything more than a simple "scholar"; it seems to me that there is exaggeration in both directions....

As for Ghyka, his work has always given me exactly the same impression as it has given you; and I must add that there are also certain bizarre facts that do not inspire confidence. For example, someone once showed me a letter from him in which he said that reading my works had greatly contributed to his research; yet you may notice that he never mentions me... On the other hand, he indiscriminately cites all kinds of 'sources', some of which are of a highly dubious nature, and even blindly accepts outright hoaxes. I know that he is in contact with many more or less suspicious people who clearly influence him; it is quite certain that none of this would be possible if he had a genuine understanding... The second part of "The Golden Number" in particular is written in an extremely unfortunate "profane" tone, which shows that he does not have the right mindset to deal with such a subject as it should be dealt with, and also that he lacks "technical" knowledge of initiatory organisations. All this work would have to be redone entirely in a different spirit; it is true that there are many others about whom the same could be said!

Valéry's case is quite different, because I do not believe that he takes himself very seriously; my impression is that he is merely "playing with ideas" and that, deep down, he does not even believe that there is a truth to be attained. Moreover, there is something in his attitude and in the way he exploits his success that could be described as "charlatanesque" and which is really unpleasant; the least we can say is that he never does anything in a disinterested way...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L74

Cairo, 16 February 1939

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter dated 26 January, and I am immediately forwarding your request for the manuscript of your article "Mahâtmâ" to Mr Préau, as he now has it in his possession. You should have received his translation shortly after writing to me; as he was only waiting for your comments to finalise it, he will surely be able to return the manuscript to you immediately.

Thank you for the addition to be made to your article on Mrs.
Rhys Davids.

What you tell me about "Divine Biunity", coming from a Catholic university professor, is indeed very interesting.

I see that the publication of Zalmoxis has been somewhat delayed, as you

had previously told me that it would be at the end of 1938; in what language is this journal to be published?

The idea has been put forward to devote this year's special issue of "E. T." (which, as always, will be the August-September issue) to questions concerning "folklore" — provided, of course, that we can find enough contributors. What do you think of this project, and do you have anything you could contribute along these lines?

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L75

Cairo, 26 February 1939.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 6 February, and I am immediately forwarding the information concerning your article on Buddhism to Mr Préau, as he is now in charge of translating it.

Thank you for your explanations regarding "shûnyavâda"; it is quite certain that, with this interpretation, there is nothing heterodox about it; but is it the interpretation of all schools? Is there not also, in certain cases, another, quite different application of a "cosmological" nature, in which the idea of "shûnya" appears to be linked to the atomist conception?

I have received a reply to the question you asked me about a book on astrology; here is what they wrote: "If you are referring to a book that is commercially available, there really isn't one that can be decently recommended; the least bad of all is undoubtedly Julevno's treatise, published by Chacornac, which follows Ptolemy and the European astrologers of the Renaissance fairly closely. If it is only a book to be consulted in a library, one can consult the Latin, French and English translations of Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos and Centiloque, and the works, in Latin, of Junctin of Florence and Morin of Ville-Franche. It should be noted that, in the field of astrology, Westerners have little more than works of decadence: works from the late Greco-Latin tradition, works from the decadence of the Christian Hermetic tradition during the Renaissance; we have none dating from the Middle Ages.

I have also just received a letter addressed to me from you via Mr A. Janta, asking me to contribute to a special issue on India for the Polish magazine "Wiadomosci Literackic". The only difficulty, as always, is finding the time to write an article within the required deadline; but, on the other hand, as "no exclusivity is required except for Poland", I think that my article "The Spirit of India", although it has appeared twice in French (in "Le Monde Nouveau" and then in "E. T."), might perhaps be suitable in this circumstance. I will therefore reply to Mr Janta to this effect; at the same time, I will also write to someone who has already translated some of my articles into Polish for other magazines, and who will be able to discuss this matter directly with the editor of Wiadomosci Literackic in order to avoid wasting time, since it would be necessary to

the article will be delivered within approximately one month.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

L76

Cairo, 10 March 1939

Dear Sir,

I have just received your three letters dated 7, 20 and 22 February. --Many thanks for your new article, which I find very interesting, as always. It is certainly a question on which it is difficult to express an opinion without reservation, but I think you have treated it with all the necessary caution; and it is undoubtedly an important point to establish as far as possible.

Regarding the addition you mention this time to your article on Mrs. Rhys Davids' book, the last sentence, 'It is the same in the genealogia regni Dei, etc.,' is very faint. I wonder if this is simply due to a typing error, or if you intended to delete it afterwards. Would you be so kind as to let me know what the situation is?

I have replaced it with the note you sent me last time to replace note 1 on page 3 of your article.

Thank you for the notice of the book "The Westminster of Norway"; I will send it to Mr Burckhardt immediately.

The comment about "Sun-Kiss" seems entirely justified to me; but I wonder if you might have mentioned this issue in some recent articles that I have not yet received... On the other hand, it makes me think that the subject of the "solar hero" in fairy tales could be interesting to cover for the issue on folklore that I mentioned in one of my recent letters; but, of course, I don't want to suggest this more than anything else, as I'm sure you have no shortage of subjects related to this topic... --I don't remember if I told you that Mr. Luc Benoist has promised an article for this issue on the motif of the "quest" in popular legends. There is also an article by Mr. Lovinescu on Romanian folklore that has been set aside for this occasion.

As for the word muni and its connections, what you say about the idea of "silence" is entirely plausible in itself; however, there may be a linguistic difficulty: should the letter 'n' not be considered part of the root? Furthermore, there is in any case a fairly close relationship between "silence" and "solitude"; the question is which of these two ideas the word implies in the first place...

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L77

Cairo, 2 April 1939.

Dear Sir,

I received your four letters dated 28 February, 6, 8 and 16 March in quick succession, as well as the package containing the issue of Speculum; thank you very much. --

I have not yet received the article on Vedanta that you also mentioned, nor Zalmoxis.

I also thank you for sending me the book on "el-ishrâq", which arrived yesterday; I will read it with interest and will certainly mention it in my reviews.

Mr Préau tells me he has sent you his translation of your article on "Original Buddhism". -- I have sent him the note to add to the other article.

I am returning Professor Alder's letter and Mrs Rhys Davids' letter enclosed herewith; the former is entirely satisfactory, since it shows that we are in fundamental agreement; it is just a pity that his book was not clearer on this point... As for the other, it is even more unfortunate than I had supposed, for it is no longer a question of more or less bizarre "psychic" experiences, but of spiritualism in the most vulgar sense of the word.

For the issue of "E. T." on folklore, what you propose on the "Jâtakas" would indeed be very good and very interesting; I therefore hope that you will be able to do so, and I thank you very much in advance.

On the subject of folklore, the article by Mircea Eliade that you have attached to "Speculum" is, in a sense, better than the usual point of view of those who deal with these things, because it seeks to show the reality of facts that we are accustomed, in the present day, to dismiss as "legend" or unfounded "superstitions" (but perhaps he attaches more importance than he should to modern "metapsychic" experiments in this regard); However, this is not the most interesting aspect of the question, and it seems that everything that is symbolic meaning escapes him or (but then for what reasons?) that he does not want to deal with it...

Who is Prof. P. E. Dumont, whose introduction to a book on Agnihotra I also found in the same package? I have never heard of him, and what surprised me was to see that a book written in French had been published in America.

The subject of the "cornerstone" and its relationship to the "diamond" is important and interesting enough that I will devote an article to it, as you suggest. I am therefore delighted to accept your offer to send me a copy of the illustration mentioned by Prof. Panovski. Thank you again! --How can we explain that the word "Eckstein" in German also means "diamond"? -- I must point out a small inaccuracy (which I wonder if it is not simply a printing error) concerning the Hebrew words: the word meaning "angle" is "pinnah" (hnp) in the singular, and pinnoth (twnp) is the plural; this word is related to penî (ynp), which means "face". In the question at hand, we find the two expressions eben pinnah, "cornerstone", and rosh pinnah, "corner head", used as synonyms. It is surprising that the second has not prevented the confusion that is commonly made between this "cornerstone" and the "foundation stone", a confusion that is all the more curious in Christian tradition, as it simply amounts to confusing Saint Peter with Christ!

On the question of the "needle's eye" (on which I hope you will write an article, as you expressed your intention to do), the use of the word pâsha in this sense is quite remarkable. Reading what you wrote to me on this subject, I immediately thought

immediately of the connection, which you also made later, with the P of the Chi-Rho; this is particularly striking in certain forms resembling the ankh cross, such as (1), used in Egypt in the early centuries of Christianity; and
(2) The "loop of Horus", which sometimes replaces the P, is also related to the pasha in the usual sense of the word (the loop). On the other hand, there is no doubt that this pasha also represents the "vital knot", which plays an important role in certain initiations, particularly in the Compagnonnage (where it is represented by a tie tied in a special way); but these different meanings, far from being incompatible, are in fact quite closely related, although this may not be easy to explain as clearly as it should be...

(1) (2)

The issue of the article for the Polish magazine does not seem likely to be resolved very easily as far as I am concerned; I have not heard anything further from Mr Ian Janmais, but someone I asked to inquire with the editor replied that he would only accept unpublished articles, and I do not see how I could possibly write one in time... Furthermore, I must say that I have received some unfortunate information about how the journal in question is viewed in Poland: everything that appears in it is considered to represent the "Jewish point of view", and this is such a widely held opinion that nothing could change it!

I have just seen posters announcing the sale of Prof. Hocart's furniture; I suppose this means that he must be leaving Egypt soon.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L78

Cairo, 2 May 1939.

Dear Sir,

Some time ago, I received your two letters dated 24 and 27 March, and then, a little later, the issue of The American Scholar containing your article on Vedanta. Thank you very much. Once again, I am very late in responding to your correspondence, and indeed in all my work, due to a severe bout of flu that has left me feeling quite unwell recently, and from which I am still feeling somewhat fatigued.

As for the article on the "Philosophia perennis", I fully understand the interest in my writing it, given the nature of the journal and the type of readers it is aimed at. Furthermore, the fact that there are no strict deadlines also encourages me to accept; I will therefore reply to this effect in the letter I received at about the same time as yours; I will do my best, and I thank you very much for kindly undertaking the translation yourself!

It is interesting that you have been asked to give a lecture at the Catholic University; this seems to indicate that there are far fewer

and preconceived ideas in America than there are in Europe in the corresponding circles...

Mr Préau told me in his last letter that he had sent you his translation of your article on "Buddhist ordination"; perhaps you have already received it by now.

As for folklore, it is true that the question of the "solar hero" is very broad, as you say, and that it would take a volume rather than an article to deal with it... The two other subjects you are considering, that of the "Jâtakas" and that of the "primitive mentality", also seem interesting to me; I can therefore do no better than to leave you the choice between the two, regretting only that, due to lack of time, it is not possible to ask you to deal with both! But couldn't the one you leave out this time be kept for another occasion? For my part, I don't yet know exactly what I'm going to do for this issue, perhaps it will simply be something on the various preconceived ideas involved in the ordinary methods of "folklorists", as there is much to be said on that subject...

I see that the question of the primary meaning of "muni" is decidedly complex; the ideas of "silence" and "solitude" can be considered related, but it seems more difficult to connect them with man and the idea of "inspiration"...

Thank you for the information about Lund's book; I think it must be in Ghyka's books that I saw it cited.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L79

Cairo, 5 May 1939.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 21 April, which I have just received, and thank you in advance for sending the photograph of the "caput angularis".

I will request the six copies of the March issue of "E. T."; it is quite possible that they have been forgotten, as unfortunately this kind of thing happens all too often at Chacornac, and I almost constantly have complaints to pass on about one thing or another!

Of course, I will send Prof. Jurji a copy of the issue containing the review of his book (but it may not be immediately, as I am very behind at the moment); I would just ask you to kindly provide me with his exact address. Based on his name, I believe he must be of Syrian origin.

As for Mr. Eliade, a certain fear of compromising himself, as you say, would fit well with what I have already been told about his character; it is true, moreover, that he is young, and it is possible that he will be less shy once he has established himself in academia...

We would be very grateful if you could write the article for the issue on folklore, despite all the other things you have to do at the moment; if it is not ready until a little later (given the time needed

for translation), it might be preferable for you to send it directly to Mr Préau this time; the issue in question will, of course, be the August-September issue, as always.

As for the Polish newspaper, if you are unable to prepare anything, I do not believe there will be any reason to regret it, and in some respects it might even be better, because from what I have heard, this newspaper has a very unfortunate reputation...

You did not mention "sâkha" referring to the rib of a parasol; this is indeed very significant in relation to the tree.

As for the loop of the P in the Chi-Rho, I agree with you that it is its position at the top of the vertical line that should be taken into consideration.

As for what you say about Janus, it is certainly true that his symbolism has many aspects; we must not forget, however, that he is, in general, much more "lunar" than "solar" (Diana = Dea Iana is his female form; she is also "Janua Coeli" and, in the guise of Hecate, "Janua Inferni"). What you are considering would be a transposition, albeit a legitimate one, to another level; I wonder, on the other hand, if what you are referring to in this regard is a form such as that of the double-headed eagle or the double bird Hamsa-Garuda.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L80

Cairo, 4 December 1939.

Dear Sir,

After so many months, I am finally able to write a little without too much fatigue; this rheumatic crisis has been very long, much longer than the one two years ago; finally, although I am not yet completely recovered, I am feeling much better, and I hope that soon I will no longer feel any effects. I would like to believe that, as for you, your health has been completely restored for some time now.

I have received all your letters (I see that the last one is dated 30 July!), as well as your other items, for which I thank you. -- Regarding the photograph of the cornerstone, how exactly should the reference be indicated? This is not very clear from the letter attached to your article, which only mentions medieval manuscripts without further details.

I have forwarded the address of the American Oriental Society to Études Traditionnelles, requesting that the journal be sent, but so far I do not know what the outcome has been.

The publication of Études Traditionnelles has been delayed by events, as the printing press has been temporarily closed due to a lack of staff. Finally, the issue on folklore, which should have been the August-September issue, has been published (although I have not yet received it). We only need to produce one more issue to finish the year, and then we will try to resume as regularly as possible. As far as I am concerned, I have not yet been able to write anything, but I hope to be able to resume my collaboration from the January issue onwards.

Naturally, I have not been able to write the article I promised for The

American Scholar"; I would be grateful if you would excuse this delay and explain the reason for it; I will try to deal with it as soon as I can. Since you are willing to take care of the translation, would it not be better for me to send the article directly to you, rather than to the magazine, which would have to send it back to you?

I also wanted to talk to you about Twice a Year; I have not heard anything since I received the first issue, and I have never received confirmation of receipt of what I sent; what has become of it?

You mentioned William Blake; I have always had the impression that he was something quite different from a mystic, but without being able to say exactly what he was connected to (apart from the use of some obviously Masonic symbols). I reread his poems while I was ill, and I must say that I am still just as confused; alongside something very clear like the one you quote, there are so many that are incomprehensible! In particular, we need to find the "key" to the extraordinary names he uses, which he cannot have invented purely on a whim; his publishers seem not to have dared to venture any hypotheses on this subject; do you have any information on this?

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L81

Cairo, 1 February 1940.

Dear Sir,

I believe that, despite the delays affecting almost all correspondence at the moment, you must have received the letter I sent you about two months ago. Since then, my condition has continued to improve, albeit rather slowly. While avoiding any excessive fatigue that might cause a relapse, I have finally been able to start working again and write my articles for the January and February issues of Études Traditionnelles.

I recently received a rather surprising letter from Mrs Norman; it seems she had already written to me several months ago, but that letter must have got lost because, as I said, I never received it. She says she cannot publish what I sent her because "each issue is very carefully planned around basic ideas" (?) and she does not intend to deal with the question of individualism. I wonder if there are not other reasons, and if my paper has not more or less offended her own ideas... In any case, she is offering me compensation for the translation, which I naturally accept in principle; but as I have no idea what is reasonable to ask for in such cases, especially in America, I would be grateful if you could settle this with her; I leave it entirely to your discretion. She also asks if there are any other journals in America to which I would like her to send the manuscript; again, not knowing what is possible, I must necessarily rely on your kindness; in any case, you could have the manuscript sent to you and keep it until a favourable opportunity arises. I apologise for causing you all this trouble, and I thank you in advance for everything.

There is something else I would prefer to discuss with you now, although there is still time

time: for this year's special issue of "Études Traditionnelles", we settled on the idea of sacred or traditional games, already seeing the possibility of having several articles on this subject. Naturally, I thought that the article on the symbolism of archery, which you told me you were considering quite some time ago, would be quite appropriate for this occasion; so may I ask you to kindly think about it when you have some free time?

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L82

Cairo, 9 February 1940.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 10 January; I too am very happy to hear from you after so long and to know that you are well now.

I wrote to you again last week and mentioned the story of "Twice a Year"; I won't go back over it, but I see that I am not the only one who found this way of doing things a little strange!

Thank you for the reference concerning the "cornerstone"; I will now be able to address this issue in a future article; there is a lot to say on this subject, if only to explain the common confusion with the "foundation stone"...

I think you have probably already answered the questions that Mr. Préau says he asked you about the translation of your article "Nirvâna, Nibbâna"; there are several words that he found difficult, and I admit that I cannot find a completely satisfactory solution either. He also mentioned your research on royalty and the priesthood, and from what he told me, I hope you will be able to give us something on this subject; it will surely be very interesting, as will "The Kiss of the Sun". Of course, I completely agree with you regarding the error of Evola that you mentioned to me; for him, this is linked to a whole set of highly questionable ideas, which clearly aim to assert the superiority of royalty over the priesthood; he knows very well what I think about this, but I have the impression that he has a "bias" in this regard and that nothing could make him give up this point of view.

Marco Pallis naturally sent me his book; there are indeed parts of it that are very good; I only regret that they are somewhat lost amid the details of a travelogue; but it is true that this will enable it to reach people who would not have read an entirely doctrinal work, and, from what he wrote to me, it seems that this was indeed his intention in mixing these two very different subjects.

As for Blake, I am not at all familiar with Foster Damon's book; Mr Paterson will see if he can find it here in the University library.

I forgot to mention the issue on folklore, which I received quite some time ago; I found your article perfect in every respect. As for Burckhardt's, it is just a pity that, pressed for time, he was unable to develop certain points further, but he tells me he intends to return to them in

other articles. -- Speaking of Burckhardt, here is a question he asked me: "In Romanesque art, we find a plastic motif that is quite frequently seen on Hindu portals; it is a head (often monstrous) that forms, so to speak, the keystone of the arch, from whose teeth emerge two snakes or dragons that identify the two 'sides' of the arch; could this be a symbol of Ganesh? It should be added that the arch decorated with this motif is not always part of a gateway, but more often a kind of triumphal arch crowning the throne of a deity." I have no memory of ever seeing this, so I cannot picture it exactly; because of the snakes, I wonder if it might not be a Garuda head instead; do you know what it is?

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

L83

Cairo, 20 February 1940.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your two letters dated 20 and 23 January, which arrived at the same time. You may now have received the letter in which I mentioned Mrs Norman's letter, which I finally received; as for the one she says she wrote to me last year, it never reached me. I see that she seems to have been a little upset by what you wrote to her; however, it is quite clear that if there has been a "misunderstanding", it is entirely her fault... She says she offered to place the article elsewhere; in fact, she only asked me to suggest a magazine to which I would like her to send it, as if I could know which magazine in America would be likely to accept it! Finally, I can only ask you once again to kindly settle this matter yourself in the best possible way, and I thank you in advance.

As for The American Scholar, it is therefore agreed that I will send you the article directly as soon as I have finally managed to write it; let us hope that it will not take too long, although I am still unable to work as much and as quickly as I would like in order to make up for lost time, as I still have to be careful not to tire myself out too much so as not to risk a relapse...

Thank you for the information about S. Foster Damon's book on William Blake.

I understand that Mr. Préau has received a review of Pallis's book from you; as I had not yet done so myself, that is fine; I still have many reviews to catch up on!

Speaking of Pallis, he wrote to me recently that, in your correspondence with him, you had mentioned the question of English translations of my books and the possibility of having them published by Luzac. We had postponed the matter due to unfavourable circumstances, but we have recently decided to try to resume it without further delay; I will keep you informed of the outcome. I do not know exactly what the situation is in England, but in France, book trade business seems to have recovered more quickly than expected.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

René Guénon

L84

Date unknown, document incomplete

... that there could still be such a genuine countryside in a country as industrialised as the United States!

On the question of "rebirths", I see that we are in complete agreement on the interpretation of the texts to which you refer. As for this case of "memory" that occurred recently in India, I had already seen various articles on the subject; it is quite clear that this is a kind of transfer of a set of psychic elements that have retained exceptional cohesion. A case that seems to be more frequent is that in which similar elements, although generally much more fragmentary, are transmitted by heredity. As for those that manifest themselves in spiritualist séances, it is well understood that they are also of the same order; and they need the support of living human beings (the medium or the assistants, it does not matter) in order to regain an appearance of individual consciousness; but this manifestation is only temporary, whereas in the other case, they have, in a manner of speaking, "incorporated" themselves into an individuality, and therein lies the difference.

What you tell me about these traditional vestiges that you have observed surviving in Maine is truly curious; moreover, I am not surprised that all of this is currently tending to disappear very quickly. I myself have seen very similar things in France, among peasants, either to stop bleeding or to heal various other injuries: sprains or strains, burns, etc.; and the conditions of transmission were much the same; but there too, I believe that this is now being lost.

End of this incomplete text

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***Letters to A. K. Coomaraswamy* (*published in* Cahiers de L'Herne, *1985*)**

Cairo, 7 June 1940

[...] On the question of "dîkshâ", or more precisely, what should or should not be considered an initiation in the strict sense of the word, it is clear that the distinction is not always entirely clear when one wants to go into the details of specific cases. The reasons may, of course, be those you envisage on the one hand, but on the other hand, there are traditions where the distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric is not clearly clear-cut, of so that may be be a multitude of intermediate degrees; on the other hand, rites that were originally initiatory may subsequently have become merely religious, and this impression is particularly strong with regard to many Christian rites; unfortunately, the history of the early days of Christianity is terribly obscure!

As for *upanayana*, the exclusion of women and Shudras is not enough to give it the character of an initiation, since, as I pointed out in my article, Christian ordination, which, at least at present, is certainly not an initiation, also excludes not only women, but also certain

categories of men such as slaves, bastards, and the infirm (it is rather curious, incidentally, that there is almost no difference between the conditions required for this ordination and those for Masonic initiation).

René Guénon

Cairo, 20 December 1945

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 15 November, and a few days ago I received a copy of your letter to Mr Pallis concerning chapter VI of *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*. Thank you for sharing these comments with me. I will see how I can arrange to take them into account. I believe the simplest solution would be to delete a large part of the end of the chapter, i.e. everything concerning Ashoka, as it is hardly possible to introduce considerations that would be too complex and too extensive. I had only modified the passages relating to early Buddhism, not thinking that the rest might also give rise to objections. Finally, as soon as I have examined this, I will send the new text to Mr Pallis so that he can modify the translation accordingly. There is only one point to which I would like to draw your attention: is not the royal consecration conferred on a Shudra (or even more generally on anyone other than a Kshatriya), even in regular forms, rendered invalid by the lack of qualification of the recipient? [...]

René Guénon

Excerpt from a letter, published in* The Doctrine of Sacrifice *by A.K. Coomaraswamy, p. 104

2 November 1945

[...] I recently noticed something that I had never had occasion to notice before, and which seems to me well worth mentioning: it concerns the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes, which bears a striking resemblance to Indra's slaying of Vritra. My attention was drawn to this by an anonymous article in a new magazine *called Dieu Vivant* (Living God); the author places particular emphasis on the most significant points in this regard, which is all the more curious given that he most likely knows nothing about Vedic symbolism, and in any case makes no reference to it whatsoever. Holofernes "holds the waters in reserve" like Vritra, and (I quote the article verbatim), "in order to quench the thirst of Bethulia (a place 'situated on high'), Judith must cut off the head of the keeper of the waters and bring it back in triumph to the city". Moreover, the name Holofernes "is a Persian name that is thought to mean 'serpent'"; and Holofernes, most often regarded as "the image of the Devil", is nevertheless considered by some (notably St. Francis de Sales) as "the symbol of the Divinity" (because "the serpent is historically ambivalent"); it is therefore exactly the Asura in its two opposing aspects. Now, one might wonder what connection Judith could possibly have with Indra, but that too seems quite clear to me: her name is a feminine form of that of Judah, the royal tribe whose emblem is the lion,

represents the "Kshatra [?]" in the Hebrew tradition; in short, the only difference is that Indra (or at least his equivalent) is represented here as acting through his Shakti, which obviously does not change the meaning of the
"myth".

René Guénon

René Guénon to Arturo Reghini

Paris, 4 January 1923;
51, rue St. Louis-en L'Ile (IV°)

Sir,

I must begin by apologising for keeping you waiting so long for my reply, and also by thanking you for your brochure "Noterelle iniziatiche", which you sent me several months ago and for which I was unable to acknowledge receipt, as I did not know your address at the time.

As for your journal, I can only accept in principle an offer of collaboration made to me so kindly, especially as I fully approve of your intention to create a publication that is completely independent of any group or school whatsoever. It is not only in Italy, moreover, that such a publication is lacking. Unfortunately, I cannot promise you very regular contributions, as I am already very busy.

I must now ask for some further explanations. First of all, when do you plan to carry out your project? Do you intend to start publication soon? Secondly, what will be the format and number of pages of the journal? This is so that I know what kind of articles will be most suitable; what should be their approximate average length? Do you prefer short articles, to be published in a single issue, or will you also accept longer studies, even if they can only be published in several issues? I would be grateful if you could answer all these questions when you have a moment, so that I can see what I can do.

I have a fourth volume, Orient et Occident, which is completely ready and will no doubt be published soon (it is now up to the publisher), and I am currently preparing a work on Vedanta.

Please convey my best regards to Armentano and Guerrieri, whom I was very happy to hear about in your letter, and accept my warmest regards.

R. Guénon

Paris, 13 January 1924;
51, rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

This time, I do not wish to take so long to reply to you, especially as I see that you intend to begin publishing your journal very soon. I realise that it would be quite impossible for me to prepare anything in time, but fortunately your proposal has come to my rescue. I therefore gladly accept your suggestion that you begin by publishing a translation of my article on "initiatory teaching"; I believe there will be no problem in removing any indication of date and source, as there is no need for readers to know that this is an old article

old and was not written specifically for the Review.

In general, it seems to me that it would be best for you to translate the articles as you have offered to do; if they were published in French, there would undoubtedly be too many readers who would not fully understand them.

I would like to reiterate how much I approve of your decision to produce a completely independent journal and also of your determination, as I understand it, to exclude any material that is frivolous or uninteresting. I would also like to thank you for your kind intention to publish a study of my works.

I have not received a letter from Mikulski; if he sent it to another address, it is very likely that it will not reach me, and I deeply regret this, as I would have been delighted to hear from him directly. When you next see him, would you be so kind as to tell him this and convey my warmest regards to him as well. If it is not too much to ask, I would like to give you another favour to do for him: our friend Faugeron, who had always kept in fairly regular correspondence with him, has not received any letters for a long time now, and he fears that he may have forgotten to give him his new address when he moved house, so that perhaps letters have been lost or returned. Here is Faugeron's current address: 29, Quai d'Anjou (IV°); would you be so kind as to give it to Mikulski and tell him that he too would be very happy to hear from him? And you can tell him at the same time that, as far as I am concerned, my address has never changed, and that it is exactly the one you wrote to me.

Thank you in advance, dear Sir, and please accept my best regards.

R. Guénon

The last issue of "Gnose" to appear was indeed that of February 1912.

To Dr Arturo Reghini

Paris, 30 January 1924;
51, rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I am taking advantage of the fact that I can finally reply to our friend Mikulski to also reply to your last letter at the same time, and I kindly ask him to forward this letter to you.

In the meantime, I have received the letter sent by Mr Ciro Alvi to Chacornac; it predates my first reply, but it was only forwarded to me after three weeks.

Two or three days ago, as you had informed me, I also received several copies of the journal's circular; I will be able to share them with anyone who might be interested.

It is unfortunate that you are delayed in getting started, and I see that it is not only in France that one is obliged to deal with all sorts of more or less tedious administrative formalities. Anyway, as you say, we must accept it, and it may be better to start with a larger issue.

You are quite right to say that if we were too strict, we would end up alone; in fact, that is more or less what happened to us in the end with "Gnosis", after we eliminated all the troublesome or uninteresting elements; the difficult thing is to find a way to strike the right balance in this regard, but I hope, from what you tell me, that you will be able to achieve this.

As for the explanation you are asking me for, here is how I think we can look at it: like everything that is expression, and therefore manifestation, symbolism must necessarily have an origin; but, on the other hand, as it has a natural foundation, this origin can be confused with the very origin of humanity (and even, in a sense, with that of the world, if we consider the order of nature itself as symbolising the order of principles, as translating or expressing it in a certain way). Therefore, there is perhaps no need to ask about the *historical* origin of symbolism in general; and, moreover, from this historical point of view, it would in any case be an unanswerable question. I do not think we can accept that symbolic expression is the result of some kind of convention (its raison d'être is far too profound for that to be the case), nor that it appeared at a specific time; What may have begun historically is only the use of particular symbols, and even that must go back a long way in most cases, for we find everywhere symbols that are very similar to each other, although they may have changed through adaptation to different times and places.

Please let me know if this explanation is clear enough for you and if it corresponds to what you understood; it is perhaps the word 'origin' that could be misleading; you will see for yourself whether it is appropriate to modify your translation on this point so as not to raise unnecessary questions. Of course, if you require any further clarification, I am always at your disposal to provide it.

Yours sincerely,

R. Guénon

Best regards to Armentano and Guerrieri.

Paris, 19 February 1924;
51, rue St. Louis-en-L'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I have been a little late in replying to your last letter, but you must have thought, not having heard from me, that I had no objections to the translation you suggested for the passage we discussed. I even think that what you added is quite good, and that it will not cause any difficulties.

Let us hope that your problems and delays with transporting the paper and printing will soon be over, and that the first issue will finally be able to appear before the end of this month. I see that it's the same everywhere: I thought my book would be published on 15 February, according to the publisher's promise, but I saw him a few days ago and it seems that

it has now been postponed again until 1 March! Will this at least be the final date?

Although I don't know enough Italian to write it correctly, I understand and read it very fluently, so I will be able to read everything published in Atanòr.

I think I have some notes on Dante's esotericism; if this is of interest to you, as I believe it is, I can organise and develop them when I have some free time, and then send them to you.

Alas! Once again, we cannot consider going to Italy this year; travel is too expensive at the moment. But Mikulski, for his part, had given us hope in the letter he wrote to Faugeron that he might soon have the opportunity to come to Paris; does he still plan to do so? When you see him again, please be so kind as to tell him that, although I have news of him through you, I trust that he will not delay in contacting me directly.

Yours sincerely,

R. Guénon

Paris, 10 March 1924;
51, rue St. Louis-en-L'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I am sending you, a little later than I would have liked, the beginning of my work on Dante. This work is not finished, but I do not want to keep you waiting any longer, and I will send you the rest in due course. In any case, it would certainly be too long to publish all at once; and even if this first part were to take up too much space, you could of course reserve some of it for the next issue.

Thank you for sending me the Nuovo Patto, which arrived safely, and which I will return to you as you requested when I have finished. I read your article with great interest; as you will see, I completely agree with you on the substance of the issue, although there is a difference of opinion that I point out from the outset. On the other hand, I found some interesting considerations on numbers in Prof. Benini's study, which I will use later on. Finally, I have just been sent a paper on Muslim influences in Dante's work, which I will also have to take into account. The subject is far too broad for me to claim to cover it completely, and on many points I will have to limit myself to providing information that may serve as a starting point for further work. There will certainly be much more to say for you or for others who intend to take up the question at a later date.

In the first part, I thought it useful to mention a number of things that are already known, but which I could not refrain from recalling, and which also gave me the opportunity to clarify my view of the question. The rest will undoubtedly contain more genuinely new considerations; in any case, I think that the whole will be of some interest to your readers.

I am very surprised that I have not yet received the first issue of the Review; have you had another unexpected delay? I hope to receive it shortly, and I also hope that you will then be able, as you say, to make up for this delay.

Yours sincerely,

R. Guénon

Paris, 19 June 1924;
51, rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I received your letter last Monday, and the following day, the package containing my manuscript with the translation, as well as the issue of the Rassegna Massonica that you mentioned; thank you very much. I am glad to hear that you have made a full recovery. You are not alone in regretting that you do not have enough time to do everything you would like to do; I am in exactly the same situation.

I will begin by discussing my article; and, first of all, I believe you are correct about the *sortes virgilianae*. I don't know why I wrote *virgiliani* without checking; it seems to me that this form stuck in my mind because I saw it somewhere, but it is probably incorrect, unless *sortes* can be of two genders in Latin, which I don't think is the case. I once had a similar problem with *clypeum* or *clypeus*; I had found both forms and wondered which was correct, but then I realised that both existed.

You did very well to seize the opportunity in the passage where
"Santo Impero" to allude to what you had told me. I am not otherwise surprised by what you tell me this time about Goblet d'Alviella; it only confirms my opinion of him, for, in my view, his mentality is much like that of a 'secular' scholar, and his conception of the 'science of religions' does not differ essentially from that of a Frazer, a Reinach or a Loisy.

As for *Kan*, the connection with German does not seem so implausible to me; there are words there that are similar not only in form but also in meaning, and I think there is also an idea of 'strength' expressed by the Hebrew *Qaïn*. On the other hand, as for Tubal-Cain, it is certain that Fludd, by attributing the invention of music to him, mistakenly confuses him with Jubal; it is also certain that he has often been assimilated to Vulcan, but this may not be so wrong in some respects. In any case, what you tell me about this ancient book of alchemy, which is said to date from the 14th century, is very curious. I too have often wondered when the representation of *the Rebis* with the compass and square first appeared, but I have never been able to find any precise information on this. This representation is found in the figures of Basile Valentin, but I do not know exactly when they were engraved, and I do not think it was before 1600. -Returning to Thubal-Cain, my note is justified by the fact that, in the French rite, it is the password for the 1st degree (instead of the 3rd). The Hebrew dictionary I have does not give an explanation of the name; in any case, even if the translation

Although the ordinary meaning is incorrect, it is nonetheless certain that this meaning has been attributed to it, and it is worth taking this into account.

Issue No. 6 of Atanòr arrived the day after I wrote to you. As you might expect, my only reservations concern Evola's article, but you yourself have expressed them in the best possible way. Why complicate matters with all these considerations borrowed from German philosophy? I prefer the assessment of Fichte in the review of the book that has just been translated into Italian; it seems entirely accurate to me. I wanted to ask you what the Lega Teosofica is; is it a branch of the S. T. or a dissident organisation? From your letter, I wonder if it might not be connected to Steiner; and yet, in that case, would it have kept that name? Steiner gave his organisation the title "Anthroposophical Society". What you wrote about "contemplation" is quite good; I don't think I would change a word.

The texts you quote in your article in the Rassegna Massonica are very interesting, and I was completely unfamiliar with them. The lecture on the origins of the Scottish Rite is also interesting; no doubt you translated it yourself. If you could send me the rest when it is published, I would be very grateful. Did you notice that *Juana* was printed twice instead of *Janua*?

Thank you for giving me Armentano's address; I will try to write to him in due course.

Thank you also for bringing Kremmerz's article on "Spiritualist Error" to my attention, which I was completely unaware of. I will write to Prof. Banti to ask him for the two issues of

"O Thanatos" that you mention. I have known Cramerez by name for a long time, but I have never had any specific information about him. Could you give me some more details about this Hermetic Order of which he is the head? Did he found it? - You mention Mondo Occulto; was there anything about me in that magazine? I only ever received one cover featuring an advertisement for L'Erreur spirite. - I noticed in the latest issue that the name Kremmerz had disappeared from the list of contributors to Atanòr, and I wanted to ask you if there was any particular reason for this. The same goes for Russo Frattasi; is he also a member of the same school?

As for the other sentence you drew my attention to, your translation is entirely accurate; but in this case, in French, one can say either "c'est" or "ce sont"; on this point, therefore, we are both correct.

As for the interpretation of the word *Altri*, I am quite sure I have seen it somewhere, but unfortunately I have been unable to find it again. The Latin words were indeed the ones I gave, but with rather fanciful endings. As for the first word, it was spelled "Arrago", and the author, not knowing what it meant, wondered whether it should be read as "Aragon" or whether it referred to the ship.

"Argo", two hypotheses that did not fit in with the rest of the interpretation, whereas if we read "Arrigo", there is no longer any difficulty with the meaning. Now, why does this name have an Italian form? Firstly, the letter A would not give a word that could be pronounced; and secondly, it may be that the form

"Arrigo" may have been specially adapted by the members of the "Fede Santa". Moreover, I believe that other examples of combinations of elements from different languages could be found, and that there is no reason to be overly surprised by this.

Naturally, the linguistic equivalent *of agni* in Latin is *agnis* and not *agnus*; the change in the initial vowel is insignificant and occurs frequently (for example, in Sanskrit *antar* and Latin *inter*). Now, I am not saying at all that the early Christians were familiar with the Sanskrit term; there is only a correspondence or concordance here that in no way implies direct communication, especially since the connection could very well have been made between the Latin words themselves, *agnus* and *ignis*; there are more extraordinary ones, which do not imply an etymological link either. Moreover, there is more than just the verbal relationship; in Hindu symbolism, the ram is attributed to Agni; and there are many considerations to be developed on all this, which I may be able to do one day.

I now come to your translation, to point out a few inaccuracies in detail that I have noticed; I think my letter will reach you early enough for you to correct them; and besides, there are some that you may have noticed yourself.

First, on p. 1, is there no other word in Italian than *mago* to render "magician" as well as "mage"? In French, there is a big difference in meaning between these two words.

You were right to add the note on p. 2; I had thought of it myself after sending you the article. The Latin name for the feast is "dominica in palmis"; but the palm also has the same symbolism, as can be seen in particular in the palm of the martyrs. When transcribing the French name, you wrote "la dimanche des Rameaux" (*Palm Sunday*), but it should *be* "*il*" (or *"il*"), since dimanche is masculine in French.

The name of the Spanish author cited on pp. 3 and 4 is *Asin*, not *Asén* Palacios. It is the acute accent on *the i* that may have confused you, and perhaps also my poor spelling of the *e*.

In the second half of p. 5, it should read: "nel viaggio notturno di Mohammed", and not "di Mohyiddin"; this is obviously a distraction.

At the beginning of p. 6, I think it is better to write *Buddhismo* than *Buddismo*, as the former is the only correct form from the point of view of Sanskrit transcription.

Towards the top of p. 7, it should read: "le teorie indiane *dei mondi*" instead of "del mondo".

On p. 13, you wrote *Roberto* instead of *Rodolfo* Benini.

In the parenthesis at the bottom of p. 12, it should read: "*alcuni 10 solamente"*, not *11*.

P 15, " " in " " a " " sentence " cited " from " " Benini, *" " somiglianza "* a " été " replaced " by *rassomiglianza*, which, incidentally, does not change the meaning.

On p. 22, there is once 55 for 65, and also, in Latin letters, *LUX* for *LVX;* you will surely have noticed this.

In the penultimate line on p. 30, it seems to me that "si svilupparono" should be used instead of "*si sviluppano"*; the meaning of the sentence requires the future tense.

Finally, on p. 32, "propensione" seems to me to be a possible translation for "attrait", although

it is not quite the same thing; I do not know if a better equivalent could be found.

It is unfortunate that your collection of "Gnosis" is incomplete, especially since I have no idea how to obtain the missing issues for you.

In fact, several years ago, I was forced to get rid of all the separate issues because they took up too much space. As for the complete collections, for the same reason, I sold them all to Chacornac; your friend will therefore have to contact him to obtain one; he sells them for 20 francs. If by chance I were able to find the issues you mention, rest assured that I would think of you.

I have been preparing the shipments of Orient et Occident over the last few days, so I think you will receive your copy very soon.

Thank you for your intention to discuss my works at length in
Atanòr on this occasion. I am enclosing with this letter a few sheets from the publisher, which you can use to promote the book among your friends and acquaintances.

Please accept my warmest regards.

R. Guénon

Paris, 13 July 1924; 51,
rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile (lV°)

Dear Sir,

I have received your two letters, as well as the July issue of Atanòr, which arrived the day before yesterday. I see that the few minor corrections I requested have been made; thank you for that. There was no great inconvenience in cutting my article at that point; the same cannot be said for yours, and it is certain, as you say, that the intention is not very clear when stopping at that point; I will therefore wait for the August-September issue to discuss this with you further.

Now, as for Aroux's quotation relating to *tale* and *altri*, you would do well to add it as a footnote, as you suggest; indeed, I would certainly have done so myself if I had had it at my disposal when I wrote my article.

Thank you for your comments on my book; I am pleased to see that we still agree on the essentials. As for your remark about the possible persistence of a Western tradition, it is very apt, and it corresponds to a question that concerns me as much as it does you: if there are still authentic representatives of this tradition, how can we establish relations with them? This is a difficulty that you might be better placed than I to resolve, because intellectually I am much closer to the East than to the West. Would you mind telling me what you think about this? Incidentally, I alluded to all this in my book; when you have had a chance to reread it at your leisure, I hope you will talk to me about it again.

I finally wrote to Armentano a few days ago; I think he will be sure to give me his news as he promised me before he left.

About a fortnight ago, I received a card from Mikulski, sent from Capri; he

said he had been very tired due to overwork, which explains his silence, and that he had been forced to take some time off; he must have returned to Rome on 3 July.

Prof. Banti sent me the issues of O Thanatos that I had asked him for; I have not yet had time to read them. From what I have seen in skimming through them, Kremmerz does not seem to have understood my point of view very well, while acknowledging that "The Spiritist Error" is a book quite different from anything else usually published against spiritualism. If he had read my "Introduction", which he seems unaware of, he might have understood me a little better. In any case, he seems to attribute to me a specifically "French" point of view, which is not mine at all and is even completely outside my intentions. Moreover, he wants to be witty in a way that is not always very successful. Finally, he seems particularly attached to the idea of reincarnation, and I believe that there is nothing more unfortunate for someone who claims to be esoteric.

I went to Chacornac to ask him to send your friend the "Gnosis" collection; he promised to do so immediately. I also gave him your address so that he could send you his catalogues. Fortunately, he had a few loose issues, among which were precisely those you were missing; he gave them to me (I did not tell him that they were not for me), and I sent them to you on Friday; perhaps you have already received them by now.

I also did not forget to mention to Chacornac the book you asked me to inquire about; he could not tell me anything right away, except that there was a French translation of this work, but he promised to look it up in the catalogues and bibliographies; I am due to see him again in a few days, and if he gives me any information, I will pass it on to you in my next letter.

Now, I must tell you what Chacornac told me: he was told, regarding the cover design of "Atanòr", that there were *three* errors (but he could not tell me which ones) in the Pythagorean symbol that appears on it, errors which were probably *intentional;* and above all, it was pointed out to him that the hand placed above this symbol is *hooked*, which apparently indicates all sorts of diabolical intentions! He did not tell me who he heard this from, but I had no trouble guessing that it could only have come from Bricaud. I therefore think that we should expect some kind of attack from that quarter, especially as the said Bricaud has had it in for me for a very long time.

On the other hand, Chacornac claims to have a personal grievance against Alvi, because the latter published without his permission a translation of a work by Eliphas Lévi which, according to him, belongs to him (it must be the Livre des Splendeurs, as I believe the others were published by Alcan). I want you to be aware of all this, although it may not be necessary to attach too much importance to it.

To my great regret, I will not be able to send you a review of Vulliaud's book in time for it to appear in the August-September issue. I will certainly not have time to read these two large volumes before the end of the month; perhaps I will manage it during the holidays. In any case, you can count on me to do so, but I dare not promise you a specific date. I plan to

leave Paris in about ten days; but before I leave, I want to finally finish my work on the Vedanta, which I had been forced to put aside completely for several months; it was only a week ago that I was able to get back to it.

What is this "Neotemplarism" mentioned in "O Thanatos", to which you alluded in the penultimate issue of "Atanòr"? Is it an invention of Sacchi's?

If Frosini publishes a new magazine, there will surely be no shortage of nonsense to point out!

As for the "Prince of Mercy", I have little information other than what I have given in my article and what is contained in Vuillaume's Manual. I do not know if Ragon gave an opening and closing ritual, and I wonder where he might have done so; although I have a good part of his rituals (which, incidentally, contain some highly questionable ideas), I am missing the one for Kadosch, but I think it contains only a simple analysis of the eleven preceding degrees, without any ritual instructions, as is the case in the Rose-Croix ritual for degrees 4 to 17. On the other hand, what is certain is that Goblet d'Alviella's Buddhist interpretation is entirely fanciful; the other name for the degree, that of "Trinitarian Scot", is enough to prove this. The analogy between the names "Prince of Mercy" and "Lord of Compassion" is very superficial; moreover, even from a purely historical point of view, it is difficult to see how any real Buddhist influence could have been introduced here. The fascination that Buddhism exerts on the minds of all Orientalists and "historians of religions" is truly extraordinary. Send me a copy of your work when it is ready; I will give you my honest opinion, and if I see any additions or modifications to be made, rest assured that I will not fail to point them out to you.

I look forward to receiving your note on the two solstice "doors"; I have some rather curious data on this subject, and if I ever manage to organise it, I may be able to use it for Atanòr.

Please accept my warmest regards.

R. Guénon

Paris, 16 November 1924;
51, rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I have received your letters and various items; this very morning I received your collective card, for which I would ask you to thank all the signatories on my behalf.

When I wrote to Mikulski, I did not think it would take me so long to send you my article; but since my return here, I have been disturbed by numerous visits, and, moreover, I have been quite ill with the flu lately; I therefore ask your kind forgiveness. I hope that this package will arrive by the 20th, as you requested.

The article may be too long to be published in one go; in that case,

you could easily split it in two. If you have enough time to send me a copy of the translation, as you did for the study on Dante, I would be very grateful. In any case, I would ask you to kindly return the manuscript to me so that I can share it with some friends who do not understand Italian.

I would also ask you to send a copy of the issue(s) of Atanòr containing this article to Mr Ferdinand Ossendowski, c/o Mr Robert Renard, 25, rue Nicolo, Paris (XVI).

When I saw Ossendowski, I had the distinct impression that if he had been welcomed so readily in certain places, it was because he had been made, quite unbeknownst to him, to play the role of a kind of "liaison officer"; but, naturally, I did not want to write that in my article. There are other points on which I can give you further explanations in a future letter, but it is a pity that we cannot meet, as that would make things much easier.

For today, as I am writing to you in a bit of a hurry, I will move straight on to the other matters I need to discuss with you.

First of all, I would like to thank you very much for having my books purchased by the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele; this is an excellent way to make them known.

Thank you also for quoting me as you did in your article in Vita Italiana. The article is very good throughout; the tone is very moderate and I do not think it will offend anyone. So I do not really understand the hesitations and reservations of the magazine's management; it seems that your true intentions have not been fully understood. It is like people who, when you talk about the constitution of the intellectual elite, imagine that it is about forming a society! I had already encountered a similar misunderstanding, which is why I took care to explain myself clearly on this point in Orient et Occident.

You see that I was not mistaken when I told you this summer, based on what Chacornac had told me, that we should expect some kind of attack from Bricaud. It's always the same old stories, and I think we would be wrong to worry about them. The "Turbine" affair is, apart from the attacks against you that have been added to it, simply a rehash of what Bricaud had already published about two years ago in his "Annales Initiatiques"; I was never able to obtain a copy, but I later saw a reproduction in the Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secrètes. Of course, if you have the opportunity to write in the
Turbine, you can respond as you see fit, but I believe it is better not to appear to attach more importance to these people than they actually have; it would be giving them too much credit to respond to them directly. As you will see, I simply added a few lines at the end of my article, and I think that is sufficient as far as I am concerned. As for the rest, whatever you do will certainly be fine; you can very well mention me in
"Turbine" without dwelling too much on all the uninteresting gossip from Bricaud and Co. Are Origene and Minaci the same person?

Still on the subject of "Turbine", I saw some articles by Dr. Ferrua; shortly before the war, he had founded in England a so-called "Reformed Initiatic Order of

Rose-Croix"; I do not know what became of this organisation, which must not have been very serious and which, from what I knew at the time, seems to me to have been rather "commercial" in nature. In any case, the articles I have just read are filled with the most ordinary "scientistic" spirit.

I do not believe that Mrs. Blavatsky ever spoke of Agartha, but she does mention somewhere a city called Shamballa, which was located near the Gobi Desert and is said to have disappeared underground. You will also see what I say about her
"Great White Lodge".

Like you, I have long wondered where the story of Tubal-Cain's appearance to Hiram might have come from, especially since I have never seen any real mention of the legend of Hiram in "Adoptive Masonry". When you asked me for information on this subject, I remembered something Faugeron had told me, and I asked him to check it out. Here is what I found: the story in question is found in a tale by Gérard de Nerval entitled "The Queen of Sheba and King Solomon", or "The Queen of the Morning" (*sebah* means "morning" in Arabic). Gérard de Nerval (who was also a Freemason) claims to have heard this story during his travels in the East; there must be some truth in it, because the Muslim elements found in it cannot be explained otherwise; but it is likely that he has "embellished" it somewhat. In any case, this work was printed in 1850; it therefore predates that of Saint-Albin, and there is every reason to believe that it is the true source from which the latter drew his story, which others then repeated after him without checking its origin, as often happens.

What you tell me about the etymology of *caelum* is very interesting; I did not know that the form *caelare* was used for *celare*. Is it the oldest? In that case, the connection with the Greek ουρανοσ is not purely accidental;
in fact, the latter word is identical to the Sanskrit *Varuna*, and the root *var* (which
change very easily into *ur*) means "to cover"; there is a very close relationship between this meaning and that of "*to hide"*.

Frosini's bulletin seemed to me to be rather empty in terms of ideas; he seeks above all to justify his successive changes of attitude; what I cannot quite understand is his insistence on claiming allegiance to d'Annunzio. What is also curious is that he continues to boast about his connections with the so-called "Universal Masonry", which you and I knew only too well in the past; it is extraordinary that there are still people who are impressed by this! With his title of
"Grand Hierophant" and his "Great Star of Sirius", he must be laughed at in many circles.

Has no other issue of the Rassegna Massonica appeared since the July-August issue that I received during the holidays? As for the date of J. Molay's death, the day may be debatable, but the year is surely 1314, not 1313.

I am not surprised that you are having some difficulty finding serious contributors; when one does not want to accept just anything, it is always like that, and I knew something about that in the days of "Gnosis". I hope to receive the issue you mentioned soon. I see that, like me, you are difficult to satisfy with your writing; but I am convinced that your article is better than you say it is

; anyway, I will talk to you about it next time.

What are we to make of this supposed discovery of the works of Titus Livius, which caused such a stir a while ago? Is it simply a hoax, or is there more to it than that? If you have an opinion on the matter, I would be grateful if you would share it with me.

Dr Peyre wrote to me to say that he was very pleased with Atanòr and had taken out a subscription. Has Mr de Giorgio written to you? I also recently had the opportunity to recommend Atanòr to a Spaniard, Mr Juan de Nogales, to whom I also gave your address.

Please accept my best regards.

R. Guénon

Paris, 29 November 1924;
51, rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I have received your two letters, the first of which arrived at the same time as my own, along with the magazine Gerarchia, and finally, just three or four days ago,
two copies of Atanòr.

First of all, I must thank you for the kind and complimentary words you wrote about me in your article on Orient et Occident, as well as for the review itself, which is entirely accurate and conveys my thoughts very well. I would have been very surprised if this had not been the case, which is why I told you that you were being too hard on yourself when you wrote to me saying that you were not satisfied with it.

I suspected that my article would be too long to appear in one go, but that doesn't matter; it can easily be divided up. In your entire translation, I found only two words that do not seem accurate to me; that is very little. On page 5 of the translation, note 1 should read: venuta *al pensiero* and not *alla penna* di alcune persone; in fact, Maritain, whom I was thinking of in particular here, made the comment in question orally, but he did not write it himself; It was Frédéric Lefèvre who noted it in the "Nouvelles Littéraires" in the account of our interview with Ossendowski last July. Then, on p. 14, note 2, it should be: *intesa* (understood) and not *estesa* (extended) nel suo senso superiore. - Now, two or three small details: p. 9 note 2 AVM and not AUM, since at the time when the symbol in question was used (prior to the 15th century), the form U did not yet exist, V being then, like I, indifferently a vowel and a consonant. - On the same page, *Swayambhû* should have a *short a* (without accent); and *a* only becomes long in the derivative *Swâyambhuva*. - On the other hand, long *a's* should be used in *Dwâpara* (p. 12, note 2) and *Râma* (p. 16, note 1).

Regarding Sanskrit words, I would like to point out a few that have been significantly distorted, probably by the printers, in the article "Yoga ed arte": p. 329, *e Ram* for *ekam;* p. 330, *Dyama* for *Dhyâna*, and, a little further on, a bizarre distortion of the name *Çankarâchârya*, not to mention *Buddho* repeated several times instead of *Buddha*. Finally, towards the beginning of p. 331, there is a name that I

could not understand: *Hsich-Ho;* it could be a somewhat altered Chinese name, but it is certainly not an Indian name. - Regarding the article itself, I have only one reservation: what the poet or artist may achieve unconsciously (or subconsciously) in certain cases is not *Yoga* in the true sense of the word, but only a preliminary stage. The article on the "Sepher Ietsirah" contains some very uneven parts; it seems that the author is afraid of compromising himself by making too clear statements; is this impression justified?

What you replied to Minaci and others seems to me quite sufficient, at least for the moment. So *Thanatos* no longer appears? For the article on
"Gerarchia", you would do well to respond, for this may be the subject of a more interesting discussion than the gossip of others. Whoever wrote this article clearly shows, towards the end, that he has not understood the essential distinction between initiatory and metaphysical knowledge and profane knowledge (when he speaks of "una nuova Accademia", etc.), and also that he knows nothing about Eastern doctrines: his classification of "mystical" and "moral" works is rather amusing!

You may be right in wanting to publish "Atanòr" every two months in 64 pages; this way, the articles will be less fragmented. If you part ways with Alvi, don't you think he will make enemies for you over the title, because of his publishing house?

I hadn't thought about what you say about the "timor panicus", but the connection is very likely. As for the name you were looking for, it is Melchizedek; I am surprised you didn't find it in the passage where "Justice" and "Peace" are mentioned. You came close to it, however, by thinking of Abraham; but in reality it is a power greater than that of Abraham, since it confers upon him a true investiture.

I am not familiar with Slowatsky's book on shamans; what is its exact title? As for Bulwer-Lytton, he was inspired by ancient American traditions, according to which a certain human race came from inside the earth, where some of them remained; but this seems to have no connection with the question of Agartha.

For Tubal-Cain, I had only thought of ordinary Masonry, not that of Cagliostro; I do not have the entire collection of "Initiation", but when I have some free time, I will see if I have the issues containing the rituals in question. It was not Papus who had the manuscript, but Marc Haven; perhaps he still has it. In any case, I am convinced that Saint-Albin's direct source is indeed Gérard de Nerval's account; now, it is not unlikely that Nerval knew Cagliostro's ritual and took some elements from it to add to what he had gathered in the East.

I am delighted to hear of your intention to come to Paris next spring; let us hope that nothing happens in the meantime to prevent you from carrying out this plan.

Please accept, as always, my warmest regards.

R. Guénon

Mr. de Giorgio writes to me that he is a subscriber to "Atanòr".

Paris, 6 April 1925;
51, rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I received your letter and the package containing my manuscript with the copy of the translation about two weeks ago. I apologise for not having been able to reply sooner; the fault lies with the printers who, after keeping me waiting for several months, set to work with such speed that I had to spend all my days correcting proofs, without being able to take a moment to attend to anything else. Finally, if they manage to make up for lost time, there is no reason to complain; I think my two volumes will be ready for publication in about a month.

Only last night did I have the opportunity to read your translation, which is excellent as always, and in which I found only three minor inaccuracies (or at least, what appear to me to be inaccuracies). The first, incidentally, is merely a simple oversight: it is the first reference indicated on p. 8 of the translation; the passage concerning Descartes is T. II, p. 235 and not 285. At the top of p. 17, you have rendered "envisagé" as "intravisto"; although this word has the same meaning in Italian as its French equivalent "entrevu", it only conveys the idea of imperfect and distant knowledge, which would be contrary to my intention in writing the passage in question. - Finally, near the beginning of p. 18, there is this: "le due vie che..., e che sotto forma exoterica *era rappresentato"*; the plural should be used, since this refers to *le due vie*. - That is all I have found; as you can see, it is very little.

As for the question of the typeface in which the article should be set, it is not of great importance, and I will not be at all upset if you use a smaller typeface; I even think that this is much better than being forced to publish the article in two parts.

The latest issue of Ignis arrived two days ago; it does indeed look better than the previous one. I saw that you included the errata from my previous article, and I thank you for that.

Minaci's letter proves that at least he is acting in good faith, and we can only congratulate ourselves on this first result of the denunciation of Sacchi's plagiarism; I very much doubt that the latter will be able to justify himself.

I had not seen what you tell me about the American Methodists, but I am not surprised; it is quite in keeping with the mentality of those people!

I hope you find the Hebrew characters in Florence, where you must be at the moment, and where I am sending you this letter according to the instructions you gave me. If you go to Bologna and see Gallo, please give him my best regards and apologise for not having written to him since I received a letter from him so long ago; I shall try to do so in the near future, but I have a lot of correspondence to catch up on.

What you say about Tahra Bey is exactly what I thought from the beginning, and I am glad that you did not get involved with him. What is surprising is that so many people are attached to him, but they are probably

attracted by the phenomena and probably do not concern themselves much with doctrinal questions.

The Ch. Bosse bookshop, 16-18, rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie (IV°), currently has, it seems, many interesting books on Hermeticism; you could write to them, giving your address and asking them to send you their catalogues. Faugeron works at this bookshop, and he has arranged to have the address appear on his publications, as it would have been difficult for him to sell them from his home.

We will leave the day after tomorrow for Blois (74, rue du Foix), and we will return here on 20 April; I hope that you will be able to come to Paris around that time, and also that I will be a little more relaxed than I have been lately. The housing situation is still very difficult here; it is not like it was when Mikulski was here, and with the exhibition about to open, it is likely to become even more complicated. Anyway, we will talk about all this again.

I am writing to you in haste, and I may have forgotten to reply to some of your points; I hope you will forgive me.

Please accept my warmest regards.

R. Guénon

Paris, 21 April 1925;
51, rue St. Louis-en-L'Ile (IV°)

Dear Sir,

I have received your two letters, the first in Blois and the second here, where we arrived yesterday as I had told you. Just now, I have also received the Era Nuova that you mentioned; printed matter always takes longer to arrive than letters.

I hasten to reply to you regarding the error you pointed out to me, which had escaped my notice; but the correction you made is quite correct. Indeed, this is exactly what I wrote:

... moreover, Malaki, "my messenger" (that is, God's messenger, or "the angel in whom God dwells" *Maleak ha-Elohim*), is an anagram of Michael.

Therefore, there should be no parentheses before *Maleak ha-Elohim*, which is the Hebrew equivalent of the words immediately preceding it in quotation marks.

I regret that I have nothing to send you to fill the few pages you still have left; but at the moment I have absolutely nothing prepared and I cannot find the time to do anything.

I am waiting for the final proofs of my book on *Vedanta*, and I hope it will be ready for publication early next month. As for the study on Dante, I think it will be out in the next few days.

I was unaware of Steiner's death; I think you would do well to publish an article about him, stating clearly what you think, without worrying too much about other people's opinions.

As for Minaci, we'll have to see if he is capable of writing interesting articles for you; unfortunately, it is often very difficult not to offend someone when you

does not want to accept publishing just anything.

I have not yet been able to write to Gallo; I thought I would take advantage of the holidays to catch up on my correspondence, which I had neglected due to proofreading, but I had too many other things to do, and those few days passed very quickly.

I know the Revue Juive only by name; it seems to me that it has not been in existence for very long. As for Symbolisme, I have not seen it for years; Wirth used to send it to me, but he stopped without my knowing why.

As for Hebrew characters, I had an idea: could you find some in Livorno, which is a very important Jewish centre? I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that if they can be found anywhere in Italy, it must be there. In many cases, it is annoying to be able to provide only a transcription; it is true that this is still better than creating fanciful and indecipherable characters with combinations of lines, as was done in the past in the
"Voie".

I have not heard of this German who is currently in Paris and who is experimenting with reading hidden writings, except from you; where did you see the report of these experiments?

Mr. de Giorgio asks me what value Evola's translation of the Tao might have; I am not familiar with it, but from what you have told me, I am wary of it, since the author does not know the language. Speaking of Evola, what is the status of his work on Tantra? It will undoubtedly be a more or less arranged reproduction of the works of Sir John Woodroffe; the most unfortunate thing is that he does not know Sanskrit either, and what is even more peculiar is that he makes unbelievable mistakes when writing in English, which is his own language.

It seems that there is another Italian translation of the Tao by Evans; are you familiar with it?

I very much regret that your trip to Paris has been postponed again; I hope, however, that you will be able to make it fairly soon, in any case before July, when we will be away for the summer holidays.

I have not heard from Mikulski since he added a few words to one of your letters; he told me, however, that he would write to me soon. What has become of him? Please give him my regards when you have the opportunity, and also to Guerrieri if, as I imagine, you still see him from time to time. Have you heard from Armentano?

Please accept my warmest regards.

R. Guénon

Cairo, 19 April 1935

Dear Sir,

Shortly after writing to you, I received a letter from Mikulski, giving me the explanations you mentioned, as well as the information concerning Fidi

(which I had also asked you for, but which I had had to ask him for in an earlier letter). Perhaps he told you that he wrote to me, if you have had the opportunity to see him since then, although he too seems to be very busy despite the fact that he is now supposed to be retired...

I read your book with interest, and it seems very good to me; there is certainly nothing in the hypotheses you make to arrive at this reconstruction that is not entirely plausible; and the connection to cosmological theories, etc., while only indicated, is particularly important.

Allow me to point out a small detail, which is only a minor detail and must be due to an oversight: I do not believe that one can say "flaming star" in English
"flaming star", or at least I have never seen this expression anywhere. We say
"flaming sword", but "blazing star", whereas in Italian and French there is only one word for both.

I have written a review that will appear in the May issue of "Voile d'Isis"; this is in anticipation of an article that I have been planning to write for some time now on a few points specifically related to Pythagorean geometry, the Tetraktys, etc., and in which I will certainly have the opportunity to quote you.

I hope that, despite your busy schedule, you will be able to get back to me soon.

With warm regards.

R. Guénon

Cairo, 25 April 1935

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 14 April, which crossed with the note I wrote to you last week in which I mentioned your book. I do not think there are any mathematical errors, and besides, as you say, it would be very surprising if no one had noticed them yet. nor am I surprised by the objections raised against you and the prejudices you face; this is quite in line with what we are used to... But it is indeed the points you raise that are, from our point of view, the most important, and it is these that I intend to return to in an article; which is why I did not dwell on them in the report, as I was keen not to delay it. Anything that can help to restore the ancient notion of 'sacred science' is certainly very significant, even though few people understand it. I too regret that we are unable to meet to discuss all this at greater length...

According to what Mikulski told me, the Fidi company still exists, and he even gave me its current address (Via Borgazzi, 4, Milan); but it is really strange that they do not reply to letters. In any case, I agree with you that there is not much hope for the settlement of royalties!

I read Buonaiuti's book; it is always interesting to know a little about all this, but there are really no profound ideas in it; it remains rather vague.... As for "...", I haven't had time to read it yet, so I'll talk to you about it another time. I always have to

start by looking at the books and journals for which I have to write reviews, which sometimes forces me to put off the rest for a while. As for the other book you mentioned and which I did not find in the package, since you have not mentioned it again, I assume that it has not been lost and that you simply did not include it.

As for the Polaires affair, what you tell me about the holder of the "method" does not surprise me either; my impression for a long time has been that all the people in this group are more or less in the same situation, and in the past, a few words from Ar had already aroused my suspicions on this subject; multiple connections have only confirmed them since then. As for the question of the oracle itself, I agree with you that there is something there, but I must say, something
"sinister" in both senses of the word.

As for the attacks against me, you have understood very well that there is something else at work here beyond outward appearances; the most curious thing is that it seems to come from all sides at once, even the most opposed; but behind all this, there is something truly 'diabolical', and it goes even further than you can imagine. To get an idea of this, you can carefully reread the answers contained in my reports and also what concerns the 'counter-initiation', the 'seven turns of the devil', etc. All these things are, in fact, very closely related; the rest are only more or less unconscious instruments, but sometimes all the more dangerous because of their very unconsciousness... - Certainly, I am much more at peace here; moreover, during my last year in Paris, life there had already become almost impossible, and it would undoubtedly be even worse now. It is impossible to tell you everything I have discovered since then and how many so-called friends have gradually revealed their true colours...

Warm regards.

R. Guénon

Cairo, 29 September 1933.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I received the proofs for pages 97 to 158, and I am writing to you immediately after finishing reading them. -- In general, I find what relates to the question of castes, and also to that of professions, to be very good; what I find noteworthy relates only to minor details.

Regarding the note on page 102, I wonder if you are aware that the real etymology of Montjoie is Mons Jovis; I am pointing this out to you just in case.

In the note on page 106, there is an error regarding the derivation of the name Arthur, which does not come from the root ar, but from the word arth, the Celtic name for the bear (Greek ∝ρχτοζ, Sanskrit riksha); and Arthur's name is essentially identical to that of the star Arcturus; the symbolism of the bear is, moreover, essentially Hyperborean.

The word Karma simply means "action" (either in the general sense or specifically in the sense of ritual action); I therefore do not think that Karma can be said to be a "law" (p. 109): action has laws (expressing its relationship with the effects it produces), but it is not itself a law. -- Nor does it seem possible to me to translate Karma as "destiny" (p. 125): destiny may be determined by action, but it is not action itself.

I was not familiar with the oracle you refer to at the beginning of page 116; it is interesting because of the connection you point out with regard to the Kali Yuga. Would you be able to tell me more precisely when and under what circumstances this oracle was pronounced?

I would like to point out a fact that supports what you say on page 120: in the special language of the Compagnonnage, the word "vocation" is always used in the sense of "profession": instead of asking someone what their profession is, they are asked what their vocation is.

Regarding pages 121-122, I am surprised that you did not specifically mention the role of Janus (who was also the god of initiation) as patron of the "Collegia fabrorum". -- A remark about the "dies natalis": in Islam, all brotherhoods also celebrate the birth (mûlid) of their founder; what is rather curious is that in Christianity, on the contrary, the feast of a saint is always the commemoration of his death, with one exception: the nativity of Saint John the Baptist, which took the place of the feast of Janus on the summer solstice.

One point on which I cannot agree with you is with regard to early Buddhism (p. 128): on the contrary, it had a democratic and egalitarian character, since it formally rejected the distinction between castes; it was only in later forms (especially outside India) that there was a return to concepts more in line with traditional orthodoxy; what you say about nirvana is no less accurate.

I don't quite understand what is meant by "Wildes Hur" (p. 131), and it seems to me that this needs to be explained a little further. I don't know

why it reminds me of certain fantastical stories of "night hunts" that I have often heard; is this comparison justified?

As for the interpretation of the Templar seal (note p. 132), you may be right: however, there is one objection: the two knights are armed, which would seem to indicate that they are both engaged in combat; Krishna, driving Arjuna's chariot, is unarmed.

Unfortunately, I do not have the text of the Bhagavad-gītā here, so I cannot verify whether passage 3.45 (pp. 132-133) is indeed the one I am thinking of; but it reminded me of a misinterpretation I had noticed in Senart's translation: Kâmarûpa does not mean "in the form of desire", but "who takes the form he desires", or, in other words, "who changes form at will". -- In passage 3, 38 (pp. 135-136), the word peccato strikes me as a little odd: one can certainly speak of "fault", but the idea of "sin" is hardly in the spirit of Hindu doctrine...

Not only does Islamic tradition give a very high spiritual rank to warriors killed in jihad, but there is also the special feature that they are not considered to be truly dead; I must say that this is a point that is rather difficult to explain clearly.

Someone recently wrote to me saying that they had seen the rune (which you mention in the note on p. 138) on the flag of a paramilitary group in Berlin; it is likely that its use in this context is related to the meaning you indicate. Incidentally, I have been told that Hermann Wirth's works are currently very popular in Germany.

The name of the Templars' standard (note on p. 139) is spelled Beaucéant, with a c and not an s; it even seems that the original spelling was Boucéan; the origin of this name is completely obscure, and I have seen no satisfactory explanation for it.

Regarding the note on page 141, there was nevertheless a link between the Greek cities of a different nature from those you mention: the Delphic Amphictyony; perhaps it would be worth mentioning this.

Regarding your very accurate observations on page 143, there is an expression that has become commonplace today when referring to war, which you have not noted, and which is nevertheless particularly significant: that of "human material"!

As for the priestly dances in Rome (note on page 150), it seems to me that, in addition to those of the Lupars and the Arvales, we should add those of the Salians; the name of the latter is even generally derived from salire or saltare. -- I would like to point out, incidentally, that in the same note, the name of Djelaleddin Er-Rumi has been horribly mangled.

Without wishing to point out printing errors, there is one that I must bring to your attention because, as it appears in a sentence in French, you might overlook it: in the first quotation in the note on page 97, it should be craint and not crient; this completely changes the meaning... -- There is also a mistake that recurs so regularly that I wonder if it is really the fault of the printers: Atzechi instead of Aztechi; this transposition of letters looks rather ugly.

In Italian, should one write retorica or rettorica? I have seen both forms; if they are equally possible, the first is certainly more in line with the etymology

(ρητοριχη). -- And that is all I had to note for today.

Best regards.

R. G

((Evola)) Cairo, 28 February 1948.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 21 January; it took a little longer to arrive than mine, but all in all, this delay can still be considered normal under the current circumstances. This is the first time that a letter from you has reached me unopened, which seems to indicate that censorship must finally have been abolished in Austria as well.

I did not know that it was still possible to send items to your old address in Rome, but since you intend to return there fairly soon, it might be better to wait until then so that the books will reach you more reliably. Naturally, when you arrive, be sure to let me know immediately.

Bocca has announced his intention to send the translation of "Aperçus" to press in early March, so hopefully it will not take too long. In addition to the articles I have included in this book, I must tell you that there are a number of others that have been included in "Règne de la quantité"; so we will have to examine all of these, as it may be that among them there are some that you had in mind (for example, the article on "psychic residues" that I remember you had already translated in the past).

As for the German translations of my books, it seems, according to what T. Burckhardt recently wrote to me, that a favourable opportunity for publication may finally arise, following the establishment in Switzerland of a new publishing house that has connections with a Munich-based publisher, which obviously gives it easier access to the market; I am awaiting further news on this subject. Burckhardt's address is now: Seftigenstrasse, 199, Bern-Wabern.

This distribution is certainly a favourable sign despite everything, and was even somewhat unexpected given the current difficulties; my old books, like yours, were all out of print, and are now being gradually reissued. I have learned that the Portuguese translation of The Crisis of the Modern World has been published; published by Martin S. A. in São Paulo. The Spanish translation of "Introduction Générale" was published by Losada S. A. in Buenos Aires, but J. A. Cuttat was responsible for that and he is no longer there, having returned to Switzerland as I told you.

I thought you were familiar with Coomaraswamy's works, or at least some of them; I believe you knew that his wife had translated something of yours (I seem to remember it was a chapter from Rivolta contro il Mondo moderno) which appeared in the Vishwa-Bharati Quarterly shortly before the war.

I too had not heard from Giorgio for a very long time, but he finally wrote to me again and we have now resumed our correspondence; it seems that he is

still the same, with his health unfortunately leaving much to be desired. I do not know why he has left several letters from you unanswered: his current address is: Santuario di Vicoforte (Cuneo).

It is very unfortunate that your condition has still not improved significantly; I really do not know what could be done in such a case... The problem is that here, traditional medicine has completely disappeared, replaced by modern medicine, which I have always carefully avoided using! From what you tell me, it really seems that what is preventing you from recovering is more psychological than physical in nature; if this is the case, the only solution would undoubtedly be for you to find a way to react against it yourself. I understand that this is not easy, precisely because of this kind of inhibition of certain faculties, especially concentration, but could you not try gradually, avoiding, of course, any excessive effort that might have an unfavourable effect? Above all, you must not allow yourself to become discouraged or, rather, apathetic, as this can only contribute to maintaining this state... -- It is certainly not impossible that 'something' took advantage of the opportunity provided by this injury to act against you; but who it might come from and why is not very clear. What is remarkable in this regard is that what you are telling me reminds me of what happened to me in 1939 (I think you must have known about it at the time), when I lay on my back for six months without being able to turn over or move. Everyone thought it was a rheumatic attack, but in reality it was something else entirely, and we knew very well who was unconsciously serving as a vehicle for the evil influence (this was the second time it had happened, but the first time, two years earlier, had been less serious); measures were taken to make him leave and prevent him from returning to Egypt, and since then, nothing similar has ever happened again. I am telling you this so that, on reflection, you can see if there might have been something similar around you; but of course, from a distance, it is hardly possible to know exactly what the situation is...

I hastened to write to you today, fearing that if I delayed, my letter would no longer find you in Austria, since one never knows exactly how long it may take to arrive. Communications with all countries are still very irregular; in France, a railway strike recently caused them to be almost completely interrupted for over a month!

With warm regards.

R. G.

P.S. I forgot to mention something rather strange: some time ago, I received a letter from a certain Buber, whom I do not know at all, asking for permission to translate The Crisis of the Modern World into Italian; he seemed completely unaware that a translation already existed!

René Guénon to an unidentified correspondent, according to a recording on

tape made by "Thomas" at the home of Brother 'Elie le Moine'

Cairo, 8 March 1948

Dear Sir and friend

I was surprised when I received your letter, to see that it had been delayed (?) because of this, taking longer than usual to arrive, as the railway strike in France had interrupted all mail deliveries for over a month, with the exception of letters sent by air. Despite this, it arrived quite a long time ago and I apologise again for being so late in replying to you: after this interruption, everything arrived at once and I have not yet managed to catch up with this enormous backlog of correspondence.

I have informed Rocco about this Philipé Ladon you mentioned, in case he sends any requests to Paris. I have also informed Allard, who recently wrote to me to say that he had received a letter from you.

I hope you will soon be able to take care of the translation of my books, as you said you intended to do. In this regard, I have asked that the new translations be sent to you so that you can immediately take into account the few changes I have made, although they are not very significant in terms of the two volumes in question. Please be so kind as to let me know if you have received Les Etats Multiples, which was sent three or four months ago. We will also send you Symbolisme de la Croix when it is published, but I do not know exactly when that will be, as Rouhier has decided to do L'Introduction Générale (aux Doctrines Hindoues) first.

I have received yet another letter from Evola saying that he intends to return to Italy soon, even though his condition remains much the same and he is still unable to walk. What is strange is that it seems that what is preventing him from recovering is more psychological than physical in nature, as he has no physical injuries. he experiences a kind of inability to react, as if his willpower in particular had been affected; who knows what connection this may have with his former claims to magic? It was he himself who, in his first letter, told me to write to him using his real name, Carlos De Bracorens, as his pen name is not known where he is. What could this story mean? It is all the more implausible given that his brother, who is an engineer in Rome, also bears the name Evola.

The story of Parisi's medal is all the more bizarre because Del Gersio also showed Rocco a silver medal, saying that it proved his membership of a higher order, the name of which he refused to reveal!

I received the first issue of Athanor, which is completely worthless, as was to be expected given the contributors brought together by Gorel Gorati Porthau. Apparently, he is the head of Martinism in Italy and seems to be working to further increase the disorder that already exists in Italian Freemasonry. naturally, this does not please Parisi, who does not seem to be on the best of terms with him and whose name appears on the editorial board, but perhaps like mine without my consent, as I know there are several others in the same situation; As far as I am concerned, I thought it best to say nothing so as not to arouse any hostility on that side. We can only hope that this publication

will not last long, as I do not believe it will be very successful.

I have never seen this book by Josso that you mention, and I did not even know that he had written another one besides "Le sentier d'Allah" (The Path of Allah), which, incidentally, is not transcendent either.

Schuon's book was written in French and, after many delays in printing, I am told that it will finally be ready for publication in the next few days, by Gallimard in the same collection as mine; Rocco has already done the Italian translation, which is to be published by Touttsa.

I was very interested in what you told me about Padre Pio and your visit to him. I am glad that you were finally able to overcome your aversion to travelling this time. It really seems that there is something quite extraordinary about him in many ways; the striking resemblance you found between him and Muhammed Kérédine is also very strange; that his role, as you say, is something other than teaching, is not at all implausible. if I understand correctly, it would be more a kind of action that is exerted around him by his mere presence, which brings to mind the pole of the Afrads in Islamic esotericism, and it is well understood that there may be something similar in all traditional forms. As for the hostility that exists between him and the clergy, I need not tell you that I am not at all surprised; in fact, the opposite would be surprising, given the prevailing trends. From what I have been told, modern ideas are gaining more and more ground in ecclesiastical circles in all countries. would you believe that there is a considerable movement within the French clergy to adopt a liturgy in the vernacular? If things were to come to that, one might wonder what would remain valid from a ritual point of view... Another symptom is that the French Jesuits' magazine "Etude" does nothing but defend the scientistic and evolutionist point of view. It is said that they have been called to order by Rome, but they have taken no notice, and what is worse, they recently published a statement by Cardinal Liénard in favour of evolutionism! These are just a few examples among many others, and unfortunately, none of this gives much cause for optimism about what may have been consciously preserved in the Church today beyond what we see on the outside... It is true that we never know exactly what may still exist in certain monasteries, but even in this regard, what those who are in a better position to know say is far from encouraging. It would seem that there is more in this regard in the Orthodox Church. Basically, I would be more inclined to believe only in the somewhat independent existence here and there of a few exceptional beings, and this Padre Pio seems to be one of them. All we can hope for from the ecclesiastical authorities is that they at least leave him alone and do not prevent him from exercising this action of presence that I have mentioned.

Regarding this apparition near Rome, since I told you about it, I have been told something similar to what you said, except that, according to this other version, it was not a Communist but a Protestant. it seems that apparitions are multiplying everywhere these days; several have been reported in France, and I must say that I do not find this very reassuring, as these

things too often have rather suspicious undertones. The ecclesiastical authorities are certainly right to be very cautious in cases of this kind, and perhaps not cautious enough, because they often end up, if not officially admitting, at least tolerating things that are, in a way, imposed on them by the crowd.

As you requested, I am returning the two clippings that were enclosed with your letter. Of course, there have always been things of this kind, but what is remarkable is that there is currently a resurgence of these more or less extraordinary phenomena. Should we see this as a reaction or compensation for the rationalism of our times, or are there other reasons for it? It is obvious that these phenomena prove nothing, but they strike the general public and it is in this respect that they can be useful or harmful, depending on the case and the intention behind them. We must never forget that there is often an outward similarity between saints and sorcerers and that the devil is God's monkey in this phenomenal realm. It goes without saying that any doubts one may have about the current state of the Church concern only a contingent situation and do not alter your reflections on Christianity itself. these are two completely different matters, so I am not surprised by the consequences your visit to Padre Pio had for you, and no doubt it was better that way, because the practice of the rites of a tradition is not only important but even essential; as you will see, this is entirely consistent with what I myself have written about the necessity of exotericism, but few people today want to, or are able to, understand this! However, those who wish to go beyond exotericism should not count on any help from the current ecclesiastical organisation. the few groups where authentic Christian esotericism has been preserved are totally ignored by Rome, even when they include priests among their members, and I am not talking about an "official" ignorance, which could be understandable, but about a very real ignorance. As for what you call Catholic intellectuals, I believe you must have been thinking in particular of the neo-Thomists, whose hostility towards Padre Pio you mention elsewhere. There is nothing to be expected from them in terms of deep understanding. Not only is their horizon limited to an exclusively philosophical point of view, which does not go very far in reality, but they are also increasingly departing from authentic Thomism, abandoning everything that is too difficult to reconcile with modern science, which they are now seeking (even now) to reconcile with that nonsense called existentialism.

I was familiar with the expression "Angel of the Great Council" as applied to Christ. I do not know what explanation is usually given for it, but I think it is probably the one that applies to Metatron. As for the passage from Isaiah, which I also find as you indicate, it is undoubtedly a difference in the form of the expression and not in the meaning, which seems to be the same. "Prince of Peace" is also a name for Metatron. As for the question of Saint John's physical survival, I am no more able than you to explain Dante's denial, which is rather surprising; it is obviously just as possible as in the cases of Enoch and Elijah; some have claimed that Dante wanted to reserve

this privilege exclusively for Christ and the Virgin Mary, but then what about Enoch and Elijah? As for the winter having a month of only one day, the meaning seems clear to me: if Cancer had a star of such brightness, it would shine throughout the night as much as the sun during the day, so that there would be no night as long as the sun was in the opposite constellation, that is, in Capricorn. The feast day of Saint John the Evangelist is 27 December.

There would undoubtedly be many other things to say, but I will stop here for today.

Yours sincerely

R. G.

Letters from René Guénon to an anonymous correspondent (based on photocopies of the manuscript)

This letter appeared in the March 1972 issue of La Destra, a magazine virtually unknown in France. It was accompanied by other excerpts concerning the accident that left Evola paralysed and the subtle causes of this type of disability (*28, 2, 48*)*; the doctrine of cosmic cycles* (*24, 4, 48*)*; Freemasonry* (*20, 7, 49*)*; the possible creation at that time of an initiatory "Order" based on a suggestion by Evola* (*25, 7, 50*)

Cairo, 28 February 1936.
(Post office box, central office)

Sir

I have just received your letter, forwarded by Mr Chacornac, and I would like to thank you for your kind words about my works.

Thank you also for your communication; I was already familiar with this brochure, and I even devoted a note to it in one of my reviews of "Voile d'Isis" in last November's issue. Everything you tell me is only too true, and several other people have already shared similar thoughts on this subject with me. I must say, moreover, that this is only one symptom among many others of the same kind; many things are happening at the moment, more than ever before, which are certainly not very reassuring... and which indeed only too well justify what I have written!

I see that the address of the "Belgian Secretariat of the Artisans of the New Era" has been added after the fact; it does not appear on the copy I had. Do you know anything about the people who run this group, and who must know you,

judging by the letter they sent you? It must be said, however, that in all these matters, there are many people who are simply unaware; those who inspire all this never even appear in public, and it is very possible that Mrs. Bailey herself has no idea what is driving her.

Please accept, Sir, my very best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 14 March 1936

Sir

I received your letter of 6 March, and I thank you in advance for the information you will kindly send me.

If these people are asking for names and addresses in this way, it may well be that they have obtained yours by this means and that none of them know you directly; this seems to show that they are keen to spread their propaganda as widely as possible...

I did notice that the address of the "Belgian secretariat" had been added later, while the other two addresses in England and Switzerland are printed. It is possible that the brochure was printed in Mexico, as all this seems to be closely linked to an association called "Vie Impersonnelle" (Impersonal Life), which has its headquarters in that country; or perhaps in Cuba, where there are also activities of this kind...

The content of the brochure had first appeared in articles in magazines in various languages, but, strangely enough, under the signature "A Tibetan". Mrs. Bailey, who is a former theosophist and something of a dissident, claims to write under the inspiration of a certain "Master"... whom I believe I have managed to identify; this is not the easiest of tasks, as, depending on the circumstances, he goes by at least a dozen different names!

As you say, what needs to be considered here is much less the idea (?) than the intention; and it is obviously the latter which, in all these matters, constitutes a very worrying symptom... It is well understood, moreover, that most of the people who are used to spread all this are little more than more or less unconscious instruments.

Please accept, Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 21 March 1936.

Sir

I have just received your letter of 14 March; thank you for the information and the circular.

I see that this matter is indeed very complicated, and if what you have been told is correct, it is already much more widespread than we could have imagined. It is quite possible that the address given is merely a kind of "post office box"... In any case, the appeals for funds clearly show that there is something here that is not entirely altruistic; but who is receiving these funds, and how is it all organised? No names are given; there is certainly something very mysterious about it...

It cannot be said that this is a strictly "theosophical" organisation, According to documents that have been sent to me from various sources, which seem to be more or less directly related to the same thing, these people claim that the "Masters" did indeed lead the S. T. in its early days, but that they then abandoned it, and that now they want to start a new "movement" through their intermediary. I must say that I have seen no reference to a future Messiah in any of this; however, there may still be something of this kind, but what happened with Krishnamurti on the other hand encourages them to be cautious on this subject... Nor do I see anything that appears specifically "communist", but if that is the case, it is quite possible that they do not openly acknowledge it either; as you say, there is surely something else besides what they say... Finally, if they already have buildings, it must not be so easy to hide!

If you learn anything else, please be so kind as to keep me informed.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

Cairo, 14 May 1936.

Sir,

I received your letter of 5 May yesterday, and I thank you for all the detailed information you provided. There are still some truly curious things in there, and very characteristic of the mentality of that whole world...

First, I note that although Mrs. Bailey is considered a "dissident" of theosophy, this does not prevent her from recruiting a large number of her followers from the S. T. Yet she seems to be one of those who claim that the "Masters" who led the S. T. in its early days subsequently abandoned it, and that this is precisely why they now want to start a new movement. Of course, these "Masters" have never been anything more than masks, so to speak, but behind them there are real people who are actually taking action. In this regard, the political digression you mention does not surprise me, and, in particular, the praise of the British rulers clearly shows that all these things are closely related... Have you not heard of the so-called Count of Saint Germain, or Mrs. Bailey's "Tibetan"?

What I find harder to understand is the importance attributed to this Mrs Balliett, whom I had never heard of before; what else can she be connected to?

The coming "Age of Aquarius" plays a major role in all these circles and causes many people to ramble... But what is remarkable is the date of 1966 set for the coming of the "Teacher"; indeed, according to certain prophecies, this date must simply be... the date of the manifestation of the Antichrist (who, it is said, has already been born)! The role of "precursor" given to Krishnamurti is also noteworthy; in S.
T., no one seems to know what to say about him anymore...

Mr Wittemans has written a singularly fanciful "History of the Rosicrucians"; for some time now, he has also been associated with a pseudo-Masonic organisation

behind which there are still some very suspicious things, as it appears to be under the influence of the famous Aleister Crowley...

Returning to the "Artisans", it seems that, if there has been a legal declaration, it can only have been this year, according to what you tell me; but is this necessary in order to have a postal cheque account? As for the "three years" brochure, it is quite possible, based on the Barcelona address, that it was printed in Spain. I see that there is also an address in Alexandria, but as this can obviously only be in European circles, I have no way of finding out about it...

It would be interesting to know whether these people mistrusted you; perhaps the future will tell...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G

Cairo, 27 June 1936.

Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June and all the information it contains.

This silence on the part of the "Artisans" is truly quite extraordinary; if it continues, one might indeed believe that they have become genuinely suspicious of you...

Since you are willing to send me the rest of Mrs Balliett's two books, as one never knows what exactly might be in them, I gladly accept. Of course, any method of reducing European names to numbers can only be fanciful and of no traditional value; but it may also conceal something else. I wonder if what relates to snakes is not more or less inspired by the older writings of another American named Hiram Buther...

As for the "Masters", it is indeed K. H. that Sinnett spoke of. The one who is supposed to have dictated "Light on the Path" was known as "Hilarion"; I have also seen his portrait... or so-called portrait. The story of the "Tibetan" is much more recent than all that, and in fact only Mrs. Bailey mentions it.

There are many different and even contradictory opinions about Cagliostro, and it is not easy to know what the truth is; but in any case, Dumas is certainly far from being an authority on the subject!

Theosophists claim that the Count of Saint G. was in fact Count Rakoczy, of the family of the ancient princes of Transylvania; they also present him as a reincarnation of Christian Rosenkrunz, Chancellor Bacon, and other figures; I mentioned this in the notes I added for the reissue of "Theosophism". What is certain is that there is someone who plays this role, and that I almost met him in 1913; in 1927, if I am not mistaken, he stayed for a while in "his" castle in Transylvania with Mrs Bessant, and even carried out "initiations"; could what you tell me about this Mrs Lazar be related to that?

The story of Miss Siculari's death and the disappearance of my book also seems rather strange; where was this book during her journey? --

As for Miss Braunstein, it is clear that she was one of the many victims of all these events...

I also knew Longuet; when he left the S. T., they accused each other of theft! You probably know that Marcault succeeded Ch. Blich as secretary general of the French section.

Do not worry about Alexandria; as for the address in Bessarabia, it is indeed strange, but isn't everything strange in this business?

Please excuse me for not writing at greater length today, and please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 16 August 1936

Sir,

I apologise for being somewhat late in thanking you for your letter of 9 July, which I only found when I returned from a short absence, something that happens very rarely... Because of this, I have not yet had time to look at Mrs Balliett's two books, so I will talk to you about them another time.

The Curtiss family has also formed a special organisation to be called the "Order of Christian Mystics" or something like that; I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the title, as I cannot find the reference at the moment, and there are so many things that it is easy to get confused! In any case, the announcement of the coming "Aquarian Age" seems to be turning the heads of many people in America and even elsewhere...

I didn't know that Longuet no longer had his bookshop "Rhéa"; I remember that, before the split, he didn't want to sell exclusively theosophical books, but I believe that, in fact, the bookshop in Square Rapp has now reached that point.

Everything you tell me about Romania confirms what I already knew about Queen Elisabeth and the rather strange role she played in many things, perhaps unconsciously. It seems that there are always many intrigues of all kinds in that country, and that politics is mixed, perhaps more obviously than elsewhere, with matters of a different order.

As for Master R.'s trip to Transylvania, it has been verified that it took place in 1925 (not 1927); and he was accompanied not only by Mrs. Besant, but also by Leadbeater and Widgwood. He "initiated" a certain John Coues, a priest of the Liberal Catholic Church, who, despite his English name, is of German nationality and usually resides in Austria or Hungary; could this be the same person who came to speak about the "Masters" in 1927? In any case, this person currently plays an important role in relation to the Romanian S. T., as it appears that all its correspondence with Adyar goes through him; I therefore wonder if he might not have succeeded, in the functions of "presidential agent", to this Bertram of whom you speak and who must have gone to join Leadbeater in Australia...

Please excuse me for not writing more at length today; although

I have only been away for a short time, so much correspondence has accumulated that I am still unable to catch up!

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 20 August 1936

Sir,

I received your letter of 14 August today. I replied to your previous letter a few days ago and, as you will see, my delay was solely due to the fact that I was away last month.

This failure to register the "Artisans" is truly remarkable, since, as you explained to me, it is an essential formality for receiving funds...

I knew there was to be a Theosophical Congress in Geneva, but I did not know exactly when it was to take place; it is possible that Marcault was very busy at the time and that this is the only reason why he has not yet replied to you.

Do you ever have the opportunity to see the Occult Review (published quarterly in London by Rider)? The July issue contains an article entitled "The Rationale of the Avatars", which is, on the "Masters" and on the "personality" of H. P. B., the most wildly extravagant thing I have ever seen, and that is saying something!

On the other hand, the so-called "Living Buddha" Kwang-Hsih clearly declares himself to be the author of the "Three-Year Plan", which identifies him as Mrs. Bailey's "Tibetan"; but, strangely enough, he makes no mention of the "Artisans" among the various organisations (real or supposed) that are said to be under his high authority.I note that, for some time now, this character with multiple names and titles has taken a visible liking to signing only with the initials K. H.; there is another intention here that is not difficult to guess!

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 9 September 1936

Sir,

I have finally read Mrs. Balliett's two books, and truly, they are even more absurd than I could have imagined! All these calculation methods are very similar to what is currently in vogue in England under the name "numerology" (which is, incidentally, another fine barbarism). Not only are the interpretations given to the numbers completely untraditional, but, as I have often pointed out, nothing can be deduced from names written in European languages, since Latin letters have no numerical value in reality, and moreover, the spelling of these names is

generally based on anything definite (not to mention the importance attributed here to vowels, which precisely cannot have any). -- But where the absurdity becomes quite evident is when this method is applied to biblical names, written with English spelling... It is clear, in fact, that we would obtain very different results if we wrote these same names in French or in another language where they are spelled differently, and that, above all, these various results have nothing in common with those obtained when we consider them, as we should, in their Hebrew form, which is the only valid one in this regard. -- And there is something else that is no less extravagant: the supposed correspondences between colours, perfumes, flowers, etc., and people's names; as all this is based solely on the names that all these things have in English, we would have to admit that, for someone who speaks another language, the correspondences would have to be completely different! -- I really don't know how so many people can take such stories seriously; it's really characteristic of the mentality of our time...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 13 September 1936.

Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 1 September, which I received just as I was writing to you about Mrs Balliett's books.

I hope you will soon be able to leave Antwerp, as the climate does not suit you. I am not familiar with it, but I imagine it must be even worse than that of Paris, which I myself suffered from for many years...

What you tell me about the incidents surrounding the "Artisans" issue really gives the impression of something abnormal, as it is rather difficult to consider all this as a series of mere coincidences!

As for the stories about Romania, there is certainly something enigmatic about Jean de Pauly's life and origins; he himself alluded to a "secret" about which he never wanted to explain himself; he also played a role in bizarre affairs, such as those of the nuns of Loigny and the alleged captivity of Leo XIII... As for H. Vacaresco, I only saw her once, but she made a rather strange impression on me; what exactly is her role at the S. D. N.? -- You are quite right about Péladan, whose manifestations lacked a little too much seriousness; I am not sure how much truth there is in his dealings with the Vatican, nor, for that matter, in those that some also attribute to Sédir (the latter, it seems, in favour of Poland)... -- Is the Ambrosian rite you mention the same as the Uniate rite? I remember there being a lot of talk about the latter in the stories concerning Albania, in which the so-called "Master R." was involved.

I have also heard, from various sources, the story of Madame Blavatsky's almost immediate reincarnation; some even add that Colonel Olcott has also already been reincarnated!

I see that, regarding the story of K. H. and those more or less related to it, I need to give you more explanations, as the various things you mention may in fact be more directly related than you suspect! First of all, I must say that Tibet is, in reality, closed off, mainly by the British, so much so that it has never been as difficult to enter as it has been in recent years. As for Madame David Néel, I knew her a long time ago; she was a theosophist at the time, but it seems she has since renounced that belief. I have been told several things about her that indicate a rather intriguing character; because of this, I doubt a little that her travels had a purely disinterested purpose... Be that as it may, her doctrinal understanding is rather limited, and she is certainly much more interested in "phenomena" than in anything else; this is, of course, what makes her books so successful, because it is what appeals to the "general public".

That said, I come to the "Living Buddha": this title does not really exist in the East; it is a designation given by Europeans to quite a number of figures, in fact to all those who are considered "Tulkus", that is to say, not as "incarnations" as is commonly said, but as "projections" of certain principles or certain superhuman entities. The real title of the person Ossendowski spoke of is "Bojdo-Khan"; but, of course, the person I was telling you about has nothing in common with that one. This character, moreover, is not really Tibetan, but it is very difficult to know exactly what he is; he claims to be descended from Genghis Khan, then from the ancient Khmer kings, etc.; his origin is probably as complicated as the names and titles under which he appears successively! What is remarkable is that he claims to have been named "Living Buddha" by decree of the late Dalai Lama, who at the same time assured him of the transmission of his powers, so that now there must be no more Dalai Lamas and it is he himself who, without having the title, must exercise the functions. What is certain is that the "powers" he possesses do not even extend to enabling him to find a publisher for the numerous works on physics and biology that he wrote when he was still only "Prof. Om Lind", for I know that he is searching in vain for one everywhere! He is currently in America, but he is due to come to Paris next year to hold a large universal Buddhist congress...

Trebitsch-Lincoln, who is a well-known agent of "counter-initiation", has also undergone many successive transformations and has always been involved in multiple espionage activities; he has served both England and Germany, just like his colleague Aleister Crowley. Since becoming "Lama Dorje-Den", he spent some time in Canada, then returned to Europe at the head of a group of similar "Lamas" (among whom there are several Frenchmen) and began raising funds to establish a Buddhist monastery in Switzerland. I suspect, based on certain hints, that he is quite close to the aforementioned "Living Buddha", who is also involved in the Buddhist monastery project. This is not the first time he has had similar projects (always in Switzerland), which have never come to fruition and have always turned out to be more or less fraudulent... -- This reminds me of another character of the same kind,

whose name I cannot recall at the moment, and who, last year, announced that he was going to Italy... to convert Mussolini to Buddhism; nothing seems to have come of it, but what is amusing is that I discovered that Mussolini, when he was a refugee in Switzerland, once gave a speech in which he declared himself a Buddhist!

I move on to Dr Cannon, who calls himself "Knight Commander of Asia, Fifth Master of the Great White Lodge", and I don't know what else; what you tell me about him does not surprise me, because the activities of all these characters always have a political side to them; and in this respect, you are quite right to think that they do not only use suggestion... One of Dr Cannon's books, entitled "The Invisible Influence", has been translated into French; it is completely inept, but apparently sells very well. A so-called trip to Tibet serves as the backdrop for a series of rambling musings, most of which are nothing more than vulgar Western hyper-mysticism; there are also anecdotes plundered from here and there, and in the account of the journey itself, I found things that I recognised from having read them as a child in some English adventure novel, the title and author of which I regret having forgotten. I wrote a review of this book which, as you can imagine, was not flattering, but here is what has just happened: one of the organs of the "Living Buddha" has reproduced this review, with my signature, but without indicating its source. I conclude from this, first of all, that Cannon is seen as an unfortunate "competitor" on that side; it is curious how all these people, who are ultimately serving the same purpose, are always arguing among themselves! But I also note that the followers of the "Living Buddha" would like to pass me off as one of their collaborators, and that does not suit me at all... I would add that the translator of Cannon's volume, a certain Georges Barbarin, has just published a book on the "Prophecies" of the Great Pyramid with Adyard Publishers; I do not know if I have already told you about this other matter, which also has some very suspicious undertones.

I met Maurice Privat some 25 years ago; at the time, he was part of a rather bizarre group called the "Hexagram"; afterwards, I went a long time without knowing what had become of him, then I learned that he had "specialised" in astrology. His dedication to Albert Sarrant is truly astonishing, but it may not be difficult to find an explanation for it: according to someone who is well informed, he has ties to the secret police... As for the chapter you sent me, apart from the fact that the precession of the equinoxes is indeed the basis of cyclical periods, it is pure fantasy from start to finish; and of course, as is almost always the case in such situations, all of this is attributed to the Egyptians. This is a very convenient approach, since we know nothing about what the ancient Egyptian tradition really was; and I even have good reason to believe that no one can know anything about it at present. The only thing I am sure of is that it was very different from anything imagined by Egyptologists or occultists.

The author of the article on Hitler, C. Kerniez, writes on various aspects of astrology and other subjects, and I have even seen some of his work that was not bad; he has just published a book on "Hatha Yoga", which I have not seen, but which I am told

is much more sensible than most Western productions of the same kind. His real name is F. Guyot and, under this name, he is editor of the "Dépêche de Toulouse" (again the Sarrant group...). But in the article in question, what a mess! I even wonder if it is not deliberate, at least to a certain extent; in any case, I cannot imagine the headquarters of Agartha in Germany, nor, above all, authentic Orientals accepting such an enormity! If there were Orientals or so-called Orientals involved in this affair, they can only be characters of the kind I mentioned above... In any case, what is certain is that at the time of Hitler's "advent", Crowley was present in Berlin; he also had under his direct command in Germany a strange organisation called "Saturn-Loge", about which I have some quite extraordinary notebooks.

That is enough for today, I think, but the subject is truly inexhaustible!

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 12 October 1936.

Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 1 October, which I have just received; your delay is quite understandable if you have been tired. What you tell me about the effects of the climate in Antwerp is truly remarkable; do many people experience the same things there? I hope that Uruguay, if you go ahead with your plan to leave, will be more favourable to you; I have very little information about these South American countries.

So the "Artisans" have given you a sign of life again. Their approach is rather clumsy, and the way the card is written is quite characteristic!

You are quite right to be wary, in general, of anything written about initiation, as it is more often fantasy or daydreaming than serious matters. As for the fear that some people have of "intellectuality", I completely agree with you on that too... It is quite certain that it is always "powers" and "phenomena" that attract most people; as for doctrine, they don't care much about it...

Surely the "living Buddha" and other such figures are still only extras, perhaps just more aware than many others of what drives them. What is curious is to see, in the "pseudo-initiatory" domain as in the political domain, so many things that seem to be opposed and yet in reality only contribute to the realisation of the same "destructive" designs, as you also observe very well.

As for Muss, I am not very surprised by what you say about him; the story of the "proof of God's existence" reminds me of Sébastien Faure, who found a way to gather twelve of them! I hadn't heard about the project to colonise southern Russia, but the study trip to China reminds me of something vague, about which I may one day find some information...

I haven't seen Maria Ryjur's book, but I have a good idea of what it might be like, based on a few articles of hers that I've read. -- One must often be wary of information from the R.I.S.S.; there and elsewhere, the story of the "High Winds" has been greatly exaggerated. They were never anything more than the governing bodies of Carbonarism, with no connection to Freemasonry other than the simple fact that certain people could belong to both. -- Returning to Muss, there must have been something else; it is nonetheless true that he was a Freemason, and, amusingly, the black shirt he wore when he entered Rome had been given to him by the Lodges of Bologna!

It seems that the Jesuits have always had a certain hidden sympathy for Freemasonry; I must say, moreover, that the same is true, on the other side, for certain high-ranking Freemasons at least... As for Cardinal Billot, what you may not know is that he was detested by his Order... because he was a Thomist; the Jesuits are the only religious Order that has been exempted from the obligation to teach Thomism in its novitiates.

I believe that the Uniates are Orthodox Christians who have fairly recently rallied to the authority of the Pope; I do not know what the situation is from a dogmatic point of view, but they must have kept all their rites unchanged, like various other Eastern Churches: Greek Melkites, Maronites, etc. Prince Wladimir Ghika, who entered the priesthood at a fairly advanced age, is a Uniate priest.

I have also read Barbarin's book, and I have even written a review of it, in which I did not dwell on the details, as that would have been endless; I pointed out above all the fundamental absurdity of the "prophecies", which basically consist in making the pyramid a "Judeo-Christian" monument.The date of Christ's birth was also "corrected" by theosophists, but they varied on this point: Madame Blavatsky also gave the year 4, but Madame Besant went as far as the year 120 before the Christian era... - In any case, the book is hugely successful and is selling by the thousands, the press is full of it, and there have been several radio broadcasts on the subject; isn't this propaganda itself rather suspicious? You are quite right to think that this is an Anglo-Saxon affair; it is possible that the first people who put forward this idea were acting in good faith, but then a way was found to exploit it... -- As for Daudet, I saw the article he wrote in Candide, which is indeed rather extraordinary; yet I am less surprised than you, for I have already noticed several instances of his enthusiasm (regarding dowsing, for example) which seem to indicate a certain lack of judgement; and then, in the present case, I wonder if his Anglophilia, which is taken to extremes, might not also have something to do with it!

I have also just reviewed the book by Enel that you mention; the author is an officer of the former Russian army who took refuge in France; I must have his real name somewhere, but I cannot find it at the moment. (Scariatine: probably N. D. T.) His idea of finding constant parallels between Egyptian and Hebrew traditions, while differing from the hypotheses of Egyptologists, is no less fanciful; he is also strongly influenced by certain occultist concepts.

Nothing remarkable seems to have happened on 15-16 September; but, of all

On the other hand, an extraordinary event is predicted by the end of this year; it is clear that something is being stirred up; let us hope that it does not succeed... The story of the "Great Monarch", mentioned in one of your astrological clippings, is yet another highly suspicious affair, which I constantly find associated with all sorts of other things of no less dubious character.

The success of astrology is definitely on the rise, if it is now to be taught officially in Germany; this vogue, like that of dowsing, is probably not spontaneous, as it all serves certain purposes...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 5 November 1936.

Sir,

I received your letter and Maria Ryjier's book at the same time; thank you very much, and thank you in advance for the other item you kindly mentioned you would send me.

I was not familiar with this brochure by Enel, which, strangely enough, bears no publisher's name or even printer's name... I do not believe he was ever a theosophist; moreover, in fact, the ideas expressed therein do not come from that source, but from the most distinctly characterised "Papusian" occultism. -- In this month's "Et. Trad." you will find my review of a large "Egyptological" work that Enel himself had printed here; I do not know how he managed to get it accepted by the "French Institute of Archaeology", which is as "official" and academic as they come...

Your remarks about the Occult Review are accurate; it often publishes articles that reflect the tendencies of Point Loma (i.e., Judge's successors). As for the Blavatsky Association, it is certainly also hostile to the current orientation of the S. T.; I believe, without being entirely sure, that it must be more or less connected with Wadia's "United Lodge". In any case, there is certainly a great deal of inconsistency in all this concerning the "Masters"! And now the confusion is growing even greater, following the publication of Loftes Hari's book attacking the authenticity of the "Mahâtmâ letters"... --For Jinarajadasa, it is certainly due to his withdrawal that Arnudale was elected president; Ernest Woole, the defeated candidate, took revenge with a book full of rather violent criticism of Mrs. Besant, Leadbeater and his "clairvoyance", etc. Disputes in this world are only multiplying endlessly!

I have never had very precise information about futurism, but I did hear, a long time ago (I remember it was around the time of the Tripolitanian War), that Marinetti was interested in the occult, and Papini was also an occultist at that time; he has changed a lot since then...

I had never heard of the colonisation project or the "floating fair", and as for the story of the trip to China, I still can't quite place what it reminds me of, but I haven't given up hope of finding out one day.

Since your father was accepted as a Freemason in Messina, do you know in which Order and which rite? The question is of some historical interest to me, because at that time there were still Masonic organisations in Sicily and Naples that later died out and played a role in the founding of the Grand Lodge of Egypt.

It is true that Romanian Freemasonry is very divided, as is the case in many other countries; it is even more so now, as a new dissident order has recently been founded, which criticises the order it has split from for the poor quality of its recruitment; it is headed by a fairly well-known writer whose name I cannot recall at the moment.

The propaganda for cremation seems to have rather bizarre undertones; in France, it is mainly free-thinking societies that are involved in it, and there is even a special society whose sole purpose is this, and whose president, if I am not mistaken, is Lévy-Brühl. But the most fanatical supporters of cremation are still the theosophists, and in fact, they were the ones who originally promoted it; in America, the first cremation was that of Baron de Palm, and it seems that Olcott and Madame Blavatsky even had some difficulty obtaining permission for it.

It is likely that the Taxil affair will never be resolved, especially since, in reality, the people of the R.I.S.S. and others of the same ilk are not at all interested in shedding light on the matter, but rather seek to further confuse things. The question of Diana Vaughan (of whom I have some rather curious autographs) does indeed seem very difficult to resolve, but it is not the only one, and why, for example, is Sophie Walder never mentioned in all this? -- In any case, the large collection of documents published by former R.I.S.S. collaborators unexpectedly gave me the opportunity to obtain proof of their collusion with the famous Aleister Crowley, which I had long suspected...

Jean de Pauly's "Zohar" is not often found; I was lucky enough to have a copy that one of the subscribers had left me in the past, unable to take it with him on long journeys, and which ended up staying with me permanently.

Farîdud-Dîn-Attar's "The Language of Birds" is a very interesting work from an esoteric point of view, but I do not know how good the translations are; it seems to me very difficult to render it accurately in a European language...

I see that the climate in Antwerp seems to be rather strange; but do you think that it is really only the "physical" climate, so to speak, that is responsible for this? What you say about variations in the "meaning" of duration depending on the region intrigues me a little; I would be glad to have the explanations you promise me on this subject.

I do believe that the idea of evolution is a necessity at present (but not for the 'general public', who, of course, are not yet ready for it); naturally, I am interested in everything related to this question, which deserves to be followed up.

I hope you will be able to overcome any obstacles to your trip to Uruguay; with all these regulations and restrictions everywhere, things are becoming increasingly complicated! Here, we no longer accept anyone who

come here looking for work, and ordinary travellers are only granted residence permits for a maximum of one month. -- As for life in Europe at the moment, everyone tells me the same thing, and it is unlikely that the situation will improve any time soon...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 18 September 1936.

Sir,

Since writing to you, I have read Maria Rygier's book and was rather surprised to find here and there a few observations that go beyond mere politics and are, in fact, rather strange (and very specifically Italian)... On the other hand, she is clearly very biased on certain points, particularly in her attacks on Palerni and the Scottish Supreme Council, which are more than exaggerated (I recognised, in particular, a character she does not name, one of my friends, whom she treats in a completely unfair manner). I also noticed an error concerning the aforementioned Frosini, whose dissident organisation, known as the "Italian Philosophical Rite", dates back much further than she says, since I have known about it since 1909 or 1910 (I must even have somewhere some issues of a magazine called "Hermès" which was its organ at the time); this organisation, of which G. d'Annunzio is the most illustrious member, continues to be "tolerated" in Italy, but people are careful never to make the slightest reference to it in public...

I noticed that there was one point in your last letter that I forgot to mention in my reply: the Jewish organisation Beni-Berith has nothing to do with Freemasonry; it is just one of many American-style organisations that were set up more or less in imitation of the forms of Freemasonry. However, I wonder if this is what you are referring to, because there used to be an irregular Masonic lodge in Salonika also called "Beni-Berith", which searched in vain for an obedience to which it could attach itself, because no one wanted it; its Venerable Founder was a certain Dr Amon de Medonça, who followed his name with a dozen or so lines of motley titles; but all this must date back some 20 or 25 years, and I do not know if anything remains of it. -- On the other hand, I also wonder whether it is indeed Belgian Freemasonry that requires its members to make very large payments; from what I know elsewhere, this would seem to refer more to the pseudo-Masonry known as the "Memphis and Misraim Rite", which does indeed have a fairly large centre in Belgium (it was initially attached to Lyon but then came under the rival obedience of the famous Crowley); I would not be at all surprised if the aforementioned "Beni-Berith" Lodge had ultimately come into contact with groups of this kind, where the trade in diplomas is combined with other things of an even more dubious nature...

I have just been sent a new manifesto to "Men of Good Will" by Foster Bailey; it merely repeats more or less the same things, and at the end there is still the same list of addresses of the "Artisans".

I have not yet received the package you mentioned, but I hope it has not been lost in the post. It is understandable that, with the preparations for your upcoming departure, you must have very little free time at the moment...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 31 December 1936.

Sir,

I have just received your letter of 20 December, which must have crossed with the one I wrote to you to complete my previous reply; as you saw, I suspected that you must be very busy with preparations for your departure. I hope that all difficulties in this regard are now behind you, but it is becoming increasingly complicated!

Thank you for "Evolution in Biology"; I will read it carefully, but I did not want to wait to write to you, so that this letter would reach you before your departure. After that, it will probably be better for me to wait until you tell me where to send my correspondence from now on...

I have already noticed that "scientists", while necessarily recognising the collapse of their old theories, cling desperately to certain assertions that they want to convince themselves are nevertheless intangible! As for what you mention about probability calculations, I entirely agree with you...

As for Enel's book, it is true that it is very "mixed"; all we can say is that he seems to be more intelligent and better educated than most occultists. As for the way his book was printed, everything you suggest is indeed possible; I have no way of finding out about it, as I have no communication whatsoever with these European circles from here.

It is quite true that Marc Rucart is a theosophist; he even published articles in the "Lotus Bleu" in the past; and some time ago, I was sent a newspaper clipping which indicated that, since becoming a minister, he had had an interview with Krishnamurti.

As for Freemasonry in Sicily, it is just as I thought: it must be the Memphis Rite, now extinct, which at that time had its supreme council in Palermo and was the origin of the Masonic organisation existing in Egypt.

On the issue of climate, I believe we are in agreement; there are certainly "subtle" factors at play here. As for the correspondences between different points on the earth, in order to arrive at precise conclusions, we would need to reconstruct the ancient 'sacred geography', which would in any case involve a very long and difficult task, and one that could certainly not be undertaken by a single individual.

Thank you for all your explanations on how you envisage this "meaning" of time to which you alluded; it is obviously not easy to formulate clearly; it all requires some thought, and I will no doubt come back to it another time. In any case, I can say that the distinction you make

between homogeneous space and differentiated "environments" is entirely accurate; I myself have been thinking about this for a long time, and I may say something about it one day, if I manage to write the book I have in mind on the conditions of bodily existence. The assertion that binocular vision is necessary to perceive depth has always seemed to me, too, to be too obviously contradicted by the facts; how can such an error be so widely accepted? It is true that there are many others in the same category, starting with the assertion that all ideas originate in the senses... - One more point I would like to mention: don't you think that the "sense" of duration may, in a way, be more particularly linked to hearing? Many different considerations could suggest this...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 6 January 1937.

Sir,

I have just received your letter of 26 December, and I believe my reply will still reach you in Antwerp before your departure. I understand only too well the annoyance caused by all these 'business' matters, having always been completely incapable of dealing with them myself!

As for the "end of the crisis" announced by the astrologers, I believe that your interpretation is unfortunately the most likely... - The announcement of Privat's book is indeed curious; naturally, the stories of the Great Pyramid come up again in it! - As for the abdication of the King of England, it seems, from what I have been told from various sources, that there are very enigmatic undertones to it, quite different from anything that has been reported publicly.

Maria Rygier's book argues above all for the cause of the Grand Orient of Italy, whether skilfully or not is another question... It echoes all the grudges of the Grand Orient O.°. against Scottish Freemasonry, which it has never forgiven for having international relations that, despite all its efforts, have always been denied to it. I received the organ of the Scottish Supreme Council until it was discontinued; I can assure you that the excerpts she quotes and the way she interprets them are completely biased. In any case, political activity on the part of an initiatory organisation is always a deviation; historical circumstances may explain it, but they do not legitimise it. If Mazzini was a Freemason, Cavour and Garibaldi were no less so; I remember seeing their portraits side by side in the premises of the Italian L.°. What is truly curious is to see, in today's Italian newspapers, dithyrambic praise for the great men of the Risorgimento, including those whose Masonic status is most notorious, alongside the worst invectives against Freemasonry!

I do not believe that fascism, in its early days, could have been supported by the Church; even regarding the role of the Jesuits, someone who knows them well told me things that completely contradict Maria Rygier's assertions. -- But there are striking similarities

between the emblems of fascism and those of a certain "black Freemasonry", which was Masonic in name only, and which I learned about long ago from a close friend of Giolitti, who was a member; perhaps this is where we should look...

As for Messina, when you mentioned the "Order of Mishraïm" to me, I thought it must be the Memphis Rite, which is quite plausible, given the place and date. As for the question of length of stay, what you were told only applies to French Freemasonry; all these administrative details vary depending on the country and the Obedience.

Pangal has joined a regular Obedience, but he has many opponents in Romanian Freemasonry. -- Speaking of irregular Freemasonry, did you also know a certain Captain Moriu in Bucharest?

Almost all Jews in Turkey have Spanish names, and even today they still speak a language based on Spanish among themselves; those here, on the other hand, speak only Arabic and French.

I am not sure what to think of the Rotarians; in any case, it is certainly a very American type of organisation!

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 30 January 1937.

Sir

I received your letter of 16 January, and I thank you for taking the time to write to me again just as you were leaving. I hope that you managed to find your lost parcels and that nothing else has happened to delay your journey further; I am therefore sending this letter to Montevideo.

I also received Privat's book earlier; if I did not thank you sooner, it was because I thought it was too late to write to you again in Antwerp. I have only just finished reading it; Edward VIII's horoscope cannot really be considered a success on his part! As for his predictions concerning France, I believe, even though he denies it (perhaps a little too insistently), that they are not entirely free of political ulterior motives... -- Returning to the story of the abdication, I think you are right and that there are some very unclear aspects to it... and that perhaps they will never be clarified; moreover, the real reasons behind events generally have little to do with what is reported to the public...

I meant to say Captain Moriu, not Marin; I must not have written the names very legibly! As for the current state of Romanian Freemasonry, it seems that Sadoveanu is gaining the upper hand over his rivals, but apart from his reputation as a writer, I don't know if he is really worth much more than the others...

I have never had the opportunity to read La République des Champs-Elysées, but I have heard about it quite often and have even seen quotations from it; it does indeed seem to be a truly curious work, although there is undoubtedly

a lot of confusion in it (the Hyperboreans and the Atlanteans are two completely different things, Atlantis is a lost continent and not a land that still exists, etc.); I wonder, moreover, if this confusion is entirely unintentional. What is even more remarkable is that similar ideas have since been put forward by other authors, all of them Belgian (notably Th. Cailleux) or from northern France; it would seem that these ideas actually belong to a more or less secret school to which all these people belong. There are certainly many strange things in Belgium, but unfortunately most of them are not very commendable...

What you tell me about the differences in light between regions does not surprise me at all; what is certain is that it is completely different here than in Algeria and Morocco, even though they are at roughly the same latitude. But one thing I have never been able to explain is that most travellers say things about it that do not correspond at all to reality; for example, in almost all European descriptions of Egypt, there is mention of a so-called exceptional brightness of the stars... which we have never been able to observe; what is the reason for this: differences in eyesight (those with blue eyes always have more or less blurred vision here), or simply preconceived ideas that affect observation?

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 12 April 1937.

Sir,

I have just received your letter of 13 March; I am glad to know that mine reached you safely, and I hope that this one will too, even though the address is only temporary.

I am glad that your journey went well despite the bad weather, but it is annoying that there are still complications with your parcels. I would like to believe that it is all over now, but I wonder how you managed to get away with that enormous crate!

As for your impressions of the country, it is of course necessary to wait a little while to allow them to become clearer, and also to see whether the climate will suit you; but I am not surprised that the people are rather noisy... As for the language, you will probably have no trouble getting used to it; Spanish is not very difficult, but it is true that, as you say, the similarities with other "Latin" languages can sometimes be misleading.

I remember seeing issues of the Courrier de la Plata many years ago; I didn't know it still existed.

There are quite a number of Theosophists throughout South America, and even more Spiritualists; as for the rest, I do not know exactly what there may be where you are.

The Anglo-Saxon Grand Lodges have founded lodges in many South American countries because they have no relations with the indigenous Masonic lodges. When relations are subsequently established, these lodges are free to change their obedience, as otherwise this would constitute an "invasion of jurisdiction".

to change their Obedience, because otherwise it would constitute an "invasion of jurisdiction".

As for Romanian Freemasonry, I have learned that the government recently ordered it to dissolve, apparently to counterbalance measures taken elsewhere against "right-wing" organisations and thus give an impression of "impartiality".

Thank you very much for your intention to send me La République des Champs-Elysées; I will be very happy to see this book, of which I have only a rough idea, based on the quotations I have seen.

Regarding Anatole France and his plagiarism, I had a pleasant surprise the day I read La Rotisserie de la reine Pédauque, recognising in it a mixture of Le Comte de Corbolis and the biography of its author, Abbé de Villars.

The impression you had at sea seems difficult to explain; one might be tempted to admit that there is a difference due to the direction of the boat, but the fact that you noticed a change in direction seems to rule out this assumption.

I had never seen anywhere what you tell me about blue eyes; it is obvious that this is an idea that could only have come from "Nordic" people... As for the brightness of the stars, it is quite possible that the twinkling is significantly increased by the humidity in the atmosphere.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 29 October 1937.

Sir,

I received your letter some time ago, and I have just received the package you sent, containing the three volumes of La République des Champs Elysées. Thank you very much for sending it!

I thought that your delay in writing must be due to some trouble; at least the issue with your luggage was resolved more easily than you feared; but I see that, unfortunately, you are not as satisfied as one might wish with the climate, accommodation and location. We must hope that all this will eventually be resolved; but it is certainly unfortunate to have to deal with such an unfavourable environment as this seems to be, although, to tell the truth, the difficulties of life are becoming greater everywhere in the current circumstances...

For my part, since I wrote to you, I have had a very violent attack of rheumatic pain that completely immobilised me for nearly a month, and I am still suffering from fatigue that is slow to pass, so that I have a lot of work to catch up on; with the climate here, and especially in the middle of summer, this is quite extraordinary. It is generally said that rheumatism is mainly caused by humidity; but, as many people who have never moved from here, where there is no humidity, are nevertheless affected by it, we must believe that there is something else...

The remarks you made about light, food, etc., are really quite strange; it would be interesting to know if it is the same in other countries in the southern hemisphere. Obviously, there must be something "reversed" there; but, apart from the reversal of the seasons, I have never had the opportunity to find out how this could manifest itself; in any case, I understand that all these anomalies do not give you a very good impression! It is also possible that, as a result of all that Europeans have destroyed, there are some of those harmful "psychic residues" that I mentioned in one of my recent articles.

What is this story about calendar reform? Don't forget to tell me more if you have any further information on this, as well as on Garibaldi's correspondence, where there may be some curious things.

I will talk to you another time about Romania; there too, there are certainly "psychic residues" that manifest themselves in a rather singular way!

I am not familiar with Dr Vannier's book on "Diagnosing diseases through the eyes", and I would be grateful if you could send it to me. On this subject, I only have a pamphlet by a German doctor whose name escapes me (I cannot find it at the moment); it does not mention colour, but only spots on the iris, which, depending on their position, indicate different diseases. -- As for homeopathy, I know people who have had very good results with it, others on whom it has had absolutely no effect, and still others in whom it has caused disastrous reactions; it therefore seems that there is at least something about it that is not "up to scratch".

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 15 December 1937.

Sir,

I received your letter after I had already written to you in reply to your previous letter and to thank you for sending me La République des Champs Elysées. I hope that my letter, although sent to the address you had previously given me, reached you safely, and also that your health is better now; but from what you tell me, this country seems decidedly unfavourable, and I understand that, under these circumstances, you do not wish to stay there too long if possible... As for me, I am also quite badly affected by flu at the moment, not to mention the fatigue that has remained since my rheumatic crisis and which is only slowly subsiding; as a result, I am still very behind with all my work... I have not yet been able to read De Grave's work, but from what I have seen, your criticisms of it seem quite justified to me; there is certainly a lot of fantasy in it, particularly from a linguistic point of view (I have always wondered why etymological research has the power to make so many people ramble on!); but what is curious is that (apart from what clearly bears the mark of its time) this is not a fantasy peculiar to a single individual, but that these ideas have reappeared

with insistence, particularly the idea of explaining everything through Flemish, considered a "primitive language"; it seems that behind this lies the work of a whole school of thought, more or less mysterious, although its continuity can be guessed at rather than seen externally... The story of Ulysses' journey also comes up often in this context; it has been taken up in particular by Cailleux, another Belgian who seems to be closely linked to the same "movement"; it is true that, on the other hand, the preconceived idea of limiting these journeys to the Mediterranean basin is perhaps not the most well-founded either!

As for the legend of Saint Brendan, I had already been told that there was not much to be gained from the edition published by "L'Artisan du livre"; unfortunately, many things have been "arranged" in this way with purely "literary" concerns in mind, which often results in the disappearance of precisely those elements that would be most important for their true understanding...

As for Mount Om or Omul, other people have already made the same comment to me as you; I am not sure what to make of it; however, I must say that, in general, endings are not of essential importance, nor are vowels, which are constantly variable and are not an integral part of the roots. Seeing the endless discussions some people have about vowel issues, I have often regretted that they are not familiar with Arabic, as this would be enough to make them feel no need to raise these questions, which arise only from an illusion due to the constitution of European alphabets... What you mention to me about the "little dog of the earth" seems really curious to me; I cannot guess where the name of Saint Tael might come from; as for the two "angels of death", it may not be unrelated to something that is also found in Islamic tradition; I will have to try to get some more precise information about all this...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 12 February 1938.

Sir,

Just a few words to share with you the reply I have just received from a Romanian correspondent whom I asked for information about this story of the "little dog of the earth" that you mentioned in your last letter. Here is what he told me:

"The quatrain quoted is not a popular song, but a 'motto' from a poem by Eminescu, which is considered to be his own invention. In editions of this poet's work, instead of Tael, the word Taci, 'be quiet', is used, so that the translation is: 'In the name of the Saint, --Be quiet and hear how the little dog of the earth barks-- Under the stone cross. However, it appears that in one of the first editions (1907) of this poet, who died at the end of the last century, instead of "Taci" the name "Tael" was printed; but this can only be a typographical error, as the expression is thus defective from a metrical point of view, and moreover no one has ever seen or heard this name anywhere else.

"As for the 'little dog of the earth', also called 'Tamcul pâmântului'" (the little one of

earth") or "Grivau" (name of a dog), or even, it is said, "Orbetele pâmântului" ("the mole of the earth"), it is considered to be an entity living inside the earth, a kind of Cerberus that sometimes comes to the surface and frightens travellers. It is said that you can hear it barking if you put your ear to the ground. This infernal entity disturbs the sleep of the dead and attacks them if they do not give it a coin (which is usually placed in the palm of the dead when they are buried). "

I want to believe that you are finally rid of all the troubles you told me about, and I hope you will soon be able to give me some news.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 4 March 1938.

Sir,

Your letter of 26 January crossed with the one in which I shared with you the information I had received about the "little dog of the earth". My rheumatism has gradually subsided; let us hope that it does not return, but I agree with you that it is very difficult to know where it comes from and what remedies might be effective... I know that acupuncture has been introduced in France, but I wonder if it is taken seriously; in any case, I know two people who have tried this treatment, and while one was quite satisfied with it, the other had disastrous results. Thank you for offering to send me the plates, which I am quite curious to see; but, of course, there is no rush; as with the book on iridology, take your time until you no longer need them. What you tell me about the photos showing depth will also interest me; I confess that I do not quite understand what that might be...

I see that, unfortunately, you are still dissatisfied with the country; let us hope that you will be able to see some interesting regions before you leave; but you did well to renew your residence permit in Belgium, since everything is so complicated now. As for the difficulties in business, I think it's pretty much the same everywhere at the moment, and it's only too true that soon there won't be anywhere left where you can live in peace!

- I don't know anything specific about Iceland; in any case, it seems to me that the climate must be very difficult to bear.

I have seen a few articles about this story of a young girl who speaks ancient Egyptian, or something that is presented as such; but, as she is a more or less professional medium, I must admit that it does not inspire me with excessive confidence, even though the thing is not impossible "a priori".

What is happening in Romania is becoming increasingly obscure and complicated; Goga did not remain in power for long; and it was quite unexpected to see the patriarch become head of government. There are some very strange characters involved in all this, such as Codreanu, who claims to act on revelations he receives from the Archangel Michael! And visions, apparitions and

predictions of all kinds are multiplying throughout the country; there are certainly some rather suspicious psychic elements at play in all this...

As for the Jewish question, it is causing a stir everywhere; it has also begun in Italy, where it has hardly been a concern until now. Your remark about certain more or less contradictory arguments is very apt; the illogicality of most people in our time is truly something quite extraordinary!

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 4 September 1938.

Sir,

I have received your letters of 4 April and 17 June, and, in the last few days, that of 22 July. I apologise for not having written to you sooner, as I was waiting for a more permanent address. Perhaps you made a wiser decision in trying to go to Paraguay, since things were not looking satisfactory in Belgium, and since it is quite certain that the state of Europe in general is not reassuring at present. As for jobs, I believe they are hard to find anywhere at the moment... Let us hope that you will be more satisfied with the atmosphere in Paraguay; what you tell me is curious, but does not surprise me too much, for more must have been preserved than is commonly said about the ancient American civilisations; even among the Indians of North America, it seems that many traditional elements are still alive; only, all this was hidden from the European invasion, and it had to be in order to escape total destruction... Thank you in advance for the little book you mention on this subject; I read Spanish very easily and even spoke it a little in the past.

Thank you for sending the photographs, which I find truly extraordinary; I had never seen anything like them before, and I must admit my astonishment that it is possible to achieve such relief, because in painting, perspective is ultimately only the effect of an artifice... - Speaking of photographs, there is something else that I noticed a long time ago, but which has struck me particularly in recent times: all those taken in China have a very special "atmosphere", which can even be recognised in poor-quality reproductions printed in newspapers. How can this be explained?

As for the question of Eminescu's poem, I would be rather embarrassed to tell you what I think about it all, because there are things there that are beyond my competence, from a "metrical" point of view, for example; The best way to clarify this would be for you to correspond directly with Mr Mihaël Vâlsan, 20, Str. Ion Maiorescu, Bucharest (IV); he has asked me to request this on his behalf. I also asked him if he knew Pâdeanu; he has heard of him, but only as a spiritualist, and he does not believe that he ever played a real political role.

In Italy, things seem to be getting seriously worse at the moment between the Vatican and the Fascist regime, and this is over the issue of "racism"; I wonder what will come of it...

Soulié de Morant has always struck me as more of an "amateur" than a man capable of really delving deeply into anything; that is why I have doubts about the accuracy of his acupuncture method... I am completely unfamiliar with the book by
J. Tissot and I have no memory of ever having heard of it. I have no confidence whatsoever in "official" medicine, because it completely lacks any basis, and it is only "by chance" that it can be successful in certain cases; basically, apart from genuine traditional medicine, there can't be much that is serious... As for homeopathy, you are right to say that it touches on the subtle, even if those who use it are not aware of it; but the extraordinary diversity of results obtained depending on the person seems to indicate that there is something that is not "up to scratch".

I knew that Jinarajadasa had recently made a new "tour" of South America; I understand that you did not waste your time going to hear him, as he must have said nothing but the usual platitudes!

I had never heard of "Logosophy" before; I would be curious to hear some details about it when you are able to give them to me. The symbol, which is certainly very "composite", produces a rather bizarre impression as a whole... I also wonder how exactly the name "Raumsol" is formed; it seems to contain the monosyllable "Aum" and the word "Sol" (sun); but what does the first letter R mean?

As for Judge Rutherford's sect, or the "Jehovah's Witnesses", which is still a very suspicious thing, it seems to be spreading a lot of propaganda everywhere; I was recently sent a few issues of a magazine it publishes in Paris, a good part of which is taken up with articles in favour of the Spanish "reds".

The story behind Maurice Verne's article is also quite significant; I haven't seen this one, but I have seen others by the same author and of the same nature; it must, as always, have appeared in L'Intransigeant, which is, in a way, the unofficial mouthpiece of the British IS in France. Verne's particular role is to tell "arranged" stories, in which there is little truth and much falsehood, in order to divert people's attention from what might be too embarrassing. What is true is that, at the beginning of the Hitler affair, there was not only Trebitch Lincoln, but also Aleister Crowley and a certain Colonel Ettington; it is quite possible that it is the latter who is involved... As for the research in Afghanistan, it actually began with a whim of a certain Bogdanoff, who was an interpreter at the Russian legation in that country and who claimed that if one dug beneath the city of Kabul, one would inevitably find the entrance to Agartha!

Thank you for asking about my health; it is good at the moment, although it was at this time last year that I had a rheumatic attack. There is nothing impossible about snake venom being effective against rheumatism; but, unfortunately, in my case there are particular reasons that would prevent it from working...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 6 January 1948.

Dear Sir,

Your letter has just reached me, and I am very happy to hear from you after so long, as I often wondered where you might be now; I did not think you had returned to South America.

As for me, as you can see, my address has not changed, and I have never moved from here during all these years. With communications with almost all countries interrupted due to the war, I took advantage of having all my free time, with no correspondence or articles to write, to prepare four new books, which were published successively in 1945 and 1946. Now, we are working on the reissue of my old works, which had all been out of print for a long time. The journal Études Traditionnelles, which had naturally ceased publication, resumed publication at the end of 1945.

You may have heard, since it is not far from you, that a Spanish translation of the "Introduction générale" was published in Buenos Aires during the war. In addition, a Portuguese translation of "Crise du Monde moderne" is due to be published in São Paulo in the next few days.

I hope, based on what you have told me, to hear from you again soon, and I will then be able to write to you at greater length than I have done today, as I wanted to reply to you without delay.

I thank you for your good wishes, and I send you mine in return, regretting only that they cannot reach you until somewhat late.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

René Guénon

René Guénon to Éric Ollivier

Cairo, 31 March 1946

Your letter has just been forwarded to me; unfortunately, I cannot give you a satisfactory answer regarding the possibilities of initiation still existing in the Western world. I do not think that, in this regard, there is currently anything to be found in Christianity, nor indeed in Judaism. Furthermore, based on what you have told me, I do not know if you are particularly attached to a specific form of tradition, which is naturally a very important point...

Since these questions seem to be of particular interest to you, I would like to point out that a new book of mine specifically on this subject, "Aperçus sur l'Initiation" (Insights into Initiation), has just been published at the beginning of this month by Éditions Traditionnelles (Librairie Chacornac).

As for your question about Gurdjieff and Lanza del Vasto, I can answer you without hesitation in the negative. The former, who must now be in America (at least I have not heard that he has returned to Europe), has used what he learned during his travels in the East to develop a rather fanciful method of psychic training, which even seems to be dangerous and, in any case, has absolutely no connection to anything authentic. Lanza del Vasto's case is different: he has no real interest in doctrinal questions, and his concerns are almost exclusively social, which explains his relationship with Gandhi (who, it must be said, was also very ignorant from a traditional point of view). This has nothing to do with initiation, and I do not believe that he has any pretensions in this area; but he would like, with a view to the social achievements he has in mind, to found an "Order" whose members would have to take vows, and it is to be feared that this would more or less turn into a "pseudo-religion".

Generally speaking, anyone who is not attached to a regular tradition cannot be regarded as a true spiritual Master. Among people of this kind, who are too numerous in our time, some are genuinely dangerous for various reasons, while others, although more harmless, can only waste the time of those who follow them. ( )

Cairo, 26 September 1946

(...) Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage can still transmit a virtual initiation, but, as things stand, one should not count on finding any support there to go further, for there is not even a hint of what any kind of realisation might be.

I thought Madame de Salzmann was still in Geneva, where she had a physical culture school before the war; if Gurdjieff, whose husband was once

one of his principal assistants, returned to France, that is undoubtedly what brought her back as well.

Canseliet (who is not Fulcanelli, but who presents himself as his successor) is certainly not a "master"; moreover, from a traditional point of view, he can only be more or less effectively linked to one of those currents that have deviated in the "naturalistic" direction to which I have referred on various occasions.

I do not know what could have led you to believe that Clavelle was my representative in Paris; he is simply one of those who are kind enough to take care of things that, due to the distance I am from, I cannot do myself; For his part, he deals more specifically with matters concerning Études Traditionnelles, just as others deal with matters relating to the publication and printing of my books, etc. I am very grateful to all of them for the help they give me, but in reality none of them is my representative in the strict sense of the word. ( )

***René Guénon to Frithjof Schuon* (*published in Les Cahiers de l'Herne*)**

Bî-smi Llâh al-Rahmân al-rahîm al-hamdu li-Llâhi wahda-Hu
In the name of the merciful and compassionate God, praise be to God alone!

Cairo, 16 April 1946.

ila l-shaykh al-fâdil wa-l-akh al ‘aziz Sayyidî
Isâ Nûr al-Din Ahmad
al-salâm ‘alaykum wa-rahmat Allâh wa-barakâtu-Hu-Wa-ba`d
To the excellent Shaykh and dear brother, Sidi Aissa Nur al-Din Ahmad To you be the greetings and mercy of God and His blessings.

Although I have heard from you often lately, as you can imagine, I was extremely happy to receive your message directly this time, and also that you are giving us hope that one of our friends will visit us; and perhaps you yourself will also be able to come back and see us without too much delay...

Thank you for sending me the successive chapters of your book, which is now complete. I find it extremely interesting, and it would certainly have been a great pity if you had not decided to write it. I really cannot think of any changes I could suggest, nor anything that could be added or removed; I believe that what relates to Christianity, in particular, has never been presented in this light before, and it may help some people to understand many things. It is important that this book be published as soon as possible; Luc Benoist had mentioned the end of this year to me, but as the reissue of The Crisis of the Modern World seems likely to happen sooner than he said at the time, I hope that this will bring forward the publication of the following volumes in the collection, i.e. your book first, and then Coomaraswamy's on
Hinduism and Buddhism. As for your new title, I do indeed think it is preferable to the first because it is shorter and perhaps also because it will seem clearer to readers who are not yet familiar with our terminology.

I had already heard from P. Genty that he had decided to write to you; I am not sure what he may have told you about the "Prophets of the Spirit", but I suspect it must have been something rather confused; unfortunately, he has remained unchanged in the 40 years or so that I have known him, and is very stubborn in his ideas... Clavelle, who tells me he also received a copy of your reply, adds that, according to a more recent letter from Genty, the latter "seems determined, this time as usual, not to stray from the realm of dreams"; as he is not entirely impartial towards him, I would like to believe that he is exaggerating. If this were the case, it would indeed be unfortunate for poor Genty, for it is high time he made a more "effective" resolution; he must be 64 or 65 years old, but, to tell the truth, he has always looked old. - To what you say in your reply about St John, there is perhaps only this to add: many Muslims also consider St George to be a prophet, belonging to the

spiritual family of Seyidnâ El-Khidr, Seyidnâ Idris and Seyidnâ Ilyas; but, in any case, it is well understood that he would also be only Nabî and not Rasûl. On this subject, I don't know if I ever had the opportunity to tell you that what gave me the idea to write the articles on "descending realisation" that appeared in early 1939 was the fact that some Shiites claim that the Wali has a higher maqam (in relation to el-qutb) than the Nabi and even than the Rasul. What I wrote recently about the Malâmatiyah, as you will see (or perhaps you have already seen it, as the fourth issue of "E. T." must have come out by now), also touches on the same question; this article coincides with what you yourself wrote about the relationship between initiates and the people, and, by a rather curious "coincidence" (?), I had just planned to write it when this part of your book reached us!

Yes, we received the two studies from Buenos Aires on Buddhism and the "Divine Names" that you mention; I had the same impression as you, especially of the latter. It is very difficult to read, and there are many rather unnecessary complications in it, and even correspondences, many of which seem unjustified; I wonder on what authority the author could possibly base some of his assertions... Surely, it is very different from the work of S. Abu B.; don't you think that if the latter were translated into French, it would be worth publishing it in the "Tradition" collection? I don't think L. Benoist would have any objection to this idea.

I met Mrs. Breton (then Miss Dano) during my last days in Paris, and since then she has continued to write to me from time to time. I think you did well to reply to her, as she is certainly very friendly and seems understanding, and there is no reason to mistrust her. What's more, she does not belong to the all-too-numerous category of troublesome and indiscreet correspondents, which is much to be appreciated. I must also say that she and her brother-in-law (Paul Barbotin) have done me some favours by helping me to elucidate certain machinations of the people of the "R.I.S.S." and others of that sort. I would add, so that you know exactly where you stand, that she is clearly Catholic and that she is also in contact with Charbonneau-Lassay.

Your chapter on art forms will certainly be very good for Bharata Iyer's volume; Marco Pallis wrote to us that he himself was preparing something on
"traditional costume". As for me, unfortunately I have not done anything yet; as they seem to want the articles without too much delay, I wonder if the translation of my study on the theory of elements, which appeared some time ago in a special issue of "E. T." on Hindu tradition, might not do the trick. It is hardly possible for me to do any work of any length at the moment, nor until I have completely sorted out all the issues concerning the editions and re-editions currently in progress, as all this takes a lot of time and is further complicated by the slowness and irregularity of the post. It is true that the period of silence in recent years has had some advantages for me, in that otherwise it would probably have been very difficult for me to prepare four new books during that time; but, on the other hand, this prolonged absence of any news was becoming really quite painful...

Thank you and all our friends for your kind wishes; we are still well, praise be to God, and my family joins me in sending you all our greetings and best wishes.

Min al-faqîr ilâ rabbihi ‘Abd
al-Wâhid Yahyâ
(*From*) *the poor man in relation to his Lord*
Abd al-Wahid Yahya

1931 (based on a typed extract)

... As for Eastern Christianity, I do not believe that much remains in terms of deep understanding. The Syrians are hardly better than the Greeks, and even the Copts are generally very ignorant. There are still a few old Coptic monks who are exceptions, but they live in an almost inaccessible region and no longer admit newcomers among them; it is therefore a dying tradition that has lost all vitality. As for Abyssinia, it is said that there are still some interesting things there, but I have not had the opportunity to verify this for myself.

➢ (concerns the "Tariqah" of Lausanne, with F. Schuon as its "Sheikh")

Cairo, 27 September 1950

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter, which I received yesterday. Allow me to say first of all that you were quite wrong not to have dared to write to me until now, for I assure you that I am not one of those people who surround themselves with ceremony and who can only be addressed through intermediaries!

During the incidents of 1946, and despite everything I had already noticed that was unfortunate even before that, I still thought that everything could be sorted out, and it seemed to me that your submission could only contribute to this; but, to tell the truth, I regretted it greatly when I saw how much it had been abused afterwards. Since then, as before, I have remained silent for as long as I could, and for the same reasons, despite all the more or less extravagant things that I have too often had occasion to observe; but that too was to no avail, and I even realised that some people were too quick to interpret this silence as approval. Finally, as you know, there came a time when, despite all my good will to conciliate, it was no longer possible for me to maintain this attitude, and I had to intervene, somewhat against my will, in this question of Christianity, which was at least the apparent starting point of the current crisis. I say apparent because, in reality, it seems to be merely a continuation of the crisis of 1946, which was never really resolved. It is now clear that there is no hope that the situation will ever improve, and it is certain that it could not

continue indefinitely...

Naturally, I already knew from Vâlsan what you thought about all this, and I thank you for kindly confirming it to me yourself. As for those who are hesitant or who are currently siding with Switzerland, their position can obviously be explained by all the fantastic assertions that have been repeated to them ad nauseam and which they still believe; but it is to be feared that sooner or later they will end up experiencing cruel disillusionment... In Switzerland, doctrinal knowledge seems to be very weak among everyone, despite their "jnani" pretensions; as for the technical point of view, their ignorance in this regard is almost unbelievable, and the most unfortunate thing is that they imagine that it is possible to make up for this with so-called "inspirations" that are too obviously outside of any traditional regularity. There would be too much to say about all this, but I will not dwell on it further, as I am sure that Vâlsan keeps you informed of the most important points in our correspondence. I am pleased that you are in complete agreement with him; he has a much more solid doctrinal foundation than the Swiss, including their Master, and I fully agree with your assessment in this regard. I was pleased to learn that you have already begun to meet independently; whatever attitude the other side may take (and I hardly expect them to resign themselves to an "amicable" separation), you certainly do not need to worry about a question of "regularity" which no longer arises in these circumstances, and which, moreover, would have no more reason to arise for you vis-à-vis Lausanne than for Lausanne itself vis-à-vis Mostaganem, for there is no real difference, and it has absolutely nothing to do with the value that may be attributed to it.with regard to Lausanne than for Lausanne itself with regard to Mostaganem, because there is no real difference there, and it has absolutely nothing to do with the value that may be attributed, rightly or wrongly, to this or that individuality... The essential thing is to have a truly normal Tariqa, what is contemptuously called in Switzerland "a Tariqa like any other"; what a pity that some people have not been content with that!

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 18 September 1950.

On the other hand, I received a letter from Burckhardt, who, regarding my replies to M.L. [Martin Lings], says "that the violence of these letters has painfully struck him, and that he cannot reconcile this impression with the circumstances that prompted my harsh remarks"; yet it seems to me that this is not difficult to understand! ... [I] admire that one can take bad faith so far.

This hardly surprises me, for from a technical point of view, the ignorance of all these people, starting with F.S. [Frithjof Schuon] himself, is truly frightening...

Thinking about all these stories, I believe we will have to be very careful about everything that F.S. [Frithjof Schuon] and the Swiss would like to publish in the "E.T." [Études Traditionnelles], because they might slip something into an article that would be directed against us, perhaps in a more or less disguised form. What happened with the famous note on the "Christic Mysteries" is bad enough, and we should not risk exposing ourselves to another incident of this kind, which might be even worse this time; [...]

I now come to the matters concerning Switzerland. First of all, shortly after writing to you last time, I received new letters from F.S. [Frithjof Schuon] and Burckhardt; M.L. [Martin Lings] brought them himself, and, as always in such cases, he seemed very eager to see their contents, but in reality, I believe he had already read them before I did! Indeed, as I had passed him the beginning of Burckhardt's letter before I had finished reading the last page, he saw that I only had three pages in my hands and said, somewhat mechanically, "I thought there were four pages... " Then he stopped abruptly, probably realising that he had made a blunder, and started talking about something else entirely. This naturally aroused my suspicions; so, after he left, we examined the envelopes closely and found that they had been carefully opened and resealed, but not skilfully enough to be inconspicuous, and that the same was true of Burckhardt's previous letter. So the Pyramids address was not really secure, and it may well be that similar things had happened many times before; fortunately, only fairly unimportant items are sent there now, except of course for letters from Switzerland.

As you will see, certain things have come to light that tend to confirm that the Pyramids address is not secure. I would therefore ask you, even though there are still at least three weeks of peace and quiet ahead, to write to me from now on at the following address:

Sheikh Abdel-Wâhid Yahya
c/o Mercerie Ramadân
5 Shara Saad Zaghlud
Gisah.

The travellers to the Pyramids are definitely due to arrive tomorrow; who knows what quarrels M.L. [Martin Lings] will cause me and what the outcome will be? With warm regards. René Guénon.

... but it is still very unfortunate that there are a whole series of things like this. It really seems that [Michel] Vâlsan has been wrong a little too often, for better or for worse, in his assessments of others; I did not know what he had told you about Mac ∴ [Masonry], which is certainly very
"simplistic".

Shrî Ramana is 71 years old, which is not a very advanced age yet, but what is worrying is that he does not want to do anything to fight the disease and seems to be completely indifferent to it. I don't see anyone who could replace him, and knowing what his brother is like, I fear that in his hands, the Ashram will very quickly degenerate into a kind of commercial enterprise of the sort that we too often see established around certain places of pilgrimage... Best regards. René Guénon.

Cairo, 9 October 1950.

... when you put all these things together, it is much less surprising that the situation has reached the point it is at today; in any case, no one can accuse me of lacking patience by saying nothing and even constantly trying to fix everything for so long!

... in Lausanne, ritual observances have been reduced to a bare minimum, and most people no longer even fast during Ramadan; I did not believe it was to this extent, and I see that I was only too right when I said that soon it would no longer be a tariqa at all, but a vague "universalist" organisation, more or less in the manner of the disciples of Vivekananda! With warm regards, René Guénon.

... because it will have become clear that I did not at all share their view of the conditions under which [haplography crossed out] a branch of a tariqa could be regularly constituted...

***René Guénon to Galvao* (*1*)**

(A)

Cruseille (Haute Savoie) 16 October 1929

... for I must confess that I am unfamiliar with any of the French translations of Dante, having only ever read the Italian text.

There is, of course, the translation by Aroux, but I do not believe it can be of much help in understanding the deeper meaning, as it is written from a very specific political and religious point of view; I have, moreover, indicated the reservations that should be made about this interpretation. Furthermore, this translation, published in 1856, is now very rare; Mr Chacornac tells me that it can sometimes be found second-hand for 150 or 200 francs. The other translations, which are more commonly found, are done from an almost exclusively literary point of view. It seems that Artaud de Montor's translation, in the Garnier classics collection, is quite good. Among the more recent ones, I have heard many good things about Father Berthier's translation, published by Desclée. I have only had rather contradictory and generally unfavourable information about the others...

(B)

Cairo, 31 January 1938. (post office box, central office)

Dear Sir,

It has indeed been many years since I last heard from you, and your letter almost failed to reach me, for it has already been eight years since I left Paris and moved here...

I am delighted to hear everything you have to say, and also to learn of your intention to translate one or two of my books, which, despite the objections you foresee, does not seem to me to be a completely futile undertaking; not long ago, I was told that it would be a good idea to have them translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Last year, Man and His Future and The Crisis of the Modern World were published in Italian. Nothing has yet been published in English (except Man and His Future, which was translated some time ago), but five volumes are currently in progress; I even have a lot of work to do reviewing all these translations to ensure that they are as accurate as possible. There are also several translation projects in German, and even in Polish and Romanian... La

1 — (Galvao: René Guénon's Brazilian friend and correspondent)
N.B. Despite the care taken by the copyist, it is certain that spelling, punctuation and other errors have been unintentionally slipped into these pages, for which he apologises. The choice of excerpts presented here was generally based on their potential interest to future readers of J. P. Laurant's work, who will naturally proceed to make a new selection of their own. Passages of a more intimate nature or concerning the private lives of René Guénon or F. G. G. have not been transcribed. Did he not say to me: "Of course, I would ask you to keep this entirely to yourself"?
Note: When a sentence ends with an ellipsis, it is by René Guénon; on the other hand, series of more than three dots correspond to deleted passages concerning the private lives of R. Guénon or F. G. Galvao.
Typing of (A) to (Y) based on excerpts copied under the above conditions except for (B): complete copy.

The greatest difficulty in many countries is finding publishers under the current conditions; naturally, I do not know what the situation is in Brazil in this regard. As for the possible order of translations, it seems to me that we can consider "East and West", "The Crisis of the Modern World" and "Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power" as forming a kind of series independent of the strictly doctrinal works, and that one can begin with either one, depending on which is more advantageous for reaching readers more easily at first. As for the doctrinal works, it would certainly be best to start with the "general introduction" and then continue in the order in which they appeared: "Man and His Becoming", "The Symbolism of the Cross", "The Multiple States of Being". I wonder if you are familiar with the latter two, which were written since I have been here, and also with my regular contributions, since 1929, to the journal "Études Traditionnelles" (Traditional Studies), formerly "Le Voile d'Isis" (The Veil of Isis) (11, quai Saint Michel, Paris 5°). In any case, I would like to bring all this to your attention in response to your request for some studies that might be useful to you; in the journal, apart from my articles, you will find There are certainly many other things that may be of interest to you.

I hope that this time you will not take so long to write back to me; I send all my correspondence by post, as I mentioned above, in order to avoid any mistakes, because for those who cannot write Arabic, our addresses here are almost impossible to write down accurately...

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(C)

Cairo, 8 May 1938.

..... It seems to me that it would be a good idea to first try a sort of "experiment" with a few articles, if you can find a magazine that is willing to accept them and where they would not be too "out of place" (this is not only difficult to find in Brazil, by the way). Naturally, I leave it up to you to choose the ones that would be most suitable, as it is obvious that you are in a better position than I to judge this. I would only ask you to write to Chacornac to request permission to translate the articles in question; of course, this is only a formality, which he will grant you without difficulty (especially as I will inform him myself) and without asking you for any fees; but he is rather sensitive, and naturally, because of the journal, we have many reasons not to risk upsetting or displeasing him in any way. For "Crise du Monde moderne", you will need to contact Mr R. Denoël, 19 rue Amélie, Paris (7°), who bought this volume (as well as "L'Homme et son devenir") following the bankruptcy of Bossard publishers.

As for the translation of Evola, I must say that he suggested certain changes that he considered necessary due to the special conditions currently existing

in Italy; I had to accept them (though not all of them), but I would certainly have preferred the translation to be entirely faithful to my text

I am pleased to see that you have followed the gradual transformation of "The Veil of Isis" and that you have realised the difficulties that had to be overcome; I can assure you that it required patience, but at least the result is satisfactory; that is why we must be grateful to Chac for gradually accepting everything we wanted to do, despite all sorts of people trying to intimidate him into changing his mind...

(D)

Cairo, 7 January 1940

..... Your second letter reached me shortly after Mr Paterson had replied to the first on my behalf... Although I have not yet fully recovered from this long bout of rheumatism, I am feeling much better, and hopefully it will soon be completely over. I have been able to resume work and prepare my articles for the January issue of Études Traditionnelles. Unless financial difficulties prevent it, the journal will now be able to return to a more regular publication schedule than it has had in recent times.

(E)

Cairo, 27 December 1943

Dear Sir,

It has been quite some time since I received your letter, and I apologise for not having replied sooner. It must be said that the long delays in correspondence, not to mention everything that gets lost in the post, do not encourage one to write. Who knows when all this will finally return to something like normal?

Thank you for your prayers and good wishes; our little girl is already a little over a year old now! Mr Cuttat intended to send you a copy of my book "Le règne de la quantité et les Signes des Temps" (The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times), written last year; I think he must have done so. I do not yet know whether he has received my other work on "The Principles of Infinitesimal Calculus", which we sent him a little later; the last news we had from him was about a year ago, and as he is practically our only source of indirect news about our friends in Switzerland, you can see how far away it all is!

On the other hand, Mr Lings sent you a copy of his own work, "The Book of Certainty", from here several months ago. Did you receive it?

At the moment, I am working on arranging and completing my articles on initiation into a volume, something I was asked to do a long time ago (most of the years of the journal in which they appear were already completely out of print before the war); but when will it be possible to have all this published?

(F)

Cairo, 22 December 1944

Our daughter is growing up, she is already a little over two years old now; and here we are
we are expecting another child soon, probably in about two months!

I have finished arranging the articles I mentioned the last time I wrote to you (almost exactly a year ago) under the title "Insights into Initiation"; with everything I have added, it forms a large volume. Recently, I finished yet another book on "The Great Triad", which, as the title suggests, deals mainly with the symbolism of Far Eastern tradition. So now I have four books ready to be published as soon as circumstances allow; let us hope that this will not be too long... I am pleased to hear that you have received "The Reign of Quantity" and Mr Lings' "The Book of Certainty". Mr Lings has asked me to thank you for your kind words about his book.

(G)

Cairo, 25 January 1946

..... I have also asked for a copy of The Reign of Quantity, published at the beginning of last October, to be sent to you from Paris..... On the other hand, I must say that you were right in a sense not to take seriously the opinion published in December 1927 in "The Veil of Isis", because its author was indeed initiated by Sheikh Ahmed, but that is all, and he made this appeal on his own initiative. Having noticed certain things that seemed rather strange and irregular to me, I inquired about this directly, and I was told that he (Dr. J. H. Probst-Biraben) had never been "mandated" for anything.

(H)

Cairo, 14 September 1946

.....You are no doubt aware that Mr Cuttat has left Argentina; when he
left, he believed he would return after his leave, but he remained in Switzerland, having been appointed to a position (Chief of Protocol) at the Ministry itself. Mr Lings also went to Switzerland during the last two months to see all our friends there; he returned here a few days ago and brought us good news from everyone.

(I)

Cairo, 28 September 1946

Note from F. G. G.: This refers to Fernando Nobre's book: "Gouvernement démophile" (Demophile Government).

..... I have only glanced at it, and it seems to me that, alongside some very good points, there are others that would call for reservations; I have also noted certain admirations that I would find it very difficult to share; and then the very word "demophilia" or "demophilism" does not seem to me to be the most appropriate; but all this is insufficient to enable me to give a real opinion. On the other hand, there is a purely political aspect to it, for which I do not claim any competence; and you must know how careful I have always been to avoid this area!

(J)

Cairo, 14 November 1946

..... As for the "Principles of Infinitesimal Calculus", I have already noticed that their title seems a little daunting to many people, but I believe this is mistaken, as one certainly does not need to be a mathematics specialist to understand them, and even many mathematicians find themselves rather hampered in this regard by their preconceived ideas and habits, which they find difficult to abandon. If I had sent a letter of approval to Mr Nobre in response to his telegram, he might have seen fit to publish it in lieu of one, and I confess that I would have been rather annoyed! As for biographical information, you know how opposed I am on principle to bringing all these individual questions into play where doctrine alone should count. On the subject of portraits, there is something else: I am referring to a real danger if they were to fall into the hands of people with malicious intentions; here alone there are I know not how many people (Europeans and Jews) who have tried in vain by every means to obtain photographs of me; what did they want to do with them? I must say, moreover, that if I have managed to live in peace here, it is only on condition that I have never had the slightest contact with European circles. What you have been told about the trip to Mecca Mecca is unfortunately inaccurate; it was only my wife who went there with our eldest daughter (this was before the birth of our second child). We hope to go there together another time, but who knows when?

In any case, Christianity, at least at present, is the only tradition in which it is permissible to eat anything indiscriminately; there can therefore be no objection for a Catholic to eat the meat of an animal slaughtered according to the rites of any tradition, or even without any rites, especially since this obviously does not imply any participation in the rite of slaughter itself. I said "currently" because this may not have been the case in earlier times; the only thing I am sure of (and this would be insufficient to

address the issue in an article, especially since I have not done any research on the subject myself, but it was Mr Clavelle who told me this), is that, originally, the prohibition on blood existed in Christianity as elsewhere; it gradually fell into disuse on its own, at different times depending on the country, but, curiously, it was never actually repealed by any official decree!

(K)

Cairo, 11 January 1947

Dear Sir,

Your two letters of 25 November and 7 December reached me within a few days of each other, and I apologise for taking a little time to reply. This delay was entirely unintentional: I had been feeling rather tired for some time, and ended up becoming quite ill, so much so that I was unable to get out of bed for two weeks. At last, I am much better now, but with all I have to do, I wonder how I will ever catch up on lost time!

I am very happy to hear that you have begun translating The Crisis of the Modern World and that it is progressing well. I have asked our friend René Allar, who is more specifically involved in all matters relating to publishing, to send you the text of two changes that could not be made in time to be included in the new edition, as well as a list of a few errors that remain in it, so that your translation can be completely "up to scratch".

I see from the clipping you sent me that spiritualism seems unfortunately to be wreaking havoc in Brazil; what is perhaps more surprising is that it is now also being reported in the newspapers.

(L)

Cairo, 18 February 1947.

..... A Polish lady, Countess Humnicka, who is very interested in our studies and who had even translated several of my books (unfortunately, these translations were lost during the war along with everything else she owned), managed after many difficulties to escape from Poland and reach Brazil with her husband, and is now in São Paulo. As she naturally finds herself very isolated, especially from an intellectual point of view, I told her about you and gave her your address, urging her to visit you on my behalf. I would be very grateful if you would give her a warm welcome...

(M)

Cairo, 9 May 1947.

..... Indeed, when it comes to Buddhism, we must now take into account the work of Mr Coomaraswamy, which completely changes the picture; Before that, of course, I had never had the opportunity to examine the matter more closely, and I must even tell you that the way Buddhism is usually presented makes it so uninteresting that I was not at all inclined to take a particular interest in it. I thank you very much for your excellent idea of sending me all the royalties directly here; since, as you know, it is still impossible for me to transfer the money I have in France, I will always be able to receive as much as I can in this way, and this will be of great service to me.

Your idea of including the study you have written as an appendix to "The Crisis" seems very good to me.

Regarding communion under both kinds, which you mention in relation to the degeneration that has occurred in Christianity, you may be aware that it has always been maintained in all the Eastern Churches, including those attached to Rome.

(N)

Cairo, 28 June 1947.

..... It seems that you have expressed some concern about the newspaper editor whom Countess Humnicka mentioned to you; you must surely know what the situation is, but in any case it seems to me, as it does to her, that he could still be used on occasion, I mean, in the current situation, to talk about the book and publicise it when it is published; what do you think?.....

(O)

Cairo, 23 October 1947.

..... I do not know if you have heard the sad news of the death of Mr. Coomaraswamy, which occurred about a month and a half ago; it was quite unexpected, because although he had been seriously ill a few months ago, he had since written to me that he was much better and complained only of being forced to slow down his work. He intended, after completing a few more things, to leave America towards the end of next year to retire to India; unfortunately, he will not have been able to carry out this project, which seemed very important to him...

(P)

Cairo, 24 December 1947.

From what you tell me, I think that "A Crise do Mondo moderno" must now be about to appear, if it has not already done so; I hope you will keep me informed of what you learn about the reception it receives. I received a letter from a certain Mr Ladislan Kovacs, of Hungarian origin, who lives in São Paulo and who obtained my address from Chacornac... I thought the best thing to do would be to forward it to you. Strangely enough, he asks me to authorise him to translate "The Crisis of the Modern World" into Portuguese and have it published, unaware that this has already been done! I would be most grateful if you could see whether it would be possible to entrust him with the translation of some of my other books, without this duplicating what you yourself are planning to do. Naturally, you are in a better position than anyone else to judge whether he is really capable of doing this work properly... On the other hand, he says that after reading "Aperçus sur l'initiation" (Insights into Initiation), he would like "to find a more solid foundation than that offered by purely bookish knowledge"; I am not sure how to respond to this, and in any case, as I do not know him at all, I think it best not to say anything to him until you have met him and let me know what impression you have of him. See also if it would be of any interest to introduce him to Countess Humnicka, whom I am not mentioning to him at this stage, of course. I leave all this to your discretion and thank you in advance.

I already knew from Countess H. that you had recently been visited by one of the members of the Buenos Aires group; I was very happy that you had this opportunity for more direct contact (and it was also fortunate that you happened to be in São Paulo at the time), an opportunity that arises all too rarely where you are, for I have often felt sorry for you because of this remoteness, which is so inconvenient in many ways... I believe you are quite right to keep your family as far away as possible from the big city, which has so many disadvantages of the kind you mention, and no doubt more and more, because all this is only getting worse. In this respect, as in many others, you have the advantage of being able to live apart in your fazenda..... What appeared on the Archaeometer in "Gnosis" was in fact a kind of collective work; I collaborated on it along with several others, and the whole thing was coordinated by A. Thomas ((Marnès)?), whose initial T. appears as a signature... We agree on the difficulty of identifying the Buddha with the 9th Avatâra; those who support this opinion are moreover obliged, in order to reconcile it with the fact that he must have been a Mlêchchha-Avatâra, to claim, based on a very dubious etymology, that the Shâkyas were Shakas, that is to say, a people of Scythian origin. Perhaps we could instead see him as a minor Avatâra; these are, moreover, naturally of indeterminate number... Regarding the possibilities of initiation, from which perspective might they be considered? Do you see any others at present besides that of the Tarîqah (Note from F. G. G.: An organisation based in Switzerland around Sheikh Aïssa Nourreddine, who received the Barakah from

Sheikh El-Alaoui, the great Moroccan saint of the first third of this century), I mean others that offer the hope of obtaining something more than a merely virtual initiation

? You know that Christian initiation seems to no longer exist, except perhaps in a few groups that are so closed and restricted that it is practically pointless to mention them. It is also possible that something remains in certain monasteries of the Greek Church, but in any case, this is obviously inaccessible.

What you tell me about this scholar and man of letters whom you knew makes me think, I don't know why, of Dario-Velloso (Note from F. G.: Brazilian, author of a Portuguese translation of the "Golden Verses" based on the version by F. d'Olivet. René Guénon met him around 1907 in occultist circles); could it be him? I would have thought he had been dead for a long time. What he told you about the caves of Mato Grosso does not surprise me and reminds me of a story I heard a long time ago; it was not in Brazil, however, but in another South American country, I cannot remember exactly now whether it was Colombia or Bolivia. An engineer working in that region ventured one day into a cave where he walked for a long time, seeing a glimmer of light that made him think there must be another way out; but he was eventually stopped by a stretch of water, on the other side of which he saw strange and unknown animals, and it seemed to him that the light illuminating this place was not coming from outside. He had to retrace his steps and never found out any more. Surely, as you say, these countries are not entirely known, and who can know what else is there from the point of view that interests us most?

Another thing on this subject: I do not know if you are aware, on Sheikh Aïssa's side, of the very interesting relations that have been established recently with the Indians of North America. I must say that I was surprised to learn that, despite so many unfavourable circumstances, many things have remained intact there until now, so much so that a revival of their Tradition is still possible; it may be that things will soon take an unexpected turn in that direction...

I am quite certain that your appendix to the translation, whatever you may say, has nothing in common with Marcireau's book; the latter is a collection of poorly compiled extracts (there are even isolated or truncated sentences whose true meaning cannot be understood), grouped under titles that, for the most part, do not correspond to my intentions. He has produced a number of volumes and brochures, all of which consist solely of more or less disparate quotations; it is obvious that his aim in all this is purely commercial. I need not tell you that he published this book about me without my knowledge; he even refrained from sending me a copy. I had initially hoped that it would go largely unnoticed, but he has publicised it so widely that unfortunately this has not been the case and it has spread far and wide (I have even been told that it is on sale in bookshops here). The way he "uses" me for his publicity (because he is still doing so) is becoming increasingly unpleasant and intrusive, especially since many people

may believe that he is acting with my permission; and we have no idea what could be done to put an end to it. I took the opportunity to say a little in the "E. T." about what I thought of his book, but I fear that it will have little effect on him.

(Q)

Cairo, 23 June 1948.

.....The letter I wrote to you on 10 June, in which I mentioned "A Crise..." should have already reassured you before you receive this one. Unfortunately, the one about the Bishop of Bragança has still not reached me; but I still want to believe that it is only a delay, as there are many at the moment; for example, a letter from Mr Préau, which we thought was lost, finally arrived three months later!..... I wonder if you have seen Mr Kovacs again and what the outcome was

continued in (R)

(R)

Cairo, 1 September 1948.

..... It must have been in my letter of 10 June that I thanked you for the translation of "A Crise" and mentioned the translation, in which I had already noticed most of the things you pointed out to me; but I don't think I can remember exactly everything I said to you. I would be delighted to hear what reactions the book has provoked so far; I hope you will tell me about them next time we speak.

(S)

Cairo, 2 December 1948.

..... I am quite surprised to see that three of my letters have been lost in the post; as for yours, I believe there was only one, the one mentioning the Bishop of Bragança, and in this regard, I would like to ask you what has become of this matter, about which I have heard nothing more. .....What Countess H. told me about Mr. Kovacs is that he had made a rather unpleasant impression on her and that she felt there was something unusual about him. Of course, that does not mean we should abandon him, if it is possible to do something for him, but I think we should at least be very cautious; we have had a lot of trouble for not being cautious enough with others, and experience has shown us that it is better to be too suspicious than not suspicious enough, especially when it comes to people who do not seem very stable. I can no longer remember whether it was you or Countess H. who

You told me that he was in a hurry to seek initiation; it is obvious that this would be premature in any case... As for the question of the translations he may do, that is naturally different, but I must admit that, even from that point of view, what you are telling me this time about the book "Liberté de conception" worries me greatly; if the translation of a work of this kind appears with his signature, it is absolutely impossible for it to also appear on my books; Have you not pointed this out to him? Apart from that, and in general, what I also fear, again based on what you have told me, is that he views translations primarily from a "commercial" perspective. This may not be a major drawback when it comes to "literary" works, but in my case, it cannot lead to anything very satisfactory, and I have always refrained from following up on proposals of this nature. The only exception was the first English translation of L'Homme et son devenir, which was done at the request of a publisher by someone he had commissioned and whom I did not know. it was so poor and caused me so much inconvenience that I promised myself I would never again authorise anything under the same conditions, and I was very happy when it went out of print, which allowed us to publish a completely new one. In any case, I would not want a Portuguese translation of any of my books to be done without your agreement and under your supervision, as it goes without saying that you are the best judge of its accuracy and quality in all respects, including language and style. As for which book would be best to publish first, you are naturally in a much better position than I to judge. I understood from what you had previously told me that you had already decided on "Spiritual Authority", which could be done more quickly than "The Reign of Quantity", since it is much shorter; I cannot remember whether you have received the new edition, which it would be preferable to translate immediately to avoid having to make changes afterwards. -- In any case, I think you will first have to finish Sheikh Aïssa's book; we must hope that it can be published without difficulty; do you think you can get it accepted by the same publisher? Sh. A. recently finished his other book, L’Oeil du Cœur (The Eye of the Heart), but we don't yet know when it will be published, as things always move very slowly at Gallimard. Coomaraswamy's Hinduism and Buddhism, which is the first volume to be published in the collection and whose translation has been ready for a long time, has only just been sent to print. Regarding Sh. A., I don't know who could have mentioned the "realisation of my dreams", as I don't remember ever using that expression, but I must admit that it does correspond to something true, because it is certain that without him, many things would have remained in a state of "theoretical" possibility and would not have been able to come to fruition.

It is a good sign, as you say, that three people have asked you to get them my books, and we must hope that it will not stop there. On the other hand, you never told me if there had been anything in the newspapers or magazines; yet it is always good to see what the reactions are.

caused, especially in a country where no other work of its kind had yet been published. -- You can be sure that I do not at all think that you have "assumed" a task that does not belong to you, quite the contrary, and I only hope that you can continue it as you began.....I believe that, in one of my letters that has been lost, I must have already told you about the story of the horoscope and the portrait exhibited by Rouhier; he did this without my knowledge, and, of course, I did not authorise it in any way; I learned about it from Mr Allar when he went to deal with the question of the reissues. This is very unpleasant for me, as I am completely opposed to this display of personal matters, firstly because it is contrary to traditional principles, and secondly because I believe that it is none of the public's business; but unfortunately, it seems that there is no way to force him to remove them. The horoscope must be false, as I assume it was based on a date given by Chacornac in one of his astrological almanacs, another indiscretion made without my consent and which I also found very unpleasant; I was only glad that, by a providential accident, this date turned out to be incorrect (5 November instead of 15, and that is the explanation I gave you earlier), because this can only "confuse" those who might want to use it! As for the portrait, I would very much like to be able to satisfy you, because it goes without saying that what I said earlier about the 'public' does not apply at all to friends like you; but the truth is that I do not have it myself, or at least I no longer have it, because I had one that remained in France, like many other things. As my wife would very much like to have it, I asked Mr Allar some time ago to see if it would be possible to obtain another copy and send it to me; but so far, I don't even know if that will still be possible...

(T)

Cairo, 20 July 1949.

..... I am not very surprised by what you tell me about "A Crise," because in France too, my publishers have often remarked that my books sell steadily and continue to do so indefinitely, unlike other books that initially sell in large quantities but then are no longer in demand. It is just a pity that so little has been said about it; are there no magazines, apart from newspapers, that could have given it more serious coverage? Regarding "silence", I am not at all familiar with the books that A. K. Coomaraswamy mentioned to you, so I cannot tell you whether they are related to the subject of my article ("Silence and Solitude") or whether they deal with the issue from other perspectives. --Of course, I am familiar with "Peaks and Lamas" and its author; he returned to Europe a few months ago and was recently in Lausanne, and he plans to return to Tibet next autumn. On his previous trip, he stopped here on his way through with Ràma Coomaraswamy, who has

now returned to America, as his mother is obliged to remain there for a few more years to take care of the work left unfinished by her husband.....

(U)

Cairo, 6 September 1949.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you today in haste, just to let you know that I have just received a letter from a certain Mr Ary Vasconcelos (rua Gustavo Sampais, 202, apt. 302, Rio de Janeiro), whom I do not know at all. What surprises me is that he addressed this letter to Les Pyramides, and I wonder how he got this address. He asks my permission to publish a translation of "The King of the World" which, if I understand correctly, he must already have done. Naturally, I replied asking him to contact you first and telling him that I will not authorise any Portuguese translation without it having been examined and approved by you, in order to ensure its accuracy. so he will probably write to you about this soon. I also informed him that in any case it will be necessary to wait for the publication of the new French edition currently in preparation, in order to take into account the few changes and additions I have made to it (of course, if his translation is already ready and otherwise satisfactory, this will be easy to arrange afterwards). -- Now I must tell you that there are certain things in his letter that I find somewhat annoying: first, he talks about a translation "with comments"; on this point, I told him clearly that I could not accept this under any circumstances, as his comments might well not reflect my true intentions. It must therefore be understood that this will be a pure and simple translation and that he will not add anything of his own; I have seen too many examples of how many people interpret things to not be wary! Next, he talks about his translation having the goal of "disseminating" traditional doctrines; is this simply because he does not fully grasp the meaning of certain words in French, or is this really what he meant to say? In either case, it does not seem very reassuring to me in terms of his understanding of what I write, and what I fear is that I am dealing with someone with more or less "occultist" tendencies; I would ask you to try to find out exactly what the situation is, and I think it would be advisable to examine the matter closely and be very cautious before giving authorisation. I apologise for causing you all this trouble, and thank you in advance.

I trust that you and your family are all in good health. I hope that my last letter (dated 20 July) reached you safely and that you will be able to send me news of yourself soon.

With warm regards.

R. G.

(V)

Cairo, 12 June 1950.

..... Our little Ahmed is now nine months old and already trying to walk; fortunately, he has never been ill since he was born; let's hope it stays that way!..... We recently had a visit from Mr Cuttat, who had never been here before..... He has just been appointed legation counsellor in Washington, where he is due to go next October; this will probably be his last post before being appointed minister.

Surely, you did not need to expressly show me your solidarity regarding the attacks by Mr F. D. (Note from F. G. G.: In E. T. 1949 pages 189-289), because I know very well what the situation is. Since my second response, this individual has kept quiet and has not reacted again; seeing that he was disapproved of by almost everyone, he may have finally understood that it would be better to be more cautious. I have just seen, in a Belgian magazine, a programme of lectures by a group of "dowsers" where his name appears alongside those of occultists of the most suspicious kind! Regarding Fernando Nobre, I have repeatedly received leaflets from an 'Institute' founded in his name in Paris, where lectures are given to spread his 'demophilocratic' ideas; I wonder what results he hopes to achieve from all this... My impression is that there are people there who are taking advantage of him by flattering him and presenting him as one of the greatest men of our time; this excessive praise does not seem entirely disinterested to me! I have not the opportunity to read Mr Lallement's book, but what you tell me about it is consistent with what I have heard elsewhere. Like you, I believe that he must be familiar with some of our writings, but perhaps we should not be too surprised that he never quotes them; he is certainly not the only one to do so, and besides, it may also be a kind of "tactic" on his part, because he is probably aware of the hostility of certain circles towards us, and it is possible that he does not want to risk it reflecting on him; but all in all, there is no reason to complain if it at least allows him to express certain ideas without arousing the mistrust and malice of all these people, which would inevitably happen if they saw my name or that of one of our collaborators mentioned.

There is certainly some truth in what you say about Saint Thomas; you would be in complete agreement on this with Monsieur Préau, who even goes so far as to consider Aristotle and Saint Thomas as the primary architects of modern rationalism, which is perhaps a little exaggerated. Since they affirm the existence of pure intellect, one cannot speak of rationalism in their case; but in practice, they draw few conclusions from this affirmation of principle, and their exclusively dialectical method was subsequently used by rationalists (although the latter, starting with Descartes, always showed hostility towards Aristotle and scholasticism). However, I do not think that this should prevent us from 'using' them, especially because of their great influence in the Western world, to indicate similarities insofar as their

doctrines are still in agreement with traditional ideas, while also pointing out their limitations where necessary, and that is essentially how I have always proceeded. What is certain is that Catholicism would have had a very different intellectual orientation if the Platonic influence had continued to exert itself as it did before St Thomas, instead of being replaced by the Aristotelian influence. one of the unfortunate consequences of this change was that it led to the neglect of the study of the Church Fathers, especially the Greek Fathers, who are certainly the most interesting from a doctrinal point of view. Of course, nothing similar happened in the Eastern Church, and this is undoubtedly why its theology, even to this day, gives the impression of being much more comprehensive and of never having confined itself to such narrow boundaries...

(W)

Cairo, 24 August 1950.

..... I was surprised to see that you thought three letters from you must have been lost, because I had initially thought it was only one; in any case, nothing has been found since I last wrote to you (a little over two months ago), and I believe that there is now little hope left. There must be something unusual about everything that happened some time ago with my correspondence... You are certainly quite right to think that one should never ignore "signs", although naturally one should not exaggerate the significance of certain things; it is especially when different signs coincide, even though they occur independently of each other, that we should pay attention to them, because there are no "chance occurrences" or mere "coincidences" that are purely accidental... In response to your question, I believe I must tell you exactly what the current situation is, and unfortunately, as you will see, it is not very encouraging. Firstly, with regard to the possibility of a specifically Christian initiation, there is still nothing, at least in practical terms, on the Catholic side. the Paraclet organisation, on which we had pinned some hopes at one point, seems, since the death of our friend Charbonneau-Lassay, to have fallen back into the slumber in which it had remained long before him, and I currently see no one who could revive it. On the Orthodox side, there is Hesychasm, which seems to have retained all the characteristics of a true initiation, but in fact it must be almost inaccessible, as it seems extremely difficult to find a qualified guide for this path. one would have to be able to go to Mount Athos, which is its centre (it was transferred there from Sinai around the 14th century), be allowed to reside there for a certain period of time, and gain enough trust from the monks to obtain from one of them the necessary transmission and technical instructions, and all this is far from easy, especially for those who are not originally Orthodox. On the other hand, as far as the "Great Triad" is concerned, it is necessary to live in or near Paris; it is not impossible that something similar may subsequently develop in other countries.

(perhaps even in South America), but in any case, for the moment, this is still only a rather distant hope; so far, attempts to do so in Italy and Syria have not been successful, due to a lack of sufficient suitable elements. -- The question of the Tarîqah remains. .....To complete the picture, and although it is of no practical interest here, I would add that in India, false gurus and figures who are more or less suspicious or dubious from a traditional point of view have been multiplying at an alarming rate for some time now; on the other hand, those who are really interesting are keeping themselves increasingly hidden, which is only too understandable given the clearly anti-traditional tendencies of the current government (it is quite significant in this regard that the government subsidises a so-called "Yoga Academy" where these things are supposedly studied using "scientific" methods, in the Western and modern sense of the word) ; who knows what will happen and whether it will be only temporary? I
think it would be really good if you translated "The Reign of Quantity" now rather than any of my other books, given that the translation of "The Crisis" has already been published and this is, in a way, the sequel; an English translation has already been done by Lord Northbourne (Note: F. G. did not quite get the spelling right), who is now looking for a publisher (there is always the possibility of Luzac, but another publisher might offer more advantageous terms); On the other hand, Gallimard has just announced its intention to undertake a third edition immediately, which I did not expect so soon. -- As for the book on the "Sacred Pipe", the American edition has not yet been published, contrary to what we had hoped; there have been delays, the exact reasons for which I do not know. Mr Allar is supposed to translate it into French, but I don't think he has done so yet... As for your collection of "Gnosis", there is no doubt that it is one of those I sold to Chacornac some time ago, and probably one of the last ones he had left; Indeed, it seems to me that the annotation you have given me must have been written in the bookshop itself by Clavelle, and I suppose that the letter mentioned must have contained something relating to the question of the reproduction of Abdul-Hâdî's article in the "E. T. "; it is therefore very likely that in reality this collection had no other owner before you, except myself first and then Chacornac.....

(X)

Cairo, 12 November 1950.

..... Clavelle also told me that he has been corresponding with you recently; I am very curious to know what you have observed regarding the G.. L.. of Sao Paulo and the trends that exist in that milieu; it would be desirable if they were favourable, but, of course, I have no idea what the situation may be..... I understand that in Brazil, thirty or forty years ago, some people were not particularly concerned about the issue of excommunication, and that there were even priests who belonged to the Maç.., as was the case in France in the 18th century;

b u t I do not know if they are stricter now... As for the Paraclete, I told you in my last letter what the situation is, so I will not go into it at length here; obviously, its almost complete "closure" is due to a combination of circumstances that are no one's fault... As for the Tarîqah, we have recently seen the establishment of a new independent branch in Paris... I have never claimed to be a "master" or "leader" of anything, and I consider myself very fortunate not to have been forced into it by circumstances, for I know of no worse calamity for anyone than to have disciples! -- As for belonging to several organisations, provided that there is no incompatibility between them (because this can also happen in some cases), it seems to me that we could apply the proverb which says: "Two safeguards are better than one", because, especially in the midst of the current confusion, one may not know exactly in advance which side will yield the best results.

The circumstances are certainly becoming less and less reassuring, and all your thoughts on this subject are only too true; in fact, I do not even believe that a new war needs to break out for the situation in Europe to become completely intolerable. As for this harmful influence in
the Southern Hemisphere, I was the one who mentioned it to Countess H., as I have known cases of people who have been very clearly affected by it; it goes without saying that these are people born in the Northern Hemisphere. It is possible that this is linked in some way to the direction of the Earth's magnetic currents, or to some other conditions that are somehow "reversed" between the two hemispheres; not everyone is equally sensitive to this, but there are people who cannot acclimatise to it...

(Y)

Cairo, 23 November 1950.

Unfortunately, it is clear that Clavelle's situation is very difficult, and if he were ultimately forced to accept a job that would leave him no time to devote to the "E.T." or any of the other activities more or less directly related to it, I really cannot see who could replace him.You do not tell me whether you were able to contact G. L. in São Paulo as you intended; I would be very interested to know what the situation is and, if so, what impression you had of that environment.

It is unfortunate that there has been this change at Martins and that he is now involved in so many other things besides his publishing; however, based on what you say, we must hope that he will agree to publish Da Unidade. We could indeed take advantage of this opportunity to do some publicity for A Crise; the review you mention is very good and you can certainly use it.

The "Reign of Quantity" has not been translated into Spanish; the Italian translation

is in progress (as is an English translation), but it is not yet finished; if it can be completed in time, I will be sure to ask for it to be sent to you.
I have just received the German translation of "The Crisis", which has finally been published after many difficulties and delays; this translation was already ready before the war!

Thank you for your kind birthday wishes; your letter reached me a few days later.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

René Guénon

René Guénon to Guido de Giorgio

The recipient of the 23 letters (dated from 20 November 1925 to 10 February 1930) published below, Guido De Giorgio, about whom some biographical details are given at the beginning of this collection, seems to have been a privileged interlocutor of René Guénon, especially among the latter's Italian correspondents. Judging by these letters alone – probably a relatively large fragment (1) of the correspondence addressed to De Giorgio – one clearly senses a sincere and disinterested friendship (in the broadest sense of the term: questions of affiliation, publishing, etc. never come into play). This cannot be explained solely by the epistolary formula "Dear Sir and Friend", which is rare in Guénon's letters and appears for the first time in the letter of 1 November 1927. In reality, many other features characterise this friendship.

René Guénon talks to De Giorgio about personal, family and even confidential matters (2): he also considers, on several occasions, inviting De Giorgio to stay at his home (and vice versa), which actually happens once, at the end of the summer of 1927; he also mentions De Giorgio's plan to settle in Blois as a teacher; he talks to him about a wide variety of subjects, but there is always understanding and agreement between the two friends (Guénon even speaks of "coincidence"...) (3).

The variety of subjects discussed seems to confirm, in addition to total and unreserved availability, the very friendly nature of this relationship. With other correspondents, at least Italian ones, Guénon's letters, while rich in references and information, are, to our knowledge, always focused on particular themes, specific leitmotifs. With Reghini, Guénon discusses Freemasonry and initiation, as well as the journals edited by his correspondent; with Evola, he deals with the vexatae quaestiones that separate him from the Italian author and, of course, also with the latter's journals.

Of these three men – Reghini, Evola and De Giorgio – it is the latter who enjoys Guénon's full and complete trust and who fulfils a "rectifying" function, which he will carry out with varying degrees of success.

However, a particular interest common to both men emerges from this partial correspondence: that concerning Islamic brotherhoods, and in particular

1 — We wondered how long the correspondence between Guénon and De Giorgio had continued. A letter from Guénon to Evola (sent on 28 February 1948) provided us with evidence that, apart from an interruption during the Second World War (and its aftermath), this correspondence lasted until Guénon's death in 1951. Here is the excerpt where De Giorgio is mentioned: "I too have been without news from De Giorgio for a very long time, but he finally wrote to me again and we have now resumed our correspondence; he seems to be the same as ever, with his health unfortunately leaving much to be desired." In another letter to Evola, dated 18 April 1949, Guénon mentions a letter from De Giorgio informing him of Evola's return to Italy (from Austria) and his hospitalisation in Bologna. Very recently, in a letter to Evola dated 15 May 1950, Guénon mentions a letter from De Giorgio informing him of his return to Italy (from Austria) and his hospitalisation in Bologna. 1949, Guénon mentions a letter from De Giorgio informing him of Evola's return to Italy (from Austria) and his hospitalisation in Bologna. Very recently, new Milanese contributors to the journal Etudes Traditionnelles (no. 492) quoted a letter to "G. D. G." dated 22 March 1936.

2 — All these things, which were once shrouded in secrecy, are now well known, at least in broad terms. There is therefore no reason to keep them quiet or to mutilate letters that also bear witness to René Guénon's "humanity".

3 — And in his letter dated 6 April 1928, Guénon wrote to him: "I was delighted to see that you agreed completely with everything I set out in my latest book; indeed, I would have been very surprised if you had not. The coincidences you pointed out to me with things you yourself had written previously are indeed very remarkable; these encounters are certainly not the result of chance (in which, incidentally, I do not believe at all)."

the Alaouite tariqa, of which we learn that there was a branch in Paris in 1927. There is more: informing his correspondent about a branch in formation that would admit Europeans, Guénon does not fail to express his concerns: "The introduction of Western elements," he writes, "is too easily a cause of deviation." We therefore have proof of the existence of an Alawite tariqa open to Europeans well before the establishment of the Swiss and then Parisian branches. De Giorgio's visit to Blois at the time unfortunately deprives us of any further correspondence on this subject, as the two friends would naturally have taken the opportunity to discuss it in person.

This correspondence covers a period of more than four years, which was of fundamental importance to Guénon: the first letter in this collection, which is obviously not the first letter sent by Guénon to De Giorgio, is dated 20 November 1925 and contains various reports on L'Homme et son devenir selon Vêdânta (Man and His Becoming According to Vedanta) in the appendix; The last of those that have come down to us is dated 10 February 1930, in which Guénon announces his departure for Cairo... "probably for four or five months". One thing should be emphasised here: Guénon does not fail to point out to his Italian friend that the trip to Egypt "had been in the works since 1911", which is an obvious allusion to his attachment to the Akbariya school of Elish el-Kebir, a connection dating back precisely to that time.

These 23 letters were sent from Paris and Blois, with the exception of one, which was posted in Haute-Savoie on 29 September 1929. Between November 1925 and February 1930, some of the most dramatic personal events in Guénon's life took place: the sudden illness and death of his wife, then her aunt; the exhausting and merciless conflict with his sister-in-law; the forced separation from his beloved niece, whose ambiguous behaviour he discovered after the fact; the very real persecution—with letters containing insults and threats—from certain "Catholic circles" close to Maritain, persecution triggered, in Guénon's own opinion, mainly by the publication of "The Crisis of the Modern World."

Guénon also informed his friend about his work and projects, as well as on a number of subjects, ideas and personalities. Apart from Evola and Reghini, he mentions Masson-Oursel, Bacot, Mead, Sheikh Moustafa ben Alioua, Matgioï (whom he had not seen for ten years), Charbonneau-Lassay and his future Bestiaire du Christ, Probst-Biraben and Marquès-Rivière. Guénon also mentions the case of Le Voile d'Isis, a journal which he says "should not be abandoned now that we have finally managed, not without difficulty, to give it a truly serious appearance"; he announces the founding of the publishing house "L'Anneau d'Or". Other people are also mentioned, about whom we know practically nothing.

The editor

NOTE - We have refrained from correcting the rare spelling and syntax errors - no doubt due to distraction - and we have refrained from interrupting the text with annoying (sic).

Paris, 20 November 1925 ,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir,

I was beginning to worry that I had not heard from you since your card in July, and, fearing that you might still be unwell, I was thinking of writing to you to ask how you were, when your letter arrived. Since then, I have been putting off replying to you from one day to the next, as I have been very busy since my return here, so that now it is my turn to be very late in replying to you. I am sending this letter to Varazze, where I think, from what you told me, you must have been settled for some time now.

Thank you for your kind thought in inviting me to join you, but unfortunately travel is very expensive at the moment. Nevertheless, I hope that we will eventually meet one day.

What you say about Vulliaud's Kabbalah is very true, although perhaps a little harsh; basically, it is more or less what I myself wrote in a more moderate form. I have discussed this work with various people who have read it; their opinions coincide with ours and are rather unenthusiastic. I have not yet had the opportunity to read Vulliaud's new book on the Song of Songs, which was published three or four months ago; it seems that it contains less discussion and criticism than Kabbalah, but still too much for some people's liking.

Thank you for sending me the issue of "Bilychnis"; since then, I have received a whole package of other journals containing articles by Evola himself. When I acknowledged receipt, I told him that I had many reservations about his point of view, which seems to me to be primarily philosophical. He wrote me a rather long and somewhat confusing letter in which he protests that the philosophical form he uses is merely a means of expression that does not affect his doctrine itself. I do not believe this, and I continue to think that he is really very imbued with philosophy, especially German philosophy. In an article published in the journal Ultra, he referred to me in a note about Orient et Occident in terms that prove he did not understand much of what I had said; he even goes so far as to call me a "rationalist", which is rather ridiculous (especially since it is a book in which I expressly stated the falsity of rationalism!), and which clearly shows that he is one of those who cannot get rid of philosophical labels and feel the need to apply them indiscriminately. He tells me of his intention to write an article on "Man and his future"; I wonder what that might be; well, we'll see.

Since we are on the subject of Evola, I must also tell you that he was offended by the criticism Reghini levelled at him, albeit in a very moderate form. He must be rather vain and would like to receive only praise; it is true that he is very young. Vulliaud, who does not have the same excuse, is almost as sensitive; it seems that he too was rather unhappy with my article; he imagines that he alone knows

the Kabbalah and is capable of talking about it. It is to be feared that Evola will soon do the same with the Tantras, which he is not really qualified to deal with; he sees all this through his philosophy, which results in a kind of German-style distortion; the true conception of Shakti is quite different from "voluntarism".

I am glad that you were interested in the articles in "Gnosis"; the inferiority of the first issues stems from the fact that I only had a nominal leadership at the time; I even had some difficulty afterwards in getting rid of troublesome people; it would take too long to tell you the details.

What is this recent book that contains fragments of the Zohar based on Jean de Pauly's translation? I have not heard of it.

I recently met Massignon; he talks a lot, and there is a certain affectation about him, which is also evident in his style. It is true that his works are quite difficult to read, and on the other hand, although he has certainly understood certain things, he has not penetrated the depths of Muslim esotericism. As for Carra de Vaux, he understands even less, and even from an exoteric point of view, he sometimes makes quite serious mistakes; he is mainly a compiler, and the main usefulness of his works lies in the fact that he has brought together information that was scattered here and there.

As for the Vedanta, there have been no reviews in the journals so far; this always takes quite a long time, and then there were the holidays. Nothing from Masson-Oursel; I do not know if he will mention it or what he will say, but I would be very surprised if it were any better than what he did for me previously. There have been a few notes in the newspapers; I am enclosing copies of the main ones with my letter; you will see that they are not bad. Last month, there was also a fairly long article about me by Gonzague Truc in Candide; I only have one copy at the moment, but I will try to get another one to send to you.

Please do not delay in sending me your news this time, and please accept my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris-Soir:

"We are well aware of how much Asia is in the spotlight and, more generally, how topical is the question of the great Eastern civilisations, which until now have been in apparent slumber, at least politically speaking, but which are still capable of nourishing the inner lives of millions of souls. Under the title "Orient and Occident", Mr Guénon presented us last year, in a small, incisive book, with the revision of values that was necessary if we wanted to finally do justice to the East. In it, he advocated the formation of an elite capable of promoting rapprochement and avoiding terrible friction. No one is better suited than he to give this elite the guidelines that will enable them to see the East as it is, and not as our Western blinders would have us see it.

"Mr. Guénon is not only our only Indianist metaphysician. In studies that caused quite a stir, he denounced 'spiritualist error' and 'theosophism'. He criticises this petty occultism for its incredible ignorance of the great traditional doctrines, its scandalous frauds, and the dangers of its popularisation.

Continuing the exposition of sacred science begun with his masterful Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines, Mr. Guénon now gives us the flower of Vedanta.

"According to these texts, which only a philosopher is capable of understanding, for everything in them is symbolic and a historian always follows false leads, the human being has a constitution that is far more complex than Western psychology imagines. We are not merely beings of flesh in communication only with our fellow human beings, they tell us; we have within us marvellous antennae, capable of picking up something other than "phenomena" and connecting us with higher powers. Perhaps the most remarkable chapters in the book are those in which the author discusses, in turn, the waking state, the dream state and the state of deep sleep. But those that will arouse the most curiosity are those that deal with the evolution of the human being after death.

"René Guénon is the antithesis of Maeterlinck. So, despite titles such as "The Coronal Artery and the Solar Ray" or "The Divine Journey", do not expect to find imaginative embellishments or uncertain thinking, but rather the sober and firm integrity of a vigorous and logical mind. The suggestive comparisons with other traditions—biblical, Arabic, Egyptian, Taoist—greatly increase the interest of this book, which marks a milestone in our knowledge of the East."

L'Intransigeant

"Quite a challenging read, this book rewards those who read it page by page. Mr. René Guénon sheds brilliant light on Hindu metaphysical doctrines and the distinction between the Self and the ego, but his book cannot be considered a "popularisation" in any sense. Moreover, it is impossible to 'popularise' such concepts. Mr. René Guénon has contented himself with providing clarifications, shedding light on nuances hitherto misunderstood even by the intellectual elite, and inviting that elite to rise to an understanding of the doctrine in its complete purity.

"His book has the value of a lesson given by a great scholar; it may also have some of the dryness of such a lesson. But for those who have reached the last chapter, what a revelation! Read Shankarâchârya in the translation provided by Mr. René Guénon.

"A book to be reread."

In the Journal des Débats, an article by Abel Bonnard begins as follows:

Asia, its doctrines and its arts are threatened by fashion. The word 'threat' may seem strong, but it is not too strong. When it comes to lofty and noble things, fashion can do a great deal of harm; it masks what it claims to reveal; it profanes and often even defiles them, and the ideas it spreads are so commonplace and distorted that one truly regrets the time when these things rested, sheltered from the public, intact and pure. Unfortunately, our time seems incapable of anything other than fashions. Solicited by a thousand objects without being retained, curious without being attentive, both greedy and distracted, it seems condemned to misunderstand everything. There is no doubt that the influence of Asia extends to us. But it is very much to be feared that this influence will remain superficial, and that it will all end in a Buddhism of

and charlatanism.

"This makes it all the more important to bring to the public's attention books that can give them a deep and true understanding of this great continent. Two such books have just been published that deserve to be known for this reason. One of them, "Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta", is the work of Mr. René Guénon. Anyone with a serious interest in the East will be familiar with Mr René Guénon's books. They are too rich in thought to be summarised in a few words. Let us say at least that their primary quality is to remove the reader from all conventional ideas and bring him back to the very heart of the subject, that is, to the general value that the doctrines preserved by Asia hold for humanity.

The rest of the article concerns J. Bacot's translation of "The Lives of Milarepa".

In L'Ere Nouvelle, there is a very skilfully written review, but I will not copy it here because it consists almost entirely of sentences taken from my foreword.

In Le Figaro, there were two columns by Etienne Fournol in which he mentions me in sympathetic terms, but in a rather superficial way.

Finally, in the September issue of Larousse Mensuel, there is a good article on Orient et Occident; it is taking a long time to appear, but it is happening little by little nonetheless...

Paris, 26 January 1926,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir,

I feel that I am increasingly behind in my correspondence; I would have preferred to send you my best wishes for a speedy recovery, since, according to your last letter, you were still quite unwell.

I am glad that you enjoyed reading "Milarépa"; I would have been very surprised if you had not. In the same collection, there is another translation by Bacot: "Trois mystères thibétains" (Three Tibetan Mysteries); it is also good, but the texts are rather literary in nature and therefore much less interesting to us.

I suppose the book by Father Huc that you mentioned is the recent reissue of his journey to Tibet and Tartary; it does not contain anything concerning doctrines; there are some rather curious descriptions in it, but that is all.

The work by Boehme that has been translated into Italian must be *De* signatura rerum; it seems to me that the meaning of the title has not been rendered very accurately. As for Campanella's work, I am not familiar with it; I have only read a review of it in the latest issue of Ignis. The fragments of the Zohar published by Rieder are in fact only excerpts from Jean de Pauly's translation; I have not seen them, but I am told that they are quite well chosen.

As for Mead, his books are so steeped in Theosophy that I very much doubt that anything of value can be gleaned from them.

Speaking of Theosophy, did you know that the solemn proclamation of the new

Messiah (Krishnamurti) is to take place very soon with extraordinary staging? How frivolous it all is!

You asked me what the magazine "Ultra" was; it describes itself as "independent theosophical", meaning that it is the organ of a group that has separated from the "Besantist" Theosophical Society (Gruppo "Roma", 5, via Gregoriana). Here is a copy of Evola's note that appeared in this magazine (in an article entitled "Il problema di Oriente ed Occidente"), in which he mentions me:

It is clear that we are talking about the East and the West as two ideal types, which, while converging in the general tone of the two cultures, may not correspond to the particulars of these. For example, current trends such as intuitionism, contemporary idealism and irrationalism are largely compatible with the principle of eros. On pragmatism, however, reservations must be made. It would therefore be impossible to agree with the thesis put forward by R. Guénon ("Orient et Occident") that "scientism" and the life of the senses are connected elements. It is true that Western science is used practically. However, the two things should not be confused: with simple desires and needs that had remained as such, scientific understanding of nature would not have progressed one step further. The fulfilment of science, on the other hand, as mentioned above, is due to an initial manifestation of the principle of domination and affirmation of the ego, which constitutes a metaphysical value. That what has been made possible by such a principle, which is in itself superior to the life of needs and feelings and to that 'pure intellectuality' which Guénon, as a good rationalist, superstitiously believes in, has been used by elements that fall outside it, is another matter entirely. In itself, it remains a value that gives Western culture its meaning and originality. With Guénon, we affirm that the principle of the absolute has nothing to do with the sentimental, moralistic and abstractly rational element; However, contrary to Guénon, we affirm that it likewise has nothing to do with that "pure intellectuality" or "metaphysics" of which he speaks and which, mind you, we know what it is, and precisely for this reason, from a higher level, we dispute that it can be distinguished from the rational as it was understood, for example, by Hegel (Vernunft as opposed to Verstand). We therefore affirm that the principle of the absolute is power (çakti) and that any system that places something before or above power in the metaphysical order is rationalistic (in the pejorative sense used by Guénon) and abstract. " (1)

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1 — Translation of Evola's passage concerning Guénon:

"It is clear here that we are talking about the East and the West as two ideal types which, while they may be appropriate to the general character of the two cultures, may not be appropriate to the details of those cultures. At present, for example, currents such as intuitionism, idealistic actualism and irrationalism are generally justifiable by the principle of eros. On the contrary, reservations must be made about pragmatism. However, following the thesis put forward by R. Guénon ("East and West"), we cannot accept that "scientism" and the life of the senses are interrelated. It is true that Western science is used for practical purposes. But we must not confuse the two things: with mere desires and needs that would have remained as such, scientific understanding of nature would not have advanced one step. The achievement of science is in fact linked, as we have already said, to an initial manifestation of the principle of domination and positive affirmation of the ego – which constitutes a metaphysical value. That what has been made possible by such a principle, which is in itself superior both to the life of needs and feelings and to that "pure intellectuality" to which Guénon, as a good rationalist, devotes a superstitious cult, has been used by elements foreign to it is another question altogether. It remains in itself a value that gives Western culture its meaning and originality. We agree with Guénon that the principle of the absolute has nothing to do with the sentimental, moralistic and abstractly rational element.

Evola is not lacking in pretensions, as you can see; but, for my part, I still think that he does not understand at all what we mean by "intellectuality", "knowledge", "contemplation", etc., and that he does not even know how to distinguish between the "initiatory" point of view and the "profane" point of view. It seems that he intends to publish a review of my work on Vedanta in the journal L'Idealismo Realistico; we shall see what that will be like. In any case, despite everything we have tried to explain to him, he persists in finding "rationalism" in Vedanta, while being forced to admit that he uses the word "rationalism" in a sense quite different from the one usually given to it.

You must have noticed that the publication of "Ignis" has been interrupted; Reghini could no longer manage to do everything on his own, or almost everything, or else he would have had to devote himself exclusively to that, which is not possible for him given his current circumstances. There are many people who promised to help him but did nothing; unfortunately, this is often the case. I think you will have seen my article on Joseph de Maistre in the latest issue, about Emile Dermenghem's books.

I will send you the issue of Candide containing the article about me that I mentioned in my previous letter. Apart from that, I don't have much news to share with you; reviews in magazines are a long time coming, and people may find it difficult to talk about my latest book. When I have something worthwhile to share, I will let you know.

What you say about the Jains' conception of Dharma seems very accurate to me, and I do not believe that this is where we can find an essential difference with orthodox doctrine. On the other hand, the meaning they give to the words loka and aloka is quite particular; it seems to me quite accurate to translate the first, in this case, as "world of forms", as you do.

As for shota, this is a concept specific to certain grammarians, and the discussion to which you refer shows its irrelevance. Naturally, the grammarians' point of view can only be external and analytical; it relates solely to the form of the word, insofar as it is constituted by the assembly of certain phonetic elements; the word is not taken in itself and synthetically. It is precisely what is artificial in this point of view that requires the intervention of sphota; you are therefore quite right. It is also certain that this discussion is much more important than one might think when considering it superficially; but we cannot expect today's philologists to understand this; everything concerning the true nature of language escapes them entirely.

Last month, I gave a lecture on Eastern metaphysics to a study group that meets at the Sorbonne; I will send it to you when it is published.

But we disagree with Guénon that it has anything to do with this "pure intellectuality" or "metaphysics" that he talks about, and which we know, let us emphasise, what it is. It is precisely for this reason that we dispute, from a higher point of view, that this "metaphysics" can be distinguished from the rational as defined, for example, by Hegel (Vernunft as opposed to Verstand). We therefore affirm that the principle of the absolute is power (shakti), and that any system that places something before or above power in the metaphysical order is rationalist (in the pejorative sense used by Guénon) and abstract.

Before me, Masson-Oursel had written two; he said some implausible things in them and presented a veritable caricature of Hindu doctrines; if you are interested, I could give you some examples the next time I write to you.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 12 June 1927,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir,

What must you think of my silence? I am truly embarrassed to have left your last letters unanswered for so long, and I reproach myself all the more because you were ill at the time. I like to believe that your health has improved since then.

I immediately carried out your request at the Bosse bookshop; they were unable to tell me whether your money order had arrived, as it seems that quite complicated research would have been necessary to ascertain this; but I was told that you need not worry, and that you should contact the post office if you receive notification that the payment has not been made. I assume that accounts are received at fixed intervals.

The Italian translation of "The King of the World" has been published; I received it very recently. I did not know that you knew Mr Hackin (1); we spoke of you the last time I saw him. He also sent me Stcherbatsky's book, but I have not yet had time to read it; this translation was announced a long time ago.

I saw Masson-Oursel some time ago; he told me that he was coming round more and more to my point of view and that he realised that Orientalists had made many mistakes. After everything he has written so far, I was surprised by this statement; I wonder if he will ever have the courage to say this publicly: he is really too indecisive and too afraid of compromising himself by making clear statements one way or the other.

Have you finally received a reply from Tahar Kheireddine? (2)

Here is the explanation you asked me for about Avalokiteshvara: this name literally means "the Lord (Îshwara) looked down upon (lokita)"; but, despite the form lokita, which is that of the past participle, it is most often interpreted as meaning "the Lord who looks down". In reality, these two interpretations, far from being contradictory or mutually exclusive, complement each other perfectly, because there is a kind of reciprocity in the relationship. In this regard, one could speak of an aspiration from below to above, causing spiritual influences to descend. It is this descent that is represented by the symbolism of Avalokiteshvara; it is what can be called "cosmic charity" (some Muslim schools also use an expression with this meaning), in

1 — This is undoubtedly Joseph Hackin, a well-known specialist in Oriental art. (N. D. E.).
2 — See note 3

using, of course, the word "charity" outside of any sentimental meaning. One of the most commonly used symbols, found almost everywhere, is the triangle ∴ with its point facing downwards. The assimilation that has been made
Sometimes Avalokiteshvara is associated with a feminine principle, which is also connected to the
same idea and symbolism; in India, the inverted or descending triangle is one of the signs of the Shaktis.

The Rex Nemorensis you mentioned must be the same character as what is often called the "priest of Nemi" (I believe Renan wrote something under this title). I know that there is a Lake Nemi, but I do not know exactly where in Italy it is located. In any case, Nemi is the current name of the place in question, but originally it was not a proper name, as it is simply the Latin word nemus, meaning "wood", and especially "sacred wood". This word is closely related to the Celtic nemeton and also, by inversion, to the Greek temenos, both of which mean "sacred place"; the roots of these words, like those of templum and sacratum, mainly express the idea of setting apart, of separating from the profane world.

I have not had the opportunity to see Mardrus' translations, but from what I know of the man, I am a little wary of them; moreover, I do not believe that the Qur'an is truly translatable.

Evola still sends me his journal; he would like me to contribute an article, but I hardly have time to deal with it. There are some things of varying interest in it, but there is much less "philosophy" than I feared. Moreover, Evola has written to me that he will soon abandon the "philosophical" approach he has adopted until now; I can only congratulate him on this intention; but I fear that the influence he has been under will persist despite everything, even though he denies it and claims to have had special reasons for adopting this language and mode of expression.

Everything you told me about magic is quite right; it seems that Evola takes this word in a sense quite different from its normal meaning, and his use of it has many drawbacks. In the strict sense of the word, it is, after all, only an experimental science; it can indeed serve as a starting point for something else, but this is true of all traditional sciences, whatever they may be, and I would even say that they are primarily designed for this purpose. Only the sciences conceived in the modern Western manner cannot lead to anything else and are constituted in such a way as to prevent the transition to a higher order of knowledge.

As for what Evola wrote to you, I agree with him that there was a Western initiatory tradition; but, unfortunately, I very much doubt that it can be considered to still be alive today. From time to time, I encounter claims that spiritual centres exist in certain regions of Europe, but so far I have been unable to find any evidence to support these claims.

Please accept, dear Sir, my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Blois, 3 August
1927, 74, rue du
Foix

Dear Sir,

You must be surprised that you have not yet received a reply to your last letter; this is because we have only been in Blois for a few days. We had to delay our departure from Paris because I had not yet finished preparing a small volume on "the crisis of the modern world" (somewhat similar in style to "Orient and Occident"), which is due to be published by Bossard before the end of the year. Now I am rushing to finish this work, as I must send the manuscript before 15 August, and I will barely have time to do so.

As for your question, some friends have told us that you should have no trouble finding accommodation here in a quiet neighbourhood, where you will certainly not hear much noise. As for the heat, it does not seem to be a major concern this year; so far, at least, sunny days have been few and far between.

I was unable to ask Mr Hackin whether he had received the letter you mentioned; we went to a lecture at the Guimet Museum once and thought we would see him there, but he was not there. From what you tell me, it would not be surprising if he had not received the letter. It has been a long time since I have had any direct news from Reghini; as for Evola, he still sends me his magazine regularly. A friend of Reghini's, who came to Paris a short while ago, told me that his view of Catholicism had changed considerably in recent times.

Lake Nemi is indeed very close to Rome; you may have seen, as I have, that there are currently plans to conduct research there to find Caligula's triremes. This lake was called "Speculum Dianae"; there was indeed a temple of Diana there, whose priest was to be the "rex Nemorensis" referred to in the sentence you quoted to me earlier.

As for Avalokiteshvara, it is quite true that the two interpretations complement each other, and also that the same symbolism is expressed in the Latin word "charitas" (as well as in the Greek charis, which is identical).

Please excuse me for not writing at greater length; I am rushing to finish my work, but I wanted to send you these few lines without further delay. Naturally, please let me know if you decide to come to Blois.

Perhaps we will see each other soon, dear Sir, and please accept my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Blois, 15 August 1927, 74, rue du Foix

Dear Sir,

I am sorry to hear from your last letter that your health is still far from good; I hope, however, that it will improve. Unfortunately, the weather has been very bad since we arrived here: thunderstorms, storms, almost continuous rain; it is really not summer weather. However, the weather here is usually much better, and the sky is not at all the same as in the Paris region; but this year, the sun is almost always absent. There are no mountains or hills, at most some gentle slopes; but there are forests very close to Blois, and there are quite a few walks to be had in the surrounding area. That, I believe, is the information you asked me for; in any case, if you decide to come, do not do so before the first few days of September, as we will be away until then. I will be very happy to finally have the opportunity to meet you, if your health allows you to make the journey without too much fatigue at that time.

Vajra is lightning, but I must confess that I too would be hard pressed to say exactly what Vajrayana consists of at present; I will have to look into it when I return to Paris, as I do not have the necessary information here.

I completely agree with what you say about the current state of humanity in relation to the Kali Yuga; this is, in fact, what I explain in the volume I have just completed. On the other hand, it is quite certain that "initiation" can only be understood in terms of the special conditions of the Kali Yuga, outside of which it would have no reason to exist. Nevertheless, it is nonetheless true that these conditions must be taken into account; which is why, while I agree with you in principle, I must nevertheless maintain everything I have said about the role of the elite. This role, moreover, is by no means unique to religious traditions; the example of Taoism is sufficient proof of this, and the same thing can be found everywhere, although sometimes in a less pronounced form (in India, for example). Since the Kali Yuga, "initiation" has existed in the East as well as it has existed in the West; there is a factual necessity for it. The same is true of symbolism: the use of symbols comparable to hermetic symbols is also quite general; and these symbols are not opposed to natural symbols, but on the contrary are quite normally connected to them. Furthermore, the symbolic nature of all manifestations allows historical facts, as well as everything else, to be given a value quite different from that which they have in themselves; this is in response to what you say about Dante; his symbolism is, if you like, Western in its outward form, but it is quite equivalent to Eastern symbolism. Moreover, there has only really been opposition between the East and the West since the latter lost its tradition, including its sense of symbolism; Hermeticism is much closer to the Eastern spirit than to the modern Western spirit. Perhaps we will soon have the opportunity to discuss all this at greater length.

I agree with you about Hackin: he is very nice, but I am not sure how much he understands. If he has not sent you Stcherbatsky's book, it is surely an oversight; he is rather absent-minded.

Yesterday I received a letter from Evola, who is still insisting that I send him some

something for Ur; I think I will eventually have to decide to grant his request. He tells me that he has published the first volume of his "Teoria dell'Individuo assoluto", but that he has not sent it to me because of its mainly philosophical nature, thinking that his "Imperialismo Pagano", which is due to appear in the autumn, will be of more interest to me. He knows about the book I have just written; I suppose you told him about it, as I have not written to anyone else in Italy since I began preparing it; but that does not matter, as I have already told many other people about it. I sent the manuscript to the publisher a week ago; I am not sorry that it is finished, because until then I had been unable to rest.

It was not Evola, but Reghini, who told us that his attitude towards Catholicism had changed recently; I must have expressed myself poorly in my last letter, or perhaps I wrote one name for another out of distraction. It is also possible, according to what you say, that the same is true for both of them; in any case, if you can have any influence on Evola, it will be very fortunate; I believe him to be intelligent, but full of prejudices of all kinds; I also think that he aspires to a position at the University, and that too may hinder him in many ways.

Please believe me, I remain sincerely yours.

René Guénon

Paris, 1 November 1927,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

We were pleased to learn from your card sent upon your arrival in Varazze that your return journey had gone well; but then your letter, which arrived before our departure from Blois, unfortunately brought us much less welcome news. However, as you do not mention your health in your latest letter, we would like to believe that you have now recovered.

Despite everything I knew about Evola, especially from you, I was a little surprised by his refusal to publish your article; I wonder, in these circumstances, why he insists so much that I send him something, as he must think that what I would write would be just as traditional and, therefore, would not satisfy him any more. I can see that there is definitely nothing to be done with him; so I will gladly write to him as you ask, especially as this will put an end (at least I think so) to any further insistence on his part and give me a decisive reason not to contribute to his journal. I owe him a reply, having received a letter from him about a month ago in which he asked me for information on a point that I believe he had already mentioned to you. I am enclosing my letter with this one, and I would ask you to read it and then forward it to him. I apologise for not being able to stamp it, as I do not have any Italian stamps at my disposal.

I would be happy to read your article if Evola has returned it to you and if you would like to

send it to me; but I am sure in advance that I will agree with you completely.

What is this Latin text for which Reghini's translation seemed dubious to you?

I am curious to know what Evola might say about Milarepa; he will certainly be struck by the very inferior place given to magic, which is nevertheless the one that suits it in reality.

I am not at all familiar with the poem by Ashthâvakra that you mention; if you would be so kind as to send me the translation you have, even though it is more of an adaptation, I would be interested in seeing it, as it would at least give me some idea of what the poem in question is about.

Here is the address you asked me for:

Mr Taillard (1), court interpreter, 5, rue Al-Djézirah, Tunis

The brochure (2) that Jossot sent me contains little of interest other than a summary of a few conversations with Kheireddine (whom he refers to only by an initial) and an overview, which I was already familiar with, of the doctrine of the Alaouites, to whom he is now affiliated, as I mentioned. It seems that this brotherhood is expanding greatly; I have even just learned that it has a zaouîa in Paris, on Boulevard Saint-Germain, a stone's throw from here; this raises fears that it may become too open and thus deviate like many others. It also seems that in Algeria it is working to promote rapprochement between Christians and Muslims, which is certainly very commendable; but will these efforts lead to any appreciable results?

The magazine Parise referred to is Regnabit, located at 30 Rue Demours, Paris (18th arrondissement). I did indeed contribute to it regularly from August 1925 to May 1927, and I had always forgotten to mention it to you. But here's how the story goes: this magazine is so little controlled by the Jesuits that they did everything they could to prevent it from being published. On the other hand, I had to stop contributing to it as a result of certain machinations that originated with

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1 — This refers to Eugène Taillard, who will be mentioned again later in this correspondence. Under the pseudonym "Jaafar", he published an article sent by Guénon to Jean Reyor in the special issue of Le Voile d'Isis-Études Traditionnelles on Sufism (August-September 1934, pp. 307-313), entitled "La Présence Divine à la lumière du Quadran" (The Divine Presence in the Light of the Quadran) (N. D. E.).

At the time of going to press, we found confirmation in Johan Cartigny's book, Cheikh Al Alawi. Documents et témoignages (ed. Les Amis de l'Islam, Drancy 1984, p. 104), of the connection between Taillard and his companion M.lle Myriam and the tarîqa of Sheikh Al Alawi. As for Gustave-Henri Jossot (1866-1951), the same book tells us that he converted to Islam under the name Abd al-Karîm before joining the same tariqa. The book in question reproduces an autobiographical account by Jossot, in which he mentions Taillard and the mysterious "sage", whom he refers to by the initial "Kh..." (probably Tahar - or Mohammed - Kheireddine) and whom he calls his "mystagogue". Taillard "worked as a sworn interpreter at the Mixed Court of Sidi Bou Saïd, in the suburbs of Tunis".

This book also confirms the existence in Paris (Porte de Versailles) in the 1920s of an Alawite zaouïa (with supporting photographic evidence). If Guénon, on the other hand, locates it on Boulevard Saint-Germain, as we shall see, it is because it was "intended exclusively for Arabs and Kabyles", according to his letter of 31 December 1927, in which he also mentions "the branch that is being formed and in which Europeans will be admitted..."; but "the introduction of Western elements is too easily a cause of deviation". 1927, in which he also speaks of "the branch that is being formed and into which Europeans will be admitted..."; but "the introduction of Western elements is too easily a cause of deviation". This is probably why

Mr. Frithjof Schuon, who resided for some time in Paris, travelled to Mostaganem to make contact with this tariqa. (N. D. E.).

2 — 6) Most likely the autobiographical account mentioned in the note, "Le Sentier d'Allah" (The Path of Allah), published in 1927 in Tunisia. (N.D.E.).

Maritain's circle; it would take too long to explain, and besides, it is not really that interesting. I intend to return to the questions of symbolism that I began to address in this journal, with a view to publishing them in book form, but when will I get around to it?

I have finished correcting the proofs of "The Crisis of the Modern World"; I think it will be ready for publication around 15 November.

The ladies send their best regards, and I send you my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 31 December 1927,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I received your two letters and would have liked to reply sooner, but I have less and less free time, so I have had to keep putting it off, especially as I intended to write to you at some length. I think that even today I will be forced to reply only to part of what you say and leave the rest for another time.

First of all, Evola has written to me twice recently, and from what you tell me, I see that what he says to me is almost exactly the same as what he wrote to you. I wonder what this "action" he intends to launch with his magazine and his book might be, not only in Italy but also in neighbouring countries; well, we shall see... He also sent me an article entitled "Fascismo antichristianismo" (Fascism and Anti-Christianity), which was republished, so that the magazine's editors had to add a note expressing reservations on this point. On the other hand, I don't quite understand what he means by "Mediterranean tradition", and I fear that his idea of it may be somewhat fanciful. I haven't had time to reply to him yet, but I will have to do so one of these days. As for the question of collaboration with "Ur", I think exactly as you do, and I am no more willing than you are to accept the limits he claims to impose on us. Moreover, since he sees "controversy" in things where my intention was quite different, I am not sure how I could avoid exceeding the said limits, which are based on a highly questionable assessment.

In the latest issue of "Voile d'Isis", there is a short note about "Ur", which states that this magazine is devoted to the study of psychology! I do not know who wrote this, but it was certainly someone who had not read a single article in "Ur"; it is likely that the expression "scienza dell'Io" gave rise to this misunderstanding; if Evola saw this, he must not have been very pleased.

Two or three days ago, I received a card from Reghini, who had not been in touch for about a year; he tells me that he will write to me at greater length and explain the reasons for his silence.

My new book arrived a fortnight ago, although it should have been published in November; it would have been surprising if the printers had not been late

, as is their habit; so we decided to release the volume in January after the holidays, as this period of gift-giving is quite unfavourable.

We saw Hackin recently and told him that you were in Blois during the holidays; he regretted that you did not stop in Paris, as he would have been very happy to see you again.

Masson-Oursel has given a short review of "Le Roi du Monde" in the "Revue Critique" (I am not sure what this publication is, having only received a clipping), which I must copy out to you verbatim, as it is worth it:

"Leibniz liked to say that there is gold in the dung of scholasticism; there is probably some – even among alchemists – in this universal symbolism advocated by the Gnostics, Hindus, Chinese and Kabbalists. Unfortunately, R. Guénon does not seek to extract this gold; only criticism could claim to do so. He takes everything at face value, provided it is traditional knowledge, and he has no doubt that everything corresponds to everything else; in this respect, he follows in the footsteps of the Symbolists. He possesses information, but he accepts any and all information. Criticism would be, in his eyes, a miserable undertaking, which would discredit the researcher, and how superfluous for an author who believes he holds the metaphysical truth! We know this well enough from Mr. Guénon's other works. What he takes for strength and lucidity, in our eyes compromises the value of the very extensive and, what is better, curious knowledge of this Orientalism. We, for our part, are alarmed that in a hundred or so neat little pages, the author claims to reveal the ultimate truth about the swastika, Aum and Manu, the Luz and the Shekinah, the Grail, the Magi and the Old Man of the Mountain, and other enigmas without shadow. Even if we have guessed correctly here and there, what does the result matter without proof? And what proof is there that there is only one symbolism among the diversity of religions and philosophies? "

What do you say to that? The most astonishing thing is that a few months ago he assured me that he would be moving closer and closer to my point of view! It seems that, on the contrary, he is further away from it than ever; he is obviously incapable of understanding. Nothing matters to him except 'criticism' and analysis, which is precisely what I consider to be non-existent; like all his colleagues, he imagines that volumes of heavy scholarship are needed to deal with the slightest detail. If I had thought it useful to reply to him, I could have pointed out that I am far from welcoming 'any information' as he claims, since I refuse to take any account of that which comes from official Orientalists; but that would have been completely pointless; one cannot change the mentality of such people, and it is best to continue on one's way without worrying about what they may say or think.

I, too, have not had the opportunity to study Virgil for a long time; it is certain that there are things in it that are quite difficult to understand now, but I am convinced that, if we had the time, it could be useful to do some research on it from the point of view that interests us; in any case, the few interpretations you point out to me seem to me to be entirely justified.

I have not been able to refer to the passages you mention in Father Wallace's book, as I lent it to someone who has not yet returned it to me; I will therefore have to look at it again a little later, and then I will get back to you. As for the reflection

I had previously shared with you on this subject, which you remind me of, what you say corresponds very well to what I had meant.

I spoke to Bacot about the German translation of Milarepa's songs; he is familiar with it, but as he does not know German very well, he has not been able to examine it closely enough to see exactly how good it is; moreover, it seems to be incomplete. The passages you quote do not seem very clear indeed, and notes would have been needed to explain them; but was the translator capable of that? You are certainly right about the middle artery, which can only be sushumna, and it is more than likely that the "wind" is indeed prana; I even wonder if, where there is mention of "five winds", there might not be a connection to be made with the five vâyus, which are modalities of prana. The meanings of mudra are indeed those you indicate; as for Dharmadhâtu, literally "seed of the Law", I know that it is a designation of Buddha, but that does not shed much light on the meaning of the sentence in which this word appears. As for Vajra, you know that it means both "lightning" and "diamond"; there would be a lot of research to do on that.

I have not yet had time to look up the text of the Bhagavad-Gita; I will make a note of the passage you mentioned; I will try to check it out one of these days.

Thank you in advance for the Vedantic poem you promised to send me; I don't think you'll be in too much of a hurry for me to return it, as I can't even read anything at the moment. Thank you also for the information you have given me about the text and its translation into prose, but it will be difficult for me to find it as I never go to any libraries.

The meaning of sâkshî is indeed "witness" or "observer"; I think that sâkshipurusha should be taken as equivalent to the "two birds on the tree" that "watch without eating", and which is effectively the personality, while the other, the one that eats (i.e. that is engaged in action and its consequences), is jîvâtmâ or individuality. The translation of the shloka in question seems accurate to me at first glance; when I have a moment, I will review it more closely.

The letter Kha symbolises the atmosphere, and even the sky, rather than air as an element. The designation of Agni as "threefold" can have several meanings; it is possible that, in this case, it refers to celestial fire, earthly fire and vital fire. The three colours you mention are more commonly associated with the gunas than with the elements: sattwa, white; rajas, red (this is even the literal meaning of the root rauj); tamas, black (darkness). As for the 0 between 3 and 2 (instead of the unit), what you say seems quite correct to me, or at least a very plausible interpretation. As for the passages in the commentary indicating the definition of mukti according to different schools, this is something else I will have to leave for another time, as I do not want to give you a translation that might be inaccurate.

I am glad that Taillard replied to you and was able to send you a photograph of Kheireddine; if you manage to have it reproduced as you hope, I would be very happy to have it. Strangely enough, on the very day I received your letter, I had one from Jossot who also mentioned Kheireddine; he said that Kheireddine died just as he was preparing to teach him, but I really don't know if Jossot would have benefited much from his teachings. I would be very grateful if you could

tell me if you have received another reply from Taillard; the Sheikh he mentioned to you must certainly be Sheikh Mostafa ben Alioua, the leader of the Alaouïas. I have a summary of the teachings of this school, written by the secretary of Sheikh Si Mohammed El Aïd, with a French translation by Taillard, and I can send you a copy if you are interested. I believe I told you that the Alaouites now have a centre in Paris, intended exclusively for Arabs and Kabyles; although I was encouraged to get in touch with them, I haven't had the time, even though it's right next door; I really must go and see it, as it may be more interesting than the branch that is being set up and which will admit Europeans, as I think I also mentioned to you; the introduction of Western elements is too easily a cause of deviation.

Please excuse my incomplete reply; I shall endeavour to write to you more frequently.

I don't think you were in the mountains during the cold spell; I hope you didn't suffer too much.

All my best wishes for the coming year; the ladies send their warmest regards, and I shake your hand cordially.

René Guénon I

almost forgot to thank you for your kind gift of stamps.

Blois, 6 April 1928, 74, rue du Foix

Dear Sir and friend,

I am embarrassed to be so late in responding to you; I would have liked to thank you much earlier for the expressions of sympathy you sent me in these sad circumstances, but for a long time I did not have the courage to write to anyone. Your last letter reached me in Paris, and I would have liked to reply immediately, but I couldn't find even a few moments; all my time was taken up with lessons and other equally uninteresting but necessary occupations. I am taking advantage of the few days we are spending here to finally write to you; we were obliged to come to Blois on business, otherwise we would probably not have decided to leave Paris at this time.

I was about to thank you for your parcel, which I received with great pleasure, when misfortune struck, suddenly and unexpectedly: I was ill for just a few days, but with a disease against which there is no cure, cerebrospinal meningitis. There was a real epidemic in Paris at the time: some people died within hours! Since then, my health has not been very good, which is hardly surprising after such a severe blow; however, I had to resume my duties almost immediately, but that is about all I have been able to do so far.

We will return to Paris at the end of next week, on 13 or 14 April; perhaps it would be better if you waited until then to send me the letter from Taillard that you mentioned, which will certainly be of interest to me. When I return to Paris, I will also have to look for the summary of the Alaouite doctrine that he translated, so that I can send you a copy as I promised.

I will have to make up my mind one of these days to write to Evola, to whom I have left several letters unanswered. So far, I have not received his Imperialismo, even though he told me a long time ago that he would send it to me; perhaps he will do so when I have written to him. In any case, if I do not receive anything, I will let you know, and then you can lend me your copy as you kindly offered.

I have read the Ashtâvakra Gîtâ rather quickly; it seemed very good to me, even in this adaptation, which is surely imperfect (especially since the preface, as far as I remember, does not show much understanding on the part of its author); I will have to take another look at it more carefully when I have some free time.

I received the first issue of the second year of Ur; has another one been published since then? Overall, I haven't noticed much change from the first year, except that these stories of the "magic chain" seem to be taking on increasing importance, and also that the "Scienza dell'Io" has disappeared from the title; Was it the "psychological" interpretation I mentioned to you that led Evola to remove this expression, which he seemed to value highly? I found all your comments in one of your letters at the beginning of January about the previous issue to be very accurate. When I write to Evola, you can be sure that I will take into account what you said to me then, because I am convinced that you are absolutely right.

Have you been able to see the new book on Dante that you mentioned to me? If so, I would be grateful if you could tell me a little about it and what kind of symbolism it contains.

I completed the commission you gave me for Bossard a long time ago; I almost forgot to tell you and send you the receipt, stamped with the date of payment.

I was pleased to see that you completely agreed with everything I said in my last book; anything else would have surprised me greatly. The coincidences you pointed out to me with things you yourself had written previously are indeed remarkable; these encounters are certainly not the result of chance (in which, incidentally, I do not believe at all).

I hope that one day I will have time to go through all your latest letters and respond to at least the most important of the various questions you asked me.

I currently have a very unpleasant job: correcting the English translation of "L'Homme et son devenir" (Man and His Future); this translation has been terribly done, with misinterpretations on every page. What is more, instead of sending me the manuscript as I had expected, they had everything typeset and only sent me proofs, so that the publishers were very unhappy when I wrote to them saying that there would be a lot of changes to make; yet it is not my fault that they made such a mistake.

I like to believe that your health is not too bad now and that you have not had another attack since your last letter.

My aunt asks me to send you her best regards, and I, dear Sir and friend, remain, as always, yours most cordially.

René Guénon

Paris, 4 May 1928, 51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

Once again, I should have replied to you more promptly, but I am currently faced with urgent and tedious work. I had barely sent the translation of L'Homme et son devenir back to the English publisher from Blois with the necessary corrections when something else came up: Théosophisme, which is out of print, is being reissued, and I have been asked for additional notes so that this new edition can be updated. So, as soon as we returned to Paris, I set to work on this task, which requires a great deal of research in order to write a few pages, and I have not yet finished; I was asked to do it as soon as possible, but I think it will take me another fortnight or so, because, with my lectures and lessons, I am far from having all the time I need, especially with the exam period approaching.

About six months ago, Bacot told me about the Tibetan Book of the Dead as something very interesting; a young man who often comes to see me recently brought this volume from England, and he is going to lend it to me when he has finished reading it. Thank you for your offer to send it to me, but you see that there is no need to trouble yourself; besides, if I hadn't known I would get it otherwise, I would have sent you a note right away to ask for it.

The matter of the English translation has turned out better than I could have hoped: the publishers informed me a few days ago that they agreed to do everything the corrections that I had indicated, all in complaining complaining about additional costs this will incur for them. As I told them, I am in no way responsible for these difficulties, since they could have been entirely avoided if I had been sent the translation in manuscript form. I confess that I would not have thought of offering to do this translation myself, because it is a time-consuming and not very interesting job; but I regretted it a little when I saw how it had been done. Surely, we would have done well to do it together; thank you for the offer; perhaps we can consider it. that on another occasion.

Ch. Lancelin is a "psychic" experimenter and more or less a spiritualist; I have not read the book you mention, but I have read others by him, and I found nothing of interest in them.

My collaboration with Regnabit lasted from August 1925 to May 1927 inclusive; the address of the magazine is 30 Rue Demours (17th arrondissement), which I may have already given you. I regret that I no longer have a complete duplicate set, otherwise I would have been happy to send you one. One day I will have to tell you the rest of the story of this collaboration, but unfortunately it is too long and almost impossible to summarise. At present, I am receiving letters of abuse and threats from that quarter; it seems that it is the "Crise du Monde moderne" which, for reasons I do not fully understand, has provoked real outbursts of fury in certain Catholic circles.

I haven't yet taken the time to write to Evola; I wonder if I ever will.

get around to it. So far, I have not received issue 2 of "Ur"; has it been published? I am curious to know what Evola says about the Tibetan book; no doubt he will have seen "magic" in it again, since, for him, everything boils down to that.

Thank you for the copy of Taillard's letter, which does indeed contain some very interesting things; your thoughts on the subject are quite accurate; I will have to talk to you about this at greater length and in more detail the next time I write to you, because today I have very little free time, and yet I did not want to delay writing to you any longer.

I have no idea who this Pierre Taillard is; I suppose he must be a relative of the other one; if he is an Antoinist, that gives me a very poor opinion of his intellectuality (see the chapter on this sect in "Erreur spirite"). Moreover, the end of the letter worries me a little: Taillard still seems to harbour many illusions about the so-called "seekers of the Reality of Being", and what he says about Europe seems far too "optimistic" to me. Since you are not familiar with the "Cosmics", I can provide you with information on the subject at your convenience, as I have known most of the leaders of this movement (now well dispersed) and am very well informed about it.

As I promised, I am sending you a copy of the summary of the teachings of the Alaouites. I am also enclosing a note on the Tidjanias, the Arabic text of which was sent to me by Jossot with a translation by Taillard; you will see that this brotherhood, like so many others, seems to have degenerated considerably today.

In haste, with warm regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 9 June 1928,
51, rue Saint Louis-en l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I received your two letters some time ago, but once again I have been unable to reply sooner, as it is only in the last few days that I have finished writing additional notes for the reissue of "Theosophism". Perhaps I have already mentioned this work to you, which I have been busy with since our return here after the Easter holidays; it has been more difficult and time-consuming than I had anticipated.

Ur still reaches me regularly; two or three days ago I received the June issue, which contains even less than the previous one. It arrived at about the same time as your penultimate letter; I also wondered what Evola's intention could have been in publishing your "edited" article and excerpts from letters that I would have immediately thought were also from you, even if you hadn't told me. Since then, I have received a letter from Evola, in which there is a passage concerning you; I am transcribing it verbatim:

* "You will have seen that Ur 3-4 begins with an article that is an abridged version of the one that De Giorgio sent me at the time. Having taken responsibility for this abridgement ourselves, you will see that the main points were certainly not at odds with De Giorgio, but only some nuances and certain ways of presenting things that would have detracted from the unity of the magazine and which have now been

eliminated. This publication can therefore serve as a major point of reference for you in relation to us and our dealings" (1). This does not clarify matters much, and I must admit that the "unity of the magazine" is not very clear to me so far.

In the same letter, Evola asks me if I have received his "Imperialismo Pagano", which he had apparently asked the publisher to send me; I replied that I had not received anything, so I expect to receive it one of these days. When I have read this book, I will be able to make some comments to him about what he has said about me; you have already made them to him as appropriate, and I thank you for that; but it does not matter, because I am not supposed to know, and I will be able to repeat them on my own behalf; we shall see if Evola takes them into account, especially since, according to what he wrote to me, he intends to publish a study of my works in Ur; I wonder what that will be like. In any case, I can assure you that I did not say anything particularly compromising in my reply to him; after everything that happened to you with him, I am very wary.

Indeed, Ur's articles are decidedly weak; Reghini's article on "Western Translation" is still perhaps the best of the bunch, but there would have been much more to say about Saturn. I see that Evola intends to return to his "Tradizione mediterranea" in the next issue; his conception of it seems to me to be both vague and fanciful.

I recently received Valli's book, but I have not yet had time to read it or even browse through it; I will therefore talk to you about it later.

The pamphlet you mention is a biography of Matgioï that must have been published around 1910; I have no idea whether it is still possible to obtain it; I must have it, but where? I end up with such an accumulation of things here that I can no longer find my way around. Yes, I knew Matgioï, but I haven't seen him for at least ten years; unfortunately, he was too "distracted" by all sorts of things that had nothing to do with Far Eastern doctrines and prevented him from continuing what he had started. What you say about his style is quite accurate; above all, he lacks precision, which is sometimes very annoying. As for other matters concerning him, I will be happy to discuss them with you if you come to Blois this summer; I still hope that you will be able to renew your passport.

Unfortunately, I have no information on the meaning of the expression "Canticum graduum"; the Hebrew translates literally as "song for ascensions", but what exactly does it refer to? Your interpretation seems plausible to me, but I cannot say for certain.

If you are leaving Varazze soon, please do not forget to let me know your new address.

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1 — Translation: "You will have noticed that UR 3-4 begins with an article that is an abridged version of the one De Giorgio sent me. As the decision to abridge the article was our responsibility, you will see that there was certainly no disagreement with De Giorgio on the main points, but only on a few nuances, on certain ways of presenting things that would have detracted from the unity of the journal and which have now been eliminated. This publication can therefore serve to give you a better understanding of us and our reports."

Please excuse my haste, as I have a lot of correspondence to catch up on.
Best regards from my aunt, and warmest regards to you.

René Guénon

Blois, 8 September 1928,

Dear Sir and friend,

Just a few words to let you know that I have received your letter and card, and that we are planning to leave Blois and return to Paris on 25 or 26 September, as I will be starting lessons on 1 October and we cannot wait until the day before because of the crowds. Until around the 20th, if you decide to come, you can choose the time that suits you best; it makes no difference to us, as I will definitely not be leaving here. I think it would be best if you travelled via Lyon and Tours, as you did when you left last year, but I understand that it is difficult for you to organise your itinerary, as I myself do not know much about it either! We like to believe that you are now feeling better and that your stay in the mountains has been very beneficial for you. You did very well not to commit yourself to anything with Evola, who would surely like you to give him articles, even if it means "arranging" them as he has already done; this experience is not very encouraging... I still haven't received the latest issue of Ur; no doubt it got lost in the post, as happened once before. When I have the opportunity to write to Evola, I will ask him to send me another copy, as I would be curious to see the etymological fantasies to which you refer. Perhaps we will see each other soon. Best regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 18 December 1928,
51 Rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

When I did not hear from you, I assumed that the announcement I had sent you, as I was unable to write to you at the time, had not reached you immediately, and I concluded that you must no longer be in Varazze, which I was not mistaken about.

This new bereavement was to be expected, as my aunt's condition had deteriorated considerably since the summer; however, when I left Blois at the end of September, I did not think I would be forced to return three weeks later, and in such painful circumstances for the second time this year.

I have been meaning to write to you for some time, but have been unable to do so. I must tell you that for over a month I have had a bout of flu that I cannot shake off

get rid of; I haven't stopped working because of it, but I am very tired and unable to do any work other than what is absolutely necessary. On the other hand, I have some very serious problems, which are also contributing to my condition. You know that I have a niece with me whom we have raised for ten years; now her mother, who has never taken care of her until now, wants to take her away from me at all costs, not even to have her with her, but to put her in boarding school; and the whole family approves and has turned against me. I do not yet know how things will turn out, and the situation is all the more worrying for me because, with the help of this child, who is now fourteen, I can manage to get by, whereas on my own I would be completely incapable of doing so; and then, if I were to fall ill, having absolutely no one, what would happen? My sister-in-law, to whom I mentioned this, replied that she didn't care, and that anyway, nothing I said mattered. I can't give you all the details, it would take too long; people's ingratitude and malice are truly unbelievable.

I very much regretted that the moment when you could have been free coincided with the moment when we had to return to Paris; and I regret it all the more now that I have no idea how my holidays will work out in the future; in any case, it will be much more difficult for me to organise myself in Blois than here.

A letter from Reghini, received a few days before yours, had already informed me of his difficulties with Evola; all this is very strange. Naturally, he has asked for my collaboration on the new magazine he is planning to launch; I have not yet replied to him; I will have to do so eventually, but I will try not to commit myself to anything for the moment.

Last week, I received issue 11-12 of Ur, which will be transformed into Krur for the new year; perhaps you have received it too. I hadn't received anything since issue 6, nor any reply to the letter I wrote to Evola about his Imperialismo Pagano, so I thought that perhaps he had taken offence at what I had said to him. In this issue 11-12, I find an extract from this letter reproduced as a footnote in an article about the "Crisis of the Modern World", which still contains the usual attacks on Christianity, which is even denied the status of "tradition"! If you would be so kind as to send me issue 7-8 as you suggested, I would be happy to read the things you mentioned to me. As for issues 9 and 10, I see that you do not have them either, but perhaps you will be able to obtain them through Parise; I would also be curious to see what triggered the split; in any case, thank you in advance for whatever you can send me.

As for the person you told me about and whom you went to see in Genoa, I must admit I was not surprised that you were disappointed; when there is such an extraordinary "phenomenal" aspect, I am always a little wary, without denying that in some cases it may conceal something more interesting. This story is nonetheless curious; have you had any further information on this subject?

I looked into a question you asked me quite some time ago

some time ago, and here is the answer I received: "For the earliest date of the appearance of the crucifix, we must stick to the 5th century, and the two oldest certain documents appear to be the crucifix of the door of Santa Sabina in Rome, and the other in ivory in the British Museum. There has been talk of an older Gnostic gem, but its date and use have been disputed."

I read Valli's book at the end of the holidays; I will tell you about it next time, as I don't have time today; remind me when you write to me. Tell me how you are getting on with all your difficulties; I see that unfortunately I am not the only one with them! I will try not to leave it so long before I write to you again.

Please accept, as always, my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 12 January 1929,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I have delayed too long in thanking you for your kind letter, as well as for sending me the three issues of Ur and Evola's lecture, and also in sending you my best wishes for the New Year, especially for the improvement of your health and your family affairs, as I see that these are still two things that you, like myself at the moment, are in great need of.

My condition is still much the same: I cannot seem to shake off this sort of flu, which is certainly due more to my troubles than anything else. Unfortunately, the body's resistance has its limits; I don't know how I manage to keep going despite everything.

I don't know if I told you that I sent my sister-in-law a letter drafted by a solicitor, threatening her that if she persisted in her attitude, we would demand reimbursement for all the expenses we have incurred for her daughter over the last ten years. It is unfortunate to have to resort to such measures, but with people like this, you defend yourself as best you can. I suppose it must have given her pause for thought, because I have not received a reply so far; but yesterday, Françoise received a letter from her mother, who had not replied to any of her letters for two months. In this letter, my sister-in-law says she is ill, she complains bitterly and recriminates a lot, but I have the impression that she is backing down, at least for the moment; that's still something.

Last night, a new adventure: the director of the course Françoise was attending wrote to me saying that she no longer wanted the child, giving arguments very similar to those of the mother. Did the mother act to achieve this result? It's quite possible, but of course we'll never know. I would have to enrol Françoise in a secondary school, where there would be no risk of the same problems, and lose my lessons, as I was the one teaching philosophy in this course. I replied immediately to the headmistress that, under these circumstances, it was impossible for me to return to her school, while also making it clear to her that she

had no business meddling in matters that were solely my concern.

Don't you think there is something really strange about all this persecution? I notice that it all started shortly after the publication of The Crisis of the Modern World; is it just a coincidence? A few months ago, I told you about my troubles with the people at Regnabit; if you manage to come and see me in the near future, as I hope you will, I will have to show you all this, as it is very instructive.

I have read Ur and I see that what you told me about the latest articles was entirely justified, which does not surprise me. The article on the "virtue of names", which you mentioned to me some time ago, contains some truly extravagant ideas about etymology. I have seen that reservations have been made in the following issue, no doubt as a result of protests from some readers. I hope that you will not miss out on these issues and that you will be able to obtain them again from Evola. Since I wrote to you, I have received a letter from him, who was not at all angry as I had supposed, and who apologises for not having written to me for so long. I will have to reply to him one of these days, as well as to Reghini, as I have not yet done so; basically, all this annoys me, especially at the moment; I would prefer not to get involved in their affairs, as I have enough of my own, and if each of them publishes a review on their own, I would rather not give articles to either of them. Someone I saw recently told me that Parise should be treated with caution; is that your impression too?

Tantric books are indeed directly linked to the great Hindu tradition, which has been essentially one since its origins, whatever Evola may say. What you say about the way he, following the Orientalists, views these things is quite accurate, as is the "moral" concern which, in essence, is indeed predominant in his work, otherwise he would not place action above all else in this way.

I see that today is not the day I will be able to talk to you about Valli's book; I will have to postpone it until another time.

Please accept, as always, my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 20 February 1929,
51, rue Saint Louis-en l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

Once again, I have let a month go by before replying to your last letter; please forgive me. We have had terrible cold weather recently, which is not yet over, and, as you can imagine, this has not helped my health. I wonder how you are coping with this season in your mountainous region, where it is even harsher; please give me some news of yourself soon.

On the other hand, before writing to you, I wanted to send you the issues of

"Regnabit" containing my articles, as you requested, and I encountered all sorts of difficulties in doing so. First, I had trouble completing the series, as it seems that several issues are almost out of print; and I could only contact the distributor for this, not the magazine's administration, after what happened last year; but I managed it in the end. Then the post office refused to accept the parcel because it was too heavy; so I had to send it by rail, which I did just this morning; I hope you will receive it soon. There are 18 issues at 2 francs each, or 36 francs, and I had to pay 13 francs, 15 for shipping; the cost of shipping is truly frightening.

My troubles continue; after the incident with the class, there was a period of relative calm, during which my sister-in-law tried another tactic; she started responding regularly to her daughter again, saying she was ill (she must have had the flu like almost everyone else), complaining a lot, etc. She even sent her extraordinary letters from her brother and sister (aged 15 and 12!), which were nothing short of sermons, all with the obvious intention of persuading the child to return of her own accord. When that didn't work, the offensive began again: I received a letter from a solicitor in Tours, then last week another threatening letter from my sister-in-law, again demanding that I send her daughter back, even setting a specific date and time. I passed everything on to my solicitor, who is taking care of responding, as I don't want to do it myself, knowing that it would be completely pointless; besides, I couldn't help saying too much. That's where things stand, and you can see that the situation is still just as worrying; as you say, it would matter much less to someone who is involved in the action, but we only want peace and quiet, and we can't even get that. It is certain that this unfortunate, unbalanced woman is not acting on her own, but is being pushed by all sorts of people, first of all by members of her family, and also by priests. Seeing all this, I cannot help but think of the letters of insults and threats I received about a year ago from "Regnabit"; there is undoubtedly no direct link between the two things, but, in different areas, they are indeed manifestations of the same sectarian and hateful mentality.

Fortunately, what I earned from the course was not very significant, at least from an economic point of view, so I don't have too much to complain about at the moment; but a large part of my time is taken up with uninteresting tasks.

I received issue 1 of Krur; it is indeed the sequel to Ur, and I see no change in its tendencies; but I understand no more than you do the meaning of this new name. Evola wrote to me again recently (I have not yet replied to his previous letter); he asks me to send him (free of charge, no doubt) or lend him my articles from Regnabit. I cannot repeat the steps I mentioned to you earlier, and besides, this time I would certainly not be able to obtain all the issues; nor can I send him the only complete series I have left, which I sometimes need to refer to. May I tell him that he should ask you to lend him the issues I have just sent you in a few weeks' time? Naturally, it should be understood that he would return them to you after reading them; it seems that he has only skimmed through

my articles at Reghini's, and he does not want to ask for them back now. Please tell me what I should do before I write to him.

I too have long thought about a possible connection between Om and Amen, but I have never come to any definite conclusion on the subject; I will have to think about it again and perhaps I will be able to tell you something about it next time.

I cannot remember the chapter in Livy where Numa is mentioned; if you would be so kind as to send me a copy of the passage, I would be very grateful.

Please accept my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 4 March 1929,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I received your letter this morning with its contents intact; I want to thank you right away and reassure you about the fate of this shipment. I thought you would wait until you received the package before replying to me; I am glad to know that it arrived safely, but it is frightening that there are still customs duties to pay for it. What you say about the wax seals reminds me of a final difficulty I had in sending this parcel: they almost refused it at the railway office because it needed seals and I hadn't put any on; fortunately, there was a helpful employee who sorted it out himself. Anyway, since everything turned out fine, there's no need to dwell on it; I'm not at all inclined to go through the same process again for Evola, especially since it's almost certain that I won't be able to find all the issues this time. I was therefore waiting for your letter to reply to Evola; I have just done so in the manner you indicated. It goes without saying that if you lend him these journals, you will have to make sure that he returns them to you; in any case, you will see for yourself what you need to do, especially since I am not telling him that you have them. I don't know any more than you do why he wants to read these articles; it is quite possible that, as you say, it is to find ideas for his own, since he has a habit of borrowing from here and there. There is indeed nothing of interest in Regnabit apart from my articles and those by Charbonneau; these are fragments of the work on the symbols of Christ that he is preparing and to which I alluded in a note in Le Roi du Monde; but I think it will be some time before he finishes it.

There has still been no significant improvement in my health; a cold snap in recent days has caused me to come down with another bout of flu; under normal circumstances, it would probably have been nothing more than a simple cold, but given my condition, it immediately brings on aches and pains of all kinds. As for my troubles, I don't think there has been any news since I last wrote to you; however, I don't know if I told you that my sister-in-law sent me a registered letter asking me once again to send her daughter back to her; I did not reply, but my solicitor has written twice to his colleague in Tours without receiving any response; it's all very strange. As you say, there would be

to treat these people with contempt if the matter were not likely to have more serious consequences; but it would be absolutely impossible for me to extricate myself if I found myself completely alone; this is not very reassuring at all.

Thank you for the text by Livy; it is indeed interesting, and I think your conclusions are entirely correct. This raises a question: what exactly were the links between the Sablins and the Etruscans? This is not very clear to me; perhaps you know something more specific about this. In any case, it is rather curious that the name of the Sablins is so similar to that of the Sabléens of the East.

Yes, I also received the first issue of "Ignis" redivivus, and like you, I am a little surprised by all this controversy, in which, of course, I do not intend to get involved in any way, despite the allusions to the borrowings that Evola made from me and many others. The criticism of his "plagiarism" is certainly justified, since he reproduces entire passages verbatim without indicating their source and as if they were his own; but I think that in this respect he is genuinely unaware; You may remember what I told you about an article on spiritualism that he sent me some time ago. In any case, it seems to me that there are better things to do than engage in disputes like these, but I always predicted that things between Evola and the others would end badly.

Amen must certainly be linked to the Egyptian Amun (which, strangely enough, spells Numa when read backwards); the main meaning seems to be mystery, something hidden or invisible; from this derives Emunah, which means faith. In AMeN and AUM, there are two letters in common out of three, A and M, which represent two opposites or complements; N indicates the product of these two terms, and is therefore placed after them, while U indicates the link that unites them and, as such, is placed between them. However, the two complements do not seem to be considered from the same point of view in both cases, although they are represented by corresponding hieroglyphic symbols. There is something here that is not yet very clear, and I will have to think about it again before I can tell you more about it next time.

Please believe me, with warm regards.

René Guénon

P.S. You are quite right, "moralism" and "amoralism" are indeed two opposite aspects of the same thing; they are on exactly the same level and respond to one and the same concern.

I wrote to Jossot a few days ago; his last letters were over a year old, and I had never replied!

Paris, 23 March 1929,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I trust you received my last letter, in response to the one in which you acknowledged receipt of my previous correspondence; since then, many things have happened.

unfortunate. The catastrophe I feared has come to pass; my wretched sister-in-law, betraying me, burst in here ten days ago and took her daughter away in the most revolting circumstances. I then learned some incredible things, which far exceed anything I could have imagined; I was surrounded by a veritable network of espionage and betrayal. What is most frightening is that the child herself was playing a double game: while she protested every day that she would not leave me, that she wanted to stay with me, she was writing letters to her mother, unbeknownst to me, to be used in case of need, in which she said she wanted to go home. Of course, she did not do this on her own; there were two women who would sneak into my house when I was away, and it was they, obviously, who dictated these letters to her (the neighbours, who were cowardly enough not to warn me, are now beginning to talk). Even so, at her age, one should know what one is saying and doing; so now that I know these things, I would not want her back at any price. I feel a disgust and revulsion that go beyond anything that can be expressed; it would be a relief to be freed from all this filth if my isolation did not bring with it, from a material point of view, complications that are almost insoluble for me; but I believe that anything is better than living in the midst of such ignominy.

Naturally, my health has suffered further as a result of this affair, and my condition is getting worse rather than better; I have no idea how it will end. With that, it is absolutely impossible for me to work on anything interesting, and that is precisely the result they wanted to achieve. Indeed, everything has been masterminded with diabolical skill; it is certainly not that deranged woman, my sister-in-law, who was capable of plotting this; her sectarian fanaticism was used to turn her against me. Thinking about the end of the "Regnabit" story and the letters of insults and threats I received from that side last year, I think it's not difficult to guess where it all started. I wonder what else might happen to me now; if I were in better health, it would be much less worrying, but my body can no longer withstand these repeated shocks.

And you, how are you at the moment? I hope you will be able to give me some news soon.

Have you heard about Evola's extraordinary attack on Reghini? I'm not quite sure where I stand, but it seems that this happened since I last wrote to you. Really, this is beyond the pale; if you are not aware of it, let me know and I will give you some details.

I received a letter from Jossot a few days ago; he lost his niece six months ago, which I did not know, and he seems to have been very affected by it; but, from another point of view, he seems less discouraged than he was some time ago.

I will not write any more, as I am feeling very tired. Please accept, dear Sir
and friend, my warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 6 April 1929,
51 rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I reproach myself for not having replied immediately to your kind letter, but there are days when I cannot find a moment to myself, or when, having finished the essential tasks, I am so tired that I am unable to write or even read. This is to say that my health remains unchanged; I experience strange ailments, which take all sorts of forms, and against which no medication can help. Obviously, all this is the consequence of everything that has happened to me; even if I can recover, I think it will take a long time. You are right to say that I should not let myself get down, but in reality, my body's resistance is at an end. If the aim was to prevent me from continuing my work (and ultimately that is all there is to it), I must admit that they are succeeding all too well, at least for the moment.

As far as practical arrangements are concerned, I am managing to get by with the help of the housekeeper, and I am trying not to think too much about what might happen next; but it is difficult, because sooner or later I will inevitably be faced with some very complicated issues. For example, I will have to go to Blois during the holidays, even if only for a short time, to sort out a lot of things; but I have no idea how I will manage in that house, especially as it is completely impossible to find a cleaner.

Regarding the holidays, thank you very much for your kind intentions; I would be very happy to stay with you, but I must admit that I hardly dare make plans several months in advance; anyway, perhaps we can find a way to arrange things, we'll talk about it again before then. In any case, I very much hope that we will be able to see each other again, and I am very grateful to you for this idea, as well as for your offer to come here if necessary. On the other hand, Reghini and Mikulski would also like me to go to Italy, and Mikulski even wrote to me saying that I had to come to Rome immediately, which is not possible because I have commitments that I cannot abandon. So I'm not sure how it will all work out this summer; it also depends a little on my state of health.

I hadn't heard from those wretched people again, but it seems they won't resign themselves to leaving me alone: this morning, I received a letter demanding Françoise's clothes and other belongings that were left here; how audacious! You can imagine that, after what happened, I would rather give these things to anyone else than send them to them.

Hackin left for Afghanistan again about three weeks ago; I don't know how long he will be staying there.

I haven't written back to Jossot yet; I'm about as late with him as you are with Taillard.

Evola did not send me issue 2 of Krur, but I obtained it from another source; the sheet enclosed with it must be partly a reproduction of the attack

I told you about. It was an article that appeared in Roma Fascista after being rejected by several other newspapers. Here too, there was the accusation of belonging to the Grand Orient, which is completely false; he went so far as to demand "confino", or at least removal from public schools. This did not have the desired effect at all, and Evola was judged very harshly in many circles. However, he did not stop there, and published yet another article in the newspaper Patria; at first they did not want to publish it, but they did so after communicating the matter to R. and P. (1) ()who filed a complaint that is still pending; that is where things stand according to the latest news I have received.

Thank you again, dear Sir and friend, and best regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 6 September 1929,
51 Rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I received your last letter, as well as the previous card; I wanted to reply immediately as you requested, but for the past three days I have not had a minute to myself; please excuse this slight delay.

As you can see, I am still here, but not for much longer now. I took on a job that took much longer than I had anticipated, but it is finally coming to an end, and I assure you that I am not sorry, as I feel completely exhausted. Moreover, despite the fine weather, my health has not improved much; I do not know whether a change of air will do me any good.

I am leaving on Sunday morning for Alsace, where I will spend eight or ten days; from there, I will go to Haute-Savoie, and I plan to stay there at least until the end of the month. I have therefore had to give up going to Blois for the moment, as it would have taken me far too long, but I will go in October at the latest. I will pass through Paris again, where I will only stop for a few days; I am not obliged to be there on a specific date. I wonder, from everything you tell me, whether it will be possible for you to join me in Blois at that time, but I very much hope so, as we need to talk about many things that are really too long to say in a letter.

As for the possibility you are considering of coming to live in Blois with your children for a while, I must confess that I have never been able to resign myself to the idea of renting out my house (which is indeed mine); I have been asked to do so several times, and I have always refused. I am very sorry to refuse you, but really, strange as it may seem, it seems impossible to me. Besides, this house is already so full of all sorts of things that I cannot see how other people could possibly find room for their belongings. On the other hand, although I have little desire to go there at present (mainly because of the organisational difficulties), I do not know what might happen in the future; I am less able than ever to predict it; I have

1 — This refers to Giulio Parise, R. obviously being Reghini (N.D.E.).

the impression of something completely unstable. Finally, I have no idea what the prices are for furnished rentals, but what I do know is that I would not benefit greatly from this point of view, as it would oblige me to pay taxes that I do not currently pay (I already pay enough others) and which would absorb most of what the rental could bring me.

As for finding something else to rent furnished, I would have to be there to find out; so I won't be able to look until October. There may be something, but I shouldn't count on it, as it's not common to rent like this in Blois. It is a town rather lacking in resources, as are most small provincial towns, at least in France, where everything is so centralised. There is no secondary school, only a municipal college; it is true that this does not make much difference to the education; the teachers simply have fewer qualifications. As for finding lessons to give in Blois, it is quite impossible; I know this from my own experience.

All this is very embarrassing, and I don't really know what to say to you; if it weren't so urgent because of this passport issue, I would like you to come and see it with me in October at least; you could then make a more informed decision. I can see that you are just like me, who also knows nothing about all these practical organisational matters; shall I tell you that even for the trip I am about to take, I am worried about getting confused with the train timetables?

There is something else I forgot to mention about my house: in winter, it is almost impossible to heat it properly unless you burn a large amount of wood, as my parents used to do; but now it has become so expensive that it is out of the question.

I hope your son does well in his exams; after all, you may feel more comfortable being away once they are over.

I have been so overloaded with work in recent months that I have not been able to do anything beyond what is strictly necessary and urgent. I did not even go to Alcan to pick up the book you asked me for, but I have made a note of it and you can be sure that I will not forget; I will do so when I am in Paris, especially if you are coming to Blois. On that note, you gave me the name of the translator of this book (H. Baron), but not that of the author, which is more necessary for requesting it.

Did you see Taillard and Mrs Bouchet again when they returned from Ommen? I had the opportunity to talk about them with Probst, who visited me a few days ago. There are some things about Taillard that I cannot understand; I would very much like to discuss them with you.

Regarding Ommen, you are no doubt aware of what has happened; Krishnamurti has dissolved the "Order of the Star"; all these people are in complete disarray; it is indeed a real mess!

I also read an article by Masson-Oursel in the Cahiers de l'Etoile, and I feel exactly the same way as you do; but I didn't know he was also going to contribute to Ur; that's all we needed!

I replied very briefly to Evola: I don't know if he will have understood this time, but

since then he has not been in touch; however, I believe he is very difficult to discourage, and what you told me about his new proposal to go with him to the Alps is further proof of this. I am not surprised by what he told you about my articles in "Regnabit", which did not prevent him from quoting them recently; he must not have understood much of them. It may indeed be that he is acting in bad faith, but he is surely also acting unwisely.

I have had absolutely no news from Reghini for four or five months now, which is really strange. What surprises me even more is that, in all this time, I have not been able to get a reply from Mikulski (1), to whom I have also written several times; I wonder what that means.

I still have several old letters from you that I have never managed to reply to completely; I am quite embarrassed about this. I can see again everything you wrote to me about A V M and A M N; it is very interesting, and I think it is largely correct; we should talk about this again, and it would be easier to do so in person. In any case, on the point that you find confusing, namely the relationship and differences between V and N, what I can tell you for the moment is this: V is the link between the two opposite or complementary terms, hence its intermediate position (this letter and the corresponding number 6 representing the 'mediator'); N is the product of the union of these two same terms, hence its final position.

As for the signs, it should be noted that the vertical line represents activity and the horizontal line represents passivity; when only one of the two lines is complete, this indicates the predominance of the corresponding element or term. Passivity predominates in minerals, and activity in animals; in plants, there is a kind of intermediate balance. Naturally, by activity and passivity, we must understand here what, in a manifested being, is respectively like the reflection (or participation) of Purusha and Prakriti.

I have never seen, or at least I don't think I have, the Egyptian hieroglyph consisting of four steps in front of a square and meaning "knowledge"; it seems that it does indeed refer to four degrees or stages; as for the rest, your interpretation is certainly plausible, but we would need to look at it more closely; this square, which may be the horizontal projection of a pyramid, also reminds me of other things, which I will discuss with you at another time. As for the Dad, I have a better understanding of what it is: it is closely related to the Brahma-danda, the chakras, Kundalinî, etc.; the "passage from the horizontal to the vertical" that you mention is particularly significant in this regard.

The story of the omphalos of the earth and the omphalos of the sea is very interesting; I seem to remember alluding to Ogygia in The King of the World; I think that this island must have been identified with Thule at some point, but then it would be the Atlantean Tula, and not the Hyperborean Tula, which is even further away, both geographically and chronologically.

I was aware of the connection (in Latin) between Eva and Ave; in Hebrew, Hàwah

1 — Before taking leave of this character, let us not forget to point out that Faugeron and he (also mentioned in Reghini's letters) lived with Guénon in 1908 during the adventure of the Order of the Renewed Temple. (N. D. E.)

(Eva) comes from the root h'ai, which means "life" and "living".

The new Tunisian magazine L'Astrosophie is a specifically theosophical publication; I really don't understand why Taillard has always remained involved with all this.

"L'Oeuf de Kneph" is a fairly old work; its reissue, announced in "Cahiers du Portique", did not appear due to a lack of subscribers; it seems to be very interesting from a linguistic point of view.

This is a very long letter, and I am still not sure I have answered everything, even briefly.

I still have so much to do before I leave that I'm not sure how I'm going to manage it! I have to work most nights, although it's now tiring my eyes a lot.

You can always write to me here; it's the safest option, as I won't have a fixed address this month. I will notify you of my successive movements so that my correspondence can be forwarded to me.

With warm regards,

René Guénon

Les Avenières, near Cruseilles (Haute-Savoie),
29 September 1929

Dear Sir and friend,

Please excuse me for not writing back sooner; your letter reached me in Alsace, where I had no free time, as I was visiting this region, which I did not know at all and where there is much to see. I have now been here for a few days and plan to stay until around 15 October, which is longer than I had originally intended. This stay is doing me a lot of good, and I have been feeling much better since leaving Paris. What's more, the weather is still superb (even better than this summer), and I must make the most of it.

It would have been great if you could have come here, as it is closer to your home than Blois, but unfortunately there is nowhere for you to stay nearby. It is a completely isolated place in the mountains, at an altitude of over 1,000 metres, halfway between Annecy and Geneva.

I will only be going to Blois in the second half of October; I sincerely hope that, despite all your difficulties, you will be able to come there too at that time. This time you will not have to worry about accommodation, since, alas, I will now be alone in this house.

Are your affairs settling down a little? Will you be able to stay in Ormea as you seemed to hope?

Your son's exams must be over by now; how did they go?

Write to me here to let me know what you can do; I would very much like to see you for a few days.

In any case, when I pass through Paris again (I will probably stop there for three or four days

), I will look into the book you asked me about; it is strange that we do not know who the author is.

Curiously enough, there are cousins of Taillard here; it really is a small world!

I still haven't heard from Evola; I think the last issue of "Ur" I received was number 8; I saw those stories about mountain climbing and wondered what they had to do with anything. As for Reghini, I have no idea what has become of him; I don't understand how or why he has not managed to publish issue 2 of "Ignis", which he told me was in preparation about six months ago, and which was to include an article by him on the "Crisis of the Modern World".

You must remember to tell me about the passage from Convivio to which you refer, and also about anything interesting that Taillard has said or written to you; but all this will be easier if, as I hope, we manage to meet, because it would undoubtedly take a long time to explain by letter.

Regarding the Egyptian hieroglyph you mentioned to me, I asked Charbonneau if he knew anything about it; he replied that he had never seen it either, adding: "Is it really Egyptian, or could it be Egyptian-Cypriot or Egyptian-Phoenician? Could each of the four triangles inscribed in the square be related to one of the steps of the ladder? I do not think so. One could indeed conjecture a four-step ascent leading to a firm floor. For the moment, I see nothing satisfactory." So, the question remains unresolved; but at least you can no doubt tell me whether it was in documents of purely Egyptian origin that you found this rather enigmatic figure.

I am rushing to finish so that I can give my letter to the postman, as we are 7 kilometres from the nearest post office.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Best regards.

René Guénon

Bois, 9 November 1929

Dear Sir and friend,

Not having received the telegram you mentioned in your card, I assumed that you would not be coming here and that something must have prevented you. From your letter, which I received yesterday evening, I see that the train timetables are indeed very complicated and inconvenient, at least for the return journey. It is certainly much easier to come to Paris; it is a pity that staying in a big city frightens you so much; but the island is very quiet, and there are hotels that are not extraordinary, but where I think you will still be able to find yourself reasonably comfortable. It is only regrettable that I cannot put you up in Paris, when I could so easily have done so here; anyway, I hope that everything will work out despite everything.

I will return to Paris on Monday; I have almost finished my business here, and it was necessary for me to come and see to everything; it had been a little over a year since I had last been there

.

I will be very busy next week, and probably the week after that too; I may even have to be away again for a few days before the end of the month, but I don't know yet. So if you could possibly delay your trip a little, until I am a bit less busy, I think that would be better for now; I will write to you again as soon as I can see things a bit more clearly and have more or less reorganised myself.

This will not be our only opportunity to meet in Savoie, as I will surely return there next year, and I may then have facilities for receiving guests that I did not have this year, as I may have an entire house at my disposal, if the construction is completed (the cold and snow must have already interrupted the work).

As soon as I received your letter, I sent you a package containing La Vie Impersonnelle, a copy of my book that I had brought for you, and several issues of Le Voile d'Isis containing my latest articles (published since the one I sent you some time ago).

I don't know if I told you that the price of "Vie Impersonnelle" is 15 francs; it's a little expensive for the size of the volume. I've skimmed through the book; it's quite bizarre, and I wonder how it came to be published by Alcan. I don't know what the figure on the title page means. Do you know what language it was translated from? In any case, I have rarely seen French as incorrect as that of the translation. All these "revelations" that are now coming out from all sides seem very suspicious to me...

Evola is definitely very unusual; some time ago, I heard that he was planning to go to England to continue publishing his magazine; according to what he wrote to you, that is no longer the case. The last issue of Krur that I received was, if I remember correctly, number 8; have any others been published since then?

As for Le Christ-Panthère, I don't recall ever having seen it; I would be most grateful if you could provide me with any information you may have on this subject.

I believe there must be a book of selected pieces in Paris that Françoise used and that might suit your needs; I will look into it when I return.

How is it that there are so many schools and teachers in Mondovi? I did not think it was such an important place. Let us hope that you will still be able to find lessons there.

If the climate is so humid, I understand that it does not suit you; but the extreme cold is also very unpleasant; let us hope that next winter will not be as harsh as the last, although it is already predicted to be very severe.

I will write to you again from Paris, but please let me know as soon as you can if there are times when it would be easier for you to make the trip, so that I can try to arrange things as best I can.

Yours sincerely.

René Guénon

Paris, 25 December 1929,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I have been meaning to write to you for some time, and I was thinking about it again when your card arrived. I have received your registered letter and its contents, for which I thank you. Please excuse my delay; since my return here, I have been constantly overloaded with work, and this shows no sign of abating. I had hoped to have a little more free time during this holiday season, but I see that this will not be the case. Therefore, despite my desire to meet with you, I believe it would be better if you postponed your trip until a later date, as I have so little time to myself that we would hardly have the opportunity to meet at leisure, and it would not be worth your while to travel here. You mention Easter; perhaps I will go to Blois at that time, but, to be honest, I can hardly predict what I will be doing so far in advance.

I am certainly better than I was before the holidays, but since I returned to Paris, my throat has been bothering me again, which is quite unpleasant; it is very humid, and that is not good for me at all.

I looked for the book you asked me for; what I have here are selected pieces by Des Granges, and I also have the Histoire de la littérature française by the same author; should I send you the first of these two volumes, or both if they are of any use to you? Of course, I have no need of them, so they are at your disposal.

Thank you for your information about the panther; I have sent the text from the Bestaire to Charbonneau, who was very happy to add it to his collection of documents on the symbols of Christ.

To tell the truth, Marquès-Rivière's book is not very good, and I don't think it will really interest you; it's mostly about phenomena; apparently, it was the publisher who wanted it that way... It's good for people who don't know anything yet and might be attracted by this slightly bizarre aspect; but it's to be feared that they won't go any further. The articles published in "Lotus Bleu" are much better and more serious; but as they will most likely be collected in a volume, I think it's better to wait. A second book by Mme David-Neel has also just been published, entitled Mystiques et Magiciens au Thibet (Mystics and Magicians in Tibet), but I have not yet seen it (the first was just a fairly ordinary travelogue). As for Mukerji's book, the best part is the first section, where he recounts his education; the second part, about his stay in America, is nothing particularly remarkable. A translation of another work by the same author, entitled "Le Visage de mon frère" (My Brother's Face), has just been published; I have only skimmed through it; it seems to contain some rather good things, but I don't think it would teach you much that is new.

Evola has written to me twice recently, and for a rather unpleasant reason: it seems that he is definitely in a legal dispute with Reghini, and that the latter has published a letter from me in which I mentioned his habit of reproducing sentences and entire passages without indicating their source; he seemed rather

unhappy. I replied, trying to calm him down and make him understand that I did not want to get involved in this affair. I have not heard from Reghini himself for over six months, and I have no idea why.

Evola also told me about the changes to the journal and its new title; it's good that you are writing for it, as this may give it a slightly different direction from the one it has taken up to now. As for me, we will have to wait and see how things turn out; for the moment, I find that my collaboration is made more difficult by the article concerning my latest book, which marks an irreconcilable divergence on an essential point, the question of the relationship between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. On the other hand, I am too busy at the moment to consider anything else; I already have "The Veil of Isis" to keep me busy (it is not always easy to find the time to write an article every month, not to mention the reviews), and I cannot give it up now that we have finally, with some difficulty, managed to give it a truly serious tone. Anyway, we'll talk about this again in a while, when I'm a bit less busy and when the first issues of the new magazine have come out, which will give us a better idea of what it will be like overall. As for the title, it's not what you suggested; it looks like it will be "La Torre".

Did Taillard tell you anything interesting in his last letter? I recently gave his address to a young naval officer who is in Bizerte and is interested in Islamic issues; I don't know if he has seen him.

All my best wishes, dear Sir and friend, for the year that is about to begin, and believe me, as always, yours sincerely.

René Guénon

Paris, 5 January 1930,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

Following your letter, I took the two books to Mrs. Courtot the day before yesterday; she had received your letter and will include them in her shipment.

You can count on me to continue sending you Le Voile d'Isis regularly; I think it will continue to become more and more interesting overall. It has changed a lot over the past year or so, and very advantageously; fortunately, we have managed to make Chacornac understand that it was necessary to do something serious, without worrying too much about the tastes of a certain clientele; and, as subscriptions are increasing rather than decreasing as he feared, this encourages him to continue in this direction.

You are really lucky to have dry weather; here, it is not cold at all, but it is always rainy and windy. Although I am very afraid of the cold, I think the humidity is even worse for me because of the pain. What I have in my throat is pharyngitis; I have tried many things without any result, and, deep down, I believe there is almost nothing to be done; my mother had it all her life and was never able to get rid of it. It has the same causes as rheumatism; I have

noticed that I suffer from it much more when it is humid, as it is at the moment.

I feel for you if you have to go back to Greek and Latin as you say; I don't think I would have the courage to do so myself; it's true that I have completely neglected it for much longer than you have. I still know enough for my own purposes, if I need any information; but when it comes to teaching it, it is obviously not the same thing at all.

I do not think it was Reghini himself who showed my letter to Evola; I understand that he submitted it as evidence in the trial, and that is how Evola found out about it. In any case, I have not heard anything more about this matter, and I hope that now they will leave me alone about it. You are probably right in thinking that Parise is the cause of this whole affair, but I too wonder what exactly his role might be.

What is truly curious is the way you treat Evola and the result you obtain in this manner; I very much doubt that he would accept this from anyone other than you. I will be interested to see the new magazine soon; I hope that the articles you mention will appear in it as you wrote them. I will therefore wait to see if I should contribute as well. It must be said that I have very little free time and I would not want to spread myself too thin. Regular contributions to Le Voile d'Isis are already quite an occupation; and then, with what is happening now, I will above all have to get back to writing books. Anyway, we will see what can be done.

I believe Charbonneau mentioned the Christ-Goat somewhere, or at least he told me he would talk about it. There have been many other articles by him besides the ones you have seen, and even those articles represent only a small part of his work, which will comprise three volumes. He hopes that the first of these volumes will be ready sometime this year.

If you can come at Easter and if we can travel together from here to Blois, that would indeed be the best and most convenient option for you; we will discuss it further before then.

Warm regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 10 February 1930,
51, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Ile (4th arrondissement)

Dear Sir and friend,

I received your two letters, as well as the card in which you announced that you were sending me "La Torre"; but it never arrived, even though, according to what you told me, you sent it by registered post. On the other hand, the issue that Evola sent me did arrive, even though it was sent as ordinary mail; it's impossible to understand. I received this issue at the same time as

your second letter; similarly, the latest issue of Krur arrived at the same time as the first; this double coincidence is rather strange.

I have been meaning to write to you for some time, without being able to do so, to announce some somewhat unexpected news: I am leaving for Egypt on 20 February, that is, a week from Thursday. The decision was made very suddenly; I am not sorry to have finally found an opportunity to make this trip, which has been in the works since 1911, and which is now coming to fruition when I least expected it. I am not sure exactly how long I will stay; it will probably be four or five months.

With my departure so close, I am completely overwhelmed by all sorts of things that I have to get done before then. Above all, I have to finish organising the publishing business so that everything is completely ready to go when I leave; everything is going very well on that front, however.

Yesterday I received a very kind letter from Taillard, to whom I had written a few days ago to ask if he needed any information that I could obtain for him during my stay in Egypt. He mentions this strange thing called "Impersonal Life", and Probst, from whom I have also just received a letter, mentions it too; apparently it comes from Mexico, which I didn't know. I wonder how important it might be; what do you think?

The book you mention is Le Secret de la Chevalerie by V. E. Michelet; it is good, although it lacks a little precision on certain points. This small volume is part of the Cahiers du Portique series, which we have now taken on in our publications; the price is 12 francs.

In case you need it, here is the address (or rather addresses) of our publishing house: Didier et Richard, 56 rue Mazarin, Paris (4th arrondissement), and 9, Grande Rue, Grenoble (Isère). The general title, which was finally chosen for the editions after several successive changes, is "L'anneau d'Or" (The Golden Ring).

You are absolutely right about La Torre; it is not good from any point of view; the external presentation is even quite poor, and the format is abominable; why did they give it the appearance of a newspaper? As for the articles, there is almost nothing in most of them; the presence of yours, in the midst of all this, seems terribly ironic. I wonder what we can do; Taillard doesn't mention it to me; anyway, as you say, let's wait until your other articles appear in the next issues. As you will easily understand, I can't think of preparing anything at the moment, with this trip so close and everything I have to do; we'll see when I'm in Egypt. If I do anything, it is understood that I will send it to you directly for translation; thank you in advance.

How are you now? Do you still have as much snow? Here, the weather, which had been constantly wet, has changed and turned cold over the last three or four days. I have had a bit of a cold for nearly a month, but I hardly have time to pay attention to it; I am counting on the change in climate to help me recover.

I regret that this trip will further delay our meeting until the summer holidays, but we had to take advantage of the favourable circumstances.

You can always write to me here, at least until further notice; I will ask

a friend to forward my correspondence to me until I have a permanent address.

With warm regards.

René Guénon

René Guénon to Hillel

Blois, 25 July 1916

Dear Sir,

I am not sure to what extent we can talk about what existed in India before the cycle of Rama, as at that time "Aryavartta" was certainly not present-day India.

Nevertheless, it is true that there are "Shaiva" doctrines that are extremely interesting, and that paths that lead to the same goal, although different, can also be orthodox. As for the school of Shankarâchârya, we would have to ask those who call it heterodox which one they are referring to, as there are currently two.

Blois, 14 August 1916

I do not think that "Dravidian" can be opposed to "Aryan"; it is simply a designation for South Hindus, whereas "Aryan", used to designate a race, is, as you know, simply an invention of a few Westerners. In reality, the word "Aryan" has never been anything more than a distinctive title for men belonging to the first three castes, both among the Hindus of the South and among others. I do not see what could have led you to believe that there was a contrast between "Dravidian" and "Aryan".

Paris, 15 October 1916

The word rich, which comes from rig in composition, is originally a verbal root meaning to praise, exalt, and also to shine, to resplend; this latter meaning may suggest a connection with the title of the Zohar. Rich is also the root of the words rishi and riksha; the latter means star, and, more specifically, sapta-riksha is the Sanskrit name for the Big Dipper (which is also symbolically the home of the rishis).

As for Synesius' resignation, I don't think much of it, except that his letter, a copy of which Mme de Chauvigny must have sent you, is from someone who is very ill (mentally, of course). I see no need to appoint a successor; as for appointing a president at each meeting of the Synod, these meetings would first have to take place, which I very much doubt. Generally speaking, I am no more in favour of the principle of election than you are, but in my opinion, the best thing is to leave the matter completely dormant, and since it will have to be taken up again one day or another, it should be in a form quite different from that of the Church, the raison d'être of which I, for my part, cannot see at all, for it is never on that ground that anything serious will be achieved.

Blois, 22 December 1918

There is certainly a great resemblance between the words "Druid" and "Dravidian"; but is there more to it than that? A common origin seems rather doubtful to me, especially since the Dravidians probably descend from a race that was in India long before the Hindus; they themselves only became "Hindus" by adopting their traditions (since this name implies only a community of tradition and not of race), and the languages they still speak today have no connection with Sanskrit.

Blois, 1 March 1919

You have no doubt heard of Téder's death and his replacement by the illustrious Bricaud; it was hardly worth fighting Boullan as Papus did in the past, only to end up with Boullan's direct and authentic representative as his successor: It was inevitable that it would all end in this ridiculous way; it is a pity, however, that "France-Antimaçonnique" is no longer published...

Chiché, 6 September 1924

We have already mentioned the Calydonian boar, killed by Hercules if I am not mistaken. Among the Phrygians, however, it is Atys who is killed by a boar. In any case, the symbolic role of the boar must be particularly important, since it is he who, in India, gives his name to the current Kalpa called Shrî-Shwêta-Varâha-Kalpa. It is even rather curious that it is the third manifestation of Vishnu, rather than the first, that characterises the entire cycle in this way.

Blois, 26 August 1926

I have recently been told about an astrological argument used in the Middle Ages, notably by William of Auvergne, to prove the truth of Christianity by considering certain planetary conjunctions, and I have been asked where it would be possible to find explanations on this subject.

I think you are right about Philalèthe's work: it needs to be looked at more closely. Moreover, I think that all alchemical symbolism can be interpreted, as you say, in a sense other than that of mineral alchemy, which, of course, does not mean that the latter should be excluded.

Blois, 24 September 1926 It is

indeed likely that what Guillaume d'Auvergne is referring to is the

famous conjunction of Saturn in Pisces; I had not thought of that.

Blois, 12 September 1928

Regarding your question about Tibet, the Adhi-Buddha is at the summit.
of the hierarchy, and the five Dhyani Buddhas (literally, Buddhas of contemplation) are his direct emanations; from each of them proceeds a Dhyani Bodhisattva. Each Dhyani Buddha and each Dhyani Bodhisattva corresponds to a certain period, in which they manifest themselves respectively through a Manusya Buddha (human Buddha, or manifested in human form) and a Manusya Bodhisattva. The Dhyani Buddha corresponding to the present period is Amitabha, and the Dhyani Bodhisattva is Avalokiteshvara. As there is also a correspondence with different celestial regions, one could undoubtedly envisage connections with the five Emperors of Heaven; but the four Mahārājas, rulers of the four cardinal points, referred to in Tibet, are something else entirely. I do not think that the latter can be placed in a "linear" hierarchy, so to speak, with the four Rishis; in a certain sense, they would be below them rather than above them, but it would perhaps be too simplistic to view them in this way.

Paris, 2 June 1929

The Tibetan vajra is not disc-shaped; on the contrary, it also has an elongated shape, with two points, and is held by the middle: in short, it closely resembles the thunderbolts of Zeus. The two points represent the two opposite effects: production and destruction.

The power to which I refer is indeed very directly related to the "science of Aum"; on the other hand, it can also be said that, at least in a certain sense, it is identified with the "power of the keys", which is expressed in hermetic language by the formula "coagula-solve" (where the two opposite aspects also appear).

Les Avenières near Cruseilles (Haute-Savoie)
24 September 1929

Everything you tell me about the Alpine region is very curious, and there must be some truth in it. I do not know if there is still something alive in this region, but in any case, here are some rather strange things: we are here on Mount Salève, whose name seems to be another form of Montsalvat, and, right next to it, there is also a Mount Sion: The name Cruseilles is also quite remarkable: it is both the "creuset" (crucible), whose meaning is completely obscure, and the "creusille" (pilgrim's shell).

29 September 1929

Thank you for your prompt reply and your information about the midnight sun, which I will pass on to Charbonneau. He needs it because it seems that this phenomenon was used to symbolise Christ in northern countries, "The coming of the Saviour having illuminated the earth as the midnight sun illuminates the night with a soft glow". There is also something in his last letter that I forgot to mention to you: it concerns the Templar priests and bishops, who were apparently accused of Manichaeism, and who were not mentioned at all in the issue of "Le Voile d'Isis"; he saw, but cannot remember where, that there were nine Templar bishops who, he says, seem to have slipped through the net in 1307.

Since I wrote to you, I have discovered a veritable deposit of "snake eggs" on one of the slopes of the mountain in a sort of ravine that descends directly to a place called Saint-Blaise (you know the Celtic meaning of this name). All this is really strange.

Everything you say about the Templars is certainly very accurate; I hadn't thought about the connection between the nine bishops and the nine who are said to have taken refuge in Scotland, but how can we know how much truth there is in this latter story?

Blaise or Beleiz is the Celtic name for the wolf, which was the symbol of Belen: the same thing is found among the Greeks for the Lycian Apollo, with a curious connection between the names for wolf (lukos) and light (luké). The name Blois is also the Celtic Beleiz; the wolf has remained in the city's coat of arms, and there are coins called Blesances, on which the usual head of Apollo is replaced by a wolf's head.

Cairo, 11 April 1930 The

person I was supposed to meet in Sohag died last year, so I did not stop there on my way

to Luxor, having learned this here before my departure.

did not stop there on my way to Luxor, having learned this here before my departure.

I saw some very interesting things in the tombs of the kings, but it was all almost exclusively cosmological and magical in nature. In any case, it gave the impression of being something entirely different from what Egyptologists describe. In some places, there are still some strange influences that remain, some of which are quite dangerous in nature.

The Sinai is also very interesting from other points of view.

Cairo, 18 October 1930

Here, behind El-Azhar, there is an old man who bears a striking resemblance to portraits of ancient Greek philosophers, and who paints strange pictures. The other day, he showed us a kind of dragon with a human head

bearded head, wearing a 16th-century style hat, and six small heads of various animals coming out of the beard. What is quite curious is that this figure looks almost exactly like the one that the "R.I.S.S." published some time ago about the famous "Dragon's Chosen One", as if taken from an old book that was not identified, which made its authenticity rather doubtful. But the most remarkable thing is that the man claims to have seen this strange beast himself and to have drawn it as it was!

Cairo, 22 April 1932

In this regard, Tamos' impression that you mention is only partly correct: if there was anything of Egyptian origin in what happened to you, it was not Muslim, but rather "pharaonic" as they say here. In fact, the only thing that remains of ancient Egypt is a very dangerous and inferior form of magic; this relates precisely to the mysteries of the famous donkey-headed god, who is none other than Set or Typhon. It seems to have taken refuge largely in certain regions of Sudan, where there are some truly unusual things: for example, there is a region where all the inhabitants, numbering around twenty thousand, have the ability to take animal form during the night; it has been necessary to set up barriers to prevent them from going out on raids, during which they often devour people. I heard this from a very trustworthy source who had been to the country and even had a servant of this kind, whom he hastened to dismiss as soon as he realised what was going on. Returning to the god with the donkey's head, the stories of Le Chartier & Co. are certainly related to it; unfortunately, it is difficult to obtain certain details, but perhaps all this will be discovered little by little... I am fairly certain that this is indeed the true centre of all the evil things you know about. I have noticed that the blood of black animals is used in certain rituals; in this regard, have you ever observed manifestations in your country that take the form of these animals? It would be interesting for me to know...

Cairo, 12 March 1933

Witchcraft in North Africa is not Arabic, but Berber, and perhaps partly of Phoenician origin, although the most powerful element (I am referring to the donkey's head) is Egyptian and continues the Typhonian mysteries; I even think that this is all that has survived of the ancient Egyptian civilisation, and it is not the best part of it... It seems, moreover, that the 'magical' aspect was developed there quite early on, which indicates that there was already a degeneration; in some tombs, there are influences that are truly appalling and seem capable of remaining there indefinitely.

Cairo, 24 September 1933

By condemning everything related to esotericism, Rome would in fact be pronouncing its own condemnation, for it would be a definitive break with the "Centre"; it is understandable that one would think twice about this, even if one is not clearly aware of what is at stake. But a truly effective resumption of contact is also highly unlikely, now more than ever; this is what I was referring to when I mentioned that one might wonder whether the aforementioned break would not be preferable, as it would at least make the situation clearer and, in a way, clear the ground.

Cairo, 5 December 1933

As for the Hasidim, I have never been able to determine exactly: there is no initiation in Judaism other than that of Kabbalah, but to what extent are they Kabbalists? It seems, moreover, that there is a quasi-mystical side to them, insofar as one can speak of Jewish mysticism (it is only in relation to them, in any case, that such an expression could be used without constituting an overly crude misinterpretation). It could also be that Baal Shem Tob was truly initiated, but that Hasidism represented for him only a kind of exoteric expression; I think that Kabbalists never transmitted their initiation except to disciples chosen one by one, and always remaining very few in number.

It is true that Rasûl literally means "messenger", but the word Malak also exists in Arabic with the meaning of "angel" (I think that in Greek there must be a certain difference in meaning between apostolos and angelos, although both words can be translated as "messenger"); and there can be Rusul "min el-malaïkah wa min en-nâs, that is, from among the angels and from among men. The expression "ed-dîn el-hânif" refers to the religion of Abraham; we were discussing the meaning of the word hânif here some time ago, and we considered various meanings, but in the end we agreed on the one I suggested: hânif = tâher, meaning "pure". The hunafâ are therefore literally the "pure" (like the Cathars, which is rather curious); they are those among the Arabs who had kept the religion of Abraham intact, for there have always been such people until the advent of Islam (some may have been prophets, but not all); and Muhammad himself, before his mission, was hânif. As for an equivalence between the Sufis and the Essenes, I do not believe that this can be envisaged, firstly because the Essenes formed an organisation that naturally had to include various degrees, including the lowest ones, whereas the word Sufi must be reserved for those who possess divine wisdom (the true Sufi is "el-ârif billah", i.e. one who draws his knowledge directly from the Principle itself), and secondly because, in Judaism, (Kabbalistic) initiation does not seem to have ever belonged exclusively to the Essenes (about whom, moreover, we do not know much that is specific), so that they would rather represent the equivalent of a particular Tarîqah, quite simply.

Cairo, 6 January 1934

What you say about Jethro seems very plausible to me; in this regard, I cannot remember where I saw, not long ago, that some rather curious discoveries had been made about the blacksmiths who lived on the Sinai Peninsula, who are said to be Kenites, which some say are Cainites; in any case, all these stories about blacksmiths are always connected in one way or another to Tubal-Cain. As for Ur in Chaldea, I would be rather embarrassed to give you its exact location; I have no map here to refer to, but it seems to me that in any case it must be quite far from the Caucasus (which is certainly not the mountain of Qaf, whatever Ahmed Zaki Pasha may claim).

Another curious thing is the Yemenites: they do not resemble the Arabs at all, but rather the Abyssinians; moreover, according to their own tradition, the two peoples were once one, which was the people of the Queen of Sheba; it can therefore be assumed that the Abyssinians emigrated to Africa at a later date than that of Solomon. The ancient Yemeni language, which is no longer spoken today, has no connection with Arabic; one wonders what the origin of this people might be, who were probably in Arabia before the descendants of Abraham.

The awakening of Kundalini concerns only a special type of initiation: one should not generalise; there are many means, although they must all contribute to the same goal. Nada is the first stage of the manifestation of sound, and it is also an aspect of Shakti; in some respects, it is even considered to be Shiva-Shakti; in any case, it cannot be equated with Kundalini, which can only be identified with it at one of the last stages of its ascent.

Cairo, 11 February 1934

Yes, the fear inspired by blacksmiths and metallurgists seems to have been quite widespread, and there is something very curious about this, which is surely linked to Tubal-Cain and the mysteries of the Kabirs; all this is not easy to clarify.
You mention Saint Patrick in this regard; indeed, there were Kabirian mysteries in Ireland.

I do not know if it is really the city of Ur that has been found, as has been said, in recent excavations; it is possible, in short, that this city was, at one time, the location of a traditional centre; moreover, Abraham could only have originally come from a secondary centre, otherwise his encounter with Melchizedek and the investiture given to him by the latter would be incomprehensible. What you say about the mountain of Qaf is quite correct; it has many names; it is called El-Jebal el abiod, the "White Mountain", and also Jebal el-Awil, the "Mountain of Saints" (which is the same as the "Mountain of Prophets", but with a broader meaning, since wali is a spiritual degree above that of nabi); and it is also said that it cannot be reached "neither by land nor by sea" (Lâ bilbarr wa lâ bil-bahi). Alborj, among the Persians, is also the same

thing; Alborj and Elbrouz are in fact two forms of the same name; the ancient form is Berezed or Berezaiti. It seems that the form Alborj is due to assimilation with an Arabic word: el-borj, meaning "tower" or "fortress" (and also the name given to the signs of the Zodiac); it is rather curious that this word is found exactly in German (Burg). To tell the truth, I believe that it is not of Arabic origin, but comes from the Greek (?) purgos, which also has the same meaning. - Returning to Alborj, it does not really matter that this name, like others, was later applied to this or that mountain; it is indeed the ? ? (line missing?) the polar mountain. This is where the white Haoma is found (which was later replaced by the yellow Haoma when this first dwelling place was lost); and this is also where the Simurg lives, which is the same as the Phoenix and which, it is said, cannot touch the earth anywhere.

Cairo, 19 March 1934

What you say about blacksmiths seems right to me; as for interpreting the Beni-Elohim as referring to the descendants of Seth, this has always been fairly common, but seems rather esoteric. In any case, as for the origin of the Kshatriyas, I see nothing similar in Hindu tradition; each caste is considered to have its own origin, by its very nature, and not by derivation or mixture. Kabir and Gibor must originally be linked to the same root; it is true that in Arabic there is only Kabir, but there is also jabbar, which is obviously identical to the Hebrew gibor; but on the other hand, the ji (which here is pronounced hard as in Hebrew) becomes K in certain regions of Arabia. - The Gandharvas are not comparable to angels, who are essentially identical to the Devas; they belong rather to simple subtle modalities of our state. Islamic tradition also admits the possibility of union between Jinn and humans, but the Jinn, similarly, are subtle beings of our world, and there are many species of them...

The word "wali" does not mean "servant" (that is "abd"); it means "friend" (of God, it is implied). I do not know if we can say that the "Righteous" corresponds to a well-defined spiritual degree; in Arabic, "çadiq", which means "righteous" and "sincere", also has the meaning of friend, but I have never seen it regarded as a synonym for "wali".

Cairo, 27 November 1934

Basically, we agree on the difference between traditional astrology and modern astrology; now we can ask ourselves to what extent the results obtained by the latter can be attributed to it as a "science" proper, or what part should be attributed to the astrologers' own abilities; you yourself acknowledge that astrologers must be gifted in this regard, and are there not many "divinatory" methods whose intrinsic value has little bearing on the results? As far as astrology is concerned, the intervention of Uranus, Neptune, etc... me seems particularly subject to

objection; if this is not a confusion with the lay astronomical point of view, I really don't see what it could be...

Cairo, 17 March 1935

The correspondences of Nephesh with Psyche and Ruah with Pneuma are not in doubt; but as for Neshamah, can "Nous" really be regarded as superior to Pneuma? On the other hand, if Nephesh belongs to the world of Ietsirah, and Ruah to that of Briah, it seems that for Neshamah, only that of Atsiluth remains, but then it would be the Atmâ, with which the "Nous" certainly cannot be identified.

Cairo, 16 April 1935

I really do not see what correspondence could be found to the fall of the angels in the Hindu tradition; the Asuras represent the subhuman states of being, but they are not considered "fallen". As for the fall of man, it obviously refers to the distancing from the Principle through the different phases of cyclical development, so we could distinguish several degrees, but I think that the departure from the Earthly Paradise would correspond more to the end of the Krita-Yuga than to the beginning of the Kali-Yuga.

Cairo, 12 May 1935

Obviously, the "catabasis" cannot be considered a "fall" in the literal sense; however, it remains to be seen whether these are not two expressions of the same thing from different points of view. In any case, it seems clear that the idea of "fall" itself cannot exist without being linked to that of "sin", which is something very special, rarely found outside the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Regarding your question about D.·. H.·., the official solution is as follows: a Mason who has been accepted into a mixed lodge and who then applies for admission to a regular obedience , is not initiated anew of , but only "regularised", which is a purely administrative formality; this therefore implies that one's initiation is recognised as valid, as would also be the case for one that took place outside of any obedience.

What is true is that not only can 7 Masons (but it must be added: having the degree of M.·.)constitute a L.·., but that there is no other way to constitute it; only then can this L.·. apply for its affiliation to an obedience. As for the so-called "clandestine" LL.·. in England (there there are none elsewhere), these are LL.·. that predate the founding of the G.·. L.·. and did not wish to join it, but have continued to ignore it purely and

simply, there must still be four in operation.

..... It is certain that the founders of the G.·. L.·. of England deviated from its spirit, but they cannot be considered as pure and simple usurpers.
Simply because, previously, they themselves were regular members of the old operative Masonry. Although diminished at that time, it was not extinct, and indeed never has been, since it still exists
today... There are also the Scottish degrees, which were instituted mainly to counter the intrusion of the Protestant spirit.

Operative Masonry has always continued to exist in England as a separate organisation, quite comparable to the guild system; it corresponds to what the Compagnons Tailleurs de pierre (Stonemasons' Guild) are in France, now almost completely disappeared, despite the claims of the infamous "M.·. de l'OE.·." who
despite all the titles he adorns himself with, has never been able to attach himself to it regularly.

I no longer remember where I found the date of 1702 for the death of Chr. Wren; since then, I have also seen the date of 1723; it therefore seems that we must accept that 1702 is only the date from which, for one reason or another, he ceased all activity.

It is true that the G.·. O.·. abolished the title of Grand Master (at about the same time as the formula of G.·. A.·., if I am not mistaken) as being too undemocratic; the role is now fulfilled by the President of the Council of the Order; but
the absence of the title makes it impossible for him to deal on an equal footing with most Masonic Obediences in other countries, as the Grand Mastership is generally considered a "landmark".

On the other hand, the Grand Master has never been held by any King of France; there is only one country, Sweden, where the King is the Grand Master. In England, if the king is a Mason, which is not currently the case, he bears the title of "Protector of Masonry"; Edward VII, who was Grand Master when he was Prince of Wales, relinquished this office upon his accession to the throne and was replaced by the Duke of Connaught, who still holds it today. It is true that the King of England has another title by right, that of Grand Master of the Royal Order of Scotland; but if he is not a Freemason, he cannot effectively exercise this function and is replaced by a Pro-Grand Master, so that the title is purely honorary.

The Royal Order of Scotland is a high-degree rite, which considers itself to be the oldest of all, since it traces its origins back to Robert Bruce (1306-1329). who is also known as the ROSY-CROSS of Heredom of Kilwinning (written R. S. Y. C. S. of H. R. D. M. of K. L. W. N. G.).

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* May 1935

... Obviously, the "catabasis" cannot be considered as a
"Fall" in the literal sense; however, it remains to be seen whether these are two expressions of the same thing from two different perspectives. In any case, it seems

that the idea of "fall" itself cannot exist without being linked to that of "sin", which is something very special and rarely found outside the Judeo-Christian tradition.*

* 30 June 1935

... I have heard it said here that the chariot was the emblem of the Pharisees and the boat that of the Sadducees, but no one has been able to give me any references on this subject.*

Fragments of letters from R.G. to P.G. – (transmitted by Lov.)

*To P.G., 9 August 1935

... As for the objects that were brought to Ireland by the prophet Jeremiah, I have also heard that they were transported to Ethiopia, that is to say, probably first to Yemen (the kingdom of the Queen of Sheba) and then from there to Abyssinia when some of the inhabitants of that region emigrated there.

... Philipon wrote something very curious to me: "Did I ever tell you that Gaston Maspéro once mentioned the gods of Egypt, that they had appeared to him, but without speaking to him, whereas they had made revelations to Mariette? I heard this story from Maspéro himself, with whom I was very close."*

... The beings (of Agartha) do not really have names; they are beyond this limitation; for one reason or another, they can take whatever names suit them, and this is no more important than putting on any old costume... The consequence is that no known historical figure can be identified as having been a member of Agartha; many, and undoubtedly more than one might suppose, have been influenced directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously; but no member of Agartha works alone in the outside world, nor makes himself known as such. This is also why, although we can name many Rosicrucians, we cannot name any Rosicrucians.

... As for your other questions, that the "King of the World" has one or more physical "hypostases" is not in doubt, but perhaps, like the
The "location" of spiritual centres is of rather secondary importance. Physical immortality for certain beings is certainly not impossible, and Saint John may be one of them; this immortality is *above all* a symbol of the permanence of a function.

... With regard to Moses, the inspired prophet and lawgiver, we might even invoke here the concept of secondary *avatars*.

... The theory of *Avatars* is that of prophets representing two complementary points of view which, as such, can very well be reconciled.

... Under the present conditions, it is not appropriate for an adept to play the role of head of state or army; he can only take on such external functions in exceptional cases relating to the foundation of states, which you mention in

your article; otherwise, he will exercise his influence in an invisible manner.

A spiritual centre can discern someone's intentions by a variety of means, which it would always be wrong to try to limit; but, apart from very rare cases, anyone who would limit themselves to waiting for initiation in a somewhat passive manner would, I believe, risk waiting a very long time.

... A great sheikh from Morocco recently stated that the Antichrist has already been born, but that he must not yet reveal himself.

... I was not aware of what you tell me about the role of the three "hierarchs" (Saint Basil, Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Gregory the Theologian) in the Orthodox tradition; it seems clear that this indicates that they represent a unique "function" and no doubt this may have some connection with the idea *of* minor *Avatâras*, especially because of the assertion that, without them, Christ would have had to return to earth (teaching of the Orthodox Church).

... Some have an interest not only in destroying the spiritual centre of Abyssinia, but also in occupying the point itself, since the location of the place is important in itself. I remember noticing strange things in the past about the places where the Bolsheviks had established their main "centres" of influence, particularly in Central Asia. The same could be said of England (Malta, Cyprus).*

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*To P.G., 2 September 1936

... In the Arabic version of the Gospels, the Paraclete is referred to as Ahmed, which is the heavenly name of the Prophet (Mohammed being his earthly name, and Nahm[???] his heavenly name). Because of this, Emperor Heraclius came very close to recognising the Prophet's mission; he was only dissuaded from doing so by certain members of the Greek clergy who claimed that this was a misinterpretation.*

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*29 September 1936

On the question of the angel Gabriel, it is astonishing that people can act as if Islamic tradition consisted solely of the text of the Qur'an... As for the spirit (*Er-Rûh*) in the passages referred to, some have indeed wanted to relate this word to the angel Gabriel, but they must have had some reason for doing so; this interpretation is, moreover, inaccurate because, in fact, it is *Metatron* who is meant.*

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*to P.G., 14 July 1937

... Shaminûra[? illegible] is neither an angel nor an archangel, he is the king of *the Jinss muminîn*[?], which is quite different; as for the origin of his name, I have never seen any explanation for it. It seems, moreover, that he has died (passed on to another state) and that the current king is ...[?], so that many magicians, unaware of this change, stubbornly repeat in vain formulas that have lost all their effectiveness...*

René Guénon to Pierre Germain (*1*)

26 August 1916

I received your two letters, but I did not have time to reply before our departure from Blois. That explains why I am writing this letter in pencil, as I am travelling and do not want to wait any longer to return Maritain's letter, which I thank you for sending me. His answer to your question is indeed neither very clear nor very satisfactory. According to scholastic doctrine, it is certain that matter is the principle of individuation, so the individuality of the soul derives from matter: its individuality, but not its being or its essence, of course. There seems to be some confusion in this regard in the postscript. As for the angel, it is limited or determined by its very essence.

Now, as for the soul separated from the body, we cannot say that it is a human being, for a human being is precisely defined as the composite of both. Therefore, we cannot even say that the separated soul is a complete being, and this is, in short, only a transitory state for it, since its nature is to be the form of a body. (This still refers, of course, to the individual soul, which Hindu doctrine calls *îivâtmâ* or the living soul.)

Another thing: *materia signata* is informed matter, which is always quantified; it is therefore a pleonasm to call it *signata quantitate*.

Finally, I do not believe that St Thomas can say that the human soul has an *esse absolutum:* this absolute would still be too relative.

On the question of the infinite, Mr Gombault told me the other day that those who admit an infinite "secundum quid" as being something other than the indefinite cannot be considered true scholastics. I am curious to know what Maritain will reply to my letter. As for *indeterminacy*, I made it clear to him that I did not understand it at all in the sense of Spinoza.

For the *Revue de Philosophie*, it would certainly be best to wait for Maritain's reply. In any case, thank you for your offer to write to Father Blanche. Mr Gombault was not aware of the existence of this journal; do you know exactly what its ethos is? I have not yet had time to finalise my work on the substance, but I will try to do so as soon as possible (...).

16 September 1916

(...) If we consider the so-called "potential infinity" to be truly infinite,

1 — Pierre Germain, a close friend of Guénon's, had, like him, been affiliated with the Gnostic Church for a time, but in 1914, following a stay in Lourdes, he rediscovered his faith. The following year, Guénon and he became friends with the daughter of the painter Maurice Denis, Noëlle Maurice-Denis, then a brilliant student at the Catholic Institute of Paris and close to neo-Thomist circles. It was through her that the two men met Jacques Maritain. Guénon's correspondence with P. Germain and N. Maurice-Denis, which we publish here, testifies to the interest and quality of the debate between the three friends. This fruitful controversy was unfortunately interrupted by the death of P. Germain in November 1922 and the marriage of N. Maurice-Denis in January 1923. (N. d. E.).

Like Maritain, I cannot see how one can escape a host of contradictions; and indeed, this must necessarily be the case, since contradiction is inherent in the hypothesis itself.

As for the difficulty you raise concerning act and potency, it does not seem to me to be insoluble at all, but we must first take care to note this: I have never said that act and potency, or essence and substance, are two *contrary* aspects of being, but rather that they are two *complementary* aspects, which is not at all the same thing. Secondly, act does indeed precede potency *in principle* (in being), but it follows it *in fact* (in manifestation); their relationship must therefore be taken in reverse order depending on the point of view from which it is considered, and I do not see how this could prevent us from saying that these two terms are correlative. Furthermore, if we consider act and potency in being itself, it is in order to be able to talk about them, and because we obviously cannot express anything (even mentally) other than in a distinctive mode; but we must not lose sight of the fact that their distinction is only real in relation to manifestation.

I am not quite sure what you mean by "reciprocity of relation"; between father and son, for example, the relation is not reversible, and yet they are only such in relation to each other, that is to say, they are indeed correlative. Similarly, there would be no point in talking about the act if we did not consider power correlatively, but the nature of their relationship may nevertheless be such that there is a logical priority of one over the other.

As for wanting to reduce one of the two terms to the other, this undoubtedly escapes dualism, but through monism, and imposes a limitation that is incompatible with metaphysics. There is, however, a sense in which we can say that being is pure act; to do so, we must consider that potency, in and of itself, is nothing, or rather that it is 'nothingness " (...), from which it follows that act must be "the whole" of being; this does not prevent being in itself from being superior to act as such, since it is the principle of act as well as of potency.

In all this, of course, we must confine ourselves to what belongs to the realm of being; since scholasticism does not go any further, there can be no need to seek either reconciliation or contradiction in anything else. St Thomas supplemented and corrected Aristotle on many points, but the use of Aristotelian language can sometimes produce certain apparent ambiguities when applied to ideas that go beyond Greek thought. It is undoubtedly because of the influence of this Greek thought that scholasticism stopped at being, which prevents it from being integral metaphysics. Of course, we would need to be sure that there was no other more complete and profound teaching in the Middle Ages, and this is quite likely if we consider that the "Summa" was, in its author's intention, only an elementary treatise for the use of students. In any case, this proves that intellectuality was more developed then than it is today: it is true that in those days people did not yet believe in "progress"!

One more word about your objection: we certainly cannot say that God is one of the two poles of manifestation; he must contain both poles within himself, being their common principle, insofar as he is the principle of manifestation, that is to say

that is, as the being. Moreover, the translation of metaphysical truths into theological language must obviously not alter these truths in any way. Great precision is undoubtedly required to ensure that the application does not lead to misinterpretation, but the difficulty lies mainly in the expression; basically, it is a question of true translation.

If my explanations do not entirely satisfy you, please be so kind as to let me know, and I would be very grateful if you would point out any objections that may be raised, for this is the only way to clarify the points that need clarification and to avoid the unfortunate confusion that could arise if sufficient precautions were not taken. (...)

René Guénon to Julius Evola (*1*)

Cairo, 13 June 1949

Dear Sir

I received your letter of 18 May about a week ago; it seems that things are moving a little faster now, but I must say that it is still very irregular.

Do not be surprised if you do not receive the "E. T." as you did in the past, because since the resumption, Chacornac, due to the enormous costs involved, absolutely refuses to provide any services; we have not even been able to persuade him to resume exchanges with a number of journals. As for the matters you mention, I have no idea what the situation is; neither Chacornac nor Clavelle have mentioned your reissued books to me, so I wonder if they were sent as you indicated. Furthermore, I did not know whether Clavelle had received your letter (or letters, if you wrote to him again); I asked him quite some time ago, but he probably forgot to reply because he always has so many things to do and worries of all kinds; in any case, I asked him again in a letter yesterday. As for Gallimard, I have a good idea what the situation is: it can only be negligence on the part of Mascolo, who is responsible for everything related to translations at the publishing house, as we have unfortunately seen several other examples of this, so much so that it seems to be almost a habit of his. I reminded René Allar of this so that he can take care of it, along with several other matters, on his next trip to Paris; he now lives in Brussels, so he can only go to Paris for a few days at a time, but I think he will go towards the end of this month.

As you can imagine, it has been a long time since I read your Rivolta contro il Mondo moderno, so I will try to reread it as soon as I can find some free time, to see if I have any points to bring to your attention, as you requested.

If Alvi wants to republish Il Re del Mondo, there is no obstacle, because I have since ensured that no one has taken over Fidi's rights, and, moreover, this book now belongs entirely to me; as I told him, he only needs to write to Rocco about it, who will inform him of the conditions that have already been established for my works in this situation (i.e. those currently with Chacornac). It is true that almost all my books have now been translated or are in the process of being translated, and this is also the case for the "Grande Triade" that you had in mind; most of them are due to be published either by Brocca or Laterza; as for Einaudi, whom you mention, he has been offered "Symbolisme de la Croix", but it seems that we have not yet received his reply. I do not quite understand what disadvantage you see in doing the translations before

1 — This letter appeared in the March 1972 issue of La Destra, a magazine virtually unknown in France. It was accompanied by other excerpts concerning the accident that left Evola paralysed and the subtle causes of this type of disability (28, 2, 48); the doctrine of cosmic cycles (24, 4, 48); Freemasonry (20, 7, 49); the possible creation at that time of an initiatory "Order" based on a suggestion by Evola (25, 7, 50).

securing a publisher, since Rocco has kindly agreed to "centralise" everything related to these translations, which has the effect of avoiding duplication. Of course, if someone were to undertake to translate a book without our knowledge, it could be that this had already been arranged elsewhere and that their work would therefore be wasted, but that is something we cannot control. On the other hand, by presenting publishers with translations that have already been done, we avoid them trying to impose their own translators. I must say that I am absolutely determined not to accept any work done by a professional translator or someone unknown to me, because the English translation of "Man and His Becoming", which unfortunately was done under these conditions, was enough of an experience for me to know what to expect!

From what you explain to me this time, it seems that you take the words "possible" and "real" to mean "unmanifested" and "manifested"; if this is the case, one could say that it is merely a question of terminology and that, despite this difference in language, we are basically in agreement on the point in question. However, this use of the words "possible" and "real" in a sense quite different from the one we use does not seem acceptable to me, because the unmanifested is not only just as real, but even more real than the manifested.

What I said last time about my connection to initiatory organisations (although I do not like to talk about these things, which are of interest to no one but myself) was in response to this sentence in your previous letter: "... il più spesso fuor di quella setta si é trovato chi é stato capace di maggior comprensione in fatto di cose iniziatiche, cosa che forse si é verificatanei Suoi stessi riguardi". This made me fear that you might suppose that, in my case, it could have been one of those so-called initiations without any regular connection to anything, which, for my part, I can only consider to be purely imaginary. Incidentally, I would point out to you that, in the "Aperçus", I devoted an entire chapter to explaining the reasons why the word "sect" is absolutely inadmissible in cases such as the one to which you apply it in the sentence in question.

You say that the "Outlines" do not mention Hermetic-Christian organisations; but I have, on the contrary, mentioned them specifically in the note to which you referred, and if I did not say more about them, it is because those of which I am aware admit only such a small number of members that they can be considered practically inaccessible. I also see that you have not understood exactly what I meant when I referred to a "complex issue"; I simply meant that there are in fact many other elements involved than those that can be known from a study carried out "from the outside"; it is therefore quite the opposite of something that would call for reservations, as you thought.

As for the substance of the question concerning Freemasonry, it goes without saying that I am in no way trying to convince you, and that I would have no interest in doing so; you say that for you it is solely a question of truth, but it is exactly the same for me too. You know, moreover, that I have never sought to persuade anyone to join any particular organisation, nor

to dissuade them from doing so; I have even stated quite clearly that this is not my role; I have never had the time or inclination to deal with individual cases, and I have always refused to give specific advice to anyone, on this or any other matter. That said, I must nevertheless make two or three comments on what you have told me this time, starting with the higher degrees, as you seem to have misunderstood the true nature of their relationship with Freemasonry. When I speak of Freemasonry proper, I am referring exclusively to the three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, to which one can only add the English degrees of Mark and Royal Arch, which are completely unknown in "continental" Freemasonry. As for the many high degrees to which you refer, it is obvious that they are of a very diverse nature and that the connection that the various "systems" seek to establish is entirely artificial. I am all the less inclined to dispute this as I myself wrote it formally in a recent article; but, however all these things came to be agglomerated around Masonry, they are in no way an integral part of it, and therefore that is not what is at issue. Another point I would like to draw your attention to is that, when you say that the Lodges that did not adhere to the "speculative" schism were unable to do anything to stop or rectify its consequences, it seems that you are ignoring things that are nevertheless of some importance, such as the restoration of the degree of Master, which was completely unknown to the people of 1717, or the action of the "Grand Lodge of the Ancients", whose independent existence continued until 1813. To be frank, I get the impression that you are still thinking only of what Freemasonry became at a certain period in Italy and France, and that you have no idea about anything to do with Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry.

Moving on to other matters, I confess that I do not fully understand what achievement you are referring to in relation to Eliphas Lévi; in fact, the only thing that came from him (or rather that was inspired by his writings, since he himself had died before that) was the French occultist movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the insignificance of which I think we both agree on. As for Kremmertz, I am well aware that there is a very unclear story behind this, but one that at least gives rise to many doubts, since no evidence has ever been found of the actual existence of the organisation to which he allegedly belonged. In any case, even if he had personally received an authentic initiation, this would still prove nothing about the organisation he founded, as there have been other similar cases (for example, that of Inavat Khan, who belonged to a regular tariqa in India, but whose so-called "Order of Sufis" has absolutely no basis in reality). all I can say is that his rituals are about as "Egyptian" as those of Cagliostro! There may nevertheless have been some achievements on this side, as you say, but they did not go beyond the psychic realm, which does not imply anything truly initiatory. I would add that, since Kremmerz's death, the various factions into which his organisation has split seem to have lost all sense of direction. I realise that, with regard to Eliphas Lévi, I forgot to mention the use of his works by Albert Pike

Pike; but this is an influence exerted (indirectly, moreover) on the interpretation of the high degrees of the Scottish Rite, which does not exactly fit with what you have in mind...

There are certainly cases where the influence of counter-initiation is clearly visible, including those where traditional data is presented in an intentionally "parodic" manner. This is particularly true of Meyrink, which of course does not necessarily mean that he was aware of the influence exerted on him. That is why I am surprised that you seem to have a certain esteem for Meyrink, especially since he had also joined the Bô Yin Râ movement, for which you clearly have no regard. On this subject, I must make a correction: there was certainly an element of charlatanism and mystification in Bô Yin Râ, but there was also something else, because he was attached to a rather unusual organisation, based somewhere in Turkestan and representing a kind of more or less deviant Tantrism. I can be quite certain about this (and I may be the only one), because at the time when the future Bô Yin Râ was still called Joseph Schneider and was studying painting in Paris, members of the organisation in question introduced him to me one day as the only European member. Later, I also saw the portrait that Bô Yin Râ had made of his "Master", which was perfectly recognisable to me; on that occasion, I noticed that even his closest disciples knew absolutely nothing about this, and I was careful not to tell them what I knew myself.

Please accept my warmest regards.

René Guénon

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excerpt from a letter to J. Evola (1)

Since you asked me about my age, I am now sixty-two years old. I knew you were younger than me, but I did not think the age difference between us was so great. As for my photograph, I am sorry I cannot oblige you, but the truth is that I do not have one, for many reasons [...] I also realised that it could be dangerous: about fifteen years ago, I was informed that a certain [...] was looking to obtain my photograph, saying he was willing to pay any price for it; I never found out what he really wanted to do with it, but in any case, it is certain that his intentions were not benevolent. Since you never know where a photograph might end up, I concluded that it was much safer not to take any.

René Guénon

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1 — Published in *Cahiers de l'Herne*.

CORRESPONDENCE
II

René Guénon

René Guénon to Marcel Clavelle alias Jean Reyor (1)

29 July 1932

The Sunnis, Shiites and Khawarij differ mainly on the question of the modalities of the Caliphate; there is no heterodoxy in this, and moreover it is far from being as clear-cut as one might imagine in Europe; there are so many nuances and degrees that it is almost impossible to establish clear boundaries. What is heterodox are the firâq, that is to say, the sects; it is true that most of them originated from Shiism, including the most recent ones (such as Baha'ism, for example, which has virtually nothing Islamic about it); we must therefore believe that there is something there that encourages their emergence, but in any case, this is no longer Shiism as such.

Cairo, 2 September 1932

... For example, he (A. Ink..) speaks in his book of a so-called "Minang Kabao rite"; this must certainly impress people who do not know that this name is simply that of a region of Sumatra, which has no connection whatsoever with the Khmers. Moreover, even if its origin is really what he claims, I would like to know where he would have found the Khmer tradition, which the Cambodians of today have even less reason to claim, as they are the descendants of the invaders who destroyed it.

... You ask me, on the question of "attitude", whether anything has changed since the publication of some of my works. I will answer you very clearly: yes, certain doors, on the Western side, have closed definitively. I never had any illusions, but I had no right to appear to neglect certain possibilities; the situation had to become completely clear, and what I did contributed to that. Perhaps there will be one last (negative) result to be achieved so that everyone knows where they stand without any possible ambiguity...

... As for political Islam, it is better not to mention it, because it is now nothing more than a historical memory; it is certainly in this political sphere that Western ideas, with their concept of "nationalities", have wreaked the most havoc, and with remarkable speed. So much so that now the Egyptians do not want to help the Syrians, nor the Syrians the Palestinians, and so on; and there are many who cannot even be made to understand how much this particularism is contrary to traditional interests. This has not prevented a so-called French "explorer", who is probably just a common tourist, from claiming in a recent book that the Caliphate still exists and, better still, that it has its seat here in Al-Azhar. This would be laughable if the reality in this regard were not so sad; did you know that at the Jerusalem congress in

1 — Dole August 1992, based on typed excerpts.

December, when the question of restoring the Caliphate was raised, it was impossible to reach any agreement or solution whatsoever? And did you also know, with regard to Al-Azhar in particular, that about a year ago, the rector refused to sign a protest against Italian atrocities in Tripolitania, on the pretext that "it was a political issue in which he had no business intervening.

... As for the "Western prophecies" (I would prefer to call them "predictions") that speak of a future "struggle between the Cross and the Crescent", I confess that I attach only the most relative value to them. Firstly, given the current state of the world, I cannot see which peoples could possibly be qualified to represent the Cross; secondly, the Crescent has only ever symbolised Islam in the imagination of Westerners; it does not belong exclusively or essentially to Islam, and is merely a symbol of "majesty", nothing more. - I would point out in this regard that King Henry II of France, who I do not believe was a Muslim, made it his personal emblem, and also that here, on many Coptic (i.e. Christian) shops, we see the Cross between the horns of the crescent (which, incidentally, reproduces exactly an ancient Phoenician symbol, well before Islam and Christianity). - But there are "clichés" that ignorance likes to repeat endlessly: thus, to take yet another example, it is commonly believed in Europe that the Prophet's banner was green; however, there were two, one white for peace and one black for war; green came much later, under some Caliph or other.

Cairo, 7 September 1933

... As for the article on the Caliphate, I understand what it is about: it is a dirty trick that France wants to play on England, which has also wanted, for a long time now, to have a "figurehead" Caliph who would be nothing more than a tool in its hands; and I now understand the trip made by a certain Moroccan figure who intrigued us a little a few months ago.... In fact, neither solution would be much better than the other, especially given what is currently happening in North Africa (not to mention Syria); the French have never behaved in this way before; it is undoubtedly the effect of the fine promises made during the war. In any case, it is rather clumsy to entrust the "launch" of this idea to people as grossly ignorant as the author of the article in question. "Priestly power", "pontifical sovereignty", etc.
nonsense as words... Moreover, it is completely false that the presence of a Caliph is necessary to maintain orthodoxy, and it is no less false that the Caliph must fulfil such and such a defined condition. It is generally preferred that he be of Arab origin, but even that is by no means necessary, and in fact anyone can be appointed. At the Jerusalem congress, some people thought of putting forward the candidacy of someone I know very well, who does not meet any of the supposed conditions; he is simply an energetic man who is very knowledgeable about Islam, and that is what matters; but without knowing the current Sultan of Morocco, I believe there is a good chance that he meets neither of these conditions.

two qualities. On the other hand, there are three possible ways of appointing a Khalife, each as valid as the other, and which correspond precisely to the three respective titles of "Khalifat", "Imâm" and "Anûrul-Muminîn"; you can see that it is quite complex and that no one in Europe knows anything about it. As for Mustafa Kemal, I understand why he would be included in the combination, and you can be sure that his reasons are not "spiritual" in nature, but how could he and his supporters continue to claim, I am not saying "Sunni", but simply "orthodox" when they use a translation of the Qur'an in mosques, which is strictly forbidden. Moreover, people who have made wearing a cap a symbol of "civilisation" are judged by that very fact. I do not mean to say that this is a matter of principle (it is much less important than they themselves believe), but I take it as a "sign" that gives a fairly accurate measure of their "intellectual horizon".

..... You have understood what I meant about the names of the Hebrews and Arabs; I know of many other meanings besides the one you mention, but apart from the fact that it is open to very different interpretations (it could even be related to the "Ocean River"), it is in any case secondary to the one that refers to the West, which is found among the most diverse peoples. - As for the question of the relationship between the two Hebrew and Egyptian traditions, I am also aware of the various texts you cite; but first of all, Moses may have been perfectly familiar with the Egyptian tradition and yet have introduced nothing of its form into the Hebrew tradition; these are two completely different things. Moreover, relations between the Hebrews and the Egyptians in his time seem to have been very hostile, and therefore not conducive to any kind of "assimilation"; and even before that, the Hebrews seem to have been keen to preserve their own "Abrahamic" tradition, that is to say, the Chaldean tradition, without any admixture. Do we not even now see how this people, when living among others, always remains true to itself? In any case, one need only look at the Egyptian symbols on the one hand and the Chaldean symbols on the other to realise which side the kinship lies with; there is not the slightest doubt about this, even without considering the question of racial and linguistic affinities, which also play a role in determining traditional forms. Now, it remains to be seen what the "vases of gold and silver" mean. It is not entirely clear, but it could well be that they simply refer to certain secondary traditional sciences. In truth, there are no very ancient traces of Hermeticism proper among the Hebrews, but that does not mean that it did not exist there as well as among the Arabs, and that is what would have been truly of Egyptian origin. This would be consistent with the second part of the sentence in the "Ash Mezareph"; but the first part of it is more questionable, because, in any case, Hermeticism cannot be equated with Kabbalah, nor can it be said that Kabbalah essentially concerns the "mysteries of nature"; one could only say that it contains the principle, and that, since this principle is the same everywhere, Hermeticism itself can be linked to it as an application, even if, as it is actually constituted, it proceeds from a different traditional form; this would then only be an affirmation of a certain equivalence of all traditions, having been able to

enable, in a case such as this, the assimilation of a science of foreign origin.

Cairo, 28 September 1933

... Your remark about the story of Nicolas Flamel is important. Indeed, the question would be whether we can find, in the same vein, references to more ancient times... - With regard to Atlantis, it would be worth asking whether the Chaldeans did not proceed in the same way as the Egyptians, which seems very likely to me.

Cairo, 20 October 1933

... As for the relationship between Kabbalah and Hermeticism, Artéphius' statement is indeed vague; Philalèthe's quotations are perhaps only clear in appearance, for I am not at all convinced that the name Israel should be understood literally; it is like the 144,000 elect of the Apocalypse, "taken from among all the tribes of Israel"; this word has often been used to refer to all initiates, regardless of their origin. On the other hand, I have often noticed a rather bizarre confusion between Mary, sister of Moses, and Mary the Egyptian, who is from the Christian era; and as for the assimilation between Hermes and Jethro, that seems like a beautiful fantasy; moreover, Jethro seems to have nothing to do with Egypt. All this is very confusing; be that as it may, your remark about the probable obscuring of Egyptian tradition in the time of Moses is correct, and moreover it seems that the predominance of the magical aspect does indeed go back quite far. As for the Chaldean tradition, you understood what I meant: the Chaldeans must also be joined by the Hittites, whose name is found in forms that show that they have the same origin.

Cairo, 11 November 1933

.... On the question of currency, I do not know to what extent what you quote can be considered accurate; it is possible because of the duality of the Papacy and the Empire in the Middle Ages, but in earlier times there was certainly direct control by spiritual authority: among the Celts, for example, this control was exercised by the Druids. On the other hand, the king's claim to be "Emperor in his kingdom" is not only unjustified, but contrary to the very nature of imperial power, one of the characteristics of which, as Dante explains in "De Monarchia", is that its jurisdiction has no territorial limits such as those of a particular kingdom.

.... While it is certain that Kabbalists still exist, it is equally certain that they refuse to communicate anything to non-Jews; it seems that they

are generally very reluctant to admit even Jewish students, and that some no longer wish to have any students at all. In short, it is always the same: everything is becoming increasingly closed off, and there are even things that seem to be allowed to die out, at least outwardly: it is like certain Coptic monasteries where no one is accepted anymore, so that there are only a few very old monks left, who are dying one after the other without being replaced...

Cairo, 8 February 1934

... I remain convinced that there is not just one person who has used the name Saint Germain, which, in fact, means nothing other than "Holy Brotherhood"... As for the story you refer to, it must date back to 1912 or 1913, when there were some unusual events related to the Balkan War, and more particularly to the establishment of Albania as an independent state.

Cairo, 1 March 1934

... Your interpretation of the title "count" is entirely correct (companion)... and your comparison with the "Holy Roman Empire" is certainly not without foundation. The same applies to Albania: the population of that country is indeed largely Muslim (Mohammed Ali, from whom the Egyptian royal family descends, was Albanian).

René Guénon

To the same ? ? ?, date unknown

... It is certain that the founders of the ☒∴ ☒∴ of England deviated from its spirit, but they cannot be considered outright usurpers, since they were previously regular members of the ancient operative ☒☒☒∴. Although diminished at that time, it was not extinct, and never has been, since it still exists today... There are also the Scottish degrees, which were instituted mainly to counteract the intrusion of the Protestant spirit.

12 April 1932... Operative Masonry has always continued to exist in England as a separate organisation, quite comparable to the Compagnonnage; it corresponds, moreover, to what the Compagnons tailleurs de pierre (stone masons' guild) are in France, now almost completely disappeared, despite the claims of the infamous ☒∴ de l'O..., who, despite all the titles he adorns himself with, has never been able to join it regularly.

26 April 1934... I no longer know where I found the date of 1702 for the death of Chr.

Wren; I have also seen the date 1723; it therefore seems that we must accept that 1702 is only the date from which, for one reason or another, he ceased all activity.

10 May 1934... It is true that the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ abolished the title of Grand Master (at about the same time as the formula of ☒☒☒ ☒.∴.☒.∴, if I am not mistaken) as too undemocratic; the role is now filled by the President of the Council of the Order, but the absence of the title makes it impossible for him to deal on equal terms with most Masonic Obediences in other countries; the Grand Mastership has never been held by any King of France; there is only one country, Sweden, where the King is Grand Master. In England, if the king is a Mason, which is not currently the case, he bears the title of "Protector of Masonry"; Edward VII, who was Grand Master when he was Prince of Wales, relinquished this position upon his accession to the throne and was replaced by the Duke of Connaught, who still holds it today. It is true that the King of England has, by right or title, that of Grand Master of the Royal Order of Scotland; but if he is not a Freemason, he cannot effectively exercise this function and is replaced by a Pro Grand Master, so that the title is purely honorary.

1 June 1933... The Royal Order of Scotland is a high-ranking title, which considers itself to be the oldest of all, since its origins date back to Robert Bruce (1306-1329); it is also known as the *Rosy-Cross of Heredom of Kilwinning*...

20 October 1933... What you say about the constitution of ☒☒.∴ not being linked to any obedience is correct, but this would not fit the definition of English "clandestine ☒☒.∴", which are said to be "working from time immemorial".

19 March 1933... Regarding your question about ☒.∴ ☒.∴, the official solution is as follows: a Mason who has been accepted into a mixed ☒☒☒☒ and who then applies for admission to a regular Obedience is not initiated again, but only "regularised", which is a purely administrative formality. This implies that his initiation is recognised as valid, as would also be the case for one conferred by a so-called "clandestine" ☒☒☒☒, i.e. one constituted outside of any Obedience.

28 September 1933... What is true is that not only can seven Masons (but it must be added: having the degree of ☒☒☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒) constitute a ☒☒☒☒, but that there is no other way of constituting it; only then can this ☒☒☒☒ apply for affiliation to an Obedience. As for ☒☒☒ so-called "clandestine" ☒.∴ in England (there are none elsewhere), these are ☒.∴ that predate the founding of the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ and did not wish to affiliate with it, but simply continued to ignore it; there must still be four of them in operation.

To Mr C. (Marcel Clavelle)
27 June 1935

... These efforts to settle the Bohemians and Jews are certainly not without significance; it seems to me that all this is related to the 'stopping' of the 'wheel' or the change from O to at the end of the cycle; this is one of the questions I intend to discuss in my next book.

To Mr C., 25 August 1935

... As for the "Protocols", although they were published in Germany before they were published in France, they did not cause much of a stir there at first; it was only the Hitler movement that gave them importance. As for the American edition of the said
"protocols", it seems that Ford was the one who paid the price; but since then, he has completely changed, for reasons unknown, and has become very favourable towards the Jews; He even subsidises a peculiar character who lives in Jerusalem and calls himself 'David, King of Israel', but who is quite harmless. He is an old goldsmith whom most people regard as a little mad. He has established a kind of protocol in his home, demanding that everyone, including his wife, call him
"Your Majesty", and he has even had medals made bearing his image...

To Mr C., 13 October 1935

... V. Lov suggests that I then do some work on Byzantine iconography; you will see some of the things he told me about Mount Athos. The rest of these involve a formula called "prayer of the mind" or
"prayer of the heart", which must be recited in a special way, in time with the breath; it seems that this practice requires training that can only be done under the guidance of a master; I had already heard that something of this kind existed in certain Russian monasteries. But what is perhaps most interesting is the story of the seven mysterious ascetics who form a kind of very hidden spiritual centre; it seems that this is not a thing of the past, for one of the monks he saw told him that he had met one of them; it is said that when one dies, one of the anchorites (not one of the ordinary monks who live in the convents) is called to replace him; it seems, moreover, that most of the monks have no conscious communication with them, so that if this is indeed an initiatory organisation, it must in any case be very closed and limited to a very small number. There are many enigmatic aspects to all this; naturally, his rather short stay there was not long enough to gain a more accurate understanding of what is going on.

To Mr C., 17 October 1935

... "□.∴. of □.∴." means "Lodge of Jakin"; in operative □□□□□□□, this expression referred to a Lodge composed exclusively of clergymen, for whom there was a special initiation, and from among whom the chaplains of the ordinary Lodges were chosen.

To Mr C., 24 October 1935

... It is not the Cadriyah[?] who are powerful in Sudan, but the Idrissiyah; there are no Wahhabis[?] in Egypt, where they would be rather frowned upon (in some places, the worst insult a peasant can hurl at someone is to call them a "Wahhabi", without really knowing what that means) and, moreover, the Wahhabis are the declared enemies of all esoteric organisations without exception; The Sanoursiyah[?] no longer have a centre in Tripolitania, and for good reason, since the Italians destroyed and massacred everything...

... There are no longer any Muslims in the House of Lords, since Lord Headdley died a few months ago. on the other hand, [.] *EL-Ulema* does not mean "Wise of the Wise", but simply "Head of the Ulema", that is to say, of the doctors of Shariyah; there is a big difference between *ûlem*
'scholar' (*ulema* in the plural) and *Hakîm*, 'wise man'; in short, it is a title equivalent to that of Sheikh *El-Islam* in other countries (in fact, we say "allâma", which is a superlative *of âlam*) and the authority of the person who bears it does not extend beyond the borders of Yugoslavia.

To Mr C., 26 October 1935

... I have had confirmation of what you told me some time ago about Christopher Wren: I do not know whether his retirement in 1702 [? illegible] was due solely to his age or whether there were other reasons, but in any case, the actual date of his death was 1723, when he was 90 years old. What is rather curious is that this date coincides with the publication of the new constitutions, as if they had waited for the disappearance of a witness to the past who could have been inconvenient...

To Mr C., 3 July 1936

The word "barzakh" (plural "barâzikh") properly means an "interval" that both separates and unites different states; by analogy, it is applied to certain figures in a sense that can be likened to the etymological meaning of "pontifex", which is why Mohyiddin, in particular, is called "barzakh el-barâzikh".

To Mr C., 15 October 1936

It was indeed hermeticism that I had in mind at the end of my article (*The Boar and the Bear*); your remark about the heterogeneous nature of the elements that have been incorporated into Christian tradition is entirely accurate: I wonder if there might not be a certain connection between this fact and the fact that it is the only traditional form that does not have its own sacred language; this is a truly strange anomaly, and I must admit that, although I have often thought about it, I have never been able to find a satisfactory explanation for it...

To Mr C., 22 October 1936

It is indeed very difficult to know with absolute certainty that nothing remains on the Western side, since if there is anything, it is so closed off and well hidden, and in fact, to tell the truth, it has always been so (and not just now) more than anywhere else. As for the "withdrawal" you mention and its consequences, I remember Ch-L. telling me one day that, while discussing precisely this kind of possibility with a priest (I now assume it must have been the one through whom he learned about the "East Int."), he told him that he wondered how this could be reconciled with the promise that the Church would last "until the end of the century", to which the priest replied: "The Christian Church is not necessarily the same thing as the Roman Church". I cannot guarantee the exact terms of the reply, but in any case, the meaning was indeed that; He therefore admitted that, even in such a case, not all possibilities would be definitively closed, which would amount, in short, to supposing that there must be something in Christianity that is capable of maintaining spiritual influence independently of Rome; but does this refer to the Eastern Orthodox Churches or to something else within Latin Catholicism itself? I would be hard pressed to say, in the absence of any further clarification...

To Mr C., 5 November 1936

What you tell me about St Peter's three denials seems quite right to me; as for what can be preserved independently of Rome, we must admit that all this must, in any case, be increasingly hidden (which is natural in the present era), for you are surely right about Abyssinia, and to this must be added the imminent disappearance of Mount Athos, not to mention the voluntary extinction of esoteric knowledge among the Coptic monks.

To Mr C., 24 February 1937

The Pope's recognition of the "Emperor of Ethiopia" gives me once again the impression that he is now much more of a "prisoner" than he ever was before the Lateran Accords... Regarding the Pope, I have made a very curious observation: here, most people have no idea who he is; some have never heard of him, others confuse him with the Patriarch of Constantinople, and still others believe that he is a figure who existed during the time of the Byzantine emperors.

... However, one interesting thing emerges (from Coom's article): that Hindus and Muslims are in complete agreement on how to view the role of El-Khidr.

To Mr C., 14 March 1937

... As for El-Khidr, I would prefer, in any case, if this subject is to be dealt with, that it be done by someone other than myself. There is a kind of spiritual "kinship" with Enoch, Elijah, St. George, etc., but this does not mean assimilation or identification, as Orientalists seem to believe. Coom. gives a reproduction of a miniature in which El-Khidr and Elijah are seen sitting next to each other; if they were one and the same person, I would like to know how this could be interpreted... El-Khidr is properly the *Master of the Afrâd*, who are independent of *the Qutb* and may even be unknown to him; it is indeed, as you say, something more "direct", and which is in a way outside the defined and delimited functions, however high they may be; and that is why the number of *Afrâd* is indeterminate. The following comparison is sometimes used: a prince, even if he does not exercise any function, is nonetheless, by virtue of his position, superior to a minister (unless the latter is also a prince, which can happen, but is not necessary); in the spiritual order, the *Afrad* are analogous to princes, and the *Aqtâb* to ministers; This is only a comparison, of course, but it does help a little to understand the relationship between them.

To Mr C., 25 March 1937

It seems that the atmosphere in Antwerp is dreadful, even causing inexplicable physical discomfort; but there, and even in Lyon, as perhaps also in the Balearic Islands and a few other places in Europe, and in California as far as America is concerned (for it is undoubtedly not for nothing that so many strange things gather there), I think that these are, in short, only secondary centres, which should not be counted among the number of "towers" proper. These seem rather to be arranged in a sort of arc surrounding Europe at a certain distance: one in the Niger region, from where, even in ancient Egyptian times, the most fearsome sorcerers were said to come; one in

Sudan, in a mountainous region inhabited by a "lycanthropic" population of about 20,000 individuals (I know eyewitnesses to this); two in Asia Minor, one in Syria and the other in Mesopotamia; and one near Turkestan, where things are as "mixed" as in Syria, for better or for worse. There should therefore be two more further north, towards the Urals or western Siberia, but I must say that, so far, I have been unable to locate them exactly.

To Mr C., 1 April 1937

Your remark about Elijah's role for the Kabbalists seems correct to me, and I can see any other interpretations.

To Mr C., 14 April 1937

I have indeed seen somewhere the story of the Antichrist chained on an island, which seems rather difficult to identify geographically, but I think this story should be classified among those that originate in a more or less misunderstood symbolism, like many stories of monsters, fantastic animals, etc.

To Mr C., 17 April 1937

I spoke to you the other day about the island of the Antichrist; I find that this island is called Bratâil (this name apparently comes from *bartal,* which means 'corrupt'); and also some say that it was Solomon who had him chained there; it seems to be a volcanic island, but I do not know what would allow it to be identified as one of the Sunda Islands.

To Mr C., 2 June 1937

... A distinction should be made between the "signs" and the actual possession of what they express... The supreme *Qutb* must be related to humanity as a whole, and the subordinate *Aqteb* to the various traditional forms; but it is nonetheless true that the supreme *Qutb* himself must also have a symbolic "seat" in relation to each regular traditional form...

To M. C., 9 July 1937

... As for your remark about communion under both kinds (which, incidentally, still exists in the Orthodox Church, and even in certain Eastern rites attached to Rome), it is quite true that there is something in all this that

is difficult to explain, unless we admit a complete transformation of Christianity (at a time that is difficult to determine but which, according to certain indications, could be that of Constantine).

To Mr C., 9 July 1937

... here even the most ignorant know that he (the Mahdi) must be of Arab descent and a descendant of the Prophet; and furthermore, the Mahdi must not be a "new Prophet" at all, and to consider him as such is a huge heresy.

Excerpt from a letter to Jean Reyor (*Les Cahiers de l'Herne*) (*Letter undated; but the announcement of Meslin's death in the last paragraph* (*not reproduced*) *places it between September 1938 and early 1939.*)

Artus Gouffier, Count of Kerhavas, was the admiral's brother, and another brother was abbot of Saint-Denis; he himself served as Grand Equerry under Henry II, and was considered the richest lord of his time (it was he who became the Marquis of Carabas in popular legend, through a distortion of the name Kerhavas). I once went with Charbonneau to the Château d'Oiron, which was his residence and is not far from Loudun; one of the walls of the courtyard is covered with a series of signs said to be the marks of the horses from Henry II's stables; now, among these signs, many are clearly cryptic, and there are quite a number where the seal of Solomon is combined with various other elements. In this regard, it should be noted that, at the same time, the Seal of Solomon was used in particular as a mark by certain craft initiation organisations (which is why I thought of mentioning this to you in relation to Dürer), hence its presence, especially in Germany, on the signs of the breweries where they met; This is even why it can still be seen today in certain beer brands, although naturally those who use it in this way no longer know the reason why. On the other hand, the fact that these are horse brands, whether real or supposed, is also interesting, given that everything related to horses has often been used, in a wide variety of traditions, as a "cover" for things of an initiatory nature. Charbonneau supposed that these signs may have been composed by one of the Carmelites of Loudun who, around the same time, traced symbols on the walls of their monastery, the hermetic and initiatory nature of which is also beyond doubt; Without being able to say anything for certain, of course, he told me that he was thinking more specifically, in this regard, of Brother Guyot, whose curious "Rosicrucian" signature he may have shown you (he also reproduced it in one of his articles in Regnabit). Another enigmatic oddity is what the peasants call the "Cocadrille": it is a dried crocodile found inside the church of Oiron, affixed to the wall, exactly like those still seen here above the doors of some old houses; it is said that this monster once ravaged the country and devoured

people, and that it ended up being taken to the castle moat! Charbonneau thought that it must have been brought from the East by an older member of the Gouffier family, a Knight of Malta, whose tomb is one of those in the church, but of course it is difficult to know whether he could really have brought it alive... Instead of "Cocadrille", some also say "Cacodrille", a variant with a rather bizarre meaning: "*Kakos"* means bad in Greek, and
"drille" is one of the names given to the Companions, so that Cacodrille = bad companion, which immediately brings to mind the murderers of Hiram (and Master Jacques); This is undoubtedly only an 'accidental' connection, at least on the surface, but when we consider the links between the legend of Hiram and the myth of Osiris, and the fact that the crocodile was a Typhonian symbol in ancient Egypt, we have to admit that it is a very apt combination! This, in relation to Poitou and its legends, the Companions and other "travellers", etc., reminds me of something else, which this time brings us to Rabelais; L. Daudet alluded to this in one of his books, and I find the reference in my notes: *Les Horreurs de la guerre*, p. 173; perhaps you will be able to look at it when you have the opportunity, especially as I remember that everything he says about Rabelais in this part of his book is rather curious; but perhaps you already know it. I would be very grateful if you could let me know what you think of all this; it seems to me that there are a number of connections here that may be of interest from various points of view. [...]

René Guénon

René Guénon to Marcel Maugy alias Denis Roman

No date.

I come now to your question concerning the [illegible] here: first there was an Egyptian [illegible], which once had a curious dispute with the [illegible] of France over ownership of the Memphis Rite (I can come back to this story another time if you are interested); when the Scottish [illegible] of Egypt was founded, this [illegible] became a [illegible], renouncing all jurisdiction over the higher degrees. Subsequently, there was a split due, as always, to personal rivalries, and above all to a certain hostility that existed between King Fouad and Prince Mohammed Ali (the brother of the former Khedive); since the death of the former, there was no longer any reason for this, and, on the orders of King Farouk, the two [illegible] L [illegible] merged into one, whose [illegible] is one of his maternal uncles, Hussein Pasha Sabri. - On the other hand, several [illegible] from Lebanon who were part of the [illegible] of Egypt have just separated from it in an attempt to reconstitute a Lebanese [illegible] that already existed a dozen years ago, but which was short-lived at the time; it seems highly doubtful that this will be any more successful this time around...

You may already have heard about the foundation, under the auspices of the [illegible] of France, of the [illegible] "La Grande Triade" (you can easily see where this title comes from), whose [illegible] Master is [illegible] Ivan Cerf, [illegible]; its constitution dates back to last April, but I did not want to mention it to you until it had begun to function normally, which is now the case. We intend to apply as far as possible the views I have set out in the "Aperçus" and to try, although it will certainly not be easy, to rediscover the methods of "realisation" of [illegible] ancient operative [illegible]; As you can see, we have abandoned the idea of an independent [illegible], which, while offering certain advantages, gave rise to too many difficulties. On the day of the installation, [illegible] Dumesnil de Grammont, who is himself one of the founding members, declared that, "God willing, this day may be more important for [illegible] than that of the proclamation of Anderson's Constitution"; as you can imagine, no one wishes for this more than I do! If you were in Paris, I would urge you to apply for membership, but because of your distance, I am not sure what can be done, and besides, you are not the only one in this situation. I have already raised the issue and will be sure to keep you informed. There are, of course, many things that can only be worked out gradually, but it is already a good start, and I must say that I did not expect to achieve this result so soon.

Please accept, [illegible], my [illegible] regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 25 March 1948.

☒.∴ ☒.∴☒.∴,

A few days ago, I learned from ☒.∴ Maridort that my reply to your letter never reached you; as this was at the end of December, it seems unlikely that you will ever receive it, and I have noticed that other letters sent around the same time have also gone astray. This is all the more annoying as I can no longer remember exactly what I said to you; however, I was going to try to recall at least the main points when, the day before yesterday, I received your letter of 16 March. I also learned from ☒.∴ Maridort that you were to receive the degree of Companion without further delay, and I believe it is to be today. I was very happy to hear this news, and all that remains is to hope that the delays can be shortened as well, which would mean an advance of about a year; I am increasingly convinced that, for many reasons, it would be in your best interest to achieve this.

all three as soon as possible...

Mr Maridort also sent me the information you sent him about J. B. and ☒.∴ Cheops; there are some rather strange things in all this, especially this story of the Ritual of the "Three Lights", which seems to me to contain some rather fanciful innovations, which does not surprise me if it is really by J. Chaboseau, as has been said; there are things in all this that would be good to clarify if possible.

One more thing, lest we forget: the Last time ☒.∴ Mordvinoff wrote to me, he gave me the list of Officers, but as he sometimes mispronounces proper names, I could not understand the name of the 2nd ☒☒☒.∴; would you mind telling me what it is? I also made a comment about this list: has the G. T. not reinstated, as was done in Thebes in the past, the functions of the Deacons, to which great importance is attached in English ☒☒☒☒☒☒? For a similar reason, I would also like to ask you where the 2nd ☒☒☒.∴ sits; this is a point that may lead to changes, particularly in the opening ritual; if you are not familiar with the one that was in use at Theba, which was an adaptation of an ancient English operative ritual, I will try to find it and send you a copy.

I am somewhat surprised by what you tell me about the lack of interest shown by the members of the Rituals Committee in its work; but if ☒.∴ Marty is not discouraged by this, and if the others are content to simply approve what he has done, then perhaps it is better that way, as you say; it may avoid a lot of unnecessary discussion, as well as the unsatisfactory compromises that such discussion might lead to. -- It would be good if things did not drag on too long and if we could reach a conclusion as soon as possible; I have already received requests from Italy and Lebanon about the possibility of obtaining rituals that are truly traditional in spirit... But it goes without saying that, on the other hand, we should not rush to the point of neglecting to examine important questions sufficiently thoroughly

important issues.

The question of the "☒.∴. de table", which you mention this time, is indeed somewhat embarrassing; it is certain in any case that the people of 1717 attached excessive importance to it; but I believe nevertheless (and I see that this is also what you think) that there are at least some elements in it that are truly ancient in origin and must have come from operative ☒☒☒☒☒☒. As such, it seems to me that it might be a good idea to keep it (or restore it), provided that it is not allowed to become too invasive; after the initiation ceremonies, and also (I would even say especially) at the solstice celebrations, it would certainly be much better than a profane banquet!

I now return to what you said in your previous letter, to which I had already replied in the one that was lost. -- First, I fully approve of the idea of restoring as completely as possible certain ritual practices that have more or less fallen into disuse, for example not only that of the ☒☒☒☒☒☒ calendar you mentioned, but also that of the alphabet that many seem to no longer know (I have sometimes noticed this in my correspondence, even with high-ranking FF∴) ; the same applies to the traditional acclamation. As for the tuilage (and I was surprised by what you told me about this, because in my time, at the ☒.∴ ☒.∴, it was still taken very seriously), each ☒.∴ should be accustomed to it in such a way that he never hesitates to respond; this is more important than one might think in maintaining the desired state of mind. In the same vein, it would also be appropriate to reinstate the three questions that the ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒☒ must ask visitors upon their entry into ☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒, which most people have long since forgotten; I still remember the embarrassment they caused one day to ☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒☒ of a Parisian ☒☒☒☒, visiting a provincial ☒☒☒☒ that had kept them! In addition to these questions, there is another that is commonly used in Anglo-Saxon ☒☒☒☒☒☒, but which is completely unknown in France, where it would be impossible to answer for a reason that you will see in a moment...

I would like to point out the difference between the French formula "A la Gloire du ☒.∴ ☒.∴ de ☒☒☒.∴" and the English formula "In the NAME of the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ of the ☒.∴"; there is something here that seems to me to be more than a mere nuance and which would undoubtedly be worth studying more closely; it is especially in relation to initiatory consecration that this may not be without importance.

Now, a particularly important point would be, if it were possible, to restore the table or layout of the ☒.∴ as it existed in the eighteenth century; but there is another point that is even more essential, since it is generally regarded as a "landmark": the presence of the altar bearing the V. S. L. ("Volume of the Sacred Law", represented in the West by the Bible, which symbolises all the sacred scriptures, and which must regularly, as I have mentioned somewhere in the "Aperçus", be opened to the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John), on which the compass and square are placed, in a different position for each of the three degrees. This, moreover, allows us to immediately answer the question

I referred to above: "And now, my Brother, can you tell us what degree we are working?"

As for the initiation rituals, there is no doubt that the second degree will be the most difficult, as it is the one that has been most damaged and distorted in every way under the pretext of "modernisation". Your idea of borrowing certain elements from Mark Masonry seems right to me in principle, as it is very likely that, originally, the particular "mark" was given to the Fellow Craft, who, in France, was sometimes also referred to in the past as the "Expert"; Moreover, you may be aware that even the Royal Arch is regarded as having a more special and direct connection with the degree of Companion, although the reasons for this are not explicitly stated... You also mentioned "tessera" in connection with the "mark"; I assume you are referring to the "Mark Master's token", which is a reproduction of what are known as "Temple coins", modified in that the inscriptions are in square Hebrew, whereas on the authentic coins they are in an older form of script. -- But, while what you had in mind is perfectly acceptable in principle, it might be quite difficult to achieve; and, on the other hand, there is something that seems even more important to me and which, one might say, is at the very heart of the degree of Companion: it is in this degree above all that elements of Pythagorean origin must come into play, which the "speculative" have always tended to overlook, although there are still some very clear traces of them, notably the Blazing Star and the predominance attributed to geometry (since even the ☒∴ ☒∴ of ☒☒☒ ☒∴ becomes here the ☒∴ ☒∴ of ☒☒☒ ☒∴). In my opinion, it is mainly in this area that research should be directed with a view to a correct restoration of the degree, and this would certainly be an excellent opportunity to bring to light the elements in question, which, as I have occasionally pointed out, actually come from a regular and uninterrupted transmission, and which are therefore far from being something that can be treated as more or less negligible.

I believe that must be more or less what I told you, at least as far as I can remember from rereading your letter. If, as I hope, you will keep me informed of what is done, I will of course be able to add further details later on; perhaps you yourself will also find it necessary to point out some particularly difficult or doubtful points...

I have just suddenly remembered that the infamous Marquès Rivière reproduced the entire Thébah ritual (opening, initiation into the 1st degree and closing) in an appendix to his book "La Trahison spirituelle de la ☒∴ ☒∴" (The Spiritual Betrayal of the F∴ M∴); you may be able to find it there if you do not have it elsewhere; in any case, it would certainly be useful for you to read it.

I hope that next time you will remember to share with me, as you promised, some of your thoughts on various other matters. In particular, I would be very interested to know exactly what you mean by certain modes of "projection" of evil influences. I have also made a few observations of my own on the "flying hunt", which I could share with you as well. Let us hope that this time there will be no

further obstacles to our correspondence...

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒,

R. G.

Cairo, 3 May 1948.

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

I am glad that my letter reached you this time; yours of 18 April arrived a few days ago, and if I did not reply immediately, it was because I first had to finish my articles for the June issue of "E. T.", for which I was rather late, as usual...

It is really good news that you have definitely obtained an extension and that you will be able to receive the 3rd degree before the holidays; this will indeed be a significant step forward!

No one had yet mentioned the seal of the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ to me; could you send me an impression of it so that I can get a better idea of what it is? Until now, I knew nothing about your 2nd ☒☒☒☒.∴ either; what you tell me about it is, on the whole, rather satisfactory, at least in a relative sense; it is inevitable that some people's abilities are more or less limited, and one must not be too demanding...

I am surprised that none of you have Marquès-Rivière's book, as I thought that Clavelle at least would have it; perhaps you will manage to find it anyway. It might also be possible to learn about the ritual in question in another way if it is still in use in Thebes, which I do not know at all. There must be very few of the old members left; moreover, after the 1914 war, there was a great change, and certainly not for the better; that is why many stopped going there... In any case, I think it would be useful for you to visit this ☒.∴ to see what the situation is now. --In this ritual, you will find a definition of the function of the Deacons; what is quite remarkable is that this function, which is surely of operative origin, corresponds almost exactly to that of the nuqabà in Islamic Turuq. --On the other hand, the 2nd Surv. naturally sits in the middle of the col. of the South, as is normally the case; the French custom is due solely to the need to establish a kind of false symmetry between the positions of ☒☒☒ 2 ☒☒☒☒.∴ -- I would also like to point out a detail of the same ritual that is consistent with what exists in English ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒: the presence, on the ☒☒☒☒.∴☒☒ platforms, of a small wooden column; during the proceedings, that of the 1st ☒☒☒☒.∴ is upright and that of the 2nd ☒☒☒☒.∴ is lying down, while the opposite is true when the proceedings are suspended.

As for the question of the Bible, there are some truly curious things in this discussion you attended at the "Réveil ☒☒☒.∴"; what was said there about the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ would seem to indicate that, even on that side, there has been a serious change in recent years; however, I do not know how far this will go

go, because unfortunately there are also signs of a very untraditional spirit, including a proposal to admit members of □□□ □.∴ □.∴, including the □□.∴, as visitors! -- I must say that in my time the use of the Bible had not been restored even in Thebes, and perhaps the central power would not have tolerated it; at that time, at the □.∴ □.∴, the use of the formula □.∴ □.∴. □.∴ □.∴ □.∴ □.∴ De □.∴ □.∴ was only optional. --As for the modification of the said formula, what you propose seems very good to me and would indeed be likely to settle everything. What you say in this regard about the "nostalgia for universality" is certainly true, and what is quite remarkable is that it seems to manifest itself especially in countries where □□□□□□□□□□ is most divided (such as Italy, for example). -- We also agree on the questions to be asked of visitors; it remains only to be seen exactly how they can be introduced into the initiation ritual.

Should the proposals for the rituals of the three degrees be submitted to the next Convent, which would leave very little time, or only for the first degree, which is certainly not the most difficult to arrange, but which nevertheless implies that general issues must be resolved?

The Masonic alphabet was used in correspondence (I do not believe there were ever any inscriptions in the □.∴ layout) for words that one did not want to write in plain language for fear of indiscretion, and also for certain abbreviated formulas, such as the closing formula of letters (i.e. I salute you, □.∴ □.∴ □.∴, by the mysterious numbers known to you and with all the honours due to you). -- A vestige of the alphabet remains in the sign...., which has been distorted because it was thought to represent a "long square" when in fact it was simply..., i.e. L...

As for the origin of the acclamation □□□.∴, what Vuillaume means, although it is inaccurately expressed, refers to the name of El-Uzzâ, a female deity of the ancient Arabs, whose symbol was said to be the acacia tree (but I do not know on what this assertion is based, which seems rather doubtful to me). It is much more likely that it refers to the word 'ezzah, which is related to the same root (which is also found with a prefix in the name of □□□.∴ □.∴) and which means glory, strength, power. -- I must say that there is another interpretation, which is specific to the 18th degree, and which sees it as a distortion of the Hebrew word *Hoshi'a*, Saviour; but this is undoubtedly only an explanation added after the fact, as is often the case with many things found in the rituals of the higher degrees. -- I would add that, in English, "huzza" is an acclamation used even in the secular world; but, as its etymology is completely unknown, this does not resolve the question, and the most likely explanation is that it is merely an "externalisation" of something that originally belonged to initiatory organisations; in any case, this is much more plausible than assuming the opposite.

The tables of the different degrees hanging on the walls mean absolutely nothing, since they are oriented according to the four cardinal points; their place can only be on the floor, in the central part of the □.∴ (of course, in the 3rd degree, it is Hiram's coffin that occupies this place). Originally, the layout was to be drawn in chalk (or charcoal) before the work began (I believe, without being entirely sure).

coffin of Hiram that occupies this place). Originally, the layout had to be drawn in chalk (or charcoal) before the opening of the works (I believe, without being entirely sure, that it was the □.∴. □□□.∴. who was in charge of this), and erased after the closing by the last □□□.∴. received; I have never seen anywhere that there was a specific order to be observed for this layout, although it is not impossible; in any case, it was only to simplify matters that the use of unrolling cloths was subsequently adopted, which removes much of the significance of the thing.

For the altar, the triangular shape is certainly more normal than the cylindrical shape; but on the other hand, the altar of Apollo, as far as I know, was cubic, and this may be a modification that took place at some point in the distant past. -- Your remarks on various place names are curious, but I am not sure what conclusions can be drawn from them.

I do not believe that there is any connection between the three steps of Vishnu and those of the □□□.∴. walk; the latter are described as "the first steps in the corner of a long square"? But there is something else that is directly related to the three steps of Vishnu, or rather to the corresponding "stations": these are the places occupied by the first three Officers (provided, of course, that that of □□□ 2nd □□□.∴. is normal). Another remarkable thing is that in Chinese initiatory organisations there is a ritual walk called "Yu's step", which is very similar to the □□□□□□□ walk, although a little more complicated. I had learnt about J. P. S.'s lecture from Maridort, but I had no further details on the subject. Some time ago, I saw a portrait of the man and was struck by his ugliness; what you say about his attitude is surely also a very unfavourable sign... It is truly astonishing that anyone could say he would have a place in the □.∴ □.∴!

Take your time with other matters you wish to discuss with me
want to discuss with me, as they are obviously much less urgent than matters concerning the ritual. -- The reindeer antlers must surely add something special to the overall symbolism of the horns; it also reminds me of the representation of the Gallic god Kernunnos.

Send me the draft ritual as soon as it is ready; I will endeavour to examine it as soon as possible.

Please convey my congratulations to □.∴ Marty for his report to the last Convent, which I have just read and found excellent.

Yours in □□□□□□□□□□□.

R. G.

I would like to point out another ritual detail that seems to be completely unknown in France: Officers should always follow the direction of the circumambulations when approaching and leaving their platform.

Cairo, 21 June 1948.

T.∴.☒.∴.☒.∴,

Your letter of 4 June arrived five or six days ago, but I was unable to reply as quickly as I would have liked, as I first had to finish my articles for the July-August issue of "E. T. " that I was preparing at the time. I have been quite tired lately, which has put me further behind than ever with everything; and although I am feeling better now, I am not yet completely recovered. Hopefully, it will be no longer the case when you send me the draft ritual, and I would like to believe that, on your side, the health problems you have also had recently are now over and will not reappear.

What Marty told you about his report is correct, but at least it proves that he has assimilated certain ideas well and, as you say, that he was able to present them to an unprepared audience, which is really not very easy...

Thank you in advance for the seal impression; it is usually used to stamp all official documents to guarantee their authenticity. As for applying the seal to the recipient's arm, according to all the rituals I have seen, it is only a simulation; and I must say that I do not know if this was actually done in the past; it is certainly not impossible, but I do not know where one could find proof of it.

The three candles framing the table must be placed in the East, South and West, with only the North remaining unlit; they thus correspond to the places occupied (at least normally) by the three principal Officers (and to the three "stations" of Vishnu). It is quite likely, as you say, that these are the three candles referred to in the "ritual of the three lights", but without knowing the details of this ritual, I have the impression that it must contain a fair amount of fantasy!

The wearing of gloves is most certainly of operational origin; in the same way as the carrying of swords in certain circumstances, the use of coats of arms, etc., in the Middle Ages it was one of the privileges granted to certain guilds, which to a certain extent assimilated them to the nobility. There would be some very interesting research to be done on this subject, which obviously has a very direct connection with the question of the relationship between craft initiations and chivalry. On the other hand, from a symbolic point of view, the white colour of the gloves expresses the idea of purity (in the ritual sense), so that wearing them during work corresponds to the affirmation, found in Islamic tradition, that "while a man is working, his hands are always pure". You can see, therefore, that it is not insignificant to maintain or restore, as far as circumstances allow, this custom of wearing gloves, which English ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ has always preserved. However, I believe that gloves should be considered merely as part of the decor, in the same way as the cord (which was originally the baldric from which the sword was suspended), the clothing consisting exclusively of the apron; and, in this regard, I draw your attention to the need to require the wearing of the Master's apron, which has been so widely abandoned in France. -- Regarding the cord, its regulation width must be exactly four inches (= 108 mm); I point this out because I

know that some manufacturers of regalia have believed that they could "round up" this figure to 11 cm without any inconvenience, which is a mistake. -- One more thing while I am on the subject of these details: the ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒☒☒ should always be covered during meetings, because he is considered to be always working at the Master's degree; when the Master's degree is in session, all ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ must have their heads covered.

The "Tracing board reading" is an explanation of the symbols appearing in the table of the degree; needless to say, it is generally rather superficial and mainly of a "moral" nature...

We are in complete agreement regarding the use of "jargon" in the drafting of the minutes.

I think, although I have never seen anything formal on this subject, that the board should already be drawn before the first question is asked by the Worshipful Master, which is, in fact, part of the opening ritual; moreover, it goes without saying that, from that moment on, a way should be found to avoid all more or less profane conversations. -- I fully share your assessment of the "columns of harmony"; songs would certainly be preferable, but only if we can find ones that are "appropriate"; unfortunately, those from the 18th and early 19th centuries, at least from what I know of them, are rather insignificant and have no initiatory or symbolic value, and I am not sure how this shortcoming could be remedied.

As for the meaning of the journeys, there must indeed be some confusion, which probably goes back quite a long way; it would seem, according to various indications, that those of the first degree should be "solar" and those of the second "polar", but it is not clear what reason could be given for this difference.

The list of Officers could undoubtedly be introduced, but, ultimately, I do not believe that this is very important.

I do not know if there are any rituals in which the work is closed by the first ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ instead of by the ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒; have you seen anything of this kind?

The columns of the two ☒☒☒☒.∴ should probably, as you say, be of different orders; if so, the first one should certainly be Doric, but shouldn't the second one be Ionic rather than Corinthian?

As for the instruction given to new initiates, Marty's idea seems to me, as it does to you, to be excellent and entirely worthy of approval; it is quite certain that the comments should not be incorporated into the text itself and that it would be advantageous to replace them with explanatory notes where many kinds of information could indeed be included. The difficulty, it seems to me, is above all not to make these notes too extensive; in any case, you can of course send me the draft and I am quite willing to help you as much as I can.

The modification of certain formulas for reasons of expediency, as you propose, seems to me to present no disadvantage, for "Truth" is in all traditions one of the principal names of God, and "Wisdom, Strength, Beauty" cannot be considered otherwise than as divine attributes, so that

there is not the slightest "idolatry" involved. -- The invocation should be pronounced by the Orator, since it is he who, in France, takes the place of the Chaplain; moreover, this invocation is called "oration" in English, and I have always thought that the very designation of the Orator actually came from an ambiguity in the meaning of this word.

Another thing while I think of it: you may know that, for the first degree, there is a certain difference between French ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ and English ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨; in the latter, the hand and forearm must be placed horizontally, which seems to be more in keeping with the meaning of "penalty"; but it would probably be very difficult to change established habits in this regard...

One point on which opinions differ is whether the sword should be held in the left or right hand; I remember having a discussion on this subject a long time ago with ▨.∴. Dyvrande, who was then a member of the Council of the Order of ▨.∴. ▨.∴. He found it ridiculous to hold the sword in the left hand, whereas I believe that this can be justified by the fact that it has a protective rather than an offensive meaning in this context. This naturally entails a slight modification in the ritual, because it is obvious that if one holds the sword in the right hand, one cannot stand to attention at the same time; in this case, one could not say: "Arise and stand in order, my ▨▨.∴, sword in hand", but would have to omit the words "and stand in order" and then say: "Lower your swords and stand in order", which is indeed found in some rituals. I am simply pointing out the issue to you; you will tell me what you think.

There are undoubtedly many other details that should be examined in detail.
More or less, but it is impossible to think of everything at once, and I can't think of anything else for today...

▨.∴ Maridort will be able to share with you what I wrote to him about the journeys of the 2nd degree, although of course this is not a matter of immediate urgency; it is mainly because there are many more or less conflicting versions of the corresponding tools.

Yours ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨,

R. G.

Cairo, 31 July 1948.

▨.∴ ▨.∴▨.∴,

Your letter of 9 July arrived a few days ago, at the same time as the draft ritual sent by ▨.∴ Maridort, or at least what has already been done, as it is still incomplete and it seems that the rest will not be ready until around 20 August; it was therefore certainly better to send it to me as it was without waiting. -- I thank you for all the explanations you have given me about the conditions under which this draft was drawn up; it is certain that, given the delay in providing you with the necessary documentation, you had very little time, and that this may have had some adverse effect on the drafting. As for the changes made

by Marty, I cannot say exactly what they are, having not seen the original draft, and it may be that some, such as the one you mention about the chain of union, are a little regrettable; but if a few concessions on details are necessary to get the essentials accepted, it is undoubtedly better not to insist, and Marty surely knows what can be done in the current environment. In any case, the bizarre phrase "que les ∴ se placent sur leur bases" ("let the col∴ stand on their bases"), which I had never seen anywhere before, is fortunately not in the draft I received! -- Please find enclosed a few observations, a copy of which I am also sending to Maridort for safety's sake, as there is always a risk that a letter may get lost in the post. Some of these observations relate only to minor oversights, but a few are more important; I would particularly like to point out the unfortunate omission of harmonising the consecration formula with that of the opening! It should also be noted that there is no mention anywhere of the compass and square placed on the Holy Book; I believe this should be expressly mentioned, as it is a very important point. As for the questions to visitors, which remain incomplete, I wonder if this is not simply because a page is missing at the end of the opening ritual. -- The most debatable question is that of the different meanings of the journeys; I cannot find a plausible reason for this, and I really do not know what should be done in this regard; in any case, it is quite certain that the final passage through the middle of the ∴ is impossible once the use of the table is restored...

I remember seeing the reference to the "magic frame" somewhere, but I can't remember where; it wasn't in the Thébah ritual, although I do recognise certain other points, particularly those concerning the "little light" (although this may also be found elsewhere). What I saw of ∴ Minot in his "Revue ∴" was far from transcendent; so I am rather surprised by this praise of symbolism that he has included in his ritual. As for the English ritual (?) used by G. T., I wonder, based on the peculiarities you point out, whether it might not simply be a ritual of "Co-Masonry"; I would be curious to see more when you have time. -- The mention of orders of chivalry, in connection with the presentation of the apron, has unfortunately disappeared, and that of "great honours" has taken its place; I suppose this must be one of the points to which the Commission objected... -- It is true that the value of the "Emmulation" ritual is quite controversial, especially in America, and I have seen various articles on the subject in the past; it is a pity that you were unable to obtain other English rituals for comparison; I cannot give you any precise information on this subject, except to say that some claim that it is that of the ∴ ∴ of Ireland which is closest to that of the "Ancients". -- It is certainly surprising, on the other hand, that no older French texts have been found; there must be a fairly large number of 18th-century manuscripts; the library of ∴ ∴ must have had some, but I have no idea what condition it is in at present.

I fully approve of the way you propose to proceed for the 2nd and 3rd degrees; it would indeed be better to leave it to Marty to then make the

"adaptations" required by the mentality of the majority. -- Regarding the awkward points in the second degree, I have always felt that the enumeration of the five orders of architecture was somewhat artificial, due to the addition of the last two; but it would undoubtedly be useful to see what Vitruvius has to say on this subject, as I believe he is the only "source" to which we can refer. -- As I do not have a copy of the English table at my disposal, I would ask you if you could send me one so that I can see the differences between it and the French table. -- I will try to talk to you later about the other questions: just remind me when the time comes. -- Regarding the meaning of the second degree journeys in connection with Pythagoreanism, I have just been sent a book which may contain some information; I will also discuss this with you once I have had time to read it.

I also received J. B.'s book, but I haven't read it yet either; I was a little surprised to see that he had it published by a secular publisher... -- I didn't think that the correspondence of ☒☒☒ ☒☒.∴ and the ☒☒☒☒.∴ with the Sun and the Moon had ever been disputed!

I don't yet have the closing ritual, but I think it will ultimately have to be performed by the 1st ☒☒☒☒.∴, according to the sentence in the opening ritual. -- There is indeed an apparent discrepancy between sunset and midnight, but for the opening, is there not also a similar one between sunrise and noon? The sacred word and the password of the 3rd degree (which are reversed in the French rite) seem in reality to be only different distortions of the same word, which cannot, moreover, have any of the meanings attributed to it in Hebrew...

What you say about the ritual elements through which spiritual influence can be transmitted, in the absence of consecration, which is its normal support, seems to me to be entirely correct, and it would indeed seem that, in Masonic ritual, everything has been arranged in such a way as to remedy the effects of possible negligence or alteration, as if it had been foreseen that these might in fact occur. However, it is understood that this must stop at a certain point, even if it is difficult to specify exactly where: the ☒.∴ ☒☒☒.∴ and even the obligation (supplemented by the proclamation) can really serve as supports, but is it possible to go much further in this direction? -- The comparison you make with what can also happen in certain exoteric rites, particularly with regard to priestly ordination in Christianity, is very interesting; moreover, it seems to me that there is no doubt that it is the laying on of hands that constitutes the most essential element here. I was completely unaware of what you have told me about apostolic succession in the Scandinavian Church, but just today I read a review in issue no. 12 of Dieu Vivant of a book devoted precisely to this question.

Thank you for the Dürer engraving; the mountain in the background, with the fortified town at its summit, clearly reminds me of Montsalvat. -- The biographical information about Dürer is also interesting, and it certainly raises some rather complex questions; the initiatory nature of many of his works, and also of certain marks he has put on them, is in no doubt; he was

certainly been connected to certain initiatory craft organisations, and through this he was also in contact with figures belonging to other initiatory organisations of a more or less different nature (hermetic and perhaps Rosicrucian); but the most difficult question is obviously to what degree he actually progressed and whether, at least to some extent, he did not serve primarily as an "instrument" to convey and express certain things before modern obscuration forced them to retreat entirely into the shadows. As for his Lutheran sympathies (which never went so far as to become membership), I admit that this is something that I find as embarrassing as you do; it is true that one should not always rely on outward appearances, which sometimes conceal very different things; and when you say that there are Protestants and Protestants, there are indeed, even apart from what you cite, indications that might suggest this. In this regard, I once heard some rather extraordinary things from Canon Paquier, who had made a speciality of studying Luther: according to him, the theses defended by Luther had in fact been quite common for a long time in the Order of Augustinians to which he belonged, and the causes of the break with Rome were much less doctrinal than political, so that the responsibility should be attributed not to Luther himself, but to certain German princes who used him for their own ends; He gave as proof that the General of the Augustinians, Seripando, supported opinions at the Council of Trent that were almost identical to those of Luther, and only more moderate in form, and that, far from being excommunicated or even reprimanded for this, he was instead made a Cardinal! On the other hand, Pastor Lecerf, a professor at the Faculty of Protestant Theology, who was a strict Calvinist and did not like Lutheranism, argued that Calvin's theology was basically in perfect agreement with that of St. Thomas, and he himself did not hesitate to declare himself openly a Thomist: According to this view, the opposition between Luther and Calvin was, in short, only a new form of that between Augustinianism and Thomism. All this is obviously very far from the ultra-modern spirit of so-called "liberal" Protestants...

The F.-D. affair is indeed a truly lamentable affair, which gives a sad idea of the mentality of certain people and certain circles; I will have to spend the next few days arranging extracts from his factum and responding to them, for I agree with Clavelle that it would be a real shame to let such a document fall into oblivion; According to the latest news, it seems, according to what we have learned from ☒.∴. Gilliard, that this individual now intends to write an entire book against me! -- The panels where the serpent appears in the ornamentation of the chasubles and stoles are all the more curious in that the source from which they come cannot give rise to the slightest suspicion of "esotericism"; but I believe that Mr F. -D. is both too vain and too dishonest to ever admit that he has made false claims. One can obviously expect anything of this kind, but I would never have expected such an outpouring of "satanic" hatred and inconceivable vulgarity...

As for the Carmelites, it seems clear to me that, for a long time now, and undoubtedly since their "reform" in a purely mystical sense, there has been no esotericism left in their order; but I do not know when the changes to their liturgy were made. In any case, it seems that currently (this information comes from a Father who is a Carmelite)

esotericism among them; but I do not know when the changes to their liturgy were made; in any case, it seems that currently (this information comes to me from a Trappist Father) they push external formalism to a point that exceeds anything one can imagine. The mention of Pythagoras alongside Elijah in the old Carmelite liturgy was pointed out to me by Charbonneau-Lassay, who also showed me symbols of an unquestionably initiatory nature, and some even specifically Rosicrucian, which Carmelites of the 15th or early 16th century had traced on the walls of their former monastery in Loudun; and I would add that I have the impression, although it is not easy for me to justify it, that this is perhaps not so far removed from the question of the organisations with which Dürer may have been associated.

***Yours* ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒,**

R. G.

Cairo, 31 August 1948.

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

A few days ago, I received your letter dated 16 August; thank you for sending me your draft ritual. I am glad to hear that you will be able to obtain the other English rituals; I have no idea what the one called "Sound Usage" might be. -- The remarks you made to ☒.∴ Mercier, from what you tell me, seem correct to me, and I see no disadvantage in "transferring" the cable-tow to the instruction. -- Regarding the instruction, it is naturally not found in what I have of ☒.∴ Marty's draft, which ends just after the presentation of the two pairs of gloves.

I must point out something that I forgot last time and which is also in your version: the addition of the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" after the traditional acclamation seems to me to be completely unjustified, and even rather profane in nature; in Thebes, in the past, it was not accepted. What is most curious is that the true origin of this motto is in an anti-Masonic writing from the 18th century; unfortunately, I cannot find the precise reference at the moment. It goes without saying that the occult legend attributing it to L.-Cl. de Saint Martin is completely unfounded, like so many others of the same kind.

Another thing: in the painting, the stars appear to be in no particular number (I see 16); however, it seems to me that there should normally be only 7.

It is quite possible that, as you say, Marty did not have time to arrange the details concerning the handing over of the apron; on the other hand, I see that in his version, some passages have been shortened and others lengthened, for reasons I am not sure of. It would be difficult for me to point out these various changes in detail, many of which are probably not very important; but I think you must have seen all this by now, if Marty has returned to Paris, as is likely.

A minor point: I think it should be written "cabinet de réflexion" as Marty did, rather than "de réflexions" in the plural as I see in your manuscript; moreover, the substitution of the word "chambre" for "cabinet" seems rather unusual here.

In the opening, the list of officers is not found in Marty; its interest obviously lies in the division "3 - 4" and 5, which gives Pythagoras' right-angled triangle, and which could be considered a reminder of the role it played in the opening of an operative ∴.

You were quite right to mention in a footnote the case where the oath should be taken on a sacred book other than the Bible; this too has disappeared.

Regarding the points you raise, the act of uncovering one's head when naming the ∴ ∴ is merely a concession to Western customs; it can undoubtedly be maintained, but it should be noted that it is completely at odds with the Hebrew elements of the ritual, so that in reality it would be better for the [illegible] to remain covered at all times.

When speaking of the accessories used to produce sounds, I was thinking in particular of a kind of metal barrel containing stones, which I find interesting because it probably dates back a very long way. Carl Hentz, in his book Myths and Lunar Symbols, points out that in a sacred dance of a certain Indian tribe, "the sound of thunder is produced by a box filled with stones that is shaken" (I have just realised, while researching this, that it is in this same book that the depiction of the "deer dance" I mentioned to you can be found). I even wonder if this instrument might not be related to the "rhomboi" of the mysteries of antiquity, which no one seems to know exactly what they were.

As for the oath, I have often seen the formula you have adopted, but I believe it is linked to the fact that the essential practice of placing the 3 ∴ ∴ on the altar had been abandoned. In any case, the compass given to the recipient must be different from the one placed on the Book, which, like the square, must never be moved during the work. If one wishes to retain the part of the formula relating to the sword, one must naturally bring the flaming sword of [illegible] before the recipient.

I fully approve of the "softening" you mention, and also, for the "little light", the removal of the "corpse", which has always seemed a little theatrical to me. For the consecration, it seems that the three blows should only be struck on the crown of the head and not repeated on each shoulder, as this would make a total of nine blows, a number that belongs only to the degree of Master and not to that of Apprentice.

For instruction, I will only point out for the moment that in ancient catechisms, the first question is formulated as follows: "What do you and I have in common? -- A. One truth." -- For the dimensions of the ∴, we find: "Its height -- From the earth to the sky. -- Its depth? -- From the surface of the earth to its centre (or, according to another version, countless cubits)."

Of the two arrangements you have indicated for the chain of union, I cannot say which is preferable; but I wonder why, in

one is inside the other, the places of ▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯.∴ and the ▯.∴ des ▯▯▯.∴, as well as those of ▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯.∴ and the ▯▯▯.∴, are reversed; is there any reason for this?

I do not have the book by J. T. Lawrence that you mention, but only another entitled "By-ways of Freemasonry"; it seems to me that the coat of arms of the ancient Masonic corporation was much less complicated than the one he describes, and it may be that there are many more or less recent additions; unfortunately, I still cannot remember where I might find this...

The planetary correspondences of the officers indicated by J. B. are indeed very strange; at least it is fortunate that he did not include them in his book! -- Regarding his book, it must be acknowledged that he has found the solution to some difficult questions (notably the explanation of the acclamation, which is very much in line with the one I gave you); but, on the other hand, there are interpretations that are a little too influenced by occult ideas and, above all, by "magical" concerns, as well as a few fantasies of his own (such as his design for an apron of a novel shape), not to mention certain linguistic and other errors. In short, it is a book that is certainly not without interest, but which can only be used with caution; what I really do not understand, despite what he says to justify himself in this regard, is that he had it published in such a way that it would be available to laymen (and I even suspect that this must be why he did not give it to Gloton, who would surely not have willingly lent himself to its dissemination).

From what you tell me about ▯.∴ Reghini, his great work on Pythagorean arithmetic, which he had just finished when he died, unfortunately seems unlikely to be published in the current circumstances, due to the enormous printing costs (it comprises 1,500 or 1,600 pages, all filled with mathematical formulas); according to his instructions, it was given to one of his friends, Prof. del Guercio, who is to take care of the publication when it becomes possible, but who is not a Mason. As for his notes and papers concerning ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯, they are in the hands of ▯.∴ Giulio Parise, a member of ▯▯▯ ▯▯▯.∴ ▯▯▯▯.∴; but I am not sure what they contain or what he will do with them. In any case, you could at least see his posthumous book, "I Numeri Sacri nella Tradizione Pitagorica Massonica"; I cannot remember whether it is R. Allar who has it or someone else in Paris, but I asked him, in reply to his last letter, if he could lend it to you or have it lent to you; if not, I will have to ask ▯▯▯. Rocco if he could send you a copy. One must only bear in mind that Reghini had become so "specialised" in Pythagoreanism that he came to consider all elements originating elsewhere in ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯ as somehow accidental or even added after the fact, which is obviously quite exaggerated.

On the subject of Pythagoreanism, I read the book I mentioned last time about the meaning of circumambulations: "La droite et la gauche dans les poèmes homériques en concordance avec la doctrine pythagoricienne et avec la tradition celtique" (Right and Left in Homeric Poems in Accordance with Pythagorean Doctrine and Celtic Tradition) by Joseph Cuillandre (Édition des Belles Lettres, 1944), but I must say

that I was unable to glean much from it. You might still be able to find it in a library; you could skip the first two chapters, which contain nothing of interest to us (they merely establish certain points relating to the topography of the battles around Troy). In the rest, and especially in the last chapter, there are some considerations that are undoubtedly interesting, but the presentation as a whole is terribly confusing: the author criticises Aristotle for not understanding the Pythagoreans, in which he is probably right, but I am not very sure that he himself understood them much better in reality. The reason, it seems to me, is that he was so fascinated by the "solar" point of view that he failed to see any other, even when he quotes facts or texts that do not appear to relate to it. Unfortunately, I do not have the time to untangle his entire argument; perhaps you could try to do so when you have the opportunity. There are also many parallels to be drawn with other traditions that he is probably completely unaware of; yet he need only have read the Bible, without going any further, to realise that the orientation towards the Levant is not specifically "Indo-European". In saying this, I am thinking in particular of the question of the position ☒☒ ☒☒☒ two ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒: in Hebrew, the right is always the South and the left the North; the Arabic names of the cardinal points are no less significant in this respect, and the reversal that occurred in the French Rite has always seemed to me rather difficult to explain.

I have not yet received the two ☒☒☒☒☒ you told me you had sent me; perhaps this is not so surprising, as letters sent by ordinary post often take a long time to arrive!

Thank you for your kind wishes regarding my health, which is not too bad at the moment, although I cannot say that the fatigue has completely disappeared; but then, one should not complain too much when things are like this...

Best ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒.

R. G.

Cairo, 16 September 1948.

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

Thank you for your letter of 5 September, which I received yesterday, and for the various items you enclosed with it; I am now reassured, for, having understood that you had sent me your two ☒☒☒☒☒.∴ quite some time ago, I was beginning to fear that they had been misplaced. Naturally, you could not yet have received my last letter, which is dated 31 August, but I think you must have it by now.

As for the rituals of the G. T., I agree with you that the only thing that is truly abnormal is the passage on the "Spiritual Archives", which is reminiscent of the ramblings of theosophical "clairvoyants"; but it is the question of the real origin of the said ritual that seems very obscure, and what you tell me about it is not very reassuring.-- Regarding the fumigations, I had noticed what you point out in the book.

by J. B., and I even wanted to ask one or two of you what this book by Dr. R. was that he refers to, which I had never heard of before; I don't understand how it could have been published in Allahabad (unless it is a purely fanciful reference, which would not surprise me too much coming from R.). I also wanted to ask if you have any information about this "Report by Petrus Talémarianus" to which J. B. refers quite often, and which was edited by Vega; I can't remember if it was Clavelle or someone else who told me about it in the past, but I have never been able to find out exactly what it was about.

The English table ▯▯ ▯▯▯.∴ is rather complicated, and there are details that are not very clear. I think that what can be seen below the book must be the IOI symbol, which is specific to Anglo-Saxon ▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯▯; are you familiar with it? There are indeed seven stars, as I told you there should be, but the respective positions of the sun and moon seem to me to be reversed in a rather inexplicable way.

Thank you in advance for sending me your draft ritual for the 3rd degree; I didn't think you would have dealt with that before the 2nd degree, but it's true that it gives rise to far fewer difficulties. As it is always good to gather as much information as possible, I will ask Marius Lepage if he could send you a copy of the ritual he developed for his ▯.∴; I pointed out to him an anomaly concerning the position of the three doors, which he acknowledges, and which is due to the place of ▯▯▯ ▯▯▯▯.∴ in the French Rite, so that he is not quite sure how to arrange it; This further confirms the need to restore their true position, which, even in the Scottish Rite (in France at least), has been altered by a need for false symmetry.

What you say about Alexander's role is certainly quite accurate;
I must have referred to it in my article on the symbolism of horns, which I cannot find at the moment; what is said about his relationship with El-Khidr in Islamic tradition is very significant, and there are also, among other things, some extremely curious Romanian legends. As for the passage from II Thessalonians that you mention, it is indeed possible that it refers to the Roman Empire and its continuation, but I am not sure that there may not be other interpretations, so I cannot say too much about it; if we were to adopt that interpretation, it would obviously not be very reassuring for the immediate future...

I was very interested in your letter to Clavelle, as it contains many historical details that I was not aware of. I have often heard it said that in Rome, the validity of Anglican ordinations is considered doubtful because it is not certain that there was not, at some point (I think it would have been during the Revolution), an interruption in the transmission, and that for this reason, the ordination was repeated "conditionally"; but it is clear that the intervention of the Orthodox bishops must change things and amount to a "regularisation". Another thing to note in the same vein: the objects used for the coronation of the kings of England were destroyed under Cromwell, so that those currently in use are only recent reproductions; is there not something here, apart from any other consideration,

could be such as to hinder the action of spiritual influences in such cases? As for the cure of scrofula, it seems to me that there are two contradictory versions: one which attributes its origin, for the kings of England, to Edward the Confessor, and the other which regards it as attached exclusively to the quality of king of France; what are we to think of this? The parallel you draw between the way in which the irregularities of the Anglican Church were remedied and that of the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ of England is truly curious and seems to me to be very accurate.

I have only read your ☒☒☒☒☒ on ☒☒☒.∴ and ☒☒☒☒.∴ briefly, and I will discuss them with you another time; but they seem very good to me, and apart from what you yourself have noticed regarding the eye, I do not think there is much to correct. -- As for the role of the 3-4-5 triangle in operative ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒, I will discuss this further at the end of my article on the "lost word". I believe that J. B. must have used my reference to the inequality of the sides of ☒☒☒ ☒☒☒.∴☒☒ square, although he failed to cite me on this subject. -- From what you say about Reghini, it seems to me that you must already be familiar with the book I mentioned to you last time; in that case, what I said to you on this subject is naturally no longer relevant.

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒,

R. G.

Cairo, 30 September 1948.

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

It has already been eight days since I received your letter of 12 September, and I apologise for not having found the time to reply sooner. Fortunately, the issues are now less urgent than they were when it was still possible to make some changes to the Ritual before the Convent; I hope that everything went well at the Convent and that one or other of you will soon give me some news about it.

For the formula ☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴, I see that you have found the reference that I was unable to locate, and which I now remember very well indeed; its origin is obviously highly suspect, especially since all the supposed rituals and catechisms contained in this book, Les ☒☒.∴ ☒☒.∴ écrasés, are entirely invented and exceed anything one could imagine as fantasy, not to mention an implausible story about the founding of ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ by Cromwell! Despite this, I understand very well why you think it is better at present to keep the said formula following the ritual acclamation; since the restoration of the latter is, after all, the essential thing, this is probably not a great inconvenience; it is certain that we must not try to rush things... As for the addition of the word "semper", it seems that it was not part of the original acclamation, but I have no idea when or how it was introduced.

Regarding the ritual of ☒☒☒ 3 ☒☒☒.∴, I finally understood, while reading J. B.'s book, the reason for extinguishing the candles with a mallet: it is so as not to blow on them! But don't we know that there is an instrument made specifically for this purpose, called

a snuffer, and which, although no longer in such common use as in the days when candles were used for lighting, must at least still be used in churches today?

While I think of it, I must point out that I have found the dates of the first printed English rituals: 1838 (G. Claret), and then 1869 (A. Lewis); prior to that, only handwritten rituals existed in England. I find the following indications of the different rituals in use: Promulgation (1809-11), Reconciliation (1813-16), Stability (1820), Emulation (1823). -- Another remark: it is inaccurate to refer to the rite currently practised in England as the "York Rite", as is often done; the York Rite was that of the "Ancients", and what has existed since the "Union" is in fact a kind of compromise between that and the rite of the "Moderns".

For the triangle 3-4-5, listing the ∴ by three and four only does not change anything essential in terms of symbolism, as it can be seen as corresponding to the two sides of ∴∴ square; the third side is then implied in a way, and its "invisibility" is in some way related to the death of Hiram. As for the role played by the triangle in question in the opening of operative ∴, you have guessed correctly: it is indeed a triangle made with three sticks whose lengths are in the desired ratio; if I did not insist on this when I spoke to you about it, it is because I intend to deal with this point more fully in the last part of my article on the "Lost Word".

-- As for the information on operative ∴ contained in "Speculative Mason" and its supplement, there are certainly some accurate points, but that does not mean that it is entirely correct on all points; what gave me some doubts on this subject was above all an allusion to the meaning of circumambulations, which did not seem correct to me. On the other hand, it is quite obvious that an operative organisation that admits women cannot be regular; I have already had occasion to discuss this with Clavelle; this is, moreover, the reason that prevented me from seeking more information on this subject, as I had intended to do at one point. I once saw articles in an American ∴ magazine that contained more reliable information, but unfortunately, as this was over thirty years ago, I have no idea where to find them; perhaps I will manage to track them down one day. I think, although I cannot say for certain, that it must be in "The American Tyler Keystone"; you would have to look between 1909 and 1914; but who knows if a collection of this magazine might be found in the library of the ∴ ∴ or that of the ∴ ∴?

Since I was just talking about the meaning of circumambulations, I would like to draw your attention, in the book on the right and the left that I mentioned to you, to the passages where there is mention of the priority of night over day (we could also add many comparisons with other traditions than those mentioned there, starting with the first chapter of Genesis); this is one of the things that most clearly shows that the author's exclusively "solar" interpretations cannot be accurate, either for Pythagoreanism or for the Celtic tradition.

The Deacons' staff is the ancient insignia of messengers, heralds and ambassadors, representing the power delegated to them; it therefore has no connection with that of the 3 ☒☒.∴ of operative ☒☒.∴ (which is essentially a "measure"), but it nonetheless deserves to be preserved. As for the wands crossed above the recipient's head, I must admit that I do not know exactly what this corresponds to or whether it is a truly ancient custom, and I am not sure where one could research this subject; but, in any case, I do not believe there is any disadvantage in maintaining it. -- In the absence of an actual initiatory consecration, you are quite right to think that the transmission of spiritual influence takes place when the ☒☒☒.∴ is given; but, to tell the truth, the French ritual seems to me to be more complete than the English ritual on this point. I have always had the impression that France retained certain features prior to 1717 that were not maintained or restored in England; However, it is rather difficult to say where they might have come from, as the question of the existence of "Stuartist" ☒☒.∴ in the 17th century, which would explain it quite naturally, is still highly controversial.

In my time, at the ☒.∴ ☒.∴, only in Thebes did the Masters wear aprons; at ☒☒☒ ☒.∴ ☒.∴, around the same time, ☒.∴ Blatin vigorously demanded its reinstatement, but despite his authority as ☒.∴ ☒☒☒☒.∴ of the ☒.∴ Coll∴des Rites, he was never able to achieve any results.

The coats of arms of the various Scottish degrees, which bring together the main symbols of each, have nothing to do with the coats of arms of the old guilds; but the coat of arms of the English guild of masons is well known; unfortunately, I cannot remember at the moment where to find its description. I know of no work on the subject of the quasi-noble privileges of the guilds, which is one of those subjects that "official" historians see fit to ignore; it was Charbonneau-Lassay who told me about it in the past, but I do not know if there might be some notes on it in his papers; I will have to try to find out more about it when I get the chance.

There is no doubt that Doric and Ionic are generally (and not only in relation to architectural orders) considered, in a way, as two complementary styles, the former corresponding to the masculine principle and the latter to the feminine principle, which their very names seem to indicate quite clearly.

I think it is definitely appropriate to maintain the use of the sword held in the left hand; you are quite right to refer to the use of the "power of the points" in this regard. By a rather curious coincidence, I have just seen a very clear passage on this subject in the recent book by ☒.∴ Fauré-Frémiet (page 38), which nevertheless contains very few references to initiatory symbolism.

Regarding the position of the hand in the Order ☒☒ ☒☒☒.∴, you are correct in pointing out the difficulty of maintaining the English posture for a long time; as it is not of paramount importance, it is probably best to stick with the French custom, but at the very least it should be "standardised".

Thank you for the seal impression; it is very good, but does it not have the disadvantage

of being a little too large to be easily affixed to certain documents?

The figure of the "sorcerer" in the Three Brothers cave is truly curious, and it reminded me of a representation, which I cannot find at the moment, of the "deer dance" among the Hopi Indians (North America); this comparison is just as unusual as the one you made with the Siberian shaman.

I hope to receive your two works soon, which you have told me you are sending; it goes without saying that I will not fail to tell you very frankly what I think of them.

I am glad to hear that you have made a full recovery. As for me, although I am feeling much better now, I still feel a certain fatigue, but I hope that this will eventually disappear completely...

Best ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠.

R. G.

Cairo, 8 October 1948

⊠.∴⊠.∴⊠.∴,

Your letter of 27 September arrived a few days ago, along with a letter from ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ Maridort to which ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ Marty's report was attached; but, contrary to what you thought, it does not mention the last meeting of the Convent, as he was probably unable to find the time (he obviously did not want to wait any longer to send me the report), and it only gives me the list of new ⊠⊠.∴ ⊠⊠⊠.∴

You can imagine how happy I was to hear the good news you have given me, and I thank you for sharing it with me without delay. I would ask you to convey my congratulations to ⊠.∴ Marty, first for his excellent report, and second for the great success he has achieved, which truly exceeds all expectations! I understand that there may have been fears that this presentation would seem too long and too difficult for an audience, most of whom are certainly unaccustomed to considerations of this kind, but I see that fortunately this was not the case. It is remarkable that there were no protests on any point, nor even any contradiction during the discussion, since all those who spoke did little else but express support for the same ideas. Everything you tell me about the attitude of the delegates, both in this regard and in other respects, is very interesting and clearly shows that something has really changed... -- I believe that, in order to capitalise on this initial success, it would be a good idea to prepare the rituals for the other degrees so that they can be presented as soon as possible, as ⊠.∴ Marty intends.

The motion requesting that there be no more than one ⊠⊠⊠⊠.∴ ⊠⊠⊠.∴ per ⊠.∴ was indeed quite threatening to the ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴, and it is fortunate that it was rejected; I wonder, however, if, in the event that it had been adopted, the fact that these are ⊠⊠.∴ who also belong to other ⊠⊠.∴ would not have made it possible to overcome the difficulty after all.

Regarding the [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], I have always wondered what exactly could be the reasons for the hostility that exists between him and Cerf (the latter even claimed that it affected me as well, although everything I know suggests the opposite); do you know anything about this?

I am glad to hear that you were able to meet [illegible]. Granger; as I said to [illegible]. Maridort, I have an excellent impression of him; in his last letter, he told me he hoped it would be possible to arrange a meeting when he went to Paris, but I did not know it would be on the occasion of the Convent.

Based on the conclusions of the report, I think the draft ritual should be printed shortly so that it can be submitted to the [illegible]. for review. if this is the case, I hope it will be possible to send a copy to our [illegible]. in Naples, who are planning to found a [illegible]. working in a truly traditional spirit and would like to have this ritual as soon as possible, not only for their own use, but also to be able to present it to the authorities of [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible]. of Italy. You may know that the latter is now [illegible] regular Scottish [illegible]., having obtained, despite the efforts of several rival [illegible]., the recognition of the Confederate [illegible]. [illegible]..

Regarding operative [illegible], I forgot to mention last time that Marius Lepage told me about a book recently published in England entitled "The Genesis of Freemasonry", which apparently contains many new or at least little-known documents on this subject. I have given Clavelle the details so that he can request a copy for the "E. T."; hopefully he will obtain it, although some publishers are not always very accommodating...

Yours [illegible],

R. G.

Cairo, 19 October 1948.

[illegible].[illegible].[illegible].,

It has already been a week since I received your letter of 3 October, and I would have replied sooner had it not been for a severe bout of flu from which I am only just recovering; the cold weather has come very early this year, and we currently have temperatures that are usually seen here in December!

The reason you give me for not beginning the layout of [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible]. until after the inspection of [illegible] [illegible]. seems to me to be very fair; if it is certain that there will be enough time for it to be completed by the desired date (it is, of course, easy to test this), then we will simply proceed in this manner; it goes without saying that everything must be finished by the time the opening is announced. -- I also agree with you on the appropriate time for lighting the 3 [illegible]. ; if this must definitely be done by the principal [illegible]., I do not see any great inconvenience in this after all, but I agree with you that simple candlesticks would be better, which should undoubtedly be placed around the [illegible]. [illegible]. ; as for extinguishing them, I

believe it would be good to take into account what I told you last time about using the snuffer instead of the mallet....

I was familiar with the caricature depicting an ☒.∴ of animals, but I must admit that I had not noticed the similarity of all its details to those of the engraving reproduced by Alice Joly; it is quite striking indeed, and it is quite likely, as you say, that it is a "demarcation". As for the arrangement of ☒☒☒ 3 ☒☒☒.∴, I do not think it is incorrect; it is in fact related to the positions of the first 3 fundamental stones in the order N. E., S. E., S. W.; the fourth angle,
NW, is naturally the one that remains in darkness, and this is consistent with the movement of the sun. The correspondence of the three ☒☒☒.∴ must also follow the same order: S. to N.E., ☒.∴ to S.E., ☒.∴ to the S.W.; in this way, if we suppose them to be placed at the very corners of the ☒.∴, each of the three main ☒☒☒.∴ would have the corresponding ☒☒☒.∴ on its right; it should also be noted that the direction of the sun's path thus goes from this ☒☒☒.∴ towards it, which is also not without significance. --As for the side on which the door hinge should be located, I do not quite understand your thinking, since this door is generally double-leafed, so that there are hinges on each side.

As for how to address the candidate, it should be borne in mind that in English it is common practice in the secular world to address someone by their name, whereas in French, on the contrary, this is considered, depending on the circumstances, either a sign of poor manners (for example among peasants) or an indication of a somewhat contemptuous attitude (when one wants to make someone feel that they are considered inferior). In these circumstances, I believe that it is not possible to address the candidate other than as "Sir" without further ado, and that it is only he himself who must repeat his first and last names for the sake of formality.

It seems to me that it would indeed be beneficial to restore the symbols I and II; for the first, you must remember that I set out some considerations relating to it in the "Great Triad". As for the second, you are no doubt aware that it is considered to be more particularly related to the two saints John; in fact, it effectively represents the annual solar cycle limited by the two solstices; it has sometimes been noted that, for this representation to be entirely correct, the two tangents should be horizontal; but it is very likely that their vertical position is due to an assimilation with the two ☒☒☒.∴, which, in one of their aspects, also have this meaning (see in particular the symbolism of the Pillars of Hercules). -- What I have just said also has a certain connection with some points in the work of ☒.∴ Mercier, which are, moreover, among those that he does not seem to me to have succeeded in entirely unravelling...

The tools of ☒☒☒ App∴ are indeed the heavy maul and the chisel; I do not know if there is any difference between this heavy maul and the common gavel that I have also seen mentioned sometimes, but it seems to me that these must be two names for the same thing; in any case, it is a tool used to rough-cut stones before the actual cutting; I don't see how it could be related to the idea of sacrifice. -- Regarding the English ☒.∴ ☒.∴, there is a study on this subject in the July issue of "Speculative Mason"; reading it, I finally understood

what the objects were that I had not been able to make out in the drawing you sent me: they are the emblems of the three theological virtues, placed on the steps of Jacob's ladder. According to the historical information contained in the same article, the current form of this ☒.∴ ☒.∴ dates back only to 1849; previously, there was a wide variety of designs; it seems that the introduction of Jacob's ladder was an innovation. -- Regarding the "Speculative Mason", F∴ Mercier's idea seems excellent to me, if you have a complete collection at your disposal (I myself only have a fairly small part of it); it would certainly be a lot of work, but it is so difficult to find anything in it that carefully classified extracts would surely be of great service.

It will be very interesting if ☒.∴ Granger can obtain precise information about Swiss rituals for you; the connection you make regarding the coin or medal is not at all implausible, given that Mark Masonry is considered to have a more direct link to the degree of ☒☒☒.∴ -- The "white stone" is obviously an allusion to the Apocalypse; I remember that there was a study in "Speculative Mason" on "Pilgrim's Progress" where this was also mentioned. On the other hand, it should be noted that in Mark Masonry there are in fact two distinct degrees, those of Mark Man and Mark Master; in any case, the "Mark Master's token" (I do not believe the word "Tessera" is commonly used) is indeed the "Temple coin" modified in terms of the shape of the characters, as I mentioned (I have one here); the image on this same coin was also adopted as the seal of King Solomon's Temple Lodge, which is one of the most "select" ☒☒.∴ in England. On one side it depicts the pot of manna and on the other Aaron's rod, which were two of the objects kept in the Ark of the Covenant; a reproduction of the authentic coin (with the characters in their original form) can be found in one of the plates in S. Munk's book on Palestine (picturesque universe collection).

I do not believe that operative rituals were ever written down; at least, if they are today, it can only be something recent, but even that seems doubtful to me. Speculative Masons are certainly not admitted as visitors to operative ☒☒.∴; the same is true of the Compagnonnage (except in the very bastardised and highly untraditional organisation known as the "Union Compagnonnique"). -- What you tell me about the possible way of achieving the Pythagorean triangle at the moment of the ☒☒.∴ of union seems to me to be acceptable, although of course it can never be the real equivalent of the operative rite of opening. -- In the operative ☒☒.∴, the name El-Shaddai is expressly mentioned in the invocation pronounced at the opening by the Chaplain (☒☒☒.∴ ☒☒☒.∴); your remark about the number 345 of this name is correct, but there are other quite remarkable things. Shaddai alone has the number 314, which is also important; it is at the same time the number of Metatron, and moreover, in Arabic, it is the number of the "developed" name of Mohammed (☒.∴ Maridort will be able to give you the explanation I gave him on this last point). On the other hand, 345 is not only the number of El-Shaddai, but also that of ha-Shem (the Name), as well as Mesheh, the Hebrew form of the name of Moses, which is, moreover, the

exact reversal of ha-Shem. -- I wonder if "The special sign of the Triangle" refers to the Pythagorean triangle, or if it is not rather a sign analogous to that of the "Royal Arch of Henoch", apparently derived from the sign of the Kohanim blessing to which I referred in my article on the "Lost Word", and of which a more singular distortion could perhaps, although almost unrecognisable (which may be intentional in this case), be found in the "sign of horror" of the Master's degree.

I have not yet received any information regarding the two works mentioned by J. B. mentioned; moreover, it has been quite some time since I received a letter from Clavelle, but I hope to receive one soon, as he has not yet replied to several of my letters.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

Cairo, 5 November 1948.

[illegible].·. [illegible].·. [illegible].·.,

Your two letters of 11 and 18 October arrived at the same time, about eight days ago; if I have not been able to reply sooner this time, it is because I had to finish my work for the December issue of "E. T.", for which I was rather behind schedule, after which came the proofs of the Italian translation of the "glimpses," which I also had to correct as quickly as possible.

First of all, thank you for giving me a summary of the speeches from the closing session of the Convent, which indeed make a most satisfactory impression. [illegible] Maridort told me that he had not mentioned it to me because he thinks the report will be printed soon and he intends to send it to me as soon as possible. The only point that is a little worrying in what you tell me is the intention of some to increase recruitment, which obviously could only be to the detriment of quality...

What you say about the reason for Cerf's animosity towards the [illegible].·. [illegible].·. is not at all implausible, given everything we know about his character; his claim to know everything is truly extraordinary; but what has he ever had to do with modern scientific inventions? As for his plan to found a [illegible] of the Royal Arch, I cannot see any more than you how this could be possible, unless he first affiliates himself with the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], which could open a "door" for him to English [illegible]; but even then, it would only be achievable in the fairly long term!

Regarding Mr. Mercier, what you tell me corresponds well with the impression I had of him; I agree with you that this flaw I noticed in his work, which does indeed stem somewhat from a "systematic mindset", should be able to be corrected little by little with reflection. -- Regarding his project for the "True Experts", one point should be noted: the "servants" are in reality quite different from deacons; they are subordinate employees who can never attain a rank higher than App.°, and who, moreover, do not participate in the work and do not enter the

L.°. unless they are called upon to carry out some task.

I had learned of the vote of the Convent of the G.°. O.°. on the question of the SS.°. of the D.°. H.°. ; the minority was nevertheless stronger than would have been desirable.°.. It seems that the rapporteur highlighted the initiatory aspect of the issue, using my article on female initiation; it was Lepage who asked me to write it for this occasion.

I rather agree with you on Marius Lepage's ritual; we should certainly not follow him in his excessive simplification; he seems to have been struck by the often clumsy and more or less ridiculous way in which the "walks" he mentions are carried out, but it goes without saying that we can find ways to remedy this without simply doing away with them altogether; The comparisons you make with ancient mysteries are entirely justified. It is a pity that he is still under the persistent influence of O. Wirth, because otherwise he is quite likeable and certainly full of good will.

As for extinguishing candles, the use of a mallet is surely an innovation that serves no purpose, and I find the snuffer much preferable, since it is designed specifically for this purpose; but as for the prohibition against blowing on them, to my knowledge this exists only in Mazdeism.

Regarding the elements that exist in French Freemasonry and which, since they cannot originate from the Grand Lodge of England, must have an earlier origin, it is rather curious that Mr. Lepage, in a letter I received the day before yesterday, makes the same observation without my having mentioned it to him in the slightest. He mentions "The Genesis of Freemasonry" again, which, it seems, was preceded by two other books, "Early Masonic Pamphlets" and "The Early Masonic Catechisms". I do not know if it will be possible to obtain them, but I believe it would be very important, as they contain completely new information on symbolism and operative ritual. On this subject, he says: "It emerges from this reading that French Freemasonry, even in its current state, is closer to the primitive spirit of ancient Freemasonry than the Grand Lodge of England. I found some astonishing pages on this subject in Knoop, particularly with regard to the drafting of Anderson's Constitutions." -- Furthermore, you will see in my forthcoming reports that I have alluded to the probable anteriority of French Freemasonry, in relation to a note published in "Masonic Light". -- Another thing: I was struck by the fact that the French T.°. B.°. has an undeniably more archaic character than the English T.°. B.°. What I pointed out to you last time, regarding the very recent date of the latter in its current form, provides a sufficient explanation for this.

As for your thoughts on the same subject, it is quite certain that the impression French Freemasons have when visiting foreign Lodges stems mainly from the fact that everything there is done with a seriousness and dignity to which they are not accustomed; this is certainly not proof of greater understanding, but it is nevertheless far from insignificant. As for the explanation for this attitude among foreign Freemasons, I believe that the practice of exoteric rites, at least to a certain extent (as they are naturally very limited among Protestants), probably contributes greatly to it.

The absence of ancient documents in France is undoubtedly quite remarkable,

especially since it cannot be assumed that they were destroyed in the same way as those in England between 1717 and 1723, from which a few nevertheless escaped; but it must be said that it does not seem possible to find any more documents concerning the LL.° that existed in France in the first half of the 18th century and even a little later (roughly until the foundation of the G.°. O.°.); I am not sure why this is the case... On the other hand, if it was a Masonic order introduced into France in 1688, it would not be that old, but it would still be significantly earlier than 1717, which is the key point in the matter at hand. I also note that if this Masonry was "Scottish", it would prove that this designation was not initially applied to the higher degrees, as is generally claimed. It is obvious that if rites of different origins agree on certain points, this at least gives strong grounds for considering these points to be beyond dispute; I do not say certain because, despite everything, there may have been subsequent "contamination" between these rites.

Brother Mercier is quite right to attach great importance to the symbolism of numbers, and I agree with you that it is very useful to introduce them as often as possible into the rituals, as you envisage. As for the number of questions in the instruction for the three degrees, the distribution is 3 x 33 + 1, which should be fairly easy to achieve. Like you, I think it is a very good idea to make the request for the sacred word the last question of the third degree and to follow the answer with the "sign of horror". -- Regarding the sacred word, I would like to ask you something: the verb meaning "to build" in Hebrew is banah, but in the lexicon I have at hand, I cannot find the derived noun (which in any case should not be very different from the Arabic *bannâ*, "builder"); could you check or have someone check what the exact form is? Here's why: in the English form of the word, at least the first two syllables are correct, whereas they are not in the others; but the third still seems distorted to me, and I would like to be able to see exactly what it is...

As for the ritual itself, I fully approve, for the 1st degree, of the arrangement setting the number of responses to be given by the recipient at 15 = 12 + 3, completing this number as you indicate in your last letter. As for the number of things that "come in threes", it could very well be increased to 33, but, of course, on condition that we do not do as Ragon did, who, in order to list as many as possible, introduced triads that are of no interest whatsoever from a symbolic point of view, not to mention those that are purely fanciful or imaginary. By the latter, I mean especially those that are supposedly drawn from Eastern traditions: either the things mentioned are distorted to the point of being unrecognisable, or they do not correspond to anything real. It must be said that, at that time, little was known about these traditions, and they were too often supplemented by imagination... -- I hope that, for the rituals of the 2nd and 3rd degrees, you will also be able to find a way to introduce the other numbers as you did for the number 3 in the 1st degree; we can come back to this when the projects are more advanced; but I see that, for the third degree at least, you think it will be ready fairly quickly; this is certainly the case for the second degree.

that there is the most to do... I had no idea about what you're telling me about the 14 hills of San Francisco and the Twin Peaks; it's quite curious indeed. What's also curious, from another point of view, is the insistence, which I must have mentioned somewhere, with which the founders of the United States introduced the number 13 wherever they could!

On 24 October, A. Coen gave a lecture in Laval, dressed in white, on "the evolution of Christianity"; I would be quite curious to know how he dealt with this subject...

Best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 26 December 1948.

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

Yesterday I received your letter dated 14 December; but what happened to the previous one, which I was unaware of when I mentioned it to Bro. Maridort, is even more annoying than a simple loss: the abbreviated greeting seemed incomprehensible, so it was stopped by the censor, resulting in a request for explanations and inconvenience for Mr. Lings (because of the address); for my part, I had to send the translation in full. This is something that could hardly have been foreseen in a country where Freemasonry is by no means hidden and where it even has, as in England and for similar reasons, an almost "official" character; but obviously one cannot expect all civil servants to be omniscient... Therefore, to prevent this from happening again, I would ask you to be careful not to include anything that might unnecessarily intrigue people and cause them unjustified concern. The most unfortunate thing is that, although I was promised that this letter would be forwarded to me, I have not yet received it, so I wonder if it has not ended up getting lost in some office; I will try to have one of our friends in the police force request it. If, despite this, it is definitely lost, I will let you know next time, as I see that, fortunately, you will be able to tell me what it contained without too much trouble. At least I am glad to know that my two letters reached you safely, as it would certainly have been much more difficult for me to reconstruct everything I had written to you...

Thank you for the "Coat of Arms of Death", which is truly very curious and clearly reminiscent of hermetic symbolism; I was waiting to hear what you had to say about the "Coat of Arms with the Rooster" so that I could discuss it further with you. Could you tell me which saint is depicted on the reverse? Despite the lion accompanying him, I do not think it could be Saint Mark; I would rather think it is Saint Jerome, but I am far from certain. What I find particularly striking in this other engraving is the shape of the mountains, which, despite the great differences that naturally exist in terms of the "technique" of the drawing, is rather reminiscent

certain Taoist landscapes.

As for the Hebrew word meaning "builder", your delay is entirely excusable and, in short, causes no great inconvenience; I now understand why it does not appear as a separate word in the lexicon I have, since it is in fact only a verb form. I see from this that the English form of the word is much less distorted than the others, and it is only distorted in that the ending has become silent; This confirms what I thought, and, basically, it was only the accuracy of the vowel O that I had doubts about, because the Arabic form is different; ultimately, the completely correct transcription of the whole would therefore be: "Mah ha-bônah".

Of course, I will be happy to answer, to the best of my ability, any questions you may have about my latest articles; there are indeed some things to which I have only made incomplete references, not only because I could not dwell on them indefinitely, but also sometimes intentionally, because, as you can imagine, I do not want to imitate the approach taken by J. B. in his book; the reasons he gives to justify it do not convince me at all!

It is a pity that Brother Marty cannot prepare his project as quickly as he thought he would; one thing that surprises me is that Cerf, according to what Maridort tells me, seems to believe that there will be difficulties in getting it adopted, which did not seem to be indicated by the way things went at the last Convent; let us hope that these fears are unfounded.In any case, so as not to wait any longer, I think your idea of sending your own project to our friends in Italy is excellent, since you now have several typed copies; I would therefore ask you to send it to Brother Corrado Rocco, via Luca Giordano, 83, al Vomero, Naples (it may be safer to recommend him). Corrado Rocco, via Luca Giordano, 83, al Vomero, Napoli (it may be safer to send it by registered post). After reviewing it, he will pass it on to F.°. Giuseppe Palomba, professor at the University of Naples, who is a dignitary of the G.°. O.°. and who intends to present it to the authorities at the Plazzo Ginstiniani with a view to what he proposes to do; it is mainly for this reason that the matter is quite urgent. Thank you in advance for this, as well as for the other copy you say you are sending me and for the 3rd degree project (I think it would be a good idea to recommend this too, as well as the report of the Convent when it appears). -- On this subject, something else while I think of it: my old friend Bro. Emmanuel Hillel, writes to me that he would like to know about the project that will be submitted for study by the LL.°. I do not know whether we should send it to him "by right" in his capacity as dignitary of the L.°. Delphes (Or.°. of Alexandria), or whether we should send it only to the L.°. ; in the latter case, I hope you will be able to send him a copy (when it is ready and printed, of course, as there is no urgency here), and, so as not to forget, here is his address: "Ker Maranatha", Saint Jean Le-Thomas (Manche).

I have nothing else important to tell you today; for the rest, we will obviously have to wait until I receive your previous letter one way or another.

Yours sincerely.

R. G.

Cairo, 13 January 1949

☒.∴ C∴F,

I finally received your letter of 9 November about ten days ago; I think you will already have heard from Bro. Maridort if you have had the opportunity to see him in the meantime.

Clavelle did not mention the two books cited by J. B. in any of the letters I received from him, and yet they do not seem to be missing; perhaps he forgot; in any case, I asked him about it in my reply to his last letter.

There is some doubt as to the exact location of the Druids' annual assembly: it may have been in the land of the Carnutes or on their borders, because of the double meaning of the Latin expression "in finibus" used by Caesar; I mentioned this in my article on "The Triple Druidic Enclosure" (June 1929). In any case, your remarks about the Bituriges and Bordeaux are curious, and the one concerning York seems even clearer to me. On the other hand, as I pointed out in "La terre du Soleil" (January 1936), it is noteworthy that the Templars often chose places with prehistoric remains, megalithic monuments or other sites for their establishments; all of which points to a "continuity" that must go back a very long way... It is also curious that the ancients often drew parallels between Druidism and Pythagoreanism; this kind of affinity that they noticed between the two may well have played a part in a case such as that of York.

I'm not sure why I'm thinking about something strange right now, which unfortunately I can't find the reference for, but I'll mention it anyway, just as a curiosity: someone, but I can't remember who, pointed out that in medieval documents concerning the construction of churches, there are numerous references to workers who fell from scaffolding while working on the vault, but who were not injured in their fall; and he found it strange that so many people fell from such a height without ever hurting themselves! I wonder if these so-called accidents might not have been a veiled way of referring to something related to a "trial of the air"...

It is indeed in Granet's "Danses et légendes" (Dances and Legends), volume 2, pp. 549-550, that we find a description of the "YU step"; it is not entirely clear, however, and I suppose this must be due to the translation. -- I seem to remember that in one of Father Weiger's works (but which one? I don't have them here to check) there is an illustration depicting "an alchemist performing the Yu step".

It is curious, as you say, that the width of the cord is given as 108 millimetres in the metric system; but it seems to me that the question we should be asking ourselves in this regard is rather that of the nature of the relationship between the metric system and the old measurements: why is the metre roughly equal to three feet (more precisely, three feet + one inch)? The definition of the metre is well known, but do we know how the length of the foot was originally determined and what it actually corresponded to? This is what we should be looking for, because I do not believe that those who established the

metric system could have had the idea of "adjusting" the length of the metre in order to make certain "coincidences" possible.

As for the meaning of the officers' movements, it is understood that this can only apply from the proclamation of the opening; it would be logical, as you say, that the same should apply to all members of the L.° when they have to move, although I have never seen any precise indication on this point. -- As for the meaning of journeys in the 2nd degree, the comparison made by Bro. Mordvinoff is correct, but it seems to me that this does not entirely resolve the question.

Your idea about the "power of the name" is certainly correct, and the reminder of the definition of the "duties" of officers could also be linked to the importance that Chinese tradition attaches to "correct names". -- As for officers being addressed "by name", I now understand the meaning of your comment, and I think you are also right on this point. -- It is certainly a mistake to put the surname before the first name; this is only a very modern and essentially profane usage (administrative papers, etc.), which I have always found all the more shocking since the word "first name" itself means precisely "before the surname". -- On the other hand, it would obviously be more normal to call the recipient "Profane" rather than "Sir", which ultimately means nothing.

For the three orders of knighthood, I believe we should stick with the ones you have chosen, and also include the phrase "most senior and honourable".

As for the priority of night over day, there are, as you may have already seen, certain indications in "The Right and the Left", but there are many others worth noting: for example, in the "days" of Genesis, evening is mentioned before morning; according to Islamic custom, too, it is sunset that marks the beginning of the day. -- The expression "high time" means noon; we also say "high twelve", and similarly "low twelve" for midnight. -- As for the relationship between noon and midnight and the two solstices, this is probably where we should look for the real reason for working "from noon to midnight"; we would only have to ask ourselves why this work is done in this way during the descending period (of the day or of the year, it is the same thing from a symbolic point of view); but it seems to me that this question is not impossible to resolve, and perhaps you could give it some more thought; I will try to think about it myself.

On a notice sent to me by Maridort, I saw that the seal was indeed smaller than the one you had previously sent me.

What you have found regarding J. K.'s will is still only a hypothesis, and I cannot say to what extent it is plausible, as the case of the lodge (?) seems quite different, firstly because of his conviction, and secondly because of J. K.'s status as a foreigner. Hopefully you will find something else when you return to the same library. I did not think that historians had taken such an interest in this figure, who, I must admit, was completely unknown to me before Clavelle told me about him, or rather about his portrait by Dürer.

There is indeed a certain similarity between the orientation of the Nile and that of the Rhône,

although in opposite directions (south-north and north-south), and also between the location of Cairo and that of Arles in relation to the deltas of these two rivers, something I had never noticed before; but as for the position of Salon in relation to the Rhône, I cannot picture it clearly enough to be able to say anything about it.

Regarding the secret name of Rome, I have seen several hypotheses, but they did not seem very conclusive to me: some have assumed that it was simply the reversal of "Roma", that is to say "Amor", which is perhaps a little too facile a fantasy; others have claimed that the name was that of Ops Consivia, who was apparently a guardian deity of Rome, but I know nothing more about her. There must have been other hypotheses, but I cannot remember them, and in short, no one knows what the truth is; the name must ultimately have been lost, probably due to the extinction of the ancient priestly colleges following the establishment of Christianity. In any case, the reason why this name was kept secret (and it is likely that Rome was not unique in this respect) is that enemies who had managed to discover it could have used it to seize the city. Knowledge of the true name of a being (or any "entity") gives one power over it, because that name identifies its very essence, of which it is the most accurate expression.

The comparison between comedy in ancient Greece and "carnival celebrations" seems quite justified to me; however, to be more definitive, we would need further details on the origins of comedy and the circumstances in which it was first performed; this should not be impossible to find, but I have nothing here on the subject; the very name of comedy indicates that it must have been related to a feast, but this is not a sufficient indication.

As for the closing of the third degree, I agree with you that a "found word" and a "substituted sign" do not go very well together, but I am not sure what could be done about it.

The page marked 7 at the bottom of the manuscript is missing

very curious data, and I intend to write something on this subject; what surprised me was that there is mention of the relationship between the numbers 345 and the sides of the right-angled triangle, which we discussed some time ago. -- This reminds me of something else (it's about God and iod, a connection that J. B. saw fit to reproach me for, as if I were responsible for it): the three letters of the word God were formerly taken to represent the initials of the three Hebrew words "Gomer, Oz, Dabar" (Beauty, Strength, Wisdom); at least that is how I found it written, but Gomer, with this meaning, seems surprising to me, and it seems to me, by similarity with Arabic, that it should rather be Gomel; unfortunately, I have not been able to find any indication that would allow me to be sure of one or the other; would it be possible for you to check or have someone check what the case is? Thank you in advance for this information.

Yours sincerely.

R. G.

Cairo, 23 January 1949.

☒.∴.☒.∴.☒.∴,

I received your two letters dated 29 December and 6 January at the same time, just three days ago. You need not apologise so much for what happened, as these are things that are hardly possible to foresee; moreover, it was more annoying than really serious, and, as you will see from my last letter, everything has finally returned to normal!

I am glad to hear that you were interested in Reghini's book on Numbers, and in this regard, apart from the question of what can be gleaned from it for secondary education (which was mainly why I thought it would be useful for you to read it), I would like to ask you if you could review it for the journal, as I have not yet been able to do so myself, and I have so many books to catch up on that I fear I will never be able to get through them all...

As for the third degree, I must say that, although I was aware of the existence of the English table, I have never seen a French table for this degree, and that, moreover, Vuillaume expressly gives (Pl 2. 4) the figure of the coffin with the mention "Layout of the Master's Lodge"; which explains what I wrote to you on this subject. Now, from what you tell me, I see that you have found a table in other manuals, which I probably do not have; but then another question arises: what, in these circumstances, should be the respective places of the table and the coffin? It seems to me that one possible solution would be this: the coffin is placed on top of the table itself, so that the table only appears when the coffin is removed. What do you think? Otherwise, we would have to assume two separate rooms for the reception, which I believe does exist in some rituals; and, on the other hand, there is no reason for the coffin to be in the third degree meetings, which do not include a reception, so that if there were no painting, the central location would remain empty. Returning to the English tableau, if you were unable to read the inscription, it may be because you did not take into account the fact that the English alphabet differs from the French alphabet in that it counts j, k, v, and w as separate letters; the distinction between i and j, u and v, seems to give it a less archaic character.

As for the position of the three lights in relation to that of the principal Officers, I believe that the clearest way to illustrate this is to draw the figure opposite, where we can see that the arrow going from each light to the corresponding plateau is indeed directed in the direction of the sun's path. One could say that in this way each light, or the influence it represents, is received in a manner of speaking as a ray of sunlight by the Officer whose function it corresponds to. --

As for the four cardinal virtues, I do not recall whether there was a specific intention in the note in the translation of "Philosophurenena... ", apart from the idea that the moral point of view is only a particular application, and that a transposition must always be made in order to arrive at a more fundamental meaning; as for a connection with Aristotle's four causes, this is not

Impossible, but I had never thought about it and I don't really see how it could be established term by term; do you yourself have any ideas on this? In any case, the acorns appearing in the English LL.° to symbolise the four cardinal virtues would in a way complement the three lights, as these can be related to the three theological virtues.

As for the double door, it seems to me that this is necessary mainly for reasons of symmetry, in keeping with the position of the two columns on either side of the door; if it only had one door, one might quite logically imagine that it should not open on the same side depending on whether one is working on the first or second degree!

I suppose that your letter written from Riom must be the one that was held up for so long, but yet there is nothing in it about the hours of Christ's birth and death; for the former, the correspondence between midnight and the winter solstice is obvious; but for the latter, three o'clock in the afternoon cannot be related to the date of Easter, which follows closely after the spring equinox, as the hour corresponding to the latter would be six o'clock in the morning; but I do not know if this is what you are referring to in the question you think you asked and have probably forgotten, as I do not believe there is another letter from you that has been lost. --I, too, know nothing of Nonnus' Dionysiaca other than the portion that has been translated by Mario Meunier, but I also have the impression that there must be some very interesting things in it from a symbolic point of view. -- Your remark about the letters B and J as initials of place names is certainly curious, but I wonder what conclusions we could draw from it; in this regard, you may also know that in the Order of the Eastern Star, these same letters are taken to mean Judah and Benjamin. -- In the article on the Archaeometer that you mention, it is not a yod but a lamed that is indicated as described by the Master's march, which is quite different and seems correct to me; I do not see what the Z could mean in this case. In fact, the Z appears in the fourth degree, where it is given as the initial letter of a Hebrew name, but I no longer remember who put forward the hypothesis that, in reality, it is more likely to be the Greek ζωε... "Life". We must also be wary of the distortions of Hebrew letters that have sometimes occurred, resulting in their replacement by Latin letters with which they have no connection, as in the case where a iod has been changed to an S, even though the two letters have completely opposite meanings, the first representing unity and the second multiplicity!

I do not believe that there is a separate organisation called the "Order of Za-Ga-Zig", but only that the "Za-Ga-Zig Temple" belongs to the "Ancient Big Order of the Noires of the Mystics Rite" (?). The rite is unique in that it is reserved for third degree Freemasons (who are extremely numerous in the United States); I seem to recall that President Harding was a member of this "Za-Ga-Zig Temple". In reality, Zagazig, or more correctly Ez-Zaqaziq, is the name of a city in Egypt; as for writing it with separate syllables, it goes without saying that this is pure fantasy!

The King Solomon's Temple Lodge was founded, I believe, on the initiative of the historian R. F. Gould, but despite this, I do not think it was ever

properly considered a "Lodge of Research"; it is also possible that its foundation was somewhat later than the publication of Rev. Lawrence's book. At the time, there was an article on this subject in the London Freemason, but although I must surely have it somewhere, I am quite unable to find it at present; there are many things that lack of space prevents me from storing in a sufficiently accessible manner...

I. C.'s "inventions" may be harmless in themselves, but this excess of imagination is still a little annoying; despite this, we must overlook many things, bearing in mind that without him, the realisation of the "Great Triad" would probably not have been possible, and this is a consideration that deserves to be taken into account.

Belonging to several obediences at the same time is certainly not abnormal in itself, but in the specific case you mention, I do not see how the National Grand Lodge, given its relationship with the Grand Lodge of England, could allow one of its members to remain a member of an obedience not recognised by the latter, as English Freemasons are very strict in this regard. L.°. of England, can allow one of its members to simultaneously belong to an obedience not recognised by the latter, as English Freemasons are very strict in this regard. I am also putting the question to F.°. Peilon, from whom I have just received a letter, and who may be able to tell us more definitively what the situation actually is.

Maridort sent me a letter from Brother Mercier, in which he mentions what you said and a few other matters; I assume that when he spoke to you about this, he had not yet decided to write to me directly. I have not yet had time to reply to him, but I will of course do so soon; you may ask him to share with you what I will say to him on this subject, so that I do not have to write the same things twice. From what he says, it seems that the adoption of the French rite by "Akademos" has already been decided definitively; this is perhaps better in a sense, because, since the establishment of the Grand Priory of Gaul, the Grand Master O.°. should no longer be recognised as being in regular possession of the Rectified Regime; I also think that this is one of the reasons why Gloton's attempt in Switzerland could not succeed, even though he addressed himself not to the G.°. L.°. Alpina as he did, but to the Grand Priory of Helvetia, which is in fact exclusively concerned. -- Regarding Strict Observance, against which there may have been a little too much prejudice among many, do you know if the text of Baron von Hund's patent (whose name is indeed rather curious) has ever been deciphered? I have this text, but I have never had the time or patience necessary to try to understand it; moreover, I do not even know exactly what language it is written in, Latin or German, although Latin seems more likely to me.

What you say about modern Christianity is certainly very true; but as for what was written in the newspapers during the last Christmas season, I must admit that I have no idea what it is all about...

As for the passages from the Gospel that you quote concerning Peter, they are certainly not easy to interpret, and I am not sure how far their application can be extended, although, in principle at least, one can always say that Peter represents exotericism; as for the name "son of Jonah" used in this way

must have some particular meaning, but what is not clear is the relationship that may exist between the actual meaning of these passages and the symbolism of the whale.

Coming back to Dürer, I wonder whether, in the "Coat of Arms with a Rooster", the strange shape of the lion's tail might conceal some numerical symbolism, but I would be unable to justify this idea in any precise way; as for the inclined position of the shield, I believe it is very common in German heraldic representations. -- The shape of the vine tendril wrapped around the lamp in "Saint Jerome in his Cell" also seems to bear some relation to that of the lion's tail; it is often in these seemingly insignificant details that many things are hidden, but it is not always easy to find the key to them!

-- As for "The Knight, Death and the Devil", I saw a reproduction of it once, but I cannot remember the details; I therefore accept your offer to send it to me, and thank you in advance. In the issue of "Etudes Carmélitaines" on Satan, only a fragment was given, the figure of the Devil, which looks very much like a pig, with something of a goat and perhaps a donkey.

What you tell me about the reasons for fearing that the ritual project will not be adopted does indeed seem somewhat worrying; but it seems to me that the essential thing would be to have it "officially" approved by the Convent, even if, subsequently, we cannot insist too much that it be observed by all ⌧⌧.∴ in a perfectly uniform manner. Your idea of giving more importance to "verbal" forms than to "plastic" forms is certainly in line with current needs and could eliminate many difficulties; but how can this be achieved without altering the specific character of a ritual of "builders"? --As for the formula now used at "Cheops", your assumption about how J. B. learned of it is indeed very plausible.

Thank you for sending it to me; please also thank Marty for coming up with the idea for the typed copy.

I trust you will not forget to tell me more about what you said regarding initiatory consecration and your thoughts on the mode of action of rites.

I thank you for your good wishes, and I send you mine in return, regretting only that they are reaching you a little late; the last time I wrote to you, I was so preoccupied with responding to so many things that I forgot it was the beginning of the year!

Best regards,

R. G.

Cairo, 12 March 1949.

⌧.∴ ⌧.∴ ⌧.∴,

Five or six days ago, I received your letter dated 24 February with the third degree ritual; this reassured me, because, not thinking that you had had to do all

this work, which indeed explains your delay quite sufficiently, I was beginning to fear that something had gone astray again. You mention my letter of 23 January, but I understand that you must also have received the one dated 13 January, since it was in that letter that I replied to yours of 29 December.

I have not yet received the copy of the first degree ritual, but that is not surprising; I learned some time ago that the one you sent to Bro. Rocco had indeed reached him, and I think he must have written to you since then.

Thank you in advance for sending this copy and for the other items you mention. Maridort will no doubt send me the Dürer engraving soon, if he has not already done so.

I believe you will be able to get through Reghini's book review just fine, and that you are really wrong to doubt yourself like that. As for the article on "Gabaon", there are surely many interesting things to say; I do not believe that much has ever been written on the subject, or at least I am not aware of it, and, apart from Ragon, I have no idea what you might find. I see in the ritual that you translate this word as "hill", which is essentially correct, but more precisely a rounded hill, because it is the idea of "roundness" that is expressed by its root, as I wrote recently to Maridort, who had also asked me a question on this subject and who, not knowing the exact Hebrew spelling, had made connections with other, completely different roots. -

-- I have no doubt that the main reason for choosing this name is God's manifestation to Solomon "in this place" (2 Kings, 3 -- 2 Chronicles 1), especially since it is directly related to the project of building the Temple. You would undoubtedly do well to mention this in the ritual, or rather to recall it when this name is given to the new Master. I realise, on rereading the ritual, that this is already indicated at the beginning of the legend of Hiram: possibly, the text from Joshua that you quote is also added to this. I have just reviewed Vuillaume's book: he only mentions the name Gibeon in the French rite, I do not know why, and he speaks of the role of the Gibeonites as guardians and keepers of the Ark of the Covenant (cf. I Chron., 21) (which is indeed another reason to add to the previous ones); this is the only explanation he gives, and as for the meaning, he translates it as "habitaculum exesum" by breaking it down into two words, which is entirely fanciful.

One point I would like to bring to your attention, although it is of little importance, is this: in France, we usually say Hiram-Abi, and there is no doubt that this form should be retained; but in England, they say Hiram-Abif, which has intrigued many people. Here is the explanation: Abi obviously means "my father"; as for Abif, it is a deformation of Abin, "his father"; both expressions are found in the Bible, and in both cases the possessive pronoun refers to Hiram, King of Tyre, who, it seems, gave the other Hiram the name "Father" as a mark of respect, for it goes without saying that he was not his son in the literal sense of the word. -- On the other hand, I do not believe that the name of Hiram's father could be Aor (light) as you have written; I have always seen it given as Har or Hor, which is usually interpreted as "fire", which may not be strictly accurate, but which in any case expresses the idea of "heat", which

seems to have a fairly direct connection here with metalworking. As for the name Hiram itself, it is rather curious that it appears in several variants: in certain biblical passages, we find the forms Hûram and Hirôm; I do not know exactly what we could conclude from this...

As for the ritual itself, I find it very good overall, and I have few comments to make, except on one important point: the instruments used to murder Hiram, as there are several different versions concerning the first two. I do not know exactly where you got the one you have adopted, but I do not think it is the most correct. In my opinion, at least, it must be as follows: First, a 24-inch ruler (blow to the throat); second, a square (blow to the heart); third, a mallet (blow to the head). In this way, the progression follows that of the divisions of time: first, a 24-hour day; second, a season (quarter of the year); third, an annual cycle (due to the cylindrical shape of the mallet). This temporal symbolism is far from negligible here, especially if we draw a parallel with the formula of the Shatapatha Brahmana, according to which "Prajâpati is the Year", at least in a certain respect, which also has its correspondence in the number of bricks used for the construction of the Vedic altar. You may recall, in this regard, that I spoke of the close relationship between the sacrifice of Prajâpati (or Purusha) and the murder of Hiram and Osiris in my article "Gathering what is scattered" (October-November 1946 issue). -- It should be noted that the 24-inch rule is something of an "anomaly", most likely intentional, since normally decimal divisions are used for linear measurements, while duodecimal divisions are used for circular measurements. I remember that in "Speculative Mason", someone asked a rather naive question: "What has become of the 24-inch rule in French Freemasonry since the adoption of the metric system?" The truth is that this measurement has never changed and does not need to change, any more than the four inches for the width of the cord, which we have already mentioned... --- I once gave a presentation in Thébah on the symbolism of the legend of Hiram; I think I must have kept some notes on it, but I am completely unable to find them at the moment; in any case, if I think of anything else, I will let you know next time, but it is mainly on this question of tools being used as weapons in the third degree that I feel it is necessary to draw your attention.

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒,

R. G.

Cairo, 30 April 1949.

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

It has been some time since I received your letter dated 31 March – 10 April; I believe that Bro. Maridort will have already informed you of this, as I requested, because I foresaw that it would not be possible for me to reply to it immediately

, as I had to first finish an article for the Cahiers du Sud that had been urgently requested of me for some time. Thank you for everything enclosed with this letter. I was a little concerned about the initiation ritual, which you said in your previous letter you would send me separately by regular post, but since I found it enclosed with this letter, I think that nothing is missing.

Regarding Gab.° (whose Hebrew pronunciation is actually Gibe'ôn), the exact translation is indeed, as you say, "round hill" or "rounded eminence"; this form is indeed common (though not absolutely constant) for representations of the "sacred mountain", and it is also that of tumuli, which, moreover, can be considered as images of this same mountain. The rounded shape at the top symbolically refers to the human skull and the crown of the head; I believe I alluded to this in an article, but I cannot remember which one. The number is indeed 131; I cannot think of any other words that have the same number in Hebrew at the moment, although there may of course be some. I wonder if what Clavelle recalled was not simply the story concerning the numbers 1331 and 313 found in the rather fanciful brochure by G. R. Dell'Acqua, which I reviewed in the September 1948 issue. As for the connection with the idea of "vengeance", it is not entirely clear to me, despite the passages from 2 Samuel that you mention and which I have just reread. Regardless of that, your interpretation of vengeance is certainly correct, but I do not believe that we can say that all the grades following the third are, without distinction, grades of vengeance. usually, this character is attributed more specifically to the degrees of the Elect. As for the connection between verses 2, 23, and 20, 12, and what I quoted on page 4 of "The King of the World", there is certainly something curious there, but, for the moment at least, I cannot see how it could be justified... --- The character Ming, consisting of the sun and the moon, means "light"; the other words Ming meaning "name", "mandate", "destiny", are written with completely different characters; but it is nonetheless true that, between homophones such as these, there is often a certain relationship of meaning (on these words Ming, see "The Great Triad", pages 116 and 122). As for the character appearing on Chinese sacrificial aprons, I cannot say for certain, having never seen a reproduction; but it seems very likely to me that it must be i, unity, in relation to the North Star, which would be associated there with the seven stars of the Great Bear; However, it could also be the word Yi, meaning cyclical change, as in the title of the I Ching.The Greeks equated the Tyrian Melkart with Heracles, but the similarity between the names themselves seems very doubtful to me; many fanciful interpretations have been given of the name Heracles (including Jacolliot's "Hara-Kâla"), and Fabre d'Olivet's, while not absolutely impossible, is in any case highly hypothetical. Furthermore, his explanation of the name Melkart is certainly incorrect: it is not Melck-Aretz, King of the Earth, but a contraction of Melek-Earth, King of the City.

Mr Rocco wrote to me to say that he had received everything you sent him and that he had been prevented by flu from replying to you immediately as he would have liked; but I see that his letter did not take long to reach you. As for

the solution he was considering, without much hope, for the attachment of the planned L., I spoke to Maridort about it immediately, and, after gathering information, the matter is indeed impossible for the reason you think, and will remain so as long as there are official relations between the G.°. L.°. of France and the G.°. O.°. of Italy (whose situation, incidentally, is currently more confused than ever, due to the disputes that arose following the death of G.°. M.°. Guido Laj); I informed Rocco of this negative response, which I had anticipated, and he told me that he was not at all surprised either.

As for the instruments used in Hiram's murder, I understand from what you have told me about the "Emulation" ritual that there are many variations, but the more I think about it, the more I believe that the version I gave you is definitely the most accurate. The "Pincers", where they are used, are surely a lever, the shape of which does not in reality bear any resemblance to that of the compass. As for the expression according to which the Master asks to be tested by the square and the compass, there is no doubt that this is something else entirely and that it relates to the symbolism I explained in "The Great Triad" (including the representation given there, particularly through the form of ancient Chinese ritual clothing). -

- The objection raised by the blow to the shoulder is that it does not correspond directly to any of the subtle centres of the human being, unlike the other blows. As for the blow to the head, it seems to me that it should be delivered more precisely to the forehead, and not to the top of the head, because the latter should really only be considered at the Royal Arch degree, due to the "extra-individual" nature of the corresponding centre. Incidentally, the blow to the forehead reminds me of the rite (now obsolete, it seems) which consisted of striking the forehead of the Pope who had just died with a silver hammer; but these two rites are in a somewhat inverse relationship, because here it was a last effort at "revival"; so here again we find the dual power of the vajra or the instruments that symbolise it. -- After sending my last letter, I realised that I had not explained myself sufficiently regarding the 24-inch rule: in reality, 24 inches make two feet, and it is obvious that the reason for saying 24 inches is to explicitly refer to the division of the day into 24 hours. On the other hand, what is truly unusual is the fact that the foot, as a linear measure, is divided into 12 inches and not 10; we would need to know where this came from, and, as I have already pointed out to you in relation to another subject (4 inches = 108 millimetres), the question of the origin of ancient measures of length poses a number of puzzles that do not seem easy to solve... Since the day is in fact a cycle, there is nothing unusual about its duodecimal division, but only in its representation by the length of a ruler, made possible by applying an equally duodecimal division to it. In China, the length of the foot varied at different times, correlating with that of the "measure of man" (the height of the royal chariot's mast), but it was always correctly divided into 10 inches and not 12.

I have carefully reread your "final" draft for the first degree initiation ritual, and this time I have no further comments to make, even with regard to

the form. Similarly, for the instruction, your arrangement to obtain a total of 33 requests seems very good to me, and I really see no changes to suggest.

I am utterly astonished by what you have told me about the draft that was sent to LL.°. for review and which, contrary to what you thought, I have not yet seen. As soon as I received your letter, I spoke to Maridort about it, and I sincerely hope that either you or he will be able to send it to me. Why on earth did Marty act in this way, without showing anyone the latest draft of this project, and how could he have introduced or allowed so many inaccuracies to remain in it, both in terms of content and form? This is extremely annoying from every point of view, and, as you say, one wonders what will happen at the next Convention; I understand your annoyance only too well, after all the effort you have put into producing something suitable. Thank you for all the explanations you have given me on this subject; it is indeed good for me to know exactly what is going on, but it goes without saying that, even if I had been aware of the text in question from the outset, it would never have occurred to me that you were in any way responsible for this kind of "flaw". I also understand that you must have been surprised when you realised that the comments in my letter of 31 July related almost entirely to changes made by Marty, which you were unaware of until then...

I now come to the question of the ritual currently in use at the G. T.; but first of all, I would like to say that I was very pleased with your clarification regarding the comments you made to Mercier, because the way he reported them caused serious concern to Clavelle and Maridort, and consequently to myself when they told me about it. You must certainly do everything possible, as they have done, to remain at the G. T., and we must hope that, despite the threats you mention, you will never be forced to leave against your will. Moreover, despite the imperfections or even unpleasant aspects that may still exist there, I believe it would be impossible to find anything better elsewhere, and we must also consider the results that this may bring in the future, for it goes without saying that it is only gradually that we will be able to achieve something more completely satisfactory, provided we do not allow ourselves to become discouraged in the meantime...- As for the ritual in question, based on everything you have explained to me, there is certainly something about it that is quite disturbing for several reasons, primarily because the way its origin has been presented is clearly a hoax; even if we cannot discover the motives and precise intention behind it, this observation alone is enough to warrant serious mistrust. It is quite clear that, as you say, this ritual has nothing English about it, or at least I can only see one minor detail: the answer to the question concerning the Master's attire, and even that is inaccurately translated, as it is actually "Yellow jacket and blue trousers" (a reference to the compass). On the other hand, I notice certain things that are rather incorrect: the correspondence with the elements is reversed for the 2nd and 3rd journeys; the transportive noises from the 1st to the 3rd are also unjustified; the dragging chain, instead of the rope, hardly corresponds to the symbolism of the "cable-tow", and that alone would almost suffice to show that it cannot

it is an English ritual. As for the questions taken from ☒☒☒.∴. Elu Coën's catechism, which are completely out of place in the ritual of a symbolic degree, it is clear that this observation is decisive; if you had not had the opportunity to find the source in this way, I might not have thought to look for it where it is (for I must say that it has been a long time since I looked at Papus' book), but I would at least have noticed at first glance that certain characteristic expressions, such as "Grand Temple Universel", could only have been borrowed from the Elus Coëns; and what can be said, when it comes to a symbolic ☒.∴, about the substitution of the equilateral triangle for the long square? I agree with you that there is unfortunately a good chance that J. B. is the real author of this ritual, and it is certain that this is not reassuring either, especially given what we know about the kind of "operations" he is accustomed to. Would there be any way to have this ritual replaced by a more normal one, for example by giving J. C. (but of course I don't mean that you should be the one to do it, and I think it would be better to leave this to someone who is on better terms with him) the proof of the deception behind it, which he is most likely unaware of?

Opening

It would be more normal to always say East, West and South, rather than East, West and South; it is obviously the same thing, but there is an old custom here that seems preferable to preserve.

The question of whether the ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ ☒☒☒ should remove his hat is debatable; according to some, he should always remain covered, because he is supposed to always work at the level of Master.

In the opening formula, it should read: "in the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ of Saint John constituted", etc.

"The edification of our edifice" is not very felicitous; why not say "of our Temple"?

Questions for visitors. -- In the answer to the second question, I have always seen "dungeons"; why has this word been replaced by "tombs"? -- The complete answer to the third question is: "Submission to ☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒ ☒☒☒☒☒☒. Greetings, prosperity and a warm welcome to all ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒.

"--The rest of the questions are missing; I suppose this must be an oversight.

- -

Initiation

Page 4, it should read "the exhausting struggle against passions".

Page 5, it seems that "To put a salutary brake on our passions" and "to teach us to calm the ardour of our passions" are somewhat redundant; one of the two would undoubtedly suffice.

1st journey. --"From East to West" must be a mistake, and it seems that the opposite should be true. -- The three journeys are not made here in the same direction, and in fact only the second is in the "solar" direction; it is true that there are many differences in this regard, but the reasons for this are not very clear, and this

point should perhaps be examined more closely.

The "sound effects discs" are really a little too modern; why not simply keep the props that were used in the past?

3rd journey. -- It is not clear how it is possible to bring the recipient "through the middle of the ☒.∴.", since this middle is occupied by the table, which must never be stepped on; moreover, the circumambulation would not be complete in this case.

Page 11, an error to be corrected: "to characters known only to true ☒☒☒☒☒☒" (and not only known).

Page 12, the mention of the square and the sword on the Holy Book must be inaccurate; in reality, it must always be covered with the compass and square, arranged in the manner characteristic of the degree being worked on.

Page 14, the consecration formula should be written in exactly the same way as the opening formula: "In the name of ☒☒☒ ☒.∴ ☒.∴ of ☒☒☒ ☒.∴ ", etc.; and do not forget to also restore "the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ of Saint John".

In the oath formula, I believe it is definitely best to keep the "vultures", because the English expression, which has a more general meaning, would not translate well literally: "les oiseaux voraces (ou dévorants) de l'air" (the voracious (or devouring) birds of the air) does not seem to me to have a very good effect in French.

Regarding the final questions, I have already spoken to you earlier about the meanings given to the letter G. On the other hand, it is rather curious that one of the pillars built by Enoch was later found by Hermes, given that Hermes is most often identified with Enoch himself; but it must be said that confusions of this kind are far from rare in the ancient versions of the legendary history of the ☒☒☒.∴; if you have found this in any document related to such a source, then there is no need to change it, as the general remark about the anachronistic nature of some of these questions is sufficient to rule out any objection in this regard.

You wrote Athelstone; I seem to have always seen Athelstan, which must be the correct spelling of this name.

One thing that occurs to me incidentally: in the past, the 2nd degree was often referred to as "Expert"; although this is certainly not very important, I wonder if we could find a way to mention it somewhere in the ritual; what do you think?

I can't think of anything else to report to you and I hope I haven't overlooked anything important. There is exactly one week left until the Convent, which is why I have been in a bit of a hurry to go through all this; I hope my letter will still have time to reach you before then!

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒,

R. G.

Cairo, 14 May 1949.

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

I received your letter of 17 April shortly after replying to the previous one; but since then, the preparation of my articles for the June issue has forced me to postpone my correspondence, which explains my delay in writing back to you. -- Of course, you can always write to me whenever you have a question or other matter to discuss; I would only ask you, once and for all, to excuse me if I am sometimes unable to reply immediately.

Thank you for your additional explanations about the rituals you sent me; I still haven't received Marty's draft. -- I haven't heard from Saint Jean-Le-Thomas for quite some time, which is starting to worry me; so I can't tell you what Marty has been doing on that front, and it's best to wait until further notice.

Based on what you have told me, I hope to receive your review of Reghini's book shortly; you can count on me to give you my honest opinion.

I had never heard of this book by Claudel that you saw recently; who is Abbé Tardif de Moidrey?

The German princes who supported or encouraged Luther are generally considered, I believe, to have had only political motives, and that was certainly the opinion of Canon Paquier, whom I mentioned last time; but it may well be that this explanation is insufficient and that there was something else at work, at least in the case of some of them. It may even be that the Reformation was in fact brought about for "cyclical" reasons and, as you say, the "quality" of the instruments used does not always matter much in such cases. It would be good to know whether the principle of "free inquiry" was clearly established from the outset, because that is what opened the door to all kinds of individualistic deviations. Your remark about the "ternary aspect" and its applications is certainly interesting; however, it seems difficult for Protestantism, which has no real unity (this is precisely a consequence of "free inquiry"), to be placed on the same footing as the Catholic and Orthodox churches to complete the ternary in Christianity, even without taking any other considerations into account. as for the correspondence of the three branches with the apostles Peter, John and Paul, I really don't know what to think... -- In any case, the passages from "Protestant Positions" that you quote are indeed quite remarkable and surprise me as much as they surprise you; it would seem that there has been a change in the mentality of certain Protestant circles, especially perhaps those concerned with the question of church unity; but to what extent could this change be interpreted as a return to the original spirit of the Reformation, or at least as a move closer to it?

As for Albert of Brandenburg, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order is certainly better known than his namesake and contemporary, but I cannot tell you which of the two Dürer was in contact with; perhaps you have been able to find out.

check what the situation is. -- I had never known when Luther's Rosicrucian symbol (or what appears to be one) first appeared; this symbol has a rather unusual appearance: the cross is placed on a heart, which in turn is placed on a rose; it seems that it was actually the seal of the "Militia Crucifera Evangelica", but the difficulty lies in knowing whether this organisation (which some have claimed to revive in America) really had any links with Rosicrucianism.

I am familiar with the portrait of Jean Klégerger, but I was not at all familiar with those of Dürer himself, from 1499 and 1500, which you mention. In the first, what seems most curious, and also most enigmatic, are the three rings; they seem to represent the union of three cycles, but what cycles could these be? Your interpretation is certainly not implausible, but should it be applied only within Christianity, or in a broader context encompassing several traditional forms? One might even wonder whether it might not rather be the union of three different initiations, and it would undoubtedly be necessary to make connections with other clues in order to arrive at a more precise interpretation... As for the other portrait, what strikes me as somewhat surprising is that Dürer gives himself the epithet "Noricus", as he does to Kléberger, because, if this epithet had a hidden meaning, I do not believe that it could apply to two different people at the same time. should we therefore assume that, for one of them (who would then probably be Dürer), it should be taken only in its literal and geographical sense, while for the other, it would be otherwise?

-- Clavelle, in his last letter, tells me that he asked ☒.∴ Granger, of Lyon, to search the library of his city to see if he could find anything concerning Klégerger; the latter was certainly a very mysterious character, and it would seem that he played a kind of "linking" role between various initiatory organisations, including those to which Dürer belonged. I cannot say for certain that Landolfo's letter quoted by Reghini refers to him, but it seems quite likely, as it is difficult to think of anyone else to whom it could apply so well.

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒.

R. G.

Cairo, 10 June 1949.

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

Yesterday I received your letter dated 30 May; I had already heard from Clavelle that you had received the first of my two letters, and I see that the second one did not take long to reach you either.

I had indeed spoken to Clavelle about the review of J. B.'s book, and I thank you for agreeing to take it on, as I feel it is necessary to do so, for the very reason that you find it more urgent than

that of the "Numeri Sacri", in which you are surely right. I hope that it will not take you too much time, and also that you will soon be able to obtain the books you are waiting for in order to finish your article on ∴, which Clavelle, according to what he told me in one of his last letters, seems eager to have without too much delay. You should not be too surprised at his insistence on asking for your collaboration, because, like him, I am convinced that you can provide interesting material; and I assure you that, once one knows how to write correctly, the rest of one's "schooling" is really of little importance in this regard!

Do not worry about what Clavelle told me about ∴ Mercier; he has undoubtedly exaggerated the significance of some of the comments you made to him, and I even have the impression that the concern he felt about them still lingers a little; but all in all, this very concern is rather a favourable sign as far as he is concerned, for it shows the interest he takes in the work of the G. T.

Thank you for the correction regarding the portrait with the three rings; I am as unaware as you are as to who Hans Tucher might be, and I had never even seen this name before; but if the three rings do indeed refer to this person, as seems likely, then it would appear that he too played some role in the initiatory organisations of his time. According to what Clavelle told me, he has not yet been able to determine exactly what function the word "Noricus" refers to; I therefore do not know to what extent it is certain that it can only be fulfilled by a single person, and it may be that for the moment this is only a supposition. ∴ Granger should search the library in Lyon to see if there is any information there concerning Kléberger; he may discover something interesting in that regard. As for the connections with the Waldensians and Calvinism to which you allude, I have no idea what they may be, and I hope you will be able to tell me more about them later.

Regarding Protestantism, your remark about the almost complete abandonment of rituals is certainly quite correct, and even putting aside any question of doctrine, this is obviously a most serious shortcoming, which clearly shows that something essential has been lost in terms of doctrine. I hope you will be able to find more details on the question of "free inquiry", because it goes without saying that, from a traditional point of view, this is much more important than more or less subtle theological nuances that may have become more pronounced after the fact, as a consequence rather than a cause of the schism.

As for the non-initiatory nature of Christian rites, at least in their current state, the remarks you have shared with me confirm what Clavelle and I think, and even suggest that this must have been the case very early on, although the question of their origin remains very unclear. It seems to me that the term used by the Byzantine Church must have the double meaning of "initiation" and "consecration" (the latter also being of an exoteric nature), as is also the case in Sanskrit for the word "dîkshâ", which must be translated as one or the other depending on the context in which it is used. -- The preservation of the word "Amen" in its original Hebrew form (which is common to both Christian and Islamic traditions) is certainly far from insignificant, but I do not believe that it can be regarded as

a substitute for the absence of a traditional language; this is a peculiarity that surely cannot be without reason, but, whatever one may think of it, it must in any case be recognised that it does not facilitate the study of the deeper meaning of the Christian tradition...

I knew nothing about Abbé Tardif de Moidrey or his relationship with Léon Bloy, and I must say that I never knew anything specific about the story of A. M. Roullé, which seems truly strange; moreover, in everything related to La Salette, there is always a rather disturbing aspect. As for Léon Bloy himself, it goes without saying that it is above all his "sequel" that greatly increases his interest; the "authority" that people tend to attribute to him, as you say, is due in large part to the influence of the Maritain group. Were you present when Cerf expressed his excessive admiration for Maritain? The proposal that was made to establish a relationship with him, and the occasion on which it was made, seem particularly suspicious to me, because of the relentless and underhanded hostility he has always shown towards me.

I am astonished by what you are telling me about Cerf's "inventions"; despite everything I already knew, I would never have believed that it could go that far! The most unfortunate thing about this story is that none of the promises made to Clavelle were kept, and this makes me understand even better the disappointment he must have felt when he realised that everything ultimately boiled down to the job he currently has... I must admit, on the other hand, that I cannot guess who the person is that Cerf brought into play in his imagination, as I have never heard of any project for a dictionary of Sanskrit terms in my work; this is something entirely new to me, and even unexpected.

You mention a "History of the Dukes of Burgundy", but I cannot remember anything about it; could you tell me or remind me who the author is?

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒,

R. G.

Cairo, 8 September 1949

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

I owe you many apologies for being so late in replying this time; I received your three letters in succession, the first of which dates back to 30 June! But since then, I have always had things that, in one way or another, have prevented me from writing to you. I must also say that, after your first letter, I waited for the article you said you would send me. I was not surprised that it was somewhat delayed, having learned from Maridort that you were on holiday at the time; but it is especially since it arrived that I have been completely short of time, and I think Maridort may have already told you this.

First of all, thank you for running an errand for Hillel and sending me his

reply, which reassured me about his health; I wrote him a few words right away. As for the other troubles he mentions, I was not surprised, as I knew that his situation is unfortunately far from brilliant; the most unfortunate thing is that it is impossible to find any way to help him liquidate his remaining interests in Romania, which is hardly surprising given the current state of affairs in that country...

Coming back to your article, I thought it was just a review of J. B.'s book, but I think it's an excellent idea to use it as an opportunity to address a number of issues concerning symbols, and you can very well continue in this vein, as you say you intend to do. As for your concern that it might seem a little " disjointed", I don't think that should be a cause for concern, as it allows you to address various points that would not each be sufficient to merit an article on their own, but which are nonetheless interesting. All in all, I think it's very good as it is. Of course, on your return to Paris, you will have been able to correct the few inaccuracies of the kind you point out in your last letter, and no doubt also fill in what you left blank (in "The Grand Mystery laid open", I think it must be a trowel and a sword, but which hand should each of these objects be held in?). --A small detail while I think of it: I believe it should be spelled "graffiti" and not "graffiti"; at least, I am sure that is the spelling in Italian, and it must have been retained as such in French, but perhaps it would still be safer to check. -- Regarding the signs at the Carmelite monastery in Loudun, I would like to point out that, in addition to the shapes you mention, there is another one where not only the letters A and M are clearly visible, but also the letter V; but there is probably no need to mention this in this context, nor the fact that the letters ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴ are used by the Compagnons Charpentiers (no doubt because their patron saint is Saint Joseph). -- Another thing: the word "Firt" exists in Latin and, in this case, could mean "he supports" or "he sustains", which obviously relates to the idea of "strength" that you mention; this same idea is also found in the interpretation that this word is formed by combining the initials of "Fortitudine ejus Rhodum Temeit". I must say, however, that I do not know when the siege of Rhodes to which reference is made took place and where a prince of the House of Savoy must have intervened; I remember that on coins prior to Italian unification, mention is made of the title "King of Cyprus and Jerusalem", which may have some connection with the same events. One thing I have never been able to explain is why, according to Vuillaume, the motto F. E. R. T., interpreted in this way, also appears among those of the Rose-Croix de Heredom degree. -- Where El-Khidr is mentioned, you could perhaps refer in a footnote to Coomaraswamy's article, and also indicate the exact reference for the quotation from the Qur'an that follows (76:21). -- I seem to remember seeing the connection between "vitis" and "vita" mentioned somewhere (perhaps by Ragon?), but I cannot find it; in any case, it is not of great importance. -- Regarding the word "evergreen", to which you say you have added a note, you know that in English this is the name given to plants with evergreen leaves; but, as when we use in the same

When I hear the expression "green tree" in French, I wonder to what extent we are thinking specifically of the colour green in this case; what matters more is the uninterrupted persistence of vegetation, which makes it a symbol of immortality (and it is obviously because of this meaning that this name is given to American ⧈⧈.∴.); it is true that the colour green is associated with it, but in a secondary way. -- What you say about the serpent's forked tongue seems right to me; but what is the origin of the word "bisse" and what exactly does it mean? I wonder if it might also be related to the idea of duality, or if it is just an onomatopoeia imitating the hissing of a snake; have you found any explanation for this? -- I believe, without being entirely sure, that it was Wirth who made the connection between the shape of the trowel and the alchemical symbol for sulphur; I'm not sure how much importance should be attached to this, but in any case it does not contradict what you say, since it is still an essentially active principle. -- I can't think of anything else to point out to you, and as I have just reread everything carefully once again, I hope I haven't missed anything.

I will now address the other questions contained in your letters, and first of all, I must draw your attention to something that is inaccurate: there is no such root as GAB, because in Hebrew, as in Arabic, every root is formed of three letters (it goes without saying that vowels do not count). In reality, the roots G B ' (I am transcribing the letter AIN as best I can), "to be round", and G B R, "to be strong", are completely distinct, even though they share the first two letters. On the other hand, in both languages there is a certain relationship in meaning between the roots G B R, "to be strong", and K B R, "to be great"; this is often the case for words that differ only in the presence of the letters G and K in their root (it should also be noted that there are regions in Iraq where K replaces G in common pronunciation). On the other hand, as far as numbers are concerned, GB ` = 75, GBR = 205, KBR = 222; I cannot see how this could possibly give 131; perhaps you could explain to me where this number came from, and whether there has been some confusion with another word or simply a calculation error.

In the event that the number three is sufficient for the work to be possible, there is no need to look far, because in ⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈ itself, three members are sufficient to form a "simple ⧈.∴." (commonly called a "triangle" for this reason), which can work regularly as such, but which naturally cannot perform initiations, since it is neither "just" (5) nor "perfect" (7). -- In operative ⧈⧈⧈.∴, the work of the seventh degree is always performed by only three people, representing the three ⧈⧈.∴ ⧈⧈.∴, and without the presence of any other assistant. In this regard, I must point out, in case you have not yet seen it, that last April's issue of "Speculative Mason" contains a very interesting description of the annual rites of operative ⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈⧈; it contains information that relates to some of the questions I mentioned about the Lost Word, as well as other information that confirms what Mercier wrote in his article on Landmarks. -- In Islamic Turuq, there must be seven people to perform the dhikr in its complete form, but three people are sufficient to perform

perform certain parts.

The sacred word of the third degree, in the form it has in the French rite, is completely unknown in England; it was certainly used as a password in France, but I cannot now remember whether it was in the Adonhiramite rite or in some other rite that has now disappeared.

I am no better than you at explaining the absence of the Royal Arch degree in France; however, it should be noted that in England, many things have been gradually reintroduced to fill in as much as possible the gaps in the 1717 organisation, starting with the Master degree itself. It should also be noted that this corresponds in part to the seventh operative degree, I mean in relation to the legend of Hiram; this is undoubtedly why the degrees of Mark and even Royal Arch are generally considered to be developments more closely related to the degree of Fellow Craft; but it is clear that it has not been possible to restore a truly logical order to all this, which shows how difficult it was to repair the "damage" caused by Anderson and his associates. Wirth wrote somewhere that "Anderson was above all very adept at spoiling everything he touched", and I think this assessment is entirely justified!

The differences between the "techniques" of [redacted] and Hermeticism naturally correspond to those that exist between construction work and what might be called "metallurgical" work as the basis for their respective symbolisms; it should be noted, however, that the symbol of the "stone" is used in both cases, and with meanings that are far from unrelated (see the notes on pages 88 and 89 of the "Grande Triade" (1946 edition, La Table Ronde).

Your remark about the possibilities offered to some by the additional degrees is correct, although this may not be the only reason for their existence, as we must also take into account a kind of "preservation" role played by [redacted] with regard to the forms they represent, due to the fact that it is the only initiatory organisation that has survived in the West with sufficient vitality to ensure this at least relative conservation; Clavelle has made fairly clear allusions to this question in his work for the third degree.

What you tell me about Danier, J. Madaule, etc., is truly remarkable; whatever the intentions of one or the other may be, it seems clear to me that any infiltration by Maritain or his group must be prevented if possible. I believe that J. B. is like Ambelain, on very bad terms with J. Chaboseau for quite some time now; based on something Bastien told me, which I did not fully understand, I wonder if it is not because of this hostility that Ambelain has apparently ceased all activity in the Rectified Regime (contrary to what his pamphlet on Martinism would seem to suggest). As for P. Mariel, it is really curious that he never appeared at the library as he had announced; it is likely that he learned of the information given about him by Clavelle and that this was enough to dissuade him from pursuing his intention! You may have noticed, on the other hand, that what I wrote about the "collective unconscious" refers in part to the article he published in the May issue of Symbolisme. I had no idea where the

Barenton Castle; I must admit that I have never had the opportunity to visit that region...

Granger also told me about his discoveries concerning J. Kléberger, but with less detail than you have given me; there are still many things that seem very difficult to unravel, and it is understandable that the written documents can only refer to the "external" activity of the person in question. -- It is strange that the two medals bear the same date and age as Dürer's portrait; should we conclude that they were actually made in the same year, which would be quite surprising, or that these indications are purely symbolic? As for the so-called "trademark", which is undoubtedly something else entirely, I do not know if you have noticed its resemblance to certain "signatures" found in Agrippa, for example, which are in fact combinations of characters grouped in a manner quite similar to that of shorthand abbreviations.

As for the protection that Dürer is said to have received from several successive emperors, I am surprised by the chronological errors you have pointed out on Barmont's part, as I would have thought that he had access to more reliable historical "sources" than Bouillet's dictionary, which is "available to everyone"; at least that is what seemed to emerge from certain quotations, for which I must admit that I have never really understood the reasons for the mystery surrounding them.

As for the Waldensians, Granger told me that he would try to obtain information from Italy; however, I wonder to what extent those who still exist in Piedmont may have preserved the original doctrine and rites; has their association with Protestantism and the influence they may have been under altered their character? Some believe that the Waldensians emerged from a movement of Franciscan origin, whose tendencies they merely exaggerated; if this were really the case, the possible links with the "Fidèles d'Amour" could perhaps be explained quite easily by this; and this also reminds me that I once heard some of Maritain's disciples accuse the Franciscans of being "disguised Gnostics"! Incidentally, I would point out that [illegible].·. Saverio Fera, who was [illegible].·. [illegible].·. of [illegible] [illegible].·. [illegible].·. of Italy, was a Waldensian pastor.

The only chapter I am familiar with from Quillet's Histoire des Religions by Lantoine on [illegible], of which he sent me a separate print. -- I was not aware of the facts you mention concerning Japan, but I am not at all surprised, especially with regard to Shinto.

Returning to J. K. and his "affinities", it is a little difficult to make sense of so many characters, some of whom are not very well known; I have no idea, for example, where one might find precise information about Tucher and other Nurembergers, nor how to explain their hostility towards J. K., especially as this is complicated by the enigma of the three rings, if indeed it is the same Tucher that Dürer painted. What seems certain in any case is that J. K., while always professing Catholicism, had connections mainly with the Reformed side; in this respect, the problem is much the same for him as for Dürer, except that,

according to your remarks, it would seem that Dürer tended to "work" with the Lutherans and J. K. with the Calvinists. In any case, there must surely have been some hidden reason for all this, and it cannot have been simply a matter of individual sympathies, which would explain nothing, given that we are not dealing with just two or three isolated cases; moreover, it is quite likely that J. K.'s financial activities served to "cover up" something else... -- Another rather obscure point concerns J. K.'s will and his night-time burial; even if we accept your explanation, which is indeed plausible (since it goes without saying that in any case he cannot be considered a "disciple" of Calvin), there is still one question that remains unresolved: what could have been the reasons for keeping his death secret for several days? I know that this sometimes happened in the case of sovereigns, for dynastic or political reasons; but for a private individual, it seems much more unusual.

It is to be hoped that you will be able to determine more precisely when and how the assertion of "free inquiry" first appeared. It is quite certain that, in Calvin's own mind, it would have been highly incompatible with the uncompromising attitude for which some criticise him, particularly with regard to the death of Servetus. Of course, I understand very well how you came to be interested in Calvinism after Lutheranism, and I must say that, for my part, I found nothing disturbing about it. As for your "exoteric choice", I see that you had initially considered a solution other than Anglicanism; do not forget to tell me more about it, as you promised, because I have no idea what it is.

On the subject of the Paraclet, I remember that Clavelle once alluded to the possibility that some of its members had been in contact with J. K., but he didn't mention anything about Riçonnet to me. Moreover, he still has to tell me about certain figures in François Premier's entourage, but no doubt, as there are always other matters of more immediate urgency, he has not been able to find the time until now.

The question of the origins of the Christian priesthood is very obscure, like everything else relating to the early days of Christianity, and I am convinced that this obscurity was deliberate, intended to conceal certain changes that took place during that period. I touch on this question in the article, the first part of which will appear in this month's issue (an article that I was led to write rather against my will, as Clavelle can explain to you (Études Traditionnelles, September 1949, issue 27 and following, margin note by L. J.). This does not concern the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but if changes were made to it, they may well have been linked to everything else, although I must admit that I do not see exactly how. In any case, according to some, the early hierarchy would have included only bishops and deacons; priests would then have been, according to the etymological meaning of their designation, only the "elders" of the community, who exercised purely administrative functions. I remember hearing this thesis developed, a long time ago, by a certain Father Tramblay, a former

A Trappist monk who may not have been very orthodox in every respect, but who certainly had considerable erudition (he was, in fact, a Doctor of Theology). However, if this were really the case (I cannot say for sure myself, as I do not have the necessary documentation), the existence of the episcopate, with the apostolic succession that it implies, would remain an essential element. Father Tramblay himself insisted on this point, even stating clearly that any church without bishops should be considered non-existent. If we accept this, there is something about the Reformation, and more particularly Calvinism, that seems truly inexplicable and impossible to justify. I wanted to bring this point of view to your attention, and I would like to hear your thoughts on it.- On the other hand, why should a hierarchy similar to the pontifical hierarchies of antiquity necessarily have been "borrowed" from them, and why should it not also have existed in Christianity from its inception? If early Christianity had an initiatory character, as it seems to have had, such a similarity appears, on the contrary, to be quite natural and even, in a way, necessary. In any case, there is no doubt that the essential changes, whatever they may have been, were already complete at the time of Constantine, as you say, and even a little earlier, and that it was mainly at this time that the work of concealing what had existed previously had to be done; if it is a question of a transition from esotericism to exotericism, the reasons that made such concealment inevitable are fairly easy to understand.

The texts by pastors that you quote at the end of your letter are very interesting, and I find in them some of the ideas that Pastor Lecerf used to support; only, at that time, there were very few who followed him, whereas now, on the contrary, it seems that this tendency has prevailed in France over that of the "liberals". There remains the question of Calvin's "Thomism", which does not seem to be confirmed by what you tell me; however, I do not believe that Lecerf, who opposed it to Luther's Augustinianism, could have supported such a thing lightly...

The article in which Father Daniélou refrained from raising the question of the episcopate seems to me, as it does to you, to be the result of a "tactic" which, to say the least, lacks frankness; and, unfortunately, your conclusion on this point is probably only too accurate, especially when one considers the way in which the Eastern Churches that rallied to Rome have already been treated, to whom certain concessions were initially presented in such a way as to make them believe that they were definitive, whereas they were subsequently transformed into mere temporary tolerances!

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒.

R. G.

Cairo, 11 November 1949.

☒∴ ☒∴ ☒∴,

It has been quite some time since I received your letter dated 1st and 4th October,

and I think Maridort must have told you so that you would not be worried, especially since there are still many irregularities in the mail service at present. I apologise for being so late in replying to you once again; the truth is that I am finding it increasingly difficult to get through everything I have to do, and it is even starting to become a real cause for concern. It is now high time that I got down to work on the December issue; however, I do not want to delay writing to you for another week. I hope to finish my article on "Christianity and Initiation" for this issue, which has grown much longer than I thought it would when I started; the incidents that forced me to write it are indeed regrettable, as you say, and although the first part did not cause the "uproar" I feared, I wonder what will ultimately come of all this; Clavelle will no doubt tell you more about it...

Thank you very much for your good wishes on the birth of Ahmed; he is already two months old and doing wonderfully well; let us hope that this continues, as the health of children is often a great cause for concern...

Our friend from Saint Jean-le-Thomas wrote to me to say that he was unable to attend the last Convent for "financial" reasons; unfortunately, it seems that his situation is still not improving in this regard. As for the Convent, it is certain that the impression it has left this time is not very favourable, and this difference from last year is quite surprising, although, to tell the truth, such a lack of continuity is not unusual in the "behaviour" of assemblies of all kinds. Marty's bad mood is understandable, but what is particularly annoying for the G. T. is that he seems to blame
J. C. responsible for the failure of his project; surely there was no need for this new cause of disharmony!

Regarding the motto FERT, it is rather unusual that the siege of Rhodes to which it refers, according to one interpretation, appears never to have actually taken place. Where did this "legend" come from? I had never heard of the name "Comte Vert" given to the founder of the Annonciades; do historians offer any explanations for this? As for the word "bissa", I had not thought of this Italian etymology; in any case, the word itself is certainly curious; do we know when it was adopted as a heraldic term? -- I hope you can tell me more about the value 131 attributed to ∴, as it intrigues me; I still don't understand how it can be obtained.

The "initiatory toilet" of the different degrees in England seems to be inspired by reasons of "symmetry" in a way; I do not know if this practice is really very old, which would obviously give it more importance. In any case, the uncovered right arm is something very widespread; to the various examples you cite, we can add that of the "ihrûna" of the pilgrimage; but the reason why it is in the second degree is not very clear. However, it is as if in opposition to the left arm uncovered in the first degree, and this, which would generally be considered an anomaly in traditional costume, may correspond to the condition of the profane. What makes me think this is that in the Maghreb, the burnous is worn with the opening on the right, in order to leave the right arm free; but in the past, Jews were obliged to wear it with the opening on the left as a

a distinctive mark. As for the third degree, the connection with the representations of Zeus, while not impossible, seems highly doubtful to me. What you have noticed about the statues of Gudea is curious; the connection with the text of Isaiah that you quote seems more than likely to me; it is also possible (but I would not dare to assert anything on this point) that this same text inspired the application of the seal of the ⊠.∴, although this is made on the arm of the recipient and not on his shoulder. Another point on this subject: according to Islamic tradition, the Prophets have a "seal" or special mark on their bodies; however, this is not found on the shoulder but, it seems, on the upper back, slightly below the cervical region, that is to say, between the two shoulders.

As for the "corpse" of "little ⊠⊠⊠.∴", if we took it to symbolise the death of the "old man", it would somewhat duplicate the skull in the cabinet of reflection. It seems to me that the most plausible explanation is the one related, as you say, to the ancient "human sacrifice" for the foundation of a building; some have also considered a similar interpretation for the murder of Hiram himself, but unfortunately I cannot remember where I saw this and therefore cannot provide you with any references. In any case, what is certain is that this "human sacrifice" (in Sanskrit "purusha-mâdha") is a representation of that of the primordial Purusha according to the Veda; you can refer to my article "Gathering what is scattered" on this subject, and you will see that I also considered this meaning for the murders of Osiris and Hiram. It may also be worth noting, with regard to this interpretation, that, at the first degree, the recipient sees the "corpse" only from a distance and more or less indistinctly, whereas at the third degree he will have to identify with it. it is easy to understand that someone who has only just emerged from the profane state is not fit to be the victim of this sacrifice, which implies a kind of "deification".

For the passage in the "Inferno" where Virgil turns Dante around so that he does not see Medusa, it seems to me that the essential point is this: it is a matter of avoiding the "petrification" caused by the gaze of Medusa; however, in general, turning around or looking back, on the contrary, is said to have the consequence of "petrification"; so there is a kind of reversal here that may be related to the fact that it occurs during the 'descent'. I believe that, in short, the explanation must lie mainly in the very idea of 'petrification'; I am not sure at the moment how this could be formulated exactly, but perhaps you could think about it a little and let me know what you think. As for the "messenger from Heaven", the usual interpretation considers him to be an angel, and indeed "angel" means "messenger"; the difficulty is knowing what he represents here more precisely. It seems just as unlikely to me as it does to you that he is Aeneas, and there is probably no need to try to identify him with any historical figure; why not consider him, based on the words he himself utters, as a kind of personified expression of the divine Will, in accordance with the doctrine that an angel is, in reality, above all a manifestation of a divine attribute? -- As for the story of Ulysses, lines 94-96 would seem particularly likely to justify your interpretation; on the other hand, the mention of the Pillars of Hercules as a boundary that

man must not cross, is noteworthy in connection with what I pointed out at the end of my article "About the two Saint Johns"; they seem to indicate here that Ulysses has followed an illegitimate path, and although he can see the mountain of Purgatory from afar, he cannot reach it, let alone the "Earthly Paradise" at its summit.

In the early days, baptism was administered exclusively by bishops, and only on a specific day (I believe it was the day before Easter); the extension of the right to confer it to all Christians, at any time, is obviously a consequence of the fact that it was considered an indispensable condition for "salvation", so that it had to be made as easily accessible as possible; of course, this also explains why it came to be given to children as soon as possible after their birth. This way of looking at baptism does not seem to have existed at the beginning, and it even appears that, in some churches at least, those born to Christian parents were considered Christians by right and were not baptised, which led some to believe that Christian baptism was derived from the baptism of proselytes that was practised among the Jews. I discussed this question with Clavelle some time ago; it is, in short, as complex and obscure as everything else relating to the origins of Christianity. -- In any case, I do not think that the validity of Protestant baptism has ever been disputed; but the other rites cannot be performed in the absence of priests, and there can be no priests where there are no bishops to confer ordination; so we always come back, in the end, to the question of the episcopate and apostolic succession. On the other hand, it is true, as you say, that Christ set no other conditions for his presence than that of being gathered in his name; but we still need to know what the words "in his name" actually imply, particularly from a ritual point of view, as their meaning is quite different, and much more "technical", than what they may represent for modern people. I have already made a few references to this, and perhaps I will have the opportunity to return to it again one day. The formula "Ubi Christus, ibi Ecclesia" must undoubtedly be considered in relation to this same question, the name "Ecclesia" applying properly to the gathering "in the name of Christ". Discussions relating to the "ecumenical movement" are certainly interesting, but what they seem to prove to me above all is that there are currently many differences of opinion almost everywhere concerning the very notion of the Church; and it could be that the more or less complete forgetting of the original meaning of the expression "in the name of Christ" has a lot to do with all these difficulties. -- If we consider an initiatory origin of Christianity, there should be, in this regard, a ritual form of invocation that is regularly transmitted; this became impossible with "externalisation", at least for most Christians, but something of this kind has been preserved to this day in Hesychasm, and this is one of the reasons why it can be considered to have a truly initiatory character.

The new information about Dürer further confirms his close ties to the Reformation, and I now understand something that I had not been able to understand until now: in relation to Barmont's article, someone (I

believe, without being entirely sure, that it must have been Préau) raised the question of Dürer's "Lutheranism" and quoted the words he is said to have uttered on learning of Luther's death; However, as Clavelle pointed out, this was chronologically impossible, since Dürer died first; but I believe that what he actually wrote was in response to the false rumour of Luther's death; the impossibility in question was therefore only apparent, and, as far as I can remember, these words were indeed the ones you reproduce.

Regarding the Franciscans, the story of Brother Elie is indeed very curious and would seem to indicate that there was "something" at the beginning, but that it did not last long. it could be, however, that it remained for some time among a few members of the Order (I am thinking in particular of Joachim of Fiore), but in any case, it goes without saying that nothing remains of it today. There is often a certain intellectual eccentricity among the Capuchins (I am not referring to the other branches of the Friars Minor), but this certainly does not indicate any esoteric knowledge. I remember that, with regard to the extraordinary linguistic ramblings of Fr. Hilaire de Barenton, a priest once said to me: "We will never know everything that goes on in the mind of a Capuchin!" I knew that Saint Anthony of Padua specialised in finding lost objects, but I did not know that he dealt more specifically with keys, which, given the role he seems to have played, is rather ironic. A very amusing story is that of the jealousy that the popularity of this saint aroused among the Dominicans, who were always in rivalry with the Franciscans, and which gave rise to Saint Expeditus. Do you know it? -- Returning to the main question, it is certain that the failure of attempts to revive Catholicism may have led to the search for another solution; what is certainly surprising in this case is that the Reformation had such unfortunate consequences from a traditional point of view... It is true, on the other hand, that there seems to have been, as you say, a considerable number of authentic initiates among the Protestants since the sixteenth century; but could this not be explained, at least to some extent, by the growing hostility of the Catholic authorities towards all forms of esotericism? It must also be acknowledged that some, such as Jacob Boehme, were also subjected to much persecution within their own Church.

Canon Paquier specialised in the study of Luther and Augustinianism; it was not he who told me about Calvin's Thomism, but Pastor Lecerf; who insisted in particular on the theory of "physical pre-motivation", but I admit that I would be unable to explain exactly what this is at present, as these are things that are easily forgotten. As for the criticisms of St Thomas that you have noted in Calvin, they may only relate to more specific points; the absence of any other mention of St. Thomas does not prove much, because at that time it was not customary to explicitly cite the authors whose ideas one adopted, whereas on the contrary it was necessary to name them when one wanted to indicate that one differed from their opinion. --- As for Father Daniélou and what you say about the Lord's Supper, I am increasingly under the impression that, in many circumstances, he has a somewhat "political" attitude that does not inspire

inspire much confidence...

Based on the details you have given me, it seems clear that falsification of J. K.'s will cannot be considered; the mystery of the burial still seems difficult to solve. I know nothing about the history of Bern in the sixteenth century, but it may indeed be that there are some interesting aspects to this; I have always thought that the bear in the city's name must have some symbolic value, probably dating back to the Celts. --- It would also be interesting to study the case of Briçonnet more thoroughly, if possible; Clavelle told me some time ago that he would talk to me again about certain figures in the entourage of François Premier, but so many other more urgent matters have arisen that he has never found the time. Regarding Francis I, I had pointed out to him the passage in Ambelain's book on Martinism where he discusses the "Agla"; there are certainly some fanciful assertions there (the number four, for example, is by no means a sign particular to printers, as he claims), but there are also points that would require closer examination.

I think Clavelle and Granger will share with you my response to what they both wrote to me about daily personal work. Detoit Manbrini was a Protestant pastor, although I believe he was no longer in the ministry when he wrote his book. I have a copy of it, but I haven't reread it in a long time; despite the interesting things it certainly contains (I seem to remember quoting two or three of them in L'Erreur spirite), I must say that, on the whole, it left me with the impression of being a little too nebulous and diffuse.

Don't forget to tell me more about your "polytréviste" solution and the cult of "Dia Dia"; could you also explain to me what you mean by the similarity in geographical location that you noticed between Arles and Cairo?

Best ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠.

R. G.

Cairo, 6 December 1949

⊠.∴ ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴,

I have just received your letter of 29 November, and I am glad to see that mine did not take very long to reach you.

Thank you for the various items you kindly took the trouble to send me on behalf of Clavelle and Maridort. The guild tokens (I have a vague recollection of having seen some at the Cluny Museum) were undoubtedly the same as what are known as "tokens" in English. The name Saint Blaise is indeed the ancient word "bleiz", which means wolf; there is also Saint Loup, which is the Latin translation of the same name, and Saint Leu, which is simply a variant. The symbolism of the wolf is generally related to light; this was particularly true among the Greeks (λυχοζ, wolf, and λυχη, light, hence the name of Apollo Lycian), and it seems that this was also the case among the Celts; I have never found any indication of a connection with lightning or thunder, but,

as lightning is also light, it is not entirely impossible.

The story of the burial and resurrection of the Alléluias, which I did not know at all, is really very curious. There seems to be no doubt that it implies a kind of assimilation to Christ, for I do not see how these rites could be understood otherwise; but then one may wonder when and how this word, which is in reality neither a name nor an epithet, came to be used to designate Christ; have you found any indication of this?

What you tell me about Clouard's book does indeed seem to indicate that his sympathies do not lie with A. F.; it is true that he may have fallen out with her, like Maritain and others; in any case, his admiration for Claudel seems really quite excessive!

As for the question of baptism being reserved for bishops, it is likely, based on what you have pointed out to me, that this does not date back to the very beginning of Christianity, but it is nevertheless mentioned by the Fathers who predate the Council of Nicaea (I seem to recall that it is found in Origen, among others); but what I do not quite understand is the reason that led to this restriction at a certain point in time, whereas the subsequent generalisation of the faculty to baptise is easily explainable. The exclusion of women from this right, according to the "Didascalia", is also quite singular; decidedly, all this is extremely obscure, and seems to become even more so the more one examines it closely... I would like to ask you what an "Andian" bishop is, as this word means absolutely nothing to me; there is also the question of the "Apostolic Constitutions", about which I have never seen much; but obviously we would never finish with all this. Incidentally, I would point out that there is reason to be wary of the works of Mgr. Duchesne, whose modernist tendencies are strongly accentuated, which is not without influence on the presentation of historical facts. As for the date on which baptism was conferred, there may have been differences between churches, but I believe that in any case the eve of Easter was quite common. As for Pentecost, it would seem, at least logically, that it should be more appropriate for confirmation, but to tell the truth, I have never found anything on this point.

As for the story of the secretary of the Eudiac Order, I had indeed asked Maridort if he could give me some explanations; I was particularly intrigued by his reference to an attack on Saint Paul, and I had no idea that it was a "discovery" of this magnitude; where could it have come from? I was also surprised by D. de G.'s recommendation, but I thought that at least he knew him personally; what you are telling me makes it even more extraordinary. It is certainly true that, in general, it is better to interview a candidate in order to get a more accurate picture of who they are, but in this particular case, I think that reading their "curriculum vitae" was more than enough! As for the altruistic surgeon, whose plans I already knew about through Clavelle, he is probably not very dangerous, but I fear he may be somewhat troublesome. I had understood that it was mainly Cerf who supported his candidacy; I did not know that Marty was also so interested in him.

Thank you for the historical information concerning the motto F E R T and the

foundation of the Annonciade; this non-existent seat of Rhodes is truly bizarre. I also note that the mottos of the "Green Count" are rather enigmatic; I suppose that "mo anstre" must be an anagram for "mon astre" (my star), but what could "Alahac" possibly mean? -- The article on Nostradamus that I reviewed is indeed published as a separate brochure, and I have never seen anything else from the journal in which it appeared.

Saint Expeditus did not actually belong to the Order of Preachers or any other order, for the simple reason that he never existed. At a Dominican chapter meeting, complaints were made about the great success of Saint Anthony of Padua, and it was said that they should also have a saint who could rival him, to which someone replied: "Expedit", meaning "that is fitting". This word seemed to be the perfect name for the new saint; another of its meanings determined his "speciality", which was to bring urgent matters to a successful conclusion; and, as he had to be "situated" historically somewhere, he was made one of the martyrs of the Theban Legion, which was obviously unverifiable. In keeping with the role attributed to him, he was depicted crushing a raven under his foot, which, with its cawing, says "cras" (tomorrow), to which the saint replies "hodie" (today), a word inscribed on a cross he holds in his hand. It must be acknowledged that all this was very ingeniously combined, but I believe, like you, that Saint Anthony of Padua still has a larger "clientele".

As for the "rhomboi", I believe that there is nothing very specific in the ancient texts, only allusions, since we have never been able to ascertain exactly what they were. I have a vague recollection that there must be something in one of Jamblique's treatises, but I would not dare to say so with any certainty. I can only think of Mario Meunier who could provide information on this, and I seem to recall that he mentioned it to me once; if Clavelle still sees him from time to time, he could perhaps ask him about it.

The arrangement you propose for the questions at the beginning of the instruction is perhaps the best solution; in any case, it is perfectly acceptable as it stands.

The magazine "Ur" was edited by Evola; as he had fallen out with Reghini at the time, the latter then produced "Ignis" as a follow-up to "Atanor"; but I cannot remember whether Parise also contributed to "Ur" despite these disagreements.

As you think, it is entirely within the role of the Couvreur to shake the barrel of stones. I don't remember if I pointed out to you that everything I told you about thunder, etc., helps to justify the interpretation of the enigmatic "faculty of abrac" as "ha-baraq" (in Hebrew) or "el-barq" (in Arabic), meaning lightning or thunder.

Regarding the Zumzumian, here is the exact wording found in a series of notes entitled "Arcane Associations" and published by the "Societas Rosicruciana in America" (1905): "Ancient Order of Zuzimites. -- The Order of Zuzimites are not much known in the United States, except by membership in the Order abroad. The Order is a secret society, analogous to Masonry but in no way antagonistic to it, nor to the various rites and ceremonics of Masonry. The Order is claimed to date back to the second century A.M. Authentic chronicles mention the Zuzimites in the year 2097 A.M., or about 3809 years ago, as being 'a people great and many' (Gen., 14,

5). There are 51 recognised degrees, subdivided into several series. The first three are Neophyte, Graduate and Fellow; these constitute Zuzimitism proper. The next two degrees constitute Marked Zuzimitism. Then the series are known as Celestine Zuzimitism. Then follow the series Arch, Acetasite, Cabbalite, and Armite Zuzimites; and finally Zam Zuzimites, or Zamzuminus. They have their Tents, and Grand Tabernacles. The work of the Order is claimed to be almost perfect. Seven members may organise a Tent. "-- This answers your question; I could not remember the exact title of the Order, which singularly distorts the Hebrew word..... which is found to be more or less correct in the demonstration of the last degree only); the imitation of the ∴ is evident on several points. Apart from that, I have never found any other information about this organisation.

I have the volume entitled "Official Medicine and Heretical Medicines"; the best article, in my opinion, is that by Dr. Galimard, despite certain inaccurate or dubious "correspondences" that I have pointed out to him; as for Dr Winter's article, it was only a sketch of a more important work he had in mind, but which he seems not to have found the time to complete so far. -- What you pointed out in the article on miraculous healings is indeed enormous; I need not tell you that I fully agree with your thoughts on this subject!

Your remarks about traditional "lineages", with regard to Islamic tradition and Hermeticism as the "legacy" of Egyptian tradition, are also entirely justified. On this subject, I must point out that, in pre-Islamic times, there always existed among the Arabs, at least among a minority (which has undoubtedly become small in recent times), what was called "ed-dîn el-hanîf", which was considered to be identical to the religion of Abraham itself; continuity was thus maintained from Ishmael to Islam.

I cannot say whether anything of the influence of the "Ancients" has actually survived in the American rituals currently in use; I only know that, as you say, there were ∴ established by both the "Ancients" and the "Moderns", and that members who moved from one Obedience to the other had to be "regularised" (the same applying in both directions). One question I have never been able to find an explanation for is the origin of the notable difference between the English and American rituals of the Royal Arch degree.- The maintenance of physical disqualifications is now much debated even in America, and for entirely secular reasons; I mentioned this briefly in a review of "Speculative Mason" (in the March 1948 issue of E. T.).

The question of the relationship between the cockerel and mercury would certainly need to be examined more closely; I hope you will be able to discuss it with me again another time. As for the cockerel on the drum, I had not thought to refer to Lanoi-Villedieu, whose interpretations, to tell the truth, are often highly questionable; in any case, as far as the "holy war" and the "great Peace" are concerned, you are quite right.

What you tell me about this ancient apron worn by the of the of Avignon would seem to confirm that the cord must indeed go twice around the waist; it would certainly be worthwhile to restore this practice in general, given what we have discussed about the "cable-tow".

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒,

R. G.

Cairo, 6 March 1950.

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

I received your two letters dated 6 and 10 February, but I have taken much longer than I would have liked to reply; I hope you will excuse me for this.
First of all, thank you for your good wishes for us all; I hardly dare send you mine, as they are so out of season now, but please believe that they are no less sincere for that! The discomfort caused by the cold has contributed greatly to my being behind schedule with everything; fortunately, that seems to be over at last.

Thank you also for the information about Gomer; I see that I was not mistaken in thinking it was a mistake, but I am not entirely sure I have read it correctly: is it Gamel or Gomel?

I have received the new ritual of the "Three Rings", which I find very good overall; as your letter had led me to expect, there is an inaccuracy regarding the "G. and R. S." (also called "S. of joy and exaltation"), but I have given Maridort the necessary instructions to correct it. -- As for the reversal of the third degree table, I can't see any other way of proceeding than the one you describe, but I'm not sure whether it can really be compared to the "shifting of lights" in Kabbalah, which seems to refer in reality to the transfer of the centre of consciousness from the heart.

Tokens are not coins in the strict sense of the word, but medals of various shapes; the speculative Mason has provided some reproductions, but I cannot remember when and cannot find them at the moment. The ancient Romans also had something similar, which, if I remember correctly, was called a tessera. The phonetic assimilation of Saint Louis to Saint Loup or Saint Lou is indeed not impossible; Louis and Clovis are indeed the same name, and the ancient Germanic form is Hludwig, with a strong guttural aspiration at the beginning.

I agree with you that modern "critical" works will not be able to dispel the obscurity surrounding early Christianity. -- Regarding the Andeans, I have not yet received the "caption", but I hope, based on what you have told me, that I will receive it soon, and I thank you in advance.

You mentioned Mordvinoff's illness to me; almost immediately afterwards, I heard the sad news of his death, which I had not expected at all; I was all the more saddened as I had known him well for a long time; he is the first member of the G. T. to pass away...

The story of the altruistic surgeon's candidacy is truly extraordinary from start to finish; it is also surprising that Marty took this matter so much to heart! As for B., I was very happy, as you can imagine, to learn

that his application had been rejected by a large majority; but what is not very reassuring, despite everything, is that in order to achieve this result, it was necessary to invoke reasons other than his disability...

As for the motto "Alhac", it can only mean "Allah Ha A", i.e. "God (is) Truth"; I am surprised I did not think of that straight away. As for the words in "The Grant Mystery beid open", I confess that I do not know what they mean; could you explain them to me?

I am not familiar with Campbell-Everden's book, and I am not sure what the expression "downwards" refers to, but perhaps it refers to the fact that, in operative Masonry, Solomon's throne is in the West (which corresponds to the actual orientation of the Temple of Jerusalem, whose entrance was in the East). As for the seventh degree, it is indeed true that it is conferred by only three members and without the presence of any other assistants.

The practice of giving confirmation immediately after baptism is not unique to the Armenian Church, but also exists in various branches of the Orthodox Church; this obviously implies that it can be conferred by a simple priest, and not only by a bishop as in the Catholic Church. I believe that it is accepted in all Christian Churches that, in case of necessity, baptism can be validly conferred even by a non-Christian, and in any case this is so in Catholicism; It was recently pointed out to me that this seems quite normal, even for an exoteric rite, because it is a sacrament that someone else can transmit that they have not received themselves. To tell the truth, I am not sure what to think about this or how it could be justified; it is yet another mystery among many others...

Your remarks about Hippocrates and Galen seem quite right to me, and although it is still rather difficult to know what the current attempts at a "return to Hippocrates" will lead to, it is certainly not impossible that they may have some connection with the "desolidification" of the world; but it might be going a bit too far to envisage similar repercussions with regard to rituals, and in any case I cannot see any evidence of this at present.

It is rather unusual that, at the "Parthenon" (☒.∴ ☒.∴), so much importance is attached to philosophical questions and other matters of an equally secular nature; one can only hope that you will be able to get through it without too much trouble... -- As for your work, I can't think of any other examples of name changes apart from those you mention, but that certainly doesn't mean there weren't any; it goes without saying that the practice in this regard in the Strict Observance was maintained in the higher degrees of the Rectified Regime. On reflection, there may also be the African Architects, but I cannot find any specific information on this to enable me to confirm it. I do not think it is necessary to mention the mottos used as signatures by the members of an organisation as "phantasmagorical" as the "Golden Dawn", which, moreover, never claimed to have any Masonic character whatsoever; this would inevitably lead to a more general discussion of Rosicrucian and pseudo-Rosicrucian organisations, which would greatly complicate the issue. At the very least, a reference to the Compagnonnage might be more

appropriate, given its obvious connection with operative ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠.

The author of the articles on "Symbolism" signed "La lettre G" is François Ménard; it was supposed to be a kind of collective signature, but in fact, he is the only one who has ever used it so far. As for Persigout, Lepage simply "eliminated" him because he was annoyed by his continual display of poorly digested erudition, which he even compares to that of F. --D.! The signature "Eques a Paracleto" naturally indicates that Persigout must have the rank of C.B.C.S., but I have no idea from whom he may have received it. The same is true of Probst-Biraben; I was completely unaware that he had this title, but the last letter I received from him is signed "Eques a Palmo Resurgente".

Mercier told me about the project to found Franco-Italian ⊠⊠.∴; he also wrote "⊠.∴ ⊠.∴ of Italy", but this is no reason to believe that it is not in fact the ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴, because, following the international recognition of ⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠.∴ ⊠⊠⊠⊠.∴, the symbolic ⊠⊠.∴ of this ⊠⊠.∴ formed, under the title of ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴ Nationale, an autonomous organisation whose situation vis-à-vis the ⊠⊠⊠.∴ ⊠⊠⊠⊠.∴ is essentially the same as that of the ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴ of France. In any case, not only is what you told him perfectly correct, but there are other reasons to be cautious, as I have just explained to him in my reply to his letter. Indeed, the situation is still far from being completely clear; even with regard to the ⊠.∴ ⊠.∴, despite recognition in principle, the American ⊠⊠⊠.∴ ⊠⊠⊠⊠.∴ remain extremely reserved in their attitude; on the other hand, the various dissident ⊠⊠⊠.∴ ⊠⊠⊠⊠.∴ that still existed in Italy merged a few months ago, resulting in the formation of a new ⊠⊠⊠.∴ ⊠⊠⊠⊠.∴ that could well succeed one day or another in calling everything into question.

I did not remember the letter from the Russian bishops that was mentioned some time ago in the R.I.S.S.; it is true that, at that time, I had no reason to pay particular attention to it. I never knew the name of the religious to whom Fr. Bouyer had turned after Fr. Poucel's departure, but I had understood, for some reason, that he was also a Jesuit.

I had not heard about the story of this "monster" that was said to have washed up on the coast of Egypt, so I would be unable to say how much truth there is in it; I must admit that I do not have time to read the newspapers, unless something of particular interest is brought to my attention. I must remember to mention this to Lionnet the next time I see him, as he is the only person I know who, due to his position at the Suez Canal, might have accurate information on the subject.

Yours ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠.

R. G.

Cairo, 4 June 1950.

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

I received your letter of 22 May a few days ago, but I have been so busy with all sorts of things lately that I have not been able to reply immediately. I was very happy to hear from you, as it had been a long time since I had heard anything from you, and I was even a little worried, as Mercier had told me in his last letter that you were quite tired, but I am pleased to see that you seem to be feeling better now. He did not specify that you were suffering from liver problems; what Clavelle told you about this is quite correct, and there is no doubt that there is a connection between the sensitivity of this organ and the importance that was once attributed to it for divination; I seem to recall that models of livers were found in Chaldea, which were apparently used for studies of this kind.

The last letter I wrote to you must have been on 6 March; did you receive it in good time? I wonder if you have written to me since then, as there are several things that you seem to have already mentioned to me; for some time now, I have noticed almost daily that letters or other items have gone astray in the post, which seems highly unusual and, in any case, very inconvenient. Clavelle, when sending me copies of two lost letters, enclosed a note saying that he would write to me again soon, but it has been quite some time now and I have received nothing else. I hope that my work for the June issue reached him safely. -- On the other hand, I am very worried about Maridort, from whom I have had no news for at least two months; I fear that the state of his affairs may be the cause of this silence, but I have not had any details about this (only a few hints from Clavelle and Mercier), and I would very much like to know exactly what is going on; could this have forced him to take time off? I would prefer that, because what I fear most is that his troubles and worries have made him ill...

I thought your article was very good; have you been able to prepare the sequel? Marius Lepage seems to have believed that this article was mine, perhaps thinking that I had signed it with another name because of J. B.'s bad temper; I naturally corrected him, and I thought there was no harm in letting him know the real author.

I asked you a question about Gomel or Gamel, as I wasn't sure I had read the word correctly in your last letter (or at least the last one I received); although the vowels are of secondary importance, I would be grateful if you could give me the exact form, as I may have to refer to it in a forthcoming article, in which I intend to return to what was said in the Speculative Mason about the letter G and the swastika.

I did not know that you had written to Mrs. Debenhane; thank you for sharing the important parts of her letter with me; it is all very interesting, but the point that remains somewhat troubling is that the information still comes from Clement Stretton, who is said to have "restored" the ritual in a way that cannot be entirely trusted. The name Mr Bardon vaguely reminds me of something that must be related to articles that appeared in a magazine some time ago.

American one, which I have unfortunately still not been able to get hold of. I have never been able to fully understand what this "Slant Masons" business was all about, or even what the expression actually means; I remember it being mentioned once before in "Speculative Mason", but I have never heard of anything like it here; I do not know why Europeans always attribute all sorts of fanciful things to Egypt... -- As for the passage you were unable to decipher entirely, it is indeed the first words of the Gospel of St John in Greek: " En Archê în ho Logos"; but I doubt that there is anything more than a phonetic similarity between the Greek "archê" and the word "arche"; one might think of a common root, whatever its original meaning, but this is unlikely, because the Greek word would then have to be spelled with a Kappa and not with a Chi. Approximate transcriptions often give rise to many unjustified assimilations; this is especially evident in Hebrew and Arabic words written as best they can in Latin characters... -- Your hypothesis about the possible confidences of certain operative Masons is certainly very plausible, but there is one objection to it: that S.. Bothwell-Gosse claimed to have attained the seventh operative degree, which led me to believe that there must have been some dissident organisation that admitted women; this is another point that is not entirely clear.

As for rituals, I believe that those of Scotland and Ireland may have retained certain elements that are older than those found in the most widespread English rituals today (and it is possible that the same is true of some American rituals that are derived from them); I know nothing about the Oxford ritual. In any case, the passage you quote is very curious, and the allusion to the symbolism of navigation is particularly clear.

I cannot remember at the moment in what context the phrase "light in darkness and darkness in light" appears; I will have to try to find it again.

I see nothing on the Islamic side that would indicate that Abraham received elements of the "Pharaonic" tradition; according to Josephus, followed by a good number of medieval authors, it was he who taught certain sciences to the Egyptians.

Yours ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒.

R. G.

Cairo, 4 July 1950.

☒∴ ☒∴ ☒∴,

I received your letter dated 15 June some time ago; what prevented me from replying sooner was that, a few days earlier, I received a huge bundle of letters that I thought had been lost (most of them dated from two or three months ago) and which had reappeared as inexplicably as they had disappeared; I have not

yet managed to catch up on everything! Among these letters were, of course, several from Clavelle and Maridort, so I learned of the accident that befell the latter's operation in Gabon, and I also received news of his trip to North Africa. On the other hand, it was only through you that I learned that Danier had been able to do something to improve Clavelle's situation, and I am very surprised that I have not yet received any letters more recent than 9 May. To tell the truth, I am still missing a number of things, which may have been lost for good; among them must be the letter in which one or other of our friends gave me the answer about the spelling of "Gamel, etc., because none of the letters I have received mention it (it was the absence of these letters that made me think that one of them must have been lost).

As you thought, I do indeed have the "Early Masonic Catechisms", as well as most of D. Knoop's works, but unfortunately I have not yet had time to read everything; if I had thought that "The Great Mystery laid open" was in that volume, I would have referred to it immediately when you mentioned it to me. Among the words in question, there is clearly "Lâ ilaha illâ'Llah" (the translation of which is, incidentally, quite correct: "There is no other God but God"). I also read, for the inventor of the secret word, "Shaikh Shihâbad-Dîn", followed by a second name (or rather a "laqab") that is probably distorted and which I cannot guess (there is indeed a well-known Shaikh named Shâbâb-d-Dîn Sahrawardi, but it does not seem possible that this is it). As for the rest, at least for the moment, it seems completely unintelligible to me; no matter how I try to pronounce these words in every possible way, in case it is some kind of roughly approximate phonetic transcription, I cannot identify anything.

It was only four or five days ago that I received the June issue of Symbolisme; so it was only after receiving your letter that I was able to read Lepage's review; it is rather annoying, but on closer inspection, it seems to me that when he refers to the "indisputable Master", his intention was only to express his own opinion (which I find surprising, incidentally) and not to attribute it to you. It is nonetheless regrettable that there could be any ambiguity on this point, and even that your article was taken as a pretext for such praise; but I am not sure what can be done about it, and I will have to give it some more thought. I do not know if there would really be any disadvantage in your writing to Lepage (Clavelle may have an idea on this subject that escapes me); I could also speak to him about it myself at a future opportunity, but I fear that if I intervene, he may attribute it to some resentment caused by J. B.'s more or less hostile remarks about me; what do you think?

-It is rather surprising that J. B. wrote to you so kindly, as it seems that this is not his usual habit; you were certainly right not to mention the sentence about me in your reply. Besides, you know that the main reason I chose not to review his book was because I thought it best not to risk provoking any more unpleasant reactions from him.

Thank you for your explanation regarding the origin of your correspondence with Mr C. D.; I believe that the information reproduced by Lepage in his article on the "Jachin" must also come from her. Dr Thomas Carr, who is mentioned there

, is the author of the articles I mentioned to you, which unfortunately I still cannot find; his name had escaped me, but I recognised it as soon as I saw it. -- Regarding Maurice Gloton, Clavelle told me that he had a very good impression of him; it is just a pity that he is hampered by a family environment that is obviously completely opposed to traditional ideas.

I cannot understand why Cerf waited so long to talk to you again about the second degree ritual, as there is very little time left; in these circumstances, you were probably right to stick to what you said, as a complete "restoration" would be very difficult, and besides, it is clear that it is mainly the usual "speeches" that are truly lamentable; I therefore hope that you will be able to get through it without too much trouble and that you will complete it in due course. Of course, it would not be possible to send it to me early enough for me to share my observations with you, but I trust that you will send it to me anyway when it is finished, as I will be interested in it regardless.

Yours sincerely.

R. G.

Cairo, 24 July 1950.

☒.∴ ☒.∴ ☒.∴,

Your letter of 15 July arrived on the 21st; correspondence seems to be working much better at the moment, and it is to be hoped that this will continue...

I am not surprised that you have been very busy arranging the ritual for the second degree; you must be glad to have finished, and we hope that you have achieved as satisfactory a result as possible; thank you in advance for sending me a copy. -- What you say about the square test seems fine to me, but I do not think there is any reason to consider the recipient as the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle, because, in reality, it seems to me that the square should rather be placed flat on his chest (it is not with the points of a square that one checks the straightness of an angle). As for the compass used at the beginning of the raising, I do not know if there is a well-defined rule for the angle at which it should be opened, but I seem to remember seeing somewhere that it is 60 degrees (the angle of an equilateral triangle). -- You were certainly right to remove the five "philosophers"; as for the two spheres, there is not much to say about them, as there is no doubt that they are a very modern addition, but as they have clearly taken.....

[PAGE 164 RIGHT CORNER, 93 MIDDLE OF PAGE MISSING]

... it is clear that their distinction corresponds to something that dates back further than the formation of the Greek language itself; and Khi must have had a sound very similar to that of sh (or the soft German ch), which is very different from

sound of K.

I understand what Marius Lepage wrote about your article; I will not mention it to him, since you think that is ultimately for the best. As for pointing out J. B.'s bitterness towards me on occasion, I certainly see no problem with that; I just prefer not to do it myself. I hope you were finally able to find his letter, as I would be quite curious to see it.

I think the article by Corneloup that you mention must be in the July issue of Symbolisme, which I have not yet received; but I realised quite some time ago that this absurd idea of so-called "secular exotericism" was running through his head; more precisely, it dates back to his report last year to the ▫.∴. ▫▫▫▫.∴.

It is very possible that the Pythagoreans, when they were persecuted, took "refuge" in the colleges of craftsmen, as you say, but certain links must nevertheless have existed previously, just as, in the Middle Ages, there were surely links between the Orders of Chivalry and the initiations of the trades before the destruction of the Templars; it is these very links that, in essence, explain how they were able to find shelter there when needed.

It is truly curious that Luther, in his manifesto, quoted Tertullian's phrase almost verbatim; I am not sure how Tertullian himself understood it exactly, because ordination must have existed in his time. Perhaps it was just a "figure of speech", comparable to that used by the Jews when they refer to themselves as a "priestly people", even though, among them, the priesthood itself was always reserved exclusively for members of certain families. As for the transformation of "Christian freedom" into "free inquiry", it would be interesting to know when and how this occurred; have you still not been able to find any further details in this regard?

If most of the recent "Marian apparitions" (some of which are rather suspect) have only been witnessed by children, it is undoubtedly because children are more sensitive to certain influences. Moreover, many children have natural psychic abilities that gradually disappear, partly as a result of the education they receive, but perhaps also for other more general reasons, which are ultimately linked to the very "solidification" of the earthly world.

Yours sincerely.

R. G.

Cairo, 14 September 1950.

▫.∴ ▫.∴ ▫.∴,

I received your draft ritual for the second degree the day before yesterday; I believe my letter of 24 July reached you in good time, and I am sure you will mention it in the letter you say you are sending me.

What you mention about the number of mallet strokes is curious

, as I assume that you did not deliberately arrange for them to coincide so exactly with those in the English ritual. I wonder if the number 115 (23X5) might have some special meaning; I confess that I cannot see it, at least for the moment; the translation into Hebrew letters yields nothing, or rather it yields a word meaning "to vomit", which is obviously not an acceptable meaning...

I had thought that what you told me earlier about the two celestial and terrestrial spheres applied to those placed on the two columns, because I had not understood that they also appeared on the fourth cartouche; naturally, under these circumstances, I can no longer find fault with the explanation based on the zodiac signs traced on the visible part of the celestial sphere.

All in all, the ritual seems fine to me, at least as far as possible, for I do not believe that it is possible to achieve anything entirely satisfactory in every respect for this degree. Perhaps some of the explanations are a little "brief", but, on the other hand, I think you were right to reduce them to a minimum, which is further justified by the fact that in the past no verbal explanation was given at all. All the more so as it is always possible to develop them as much as one likes in subsequent instructions. In this regard, I wonder if it would be possible to produce something like the "readings" that exist in England for each degree, but, of course, without the "moralising" character that has been given to them to the detriment of the strictly symbolic and initiatory point of view... In any case, in the ritual itself, the main thing was to emphasise the role of Pythagoreanism, as you did.

There is one point that I feel needs to be corrected: the application of the square by its points, which does not really correspond to anything plausible; as I already told you in my last letter, there is no doubt that it should be placed flat on the recipient's chest, with the angle facing upwards. This is rather difficult with the Jewel of [illegible], so perhaps this should also be changed; moreover, it seems to me that, even aside from this consideration, it would be preferable to use a larger square than this one. In any case, the objection concerning the way in which the square is applied is certainly the most serious that can be made about the entire content of the ritual; the essential feature of a square as a measuring instrument is the right angle, not the points, and moreover the respective length of the sides, which is very important in other cases, is completely irrelevant here; in fact, it seems to me that it would even be advantageous to use a square with equal sides to correspond to the symmetry of the human body..

As for the tools to be carried on the various journeys, you know that there are many differences of opinion; but the solution you have adopted seems acceptable to me, and is certainly as good as any other; this is undoubtedly one of the points that will always be the most difficult to settle once and for all...

We could discuss the order in which the five senses are listed; I do not know exactly where you found the one you indicate, which does not seem to me to

correspond to any traditional data. Perhaps we should not be too strict about all the details, which would lead us too far afield; but in any case, if we simply want to rank the senses in order of importance, should touch not be placed before smell and taste?

I must point out a Greek error that needs to be corrected: it is gnôthi (not gnosi) seanton.

With regard to acanthus, it should be noted that the shape of its leaves is related to the symbolism of the spiral, but it would undoubtedly be quite difficult to explicitly introduce this consideration into the ritual; the spiral is also found in the shape of the fifth journey, where its path from the outside to the inside naturally leads to the centre.

Regarding the letter G as the initial of five words taken from Greek, this is not accurate for "generation", which is purely Latin; the equivalent word of Greek origin would in fact be "genesis". On the other hand, among these five words, the one that should be highlighted in the second degree, and which should therefore be mentioned first, is "geometry"; it is even the only one that is essential, the others being only secondary and somewhat artificial additions. while I am on this point, I would add that "gammadion", apart from being somewhat redundant with "gamma", from which it is directly derived, was never actually used in ancient times to refer to the swastika; On this point, I would refer you to my article in the July-August issue (it was very late in coming, but it may finally have been published now, although I have not yet received it). On rereading, I see that you wrote "ganuna" and not "gamma" as I had first read; but the objection regarding the real meaning of the word "gammadion" remains.

There is nothing to note regarding the biography of Pythagoras, except that it might have been good to emphasise his relationship with the Delphic Apollo (and Hyperborean, since he was properly the "God of geometry", so that this is another point of particular importance for the second degree.

What you have in mind for the theme of travel in the second degree seems very good to me in principle; I will have to think about it some more, but these studies on numerical correspondences should be fairly easy to carry out. -- For the third degree, I wrote to Marius Lepage a few days ago and asked him to send you a copy of his ritual, and I have no doubt that he will gladly do so; you will let me know what you think of it.

☒.∴ Parise is indeed the former editor of the magazine Atanor; last year, a certain ☒.∴ Gorel Porciatti had the idea of reviving this magazine, and he even enrolled me "ex officio" in the editorial committee without waiting for the acceptance he had requested from me; I received the first issue, which was rather insignificant and bore no resemblance to the old magazine of the same name, and it seems to me that things have remained that way, because since then I have never heard anything more about it.

I am pleased with what you have told me about the relationship between the ☒.∴ ☒.∴ and the ☒.∴ ☒.∴; however, it is quite certain that the requirement for a "re-initiation", rather than a simple "regularisation" as previously, is excessive, as you say, and even rather incorrect from an initiatory point of view.

☒.∴ Maridort sent me, in a letter that arrived at the same time as yours, the work of ☒.∴ Mercier; I have not yet had time to examine it in sufficient depth, but it seems to me that there are things there that are not entirely clear, and that the fact of taking certain particularities of the French rite as a basis has caused some confusion, or more precisely some interversions in the symbolic correspondences...

I think you must have received my letter of 16 August by now; regarding the exoteric question addressed in your letter to Clavelle, your argument seems sound to me; the only point that needs to be clarified in order to remove all doubt is this: has the "regularisation" carried out by the intervention of the Orthodox bishops now been extended to the entire Anglican Church? On the other hand, it is true that the use of a vernacular language seems a little awkward; but, as you say, there is the fact that the Orthodox Church, in addition to the various languages that are truly liturgical and have been recognised as such since ancient times, also admits a few others that are quite unexpected!

Thank you for the representation of the Siberian shaman; there is no doubt that it bears a striking resemblance to that of the prehistoric "sorcerer" and "deer dance". The Hopi are one of the factions of the Pueblo Indians, and it seems that they are the ones who have best preserved certain traditions.

I return to the instrument designed to imitate the sound of thunder: the fact that, among certain peoples, such an instrument is carefully hidden from women, in addition to what you say about it, which is certainly also true, seems to me to be related to the essentially masculine character that is everywhere and always attributed to symbols of lightning, the vajra and its various equivalents. On this subject, you may also wish to consult the curious Chinese legend of Yu the Great and his wife (in Granet, "Dances and Legends of Ancient China"); here, the instrument used is a stone drum.

As for the barrel in question, the more I think about it, the more I find connections that tend to show that it is actually much more important than one might think at first glance. In certain Indian tribes, to bring rain, a man climbs onto a roof (like the roofer in the ancient operative ☒☒.∴) and shakes a calabash filled with pebbles; there is therefore something here that is directly related to the rites of the "rainmakers" or so-called rainmakers. Now, the true meaning of these rites, as I have indicated, is a call intended to bring down spiritual influences from Heaven to Earth; in ☒☒☒☒☒☒ initiation, the response to this call is given, during the consecration, by the mallet, equivalent to the vajra, and the flaming sword, which has among its various meanings that of lightning; the concordance between the call and the response therefore seems as clear as possible. All this takes us a long way from the unfortunate "sound effect discs"; it might be interesting for you to communicate these remarks to our ☒☒.∴ of the G. T..., for whom they could be the starting point for further developments. For the Ob.. in general, it goes without saying that it would be pointless to mention considerations of this kind, which would probably be little understood, and that it is sufficient, to justify the restoration of the barrel of stones in the ritual, to point out that it was in use in the past. I would add that it seems to me that this instrument

should normally have its place in the west, which corresponds to the Earth from which the call to spiritual influences is made, while the East, from which the response to this call comes, corresponds to Heaven (which is why it must regularly have a semi-circular shape, not included in the dimensions of the "long square", and equivalent, in the horizontal layout, to the dome surmounting a square-based building). -- On the rites of rain and storm, and in particular in connection with the oracle of Dodona and the "perron" of the fountain of Barenton, there is interesting information in a book entitled "Classical Mythology and Arthurian Romance" by Charles Bertrame Lewis (Oxford University Press, 1932); but I do not know if it can be found in any library in France.

The name Zamzumim in the Bible is generally interpreted as meaning men who speak an unintelligible language, which would make it equivalent to the Sanskrit word "mlîchchha"; but it is curious that they are referred to as a race of giants. As a matter of interest, did you know that there is an "Order of the Zamzumim" in America, which is just one of countless pseudo-initiatory organisations whose forms are more or less imitated from those of Freemasonry?Now, the name in question is considered to be of Arabic origin, and it does indeed, as you surmised, have the same derivation as that of the well of Zumzum; the latter is located within the enclosure surrounding the Kaaba, and is said to have sprung up at the moment when Ishmael was about to die of thirst in this place, which was then nothing but a desert. I myself have drunk water from Zunzun; it has a very distinctive taste that is difficult to describe (I can't think of anything to compare it to, except perhaps the liquid found in fresh coconuts), and although it is undoubtedly imbued with a special "barakah" that has healing powers in certain cases, one certainly cannot drink large quantities of it at once. The name Zemzem means "whisper" or "buzz" and can naturally refer to the sound made by water gushing abundantly (this is how it is most commonly explained); but it is true that, as F.. Maridort told you, it also refers to the rumbling of thunder, which is perhaps more interesting in relation to the question at hand, and which could bring us back, in a rather singular and unexpected way, to something comparable to the fountain of Barenton. It may not be very easy to explain completely, especially since the memory of certain things has long been lost, but we must also consider, in this regard, the symbolic correspondences of the "black stone" found nearby... --On this subject again, it is well understood that the "perron" of Barenton was, according to the ancient meaning of the word, a block of stone, and not, as I have seen seriously explained in I don't know which book, a staircase giving access to the entrance of a castle!

There is something in all this that not only clearly relates to a truly universal symbolism (such as that discussed by Mircea Eliade in his article on Shamanism, which I reviewed in the July-August issue of "E. T."), but which also, and by the same token, touches more particularly on what might be called the "prehistoric" origins (or ties, if you prefer) of Freemasonry. However, it is difficult to discuss these matters with most Freemasons today,

who, especially if they are still as influenced by current ethnological and sociological theories as many were in my day, would probably imagine that, by making such comparisons, we simply want to liken them to "sorcerers"!

I have carefully reread your two works and have not found much to correct; there seems to be only one small inaccuracy, and that is purely historical: from what I have always seen, it was not in Scotland, as you say, but in Ireland that the Culdean Church survived the longest. According to Eugène Beauvois, the Culdean monks of Ireland founded settlements in North America, as did the Knights Templar; I am not sure what to make of this, having never had the opportunity to see his works myself, but it seems to be based on serious grounds.

Regarding the rooster, I am not familiar with the two engravings by Dürer that you mention; could you give me an idea of what they represent? -- I cannot quite make out what, in Shintoism, is symbolised by a rooster on a drum; I think I read "world peace", but that doesn't seem to fit with the context, and I can't quite understand this symbolism, which I had never heard of before. -- Now, as for the assimilation of the rooster to a figure of hermetic mercury, the general objection that could be made is this: it is generally considered that only sulphur and salt are present in the cabinet of reflection, because this is a state of isolation from the environment corresponding to mercury; if this is the case, how can the presence of the rooster be justified, unless it has another meaning in this context? I am simply pointing out this difficulty to you, and you will tell me how you think it could be resolved.

In what you say about the apron, I saw further justification for the connection you made between its cord and the cable tow; for this to be entirely accurate, the cord would have to go around the waist twice, as Mr. Mercier rightly pointed out.

Regarding the letter S taking the place of the Hebrew letter, it seems that this confusion of form has been made quite often, and it is all the more remarkable in that it actually gives a completely opposite meaning, since 'et I represent unity, while S normally represents multiplicity. In the Scottish degree of Knight of the Sun, the three 's in a triangle thus became three S's, which, in order to find a plausible explanation for them, were interpreted as "Science, Wisdom, Holiness". I do not know if the three iron S's that once stood there can still be seen along the façade of the T. on Rue Froidevaux; I have always wondered if those who had them placed there did not have, more or less consciously, some symbolic intention of the same kind.

The altar of Delos was cube-shaped, but was it really a cubic stone? According to some, it was formed from an accumulation of ox horns; which would explain why it was possible to double its size without destroying it, i.e. not by replacing the old stone with a new one that would have been twice the size, but simply by adding more horns to those already there until the volume was doubled, while retaining the same cubic shape. The

symbolism of the horns is particularly relevant here in relation to Apollo Karneios, whom the Christianised Bretons assimilated to Saint Cornelius, who for this reason became the protector of horned animals.

I must stop here, as it seems that this letter will never end!

Yours ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠.

R. G.

René Guénon to Martinez Espinosa (1)

Cairo, 24 August 1930

Sir,

You must have thought that I would not reply to your letter, which reached me in Paris about a year ago. The truth is that I was very ill at the time, and since then, various trips and occupations of all kinds have always caused me to postpone any correspondence that was not absolutely urgent. Time passes very quickly, and one never manages to do everything one would like to do. I am taking advantage of the fact that I am more or less settled here at the moment to finally write to you, and I apologise for the long delay. I would at least like to tell you how pleased I was to learn of your interest in reading my books. Obviously, your point of view is quite special and cannot be exactly mine, but I am happy to see that it has not prevented you from getting rid of the anti-Oriental prejudice that, according to yourself, you had at first. I hope that many others in the West will do the same and come to understand the ancient doctrines of the East.

You mention Mr Maritain; personally, I have always had a friendly relationship with him; as for ideas, we agree mainly on a negative point of view, I mean in the 'anti-modern' sense. For the rest, unfortunately, he too is full of prejudices against the East; at least he was, for it seems that his prejudices have softened somewhat in recent times; but, strangely enough, he seems to have a kind of fear of what he does not know, which is regrettable, for it prevents him from broadening his perspective.

Since you read all my books, I would like to point out that, since The Crisis of the Modern World, there is another, Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power, which was published last year. I am currently working on a volume on The Symbolism of the Cross, which will probably be published towards the end of this year.

Please excuse the brevity of my letter; I would like to finally catch up on my correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.
Post office box, central office,
Cairo (Egypt)

1 — Martinez Espinosa was a Catholic writer from Cordoba, Argentina's second largest city, who wrote the first article on René Guénon published in that country. These two letters are part of a larger correspondence that Martinez Espinosa's widow entrusted to a Dominican friar, Fr. Mario Pinto, himself a reader and admirer of the French "traditionalist". (Note by André Coyné)

Cairo, 23 February 1934.

Sir,

I apologise for taking so long, once again, to reply to your letter, which I was delighted to receive after such a long silence; but I have been quite seriously ill with severe eye strain, and your letter arrived precisely during this time, so that I was unable to read it until quite some time later. The amount of work of all kinds that accumulated while I was unable to work is such that, since then, I have not yet managed to catch up and make up for lost time.

I thank you for everything you have said about my work, and I think that we can indeed agree, at least as far as the current state of the world and the need for a return to tradition and spirituality are concerned, if indeed this is still possible for the West, given the way things have turned out. Although, living far from Europe, I may not be fully aware of certain trends, I must admit that I do not have excessive confidence in a "renewal" which, from what I know, has so far remained rather superficial and chaotic: with a few rare exceptions, there are mainly vague and ill-defined aspirations, and it is very difficult to say what will come of it. But what is certain is that it is quite generally observed that people are no longer as satisfied with their modern 'civilisation' and are beginning to doubt the supposed 'progress': however negative this may be, it is still something...

As for the questions you raise in your letter, allow me to say quite frankly that these difficulties seem to me to stem mainly from the fact that you do not make a clear enough distinction between the religious point of view on the one hand, and the metaphysical and initiatory point of view on the other; whatever their relationship may be in certain respects, they must never be confused or mixed up, for they relate to totally different domains and cannot therefore interfere with each other. Everything you state as religious truths belongs to what Hindu doctrine calls "non-supreme" knowledge; it is enough to place each thing in its proper place and order so that there can be no conflict. Above all, we must not forget that mysticism belongs entirely to the religious domain; there is therefore no possible comparison between mysticism and metaphysics. The two paths, apart from the extremely clear differences in their modalities, are not, in reality, designed to achieve the same goal; and "mystical union" is not "jîvan-mukti", any more than "salvation" is "Deliverance". Everything that is religious, including mysticism, concerns individual possibilities, in the indefinite extension to which they are susceptible, and does not go beyond them; this is, moreover, its raison d'être, just as the raison d'être of metaphysical realisation is, on the contrary, to go beyond them; and this is precisely why one can serve as a basis for the other. This was the case in medieval Christian esotericism, and it is still the case in Islamic esotericism; and from the latter, I will quote this aphorism, which seems to me to fit perfectly with what we are discussing: "As long as a man desires Paradise or fears Hell, he cannot claim the slightest degree

of initiation."

I must also draw your attention to the fact that the religious point of view is necessarily linked to certain historical contingencies, while the metaphysical point of view refers exclusively to the order of principles. If you speak of "multiple avatars", it is because you are in the realm of appearances; but in absolute reality, they are "the same"; the Christ principle is not many, whatever its earthly or other manifestations may be. The "Mediator", according to all traditions, is the "Universal Man", who is also Christ; whatever name we give him, it makes no difference, and I do not see what difficulty there can be in this.

The "ascetic" path would, in its order, be more comparable to the initiatory path than mysticism is, if only because it involves a method and a positive effort; mysticism, on the other hand, is quite the opposite because of its passive nature. The ascetic path can therefore be a preparation for a realisation of another order, much more so than the mystical path, which even appears to be incompatible with it. But I do not think that we can say that anything beyond basic religion is open to everyone; asceticism is only suitable for a few, and mysticism for a few others; as for what lies beyond the religious realm, it goes without saying that this is only accessible to a much smaller number of people. Those who find satisfaction at a certain level would be very wrong to want to go beyond it; there is a question of necessary hierarchy here, against which all the sophisms of democratic egalitarianism, which unfortunately many Catholics today are imbued with, even perhaps among those who suspect it the least, are powerless.

As for your objection concerning the predominance of pure intellectuality, are you sure that this is what is being referred to? Here again, an essential distinction must be made: the texts you quote are directed against profane knowledge, not sacred knowledge; and let us not confuse what is simply rational with what is purely intellectual. When I say secular knowledge, I mean, of course, everything that is philosophy; the less one's mind is cluttered with all these things, the better, most certainly, and even more so from an initiatory point of view than from a religious one. Perhaps we should even add a good part of theology to this, insofar as it contains many unnecessary and still quasi-philosophical subtleties; in any case, everything that is discussion and controversy is clearly profane in spirit. That said, it must be added that pure intellectuality is beyond the realm of religion; religion is something else, and it goes without saying that feelings and actions have their place in it; here again, everything must be put in its proper place, without allowing it to encroach on a domain that is not its own. Finally, pure intellectuality is as indifferent to pride as it is to humility, these two opposites being equally sentimental in nature; those who claim the contrary clearly show that they have not the slightest idea of what intellectuality really is.

I see that you appreciate Father Allo's incomprehension as it deserves; it would certainly be difficult to find a more narrow-minded spirit than his; and, truly, what a fine way to defend Christianity is to stubbornly deny that its

doctrine contains a meaning superior to the moral and social platitudes that are commonly accepted! I do not see how all this "down-to-earthness" would require the intervention of a superhuman principle; fortunately, for my part, I have a better idea of Christianity than he does... It is sad to see that people of this kind try to sully everything that is beyond them; but they are wasting their time: the Truth is too high to be affected in the slightest.

Please accept, Sir, my best and most distinguished regards.

R. G.
Post office box, central office

René Guénon to Mrs Nacht (1)

Cairo, 26 June 1947

Madam,

[...] As for your question about an initiatory organisation, I can of course only wholeheartedly approve of your intentions; but unfortunately this is very difficult to find in our time, at least in Europe itself, and especially when it comes to the even more limited possibility of female initiation [...]. You are not the only one to ask this question, far from it, especially since the publication of my *Insights into Initiation*; I must say that I have even been surprised by the proportion of women among the people who write to me on this subject. I have already discussed your case, as well as several others, and I will see what can be done in this regard; rest assured that if any serious possibility arises, I will be sure to inform you. In the meantime, I cannot urge you strongly enough to be wary of all the groups you may hear about; most of them are of absolutely no value from an initiatory point of view, and there are even some that are even worse, in which highly suspicious influences are at work [...].

René Guénon

1 — *Les Cahiers de l'Herne*

René Guénon to Mrs Guerreiro (1)

Cairo, 29 March 1950

Dear Madam,

It has been a long time since I received your letter, and I apologise for not having been able to reply sooner; I always have so much to do that I find it increasingly difficult to keep up with my correspondence... First of all, thank you for your good wishes; I hardly dare send you mine, as they are so out of season now!

I understand that you have been somewhat discouraged about the Ch. du P. (2); you are not the only one to have encountered this obstacle you mention, and others have also had to give up in the end. Of course, Mr. C has absolutely nothing to do with it, and in fact, I believe that it is no one's fault, but rather just a matter of unfavourable circumstances; he wrote to me recently that, in his opinion, it can hardly be said that this still represents an initiatory possibility. This is certainly very regrettable, but unfortunately I do not see what could be done to remedy this situation [...]

René Guénon

1 —.*Idem.*
2 — Knights of the Paraclete

René Guénon to Noëlle Maurice-Denis

Blois, 12 August 1917

Dear Miss,

It has already been eight days since I received my manuscript and your letter. Please accept my apologies for taking so long to thank you and respond to your objections, which I accept, believe me, with great pleasure. However, the praise you offer is perhaps not entirely justified, for my only merit is to have tried to explain these things as clearly as possible, and I am not sure that I have always succeeded completely. As for the ideas themselves, it goes without saying that I do not claim them as my own, especially since that would deprive them of any metaphysical value, as it would anything that pertains to the individual.

On the first point you raise, I entirely agree with you. When speaking of "the minimum determination required to make the Infinite or the universal Whole conceivable to us," I am naturally referring only to our conception as currently determined by the conditions of our state of existence (or any other state analogous to it).

Moreover, I add: "to make it conceivable to us, and above all expressible to some degree", and expression can only be considered in relation to a manifested, i.e. conditioned, state. Nothing is inconceivable in itself, nor unknowable, and you are quite right to say that universal Knowledge is identical with the Infinite itself. You can see, therefore, that I am very far from the Plotinian conception, and indeed you must have thought so, assuming, however, that for Plotinus, Intelligence is really only a limited emanation of the Infinite. If this is the case, it is an obvious distortion of Eastern conceptions, to which the Greek mind, even among the Alexandrians, has never been able to adapt perfectly; for Easterners, in fact, Knowledge is indeed identical to the Infinite, and here is a text that is particularly clear in this regard: "Brahma is Truth, Knowledge, the Infinite" (I am translating quite literally).

I am thinking of the second point, the one concerning the word "being", and I must tell you first of all that the reason that prevents me from using this word in a completely universal way is not the historical reason you mention, for I do not believe it is correct to say that it originally referred to existence. Here is why: in Sanskrit there are two distinct roots, AS and BHU, the first of which, which is the origin of the word "being", refers to pure (being), while the second refers specifically to existence with all the limiting ideas attached to it, and in particular the ideas of origin or production, formation, etc. The opposition between these two roots stems from that between the two notions of essence and substance as I understand them, and it contains a clue to resolving, from a purely metaphysical point of view, the question of the relationship between essence and existence, which, like many others, is greatly simplified when one agrees to consider it exclusively in this way, which will not prevent one from subsequently making whatever applications one wishes.

I therefore agree with you that what the word "being" designates has been, from the outset, of a universal nature, although this etymological question is undoubtedly of secondary importance; but in any case, this does not mean that it is the most universal thing there is, nor that those who wanted to limit the object of metaphysics to being did not do so because their intellectual horizon did not extend beyond a certain conception. We must not forget that, despite everything, Aristotle was Greek; it is possible that others subsequently extended the meaning of the word 'being' far beyond what Aristotle had conceived, but don't you think there are some drawbacks to extending it excessively? Firstly, it can lead one to believe in an identity in thought, whereas identity really only exists in words; secondly, to designate everything that goes beyond being as I understand it, I find it much preferable to use a term in the negative form. Furthermore, there can be no confusion between 'non-being' and 'nothingness' once we have taken care to specify that non-being is included in Possibility, whereas nothingness is nothing other than the impossible. I cannot therefore agree that the opposition ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ being ⊠⊠ nothingness is identical to the opposition ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ possible ⊠⊠ impossible: the latter two terms are indeed identical, but the former two are not; and even then, we cannot strictly say that it is being, but only the possible, that is opposed to nothingness, or rather that it would be opposed if it could actually enter as a term in any opposition.

By ruling out any possibility of confusion between "non-being" and "nothingness", I do not see what reasons there could still be for rejecting the term "non-being", or rather I can see only one: its use by Hegel; but is it not giving too much importance to Hegel and his system to dwell on this? On the other hand, this term has in its favour its metaphysical use in Eastern philosophy, and above all its extremely important traditional use in Taoism. This may be a reason that does not have equal value for everyone, but it has a lot of value for me; in any case, it would be quite ridiculous to compare, from this point of view or any other, the pseudo-metaphysical inventions of Hegel or any other individual with the authority of a purely metaphysical and impersonal tradition.

I find that, by using the word "being" as you do, you seem to limit your thinking more than it actually is; this is a consequence of the drawbacks I find with this word, which I pointed out to you earlier. The definition of metaphysics as exclusively the "knowledge of being" characterises a certain mode of thought, which differs essentially from that for which ontology is, on the contrary, only a branch of metaphysics, and not the most important one; there is even here an expression of one of the most profound differences between the Western and Eastern minds. That is why I cannot say that this is merely a question of words; it is something much more serious in reality, as I have repeated many times to our friend Germain, who made much the same objections to me as you have on this subject. Even if we divert the word "being" from its proper meaning in order to universalise it further, it remains nonetheless a mark of Greek influence exerting itself, or at least having exerted itself originally, on the thinking of those who use it in this way; and it is perhaps this influence that has prevented scholasticism from being an expression of integral metaphysics.

As for replacing "being" with "existence", this is not possible for me, because, on the one hand, I also need the word "existence" in its proper sense, which is even less universal than that of "being", and, on the other hand, if being is the principle of existence, it cannot be identified with existence itself. It is true that I wrote that "everything possible has its own existence as such", but this is, as you say, merely a figure of speech, and even a figure of speech that I find, on reflection, too flawed, and that I had already thought of changing. One could, for example, use "reality" instead of "existence", which would have the advantage of highlighting the metaphysical non-value of any distinction between the possible and the real. However, you would then reproach me for distinguishing between "being" and "real", or rather for extending the real beyond being; but this is of little importance, because I only use the word "real" because of this supposed distinction commonly made between the possible and the real, and to assert that such a distinction has no metaphysical basis; without this, I would gladly dispense with using this word, to which I do not believe we can attach a clear and precise meaning, unlike words such as "being" and "existence".

What I find more important is the danger you see in depriving yourself, in metaphysics, of using the principle of identity and even the verb 'to be'. First, as for the verb 'to be', I believe that it can be used perfectly well, and indeed that it is impossible to do otherwise, given the very constitution of language; however, we must take care to note that, for anything that transcends being, this verb can have no other role than that of a purely symbolic copula. For the principle of identity, the question is a little more complicated, and here is how we can approach it: from a logical point of view, we should consider the principles of identity and contradiction (I am not saying, as is often done, the principle of identity or contradiction) as the application, to the conditions of human understanding, of the corresponding ontological principles; but, from a purely metaphysical point of view, consideration of the latter is insufficient, precisely because they are exclusively ontological principles. The principle of contradiction, in its ordinary form, is in a sense the negative or inverse aspect of the principle of identity, and as such it is derived from the latter, which is applicable only to being (the true ontological form of the principle of identity being: "being is being", a form under which it gives rise to interesting developments that I may discuss another time). But the absence of internal contradictions (the addition of this word is necessary to rule out the anti-metaphysical distinction between the possible and the compossible) defines not only logical possibility, nor even ontological possibility, but also metaphysical possibility in all its universality. We therefore think of "possible = non-contradictory", and in this sense we can speak of a "principle of non-contradiction" with a completely universal scope and a negative form, like any expression of what extends beyond being; in the realm of being, this principle, taking on a positive form, will become the principle of identity. The inverse aspect of the same universal principle will be "contradictory = impossible"; it is this principle which, in the realm of being, will become the ordinary principle of contradiction. I have just used the equal sign here as a symbolic copula, well

This is in no way a quantitative equality as in its usual usage; I could just as easily have used the verb "to be" in the same way. In any case, I hope that these few explanations have sufficiently clarified this point for you.

I would add this: it would not be sufficient, as you say, to "distinguish the different ways of being (or forms of reality) from existence as we experience it" because the latter constitutes only one mode of universal existence, which also includes an indefinite number of other modes, which are precisely all those ways of being that you mention. We must therefore consider everything that transcends existence, starting with the very principle of this existence, which is being as I understand it, and then everything else, that is, all the possibilities that this being does not encompass. Note, moreover, that the idea of being is no less analogical for me than it is for you: being transcends all genres, for it is universal in nature, without being the most universal thing there is; it is the foundation of existence and of everything that belongs to the realm of existence in all its states, but it is really not possible to go any further without diverting the idea of being from its legitimate meaning. Moreover, we have too few metaphysical terms at our disposal to voluntarily deprive ourselves, by attributing another meaning to it, of the one that most accurately designates the principle of existence.

I now come to another set of questions, those you raise in the last part of your letter. When I say that "any possibility that is a possibility of manifestation must manifest itself by that very fact", I do not mean, as you seem to think, that this necessity of manifestation affects the possibilities in question, but rather that it is inherent in them, that it is constitutive of their nature. I do not see how this resembles Leibniz's conception, for whom, moreover, possibilities (all possibilities without exception) "tend to exist" (he does not say "begin to exist"), which excludes from this conception all possibilities of non-manifestation. If we can say that manifestation is a necessary result of the Infinite, which basically means simply that it is included in universal Possibility, it does not follow that it requires the Infinite, because, as you yourself say a little further on, "there is no reciprocal", and also because the Infinite cannot be constituted by the addition of all possibilities; metaphysically, one can only go from the principle to the consequences, and not back from the consequences to the principle (except as an auxiliary and transitory means of conception). You are right to say that manifestation must be contingent as such, and necessary in its principle; but it does not require its principle for this, any more than the effect requires its cause; this analogy seems to me much more accurate than that of the agent and the final cause. The mistake we make in this question is to attribute much more importance to manifestation than it actually has; what must be said is that this importance is strictly nil in relation to the Infinite. To take a comparison, which is undoubtedly rather imperfect but which may make the matter clearer, a point located in space is equal to zero in relation to that space; this does not mean that this point is absolutely nothing, but it is nothing in terms of extent, it is strictly zero in extent; manifestation is nothing more, in relation to

everything else, what this point is in relation to the space considered in its entirety. And note that we are talking here about the entirety of universal manifestation, whose contingency can thus be understood; and this contingency in no way excludes necessity in the sense I indicated to you earlier; the opposition between necessity and contingency, in their ordinary sense, is no longer applicable, and the possibility of going beyond this opposition is one of the reasons that greatly diminishes the interest of the question of freedom as it is commonly posed. The texts by Cajetan that you quote to me seem to me to be quite satisfactory in this regard; in any case, they clearly show the part that imperfections of expression play in certain difficulties.

In short, the opposition between "necessity and contingency in the world" seems to me to be more important from a theological point of view than from a purely metaphysical point of view, and even from the latter point of view, it can be said that it no longer exists. However, when we go beyond this opposition, we are placing ourselves solely from a metaphysical point of view, and no longer from a theological point of view, and then the questions no longer arise in the same terms; even the use of the term 'creation' is no longer justified. By separating questions according to the points of view to which they refer (and which correspond to different modes of thought), it seems to me that we can greatly contribute to avoiding the unnecessary complications that generally result from confusion between these points of view (the history of the so-called 'ontological argument' provides one of the most striking examples of this). As for the phobia of pantheism, I believe that it would suffice to dispel it with this very simple remark: that pantheism, if we take the word in a reasonable sense (instead of applying it indiscriminately to almost everything we detest), is a doctrine that places the absolute in becoming, and is therefore an essentially naturalistic doctrine, and, by that very fact, anti-metaphysical.

I would be very happy to hear your thoughts on the various considerations I have just outlined, perhaps a little too at length, and also to know the further reflections that my work has inspired in you, if you would be so kind as to share them with me when you have a few moments.

We received a letter from Germain before we left Paris; I replied to him from here, and since then we have had no further news from him; do you know if he is now in Ligny?

I still haven't received anything for my speech, neither the proofs nor the "Bulletin Municipal"; since it has been published, I would be curious to know if the text is complete and also if it has been distorted by any printing errors; in the latter case, I would not hesitate to have a correction inserted. I thank you for your kind offer to send me your copy, but if you only have one, I would be sorry to deprive you of it. If, on the other hand, you can get another one, I would be delighted to accept, especially as I would enjoy rereading Lebey's reply... It must contain many subtleties that I may have missed, which is a pity!

The ladies send their warmest regards to you and your sister, and I send you both my best wishes. R.G.

Le Portail, near Champigny-sur-Veude (Indre-et-Loire),
13 September 1917.

Dear Miss,

Not knowing whether you are still in Perros-Guirec, I am sending this letter to Saint-Germain, thinking that it will be forwarded if necessary.

First of all, thank you for sending me the school's "Bulletin Municipal". I haven't received a single copy; perhaps I'll get some when school starts again, but that's not certain, and in any case, I think they could have sent me some.

Germain wrote to me recently to announce his return to Paris and give me his new address. We will be returning ourselves in a fortnight; we will leave here next Tuesday and stop for a few more days in Blois, where we always have a lot to do. We have been travelling almost continuously lately, which is why I have not been able to reply to you more promptly.

I am glad that you found what I said about being sufficiently clear; moreover, I am quite convinced that we must agree, fundamentally, on everything related to being. What remains is that which is beyond being, whatever we may call it; on this point, there is no disagreement either, but rather, in reality, an absence of any doctrine on the Western side. Germain, like you, is always bothered by the term "non-being" and recently objected to me, against the necessity of using the negative form, that the words "Perfection", "Everything", "Universal Possibility" have nothing negative about them and are nevertheless applicable beyond being. I replied by pointing out that, in any case, the negative form is still necessary when we want to designate what is beyond being to the exclusion of being, which is precisely the meaning of "non-being". I also think I notice that you accept the negative form more readily than Germain does; what you dislike is probably the use of the verb "to be" in relation to "non-being"; but it seems to me that it is enough to understand that this is merely a defect of expression, which is simply due to the constitution of language, and which makes it inevitable; we must blame grammar and perhaps logic, but not metaphysics, which in itself is and remains essentially independent of any expression. - Finally, we can talk about all this again in a while, as well as the principle of identity and the so-called "ontological proof", which is only a misunderstood application of it. Perhaps you are right to trace this misunderstanding back further than Descartes; I would be grateful for some clarification on how the matter was presented by Saint Anselm.

As for the relationship between metaphysics and logic, we are forced to "go beyond logic" in metaphysics, precisely because of its universality, which cannot be conditioned by anything relative; and logic is indeed something relative because, although it considers certain principles of a universal order, it does not consider them in themselves (this concerns only metaphysics), but only in their application to the special conditions of human understanding

(conditions which, of course, are individual). In short, the relationship between metaphysics and logic corresponds to that between intellect and reason, that is to say, fundamentally, between the universal and the individual.

I will now move on to another point that I consider particularly important: how we should understand the possibility of agreement between different traditions. Such agreement must not in any way lead to the substitution of one tradition for another, nor even to a fusion which, at least outwardly, would be neither possible nor desirable. It could only be a fusion conceived in a completely different way, as operating from within and from above; but that is a question of a different order, one that is rather difficult to explain clearly, and one that we are far from being able to consider in a useful way at present. In any case, I do not think it is necessary, in general, to speak Sanskrit or Chinese, which would be, not "revolutionary" as you say, but rather "reactionary"..., but which might not be the best way to make oneself understood. However, Germain has often encouraged me to simply retain Sanskrit terms and explain them; it is true that it is very difficult and often even impossible to find true equivalents for them, but I think that above all we must simplify the terminology as much as possible. For me, one of the flaws of scholasticism is its overly complicated terminology, especially when this complication does not produce sufficient precision, and this happens in many cases, as evidenced by too many discussions that are far from clarifying the issues as much as they should; and they could easily be clarified if we agreed to remain strictly within the realm of pure metaphysics, instead of introducing a host of extraneous considerations, which could be revisited when we come to theological, cosmological or other applications. Since what matters most with regard to Eastern doctrines is to make their spirit understood, it is more a question of adapting them than of transcribing them, given that such transcription would risk being unintelligible.

On the other hand, it is very important to highlight the similarities between the various traditional doctrines whenever the opportunity arises; but in doing so, we must never forget that in the West, at least at present, there is no tradition that is purely metaphysical in nature, nor indeed that is metaphysically complete; the first of these two shortcomings seems to be mainly attributable to the legacy of the Jewish mentality, the second to that of the Greek mentality. I say "at present" because we might perhaps see things differently if we had a better understanding of everything that existed in the Middle Ages, of which, unfortunately, the so-called Renaissance left nothing behind. I have no doubt that there was then a traditional teaching much less external than what is contained in all the writings that have come down to us.

I will now return to your objections, beginning with the necessity of manifestation: it is well understood that manifestation, as such, is transitory, but it is nonetheless permanently implied by the possibilities it encompasses, since these possibilities are themselves absolutely permanent; and everything must, in principle, be found in such permanence, including manifestation itself, which, without this, would be purely

illusory. The only difficulty is, when considering something in a transitory mode, knowing how to transpose it in order to consider the same thing in a permanent mode, because then everything that constitutes manifestation belongs to the order of the unmanifested. I do not know if I am making myself clear, for this is much more difficult to explain than to conceive, as indeed is everything concerning the relationship between time (or more generally, duration) and eternity. I believe that this question may be of particular interest to you in relation to its application to the resurrection of the body; in this particular case too, the body, which is transitory in the realm of manifestation, acquires permanence in another mode, with all the attributes that this implies, so to speak, in addition.

As for the relationship between the manifested and the unmanifested, a question that is directly related to the previous one, Germain's interpretation is more than inaccurate; I have corrected it in my letter to him. The unmanifested includes, on the one hand, what can be called the "unmanifestable", or the possibilities of non-manifestation, and, on the other hand, the "manifestable", that is, the possibilities of manifestation insofar as they do not manifest themselves. It is obvious that if the unmanifested is the principle of the manifested, it is not insofar as it includes the unmanifestable, but insofar as it includes the manifestable. What must also be realised is that the manifested contains no possibilities other than those included in the unmanifested (or rather, some of those), for it is constituted simply by the possibilities of manifestation insofar as they manifest themselves, while those same possibilities, insofar as they do not manifest themselves, obviously belong to the unmanifested: I do not believe that there can be any difficulty here.

As for the question of emptiness, I have dealt with it only incidentally and very incompletely in what you have read; I would therefore ask your permission to postpone explanations in this regard. However, even if it were only an "ens rationis", it would nonetheless be true that it is the expression of a possibility, for everything we truly conceive is obviously possible. I say "everything we truly conceive" because, naturally, the same would not be true of a pseudo-conception that would imply a contradiction; in the latter case, we would only be dealing with an absurdity, that is, an impossibility. Now, this case is precisely that of spatial vacuum, which is how physicists view it; so this is not what we are talking about at all. On the other hand, I would not call an "ens rationis" an abstraction, because I strictly reserve the use of this term for the consideration of a quality separately from its subject. But, in the order of possibilities of non-manifestation, there can be no question of either "abstraction" or "entes rationis"; it was necessary to at least clear up any confusion on this point.

Another thing: one cannot strictly speak of the "essence" of a possible as such, because the possible are beyond the distinction between essence and substance, this distinction being valid only within being, whereas everything possible, in itself, is beyond being. If we speak of what "essentially" belongs to such a possibility, it is therefore only in a symbolic way, as when we attribute "existence" to possibilities. Regarding this latter way of speaking, rather than removing it, I added a note to my manuscript, and

your objections led me to do the same in several other places. On the other hand, I have managed to express, more clearly than I had done before, the meaning and metaphysical significance of "the identity of the possible and the real"; I will share this with you.

Regarding the use of the word "virtually", you must understand that I do not use it in the sense intended by Leibnitz; nor do I use it in any of the other meanings you suggest. For me, "virtually" is mainly opposed to "effectively" and its use refers to the point of view of "realisation", so that it is difficult to justify it completely when one sticks to theory alone. Some time ago, I wrote an explanatory note on this subject, which I also showed to Germain; I will show it to you too, but please remind me, as I may well forget.

The principle of unity of a being in all its states is indeed, as you understand it, Personality, which belongs to the unmanifest, but is reflected in all states, so that it is this reflection that constitutes, in each state, the immediate principle of unity of being. When we move on to the unmanifest, it is quite certain that we can no longer properly speak of "unity" or "being"; it is therefore symbolically, here again, and in order to be able to express ourselves, that we continue to speak of a "being". This would undoubtedly be more intelligible if you had read the manuscript that precedes the one I lent you, to which I refer quite frequently in the latter. But it is indeed "a being" that must be said, with the previous reservation, and not "the being one": each being has a state that corresponds to each of the degrees that must be considered in the universal order, but this in no way excludes the corresponding states in other beings; I see no difficulty here. Moreover, where could all beings be "one", if not precisely where there can no longer be any question of "unity", but only of "non-distinction", which is not the same thing? Similarly, when it comes to the Infinite or universal Possibility, it is not "unity" that should be used strictly speaking, but rather "non-duality"; you may remember that I used this word in my lecture on metaphysics. - Returning to multiple states, you say that integral individuality comprises an indefinite number of modalities, which is correct, and states, which is not; in reality, this integral individuality, in all its extension, constitutes only one state in the total being. The connection you make with regard to the "beatific vision" seems very interesting to me; if you like, we can talk about it again. As for identification through knowledge, it has a significance that Aristotle himself does not seem to have suspected, and which can only be fully grasped by moving from the theoretical to the practical point of view. It is especially the latter (which, moreover, must necessarily influence the theory itself) that I find no equivalent for in Western doctrines; and yet it is ultimately the only thing that matters, although theory is certainly its indispensable preparation.

You are right in saying that Zero is the principle of unity in the same sense that Non-Being is the principle of Being, and indeed they are essentially the same thing; on the other hand, if unity is the principle of multiplicity, it is in the same sense that Being is the principle of manifested things. Now, these are not two absolutely different meanings

for the word "principle"; rather, it is the same meaning taken at two different levels, with the appropriate transposition. I am not saying that unity is relative to multiplicity, any more than universal Being is relative to particular existences; only, as soon as unity is posited, multiplicity is immediately implied, and moreover, if this were not so, there could be no multiplicity

I come to your last question: a comparison can only really be made between two beings in relation to a common element that they both possess, but which they manifest at different degrees of development. On the other hand, in the case you are considering, of a being that has the same elements as another, plus a certain difference that makes it superior to the latter, this case is not feasible, because the relationship thus established between these two beings would simply be the relationship of a species to a genus, and not the relationship of two species of the same genus. Each species must have a difference, so that if, in relation to another species, it has one more characteristic, it also necessarily has one less, and since it is not possible to establish equivalence or non-equivalence between these two different characteristics, I do not see how a comparison based precisely on the differences would be possible.

My wife joins me in sending you, dear Miss, and your family, our warmest regards.

R. G.

Sétif, 3 January 1918.

Dear Miss,

When I received your kind letter last week, I intended to write to you, and I would have done so had it not been for a bout of flu that left me feeling rather unwell, and from which I have not yet fully recovered. We have had very cold weather these past few days, with temperatures dropping to minus twelve at night. Fortunately, the weather seems to be warming up, but as you can see, it is not only in France that people suffer from the rigours of winter.

I don't know if Germain told you what classes I have to teach here: in addition to philosophy, I teach French to Year 12 students and Latin to Year 12 and Year 11 students, which I must say I don't enjoy at all, especially since the students are generally extremely useless, particularly in Latin. It's true that the exams are less difficult in Algiers than in Paris; and then, as most of the candidates have very good marks in Arabic, they only need to get a 4 or 5 in French and the same in Latin to pass. I have very few students in philosophy: only three, plus two in mathematics; they are doing quite well, and have even taken to it more quickly than is often the case. Unfortunately, there are many more students in the first and second years, and marking their assignments takes up a lot of my time, so that, until now, I have not been able to do any work for myself. I'm not even sure how I would manage if I didn't have my lessons prepared in advance. This extra workload is due to a shortage of teachers, which is all the more surprising given that the school is large and has nearly 400 pupils. Just think, a single teacher is obliged to teach Latin to pupils in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth years.

and then we combine the classes two by two; under these conditions, it is really no surprise that the results are poor. We live very close to the school, so I no longer have the fatigue of daily commuting, which is appreciated, especially in winter. There is another advantage for me here: the position I hold was permanently vacant, as its incumbent had been appointed to Blidah; so I no longer have to fear the same misfortune as last year, whereas if I had again replaced someone who had been called up, he could have returned at any moment, and then I would have had to change jobs again. It's not that we intend to stay here indefinitely; it's just that we may have to extend our stay a little longer than we had planned, as I cannot give up a secure position for another that will once again only be temporary. The hardest thing for us here is feeling so far away from all our friends. my colleagues are very nice, as is the Principal, and relations with them are quite pleasant, but as an intellectual environment, it leaves something to be desired. In general, people here are concerned only with trade and business; everything else seems to leave them indifferent: for example, no one ever talks about the war; it is too far away and does not affect them enough. We would know nothing if it weren't for the newspapers from France, and even then they only arrive very irregularly, usually after a week. It is especially when we go several days without mail that we feel our isolation; and, as the region is certainly one of the least interesting in Algeria in every respect, it would not be very cheerful if this were to last very long. Finally, in the current circumstances, we must still consider ourselves fortunate to have no other troubles than these.

We have had twelve days of holiday, which end today; the weather has been so bad that we did not dare to risk taking a short trip as we had originally intended; and I think we did the right thing, because it seems that there has been snow or rain everywhere. Besides, it might not have been very prudent with my flu, especially as my aunt has also been very tired from the cold; so it will probably be for Easter.

I will leave it to my wife to give you further details about the country, as you requested, and I will now try to reply to your letter, or rather your two letters, as I have not forgotten the one you sent in September. Germain wrote to us to say that you had been accepted to study at the Faculty of Theology, and we offer you our warmest congratulations. I quite understand your aversion to exegesis; as for the study of Hebrew, you do not tell us whether it interests you. And your thesis project for the doctorate in philosophy, do you think you will be able to carry it out soon?

As you can imagine, I was delighted to hear of Father Sertillanges' favourable opinion of me, which you conveyed to me. I regret all the more not having been able to meet him when you so kindly planned to bring us together, but I hope that the opportunity will arise in the next few days. What you have told me interests me all the more because it is not in academic circles that I expect to find the slightest understanding of metaphysical matters.

I also believe that it would be wrong to attach no metaphysical importance to theology, but that, despite this, a very clear separation must be maintained between the

two fields. Many metaphysical truths are certainly susceptible to theological application, but they must then be translated into a completely different language, and this difference stems from the different points of view from which we approach them. Therefore, I think that when engaging in pure metaphysics, it is best not to concern oneself with possible theological applications, or with other applications of any kind, which is far from meaning that these applications are without interest in themselves.

Now, if you find clearer correspondences among theologians than among philosophers, this does not surprise me unduly, for if theology is not and cannot be pure metaphysics, philosophy is often even further removed from it. This is perhaps less true of Catholic philosophy than of academic philosophy, but nevertheless almost everything that has been written in modern times (I am not referring here to the Middle Ages) is bound to be influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the general mindset.

As for mysticism, I do not despise it as completely as you seem to believe; I do not regard mystical 'realisation' as illusory, but only as incomplete, and I readily concede that there is something more to it than mere theory. However, I think you will recognise, for your part, that this realisation differs profoundly from metaphysical realisation, and this in its very principle, since it takes place in a passive mode; it is for this reason that it cannot exceed certain limits. To be more precise, I would say that these limits are those of an individual state considered in its entirety, while other states can only be perceived through reflection, so to speak, and not directly and immediately. A second consequence of the passive nature of mystical realisation is its lack of order: it mixes very diverse elements, leading to confusion between the intellectual and the sentimental, a confusion which is inevitable whenever a certain realisation is not supported by a sufficient theoretical basis. It seems to me, moreover, from what you tell me, that Father Sertillanges recognises the existence of this confusion. No doubt, one can always extract the intellectual elements from it, but what one obtains in this way will have lost its properly mystical character. This may be more interesting for making certain connections, but only on condition that one has already acquired the necessary metaphysical data elsewhere, for it would be risky to undertake metaphysical studies based on the writings of mystics, even the most orthodox ones. I believe you will agree with me on this last point without too much difficulty.

Now, can we talk about "intellectual mystics" as you would like? Since what essentially characterises mysticism as such seems to be the presence of the sentimental element, it seems to me that all we can say is that there may be reflections of intellectualism in mysticism; but would these reflections not correspond precisely to the reflection of higher states that mystical realisation does not directly attain? As for Spinoza, whom you quote to me in this regard, I do not know to what extent he can be said to be mystical in the proper sense of the word, but in any case, I would not accept to regard him as truly intellectualist, even though he was, in some respects,

beyond Cartesian rationalism, thanks to his knowledge of medieval Jewish philosophy, and in particular of Maimonides; but it remains to be determined to what extent he understood the latter, who seems to be far superior to him, even though the Jews have never been very metaphysical.

You are right not to want to separate the realisation of theory and to say that it forms an indissoluble whole; in pure metaphysics too, this must be the case, but theory must nevertheless precede any realisation, because it alone can provide the indispensable basis for it. In other words, theoretical knowledge is the necessary preparation for effective knowledge, but it can only be that, and this character must influence the way in which the theory itself is presented. I mean that, even if we leave aside everything that is not exclusively theoretical, we must nevertheless take into account what must thus remain 'implied'; This is what happens with the use of the words 'virtually' and 'effectively', which led us to address this question of realisation. I hope you will tell me in your next letter whether you have a better understanding of the possibility of metaphysical realisation, now that I have tried to explain what distinguishes it from mystical realisation. I should add that the latter is the only thing to be found in the West when one wants to move beyond a purely theoretical point of view. And yet, here again, I am tempted to make a reservation: perhaps there was something else in the Middle Ages, but then it is something we no longer know anything about; has it been completely lost, or are there still some traces of it that, in that case, would be well hidden? This is a question that would be interesting to elucidate, but I believe it is very difficult.

As for the "effort of inner life", you have seen very clearly that this is not at all what is meant, nor even anything similar to it, when we speak of metaphysical realisation. It could not even make sense here, since this realisation must precisely go beyond life, as well as all the other limiting conditions that define this or that particular state of existence. Moreover, mystics themselves already go much further than the realm of psychology, without leaving the individual human state, nor, consequently, life, which is one of the conditions of that state. This expression "inner life" has taken on a rather unfortunate meaning with the modernists, a meaning that is not unrelated to that of Bergsonian "intuition"; in essence, these are merely different expressions of the same tendency.

With regard to the above, I would like to note, to return to it another time, that the assertion of the metaphysical identity of the possible and the real takes on a much more precise meaning when viewed from the perspective of "realisation", and that it is only this perspective that can give it the full significance it deserves. I promised to talk to you about various other things as well; I would be grateful if you would remind me of them at the next opportunity.

I will move on to another point: when I distinguish between the sentimental and mental elements in human beings, it is understood that I am referring only to what is individual; therefore, there can be no question of the intellectual element proper, which is supra-individual. You object to this by saying that "the individual is

virtually all-knowing"; but we cannot say that, because, if it is true of human beings, it is not as individuals, but rather because they are connected to supra-individual states and have the possibility of entering into possession of these states, which together with the individual state constitute one and the same total being. Now, the intellectual element is precisely what connects all these states of the total being; but that is why it does not belong to the domain of any of these states taken individually; it only encounters this domain at one point, which is, moreover, its true centre. It is only this encounter or incidence, with the refraction that results from it, that can become conscious when it comes to the individual human state; and this is, moreover, a necessary condition for this state to serve as the basis for a realisation reaching supra-individual states. For the latter, there can no longer be any question of "consciousness" in the proper sense of the word; or, if one wishes to continue to use this term by transposing it into the universal, one must take great care to indicate that it is no longer being used in its ordinary and "psychological" sense. I do not know if I am making myself sufficiently clear, but in any case, I do not see why there should be any reason to give the intellectual element another name, at least when strictly adhering to the metaphysical point of view. It may be different when one wishes to move on to the theological "translation" I mentioned earlier.

I am not sure exactly how you understand the idea of 'incarnation' when you say that I should regard it as anti-metaphysical; could you clarify this for me? However we understand it, we must nevertheless maintain that the intellectual principle is essentially 'non-incarnate' because of its extra-individual nature. This is all the more true of "personality", of which this intellectual principle is, in a way, the projection through all states of being. If you do not yet clearly understand the meaning of the term "personality", I would ask you to put some specific questions on this subject, and I will endeavour to answer them as best I can.

The notion of "obedient power", the definition of which you give me, does indeed seem to be close to the metaphysical conception of the multiple states of being. However, is it not necessary to establish, for this definition, a distinction between the case of human nature and that of angelic nature, the latter not having the same possibilities as the former?The question undoubtedly deserves closer examination. As for intrinsic non-contradiction, it is a characteristic of any possibility whatsoever, but it cannot in any way be regarded as a "limitation", for that would be to say that the impossible, which is nothing, limits the possible, which is everything; To say that possibilities are "limited" by intrinsic non-contradiction is an imperfection of language that would be very difficult to avoid.

As for vocabulary, I do not believe that great complexity is necessary for precision; I even believe that the apparent perfection it gives to expression is illusory and does not compensate for the disadvantages that may result from this complexity. These questions of vocabulary are, in fact, of only secondary importance; the essential thing is to make oneself understood as well as possible, and that is why I believe we should avoid

unnecessary complications; instead of inventing new terms, it is preferable to clarify the meaning of those we use, without worrying too much about the misuse that may have been made of them by others.

I told you that I had not yet found the time to work since my arrival here; however, I have read Boutroux's thesis on the "contingency of the laws of nature" and also Bergson's "creative evolution". I find that the former is not worthy of its reputation, and as for the latter, it only confirmed my opinion of its author; it is all terribly confusing, and it is here in particular that one can find unnecessary complications, both in terms of content and form.

You have no doubt heard, as we have, of Durkheim's death; do you remember Dom Besse's reflection on him on the day of your bachelor's degree exam? He was not wrong when he said that he did not have long to live. If only his passing could change something in the spirit of the Sorbonne! Let us hope so, but without daring to hope too much.

Poor Germain was really unlucky to fall ill just when he was due to take his physics exam. We wonder if he will prepare for it again for the next session. In any case, the stay in the countryside and the change of occupation will certainly do him good, but it is very unfortunate that he has not been able to rid himself this time of something that bothers him so much and tires him all the more because it is not to his liking.

We were very happy to learn from Germain that your mother's health had improved considerably; we sincerely hope that this improvement will continue and become even more pronounced. Please accept, dear Miss and friend, my best wishes for you and yours for the new year, and believe in my respectful sympathy.

R. G.

I would be delighted to have you as a student of Sanskrit when I return to France; I hope that your plans will not have been abandoned by then.

We learned of Léon Bloy's death in the newspapers. A few days ago, I received a note from Mr Milhaud, to whom I had written to announce my change of plans, as I had been unable to see him before leaving Paris.

Blois, 8 December 1918.

Dear Miss,

A few days ago, we received the issue of the Revue des Jeunes that you kindly sent us, and we learned that you had returned to Saint-Germain. Did your mother return from Switzerland with you, and how is she now?

For us, our return from Algeria went smoothly, at least until we reached Paris, where all three of us came down with the flu almost as soon as we arrived; we were barely able to leave for Blois the day before school started. After a week and a half, the school was closed due to the epidemic, which I was not upset about, as I was in great need of some rest to recover

recover. The definitive start of the school year was not until 15 November, but with four teachers ill, I have had to take on extra work since then: French in the third year, which is not very interesting; I hope it will not go on too long. Normally, I have much less to do here than in Sétif, so I hope to have the opportunity to do some work for myself, which is all the more necessary as I intend to try for the agrégation at the end of the year, even though the programme is not the most satisfactory. This competitive examination is reserved for teachers and delegates who have been in post for at least two years, which is a disappointment to Germain, who does not meet this requirement; perhaps he has mentioned this to you. We saw him several times during the few days we spent in Paris; he told us then that he had been appointed to Stanislas to replace Maritain, who had requested a year's leave of absence. I do not know if his new duties are so absorbing that he has forgotten his friends, but since we have been here, he has not given us the slightest sign of life, so I finally decided to write to him to find out how he is doing, and I did so today. Preparing his course seemed to cause him some concern, and what is more, he must have quite a large class, which is a disadvantage I do not have here.

I have been asked to review books for the "philosophical journal"; I have accepted, although it is not always the most pleasant of tasks. In any case, it would be hardly possible for me to undertake anything more serious this year.

I read your father's article with great interest; although I am not very knowledgeable about artistic matters, I very much liked some of the ideas expressed in it, even from a different point of view.

For example, the distinction between symbol and allegory; I have always made the distinction, but without finding a way to express it clearly; it seems to me that this point needs to be explored further. On the other hand, the definition of idolatry seems entirely accurate to me. The consequence of this would be that idolatry can exist everywhere and always among those who do not understand symbols, but that no idolatrous doctrine has ever existed in principle, which is exactly what I myself believe in this regard.

In the same issue of Revue des jeunes, I noted what was said about a book on "the introduction of scholasticism into secondary education". I even wondered whether the author of this book, who signed himself "Miles Christi", might have some connection with Maritain, because Germain showed me the course that Maritain was teaching at Stanislas, and it is entirely scholastic, and even, it seemed to me, a little too difficult for students in a philosophy class to follow, as they generally have no special aptitude for it and, moreover, have not been prepared for it in any way by the teaching they have received so far. The undertaking therefore seems to me to present many difficulties and perhaps even certain disadvantages; in writing to Germain, I share with him some thoughts on this subject; moreover, he seemed rather hesitant about what he himself should do for his teaching. In any case, the question is certainly worth discussing. If you are interested, when you see Germain, you could ask him to tell you what I said to him, as well as his thoughts on the question of the existence of a "university philosophy".

university philosophy'. I am asking him for his opinion on all this, and would be very happy to hear yours as well.

You have no doubt heard of the death of Mr Milhaud, which occurred a few days before the liberation of Lille: he was therefore unable to see his son again, who had been held there since the beginning of the war.

We were delighted to hear of Father Sertillanges' election to the Institute. I very much regret not having been able to meet him as you had planned, especially after what you wrote to me last year about his appreciation of the metaphysical ideas you had discussed with him; let us hope, however, that a favourable opportunity will eventually arise in the next few days.

Have you returned to your philosophical work? Are you able to find the time to take up some classes again? I hope you will keep me informed of all this, as it is still of great interest to me. I also remember that you promised to reply to something I wrote to you a long time ago.

We are very happy with the unexpected turn of events; no one could have predicted such a happy and, above all, such a swift outcome. If only all this could bring about some change in the general mindset! But I fear we should not count on it too much.

Please convey our kind regards to your entire family, and accept, dear Miss, my respectful compliments and the warmest regards of the ladies.

R. G.

Blois, 19 December 1918.

Dear Miss,

Your letter crossed with mine, and it was with the greatest pleasure that I read the reply you had promised me for so long, just when I had reminded you of that promise.

You find our current situation enviable; certainly, it is preferable to last year's in many respects, and yet, despite my lighter workload, I still do not think I have the time to work as I would like on the things that interest me. Moreover, to do so, I would need to be free from the fatigue of teaching and all the concerns that go with it. I am coming to believe that teaching, at least at secondary level, is completely incompatible with certain personal projects.

Germain, to whom I wrote at the same time as I wrote to you, seems surprised by the friendly reproaches I addressed to him concerning his long silence. However, having seen us so ill in Paris, it seems to me that he could have inquired about what had become of us; but, of course, I do not hold it against him in the least. Moreover, I sincerely pity him for having so many pupils and, above all, according to what he tells me, so difficult to manage; he too must not have much leisure or peace of mind at present. And I see that you yourself are not exempt from worries and troubles of another kind, since your letter was interrupted.

I completely agree with you when you speak of a decline, not in mysticism, but in the theory of mysticism, and of the unfortunate influence that

modern philosophy has had on this branch of theology. This is especially true if you are thinking, as is likely, of certain theologians such as Görres, who never completely shook off the Protestant mentality he owed to his origins. That said, and to get to the heart of the matter, it seems to me that, while I agree with you that certain common interpretations of mystical states are inaccurate, it is still not possible to regard purely intellectual states as "mystical". If we extend the meaning of the term beyond certain limits, everything I have said to you may also apply to it; therefore, it is always good to agree on definitions, especially since the extension in question is not without certain dangerous ambiguities. You regard the sentimental element as purely incidental in mystics; I, on the contrary, think that its presence constitutes an essential feature of the mystical mode of realisation. I do not mean to say that it is the end, far from it; only that it is a means peculiar to this mode, which distinguishes it precisely from others, while at the same time explaining in part what is incomplete about mystical realisation. To say that it is incomplete, moreover, is not at all to say that it is negligible or contemptible, far from it; and it is even very fortunate if, as you assure me, mysticism is not in decline today, for without it there would not remain in the West the slightest trace of realisation of any kind. I am telling you all this at the outset so that you cannot misunderstand my intentions.

On the other hand, it seems to me that when you speak of metaphysics, you always think of theory, separating it from realisation, perhaps because you conceive of the latter exclusively in mystical terms. On the contrary, when I speak of metaphysics, I think above all of realisation, since theory is only a preparation for it. You dispute that this preparation is indispensable; I agree that it is not necessarily so for partial realisation, but the same is not true if we consider the possibility of complete realisation. It is true that you may not yet fully understand what I mean by this, as it is obviously difficult to express. This brings me directly to another consideration: you insist, quite rightly, on the inexpressible nature of mystical states; but this is just as true for purely metaphysical realisation, and theory itself must always reserve the part of this inexpressible that is essential, leaving the conception open to unlimited possibilities; which is why true metaphysics excludes any expression of a systematic form. Now, you say that "for those who realise, it matters little to them to express themselves clearly"; I would go even further and say that it is indifferent to them not to express themselves at all. Necessarily inadequate expression has no other purpose than to help conceive certain things; it is an "adjuvant" but nothing more, whether it be expression through words or through symbols of any kind.

I don't think I ever said that mysticism is "a means of expressing metaphysics"; one could perhaps say that about theology, but that is a completely different matter. Any realisation, even partial, goes far beyond expression; and it cannot rightly be described as an 'inferior stage', because it is a realisation that is all it can be, given its starting point. You

yourself acknowledge that it is not complete, that is to say, that it can only go so far; but I attribute this to its "irregular" nature, if one may so speak, whereas you see it as a necessity of any realisation, whatever it may be; and this, it seems to me, is the greatest difference between us.

Before discussing this point in greater depth, I must make a few further observations so as not to overlook anything in your letter. You fear that recognising the symbolic nature of religion will diminish it; yet can you deny this nature in everything that is a means of expression in religion, whether in the realm of dogma or ritual? Do not think that this is a reason to reject the effective power of ritual, as Protestants do; quite the contrary. The existence of this power, when recognised, is precisely one of the best examples to show the role of a symbolic element as a support for any kind of realisation. I would add that, for me, symbol and expression are essentially the same thing, so that the role of theory in metaphysics cannot be other than that which I have just indicated, with the difference that its effectiveness is not immediate; but what we truly know can never be lost and must sooner or later lead to a corresponding realisation.

One more thing: you say that in mystical contemplation, "the intellect comes into play in an intuitive and inexpressible way". As for the inexpressible, according to what I have just said, it is common to all realisations; as for the intuitive character, I would say the same if it truly belongs (I mean in the intellectual order) to mystical states. Indeed, is not intellectual intuition what properly and essentially constitutes metaphysics? Without it, metaphysics could not be "supra-rational" as it must be; not to recognise this characteristic is, for me, tantamount to denying metaphysics, or, which amounts to the same thing, to attributing this name to something that is in reality only pseudo-metaphysics. Translation into rational mode, with all its inevitable imperfections, can only intervene in metaphysics for the sake of exposition, not for knowledge itself; and it is only in this rational or discursive expression that error is likely to creep in, intuition being immune to it because of its direct and immediate nature.

If I expressed reservations earlier about the role of intellectual intuition in mystical states, it is primarily because its presence is what defines metaphysics as such, and also because I fear that you may confuse this intellectual intuition with the "intellectual vision" of mystics, especially since I know that many people do indeed make this confusion, even among theologians. However, there are two essentially distinct things here: we must not forget that intellectual vision is a mystical phenomenon (absolutely arbitrary), a phenomenon which, as you say, goes far beyond all the laws of psychology (and we are allowed to laugh at psychologists like Delacroix who claim to explain these things); but ultimately, does not the very use of the word "phenomenon", if we want to give it meaning (and it seems to me that we must), indicate that it is something that occurs in the realm of individuality? And it is the limits of this realm that, for me, mark those

of mystical realisation; but it must be clearly understood that I am not referring here to the limited and fragmentary individuality that is usually meant by this term, but rather to what I call, for the sake of distinction, extended individuality, with the full development of all the possibilities it encompasses, which are indefinite (but not infinite). You seem to agree with me when you speak, in relation to the mystic, of 'the invasion of something that is not him', which I cannot interpret as 'his accession to a supra-individual realm', but only as the action of a supra-individual principle in the individual realm. Please reflect a little on this expression "mystical phenomenon" and tell me if you can find another possible meaning for it; for my part, I cannot see one. In any case, there can obviously be no question of "phenomena" of any kind from a metaphysical point of view; with my interpretation, this can be explained by the universal nature of everything metaphysical, and, on the other hand, it is perhaps what most clearly marks the profound difference between the two modes of realisation, mystical and metaphysical, because, by indicating their respective domains, it shows how far each can lead; and so I return to the question of the possibility of "complete" realisation.

22 December: I too was forced to interrupt my letter; I will resume it today where I left off.

You say that "complete and absolute realisation in all respects would imply the total and effective liberation from all the conditions of human existence". I myself do not believe I have ever said anything else, and I would even add: not only from human existence, but also from any other mode of individual existence, whatever it may be. We are therefore in complete agreement on this point; however, we disagree on the consequences that should be drawn from it. This is mainly because you always consider the human being solely as a human being, and from this point of view you are certainly right, since the human condition is an individual and conditioned state, it is obvious that the being, while remaining in this state, cannot free itself from the conditions that precisely define it and which, in short, constitute its entire reality, at least when we consider it in itself. Since you admit that the mystic "is never liberated except partially and virtually", it follows that he is never anything other than a human individual; like any individual being, he has the possibility of being something else, but only the possibility. I therefore do not see how you can logically think that he reaches a supra-individual realm; it seems to me rather that we should be in complete agreement with regard to the mystic: he extends his individuality indefinitely, he can achieve all the possibilities of which it is capable: but extended individuality remains individuality, with all the limiting conditions that make it what it is.

Now, here is the other point of view, the one you have not considered: the being who, in a certain mode of existence, is a human individual (a thing cannot be anything other than what it is) (principle of identity) can also be something else; and it can be so, not only successively, but also simultaneously, and even better, since time is only one of the special conditions of the state.

individual human being, does not have to intervene in anything outside of this state. I do not believe that the expressions 'before' and 'after' used in relation to human existence as a whole can have any meaning other than that of a purely logical and causal succession; but a causal relationship, both between different states of existence and within the same state, necessarily implies simultaneity. I do not mean to say that there are not, outside the human state, modes of succession more or less analogous to the temporal mode, and which can be understood with it in the same more general term, such as "duration"; but these modes are never, like time itself, anything more than particular conditions of this or that state of existence, and therefore do not come into play when we consider the universal, that is, when we consider the possibilities of being as a whole, rather than limiting ourselves to those of one of its states. And I would add that only then is being considered metaphysically, since the metaphysical point of view is properly the point of view of the universal.

I trust you will not dispute that human beings can be other than what they are as individuals and that, insofar as they are other, they are no longer subject to the conditions of human existence; in particular, they are no longer subject to time, which is one of those conditions. This amounts to saying that a realisation relating to extra-individual states cannot be constrained to occur only after human existence, rather than during or even before it (these words being taken here in their ordinary temporal sense, which can only really apply within human existence). Consequently, the human state may, just as well as any other state of existence, be taken as the basis for such a realisation.

The whole difficulty for you seems to me to arise only from the fact that you do not place yourself in what we might call 'non-time'. I agree that it can sometimes be quite difficult to rid oneself of the temporal point of view; and yet I believe that you yourself recognise that it must be done, or else all metaphysics would have to be abandoned. The most difficult thing, in my opinion, is to conceive of the relationship between time and 'non-time'; however, it can be done (note that I say conceive, not imagine).

Now, you say that "absolute or total realisation, infinite unity, and beatific vision cannot be attained in this life". Here again, we are in complete agreement, and to think otherwise would be completely contradictory, since it would simply mean thinking that the universal can be understood in the individual, or the unconditioned in the conditioned (life being, like time and space, only one of the conditions of individual human existence). I have therefore never meant to say that complete realisation is possible "in this world", because by "this world" I can only mean the set of conditions of our current individuality. However, in asserting this impossibility, I do not mean to say that such realisation must necessarily be deferred until after death, since precisely this afterlife no longer has any meaning in the extra-individual order, the only one that needs to be taken into account with regard to this realisation. To assume this is to assume that the unconditioned is affected by the contingencies relating to the course of human existence, its beginning and its

end (which are beginning and end only from the point of view of individuality, and I would even say of restricted individuality), is therefore to regard the unconditioned as conditioned, that is to say, to fall back into exactly the same contradiction as before, albeit in a different way.

Thus, the individual, as an individual, cannot in any way escape the conditions that make him or her what he or she is; but the being who is a human individual is also something else at the same time, and it is in this capacity that he or she can bring about the communication that exists virtually between his or her human state and his or her other states (and this for all or part of the states in question). Whether this result is obtained from the human state or from any other, it is ultimately the same, for the human state must necessarily be found, like all others, in the total being. On the other hand, since all beings have strictly equivalent possibilities in this respect, the realisation must ultimately be achieved by all, from one state or another; you see that I am going further than you here, and that, for me, it is only from the human point of view that "many (and even all) are called, but few are chosen"; but from this point of view, it is perfectly true that "few are chosen", that is to say, few actually achieve it from the human state, either during life or after death, that is to say, to speak more precisely in metaphysical terms, either in the part of human individuality represented by earthly existence, or in the posthumous extension or prolongation of that same individuality (a prolongation which, moreover, can be envisaged as 'perpetual', that is to say, temporally indefinite).

At this point, a difficulty arises: it would seem, from what I have just said, that it does not matter whether human individuality is taken as the basis for realisation rather than any other state, if the final result is to be the same in all cases. ~~(However, this is not the case~~) [text crossed out by the author] Moreover, the human state is only one state among others and like the others; from the universal point of view, if it cannot be disadvantaged in any way compared to the others, it cannot claim any privileges either. However, on the contrary, it is very important that this human state provides the effective basis for realisation; but for the moment, I cannot dwell on this point, and I will simply assure you that the difficulty I have just pointed out (in order to anticipate an objection that you would certainly have raised yourself) is by no means insoluble, although great care is needed to express the solution in a reasonably satisfactory manner.

There is still another side to the question: what becomes of human individuality for the being who has attained complete realisation? In one sense, it is as if it did not exist, for all contingency is nothing in relation to the universal; but in another sense, it is, in the total being, an element as necessary as all the others (using mathematical symbolism, we could represent the total being not as an arithmetic sum, but as an integral of all these elements which are its states of existence). In any case, once being is in an unconditional state, the conditions of its individual state, no longer being limiting, can only exist for it in an illusory mode; but as far as appearances are concerned and in relation to other human individuals, nothing has changed. I do not know if I am making myself

very clear on this point; it will be up to you to tell me if it is necessary to provide further clarification.

In a certain sense, it could be said that metaphysical realisation operates in the opposite direction to mystical realisation. Indeed, the latter implies the action of a universal principle in the individual domain, an action that can be symbolically described as a 'descent' of this principle (but, of course, without the principle being affected in any way). On the other hand, metaphysical realisation can be regarded in a way as a taking possession of higher states, that is, as an "ascent" of the being realised in these states. Naturally, "descent" and "ascent" are only figurative expressions here, but they are ultimately another way of expressing the "active" nature of one of the two realisations in relation to the "passive" nature of the other. Moreover, the opposition exists only in one respect, in terms of means and not ends; complete realisation necessarily entails, in addition, the effects produced by any partial realisation.

With regard to the relative opposition I have just pointed out to you, I note in particular your quotation from the Symbol of St. Athanasius: "Non conversione divinitatis in carnem, sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum". One could find in this an application, perhaps unexpected for you, concerning the "non-mystical" character of certain states that you nevertheless regard as mystical. This proves once again how necessary it is to know exactly what is meant by "mystical"; it seems to me that if we disregard certain characteristics that I consider essential to its definition, the word no longer has any precise meaning, and consequently there would no longer be any point in keeping it, since we would want to include everything in it. It is a bit like the case of correlative terms, which can only have meaning in relation to each other.

In order not to be too incomplete, we must also point out a difference between the two realisations in terms of their respective preparation: theoretical preparation is essential for metaphysical realisation, but not for mystical realisation; you agree with me on this. I would only add that this theoretical preparation concerns only what is of a purely metaphysical nature, to the exclusion of anything that is of a relative nature (such as strictly scientific knowledge), which is of no importance here. On the other hand, there is also a certain preparation that is quite specific to mystical realisation: it is what one might call "moral", if that word were not in danger of being taken in a rather unfavourable sense; this preparation, whose nature is closely connected with the sentimental element of mysticism, being of the order of human (if not social) contingencies, could have no effect on metaphysical realisation. This will no doubt seem a little strange to you, for I fear that you see a possible connection between the metaphysical and the moral points of view which, for me, cannot exist. I am well aware, on the other hand, that the idea of 'charity', which I am thinking of more particularly here, is susceptible to a certain analogical transposition; but could not the same be said of any idea of any kind? And since the intellectual order is the only one that is directly related to the universal, is it not preferable to consider, at the outset, this which is purely intellectual, without any mixture of the sentimental

sentimental? Moreover, the consequences are nothing to worry about, since, in the end, everything else will also be found to be an added bonus.

It seems, moreover (but have I understood you correctly on this point?), that even "moral" preparation does not appear to you to be absolutely essential to mystical realisation; this will help you to understand that it is completely irrelevant to another mode of realisation, but at the same time it would still show the "irregular" nature that is peculiar to the mystical mode. Here, it is true that there is no method; but I cannot say, as you do, that there is no method for "realisation" in any mode whatsoever. All methods are merely preparatory, of course; but even with this restriction, you do not want to admit it because, you say, "it would be admitting that the supernatural obeys nature". Is that really true? If this preparation is purely metaphysical? Doesn't the very word 'metaphysical' mean 'beyond nature'? There is no possible reconciliation between metaphysics and any kind of 'naturalism', whereas mysticism can, without contradicting or denying itself, admit a certain 'naturalism', at least provisionally. Talking about the supernatural or metaphysics are undoubtedly just two different ways of expressing equivalent, if not identical, things; this is why it is important to emphasise above all the 'supra-rational' nature of true metaphysics. Of course, nothing that modern philosophers believe they can call metaphysics can fit into such a conception; for me, all of this is nothing more than pseudo-metaphysics.

The relative and 'phenomenal' nature of the mystical order is further manifested in the fact that mystical states are susceptible to counterfeiting: there is a 'diabolical mysticism' as well as a 'divine mysticism', and the outward appearances may be the same in both cases. In metaphysics, there is no such thing, because, not dealing with phenomena, one is thereby outside any duality of this kind.

As for the mystical "gift", I interpret it in the sense that the individual cannot, by his own means, enter into relationship with the universal or that, considered simply in himself, he is absolutely nothing in relation to the universal. I assume, moreover, that differences that are only in language cannot embarrass you: from metaphysical language to theological language or vice versa, translation may be more or less difficult, but I am convinced that it is always possible, with the exception of what in metaphysics does not find its correspondence in theology (the reverse, moreover, not being the case).

I will stop here, as my letter, already much longer than yours, would end up becoming a veritable tome. Naturally, I will not ask you to respond to all my points immediately; but if certain things seem unclear to you, which would not be surprising, I would be grateful if you would let me know clearly and prompt further explanations.

Moreover, you can imagine how pleasant it is for me to take a break from my concerns about the class!

In my reply to Germain, I spoke to him again about issues relating to the teaching of philosophy; he will no doubt have told you about it. I

noticed that he had changed his mind on this since September; I fear he may be under the illusion that his pupils are capable of assimilating even elementary metaphysical concepts.

On the occasion of the New Year, we send you, Dear Miss, our best wishes for you and your entire family, and we ask you to accept our warmest regards.

R. G.

Blois, 16 February 1919.

Dear Miss,

I was certainly not surprised by your silence, but I was nonetheless pleased that this time you did not keep me waiting so long for your reply. I did not know you were in N. D. de Sion; Germain had not mentioned it to me. It is true that, for some time now, he has been writing to me only rarely, and above all very briefly, for which I readily excuse him, thinking that he must indeed be quite absorbed in his teaching, given the number of his pupils. Moreover, this does not prevent him from very obligingly carrying out the errands I have entrusted to him for books I need at the moment.

I am happy to hear that your thesis is progressing, and at the same time I envy you a little for being able to work on it so peacefully. What subject have you finally decided on? Do you intend to remain in your retreat for a long time?

Contrary to what you think, I have hardly been involved in preparing for the agrégation so far; I have hardly found the time, having only recently got rid of my extra classes, and what is more, I have still been quite tired from a new bout of flu. What bothers me most is Greek, which I really can't bring myself to study seriously. On the other hand, this year there will be a second competitive examination reserved for demobilised soldiers, which will undoubtedly significantly reduce our chances of success. However, as you say, I would like to be rid of all this as soon as possible, so that I can finally return to more interesting work.

Germain did mention some difficulties he had with what I explained to you in my last letter, and some objections he wanted to raise on the subject, but he did not specify anything. If his objections are partly the same as yours, my reply will be for both of you at the same time.

As for the logical difficulties, it seems to me that you are exaggerating them greatly, and that they lie not so much in what I wrote as in the way you interpreted it. I must assume that I did not explain myself well enough, even though I tried to be as clear as possible. First of all, I would like to say that we are in complete agreement that metaphysics is supra-logical, but that this does not mean that it can contain anything illogical. So if you thought you found somewhere a "violation of the principle of identity" or some kind of contradiction, rest assured that it was not my intention. Perhaps it is simply due to the difficulty of expressing certain things. However, it is not that I want to "retreat into

the inexpressible when I am not understood", as you seem to reproach me for; but ultimately, we must always reserve a place for the inexpressible, or else we would have to abandon all metaphysics. Those who believe that it is possible to express everything can only ever build "systems", in the manner of Descartes; and don't you agree with me that they would do much better to keep quiet? I confess that, for my part, I prefer a positivist to a pseudo-metaphysician; one has a narrow-minded mentality, but the other has a radically false one. That is why I have so little regard for all modern philosophy; and I think that in the West, true metaphysics can only be found in scholasticism, even though it seems to me to be incomplete, and even doubly incomplete, as I believe I have already explained to you: 1. - from a theoretical point of view, in that it does not go beyond Being; 2. - from the point of view of realisation, which is absent from it. For everything else, that is to say, everything that is metaphysical in scholasticism, I still think that agreement is perfectly possible and desirable; the greatest difficulty seems to me to come mainly from terminology, and also from certain extra-metaphysical complications and subtleties introduced by discussions of entirely secondary interest, and difficulties of this kind are certainly not insurmountable.

This brings me directly to answering one of your first questions: can we separate theory from practice? According to what I have just said, we must, and we must even separate theory into two parts, which does not prevent, of course, the part that is limited to the consideration of Being from being incomplete in itself, nor does it prevent the entire theory from normally serving as preparation for realisation; but if theory must be presented first, it is because its study must obviously be independent of what can only come afterwards. Moreover, true metaphysical teaching is such that each person can only go as far as the extent of their intellectual horizon allows. In other words, each person can accept everything they can understand, and cannot even refuse to accept it once they have understood it. No consideration foreign to metaphysics can intervene in this, and this applies, whatever you may think, to both practice and theory; these are things that can neither agree nor disagree with anything else, because there is truly no point of comparison. So whatever you may think about the relationship between metaphysics and theology concerns only that part of metaphysics that you know, that is, scholasticism, which is properly ontology; for everything else, the question cannot be posed in the same way.

I must make another preliminary remark: since I have only spoken to you about the possibility of metaphysical realisation (and I could not speak to you about anything else), you have considered the question from a point of view that could be said to be more philosophical than truly metaphysical. By this I mean that you are discussing as if it were a question of whether or not this is so, whereas for me the whole question is to understand that it is so, and how it is so. Moreover, there is one point on which you can be entirely reassured: when you speak of a possible illusion in this regard, there can be

be any illusion in the intellectual realm. The danger is therefore rather for mystics, and there it is very real, because there it is, at least in part, a question of phenomena. I have already alluded to this when speaking of the opposition between "divine mysticism" and "diabolical mysticism", and I will only emphasise the external similarity of the phenomena in both cases. Thus, when it comes to bilocation, for example, or physical insensitivity in ecstasy, we will undoubtedly find many examples in the lives of saints, but perhaps even more in the stories of sorcerers, and the appearances are exactly the same.

Finally, I think it is completely inaccurate to say that it is a matter of "seeking something better than holiness"; the truth is that it is something else, and that there is no common measure, even though, in absolute terms, all particular points of view (i.e. those that differ from the metaphysical or universal point of view) must obviously be understood "in addition". In any case, I do not believe that anyone can claim that the means are more important than the end, which, of course, does not mean at all that they are without importance.

That said, I return to your logical difficulties. You first raise this objection: "a being cannot be simultaneously and in the same respect individual and universal". Certainly not, but have I ever said anything like that? It must be simultaneously, since one of the two states in question is not only extra-temporal, but also outside any condition of duration or succession in any mode whatsoever, and therefore necessarily in perfect simultaneity with everything else. But it is quite obvious that it is not in the same respect, since it is insofar as it is something other than a human individual in one of its states that it is no longer subject to the conditions of human existence. As these conditions are those that define the state of existence that is that of the human individual as such, they cannot apply to other states, nor consequently to the being as we consider it in these other states (even though these may be other individual states, each of which must be subject to its own conditions that define its domain). I thought this was sufficiently clear, and it is really very difficult to find a contradiction here. If it is the expression "as" that you criticise and find obscure, I would reply that it precisely indicates the relationship under which the being in question must be considered, and that it therefore prevents us from thinking that it is under the same relationship that the being is both conditioned and unconditioned, which would indeed be contradictory. As for saying that the meaning of this expression is not at all the same in the sentence just mentioned and in this one: "man, insofar as he is God", which you declare acceptable, I confess that I do not see the difference at all; or at least I see only one possible difference, which is the one you then wish to establish between the essential and the accidental, and if that is indeed the case, I will come back to it in a moment, as I would like to follow the order of your letter as closely as possible to be sure I do not forget anything.

You say this: "If you are talking about the universal being, in what respect and in relation to what is it also a human individual? It would have to be in relation to something other than itself, but there is nothing outside of it." I could first contest this last statement, as I cannot accept that Being encompasses within itself all

possibilities; there is this whole other part of theoretical metaphysics that goes beyond the realm of Being, which you have the right to ignore, but which I am obliged to take into account. However, that is not what we are concerned with at present; it is only necessary to remember that what I am saying must be understood not only in relation to the states that are included in Being, and which are properly states of existence, but also in relation to the states that are beyond Being. If I continue to speak of "a being" in the latter case, it is only because I am forced to give it some name in order to be able to speak of it; this is not a contradiction, but a simple imperfection of language, which is inevitable, since any other term would be just as inadequate. - I could then point out a contradiction in your argument, this time a very real one: you have just said that "there is nothing outside of universal being", and further on (regarding the concept of creation, which I will come back to in due course) you say: "God wanted something to exist outside of himself, and for that something to be united with him." How can you reconcile these two statements? The contradiction between them seems obvious to me. I would add that, in my view, you would be right in the first case if God were only Being, because to say that something is outside God is simply to say that God is limited. I do not want to believe that the way you envisage creation really implies this consequence. I will now answer your question directly: if the universal being is also, in a sense, a human individual, it is simply because it contains this possibility within itself, or, in other words, because every human individual represents a possibility of being. There is therefore no difficulty if we consider things from this point of view, which is, moreover, a purely theoretical point of view, and not that of realisation; from the latter point of view, it is not strictly speaking the universal being that we should be talking about here, but the "personality" which is the transcendent principle of a human individual in a certain state, and something else in other states. It is in relation to this "personality", the principle of all states of a being, that realisation must essentially be considered; I thought I had already mentioned this to you. - Returning to the theoretical point of view, I see no problem, not in "assigning this predicate to the Infinite", which is a human individual with its special conditions of existence, but in attributing this predicate to Being (without the latter being in any way "affected" by it), for this individual is ultimately only a "way of being" (either in relation to universal being or in relation to "personality"), and to attribute it not only to Being, but to the Infinite, that is, to total Possibility, because any possibility of being is also, obviously, a possibility pure and simple, Being being included in total Possibility. - Here again, there is no contradiction, since the Infinite is not affected by any attribution (and one could say that, having them all as possibilities, it has none of them as determinations); it cannot be otherwise, because the relationship between the finite and the Infinite, however one wishes to consider it, can only be strictly nil: this is why we can say that the finite exists only in an illusory mode with regard to the Infinite, which does not prevent it from being real in itself, and this because it is a possibility. - As for "moving continuously from one domain to another", this can only be understood if the domains are two different but analogous states; there can be no question of continuity if it is a matter of one

on the one hand, a certain state of existence, and, on the other hand, the Totality of states. I do not believe I ever said that realisation had to take place in a continuous manner, but only, perhaps, that it brings about the continuity of all states between them, which is quite different. Nor did I say that "the individual could, through his activity, escape the conditions that define him", since, on the contrary, the being, insofar as he escapes these conditions, is no longer and can no longer be the individual, the latter existing as such only in these conditions.

18 February. Once again, I have been forced to interrupt my letter... to summarise ancient history for sixth form students! It's really interesting...

To pick up where I left off, I now have to answer this question: "If it is the universal being that is at stake, how can it come into possession of the universal, since it is already universal? " Obviously, from the point of view of an immutable and permanent principle, it cannot be affected or modified by any change; you are therefore right to say that the word "realisation" implies that we are taking the point of view of individual beings, who, as such, are "in the process of becoming", or rather, I would say, in the process of manifestation. However, in order to 'realise', the individual being does not have to 'become infinite', which would be contradictory; it has to become effectively aware (if the word 'awareness' can be applied here) that it is not only an individual being, or rather that the being it is in a certain state is also something else in other states. Of course, there can be no change from the universal point of view, nor therefore from the point of view of "personality", which is a principle of universal order; however, this is where we must again invoke the distinction between the "virtual" and the "actual", however unclear you may find it. To try to make myself clearer, I will use a translation in theological terms: Does Redemption simply restore the order that existed before the Fall, or is there something more to it? In other words, to use the words of St Paul, is there not a difference between the "first Adam" and the "new Adam"? I would be grateful for your answer to this question, as I believe it would greatly facilitate explanations on the point in question.

I come to your distinction between the essential and the accidental, a distinction that I really cannot accept. For greater clarity, it would be good to consider it first in the case you are presenting, and then in a more general way: "For us," you say, "the supernatural is accidental." If this is so, it is because man, in himself, has no supernatural end; yet I do not believe that you can accept this. If "grace is an accident", holiness is something exceptional, one might almost say abnormal, and it is not true that everyone is called to it; as for those who do not receive this "accidental" grace, too bad for them, but they nonetheless have everything to which they can legitimately aspire as human beings. I seem to see in this consequences that are strangely similar to Jansenism; if you think about it a little, I have no doubt that you will easily realise this. I am well aware that it might seem contradictory to say that the supernatural is part of human nature in any way whatsoever, but isn't the contradiction simply in

the words? So, instead of "nature", I prefer to say "essence", although this latter term also becomes inadequate when it comes to going beyond being; but then, as I said before, it would be exactly the same with any expression, and, as long as we take the necessary precautions, the disadvantages are not as great as some might believe. In any case, I am not one of those who think that fundamental importance should be attached to terminology, although we must naturally strive to ensure that it is as free as possible from imperfection and complication.

Now, generally speaking, the distinction between the essential and the accidental is not logically sound because it is not acceptable that any attribute that truly suits a being should not be part of its essence: "omne pradicatum inest subjecto" otherwise we would have to accept Kant's distinction between analytical and synthetic propositions, with all the consequences that entails. I do not believe that you can dispute that every true proposition must be analytical: and the inherence of the attribute to the subject can only be understood in the sense that the attribute, whatever it may be, is a constituent element of the essence of the subject. Under these conditions, there may only be cause to distinguish between attributes of unequal importance, and it is the least important ones that we will call "accidental", although in reality there is only a simple difference of degree between them and the others. -- Moreover, why should essence be constituted only by certain attributes of being? I see no reason for this apart from a proposition such as that of Descartes, for whom there must be a "principal" attribute that alone expresses the whole essence of the subject (and this is necessary only to justify his dualism). But aren't you confusing "essence" and "species"? The individual participates in the nature of the species, or specific essence; one can even say, in a sense, that it has this essence within it; but individual essence also includes other attributes (and even an indefiniteness), without which there would be no possible distinction between individuals within the species. If you want to call individual differences "accidents", I see no obstacle to that, but on condition that you no longer oppose the accidental to the essential, since "accidents" thus understood must be part of the essence of the individual, otherwise they would be attributes that do not really suit him. If you have any objections to any of this, I would be grateful if you would let me know.

Returning to the supernatural, I would add that, if it is part of the essence of the human individual, it is only as a virtual possibility and can never be anything other than virtual for the individual as such, since this possibility can only be effective beyond the individual realm. I therefore agree with you that identification with God is not achievable, that is to say, it cannot be made effective for the creature as a creature, if by "creature" you mean the individual as such (and I wonder if you can mean anything else). When I use the expression "as" here, I mean that, in order for us to consider "supreme identity" as effectively realised, the relationship under which we must consider being is not the relationship under which it is a "creature" or an individual, for we must obviously consider it as unconditional. Moreover, insofar as being is unconditional, it

is permanent, and so, strictly speaking, we should say that identity is realised without "identification". What I have just said about the supernatural in individuals can also be said about the intellect, which, being universal in nature, can only ever be virtually present in individuals. Moreover, these are, in essence, two different ways of expressing the same thing, one more theological, when we speak of the supernatural, and the other more purely metaphysical, when we speak of the intellect.

One final remark on this question: When you speak of an "external gift" that has no basis in the essence of the being who receives it, it reminds me of "extrinsic denominations". However, from what I said above, it would follow that there are no purely extrinsic denominations, since such denominations would have no truth. This is what Leibniz says, but I believe we can agree with him on this point without accepting all the consequences he draws from it in terms of his conception of individual substance.

A moment ago, to use your language, I employed the word "creature", and I did so in the sense that I consider most acceptable, although I am not entirely sure that it is exactly the same as yours. Moreover, if I had been able to stick to a purely metaphysical point of view, I would not have had to use this word at all, or rather the idea it expresses; it is the way you pose the question (and I certainly do not blame you for this) that sometimes forces me to take a theological point of view. I must dwell a little on this conception of creation, which is not specifically Christian, but properly Jewish in its origin, and therefore common to all doctrines that have a Jewish root, but only to those. As this conception does not exist among Eastern peoples (with the exception of Muslims), nor did it exist among the Greeks, I cannot regard it as being as fundamental as it seems to be for you, nor as having any truly metaphysical significance. Its true raison d'être is quite different, and, if we put everything in its proper place, it is not in the metaphysical realm that it has a role to play, but only in the strictly religious realm, in the most narrow sense of the word. This concept can certainly convey a whole order of truths in the most appropriate way for a certain level of understanding, which is highly commendable; but its necessity lies above all in a danger inherent in the mentality of certain peoples or races, a danger which is a tendency to admit a "matter" co-eternal with God, or, if you like, to substitute a "demiurgic" conception for a "divine" conception. -- In any case, if it is in the idea of creation that you find an obstacle, I can assure you that it is in no way incompatible with the realisation of the "supreme identity". Their "compossibilities" (if we may use that word) appear quite clearly in certain Islamic doctrines, and Muslims are no less attached than Christians to the concept of God as Creator.

It is all the more surprising that you dispute the possibility of metaphysical realisation, given that you have, in essence, its essential principle in the affirmation of the identity of knowing and being, which Aristotle expresses by saying that "the soul is all that it knows". What is strange is that no one has ever thought, in

The West must draw the necessary conclusions from this principle, because if it is only a theoretical assertion, it might as well be said that it is nothing at all; but I cannot believe that no one has ever really thought about it, and for many reasons I am convinced that in the Middle Ages, in this regard, there were many things that have not come down to us, and this within the Church, which may surprise you even more. For these and other reasons, I therefore believe that the Church's attitude on this point cannot be as strictly negative as you say, that it must be more 'Catholic' in the etymological sense of the word, although it is doubtful, to say the least, that this is one of those questions on which the Church can take a categorical stance. For me, the possibility of a real conflict between the metaphysical point of view and any other point of view, including the religious point of view, is something completely inconceivable. You say that we must be careful "not to confuse the levels"; such a reproach can hardly be levelled at me, as I always take care to emphasise the profound separation that must normally exist between different points of view, as well as insisting on the necessary hierarchy of the multiple states of being. There would be much to say on this last point, but that would take me too far afield; so I will only add, in this regard, that what makes it possible to synthesise these multiple states (without any confusion between them) is not a common element, as you suggest, but rather their common principle, which is what I have called "personality"; for what is common to them cannot be immanent in them, but must necessarily be transcendent in relation to each of them. I do not deny, however, that a certain conception of immanence may be reconcilable with transcendence; but for this to be the case, each state would have to be considered not in isolation and in itself, but in its totality and in union with the principle.

20 February. -- Another interruption... Anyway, I hope to finish today.

You say that "God in himself has no use for creatures"; I would like to know exactly how you mean this. I believe that this is, in essence, only a theological way of expressing what I myself said earlier in metaphysical terms, that the relationship of the finite as such to the Infinite can only be nil. This amounts to saying that "the Infinite (and even Being) is unaffected by the multiple modifications it contains within itself, modifications by which we must understand all the possible states of all possible beings. However, it must be clearly understood that any possibility of being, by virtue of being a possibility, and being the possibility that it is, must follow the mode of manifestation (or state of existence) that is inherent to it, otherwise it would not be what it is, and would not even be a possibility of being. Similarly, any possibility that is not a possibility of being is just as real, albeit in a different way, involving no manifestation, since this possibility belongs essentially to the order of "non-manifestation" and could not enter the realm of the manifested (you would probably say "of becoming") without being something other than what it is, since this realm includes only possibilities that manifest themselves (and insofar as they manifest themselves), and these are, by definition, possibilities of being. You can see from this that I take as much care as you do to avoid any

contradiction; but what I mean above all here is that the distinction between the possible and the real has no metaphysical value, and that it is even properly anti-metaphysical. It is this distinction, complicated (or perhaps even brought about) by the intrusion of the moral point of view, that led Leibniz to his extravagant conception of the 'best of all possible worlds'. Moreover, all modern philosophers have done nothing but strive to find a limitation to universal possibility, in order to reduce it to the measure of their individual understanding; it is even through this that they have been able to give their doctrines the form of "systems", which is in itself the negation of metaphysics.

Allow me to ask one more question: in what precise sense do you use the word "mystery"? If for you it means "inexpressible", which is its original and etymological meaning, then I can perfectly well use it in the same way. However, if you accept the common meaning of "unintelligible" or "unknowable", I am obliged to reject it, because the unintelligible can only be the absurd, that is to say, the impossible or pure nothingness. Metaphysically, there is no such thing as the unknowable; we must leave that to Kant (with his "noumenon") and Spencer, or, more generally, to pseudo-metaphysicians and positivists, who, for once, agree on this point. It is true that it is very convenient for all of them if everyone can decree as "unknowable" everything that is unknown to them, and call "mystery" everything they do not understand!

There is only one last point on which I must dwell: you seem to find it extraordinary that I relate "charitable love" to the emotional realm, but to what else would you have me relate it? It cannot be to the intellectual order; and I readily admit that I have never been able to understand what Spinoza meant by "intellectual love", as such an expression seems to me to be fundamentally contradictory. You say that you have never disputed that love, humility, etc., are at the root of the mystical path; it seems to me that this is to recognise that the sentimental element is essential to it, and so we agree at least on this point, for I have never said that this element constitutes the end of the mystical path, but simply its characteristic means, the presence of which makes it properly mystical. However, here is the difficulty: the sentimental order has meaning only in the individual and in relation to the individual; how, then, could anything related to it lead beyond individual possibilities? In any case, if it can, it will only ever be occasionally and "by accident"; and, moreover, under these conditions, anything could do the same and be taken just as well as the basis or support for a realisation; but, normally, we cannot expect anything more than an extension (which may be indefinite) of individuality. What belongs to the individual cannot, in itself, have any effect outside the individual domain, just as action cannot liberate from action; if it were otherwise, the effect would not be in the cause and would be superior to it. I am well aware that the idea of "charity" can be transposed analogically, as any idea can be; but then it could no longer be a question of an exclusive application to the human domain, which is apparently all you have in mind. Rather, it should be understood in the sense of "cosmic charity", as the Arabs understand it, for example, when they speak of

saint who "supports the worlds with his breath" (which, incidentally, refers to one of the symbolic meanings of the rosary in Eastern cultures). In any case, if you take charity as it is usually understood, in a moral and social sense, its sentimental or emotional nature is obvious; and the word "love" that you add to it further confirms this interpretation. As for "self-denial", it seems to me to be a very weak reflection of what Easterners call by various names that all mean "extinction of the self", an extinction which consists in the fact that individual conditions, and consequently individuality itself, can only exist in an illusory mode for the being who has realised this (without anything changing in terms of appearances); I think I already pointed this out to you last time. Here again, I do not see any real opposition; it is just that each person goes more or less far in the possibilities of being, and there is only metaphysics insofar as one envisages communication with supra-individual states, communication whose only means is pure intellectual knowledge. I could say about this more or less what you say when applying it to something else: apart from that, there is only illusion, but without denying that this illusion is also a reality, and even the whole reality that individual possibilities, human or otherwise, entail.

In closing, I would like to ask you a small favour: if possible, I would be very grateful if you could explain to me how Father Blanche explains the reduction of the principle of sufficient reason to the principle of identity. You mentioned it to me once, but only in passing and in a rather vague way.

Please excuse me if the last part of this letter leaves something to be desired; I have been struck down again today by a rather high fever. If I am not making myself clear enough, you can of course always ask me for further explanations, and I will be delighted to provide them, especially as it gives me an opportunity to take a break from all these insignificant tasks that weigh so heavily on me. Perhaps this last reason will make you think it would be kind of you not to delay your reply too long.

The ladies send you their regards, and I, dear Miss, beg you to accept the expression of my respectful sentiments.

R. G.

Blois, 30 March 1919.

Dear Miss,

We heard from Germain that you and your family had come down with the flu; we are saddened to learn from your letter that it was serious, but we hope that you will all be fully recovered soon.

I am sending this letter to Saint-Germain, thinking that you are still there; do you intend to return to Paris soon? My wife and I will be spending the Easter holidays there, and we very much hope to have the pleasure of seeing you during that time.

Truly, you are doing yourself an injustice by declaring yourself slow-witted; for my part, I find quite the opposite to be true. Nor do I believe that the work you

you have undertaken for your thesis is really beyond your capabilities. Of course, I gladly allow you to discuss in this work, as you see fit, some of my ideas, which are mine only in expression, not in substance. Only modern philosophers, creators of systems, with their absurd claim to originality above all else, can imagine that ideas are someone's property; and in fact, as far as their ideas are concerned, this is not very important.

But no, Germain did not reply to the last letter I wrote to you, and I think we should not count on him to do so. I have only received a few lines from him from time to time, and even then it has been quite a while since I have heard anything at all; he has promised me several times to write a longer letter, which has never arrived (I have not even been able to find out yet whether he will be in Paris at Easter). I understand that you are not in a position at the moment to respond to everything I have said, but I am not letting you off the hook, and I do hope that you will do so when you have fully recovered, especially as I, in turn, had certain objections that I would like you to resolve.

You say that you see no advantage in trying to achieve both goals simultaneously through two different paths. To tell the truth, I don't even think that's possible, and it's better for each person to choose the path that suits them best; that's why metaphysical realisation does not eliminate the other, or even the others if there are any, and does not render them useless. That is also why I told you that it is fortunate that mystical realisation exists in the West, where without it there would be absolutely nothing. However, we cannot say that one mode of realisation is more suited to human nature than another, in general terms; metaphysical realisation applies to human beings, and not to some other being that we do not need to concern ourselves with (although the possibility of such realisation must exist in all beings, since it is universal in nature, which essentially distinguishes it from all other more or less specific modes). - On the other hand, I would readily say that a mode of realisation that is subordinate to a point of view such as the religious point of view (or, more generally, to any point of view other than the purely metaphysical point of view) is therefore only suitable for certain human beings, and not for all.

Another remark on this subject: I have never said or thought that different traditions should or even could merge or assimilate in any way, even in their theoretical aspects. All that is possible and desirable is agreement on certain points; and this cannot be disputed once we accept that, since there is only one truth, it is possible to establish equivalences between its various modes of expression. I would add that communication between the various traditional doctrines, under conditions that do not detract from the independence of any of them, can only take place from above. Perhaps I have already told you this, for that matter; unfortunately, I am not currently able to explain myself as clearly as I would like on this subject, especially since I fear it would be very difficult to find qualified individuals capable of taking the initiative for an effective rapprochement such as the one I have in mind. Perhaps it will happen one day; we must never despair...

You say that "the initiative for perfect knowledge can only come from the object of that knowledge itself". I readily admit this; but, as it must be added that, in the field in question, the distinction between subject and object no longer applies, I do not see how this can constitute a valid objection. On the other hand, your fear of "evil angels" is in no way justified, for although their action is certainly likely to be exercised in certain areas, and in particular in the mystical realm (this I am less than anyone else inclined to dispute, and you must already have realised this), the same is not at all true in the metaphysical realm, where nothing "good" or "evil" can find a place, for it is far beyond all distinctions and oppositions of this kind, which are eminently contingent.

I now come to Father Blanche's argument, and first of all I would like to thank you for the explanation you have kindly given me. I will try to tell you what I think about it. First of all, I also believe that the principle of causality, sometimes expressed as "every effect has a cause", is completely meaningless, because it is too obvious that effect and cause only exist in relation to each other. I also think that it is best not to introduce the idea of time or any other similar condition (by which I mean any kind of duration or succession), which may not be applicable to all states of universal existence, but only to some of them. I therefore fully accept the formula: "everything that is contingent has a cause"; but we still need to agree on the idea of "being contingent". I do not know to what extent we can really say that this idea and that of "having a cause" are "abstract from experience", especially since, for me, abstract ideas are only ideas of qualities and relationships; we would also need to specify what we mean by "experience" here. Now, if we say that the principle of causality is not created by intelligence, but imposes itself on it, we are in complete agreement (I assume, of course, that we are talking about individual human intelligence); and, moreover, the same is true of all logical principles, which are essentially only a translation or expression, in relation to the conditions of human understanding, of true principles of a universal or metaphysical order. What are called "rational principles" are not, as some seem to believe, laws posited by reason and imposed by it on its objects; on the contrary, they are the expression, in a form appropriate to the rational mode of knowledge, of transcendent principles (of a purely intellectual order), which are essentially independent of reason and impose themselves upon it. I do not believe that the purely intellectual origin of the principle of identity and those immediately derived from it can be disputed; for the principle of causality, the question is somewhat different, because it refers to contingent being, and this is undoubtedly why Aristotelian theory wants it to be drawn from experience; but if it can be linked in some way to the principle of identity, can this theory be maintained? For the moment, I am merely posing the question; perhaps the rest of this discussion will make it easier to answer.

As for the conception of "a priori synthetic propositions", which play such an important role in Kant's system, I really cannot find any reasonable meaning in them; on this point, too, it seems to me that we are in complete agreement. Any

true proposition is essentially analytical in itself: "omne praedicatum in est subjecto": if the attribute were not contained in some way in the subject, it would not really suit it, as I already told you last time. A true proposition can therefore only be synthetic for us when we are unable to analyse the concept of the subject in order to see how that of the attribute is contained within it. However, if we affirm such a proposition, it is because it expresses a fact that we have observed; only the guarantee of experience can assure us of its truth, without our knowing the reason for this truth (if we knew it, the proposition would become analytical). We therefore only have the right to assert a proposition that presents itself as synthetic a posteriori, as expressing the observation of a fact of experience; To say that a proposition is both synthetic and a priori is to say that we do not know not only why it is true, but even if it is true, since it is neither guaranteed logically, because it is synthetic, nor experimentally, because it is a priori.

Now, it remains to be seen how all analytical propositions, that is, in short, all true propositions, can be derived from the principle of identity. Could we not say that they must be contained in it in principle, in the same way that all possible determinations of being must be contained in being? This brings us back to how we should view contingent being. Before that, it might be a good idea to agree on the statement we will give of the principle of identity. You say "principle of identity or non-contradiction"; this is perhaps better than saying, as Leibniz did, "principle of identity or contradiction". I will not go back over the distinction between these two principles, the second being, moreover, an immediate consequence of the first. I do not know if you see exactly the difference I make between the "principle of contradiction" and the "principle of non-contradiction", which I do not regard as equivalent at all; but it seems to me that we have already discussed this before. I will therefore simply remind you that, for me, the principle of identity applies strictly to being, while the principle of non-contradiction, because of its negative form, is capable of applying even beyond being: it is that which, in being, asserts itself as the principle of identity; but that does not matter here, since we are only concerned with being. On this subject, have I ever told you how the principle of identity contains everything that is metaphysically valid in what is commonly called the "ontological argument"? I do not remember, but if you are interested, we can come back to it.

To stay on topic, I therefore accept, more as a consequence of the principle of identity than as an expression of that principle itself, the formula given by Father Blanche: "a being cannot be and not be". This formula applies well to being in all its universality (I assume it was a slip of the pen when you wrote "its generality"), and it certainly has an advantage in this respect over Aristotle's, although the use of the word "same" does not necessarily imply the introduction of the category of substance. I would be grateful if you could give me some further information on this point. Now, it is understood that when various determinations are introduced into being, depending on the degree considered, it will be necessary to express these same

determinations in the statement of the principle that will be matched to it. However, when you (or Father Blanche) say that "being is enriched by increasingly specific determinations", there is a word there that I do not like very much, and moreover I cannot lose sight of the fact that anything more determinative is in reality less metaphysical. As I said earlier, all possible determinations of being are in principle in pure being, and the latter must necessarily be greater than any of its modes.

That said, I fully admit that the notion of causality should not be applied to pure being, which cannot, despite Spinoza and others, be properly called "causa sui", because in order to be a cause, one must first be. On the other hand, this notion of causality is still universal in nature; it must therefore be placed beyond all genres, that is, before the categories. You say that it relates to existence; this is quite obvious if we take the latter word in its proper and etymological sense, which is, in short, precisely that of "being dependent". So, basically, 'existing', 'dependent' and 'contingent' are one and the same thing; if this is indeed Father Blanche's thinking, we are in complete agreement. The existing is indeed contingent, that is to say, non-necessary, in the sense that, by definition, it derives its being from something other than itself, or, in other words, it does not have its own reason for being within itself. On the other hand, the domain of existence is that of universal manifestation; I therefore arrive at this: the contingent is the manifested. You would no doubt say: the contingent is the created; and this is basically the same thing, for 'manifestation' and 'creation' are only two different ways of expressing the same thing, from two different points of view, one purely metaphysical, the other more theological.

A brief aside: is it really true that Aristotelianism is dualistic? In any case, this dualism would go much further than that of Descartes, because its two terms (act and potency) are universal, whereas those of Cartesian dualism (mind and matter) are not; But is there not something more, and is Aristotle's thinking really a true, i.e. irreducible, dualism? It seems that pure being is beyond the distinction between act and potency, and if it is the common principle of both, then it is no longer dualism. I would be grateful if you could tell me what you think about this. In any case, I agree with you when you say that the idea of creation profoundly changed Aristotelianism; but act and potency may be equivalent to what I prefer to call essence and substance, that is, the two poles of universal manifestation. Any dualistic position is certainly untenable and, moreover, devoid of any real metaphysical significance; that is why I find it difficult to accept that this was really Aristotle's position.

I return to the notion of the "contingent": a contingent being, having no reason for being in itself, is relative and incomplete; such are all individual beings, and even, more generally, all beings manifested as manifested (or existing). I think there is no need to dwell on this further, and that you can easily see everything that can be deduced from it concerning the relativity of "individual substances". But in what sense can we say that a contingent being "can exist or not exist"? In the sense that manifestation is only an

"accident" in relation to its principle (which is not affected by it); but any possibility that is a possibility of manifestation must, by that very fact, manifest itself in the manner that its nature entails, otherwise it would not be what it is. Here again, we come back to things I have already told you in one of my previous letters; I will therefore simply refer you to it. In a word, existence is implied in being and derives from it because it is a possibility of being, and, on the other hand, it must contain all the possibilities of manifestation as they manifest themselves; but the whole of universal manifestation is strictly null in relation to the unmanifested, and that is why it can be regarded as contingent, or even illusory (without thereby denying the reality of which it is capable), even though it cannot not be what it is. I believe that it is in this way of considering contingency that you may encounter some difficulty, and yet it is the only one that is metaphysically tenable, for any distinction between the possible and the real is properly anti-metaphysical.

As for the distinction between essence and existence, it seems to me that it implies that existence is not really an "attribute", since every attribute must be understood in terms of essence, or, if you prefer, express something of the essence. Perhaps we could say that what is understood in essence is the possibility of existence, not existence itself, and this would further demonstrate the accidental or contingent nature of the latter. - For me, this distinction between essence and existence is based above all on the fact that, if we consider essence and substance in relation to any manifested being, existence is on the side of substance; I believe I have already mentioned this to you. - I will add just one more thing: a possible being and an existing being that have the same essence are indeed the same being, since the possible being includes the possibility of existence (and without this it could not have the same essence as an existing being), or existence in principle, that is to say, it possesses permanently (effectively or virtually) what existence or manifestation develops only temporarily. Apart from what exists only negatively, that is to say, as deprivation or limitation, everything must be found in the principle, but, of course, in the unconditional state, which is that of non-manifestation. Moreover, if this were not the case, the "resurrection of the dead", to use theological terminology, would have no meaning. I will leave it there for now, asking you to reflect on this last consideration and let me know if you can see things differently, which would surprise me somewhat.

With our best wishes for your full recovery, we send you, Dear Miss, our warmest regards.

R. G.

Blois, 1 July 1919.

Dear Miss,

We are leaving tomorrow for Paris, as the competitive examination is to take place on Friday, Saturday and Monday. I plan to stay until Friday 11th, as I have to return here for the prize-giving ceremony on the 12th. If you are able to come and see us on Tuesday 8th,

Wednesday the 9th or Thursday the 10th, please let us know with a quick note; needless to say, you would give us great pleasure. I will lend you my work on the subject, as you requested.

My wife and I would like to assure you, dear Miss, of our warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 10 July 1919.

Dear Miss,

I received your note this morning; I am sorry for the setback that prevented us from receiving your visit, but I think you will be able to make it up to us next week, because, after much hesitation, I am leaving alone tomorrow for Blois for the prize-giving ceremony, and I will be back here on Saturday evening to enjoy the festivities a little. You are therefore welcome to visit us any day next week from Tuesday onwards, but please be so kind as to let us know in advance so that you can be sure of finding us here.

Our fondest memory.

R. G.

Paris, 30 July 1919.

Dear Miss,

We received your card yesterday evening, and only learned this morning the results of the entrance exam. I am one of seven out of twenty-four who passed this first test. Now we have to take the oral exam, which, apparently, could take another fortnight! Boutroux is the president of the jury. Here are the topics of the three essays: (1). - The role of intuition in knowledge. (2). - Realism in art. (3). - Ideas and genres in Plato's philosophy.

We were sorry not to see you before you left, and we think we will have a better chance of meeting you when we return in the autumn. When the exam is over, we will return to Blois, then we will spend a fortnight in Touraine; as you say, I am really starting to need a rest, and even to stop thinking about anything for a while, if that were possible.

Please give our best regards to your parents and accept our warmest regards.

R. G.

Le Portail, via Champigny-sur-Vende
(Indre-et-Loire), 8 September 1919.

Dear Miss,

I was going to write to you to tell you about my exam when we saw the news of your mother's death in the Écho de Paris. Since your reply, I have been unable to find the time to give you any details about it. So here is what happened: First of all, I must confirm that the result is negative, as

you must have guessed as much. There were seven of us eligible, as I believe I told you, and there were also seven former eligible candidates; there were fourteen positions available, and yet only five candidates were accepted in total. This is the only competitive examination where such severity has been shown: everywhere else, there were between fifteen and twenty successful candidates. Moreover, some completely incomprehensible things happened: among the former eligible candidates, a teacher from the École Alsacienne in Paris, who had given a truly remarkable lesson, was rejected, while the only candidate in this category who was accepted had given a lesson that was off-topic and had said things that were scientifically nonsensical, which none of the members of the jury were able to notice. Two doctors of literature were also rejected, one of whom is a lecturer at a university!

Among the new candidates who passed, there was a graduate of the École Normale Supérieure who, having fallen ill, had been unable to give his lesson; this is rather extraordinary. In general, the candidates who passed were those who simply demonstrated their memory and erudition, without any personal ideas.

For my part, I had the misfortune of being given a moral subject for my lesson (the idea of sacrifice) that did not interest me in the least; nevertheless, I did something that made sense, but which certainly displeased Darlu, who was presiding in Boutroux's absence; the latter, probably ill, was unfortunately unable to attend the oral examination. I do not think there could have been any other reason, as I was very satisfied with my explanations of the authors, even for the Greek, which I had mastered more easily than I had thought. It is true that, if I had had a lesson topic more suited to my abilities, the result would probably have been the same, given the mentality of the jury. Moreover, Lévy-Brühl himself had told me that this competition was mainly for much younger candidates, which the results confirm. You know that I have never had much regard for examinations and competitions in general, but even so, if I hadn't seen things so closely, I wouldn't have believed that this was how it worked. The results of the competition for former eligible candidates are particularly shocking because, for them, who only had to take the oral exam, everything took place publicly. You must think that, after this experience, I have no desire to do it again, even though some people are encouraging me to do so. In any case, for me to decide to do so, the eligibility would have to be maintained, and we do not yet know if that will be the case. Of course, I would not prepare any more than I did this time, because I prefer to devote my time to more interesting work, which I intend to resume as soon as I have had a little rest.

I am sending my letter to Perros-Guirec, thinking that you have returned there as you told us, and that you will all recover a little from the terrible emotions you have just been through.

Please accept, dear Miss, our deepest sympathy.

R. G.

Blois, 5 November 1919.
74, rue du Foix.

Dear Miss,

We have just returned to Blois after a two-month stay in the countryside, during which I took a complete rest that did me a world of good. We plan to return to Paris towards the end of the month, and we hope to have the pleasure of seeing you then. Of course, I will send you my work on the subject again, as you requested in July, and I would be very happy if it could be of any use to you for your thesis.

Before receiving your letter, I was completely unaware of this new decision setting an age limit for the agrégation. According to what my colleagues here have told me, the limit is thirty years of age, but it does not apply to candidates who have already taught. Do you have any more specific information on this subject? On the other hand, I wonder if our eligibility will be maintained; it had been discussed, but it seems that no decision has yet been made. If I only had to take the oral exam, I could certainly try again, but under the same conditions as this time, i.e. without much preparation, as I would not want to spend a lot of time studying more or less insignificant authors. The most annoying thing is that these authors change every time; it seems that the new programme has already been published, but I haven't seen it yet. Moreover, I wonder if the 1920 competition will be reserved entirely for those who have been called up. In any case, I don't think I'll wait that long before getting back to my personal work, and I intend to get started this winter, while trying to find some lessons.

What has become of Germain? I haven't heard from him since the holidays began, even though I wrote to him at the same time as I wrote to you. I really can't help thinking that he is a little too negligent. Has he returned to Paris? I wonder what he will do this year, because now, with the age limit, he can no longer think of taking the agrégation.

My wife sends her regards to you, and I, dear Miss, remain yours sincerely.

R. G.

Paris, 16 December 1919.

Dear Miss,

We have finally been in Paris for a week now; unfortunately, we will have to be away for a wedding between Christmas and New Year's Day, so I wonder when we will be able to meet. Do you come to Paris from time to time and do you have a few free moments? If so, just let us know; I must tell you, however, that I am busy all this week.

We saw Germain, who gave us some additional explanations about the "universal review", a project I knew nothing about before you mentioned it to me; he told us that the publication of the first issue would be delayed until March. If there is anything I can do for the Review, even outside the philosophical section, I will be very happy to do so. Anyway, we'll

talk about it again.

You may know that Germain has now received a reply regarding the competitive examination; it seems that he will be able to sit it, because the five years of war during which there were no examinations will be taken into account. In these circumstances, it would have been better to say that the age limit was set at 35 and not 30... Thank you for sending me Dimier's article; I think he is right in his assessment of the real motives behind the measure in question. It seems that the benefit of eligibility will be maintained for those who have been called up and who will be re-taking the special competition next year, but for us, that is out of the question; if it is not maintained for us, it is very likely that I will not bother.

As for lessons, I currently have one student; it's a start, but I would like to find a few more.

As for my work, before tackling my doctoral thesis, I would like to be able to publish various less important, or rather less voluminous, pieces. I believe that one of the great difficulties with the thesis will be finding a way to get it accepted; I fear that I may find myself faced with people who declare themselves incompetent. So I don't yet know in what form I will be able to present it; in any case, you must understand that I do not want at any price to produce a large volume on a simple, more or less insignificant detail, which is the case with most theses. In short, I want to do something other than scholarly work, something that truly has metaphysical significance, and yet, on the other hand, there are certain types of questions that I would not want to address in a thesis; you can see the difficulty.

I look forward to seeing you soon, dear Miss, and in the meantime, please accept our warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 31 December 1919.

Dear Miss,

I wrote to you about a fortnight ago to tell you that we were finally back in Paris, but I very much fear that my letter did not reach you, as it was posted at the same time as several others, and I have received no reply to any of them. I asked you then if you would be able to come and see us at the beginning of last week, as we were planning to be away between Christmas and New Year's Day for the wedding of one of my sisters-in-law; but as the wedding has been set for 8 January, our departure has been postponed slightly. We will be leaving Paris the day after tomorrow and expect to be back around the 15th; I hope we will be able to meet then.

We have only seen Germain once, about three weeks ago; he gave me some details about the "universal review" project you mentioned in your last letter and told me that the first issue would not be published until March instead of January. He also told me that he had received a reply regarding the competitive examination, stating that the five years of war would be taken into account for the age limit. If this is the case, would it not have been better to simply say straight away that the limit was set at 35? What is

possible to know yet is whether we will retain our eligibility, but it will be retained for demobilised soldiers who took the October exam; if we have to start all over again, I would prefer to give up altogether, and besides, I think Dimier is right in the article you sent me. I believe I already told you all this in my previous letter; if you received it, which seems unlikely, please excuse the repetition.

I was also responding to your questions about my work, which, incidentally, I have finally been able to get back to a little since we have been here. I do not think it would be best to start with a doctoral thesis, for which the most difficult part will be getting the subject accepted (I do not want to be forced into a simple question of detail), as well as how to approach it; what I fear most is finding myself faced with people who declare themselves incompetent. It would therefore be preferable for me to publish something else first; but the costs are a little daunting at the moment. On the other hand, there are many questions that I would not want to address in a thesis, but to which I promise myself to devote a series of separate works sooner or later, which seems to me to be better than overly voluminous works. Finally, I hope we can talk about all this again soon.

We wish you and your family a happier new year than the one just ended, and we send you our best regards, Dear Miss.

R. G.

Paris, 15 January 1920.

Dear Miss,

We found your letter on our return to Paris. Of course, your silence is entirely excusable, and we realised that it would be difficult for you to come and see us during the festive season. So it will be next Tuesday, 20 January, as you suggested; we have no commitments for that day, and I will be very happy to talk with you; I hope, therefore, that you will be able to come early.

As for the journal, I would like to know a little more clearly what idea, as you say, serves as its doctrine; what I know so far is still very vague, but I think you will be able to give me more precise information in this regard. Is there currently a more or less defined programme, or something that serves as one? In any case, I would readily believe that it will be easier for me to contribute to it than to academic journals; the question is above all to know what is likely to interest the readers to whom this publication is addressed.

As for my current work, I have not been able to attend to it for a fortnight, but I intend to get back to it as soon as possible; it was going quite well before our absence.

Yours sincerely, R. G.

Paris, 10 February 1920.

Dear Miss,

I received your letter on Saturday, and only yesterday the manifesto of the Revue Universelle that you mentioned. Thank you for sending it; Germain was unable to find his copy. Of course, I will return it to you once I have read it.

We are very sorry that you are not coming to Paris at the moment; perhaps you will be able to find the time one of these days. As for us, we accept your invitation to visit you in Saint-Germain in principle, but it will have to be some time from now, as we are all still suffering from colds to varying degrees, and what is more, as I have a sore foot, I am avoiding walking unless absolutely necessary.

My work, which I am still busy with, is not quite finished yet, but I don't think it will take much longer now. We visited Mr Rouart, who gave us the image models.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

Paris, 28 February 1920.

Dear Miss,

We intend, if you don't mind, to come and see you next Thursday. Just let us know with a quick note if you are free or if it conflicts with your plans. If the railway strike is not over, I think we can always take the tram: don't they run every half hour?

My work is now finished; all that remains is to copy it out, which is not the most enjoyable task, but the most difficult part will probably be finding a publisher.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

Paris, 12 May 1920,

Dear Miss,

Do you still come to Paris every Tuesday? I seem to remember you telling us that you were free from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please do us the favour of coming to lunch with us next Tuesday: we can at least have a little chat.

Regarding the legend of Bacchus, despite my research, I have not been able to find much information; I have not even...

(Incomplete document)

Paris, 16 July 1920.

Dear Miss,

We were sorry not to see you before you left, and we hope that your brother François's health has not deteriorated. When we received your letter, we were just about to write to you to apologise

, as Françoise had been in bed with measles since Sunday, and we were afraid of infecting you with the disease.

We have passed on your information to our cousin, but we do not yet know what she will do.

As soon as Lévy-Brühl returned, I spoke to him about my work; he almost dissuaded me from approaching Alcan, telling me that even with his recommendation, Alcan would not want to bear the costs of publishing. So I approached Rivière, who did not refuse in principle and even seemed to like the subject. I gave him my manuscript today, but he is asking for some time to think about it and seek advice from various people, notably Father Peillaube. Do you think a word from you to the latter might influence him favourably? If so, I would be grateful if you would do so. I do not know who else Rivière usually consults; I suspect that Maritain may be one of them, but I am not as certain as I am about Father Peillaube. I am due to see Rivière again in a fortnight, and I would like to have a definitive answer by then.

Do you know if Germain has applied for the agrégation? We are wondering if he is still around, as we have not seen him for a month and a half.

I think that even if you have already left Saint-Germain, my letter will still reach you. We still intend to leave for Blois in the first few days of August.

Please accept, dear Miss, our warmest regards to you and your family.

R. G.

We will go to hear "The Legend of Saint Christopher" on Wednesday. I still have the issue of "Lettres" and Pécoul's book that you lent me: will you be missing them?

Paris, 3 August 1920.

Dear Miss,

I have been meaning to write to you for some time, but I waited until I could give you the outcome regarding my book: Rivière has agreed to publish it at his own expense, and he has promised to have it out before the end of the year; the agreement was signed yesterday. As you can imagine, I am very pleased, especially as I was afraid it would take much longer. In the absence of Fr. Peillaube, it was the secretary of the Revue de Philosophie, Abbé Hèzelay (is that how his name is spelled? I may be mispronouncing it), who read my manuscript and gave a favourable opinion; he also consulted Maritain, who supported it; as you can see, everything is going well. Thank you for writing to Father Peillaube; it may not be in vain, as Rivière would prefer, if possible, for the work to appear in his collection, because that would guarantee sales, but he does not make it an essential condition, since he made a commitment before consulting Father Peillaube.

You are no doubt aware that poor Germain failed his teaching qualification exam; he was

a little surprised, especially since Lalande's assessment of him was the opposite of what he had expected. He is looking very poorly at the moment and made a distressing impression on us; I think he is in great need of complete rest. He has applied for a position for the new academic year, but I wonder if he will be fit to teach; moreover, it is not certain that he will get anything, although Lalande has mentioned a possible position near Bordeaux.

We are happy to hear that François is feeling better; as for Françoise, she has now fully recovered. So we are leaving tomorrow for Blois, and we will be back here at the end of September. I have put aside what you lent me; I will return it to you at the start of the new term.

We thoroughly enjoyed our evening at the Opera: we found the sets superb and the play very interesting.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.
74 Rue du Foix, Blois.

Blois, 17 September 1920.

Dear Miss,

Your letter reached me at my mother-in-law's house, where we spent three weeks; we returned to Blois last Wednesday, which is why I have not replied sooner. I believe you are now back in Saint-Germain; as for us, we will be in Paris in early October.

I am very pleased with the letter from Father Peillaube that you shared with me, and I gladly accept the offer to write a few articles for the Revue de Philosophie. I am quite happy to do something against theosophy; I will start as soon as I return to Paris, because it is not easy for me to work here, and besides, I do not have my documents to hand. Like you, I hope that this will be more successful than with academic circles, and from this point of view, it is perhaps better that my book be published by Rivière than by Alcan. There is only one thing that bothers me: Father Peillaube says that Rivière is never ready, and I can see that for myself, because he promised me the first proofs at the end of August, and I have not received anything yet; so I am writing to him today to try to speed things up a little, as I would very much like the volume to be published before the end of the year, as agreed.

I have also just written to Germain to ask how he is doing, as I have not heard from him since the beginning of August. His health is truly worrying, and unfortunately it is unlikely that he will be able to do anything when the new term starts.

I read the first volume of Maritain's textbook, which Germain lent me before we left Paris, and I found it interesting; but I think it is a little too complicated to be given to students. Apart from this general criticism, there are also certain things in the historical introduction that I will discuss with you when we have the pleasure of seeing each other.

Please accept, dear Miss, our warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 22 October 1920.

Dear Madam,

We only returned to Paris last week, but we are now more or less settled in. As we imagine you will have opportunities to come here, we would be delighted to see you one of these days. Could you drop us a line to let us know when you plan to visit? I have many things to tell you about my book, which has not yet gone to press. It would take too long to explain in a letter, but apart from the delay, which is already annoying, I fear I may have some difficulties with my publisher, and perhaps in that case you could do me a favour; we will discuss it together.

Has Father Peillaube returned, and what is his address? I would like to see him before I start preparing the article he has requested, so that I can find out more precisely what he wants.

In recent days, we have received news of Germain, whom we did not know was so far away from us; he seems to be much better off than here, waiting for his daily bread. Let us hope that he can continue without too much fatigue.

Believe us, dear Miss, in our best regards.

R. G.

Paris, 27 November 1920.

Dear Miss,

Thank you for the information you sent us about the paintings; we will look into the matter and let you know if we have any success. We haven't been able to do anything yet because we have all been suffering from severe colds, even flu, and also because of the wedding preparations; these are the same reasons that prevented me from writing to you earlier. We returned from Angers last night, quite tired from the journey; finally, we will have a little more peace and quiet now, and we hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon.

I visited Father Peillaube, who received me very kindly and offered to speak to Rivière himself about the thesis. I think he must have done so, because when I saw Rivière again, he raised no further objections and simply told me that we would sort out the copies to be supplied (67 are needed) later on. At the same time, he told me that the printer had finally started work. This time it was true, because the proofs arrived the day before yesterday. -- On the other hand, everything has been settled on the Sorbonne side: I was finally able to meet with Sylvain Lévy, who gave me his written approval; the dean immediately granted his authorisation and I had the title of the thesis registered at the secretariat. So now all we have to do is wait, and I think that barring any incidents such as another printers' strike, everything will be ready around February.

I have started preparing my article for Father Peillaube's journal and will take it to him as soon as it is finished.

As I still have no news from Germain, I am going to write to him to find out why he has been so silent for so long. I will try to get him to finally send me back the article he has had for so long, and then I will send it to you; perhaps, once you have read it, you will have an idea about how it could be used.

I found a few issues of Pécoul's magazine, which I have set aside for you.

I have not yet been able to visit Bernoville; perhaps I will be able to do so one of these days; I would very much like to have some explanation about the interrupted controversies.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

Have you been able to obtain any information about Mother Marie-Louise?

Paris, 16 December 1920.

Dear Miss,

We have not yet taken any holiday leave, so we will be able to visit you whenever you let us know. I would only ask that you let us know as soon as possible so that we can arrange our other days off, if necessary.

Françoise is in bed with a second bout of measles, but it is much milder than the one she had in July. We hope she will be well again by the holidays and that we will be able to bring her to see you without any risk to your brothers and sisters.

I too would be very happy to see the projects you mention come to fruition; we will discuss them during Christmas week, but I do hope the weather will be milder, because otherwise my mind and body will be completely frozen...

Still no news from Germain; I'm going to decide to copy my article. I haven't quite finished copying the other one yet, but I think I'll be able to take it to Father Peillaube next Tuesday.

Our fondest memory

René Guénon

Paris, 19 January 1921.

Dear Miss,

On Monday, I finally received the rest of my proofs, a rather large package, since it now makes up about a third of the book. If you could come and see us on one of your next trips to Paris, I would give you this first part so that you could read it right away. I hope the rest will not take as long, and I would like it to be finished by the end of next month.

Have you thought about the subtitle for my article? I would like to give Father Peillaube an answer on this subject as soon as possible, but I must admit that I still have no idea...

Did François's minor operation go well? We like to believe that he is already looking better.

Please accept, dear Miss, our warmest regards.

René Guénon

Have you finally been able to obtain any information about Mother Marie-Louise?

Paris, 7 March 1921

Dear Miss,

Since Saturday, I have been in possession of S. L.'s report, which is so curious and extraordinary that, if you have a moment next Friday, I would ask you to come and read it. I say next Friday because we may not be here the Friday after.

I did not meet Maritain on Saturday; he did not stay for lunch in Paris, and no one could tell me when he was leaving for Louvain. I wonder if he will still be here on Thursday; perhaps I will try to go and see him again; in any case, if you meet him, you can tell him what has happened to me.

Believe me, dear Miss, in our deepest sympathy.

René Guénon

Blois, 27 March 1921

EXCERPTS

It seems to me that there is still a slight misunderstanding about what I said to you regarding your article (1) and the "concept of contemplation". What I criticised you for was not at all for saying that this concept is precise in the Gospel: it was for saying that it had been "confused until then", and that in a very general way and without any restriction (.).

Another thing: you say that "the created intellect could not in itself contemplate God"; this is obvious if we are talking about the created intellect, but can this epithet be applied to the pure and transcendent intellect, which alone intervenes directly in the metaphysical order? On the contrary, I think it should be reserved for individual faculties (reason and other psychological elements). For I do not see how "created" can be anything other than synonymous or equivalent with "manifested" and "conditioned". In short, creation and manifestation are one and the same thing viewed from different perspectives (otherwise, creation would be necessary and eternal); but, precisely, the pure intellect is, in itself, of the order of the unmanifested and the unconditioned, and if it did not itself belong to this domain, which is that of metaphysics, it could not reach it, any more than reason and other created faculties can, which, by virtue of their very nature and their own conditions, will never receive more than a kind of indirect knowledge, by reflection and

by participation (at least as long as the limiting conditions that define individuality remain, that is, until total realisation is achieved, after which these faculties can no longer be considered distinct from the intellect itself or from the principle of all knowledge). (...)

(1) This is the article published by N. M. Denis in February 1921 in the "Revue Universelle", under the title: "The rebirth of mystical studies" (N. d. E.).

Paris, 7 May 1921.

Dear Miss,

We have received your kind card from Siena, and, suspecting that you must now be back, I thought I would have the reply you promised me, which indeed arrived yesterday. I am hastening to write to you because this morning I finally received the first copies of my book; no doubt they are not all bound yet (the printer was to send them as they were ready), but this time I hope it will not be long, and it is really time; it has already been two months since everything was almost finished, or so they said. If you would be so kind as to come and see us next week (do you still come to Paris on Fridays?), I will exchange the manuscript (which I no longer need) for a printed copy. Naturally, I am still counting on the article you kindly promised me for the Revue universelle. When you have a moment, would you also be so kind as to consider writing a shorter review for Lettres? I haven't seen Pourvouville in a long time, but since he was the one who offered to publish it, I don't think he has changed his mind.

I haven't seen Maritain either since we came back here; I'll have to try to meet him one of these days, but I'll wait until my book is published; it was really a bit annoying to still be at the same point! My work on Theosophism is almost finished; I only have one chapter left to write; I'm also waiting for some additional information that I've been promised, after which all that will be left is to copy it out, which isn't the most interesting part...

We finally received a letter some time ago from poor Germain, which made a painful impression on us: he says he is bored, that he does not know how he is living, and that he cannot do any work. In my reply, I recounted the whole story of my "thesis"; since then, we have had no further news.

I now come to your reply; and, first of all, I am pleased to see that there are a number of points on which we are in complete agreement; on others, it may be that the difference is mainly one of terminology. Thus, you are perfectly right to regard the distinction between the natural order and the supernatural order as necessary; but this distinction, expressed differently, is no less clear among Easterners, with the difference, however, that they attach much less importance to the natural order than Westerners do (I am referring, of course, to Westerners who accept the supernatural order). Moreover, I believe I have sufficiently emphasised in my work, on several occasions, the irreconcilable opposition of Eastern doctrines to

all "moralism"; if this distinction is perhaps not emphasised as much as in Western theology, it is because it is regarded as self-evident, and no one could think that the relationship between the finite and the Infinite is anything other than non-existent, and therefore that the finite as such (or the natural order) has any interest in itself.

Now, the expression "human intellect" can give rise to confusion, because this "created, manifested, or conditioned" intellect of which you speak, which knows only "by reflection and participation", and which is indeed all that the human individual possesses as an individual, this intellect is not really an intellect, but is properly reason. And I would add that this reason is not, in itself, "capable of being elevated to the supernatural state"; such an elevation, for reason as for all other individual faculties, is nothing other than the "Transformation" that is implied, in a manner of speaking, in total realisation. After this transformation, moreover, one can no longer say that it is reason or any individual faculty, since individuality itself then has only an illusory existence (the essential character of individuality as such being that it is conditioned); this is yet another application of the principle I mentioned earlier, that the relationship between the finite and the infinite is strictly nil. If it is this reason that you call "human intellect", you are quite right to say that it "is part of the world and is a finite thing"; if, on the contrary, it is the transcendent intellect (the only one, for me, that can properly be called by this name of intellect), it is quite different, but it cannot be called "human", since it is of the universal order and is in no way a faculty of human individuality. It is this intellect alone that has, in itself, "the possibility of becoming (or rather of being) all that is knowledge"; the other faculties have it only by "participation" in its essence, and that within the limits of a certain domain. Since you recognise the identity of being and knowing, you must conclude that everything that is, is knowable; therefore, if being is "unlimited", the possibility of knowledge must also be unlimited (which clearly shows that, in itself, it cannot belong to a limited, conditioned, individual being). For the sake of simplicity, I am neglecting here the distinction, albeit a crucial one metaphysically, between Being and the Infinite; strictly speaking, it should be said that the knowable extends not only to all being, but also beyond being.

The distinction between reason and intellect (the absence of which seems to me to be a major factor in your objections) therefore still corresponds to that between the natural and supernatural orders; essentially, it is only one aspect of it. I would restrict the possibilities of reason even more than you do, and the "transformation" of which it is capable (as anything can be, for that matter) appears to me to be only a secondary consequence of realisation. As for the latter, I agree with you that the principle does not lie in the individual human being (since it lies in the transcendent intellect), but that does not prevent individuality from providing it with a foothold. You dispute that there can be two kinds of realisation, because, for you, there is no realisation when "man remains within the plane of his nature", that is to say, in short, within the realm of his individuality. Yet the extensions to which this realm is susceptible do constitute an

effective realisation, however imperfect and incomplete it may be, even though it certainly has nothing in common with supra-individual realisation. I would even say that the former can, in some cases, be a preparation for the latter, just as it can, in other cases, be an obstacle to it. This realisation of extended individuality is already sufficient to bring into play faculties that are entirely beyond the scope of investigation by psychologists, and yet have nothing supernatural or even "pre-natural" about them. Moreover, this latter expression gives rise to some objections: strictly speaking, everything that is not natural is supernatural, and conversely, the 'preternatural' must still be natural. If we want to use this word to refer to what is, in a sense, supernormal in the natural order, we could apply it to the faculties I mentioned, but as I am well aware that this is not how it is usually understood, it is better to refrain from doing so. I will concede, moreover, that there is sometimes a possibility of confusion between the exercise of these faculties and certain "preternatural" phenomena in the ordinary sense; but in any case, the confusion cannot go any further and extend to the truly transcendent order, where there can be no question of "phenomena" of any kind (which excludes any possibility of illusion).

I do not know whether the way in which Averroes' conception is interpreted is entirely accurate; one cannot say that the intellect itself is "God", but one can perhaps say that it is "divine"; in any case, if one does not wish to use any terms that appear more or less theological, it is certainly "superhuman". The greatest difficulty here undoubtedly stems from the fact that Westerners are accustomed to considering nothing else and nothing more in a being than individuality, as if the individual were the complete being; and even what they consider is only a limited portion of individuality. Individuality is both much more and much less than they think: much more in terms of the possibilities it offers, but much less in relation to the true being; there is not even any common measure between individuality and the being of which it is only the manifestation under certain special and specific conditions.

I return to the question of contemplation: Easterners, generally speaking, never separate the idea from reality, and here even less so than elsewhere; their logic in this respect is somewhat different from that of the Greeks, and even more so from that of modern Westerners, in the sense that, for them, there is not the thing on one side and the idea on the other, but the idea is only valid insofar as it is identical to the thing itself. In any case, the idea, even a purely theoretical one, that we may have of contemplation does not seem to me to be properly called a concept, in the sense that this word has in Western logic; that is the objection I wanted to raise on this point. Now, I would be happy to be persuaded that theologians do not consider theory for its own sake, even when they do not expressly speak of any realisation; but I fear that you are generalising too much, and there are certainly those among them whose concerns of a different order are hardly noticeable. Be that as it may, what you say implies that any true believer should regard the strictly 'philosophical' point of view as untenable, even reprehensible; on that point, I certainly will not contradict you.

As for the means of realisation, you say, on the one hand, that "you do not believe

that no means, no tradition, no human work is necessary for God to act", and, on the other hand, that "the supernatural for us is only realised under certain conditions"; how do you reconcile these two things? I confess that I do not see it very clearly, but I believe we agree on this: if theoretical preparation is an indispensable condition for metaphysical realisation, the same is not true for mystical realisation, for which it is nevertheless not useless. But I see nothing surprising in the fact that the ideas received directly by mystics are identical to those expressed by Tradition, since these ideas are true, and truth is one and exists independently of the mind that conceives it. All this can be perfectly explained either by intellectual intuition or even, within certain limits, by that extension of individual faculties I mentioned earlier; in the latter case, there is a genuine "clairvoyance", naturally very different from that of theosophists and occultists (which is mainly self-suggestion), but which must be distinguished from pure intellectual intuition. We also agree entirely on the non-transmissible nature of all realisation: words and other symbols are never more than a means, a support or a starting point, and nothing more; the contemplative may be absolutely incapable of translating the truth of which he is aware, and, moreover, he always realises that any expression is inadequate. I would also remind you, in this regard, that any true metaphysical conception must always take into account the inexpressible, which is in fact the most important aspect; even theoretically, there is something incommunicable about it.

I wonder if all mystics would accept your interpretation of what they call "pure love"; moreover, desire, even understood in an analogical sense, cannot be identified with the will: in my view, it was desire and not intelligence that distinguished the will by its active and passive aspects. Moreover, desire or will are never more than an initial driving force, the end being, as you say, of an intellectual nature; and it must be added that, in the transcendent order, no distinction can be made between faculties, as exists in the individual order. There is still much to be said on this subject, but we can discuss it further, as I very much hope we will have the pleasure of seeing you again soon.

In the meantime, dear Miss, please accept our warmest regards.

René Guénon

Blois, 28 July 1921,
74 Rue de Foix.

Dear Miss,

First of all, I must apologise for taking so long to acknowledge receipt of your letter and to thank you for it; I was unable to find a moment before our departure from Paris, and although we have been here since Saturday, we have barely settled in. I wonder if you are in Saint Germain at the moment, but as you told us you would not be away for long, I am sending my letter there, thinking that it will be forwarded to you in any case.

I was able to settle the matter with Valois before leaving; the contract has been signed, and the

terms are more or less the same as those of Rivière. We hope that the volume will be published around the beginning of November. I have just written a few words to Maritain to tell him that everything has been arranged and to ask him when I should send him my article on theosophism, which I have not yet worked on but which I can prepare here.

Germain came to see us several times; we found him looking better, but still not quite back to his old self. You probably know that he is thinking of returning to Paris in September for a summer course; as for the Seine-et-Marne affair, he finds it too far from the capital, and also that he will be too restricted; so it is to be feared that it may not last very long, even though it would certainly be the best thing for him in every respect. One evening he brought his friend Rosenblum, whom he had often mentioned but whom we had not yet met.

If you would be so kind as to send me, as you suggested, the issue of the journal containing Maritain's article on spiritualism, I would be very grateful; I will of course return it to you after I have read it.

Now, I would like to ask your permission to tell you very frankly what I think of your article, or rather of certain points in it. Naturally, I will skip over the praise you give me at the beginning, for which I can only thank you. But while you certainly had the right not to express a clear opinion on the question of the true interpretation of Eastern doctrines, I must admit that I was a little surprised to see these reservations recur several times throughout the article, and in terms which, while undoubtedly reflecting only an excess of caution on your part, are nonetheless liable to be misinterpreted by some. Was it really necessary to spare the feelings of official Orientalists? If there is any doubt that the doctrines I expound are truly Eastern, I wonder what they could possibly be, for it seems to me that everyone must at least recognise that they are not Western, and as for having invented them from scratch, that would require an intellectual capacity that I certainly do not possess.

I would then like to point out an omission which I wondered whether it was entirely unintentional: you said nothing about my attitude towards the philosophical point of view, which, in the field in which you have placed yourself, would seem to be quite essential. It is a little embarrassing to see you use the expression "Hindu philosophy" or "Hindu psychology" when I have taken pains to show that there is no such thing. Do you remember that, at the beginning of Sylvain Lévi's report, I pointed out to you the sentence in which he referred to my work "on the philosophical systems of India" as a sign of misunderstanding on his part? As this is certainly not the case with you, and as I had specifically drawn your attention to this, I do not really understand the reasons for this confusion; Would it be indiscreet to ask you about it? Such confusion sometimes has more serious consequences than the use of an inappropriate expression, because it risks, on certain points, making me say the opposite of what I said: for example, are you not saying that "I exclude morality from philosophy"? Oh no, I do not exclude it; on the contrary, I willingly abandon it to philosophy, and I am convinced that it can hardly go beyond this mass of theories.

heterogeneous concepts that we group together under the name of philosophy. And, on the subject of morality, allow me also to say that I find your comparison with Durkheim somewhat unjustified: even if he or anyone else happened to say something true about a particular point, it seems to me that the fact that he said it is not sufficient reason to take a biased stance and argue the opposite; and it also seems to me that we have every right to acknowledge that an author is right on one point without agreeing with him in the slightest and even while deeply despising all of his ideas: isn't total error a pure impossibility? Moreover, in the present case, the agreement with Durkheim is very superficial: while he insists on the exclusively social nature of morality, which certainly implies its relativity, his absolute ignorance of metaphysics certainly did not allow him to see or even sense its true reasons. Finally, what I think about morality is exactly what I thought at a time when I barely knew Durkheim's name and had no idea about his ideas; in other words, I could not have been influenced by him.

To conclude on the question of morality, you acknowledge that the concept of "dharma" is not moral in itself; that is enough for me, because the contingent applications that each person may make of it are none of my concern, and one cannot hold an idea responsible for the misconceptions to which it may give rise in some people. In any case, I dispute that this concept becomes moral "as soon as it is applied to human nature"; it will only become so when it is distorted by being conceived with a sentimental nuance, for it is sentiment that makes the specifically moral point of view, not the will, whatever Leibniz may say, whose opinion matters to me as little as that of any other philosopher. Finally, what you call the "human problem" (which is perhaps only a problem for Westerners, and for philosophers) may have solutions that are perfectly free of any "moralism"; moralists are free to proclaim them insufficient, probably without even trying to understand them, but they cannot deny their existence. As for me, whatever you may say, I do not deny the existence of philosophical morality; I have had only too many opportunities to observe it! I only dispute that it is worth anything, which is quite different.

Another question: you agree with me that "metaphysics cannot progress in itself", but you add that "it can progress in the mind of a metaphysician". It seems to me that what progresses in this case is simply the understanding of the person in question, and metaphysical truth is in no way affected; to say that it is metaphysics that is progressing is to reverse the relationship. It should also be added that the extension of knowledge in this field often proceeds in a discontinuous manner; this is a consequence of its intuitive nature, which you seem to dispute, but which nevertheless exists... A commentary contains nothing more than the text, and if we need it, it is because of the imperfection of our intellectual conditions, at least at the beginning, for there is a point beyond which not only the commentary but the text itself becomes useless. As for the role you attribute to "men of genius", allow me to remain very sceptical about its importance and about the results that can be expected from the ideas of such people when they lack certain data; I will persist

to regard the vast majority of "great philosophers" as vulgar ignoramuses with regard to the only things that interest me, and which have nothing to do with "profane" science.

You accuse me of drawing too sharp a distinction within human knowledge; I fear rather that I have failed to show it as profound as it really is. To tell the truth, I do not know whether we can still speak of 'human' knowledge when it comes to metaphysics; if by 'human' we mean exclusively the individual being, we certainly cannot. But, on the other hand, this has nothing to do with angels; if what theology says about angels is metaphysically true of supra-individual states of being, this is a remarkable concordance, which may need to be explained, but against the existence of which no one can do anything, any more than one can do anything about the fact that true and complete knowledge implies the effective identity of the knower and the known, regardless of any subtleties of philosophical interpretation. Too bad if certain truths are uncomfortable for those who are afraid to go too far; we cannot force them to conceive of these truths, but that does not give them the right to deny them, and yet that is what they most often do, behaving in this respect like positivists; this is an effect of what I call "the spirit of system". When I speak of these people who fear anything that seems too high or too low, who seek to maintain a middle ground in everything, I cannot help but think of the unfortunate Delbos, who was a striking example of this; I used to amuse myself by calling this a "bourgeois conception of philosophy"; deep down, perhaps it is the philosophical spirit itself that is thus constituted... In any case, Thomism as you present it (of course, when I say you, I am not referring to you personally) can make a somewhat similar impression: for me, it is not "a summit between two errors", but rather a partial truth that remains halfway up the mountain. I would add that Thomism itself, although certainly incomplete metaphysically, is perhaps not as narrowly limited as some of its current interpreters claim. What I find quite astonishing is that you attribute to human intelligence a truly extraordinary power, one that I absolutely deny it has: that of "transcending truth"; if you say that man can conceive more than what is, you are simply, without realising it, making him superior to God! Admit that the "hyper-intellectualism" you denounce (and which is in reality nothing more than pure intellectualism), if it only equates it with angels (and even then not as a human individual), is truly very modest...

I do not wish to dwell on the confusion between intellect and reason, or between the universal and the general; we have already discussed this at length, and I see it only as the effect of a tendency to reduce metaphysics to the limitations of the philosophical point of view. I do not engage in "theory of knowledge", whatever you may say, and neither do the Hindus; they are content with knowledge itself. This kind of theory must be left to philosophers, especially modern philosophers. It is quite true that I cannot accept that all knowledge (including that of a metaphysical nature) comes from the senses; but for those who have only knowledge of a sensory origin (and there are undoubtedly some), it is not

No one has the power to make them understand knowledge of a different nature, just as it is impossible to make nominalists such as Poerkeley understand what a true general idea is; this is a question of a more or less extensive "intellectual horizon". Metaphysics is not an 'abstract science'; it is not even a 'science' at all; it is 'knowledge' par excellence. Moreover, it is well understood that the universal is in all things, but one must still know how to recognise it, and this is where intellectual intuition necessarily comes into play. You also say in the same passage that "man is both simpler and more complex"; I don't quite understand. It seems to me that you are simplifying it terribly (I am speaking here of Westerners in general) by considering only two elements in all and for all; but, on this point too, the recognition of reality seems to me preferable to all philosophical theories.

You criticise me for neglecting certain distinctions; the fact is that I believe these distinctions are either unfounded or, at the very least, not as important as you make them out to be. When I can avoid any kind of complication, I am very happy; obviously, this attitude is the opposite of that of philosophers, who generally excel at creating artificial problems. Similarly, I find the use of complicated or overly specialised terminology unnecessary, with a few exceptions. In particular, and without wishing to give advice to anyone, it seems to me that scholastics would benefit greatly from reserving their terminology for didactic treatises and endeavouring to translate it into plain language everywhere else. The difficulties inherent in understanding are sufficient without adding others, and no one should be forced to learn a special language in order to understand certain ideas. This is not a question of trying to make ideas accessible to everyone, for you know how much I detest popularisation; but I think that those who are truly capable of understanding are not necessarily the most capable of retaining more or less extraordinary words; moreover, if this were not the case, the intellectual nullity of most scholars would be difficult to explain.

As for the relationship between metaphysics and logic, what you say does not persuade me to change my view in any way; here again, it is the question of intellectual intuition that makes all the difference between us. On the other hand, a notion that did not participate in any way in the nature of the thing would be absolutely false; the notion is not strictly speaking an "intermediary" between the subject and the object, but rather their point of contact, or that in which their natures coincide (even in the lowest degrees of knowledge, where this coincidence naturally does not go very far; but the notion is true only to the extent that the coincidence exists); and it seems to me that, despite everything, this is not very far from Aristotle's thinking. Perhaps you are right, to a certain extent, to link the possibility of conceiving what is "beyond being" to the essential independence of metaphysics from logic; but there is much to be said on this point. In any case, I can assure you that the refusal to identify the infinite with being does indeed concern being as you understand it, and not only in a "univocal" way: universal (and not general) being is the first of all determinations, but it is still a determination, and therefore a limitation. I am not sure that Aristotle's

notion of "pure act" in Aristotle is perfectly equivalent to the idea of infinity; apart from this point, which should be examined more closely, we agree on the non-existence of this idea of infinity among the Greeks before the Alexandrian period, that is, before more direct contact with the Orientals made it known to them, which proves that they were incapable of reaching it on their own.

You say that the question of pantheism is perhaps more complex than I think, which is not quite the case, but this is another point on which I wanted to cut short any subtlety. The word "pantheism" being one of the most misused, it was necessary to define its meaning very clearly, which could only be done by confining it to the philosophical domain, where it originated and from which it should never have been removed. I do not quite understand the distinction you wish to make when you say that you mean "personal" in the philosophical sense and not the theological sense; if there really is a significant difference, this distinction will force me to make another one and tell you that, for my part, I have understood it in neither of these two senses, but rather in the metaphysical sense, which has a completely different meaning. It is very true that the triplicity of the main aspects of Îshwara that constitutes the Trimûrti does not correspond to the Christian Trinity, but I have not claimed that it does either. There is something else in Hindu doctrine that has much more to do with the Trinity; only, I have not mentioned it at all, and intentionally so. Now, do you admit that the Trimurti is constituted by three aspects of the Word? If so, that is another point on which we will agree.

Here is something else I do not understand: "For Easterners, you say, there is the inexpressible, but no mystery." For them and for me, mystery and the inexpressible are precisely one and the same thing; and the original and etymological meaning of the word "mystery" seems to prove us right. If this same word has come to mean something inconceivable to some, it simply proves that those who gave it this meaning were indeed incapable of conceiving what they could not express or at least represent by some image. If you assert that there is something "unknowable", you are in agreement with Spencer and the positivists; those who take this attitude are only logical in concluding from this that metaphysics does not exist, at least for them, for this obviously does not prevent it from existing in itself, and also for others. - You then seem to confuse "immutability" with "immobility"; then you say that "Easterners <u>believe they</u> have attained perfect knowledge". No, those who have attained it <u>know</u> it for certain, and as for the others, they at least know where they can find this knowledge, provided they have the intellectual means to do so; is there anything equivalent to this in the West? Similarly, Hindu sages (the true ones, of course, those who are <u>complete</u> sages) do not <u>tend</u> to realise their knowledge, they <u>actually</u> realise it (otherwise, this knowledge itself would remain imperfect and insufficient); I would readily say that this is a matter of <u>fact</u>, if the word "fact" were not usually restricted to the experimental domain, which is not at all the case here. Certainly, there is much more to it than "fleeting glimpses of eternity"; what a being has realised constitutes a permanent acquisition for them, which nothing can ever take away from them, and this is so

incomplete and partial as its realisation may have been. It is not permissible to speak here of "philosophical-mystical aberration"; first of all, it is highly inappropriate when referring to people who have nothing mystical about them and for whom the philosophical point of view is non-existent; I maintain the meaning I have given to the word "mystical", and unless this word can be applied indiscriminately to anything, that which is purely intellectual can be neither mystical nor pseudo-mystical, because, first of all, it cannot be religious or pseudo-religious (and mystical necessarily means religious, or else, once again, the words no longer have any meaning). Secondly, if what we are talking about could be "misguidance" or "illusion", it could just as well be thinking that 2 plus 2 equals 4, because there is no more certainty in this case than in the other; you are entirely righting the sceptics, who alone would have the right to express themselves in this way. Moreover, it is always an extremely serious matter, when dealing with a truly traditional doctrine, to want to label it as "error" or to express oneself in a disrespectful manner towards it; Catholics have less right than anyone else to adopt such an attitude, since they also claim to follow a doctrine that is traditional in nature (and this is what gives it its value); by acting in this way, they would expose themselves to being treated in the same way by representatives of other doctrines, if the latter were motivated by a similar spirit of exclusivism (this is not the case, it is true, but that is no reason to take advantage of it). It is surprising that no one seems to think of this, and then, finally, even if there is room for discussion (and there is, as long as we have not arrived at a perfect understanding of a doctrine), can we not do so without resorting to insults? (I am thinking in this regard of Father Mainage, who used his lectures on theosophy as a pretext to insult Hindus in the most odious manner, while displaying the most complete ignorance of their doctrines.) There are ways of discussing things which, even in the eyes of people who are not very knowledgeable, provided they are disinterested in the matter, do not give the impression that one is right, or even that one is sure of oneself...

Returning to the subject of realisation, you say that its term is "essentially supernatural": I am willing to accept this way of speaking, even though it may be misleading; and even putting aside all subtleties of interpretation, what is truly metaphysical, being "beyond nature" by definition, can indeed only be called "supernatural". You state that this term cannot be achieved "without the help of grace"; that may be true, but are you sure that this help is lacking, simply because what is meant is not called by the same name in all languages? And yet the word "grace", apart from the disadvantage of being commonly understood in a sense that is not sufficiently metaphysical, is one of the closest translations available in Western languages for the Sanskrit word "prasâda"; You will then tell me that I was wrong not to mention this, but I did not claim to give a complete account, and there are many other things no less important that I also had to leave out. Finally, you claim that the ultimate goal of realisation cannot be achieved "by metaphysical means"; but are you familiar with these means? I beg to differ, and it seems to me that you are being much less cautious here than you were when you expressed your opinion on the authenticity of the doctrines I have expounded.

As for the reservations that Brahmanism would require "from the point of view of the Catholic faith", you are greatly mistaken in thinking that "this goes without saying"; this is only true for those who stick to common and superficial notions (refer to what I said about the attitude of the Jesuits in China in the 17th century). There is still some confusion here, and we would need to return to the definition of religion, a point you have not addressed. If we were to force a comparison between two doctrines that do not stand on the same ground, the one that can admit the coexistence of the other without being bothered by it would seem to me to have the advantage, because it proves that it can have all the truth that the other possesses, with something more. Did you know that many Hindus, among the most strictly orthodox (the others hardly count), give Christ a place of honour in their homes? On the other hand, I know that there are eminent Catholics who are far from sharing your view and who do not find the supposed incompatibilities that seem to frighten you; if I had the right to say everything, I could even invoke the authority of a cardinal who died only a few years ago... It seems to me, moreover, that you have a tendency, perhaps an unfortunate one, to identify Catholicism as a whole with Thomism, and even more precisely, with a certain interpretation of Thomism, which I know well is not that of all scholastics or all theologians.

I come to your last paragraph: you say that "it is from its own Tradition that the West will find the strength to reform itself"; for my part, I do not remember having said anything else, and I believe that there is something very similar to this in my conclusion. I would add, it is true, that in order to make up for what is metaphysically incomplete in the West, we would have to turn to the East, but it is understood that this concerns only the elite. Moreover, under current conditions, it is highly unlikely that the West will be able to return to its own Tradition on its own and without any help; this is precisely where the elite in question should intervene, with the support of the East. Sometimes we must resign ourselves to having allies who cannot be subordinates; not to admit this seems to me to be more prideful than what you are trying to condemn with this epithet. On this subject, I am not sure I understand the expression "teaching the prideful wisdom of the East"; if it really means what I think it means, it is yet another illusion that must be abandoned: be convinced that the West has nothing to teach the East (except in the purely material realm, which the East does not want to hear about). And there is no "pride" in this: Eastern wisdom (I might as well say wisdom pure and simple) is entirely free of sentimentality; pride and humility are equally foreign to it... and indifferent.

Finally, your last sentence contains a misunderstanding that has deeply astonished me. Where on earth did you get the idea that I am proposing "a Hinduist renovation of ancient Gnosticism, the mother of heresies"? If you took the word "Gnosis" in its true sense, that of "pure knowledge", as I always do when I use it (and this is the sense in which it is used, for example, by certain Church Fathers), I would certainly not have to protest against the intention to "renew knowledge" with the help of Hindu doctrines, although I may not be very qualified to claim such a result; but the rest of your sentence shows

that it is abundantly clear that this is not at all what you meant to say. First, Gnosticism, understood in this way (and I refuse to understand it any other way), cannot be called the "mother of heresies"; that would be like saying that truth is the mother of error; if there are human beings who misunderstand the truth, and if this is where errors arise, the truth certainly cannot be held responsible for them; it would be just as fair to speak, for example, of "Catholicism, the father of Protestantism"! In fact, you are simply confusing "Gnosis" and "Gnosticism"; Do you not go so far as to describe Hindu metaphysics (and, in essence, all true metaphysics) as both "perfect Gnosis" (which is quite acceptable, since it is indeed complete knowledge) and "absolute Gnosticism"? I cannot bring myself to believe that you do not know what Gnosticism is, at least historically; but then why this assimilation, which nothing can justify? Admittedly, this is not the first time I have encountered such confusion and had to point it out; but until now, it has always been the work of people who, in order to praise Gnosticism and pass it off as something it is not, have unduly adorned it with the name of Gnosis; I have even attracted some hatred by reproaching them for this... This time, the exact opposite is happening: it is Gnosis, in the sense of pure knowledge, that people want to cast suspicion upon by assimilating it to this heterogeneous mixture called (or formerly called) Gnosticism; and yet, to avoid any misinterpretation, I have carefully refrained, throughout my work, from using the word Gnosis, despite its perfect equivalence with the Sanskrit "Jnâna", and I have contented myself with the word metaphysics, which can almost always be substituted for it without inconvenience (when this is not possible, one can simply speak of "knowledge"). There is no cunning or lack of frankness on my part (as your sentence might suggest), but only a desire to avoid anything that might be misunderstood, insofar as it is possible to foresee it; but I have not succeeded, since, despite all my precautions, the misinterpretation has occurred anyway, and from the side where I least expected it! No matter how clearly one tries to write, it is hopeless to expect to be understood; Truly, if one cannot say that morality has only a purely social significance without being likened to Durkheim and other sociologists, or speak of pure intellectual knowledge without being associated with Gnostics of all kinds, or even placed below theosophists and denounced as more dangerous than those malicious fools, I am beginning to believe that it would be best to simply remain silent. If it weren't so unfortunate, it would be amusing for someone who defends traditional orthodoxy in all areas and who wants to know nothing outside of that orthodoxy to be accused of seeking to promote heresy! As far as Gnosticism is concerned, need I say that this Greek distortion of misunderstood Eastern ideas does not interest me in the least? It is not worth much more than a philosophical system. Should I have defended myself in advance, and without any reason, against wanting to establish anything? It would never have occurred to me that anyone could attribute such intentions to me, especially since I had said in my conclusion that these were only very remote possibilities; moreover, if the elite I mentioned ever manages to establish itself, it will certainly not be through any kind of association; this requires means of a different order.

profound. In short, I did not mean to say anything other than what I said, and all this proves that, in wanting to "speak frankly", as you say, one runs the great risk of attributing to people thoughts they never had. This misrepresentation of my intentions is so serious in my eyes that I feel obliged to take the earliest opportunity to make the necessary correction.

Please do not see any ill will in these remarks; it is only your last sentence that really offended me, and you must now understand why; the only thing I cannot accept is being credited with ideas that are not my own. As for the rest, it is not me personally who is at issue; it is the doctrine, which I expound very imperfectly, though to the best of my ability, and which, in its essence and far above all the controversies to which it may give rise: whether we understand the truth or not, it matters greatly to us, but the truth is in no way affected. Perhaps I am wrong to write so clearly what I think, but I hope you will not hold it against me and that you will not be offended in any way.

I await your article in "Lettres" with some curiosity; do you know if it will appear soon?

Please accept, dear Miss, our warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 19 November 1921.

Dear Miss

It is my turn to apologise for not having replied to you yet; I too have been quite busy since our return to Paris, and I wanted to wait until my book on Theosophy had been published before writing to you, which could not be long now. That has now been done, and yesterday I prepared several copies, including one for you, of course, so that you could have it without delay. I took advantage of the shipments that Valois was making for the service and had it included; everything should be leaving today, so I think you will receive it at about the same time as this letter.

I saw Maritain and Massis, who agree with me in asking you to review the work in the Revue Universelle and to take the opportunity to make the clarification I asked you for. This is what Maritain had already told you, and it was Massis himself who suggested that I arrange things this way. Your letter makes me fear that this review may not appear for some time; I understand your reasons, but in writing this, you were no doubt thinking that the book would not be published until a later date. In any case, I would be very grateful if you could prepare it as soon as possible; as you are already familiar with the subject from my articles (although the volume is much more detailed), I do not think this work should take you very long.

Rereading the last sentence of your article in "Lettres", I realised that you did indeed mean what you explained to me, but the sentence can also be understood in the other way, the way I criticised you for. It often happens

that we don't notice these double meanings ourselves, because we know exactly what we meant to say, so that's all we see, and we don't think the reader might see something else in it.

I like to think that you are no longer suffering from your flu and that your fatigue has disappeared. You no doubt come to Paris from time to time; if you could spare an hour or two one of these days, we would be delighted if you could come and see us; we could talk a little about your thesis and the various projects that seem to be occupying your mind. I had initially thought of giving you my book when I saw you, but although I decided it would be better to send it to you straight away, I hope this will not prevent you from coming to see us without too much delay.

Yours sincerely,

René Guénon

Paris, 3 January 1922

Dear Miss,

The reason I did not reply sooner to your letter, which is already more than a month old, is that we were still expecting your visit, as you had led us to hope. The last time I saw Maritain, he told me that Miss Bernadette was unwell and that you might have to take her to the south of France. Did you go? We would like to believe that her condition is nothing to worry about, and also that you are no longer suffering from your two bouts of flu.

Here, our health is not very good either: since we returned, we have all had almost continuous colds. In addition, I have been suffering from headaches all this time, which must be due to the abnormal and unhealthy temperature, as many people are also complaining about it, and this has hardly allowed me to work. However, I was able to write two articles that had been requested for the Revue Bleue, one on Hindu doctrines and the other on the origins of Mormonism; the latter topic is currently in the news because of Pierre Benoît's Lac Salé.

I hope that, as you told me, and despite your concerns, you will be able to prepare the review of my book during these holidays, so that it can appear in the February issue of the Revue Universelle. You may know that Daudet intends to write an article for Action Française in which he will discuss both of my books at the same time.

And your thesis, have you finally been able to get back to it a little?

Towards the end of November, my aunt and my wife saw Germain in the town hall square; they were very surprised, but as they were in a hurry, they were unable to stop him. Since then, I have learned from Maritain that he left Sedan after a month, spent a fortnight in Chaugy, and is now in Paris working for an insurance company; but is he still there? We have also heard from another source that he has not been in touch with his family since leaving Sedan. As for us, we have not yet seen him, and we wonder why. You must admit that his behaviour is rather strange.

We hope you will not delay in coming to see us; we would be delighted to finally have a chance to talk with you.

With our best wishes for the New Year for you and yours, please accept, dear Miss, the expression of our warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 4 March 1922

Dear Miss,

I have just seen Massis, who, like me, received your letter last night; he asked me to pass on to you the explanations he gave me. So, here is the situation in a nutshell: as Johannet only dealt with the political aspect, his article is not considered to be a review of my book, and will in no way prevent yours from being published. Massis has not yet seen your article, but he does not think (and neither do I) that you have dwelled on the political side of the issue; if, however, you have mentioned it in passing, he would simply ask you to delete the passage that could duplicate what has already been said. That was his reply to Maritain, who also wrote to him about this matter. All in all, everything is working out for the best; your letter had worried me; I wondered what might be behind it, and I wanted to get to the bottom of it right away. If I end up with two articles instead of one, I won't have any complaints.

Johannet is also supposed to write a review for me in "Lettres"; there is nothing in the March issue, which I received this morning; it will no doubt be in next month's issue. He also mentioned me in an article in "Revue Française", again on the political underpinnings of Theosophy. I have had two very good articles, one by Gonzague Truc in the "Epi ion", the other by Eugène Tavernier in the "Libre Parole". - In recent days, Daudet has spoken to Massis again about my two volumes; he still intends to do something about it; it is a pity he is so busy.

We hope that, despite everything you have to do, you will be able to find a few moments to come and see us before the Easter holidays, which we will spend in Blois as usual. I hope you will soon finish your thesis; it will be one less thing for you to worry about.

As for Germain, despite his promises, he has not given us any sign of life since the day he came with you. One wonders if he is still in Boulogne; it is indeed very worrying.

Please accept, dear Miss, our warmest regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 24 May 1922.

Dear Miss,

We were still expecting to see you, as you had led us to hope, which is why I did not reply to your letter sooner. No doubt you are still

very busy; nevertheless, please try to find a few moments to come here one of these days. I would very much like to know more details about what happened with your thesis at the Sorbonne.

Maritain, whom I saw last week, told me that your defence at the institute would probably take place on 17 June. I would be very grateful if you could let me know whether this is the final date and also tell us the time, as we would be very happy to attend.

Maritain also told me that your report had been written, so let us hope that it will eventually be published. Thank you for speaking to your father before he left about what I had written to you; it is a great pity that the Brussels exhibition is taking place in June.

We heard from the Dubois that Germain had passed through Paris on his way back to Ligny; we have not heard from him directly since. It seems that he has expressed his intention to start his thesis; what do you think of that?

My work on spiritualism is finished, and I have recently started on another book, which I must give to Payot, and I think I will only have time to get it ready before the holidays.

I hope to see you soon, dear Miss, and please accept our best regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 3 July 1922

Dear Miss,

We were very sorry not to see you last week as you had hoped; no doubt you did not have time. You are probably no longer in Saint Germain, but I trust that my letter will reach you nonetheless. I received your thesis a few days ago, and I thank you very much for it; I would have liked to at least skim through it before writing to you, but that was not possible as my work is not yet finished. I will read it during the holidays and let you know my thoughts. We would like to leave Paris as soon as possible, but I do not yet know when I will be ready; it will probably not be before 20 July at the earliest.

Yesterday, at Gonzague Truc's house, I saw Mr Guéguen (I'm not sure if I've spelt his name correctly), who mentioned you to me. On that note, I must tell you that, as your thesis was discussed, Gonzague Truc expressed a desire to receive a copy so that he could mention it in an article; He would certainly do so, because, as you know, he is very interested in anything related to scholasticism. I don't know if Rivière has sent out a press release for your book; in any case, it seems to me that you could ask him to send it, and I think that would be a good thing.

Please excuse me for writing you only these few hurried words today, and please accept, dear Miss, our best regards.

René Guénon

Blois, 2 September 1922
74, rue Du Foix.

Dear Miss,

Upon receiving your card, I wrote to Massis, who sent me the Revue Universelle by return post. I was therefore able to read your article, for which I thank you; I believe that, despite the delay in its publication, it remains relevant; perhaps it is better, after all, that there was a certain interval between Johannet's article and yours. Your correction regarding "gnosis" and "Gnosticism" sets the record straight; let us hope that it will dispel any ambiguity in the minds of readers. What you say about esotericism is pretty much what I think myself; but, for my part, I will not agree to call "esotericism of principle" what is, on the contrary, only esotericism of fact, that is, esotericism that is not justified by any consideration of principle, as is the case with theosophists and occultists; I would even say that this is merely "pseudo-esotericism". As for the division of people into "initiates" and "non-initiates", I am convinced that it really exists, in a completely natural way, by the very force of things, and that this is true in all areas. Perhaps this is not what you wanted to dispute; but even in a more precise sense, I see a fairly clear difference between "initiatory" knowledge and "profane" knowledge. We would undoubtedly need to agree on the terms, which is not always easy; I will surely have more than one opportunity to return to this subject, which is not unrelated to the distinction I make between "metaphysics" and "philosophy". In your article, in any case, these are only details, and it is unlikely that readers will dwell on them; for everything else, we are in complete agreement.

Regarding Theosophism, do you remember that I told you about Vincent d'Indy's membership in the group of "watchers" (formerly "affranchis")? You were very surprised and could not believe it. At the time, I couldn't say for sure, because I had only been told about it and there could have been a mistake; but now I have proof: his name appears on the list next to that of Camille Flammarion. What do you think about that?

I have just finished reading your thesis, which I found extremely interesting. If I may be so bold as to give you my honest opinion, it may be a little too dense, due to the large amount of text you quote; but I think you are well aware of this yourself, and it is undoubtedly difficult to avoid, given the importance you attach to the historical perspective in your treatment of the subject. Not all points seemed equally clear to me and, especially with regard to Aristotle, there seems to be some uncertainty at times; and it may well be that the fault lies mainly with Aristotle himself, or with the state in which his works have come down to us. I think you were right to emphasise the analogical nature of the concept of power and to distinguish, as you do, between its different meanings. The distinction between 'possible' and 'potential' is extremely important; perhaps more could be said on this subject than you have said, but what you have said is already a great deal, and I do not know whether, from a scholastic point of view, others had highlighted this before you. I also find what you say about the infinite and the indefinite to be very good,

particularly in the paragraph on movement and "accidental becoming" (which, incidentally, seems to me to be clearer than the preceding paragraph on matter and "substantial becoming"). - Regarding matter, let me point out a detail that may not be without importance. On page 36, you say: "The genus 'animal' could exist 'as matter' if there were a specific chemical substance from which all living beings originated." Here you are using the word 'matter' in its entirely modern sense, and I do not believe that this explanation is at all consistent with Aristotle's thinking, which you are seeking to clarify in this passage. Moreover, what you add immediately afterwards destroys such an interpretation, which is found only in this single sentence. You are quite right to point out certain confusions that are sources of almost inextricable difficulties, such as the double meaning of the word "substance" (I cannot understand how this word could have been taken to translate (ουσια)) and, above all, the confusion between the general and the universal. On the latter point, I particularly agree with what you say on page 44; you were quite right to link it to the confusion between the potential and the possible, which also seems to exist in Aristotle. However, you combine the logical and psychological points of view a little too closely, which, in my opinion, are very different. On the other hand (and indeed the two things go together), you separate the logical point of view too much from the ontological point of view; you must admit, however, that there is at least a correspondence between the two, otherwise the former would hardly be valid, and we would risk agreeing to some extent with the relativism of modern thinkers.

One thing that strikes me as very strange (but this criticism is not directed at you) is the assimilation of knowledge to movement, even if we extend the meaning of the latter word as far as we like. Similarly, I can see only disadvantages in broadening the meaning of the word "action" to include knowledge; for me, there is something unfortunate in Aristotelian and scholastic vocabulary which, despite all the distinctions that can be introduced secondarily, is likely to give rise to many ambiguities. When knowledge and action are separated, as in Eastern doctrines, it is much clearer! Moreover, everything that comes from Greek thought (despite the corrections that have been made, the value of which I fully recognise) always strikes me as unnecessarily complicated and cluttered with rather futile subtleties, amid which one often risks losing sight of the essential. There is really too much "analysis" in it... and yet Aristotle does not have Plato's verbosity. -- It does not seem to me that you have succeeded in sufficiently clarifying the concept of the "active intellect"; it is true that this is very difficult, and I even think that it is not possible if one limits oneself to strictly Western points of view. The expression "faculty of the soul" (page 160) is much vaguer than you seem to suppose; does not the word "soul" itself have a plurality of irreducible meanings? Even if we take it exclusively as equivalent to ψυχε, it is not always easy to see exactly what is meant by it; in any case, νουζ is generally regarded as superior to ψυχε, not as part of it; but that question would take us too far afield. What is quite correct is that "reasoning is a sign of intellectual inferiority" (page 162);

but should the term "concepts" not be reserved solely for general ideas, to the exclusion of universal (or transcendental) ideas? Furthermore, there is a considerable difference between general ideas and abstract ideas, which I do not see you taking into account; I am well aware that the confusion is common, but it is just as serious as some of those against which you rightly protest. -- I may have a few more thoughts to share with you, but I will stop there for today, not without reiterating how much I enjoyed reading your work.

I have just received the first proofs of "L'erreur spirite" (The Spiritualist Error); I am pleased with them, because, with Rivière, I always fear that things will drag on.

Please accept, dear Miss, our best regards.

René Guénon

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30 October 1922

Dear Miss

It has already been nearly two weeks since I received the book by Father Walace that you sent me, and I am truly embarrassed that I have not yet found a moment to acknowledge its receipt. I must tell you that I have been asked to take charge of the philosophy class at the Francs-Bourgeois school, and I accepted all the more because it is very close to here. We returned to Paris a month ago, but I have been very busy correcting the proofs of L'Erreur spirite (The Spiritist Error); this will soon be finished, and I hope the volume will be published in November.

Some time ago, I received a letter from Mr Mayer, saying that he had obtained my address from you and asking me to arrange a meeting with him to discuss a project for a universal ideographic writing system. I met with him; I find his idea interesting, but I wonder how it will work in practice. In any case, he left me a brochure that I will examine at my leisure when I have some free time, and then we will discuss it further.

Will we have the pleasure of seeing you soon? If you are still coming to Paris on Friday, I am free that afternoon. In any case, we hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

René Guénon

Paris, 6 March 1923

Dear Madam,

After sending my congratulations to Saint Germain on the occasion of your wedding, I waited to send them to you directly, still hoping to meet you; and that explains why I am so late in telling you about this great event, which we did not expect, since we thought you were

still in Allier. Now that you are almost our neighbour, we hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon and meeting Mr Boulet. As usual, we will be away during the Easter holidays and will be back at the beginning of Quasimodo week.

My book on spiritualism is finally due to be published in the next few days; I have been very annoyed by the printers' delay: if everything had gone normally, it should have been ready in November.

Do not be surprised by my black paper: we have been in mourning for several days for the father of our little Françoise, who had been ill for so long.

Our sincere congratulations to Mr Boulet, and to you, dear Madam, please remember that you are always in our thoughts.

René Guénon

Paris, 30 October 1923.

Dear Madam

What must you think of my silence? I am truly embarrassed to see that your card is already two months old! I think you must have returned to Clermont, but as I do not have your exact address, I am sending this letter to Saint Germain, and I am sure that it will reach you.

My aunt was very ill and had to undergo emergency surgery in July; fortunately, she has recovered very well, but we were unable to leave here until 10 August. The holidays passed very quickly, which is why I was unable to reply to you immediately. On the other hand, I was quite tired at the end of the school year, but now we are all in good health.

We were happy to hear from you, and we like to believe that Mr Boulet's condition has continued to improve. We hope you will not forget your promise to come and see us this winter, as you will no doubt be coming to Paris from time to time. I would be delighted to discuss matters of mutual interest with you again.

My book Orient et Occident has not yet been published, even though, if everything had gone according to plan, it should have been ready in June. But one must always reckon with the negligence of printers: I waited weeks without receiving the next set of proofs, so that the last ones only reached me during the holidays. So it should finally be ready to go to press now, but now Payot is keeping me waiting again, on the pretext of looking for the most favourable moment for the launch; he keeps promising me an answer, but is in no hurry to give it to me. It's all very annoying!

I hope to start a new project soon, but I'm not sure what it will be yet; there's no shortage of subjects...

Almost all of my students passed their exams in July, but despite this, I did not return to teaching at Francs-Bourgeois; I will tell you the story when we have the pleasure of seeing you. For the moment, I only have one class of young girls; I would like to have two or three more of the same kind, as it is

less tedious than one class and more reliable than private lessons. I have mentioned this to various people, but so far I have not found anything; if by chance you know of anything of this kind, you would be very kind to let me know.

Please, dear Madam, give our best regards to Mr Boulet, and accept our warmest regards.

René Guénon

René Guénon to Pistoni

Cairo, 25 May 1949. (Post office box, central office)

Sir,

I have only just received your letter forwarded by Gallimard publishers, as correspondence between Europe and Egypt is currently very slow and, above all, very irregular. You need not apologise for writing to me in Italian because, although I do not write it myself due to lack of practice, I understand it just as easily as French.

The subscription price for the journal Études Traditionnelles is 750 francs; as for what has appeared since its publication resumed after the war (in October 1945), I was told quite some time ago that the first two years were out of print, but I do not know exactly what the situation is. As you will easily understand, the distance between us does not allow me to deal with these matters, and in fact, I am only one of the magazine's regular contributors and have no part in its administration. For all these matters, you must therefore contact Mr Paul Chacornac, bookseller and publisher, 11, quai Saint Michel, Paris (5°)..

I would also like to mention, in case you are not already aware of it, the journal Studi Iniziatici, edited by Mr Corrado Rocco and published in Naples, via S. Bartolomeo, 47.

As for Gallimard publications, the next volume to appear in the Tradition collection, which is now almost ready, is Hinduism and Buddhism by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. This will be followed by a second work by F. Schuon, L'Oeil du Coeur (The Eye of the Heart), the manuscript of which has already been submitted to the publisher; but I cannot tell you when it will appear, because, due to the difficulties caused by the current situation, which are more or less the same in all countries, all publications are proceeding much more slowly than we would like.

I think you are probably aware that one of my books, Considerazioni sulla Via iniziatica (Translation of "Aperçus sur l'Initiation"), was published a few months ago by Bocca, in your own city; Italian translations of several of my other works are also currently in progress.

Please accept, Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 19 June 1949.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 9 June. In the meantime, Mr Rocco had also told me that you had recently visited him in Naples. I am glad that you got to know him personally, as he will certainly be able to give you information on many things.

Among the books of mine that you would like to have now, there are several that are out of print, and it seems that it is impossible to find them at present; however,

Orient and Occident, Spiritual Authority (which Mr Rocco is currently finishing translating) and The Multiple States of Being were reissued last year, and The Symbolism of the Cross is due to be reissued shortly. As for The Great Triad, which is the latest work to be published, it is still available. To obtain all my books, it is best to contact the Chacornac bookshop, which stocks those published by various publishers; it is much simpler to deal with a single bookshop.

I can only wholeheartedly agree with what you say about the practice of Catholic exotericism, for I myself have insisted on the necessity of traditional exotericism, both for those who want to go further and for others. The only drawback in this case is that Catholicism, at least in its current state, seems to leave no door open, so to speak, to esotericism and initiation. The interpretation you envisage of Catholicism would be justified if the word could be taken in its etymological sense, since it expresses an idea of universality; but in fact, what bears the name of Catholicism is something else entirely: it is only a particular form of tradition, and one that is strictly limited to the exoteric point of view. Moreover, one need only look at the exclusivism its representatives display towards other traditions; I do not believe that, except in Judaism, it can be found elsewhere to such a marked degree. I certainly do not wish to substitute myself for Mr. Schuon in interpreting what he has written, especially with regard to Christianity, which often raises many difficult and more or less obscure questions; but as far as the passage you quote is concerned, it seems to me that it is very clear and that there is no need to look for anything other than what it formally expresses, which applies to all forms of traditional exotericism, both in Catholicism and in other religions. I would add that Catholicism is far from being the only example of a word whose usage has completely distorted its original meaning to such an extent that it is no longer possible to return to it. I do not believe that one can say that Mr. Schuon knows Orthodox Christianity better; but the truth is that he thinks, and rightly so from what I have been able to learn, that certain things have been preserved in it until now whose equivalent has long since ceased to exist in the Latin Church.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 24 July 1949.

Dear Sir,

Your two letters arrived almost simultaneously, and I apologise for not having been able to reply immediately. I am currently behind on my correspondence, and it is not always easy for me to keep up with it as I would like, as I often lack the time to get everything done.

Unfortunately, it would be very difficult for me to give you my opinion on the considerations you set out in your letter to Mr. Schuon, for two main reasons. The first is that, as I believe I have already told you, it

it is not my place to answer questions about what someone else has written, and that, not knowing exactly what Mr Schuon himself might think about it, it is really not possible for me to substitute myself for him in this case, or to give you an answer that might not entirely agree with his, since I do not see clearly enough what specific points your objections concern. The second reason is this: I must say that these considerations, in themselves, do not seem entirely clear to me, perhaps in part because they relate to a point of view that I am not accustomed to considering, but also undoubtedly because there is something in Christianity, especially in its original form, that is very obscure and difficult to define, and which even seems to have been intentionally obscured. you must have noticed that when I have had occasion to touch on these questions, I have always done so with the greatest reserve. While there seems to be no doubt that early Christianity was primarily esoteric in nature, it is equally certain that it lost this character very early on, whatever the reasons may have been, and that it lost it so completely that Catholicism in particular, in its present state, is the most rigid and exclusive exotericism conceivable, to such an extent that its representatives expressly deny the very existence of any esotericism, which is perhaps unheard of in any other tradition (even the Jews do not deny the Kabbalah, even when they admit that they do not understand it or do not want to concern themselves with it). Of course, this does not prevent the deep and esoteric meaning from existing, but it is entirely outside the domain in which the Christian religion as such intends to confine itself, voluntarily or involuntarily, and its Western form even more exclusively than its Eastern forms, which always leave at least a possibility of going beyond the exoteric point of view, which current Catholicism, on the contrary, refuses to admit in any way.

As for the distinction between exotericism and esotericism, what you say in your last letter seems to me to be correct in a certain sense, but we can also mark their difference more clearly both by their domain and by their goal: the domain of exotericism is always that of human individuality (with its indefinite extensions), while for esotericism, on the contrary, it is essentially a matter of transcending it, even though it takes it as a starting point and a necessary support; the goal of exotericism is "salvation" (still an individual state), while the ultimate goal of esotericism is "Deliverance" or "Supreme Identity", that is, the absolutely unconditional state.

The question of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity is certainly much more complex than you envisage, for that would not explain the continuing existence of the Jewish tradition to this day, which must surely have its raison d'être; but that is a subject that would undoubtedly lead us far afield...

I regret that I am unable to give you a more complete answer at this time, and I ask you, dear Sir, to accept my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 5 September 1949.

Dear Sir,

It has been some time since I received your letter of 8 August, and I apologise for not having been able to reply sooner; I receive so much correspondence that I often find it difficult to keep up with it.

You are certainly right to want to study the Catholic tradition as deeply as possible, since it is your own; but unfortunately, as far as finding in Catholicism, as it currently stands, an effective possibility of going beyond exotericism, this is something that seems extremely doubtful to me, to say the least...

The objection raised by your friend against the necessity of regular initiatory attachment, at least in certain cases, only shows his misunderstanding of the cyclical laws and the conditions that result from them. As long as the Kali Yuga lasts (and it is quite clear that we are still in it), the "descent" continues, and even in an increasingly accentuated and rapid manner, until the final catastrophe. The return to the origins occurs through a kind of instantaneous "reversal" at the very beginning of the next cycle, and not gradually during the current cycle. The possibility in question therefore does not exist in the latter periods of the cycle, and even the simple qualification for initiation becomes increasingly rare; that is the whole answer to this argument.

I am surprised that you have not received any response regarding the books and journals, but if you have recently been to Paris as you intended, I hope that you have been able to find everything you wanted without difficulty.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 22 September 1949.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of 12 September last week. From what you say, I think you have understood that your friend's argument is not valid, since we are still in the Kali Yuga and, as long as it lasts, spiritual obscuration can only increase. It goes without saying that, for the same reason, initiates (I mean, of course, true initiates) will become fewer and fewer, as you say; but I do not understand why some, even though they are truly qualified, would find themselves, even in the most unfavourable circumstances, unable to receive initiation in any of the traditional forms in which it still exists...

As for finding in Catholicism a means of transcending exotericism, this would require the existence of an initiation based on the exoteric form that is Catholicism itself; This is obviously not impossible in principle, and there were certainly such initiations in the Middle Ages, but unfortunately I very much doubt that they still exist today, or if they do, they are so hidden and limited to such a small number of members that they are practically inaccessible. This is

a de facto situation, of course, but we are nonetheless obliged to take it into account.

I do not see at all why or how the difficulty would begin only with regard to the "great mysteries", for only those who have first travelled the entire path of the "lesser mysteries" can approach them. The "primordial state" is the perfection and the end of the "lesser mysteries", and it seems quite obvious to me that, before reaching it (and moving on from there to the "greater mysteries"), one must necessarily have passed through the previous stages and, first and foremost, have received the first initiation giving entry to the realm of the "lesser mysteries". I therefore do not see how a question relating to the "primordial state" could arise for someone who has not yet received this first initiation, nor what interest it could have in these circumstances, because, in this as in all things, one cannot claim to start at the end.

I regret that my answers are probably not as satisfactory as you would have liked, and I beg you, dear Sir, to accept my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 29 September 1949.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of 17 September shortly after replying to the previous one, and you will see that I was quite surprised by the sentence to which you refer. I thank you for the explanations you give me on this subject, but I must say frankly that they seem to me far from entirely clear. First, I note that when you speak of "family traditions, race, etc.", you use the word "tradition" in a sense that is often used in everyday language, but which I absolutely refuse to accept. for us, as I have often explained, this name can only legitimately be given to something that is essentially characterised by the presence of a supra-human element, which is obviously not the case here. On the other hand, everything you say about the integration of traditional elements, even to the extent that it really is religious tradition, remains entirely within the limits of the exoteric domain and therefore has absolutely nothing in common with the "lesser mysteries". It is possible that, in the most favourable case, this may lead to certain "mystical" states or something comparable to them, but certainly not to the restoration of the "primordial state". It is to be feared that, in fact, the results will most often be only psychological or "subjective", that is to say, completely non-existent and illusory from the point of view of any real achievement. There is surely much more to all this than simple questions of terminology; basically, I see it above all as a confusion between exotericism and esotericism, which you should endeavour to dispel above all else so that we can better understand each other...

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 8 November 1949.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of 25 October. I see that you did not go ahead with your plan to visit Paris, but hopefully, without having to make the trip, you will be able to have the books of mine that you are missing sent to you, or at least those that are currently available, as some are out of print and have not yet been reprinted.

I understand that the questions you raised require reflection and meditation, and it is not surprising that there are things in all this that are not yet perfectly clear to you. Although you are not asking for a reply this time, there are one or two points to which I would like to draw your attention. First, regarding the common meaning of the word "tradition", particularly when referring to "family tradition, racial tradition, etc.", as you did in a previous letter, it seems highly doubtful to me that what is meant can be considered to represent even degenerate remnants of true tradition; they are rather simple "customs", that is to say, something purely human and which has never been anything more than that. The remnants or "relics" of tradition are what is properly meant by the word "superstition" in its etymological sense, and that is something quite different. -- On the other hand, it is true that, in a certain sense, one must pass through the psychic realm in order to go beyond it; but this cannot really be considered a preparation for reaching the spiritual, but only as something that is in fact inevitable, and in any case it is dangerous to stop there. On the contrary, one must constantly aim beyond, without allowing oneself to be diverted from the path that must lead to the spiritual; only then can one approach the psychic from above and descend into it without any danger to fear, if indeed it is still of interest for any reason.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 22 January 1950.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your wedding announcement, which arrived at the same time as my reply to your last letter. As I see that it is already nearly a month old, I do not want to wait for another letter from you to express my congratulations and best wishes on this occasion.

I am sending this note to the address indicated in the middle of your announcement, as I assume that this must now be your address.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 12 February 1950.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of 2 February. I understand that your marriage and your new home have left you little time for writing or studying lately, but at least this is an impediment caused by happy circumstances! I see that we can write to you at either of the two addresses provided; naturally, I did not know that you were keeping the old one for your office.

I am glad to hear that you have finally received some of my books from Paris, as well as several years' worth of "E. T."; these are probably the only ones that are not yet completely out of print.

As for my articles on "Christianity and Initiation", which are indeed somewhat related to the issues we discussed earlier, please let me know, once things have calmed down a bit, what you feel needs clarification; I will be happy to provide it to the best of my ability. I must say frankly that there are many points that remain unclear despite everything and on which it would be very difficult to make precise statements (for example, the changes that occurred at certain times in the ritual of the sacraments, because we do not know exactly what it was in early Christianity, and there are many other things about which we are no better informed). What is even more remarkable is that the more one tries to examine all this closely, the more one discovers unexpected complications and difficulties, so that it is very doubtful whether everything can ever be completely elucidated... That is why I hesitated for a long time before writing these articles, and I only decided to do so because I felt somewhat obliged to do so by the questions and reflections of many correspondents; I do not yet know whether there will be any need to return to this subject at a later date, and this will undoubtedly depend above all on what I may learn from people who are better placed than I am to carry out certain research, for which, moreover, a great deal of time would be required.

Please give my regards to Mrs Pistoni, and accept my best wishes.

R. G.

Cairo, 26 March 1950.

Dear Sir,

It has been quite some time since I received your letter of 14 February, but I have not been able to reply until now, as I have been constantly busy with various urgent matters. I was pleased to hear that your health had improved, and I trust that you have now made a full recovery.

What I said in my articles about the permanence of the initiatory character in rites was a direct response to an objection that had been raised in this form by one of my correspondents. It is understood that this is only one side of

the question; but, on the other hand, I must point out that I did not say that the original character of Christianity had been "lost", since this was a change which, given the conditions in the Western world, was clearly providential. In order for initiates to transmit what they have received, they must obviously have the intention to do so (even in the case of simple virtual initiates who are not clearly aware of the true nature of what is involved). Christian initiates may well have ceased to have this intention at a certain point, not on their own initiative, since there was a providential action involved, but, in the language of Christian tradition, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it has not been proven that the rites themselves did not undergo certain modifications of varying importance at that time; this is a very difficult question to resolve with any precision, but there are at least indications that such modifications did in fact occur during the early centuries of Christianity. I would add in this regard that the deliberate cessation of initiatory transmission is not an absolutely exceptional occurrence; at present, certain initiations are on the verge of dying out as a result of a decision not to transmit them to anyone else, for reasons related to the conditions of the cyclical period in which we find ourselves; I know of one such case here among the Copts.

Between the "externalisation" of Christianity, or what might be called its "descent" into the exoteric realm, and the emergence of mysticism, a considerable number of centuries passed, so that the question you were considering on this subject cannot really be asked.

The being who has attained "salvation" has not actually achieved anything; he has only acquired a potentiality that will enable him to attain a certain realisation in the course of his posthumous states; this realisation, which is an extension of the human state, must naturally lead to the "primordial state", but it may be deferred until the end of the present cycle.

"Deification", to use the expression you employ, necessarily implies leaving the Cosmos (that is, the manifested world); it cannot therefore consist in harmonisation with the cosmic rhythm, and this can in any case only be a simple preparatory stage. Furthermore, what you say about the presence of beings whose function is, in a way, to "restore balance" is certainly true, and I would even add that if they were not constantly present, the world would immediately come to an end. According to Islamic tradition, there is such a being who, each year, takes upon himself three quarters of the evils that must occur in this world...

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 9 May 1950.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of 17 April a week ago, but I have not been able to find the time to reply until now. Regarding the

remarks made by your friend, I agree with him that initiation is more necessary than ever, but with the proviso that it is for those who are truly qualified to receive it. and it is a fact that such people are becoming fewer and fewer, which is why it is natural that initiatory organisations are becoming increasingly closed, especially when one considers that those that have remained too easily accessible have thereby undergone a certain degeneration, more or less pronounced depending on the case. On the other hand, if it is now possible to explain certain things more easily than in the past, it is because in the past they might have been misunderstood by many, whereas today they only risk not being understood at all, which is much less serious and less dangerous, since most people pay no attention to them and they are as if they did not exist for them; it is therefore completely wrong to speak of "disclosure" in this context, since these things are, on the contrary, intended exclusively as guidance for the very few who are still capable of benefiting from them; there is therefore nothing contradictory about this in reality. Since the name of J. Evola has been mentioned in passing, you are no doubt aware that, despite the undeniable interest of his work, I have always been obliged to express very serious reservations on certain points which, in his case, are not in accordance with traditional orthodoxy.

To come to your own question, there is no doubt that there was a specifically Christian esotericism throughout the Middle Ages (it may even be that vestiges of it still exist, especially in the Eastern Churches). You are quite right to cite Meister Eckhart in this regard, and there are others whom we are wrong to consider "mystics" today. This coexistence of exotericism and esotericism in a traditional form is perfectly normal, and we have another example of this in the case of Islam. What is not normal is the denial of esotericism by the representatives of exotericism... But I see that there is a need to clear up some confusion: the goal of esotericism is indeed to lead beyond all forms (a goal which, on the contrary, is not and cannot be that of exotericism); but esotericism itself is not beyond forms, for if it were, we could obviously not speak of Christian esotericism, Islamic esotericism, etc. Moreover, the very existence of initiatory rites is sufficient proof of this. As this necessarily changes the considerations at the end of your letter, I will not dwell on it further, as it would be preferable for you to revisit the question with this in mind.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 25 July 1950.

Dear Sir,

Your three letters dated 7, 14 and 19 June arrived a short while ago in quick succession, but not in the order of their dates, as it was actually the first one that I received last. I must say that there has been extraordinary and completely inexplicable disruption to the postal service recently: letters sent by airmail have

remained in transit for up to two or three months, and I ended up receiving about fifty at once that I thought had been lost; I have not yet managed to catch up on all this backlog of correspondence...

As for your friend's objection regarding "popularisation" or "disclosure", I see that you and I are in complete agreement; it seems to me that when he talks about such a large number of people who are interested in esotericism today, he is confusing the issue, because in reality most of these people are only attracted to caricatures or counterfeits of esotericism, which are entirely to their taste and within their reach, whereas if they are presented with true esotericism, they are quite incapable of understanding anything about it. The proliferation of pseudo-esotericism in our time is also one of the reasons why it is necessary to present certain authentic traditional concepts, in order to prevent those who deserve better, however few they may be, from being deceived and led astray by all these things; and if these concepts are presented as they are, without distortion or excessive simplification, since it is not in their nature to be "within everyone's reach", we cannot speak of "popularisation" in this case. It is not because something is brought to everyone's attention that it is better understood; the ancient Hermeticists sometimes even deliberately used a technique in their writings that consisted of highlighting precisely what they intended to conceal most... On the other hand, if in the Middle Ages there was no need to give certain instructions in writing, it was because those who sought and were truly qualified could find, even in the West, initiatory organisations that met their aspirations, but this is no longer the case today. As for Christianity today, it would certainly be desirable for your friend not to be mistaken, but I believe he is under many illusions; moreover, I do not see any more than you do what a "reconstruction" of esotericism could mean if there were still a living Christian initiation, which by definition would have preserved this esotericism intact.

As for your own question, it must be understood that the establishment of Christianity as exotericism did not cause esotericism to disappear. On the contrary, it continued to exist for many centuries with corresponding organisations, although the external church could only "officially" ignore it, since these are matters that do not fall within its domain, which is exclusively that of exotericism. As for the "glimpses" of intuition you mention, outside of any regular transmission, I am far from disputing them, but I do not think they can ever cease to be fragmentary and scattered, nor therefore replace initiation; as long as one remains solely in exotericism, there cannot be more than that; moreover, these are always exceptional cases, which cannot be made into a rule, and among which no one has the right to think that they will find themselves, for there is nothing voluntary about it.

Returning to your friend, regarding what you quote from him in your second letter, there is not much to add, as he repeats himself a lot; I can only maintain that there is no "disclosure", and I wonder what this "avalanche of publications" he refers to might be, because I can only see a tiny number that are of any real traditional value

traditional value. It is also obvious that, as the cycle progresses, the number of initiates must continue to decrease until the very end of the Kali Yuga, because only then will the "descent" be complete (it must be understood that the ascent, to return to the origin, can only be achieved through a sudden "reversal" and not gradually). I cannot explain what he finds unclear in all this; if he does not understand my explanations, there is really nothing I can do... What I have just said already answers in part the questions you added yourself; moreover, it is possible that, as you say, the need to "anticipate" is in a certain sense less towards the end of the cycle, but we must not forget that there is also another necessity, that at least a few should keep the entire deposit of tradition until the end in order to transmit it to the future cycle. What I do not quite understand is why you think that exotericism is preferable to esotericism in certain cases, because they are not of the same order, and you seem to envisage an esoteric path outside of initiatory organisations, whereas this can only be a simple theoretical study, the danger of which I do not see. Finally, it is well understood that all exotericism necessarily has a "social" side (this is not unique to Christianity), and it can indeed be said that this partly explains its limitations.

I thank you for also sharing with me in your third letter the new details provided by your friend; naturally, this does not change what I have already said, despite the distinction he seeks to make between different types of initiation; initiatory "qualifications" are, moreover, quite different from the profane "qualities" with which he seems to tend to confuse them. I would only add that certain external similarities between the language of mystics and initiatory terminology should not be misleading; the same words, such as "union" for example, are by no means used in the same sense, and I believe I have pointed this out on various occasions.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 19 November 1950.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I received your letter of 1 November; please believe me when I say that I fully excuse you for not writing back sooner, as I can see that you have been very busy in many ways. First of all, I would like to offer you my congratulations and best wishes on the birth of your daughter; of course, I have taken note of your change of address.

As for what you tell me about your friend, I am of course familiar with the Hermetic School of Kremmez, and I must say that everything I have seen of it has never inspired me with much confidence; you are no doubt aware that it has split into several rival groups, all of which seem to have been very active recently. On the other hand, I had never heard of Count Alberti until now, who, if I understand correctly, must have founded another organisation of the same kind, in competition or even opposition to the other one; could you give me some

more precise explanations about what this is all about? In any case, I don't need to tell you that, from an initiatory point of view, it is hardly possible to believe in the regularity of all this...

As for Scaligero, I would not have believed him to be so incomprehensible, and unfortunately, from what you tell me, it is to be feared that this is irremediable; but you must understand that if I replied to him as I did, it was much less for his sake than for that of his readers (Rocco intends to publish a translation of my article in his journal), and also for all those who, without being as obstinate as he is, might make more or less similar errors of interpretation. It was only when I read his next article that I realised his "Steinerism", from the way he attacked Evola on this subject; his idea that initiatory forms have lost all value for "modern" humanity is, moreover, quite consistent with Steiner's theories... In 1939, he sent me his book La Razza di Roma, but E. T. suspended publication before I could review it. When I wanted to revisit it after the war, I realised that it had already lost all meaning due to the events that had occurred in the meantime, and that it had become truly impossible to discuss it. a book that depends so much on "current events" can certainly not be of much value!

We agree with the three modes of action you mention, provided that we specify that the third is only possible, as you yourself suggest in the form of a question, after total spiritual realisation; this is the case for those who are "on a mission". This is what I have called "descending realisation"; but, as the articles in which I dealt with this subject date from 1939, I do not know if you are familiar with them.

The way you view the events of your life may be true, because everything necessarily has a reason for being and can at least have value as "signs"; However, the danger is in attaching too much importance to them (I know people who attribute "cosmic" significance to everything that happens to them), and, without neglecting them entirely, it is perhaps best not to dwell on them too much...

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

Cairo, 29 May 1947 (post office box, central office)

Sir,

Your letter reached me only a few days ago. My distance from you will explain this delay, as postal communications are still very slow and irregular.

On the question of pre-Columbian relations with America, I was indeed aware of the matter you mention, and I confess I do not see what difference it makes that it concerns the northern latitudes rather than the middle latitudes, since, in any case, it is still America that is at issue. I have learned that an important work on this subject has recently been published in America: "*America: 1355-1364*" by Hjabuar R. Holand. But there are also other things, in particular an Irish affair (more specifically, the Culdee monks). There is also said to be a memory (but I no longer know in which region) of an establishment formed by men whose costume, as described, is none other than that of the Knights Templar: and, strangely enough, this establishment is said to have been destroyed at a date corresponding almost exactly to that of the destruction of the Order of the Temple in Europe... Unfortunately, it is now impossible for me to find the information I had on all this; it must be said that the 1st edition of
" The Crisis of the Modern World" dates back to 1927, and also that I have only ever dealt with these historical "asides" quite incidentally. I will have to ask one of my friends, who was once particularly interested in this question, if he can give me some details, and if so, I will be sure to pass them on to you.

As for your other question concerning "Tradition", it is true, as you surmised, that the answer can be found in my works, which are all based essentially on traditional data, as are those of a few others, notably A.K. Coomaraswamy. Since you are primarily looking for a general overview, it would probably be best for you to read my "General Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines"; unfortunately, like all my pre-war works, it is currently out of print, but it should be reissued fairly soon, probably towards the end of this year. On this subject, and in the same vein, I would also like to draw your attention to our journal Études Traditionnelles (published by Librairie Chacornac, 11, Quai St-Michel), as I think you may not be aware of it.

Yours sincerely,

1 — Published in *GRAAL Special Winter 1987/88* (Bagnoles-de-l'Orne Colloquium).

Cairo, 24 August 1947

Sir,

Here is the information I have just received regarding your enquiry about pre-Columbian relations with America: "Celtic monks from Ireland are said to have gone to evangelise north-western Canada, and from there they may have travelled as far as Peru, where there are traces of a white evangelist who has been mistakenly identified as the apostle Saint Thomas. As for the Knights Templar, they are said to have had possessions in Mexico. All this can be found in the works of Eugène Beauvois, whose offprints are available at the National Library, where they can be easily consulted.

On the other hand, I saw that a book entitled "Vers les Terres fortunées, 780-1490" (Towards the Fortunate Lands, 780-1490) by Mornand (Éditions de la Nouvelle France, 1946) was recently published, which, according to the review given, also relates to the history of Irish monks in America; the date of 780 would, if I understand correctly, be that of the founding of their first settlements, which would thus predate the Norman expeditions.

Yours sincerely, Sir,

Cairo, 12 October 1947

Sir,

A few days ago, I received your package, along with your letter of 19 September, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude. As for the question that prompted our correspondence, it would of course be necessary to examine E. Beauvois's work more closely in order to assess the validity of his arguments; but from what I have been told, it does not appear to be comparable to the deplorable fantasies that you rightly denounce. For my part, I am particularly wary of linguistic imaginings, as I have seen too many of them of all kinds.

I was very interested in the brochures you kindly sent me, firstly for their content, and also for a reason you could certainly not have guessed when you sent them to me. Here is what it is about: some time ago, I was sent copies of two paintings that are in the library of the Paris Mosque and which intrigue everyone because no one knows where they came from. One of these paintings bears the signature:
"Amadou Hampaté Bâ", which no one understood; I immediately saw that it was a Sudanese name, but, naturally, I knew nothing more about it. This painting relates to an esoteric interpretation of Muslim prayer, corresponding to certain numbers, some of which are easily explainable, but others of which are rather enigmatic. From what I can see, there is no doubt that your friend is the author, and that he must have composed it based on his uncle's teachings. The other painting, which is unsigned but probably of the same origin, seems to refer to

correspondences between certain elements of Arabic music. I would now like to ask you if you could give me Amadou Hampaté Bâ's address, so that we can obtain some explanations from him about various points in these tables, which are of interest to us in more ways than one. I hope this request is not too intrusive, and I thank you in advance for any information you can provide on this matter.

Cairo, 15 December 1947

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your prompt reply. I will be sure to write to Mr Amadou Hampaté Bâ as soon as I have had time to review the points in his prayer outline that I feel particularly need clarification, especially as what you have told me about him has further increased my interest in him.

I am also very interested because you have told me about your work in progress, particularly on the teachings of Tierno Bokar. Although I am in contact with Les Cahiers du Sud, I did not know that they intended to publish a volume on Le Monde Noir. As for the story of Kaydara, I think you must naturally know that he is none other than El Khidr (Qôran, sûrat El Kahf).

As for the other painting I mentioned to you, regardless of who the artist is, all I can discern is an indication of a correspondence between certain musical elements and different times of the day (as in Hindu music), and also something which, through a relationship between these same elements and human temperaments, seems to have a possible connection with the therapeutic effects of music. I know that all this did indeed exist in Arabic music, but here it is now largely forgotten; might these things have been better preserved in certain more or less remote regions, such as Sudan? Perhaps you could tell me something about this, if it is not too much to ask of your kindness in offering to provide me with information from time to time, for which I would like to express my gratitude once again.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

Cairo, 1 February 1948

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 21 January, which I have just received. Regarding Kaydara, I understand very well that it was not possible for you to give many details in your lecture; I will be very interested in the more complete study that you are currently preparing.

What you tell me about Mr Mercier's communication confirms what I thought; it seems, according to this, that knowledge of these musical correspondences must have been preserved in certain regions less affected than others by

Western influence. I take note of his address, as I may write to him one day on this subject, as you suggest, if I can find the time, for I am always short of it for many things!

For the same reason, i.e. lack of time, I have not yet re-examined Mr Hampaté Bâ's table, and consequently I have not yet written to him. When I do so, I will of course take the precaution you suggest; I had believed, based on what you told me previously, that the colonial administration's hostility towards the Tijaniyak was a thing of the past, but in any case, it is quite certain that one cannot be too wary of the consequences that the misunderstanding of certain people may have... I recall a typical example of this mentality: would you believe that in India some 30 or 40 years ago, British officials tried to ban the reading of the Bhagavad-Gita because it mentions fighting?

Please accept, dear sir, my best and most distinguished regards.

Letters from (A) to
(Z4) (A)

Cairo, 17 August 1932
(Post office box, central office)

Sir,

I have only just received your letter today, and its origin will explain the reason for this delay. I live in Egypt, and correspondence does not always reach me very quickly.

I am pleased to hear what you say about my "Introduction" and the interest you have taken in it; I hope that the same will be true of my other works, which, without exception, are all based on the same principles. The reason for the silence surrounding these books is indeed as you say; but now, as this tactic is no longer sufficient, recourse is being had to insults and slander, which proves that the truth is not always good to tell, in our era less than ever...

I would never have believed that hatred of the East and everything related to it could reach such a level of violence among so many people in Europe, who otherwise seem to have nothing in common apart from this hatred!

The question you ask me is one I am often asked, and I must say that it always embarrasses me, because I do not know of any Western works, translations or otherwise, that can be recommended without reservation.

The translation of the Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad that you mention, published under the name of P. Hérold (it is in fact a collective work by Sylvain Lévi, Foucher, etc.), is virtually incomprehensible, lacking explanations that its authors would have been hard pressed to provide. I suppose that, apart from that, you must at least be familiar with the Bhagavad-Gita, of which there are quite a number of translations; the one by Burnouf, which must have been reissued fairly recently (though I do not know by which publisher), has the particular flaw of being very vague. The most recent, by Sanart (collection of Eastern classics), (???) with Sanskrit terms; by comparing the two, one can manage to get by more or less... There is no French translation of the Upanishads worth mentioning; however, some texts were translated in the past by Pauthier in two large volumes entitled Les livres sacrés de l'Orient (The Sacred Books of the East), but I believe these are now impossible to find.

These old translations are often preferable to more recent ones because, although they also contain many errors, at least these are not due to the influence of preconceived ideas.

If you know English, you can consult Max Müller's translation of the Upanishads (Sacred Books of the East, Oxford University Press), which is no better or worse than any other, provided you ignore the preface and notes. The same observation applies to G. Thibaut's translation of the Brahma-Sûtras with commentaries by Shankarâchârya and Râmânujâ in the same series. In any case, I would urge you not to look at translations until you have read my books; there are

many things that you will then be able to correct yourself.

I would also like to draw your attention to the translation of the life of Milarepa (a Tibetan work) by
J. Bacot (in the aforementioned classics of the East); it is excellent, including the preface, which is fortunately far removed from the usual conceptions of Orientalists.

I have not published anything on the question you raise concerning Grousset; but, in reality, Mahayana has been so transformed that it is no longer even Buddhism, but rather Tantrism; there has therefore been a "revival" in the traditional sense.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(B)

Cairo, 3 December 1932.

Sir,

I apologise for being somewhat late in replying to your letter; my correspondence is always extremely busy.

Since you have taken care to number your questions, I think I need only repeat them in the same order to answer them.

1°-- I have not yet had the opportunity to develop the theory of Apûrva; it is one of the many things I still intend to do, but will I ever have the time to accomplish them?

2°-- I think there are many distinctions to be made in what we call "madness", but in any case, it is always a question of imbalance and a lack of cohesion between the various elements that make up individuality; it is not the inner being that is affected, but rather its means of expression that are altered to a greater or lesser degree.

It is unlikely that Shakespeare had any knowledge of Hindu doctrines, but he (or those for whom he served as a spokesperson) certainly knew of similar or equivalent doctrines that existed in the West during the Middle Ages, albeit in a rather hidden way, and of which many vestiges still remained in his time. There are many indications of such knowledge in his work, other than those you cite; in reality, these are not "visions" at all, but very positive sciences.

3°-- It is well understood that the ordinary man cannot be fully conscious in all states, or, if you prefer, transport the centre of his consciousness there at will; but, on the other hand, we must not forget that we are dealing here with the state of the real being and not with physiological or even psychological states. I do not know what deep physiological sleep is, but I would understand better if we were talking about the physiological manifestations corresponding to deep sleep; and if there is then an appearance of unconsciousness, is it not simply because the being has withdrawn to such a depth that communication with the bodily modality is reduced to almost nothing?

4°-- I do not fully understand the "lack of concordance" that you believe you see in this

regarding posthumous evolution; it seems to me that here you are trying too hard to simplify, by removing the intermediate stages that correspond to the multiple modalities of the subtle state.

5°-- Regarding the question of procreation, it should be noted that, first, from the point of view of the Principle, the entire world of manifestation is strictly null and void, and thus the matter is of no importance; second, from the point of view of manifestation, since it is a possibility, it has its raison d'être and its place in the Totality, and thus its suppression cannot even be considered. On the other hand, the being that is born is not a being that begins to exist (which would not make sense); it is a being that enters into a certain state of manifestation through which it must pass, as well as through an indefinite number of others; it may even be that this state is precisely the one that will serve as its foothold, or rather its "basis" for attaining Deliverance.

6°-- It seems to me that there is some ambiguity surrounding the terms "consciousness", "knowledge", etc. ; they must all be transposed analogically to apply to the supreme state, and thus what they designate no longer has any common measure with the limited modalities which, as far as conditioned states are concerned, are designated by the same words to express a certain correspondence, which cannot in any way be regarded as an identity, nor even as a similarity; this question of the application of analogical meaning is extremely important.

7°-- The siddhis or powers of the Yogi are, as I have said, only secondary consequences of his state and are of no interest in themselves; those who seek such things can be certain that they will never attain the goal that alone matters. On the other hand, why should the jîvan-mukta have a special appearance and a particular way of life? Being beyond forms, he can take on any formal appearance; having reached the goal, he no longer has any rules to follow, for all rules are merely means, and "he is his own law". It is said that Ramakrishna had attained the state of Parama hamsâ, that is, a high but still conditional spiritual state; he had therefore not realised the supreme Identity which is attained once and for all and from which the being does not depart, whatever the appearances may be. It is very difficult to know exactly what the case of Ramakrishna is, as everything concerning him has been distorted by his disciples, especially by Vivekananda. As for Romain Roland, it is better not to say anything; his sympathy for the East is undoubtedly genuine, but it stems only from a naive sentimentality and is directed at an East that bears little resemblance to reality; he understands nothing about these things and would do much better not to get involved in talking about them.

I return to your question: the Supreme Brahma contains all states, and is in no way affected by the manifestation of certain of these states, since the finite cannot affect the Infinite, in relation to which it is nothing; there is therefore no difficulty here.

8°-- The question of intellectual intuition does not arise for us, because we are not concerned with "criticism of knowledge"; secular philosophy is not qualified to deal with this issue; moreover, when I see the sun,

all the reasoning of philosophers will not succeed in proving to me that I do not see it, and the same is true of intellectual intuition (which is not a special operation, but immediate knowledge through identification of the knower and the known).

9°-- See the answer to question 7: moreover, how could anything (even manifestation) be outside of absolute totality? We cannot say that Deliverance is an "impossibility" of manifestation, since, on the contrary, it totalises all possibilities; it only removes limitations because these are something purely negative.

10°-- The doctrine does not ignore affectivity or anything else of this kind, but it puts them in their relative place; and, if these things can in some cases be used as preliminary means (this is a question of "individual nature"), this can never lead very far.

11°-- As for your last question, which cannot be answered in a few lines (especially since it must first be clearly stated, stripped of all "literature"), I can only refer you to my latest work, "The Multiple States of Being". I must warn you, however, that it is hardly possible to understand it without first reading "The Symbolism of the Cross", to which it is a direct sequel; it is the continuation of the series begun by "Man and His Becoming".

I recognise that an anthology of the sacred scriptures would not be useless, but I have no taste or aptitude for the work of a translator, and I must say frankly that I have other things to do; I can only hope that someone will be found who can do this work properly.

I have obtained the issue of "Information" that you mentioned to me because, naturally, I do not see French newspapers here and have no way of seeing them, having no connection whatsoever with Europeans. I admit that I did not find the article in question very clear, especially in its conclusions; in any case, whatever its ambitions, Japan is hardly qualified to take the lead among the Asian peoples, for it has never done anything but copy the civilisation of others, and its domination would not be accepted any more willingly than that of the Westerners.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(C)

Cairo, 15 July 1933.

Sir,

It has been a long time since I received your letter, and I apologise for not having been able to reply sooner; even devoting all my time to it, it is becoming physically impossible for me to keep up with my ever-increasing correspondence...

You asked whether there was any disadvantage in speaking positively about the "unthinkable": I would say that there is an disadvantage in speaking about it in any way, since all language is necessarily imperfect and limiting in this regard. Therefore, everything that can be said on this subject should be taken only as "figures of speech",

intended solely to suggest the inexpressible; from an absolute point of view, only silence would be appropriate.

To see exactly what the "interversion" you mention in the Chhândogya Upanishad is all about, we would need to refer to the text itself, which I do not have at my disposal here. On the other hand, what appears to lend itself to a "reincarnationist" interpretation is certainly attributable to the translators, whose misunderstanding gives concrete meaning to certain expressions that are in fact entirely symbolic.

It is only from the point of view of manifestation that we can speak of the multiple states of a being, since, outside of manifestation, the being is beyond this multiplicity. I do not fully understand this objection, as I do not see how "consciousness" can possibly be involved in this (and we would still need to agree on the precise meaning to be given here to the word "consciousness"). It is not a question of appearances but of reality, since such and such states are manifestations of the same being. Does it matter whether this being, as situated in these states, is conscious of them or not? That certainly does not change what is.

You say you have not found an answer to the "why" of the painful nature of the manifestation; there is a very simple reason for this: metaphysically, the question does not arise. Pain, pleasure, etc. are simply modifications corresponding to possibilities like any others, and their case does not deserve to be considered in any special way. It might be more interesting to ask "why" ignorance exists, as this is more universal in scope; but this "why" is, in essence, nothing other than limitation; and the word "deliverance" means precisely freedom from all limitation (without any need to speak here of anything "undesirable", as this also applies to states where desire has nothing to do with it).

Regarding your question about musical symbolism, one could object to the element of sentimentality that almost inevitably becomes intertwined with what music expresses or suggests; but I must say that this objection only applies to modern Western music, in which there is certainly something "distorted". Without claiming to know anything about it, I must say that I find it almost impossible to find a true rhythm in it, whereas this can be felt immediately in Eastern music.

True music, the kind that can validly play the role you envisage, is in reality purely mathematical; it is therefore not so far removed from geometric symbolism, and these are just two forms of expression based on the same foundation.

Moreover, we must not forget that everything related to authentic symbolism is "exact science" in the most rigorous sense of the term, leaving no room for "fantasy" or "daydreaming"; and it could not be otherwise, since symbolism is in no way the product of human invention.

As for questions relating to "realisation", it is quite clear that the jîvan-mukta is no longer an individual, even though he retains the appearance of one, since he is beyond the limitations that define the individual as such; but his state is the very

contrary to "ecstasy", because this word, etymologically, expresses the idea of "coming out of oneself", and then there is nothing outside of "oneself"; with this reservation, what you say about the passage from Tchang-Tseu is correct. However, I do not see how you can justify the conclusion you draw regarding a "lack of connection" between the jîvan-mukta and his physical body; he is no longer affected by it, but he can use it, according to the Hindu comparison, "as the carpenter uses his tools"; and we must not forget that everything is contained within the "self".

As for whether jîvan-muktas really exist, this is not a matter for discussion, it is a matter of fact; when you see the sun, the most beautiful reasoning of philosophers cannot change this fact; here, it is exactly the same. More generally, there is no point in discussing the possibility of any state whatsoever; for those who have not attained it, it is completely useless, and for those who have attained it, it is obvious that the question no longer arises.

But what surprises me is that you mention works dealing with historical cases of jîvan-mukti; how could this exist, since it is something that necessarily escapes any "external" investigation?

The author of such a work, not being a jîvan-mukta himself, could always be mistaken, so that it would serve no purpose; and, going deeper into the matter, I must add that the true jîvan-mukta is always unknown in terms of his "powers"; all we can say is that, having realised "totality", he thereby has, "in addition", everything that belongs to all states; this consideration alone makes it superfluous to go into any details in this regard; and, in particular, as far as "siddhis" are concerned, I think that, for many reasons, it is preferable not to dwell on them (especially because of the "phenomenal" aspect that distracts so many people from the essential).

Since the jîvan-mukta is essentially "beyond name and form", it is clear that he can take any form without resorting to any "magical" means; let us not forget that magic belongs entirely to the realm of illusion and does not exceed the possibilities (even the lower possibilities) of the individual. In truth, it is not the "centre" that, in the case you are considering, must be transported here or there (you are perfectly right to say that it cannot be located), but conversely, this or that thing that is brought to coincide with the centre (although this is, of course, only a figure of speech, but perhaps the least inaccurate one).

The "Metaphysical Way", the "Rational Way" and the "Secret Teachings of Gnosis" have never had a publisher as such and have long been completely unavailable, unless one comes across them in some second-hand catalogue, but even that does not happen very often.

If you want to study Sanskrit, I cannot urge you enough to learn the characters, which does not require a great deal of effort; there can be no transcription that is not "distorting", and especially the one invented by Orientalists is, for me at least, completely unreadable (and their special signs must be about as difficult to learn as the real characters).

As for the grammar and dictionary you mention, I cannot comment on them, as I am not familiar with them at all.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(D)

Cairo, 19 December 1933.

Sir,

Once again, I am very late in replying to you; the reason is that I have been quite seriously fatigued lately, and this fatigue has affected my eyesight in particular, leaving me completely unable to write for a whole month; this has resulted in such an accumulation of correspondence and all sorts of other things that I no longer know how to catch up on everything...

1°-- You speak of the "(illusory) beings of the Universe"; beings are not illusory; what is illusory (which does not mean unreal) are only contingent states. On the other hand, as for the continuity of a being's states, it would be inconceivable for this continuity not to exist; on this point, I can only refer you to the geometric representations set out in "The Symbolism of the Cross."

But what does it matter if these states are unaware of each other (you may also be unaware, because you have forgotten, of what happened at a particular moment in your existence and the state you are currently in)? What matters is the being to whom these states belong and who is aware of all of them.

2°-- The question of the transition to unity and multiplicity is the very question of possibilities; I have dealt with it as thoroughly as possible in the first chapters of "The Multiple States of Being". Only total possibility is unlimited, a plurality of infinities being a contradiction; possibilities can therefore only be limited.

3°-- Despite your explanation regarding your use of the word "ecstasy", I still think it is inappropriate in any case: the jîvan-mukta has not left the self, since, in his case, there is no longer a self; obviously, one cannot leave what does not exist... Perhaps this is precisely why we cannot speak here of "absence" or of any special "phenomenal" appearance. All this can only have meaning in cases where the being has attained states that are still conditioned (states that may even be mere modalities of the human state, as is the case with mystics, for example). It is only when we consider things from the point of view of a state such as ours that the unconditioned state seems to be the most distant thing there is; in reality, it is exactly the opposite, precisely because it contains everything (which is why it is possible to attain it from any state). The difficulties you envisage stem simply from the fact that we talk about it as a state; it is hardly possible to do otherwise, no doubt, but it must be understood that it does not belong to a series of states; the whole is not one of the parts.

I must also point out that, when it comes to supreme realisation, we cannot speak of 'purely internal evidence', because there is no internal or external, all distinctions having been transcended; I would add that, until we have reached that point,

the internal, in any case, is always more valuable than the external; and as for the scepticism of "Westerners", I think you will agree that this is irrelevant!

I cannot understand what you mean by a "split personality"; this is something that cannot exist for any being, in any state whatsoever; all the more so for someone who is beyond all duality. There must be some misunderstanding here, because you speak of a personality "subject to ignorance"; but personality is never subject to ignorance, which concerns only individuality. A "split personality" is inconceivable, since personality is the sole principle of all states. Furthermore, why speak of the "impossibility for the self to subsist as such" when there is no self? But is it necessary for the author to believe in the real existence of a character in order to play the role? Finally, no possibility, even "taken particularly", can be forbidden to those in whom there is totalisation of being; and if we speak in this regard of "caprice" or "arbitrariness", it is only because the point of view of totality escapes us (the very expression "point of view" becomes inaccurate here, of course).

4°-- As for your question about "powers", when you say: "without the possibility of phenomena contrary to the natural order of the Universe", if you are talking about the total order, that is obvious, since everything necessarily fits into it; only, I do not know why it would be called "natural"...

But there may be phenomena that are completely outside the usual order of a certain state, so that they imply the intervention of something else (which may be very different depending on the case, even if the phenomena as such, i.e. the appearances, are similar: the case of the saint and the sorcerer, for example. But when it comes to "phenomena", this is only of relative interest; for the being who has reached a certain state, even if still far from Liberation, the exercise of such "powers" is totally irrelevant; and if he happens to exercise them accidentally, it is for reasons of a different order; that is all that can be said in general terms. When it comes to jîvan-mukta, I do not think that his "powers" are distinguished from the attributes of Brahma (as "non-supreme", for the "supreme has no attributes, he is "nirguna") in any way other than nominally; we speak of them as we speak of jîvan-mukta himself, and it is exactly the same thing.

Finally, I am surprised that you can say that, once totalisation has been achieved, there is no longer any room for this or that, whatever it may be; this is contradictory: if there really is totalisation, there is room for everything.

I apologise for these somewhat brief answers, and I am not sure I have not forgotten anything; I have little time, but I did not want to delay any longer.

Thank you for the article enclosed with your letter; it provides a rather good example of the confusion so common in our time regarding the use of the word "ecstasy": "naturist ecstasy", what on earth does that mean? It's like the word "religion", which is applied to anything and everything these days... As for Arniel, according to this that I know, he it is that states simply

"psychological"; it doesn't even go as far as mysticism. But the best part of this article is the identification of nirvana with nothingness (because it is "the suppression of life", as if "life" were everything...): that's what Westerners understand! Unfortunately, we find things like this everywhere; and the ability of so many people to talk about what they do not know is something unbelievable; it is a particularly striking sign of the disorder of the present age...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(E)

Cairo, 4 September 1934.

Sir

Months have passed since I received your letter, and during that time I have been unable to reply due to a series of circumstances beyond my control; I apologise for this. Please believe me when I say that you are far from being the only one in this situation; I have accumulated such a backlog of correspondence that I am struggling to keep up!

I will endeavour to answer the questions contained in your letter in the order in which they appear.

1.In Non-Being, one cannot really envisage either multiplicity or even unity; that is why we speak only of 'non-duality'. But, on the other hand, it is quite obvious that everything is there in principle, even the distinction between beings; it should only be noted that distinction, here, does not mean separation, the latter being only the result of the limiting conditions inherent in contingent states.

2. It is well understood that Non-Being is not affected by Being, nor, a fortiori, by the manifestation of which Being is the principle. But the absence of all manifestation cannot even be supposed, since it would amount to suppressing the possibilities of manifestation, that is, to placing them outside of universal Possibility, and thus to limiting the latter. Similarly, one cannot exclude a single point from space, even though the extent of the point is zero.

Error is only the consequence of ignorance, and therefore it is necessarily negative like ignorance; it can never be positive in reality, for nothing can oppose the truth, which is infinite and identical with Brahma (Satyam Jnânam Anantam Brahma). More generally, all the attributes of manifested beings that result solely from their limitations (due to the special conditions that define their contingent states) are actually negative, even if they appear to us as positive qualities. With this clarification, I do not see any difficulty, but I believe that, in speaking of "counter-truth", you have confused partial and contingent truths, which can indeed be opposed by error, with the total Truth, which is the only thing to be considered here.

3°. --a) You ask how we know that there are in fact people who possess the state of jîvan-mukta (and I would even say that there always have been); one could answer that we know this from Tradition, but this, of course, would require further elaboration... However, we can also say that if they did not exist, the

conscious link between earthly humanity and the Principle would be broken, and then humanity itself would cease to exist.

b) Since there are an indefinite number of states of being, any classification of them can only be schematic; what it indicates are always "groups", so to speak, or main stages if we look at it from the point of view of "realisation".

c) There are indeed states in which the being may appear to be immersed in deep sleep; but the term "ecstasy", which refers to "mystical states", is not appropriate here, as it means "leaving oneself", and if it is really a question of metaphysical realisation to any degree, the being is, on the contrary, "concentrated within itself".

d) The states that have been truly acquired by a person are acquired once and for all, and not just momentarily or even for the duration of earthly life (which, moreover, cannot affect the higher states in any way).

4. -- The reasons why beings who have attained certain states may "accidentally" exercise more or less extraordinary "powers" are related to what is sometimes called the "hidden government of the world"; it would therefore be very difficult to explain this with any precision.

5. -- Since animals, like ourselves, are beings in a certain state of manifestation, it is natural that they should have, like us, their "posthumous evolution"; but their "path" is different from that of beings who pass through the corporeal state as human individuals; it would therefore be of no interest to us to seek to know it in detail.

6. -- Space and time are merely special conditions of the physical state; but what necessary connection can there be between them and causality? This association seems completely incomprehensible to me... The necessity of causality, moreover, which imposes itself on human reason (despite all the artificial discussions of philosophers), cannot be established by it, but belongs to something superior to it, that is, to intellectual intuition; and what more could one ask for, since intellectual intuition is immediate and infallible knowledge?

7. No, certainly, I am not a "convert" in any sense of the word; and I cannot even conceive that these things could have had a "beginning" for me; which is why my "example", if I may say so, could be of no use for anything...

The 'split' that has occurred between East and West can only be explained as a consequence of 'cyclical laws'; in other words, this question would take us a long way. I have already alluded to this in The Crisis of the Modern World; perhaps I will return to it more explicitly in another work, which will be a kind of sequel, and which I intend to write as soon as I can find the time.

Once again, I apologise for my delay. Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(F)

Cairo, 19 November 1934.

Sir,

I have received your two letters, the first of which crossed with mine. Thank you for the issue of Art et Médecine, which I also received, and for the clippings enclosed with your last letter; I read everything with interest.

What you say about Vedanta is correct, but I believe that unfortunately most Westerners today have become completely incapable of thinking... -- One cannot speak of "acquiring buddhi", since it is in all beings; it is only a matter of becoming aware of what is, but it is understood that not all human individuals are "qualified" for this.

1. It is not my role to indicate the "practical" means of realisation, which would in any case be completely useless, not only because of Western incomprehension, but also because, without regular initiatory transmission, these means are ineffective; what can be learned from books is therefore absolutely useless.

2. I had already been informed that Grouont, in his new book, had omitted to quote me, and I was not very surprised; he must have received comments on this subject from the Maritain group, which will have prompted this omission... It is understood that his interpretations are tendentious and that one must be careful not to accept them as they stand without examination. What is accurate with regard to Râmânuja is that the "bhakti" path predominates in his work; but it cannot be said in any case that this path leads to the same goal as that of "jnâna" or knowledge: Îshwara is not the supreme Brahma, but only the Non-Supreme.

3. If man were no longer capable of supreme identity, he would no longer be man; it is not a certain bodily form that makes him so; therefore, there could no longer be any question of humanity. Moreover, material existence is not something that can be conceived as having its own separate reality; manifestation, if it were not connected to the Principle, would not exist in any way.

4. Humanity occupies the centre of a certain state of manifestation; but this is only one state among many others, which are innumerable, both on the lower side and on the higher side (lower and higher in relation to the one we are considering more specifically because it is our own).

5. Radam was certainly learned enough to have been able to think of the Gnostics' "Abyss" when writing the sentence you quote; but the fact that he borrowed this term from them does not prove that he had any real understanding of it, which he seems to have been quite incapable of.

6. a) If I do not mention the doctrine of the ancient Egyptians, it is because I do not claim to know it, and I even think that no one today can know what it really was. The tradition that is alive today in Egypt is the Islamic tradition and no other; the ancient Egyptian tradition has been dead for many centuries, and no one here is concerned with it (Egyptologists are all Westerners). Note that the case is much the same for Druidism in France; yet the French people today are partly of Celtic descent

, while we know nothing about what became of the descendants of the ancient Egyptians.

b) I have heard that Hegel borrowed some ideas from Hindu doctrines, but no doubt in the manner of Schlyel, Schopenhauer and others, that is to say, by distorting them to fit his own way of seeing things. Of all the German philosophers, only Leibniz had any real knowledge, and even that did not go very far; moreover, in essence, all that is "philosophy" is a kind of game to which it would be wrong to attach any real importance; what a philosopher says may be true or false, but in any case, it is never more than a figment of the imagination...

c) I know nothing about W. Oken except his name; in any case, what is certain is that the theory of metaphysical Zero has no "creator", since it is traditional, and it is especially in Taoism that it is developed most clearly.

7. The indifference of Hindus towards Westerners can be explained simply by their lack of concern for "propaganda"; as for me, for the same reason, I limit myself to explaining certain things without any intention of convincing anyone, and only for those who can understand them... if there are any; in any case, once this has been done (by whomever), there is no point in anyone else doing it again. But why call me "European"? I assure you that I have never felt like one in any way!

8° Others besides yourself had already made the same comment to me about the "Symbolism of the Cross"; obviously, it is always possible to add a few figures; however, it did not seem necessary to me, as I thought that anyone could easily draw them if they felt the need to do so; finally, we will see in the event of a reprint...

If, despite what you say, you still have questions for me, please do not hesitate to ask; I would only ask you to excuse the delay in my replies. As for the very kind offer you have made me, I thank you, but it is not my habit to receive anything in exchange for information. I would only ask that, when you come across something you think might interest me, you kindly send it to me as you have done this time.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(G)

Cairo, 12 February 1935.

Sir,

A few days ago, I received your letter and its contents, as well as the package containing "The Etheric World"; thank you for everything. Apart from Father Wieger's translation of the Tao Te Ching, I know of only two others from which anything can be gleaned: one is the one incorporated into Matgioï's "Voie Rationnelle" (The Rational Way); the other is Alexandre Ular's; but, unfortunately, I believe that these two works are now completely unavailable.

As for the expression "acquiring buddhi", there is a difference with what you quote to me: one cannot say of a faculty (which, moreover, is in every being) what one can say of a state.

1. What you say regarding the case of the isolated individual, and your application of the passage from the Brahma-sutras, is perfectly correct; it is well understood, moreover, that these can only be rare exceptions.

2. Since the true Rosicrucians withdrew from the West, it seems that there are no longer any truly active initiatory centres. There are still some remnants, by which I mean organisations that represent initiatory orders, but they are in very poor condition: Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage. Apart from that, there is only charlatanism or fantasy, in a word, "pseudo-initiation"... and sometimes even something worse, which amounts to "counter-initiation". -- I must add, however, that it is possible that there are still a few Kabbalists here and there; but they do not make themselves known and must be very difficult to accept students, even among Jews; as for non-Jews, it is practically inaccessible to them.

3. What you say about Râmânuja's limitations is quite correct: his doctrine is valid from a certain relative point of view, but not beyond that. One could say that he is "negatively" heterodox when he meddles in denying what goes beyond his own point of view; the same is true of anyone who, being competent in only a certain field, claims to judge what lies beyond it; and you could apply this to the doctors of exoteric religions, whatever they may be, who presume to formulate any kind of assessment of what pertains to esotericism.

I am familiar with Masson-Oursel's "Comparative Philosophy" and also with the author himself; there is no doubt about his sympathy for Eastern doctrines, or at least what he believes them to be, but understanding? I can assure you that he does not. The poor fellow, who has the misfortune of being both a philosophy graduate and a student of Orientalists, is quite incapable of ever stepping outside his academic framework! He has written reviews of my books in the Mercure de France and elsewhere, which are among the most remarkable for their complete incomprehension... Sympathy is not enough and can be misleading; we must not forget that, even without mentioning theosophists, among whom this tendency is taken to caricature, there are people who have developed a sympathy for a fanciful Orient that they have dreamed up and who do the greatest harm to the real Orient; Keyserling and Romain Rolland are fairly typical examples.

I cannot discuss Wachsmuth's book with you at this time, as I have not yet had time to read it.

Oken's passage is indeed rather curious, but very confusing; there is certainly what you say: confusion between the mathematical zero and the metaphysical Zero; basically, he cannot escape the realm of quantity, and it is clear that he does not know how to make the necessary transpositions.

As for Paul Valéry, I still wonder what he means, and whether he is engaging in a kind of pseudo-intellectual "game" rather than serious thought; it is to be feared that the influence you mention, if it exists, is purely verbal. In the past, the unfortunate Alfred Jarry seized upon a few phrases from the Upanishads, which he repeated indiscriminately in the midst of his ramblings; did he

he ever understood a single word of them? He went mad, which is certainly not the case with Valéry, but I mention him to show that we should not be misled by external borrowings, which do not necessarily imply any kind of assimilation.

From another point of view, I am also very wary of what can be found in philosophers; one must always be careful not to give them too much credit, because deep down they are terribly narrow-minded. No doubt there may be some glimmers of insight among them, especially without their knowledge, but they are quick to recover and drown it in the mass of their "rational" theories!

One of the articles in Le Temps concerns Granet's book; you will also have seen the one devoted to it in the January issue of Le Voile d'Isis. I have had the book itself in front of me for several months now, but I have not yet been able to find the time to read it!

Please accept, Sir, my warmest regards.

R. G.

(H)

Cairo, 22 March 1935.

Sir,

Thank you for your new shipment, which arrived the day before yesterday.

Monterlant's article is truly curious, but... isn't there a certain tendency on his part to want to be paradoxical? I have heard very different opinions expressed about him, and some even consider him a kind of "insider" (?). For my part, I simply believe that he sometimes has certain "flashes of insight", as happens with many writers and poets, without ever going very far... -- I also read Thérive's article that follows, whose title leads one to expect something else; there would indeed be much to say about the "myths of fire", but, like everything he writes, it remains very "literary" and superficial...

Since I wrote to you, I have read the book on the "Etheric World"; it is very confusing, and it is mainly a mixture of Steiner's fanciful views (borrowed largely from theosophists, with simple changes in terminology) and modern scientific theories, which all these people seem to be very impressed by. With all this, it is difficult to know exactly what it is about and where it is located. In fact, according to traditional doctrines, ether does not belong to the subtle realm at all; it is only the first of all the elements of the physical world, from which the others (and consequently the bodies formed from them) derive directly or indirectly. Moreover, it is not possible to speak of a plurality of ether, since it is that which, in the corporeal world, represents a state of undifferentiation, where the qualities that will be manifested in the other elements are in a state of neutrality, with opposites perfectly balanced. This is why ether, the "quintessence" of Hermeticists, is symbolised by the centre of the cross, whose four arms correspond to the four other elements. As for the conceptions concerning the first human races, they are pure extravagance

; moreover, it is taken entirely from H. P. B.'s "Secret Doctrine". -- What is rather curious is the tendency of Steiner's disciples to try to apply their ideas to a wide variety of things: teaching, medicine, chemistry... even agriculture! One wonders what exactly lies behind all this...

Please accept, Sir, my very best regards.

R. G.

(I)

Cairo, 5 May 1935.

Sir,

I received your letter about ten days ago, but I have not been able to find the time to reply until now.

Regarding your comment about the "etheric world", it was Steiner himself who placed his "anthroposophical" organisation under Goethe's patronage, since he named his institute in Dornach the "Goetheanum"; Basically, I believe that the only reason for this is that Goethe has always been considered, rightly or wrongly, to have belonged to some more or less "Rosicrucian" group. I had often heard great praise for the second Faust, but I must say that when I had the opportunity to read it (in translation, it is true, since I do not know German), I was very disappointed. I do not know if it is because there is a form of expression in it that I am not used to, but I see only a very vague and nebulous symbolism, which I would readily compare to that of Ibsen's Peer Gynt. I do not believe that a Gnostic derivation can be found there; in fact, the legend of Faust does have an initiatory origin, but the question would be to what extent Goethe preserved its primitive character...

1. It is very difficult to speak of "counter-initiation" more clearly than I have done in some of my articles; it responds to a truly "satanic" design, that is to say, it tends to develop the being in a direction that runs counter to spirituality; as for its general action in the world, it claims to go against the realisation of the divine plan, which is necessarily illusory, because nothing can really oppose it, and everything contributes to it, willingly or unwillingly.

2. Your arithmetic representation of the three gunas seems very acceptable to me; but it should be noted that there are other cases where "positive" and "negative" are taken to represent not "superior" and "inferior" as here, but only two correlative and complementary terms; care must therefore be taken to avoid any confusion between these different applications.

3. The symbol in question is the figure of Ganesh, the Hindu symbol of Knowledge.

4. Regarding the passage from Man and His Becoming that you mention, there is no real contradiction: the "living soul" is one thing, and the "true consciousness of being" is another that is not inextricably linked to it; this consciousness can very well be transferred to a deeper level, as already happens during life in deep sleep, which is also truly an informal state, and therefore supra-individual; but it is quite obvious that the "living soul"

is not destroyed by this.

5. Participation in the doctrine can obviously involve many degrees, and it may be only indirect and virtual; initiation itself may remain virtual in its effects; this is all the more true when it comes to the "exoteric" participation of the uninitiated. However, once there is a real connection to the tradition, even indirectly, it is not something merely theoretical; it is therefore of a different order than a rational adherence to a "belief"; and we must be careful not to interpret these things in "psychological" terms. As for whether this link is truly broken in the case of the "conversions" you mention, the question is not so simple: it may sometimes be the case, but not necessarily always; to find out, we would need to be able to observe what happens when the person in question dies and, so to speak, which side they go to.

6. I am not surprised that the book you mention disappointed you in terms of what you thought you would find in it; moreover, to what extent do the "neo-Thomists" understand St Thomas? In any case, it is certain that even quotations from St Thomas can always be interesting and useful; the passage you quote is indeed remarkable, and one could undoubtedly find others of the same kind. For this reason, I gladly accept your offer to send me the book, provided you no longer need it yourself. -- I do not know if a direct connection can be established with the Tao wherever there is mention of the "way"; nevertheless, it is true that at least the same symbolism is used. On the other hand, it is quite certain that it was through the Arabs that Aristotle became known in Europe in the Middle Ages; the Latin translations were made from the Arabic translations, and not directly from the Greek text. -- Albert the Great and Saint Thomas were attached to a hermetic organisation; but it is possible that the name "Rosicrucian" was not yet in use at that time; I do not believe that it could have appeared before the 14th century.

7. Regarding Leibniz's "fulgurations", your comparison with Râmânuja may not be without foundation, but there is another, even more striking comparison with the Tibetan symbolism of the "Vajra"; I pointed this out in an article in "Voile d'Isis" on "Thunderstones", which I cannot find at the moment. -- As for the relationship between "confused perceptions" and "distinct perceptions" in the monad, it is derived from Aristotle's theory of potency and act, but with some rather curious complications. -- What is absurd, as you say, is God's "choice" among possible worlds; it must be said, moreover, that Leibniz's idea of the "Best of All Possible Worlds" is derived from mathematical considerations that are accurate in themselves but poorly applied.

8. Certainly, current events prove me right only too well; I would have preferred that they did not do so so completely, and especially so quickly!

I have already heard about the new book on "Buddhist meditation"; from what I have been told, it seems to be a rather "Westernised" presentation. I was wondering if there would be a review of it for "Voile d'Isis"; as nothing has come through yet, it is now unlikely. Once again, I would like to

to accept your offer, but always, of course, on the condition that you do not wish to keep the volume yourself; thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(J)

Cairo, 31 May 1935.

Sir,

The books arrived a few days after your letter, as is often the case with printed matter; thank you for sending them and for the clippings.

It is understood that I will return "Intellectual Intuition" to you; I will discuss it with you once I have read it. For the moment, I have only been able to glance at the other two volumes. This adaptation of the Bhagavad-Gita is, in fact, yet another fine example of Western incomprehension; and I really wonder how one can allow oneself to write and publish something on a subject about which one is so completely ignorant; the author's approach reminds me of Salet's translations... As for "Buddhist Meditation", it is a rather basic summary, where one senses a constant concern to choose what might suit Westerners; this certainly cannot lead very far, but at least it is fairly harmless, and still better than the fantasies of theosophists!

I only know L. Snali's book from a very favourable review I saw in an Italian newspaper, but it didn't tell me much about the content; if you would be so kind as to send it to me, I will return it to you along with the other volume.

The response you received from L. Lavelle is, in short, what one would expect from an "academic" such as himself; one cannot even hope to arouse any interest in such people, nor to draw them out of their pseudo-problems... I still wonder, on the other hand, to what extent philosophers such as this Jospers (whom I knew nothing about) themselves understand what they are saying, and whether the Eastern influence, when it exists, goes beyond a simple borrowing of formulas that remain purely verbal for them.

I hope you will find "The Veil of Isis" interesting. I regret not having thought to mention it to you sooner...

1. Buddhists have often been criticised for the contradiction you point out, and indeed it is not easy to see what the being that passes from one state to another might be for them; no doubt this simply proves the impossibility of logically following the theory of "impermanence" to its conclusion.

2. I do not see why the acquisition of knowledge should not continue in the 'extended life', especially if it has already been prepared in some way during earthly existence; the being is never 'fixed' until the final goal is reached.

3. We can undoubtedly speak of heredity for certain psychic elements, but there are also similarities that can be explained more by 'affinity'. The individual is, in

some way the result of the encounter between a certain being and a certain environment, and there must necessarily be a "compatibility" between that environment and that being. -- Maeterlinck's article clearly expresses, as you say, the Western conception, which, there as elsewhere, takes into account only the "horizontal sense" represented here by the environment, and completely ignores the "vertical sense", that is to say, what belongs properly to the real being. -- I would add that, in an era such as ours, affinities are certainly less clear-cut and exceptions more numerous than in a more regular period.

Please accept, Sir, my very best regards.

R. G.

(K)

Cairo, 2 July 1935.

Sir,

I received your letter last week, along with a copy of Art et Médecine; the reproductions it contains are interesting, but it is a pity that the text sticks to such "profane" and external points of view. -- The books arrived a few days later; thank you very much. I did not know that Suali's book had been translated into French. I have Mukerji's, which is indeed rather "mixed"; anyway, I will send everything back to you at the same time.

Since I wrote to you, I have read R. Jolivet's pamphlet, and I must admit that, apart from the quotations from St. Thomas, I did not find much of interest in it; all these "irrelevant" subtleties and all this talk of "abstract" and "concrete" mean nothing to me; I wonder, moreover, to what extent St Thomas himself can be held responsible for the fantastic role attributed to "abstraction" by modern scholastics... In any case, I noticed something that seems very important to me: almost everywhere where the word "mind" is used in translation, the Latin text actually uses the word "mens", which is obviously not the same thing at all. So the passages that seem to deny intellectual intuition are self-explanatory, since it is in relation to "mens" that they deny it: this amounts to saying that "Buddhi" is not included in "manas", which is correct; and it is also true, moreover, that "Buddhi" is not a "human" faculty (individual) faculty. In short, this would be enough to resolve all the difficulties; only, these people are far from suspecting that the being that is human is also something else entirely.

Mr Fleury, who is both a spiritualist and a pantheist, used to overwhelm me with letters full of philosophical "quibbling", of which his article gives you an idea; seeing that it was impossible to make him understand anything, I finally stopped replying to him. Even so, this article in Le Mercure is rather less bad than another he published a few years ago in a magazine called L'Esprit français, which I believe has since ceased publication.

The article on "prayer" is not mine, but by F. Schuon; nevertheless, I fully approve of its content.

I have just read Granet's Pensée chinoise, having not had time to do so until now; it contains some interesting documentation, especially concerning numbers; but it is quite clear that he does not really understand them, and his "sociological" interpretations turn things upside down by presenting as the origin what is only a simple application.

numbers; but it is quite obvious that he does not really understand, and his "sociological" interpretations turn things upside down by presenting as the origin what is merely an application.

The article by this Dr Naacune, whom I do not know at all, is quite interesting indeed; however, I wonder what this story is about a lost work by Saint Augustine, which was supposedly entitled "Beauty and Convention"; this title seems very "anachronistic" to me...

I was not familiar with the passages from Nietzsche and Shakespeare that you quote, which are indeed rather curious, especially the latter.As for Malebranche, I do not believe he was in any way esoteric, for if he had been, he would not have been influenced by Descartes as he was. What may sometimes give the illusion of this in his work is simply what he borrowed from Platonism (or Neoplatonism), which he must have known mainly through Saint Augustine.

I will now move on to your various questions.

1. It must be clearly understood that this "indefinite prolongation of individual life" is not something that man obtains by himself, but a consequence of his participation in a Tradition; and it is clear that the reason for this is not so much to maintain his individuality, which in itself would be of no interest, but to enable him to obtain, in this extension and in a somewhat "deferred" manner, what he had not been able to achieve during his earthly life.

2. The transition to a higher state (as a state) does not necessarily imply that the being must be "born" into a "central" condition such as that of man in our state; in this state, there are also animals, plants, etc., and in other states there is naturally something that corresponds to all of this; a being can therefore, while being in a higher state, find itself in less advantageous conditions. As for the "fall of the angels", this should be seen above all as symbolism, which is far from being perfectly clear. In Eastern doctrines, there is never any question of a "fall" strictly speaking, but only of a distancing from the Principle in the process of manifestation (this is for the development of each state considered in itself and in isolation).

3. "Birth" and "death" appear as exceptional changes only insofar as we place ourselves within the cycle of which they mark the beginning and the end; otherwise, there is no difference between them and other changes. Your explanation on this subject is therefore entirely correct, and that is precisely what I meant to say.

4. Similarly, with regard to species, the answer to the objection you mention is indeed that species have reality only in the "horizontal" sense exclusively. I have long intended to deal with the question of species and their conditions in a more developed way; I do not know if I will ever have the opportunity to carry out this project...

Please accept, Sir, my very best regards.

R. G.

(L)

Cairo, 26 August 1935.

Sir,

I received your letter of 2 August about ten days ago, followed by your parcel, for which I thank you.

I was only familiar with Luther's "Table Talk" by reputation, having never had the opportunity to read it (I do not know German), but what you tell me does not surprise me; in any case, I would not mind taking a closer look at it...

I have read L. Suali's book; as you said, it is well presented; one criticism that could be levelled at it is that it quite often uses specifically Christian expressions that could give rise to false assumptions.

If you are not in too much of a hurry to have your books back, I will wait a little longer before returning them to you, so that I can include Oldenberg's "Buddha" when I have seen it, since you are kind enough to send it to me as well. I will also enclose your copy of "Buddhist Meditation", as I have received another one, which was sent rather late, as a service to "Le Voile d'Isis".

Thank you for your kind offer to send me "Asian Mythology", which I am not familiar with at all. You can send me a parcel by post; this has happened several times before, and they have always arrived safely; in this case, I receive a notification from the post office.

I had already heard about this book on the "cult of Civa"; the quotation suffices to indicate its spirit; it is truly unheard of, and moreover very English...

The story of the mandrake is a truly curious one; I once saw one that clearly resembled a man, a woman and a child. Those who claim that roots with such shapes have been carved have certainly never seen one, for their very structure makes this completely impossible.

Regarding Shakespeare's passage, the expression "maturity" is indeed quite accurate; it is also used regularly in India in the same sense. As for Leconte de Lisle's verses, I was not familiar with them, or at least I had no recollection of them. I confess that I am a little surprised, for it never seemed to me that he could have attained a very deep understanding; perhaps, as often happens, it is something he appropriated without grasping much more than the words; in any case, it cannot be the effect of a simple coincidence...

F. Schuon is indeed the real name of the author of the article on "prayer"; he is of Alsatian origin but currently lives in Switzerland; he has even formed two groups of young people in Basel and Lausanne who are studying metaphysical doctrines very seriously; I believe that this would be more difficult to achieve in France!

From what I know of him, Rivaud seems to me to be less narrow-minded than many other academics; but he too is caught up in the prejudice of relating everything to the Greeks; and even among the Greeks, there are surely many things that escape him; his confusion about numbers clearly shows this. It is true that in our time we often see people who go even further in this direction, to the point of

confusing numbers with digits!

Regarding numbers, I do not see that there is, in Chinese symbolism, the difference that you think you find there: the Tao "without a name" is the metaphysical Zero, indicated perhaps even more clearly there than anywhere else; it is only the Tao "with a name" that can be identified with the "Great Unity" (Tai-i), represented by the Pole; but I wonder if Granet has any idea of this very essential distinction; as for the two, it represents "polarisation" everywhere: the pairs "Heaven-Earth", "Yin-Yang", etc., are always, at heart, aspects of the duality Purusha Prakriti (contained in the unity of Îshwara or Being). And it is with the three that manifestation properly begins: "one produced two, two produced three, three produced all numbers" (which we all have as soon as we have four, since 1+2+3+4 = 10; and that is why, in Chinese ideograms, the sign + = 10, and 10 to the power of 4 = 10,000 denotes the indefiniteness of all beings).

In the Tai-Ki diagram, there is no actual vertical axis, as it should be viewed as drawn on a horizontal plane; one could only say that one of the axes plays a "relatively vertical" role in relation to the other; but then why would it be the diameter rather than the semi-circumference (or better still, the two semi-circumferences together)? I see nothing to indicate this, and even the figure as it is usually arranged (see page 280 of Granet's book) seems to indicate quite the opposite. Please let me know if you have seen anything else that made you think this; in any case, even if what you say were sometimes encountered, it would still not be an insurmountable difficulty, for it would only be a special case of that exchange of numbers and symbols which Granet himself points out on several occasions (exchange of even and odd numbers between Heaven and Earth, attribution of the square to Fo-hi and the compass to Niu-Koua, etc.), but whose true meaning his obsession with "sociological" explanations prevents him from understanding, because, satisfied with what he believes he has found in this regard, he does not even think to look further...

As usual, I will conclude with your numbered questions:

1. The sentence you point out to me in "The Gift" cannot have a pantheistic meaning because of these words: "from an absolute point of view", which necessarily imply that all beings are considered as a principled totality; what precedes, i.e. the affirmation of difference "from a relative point of view" (which is that of all manifestation), precisely rules out any pantheistic or immanentist conception.

2. Limitation as such is purely negative; it therefore has no fundamental existence, so to speak; limitation can only be considered from the perspective of contingent beings (I believe this is what you mean when you refer to possibilities of manifestation considered as "realised"); the error of perspective, in these beings, consists in taking limitation (or what results from it, and which is therefore as negative as limitation itself) for a positive attribute. In short, limitation stems from nothing other than 'distinctiveness': each particular possibility, if considered separately from the others, thereby becomes exclusive (or negative) to it; but if it is

on the other hand, to the whole, limitation disappears, since for the whole there can obviously be no limitation.

3°. a) States of manifestation other than the human state are well represented by the coils of the helix following each other in different planes; moreover, there is no reason to limit this correspondence in the ascending sense to the bodily modality alone, since each state naturally comprises multiple modalities, as does the human state itself.

b) The difficulty you point out, concerning the horizontal coils that move away from the centre as they widen, corresponds only to an imperfection in geometric symbolism, which can only be corrected by considering the "opposite direction": in terms of what is being represented, it is, on the contrary, that which is most extensive (i.e. least limited) that is closest to the centre. This difficulty also arises when we want to represent the "heavens", following Dante for example: we can only depict them as circles that get larger from the lowest to the highest, but at the same time, it is the highest that is closest to the divine centre; this is easily conceivable, but it is impossible to obtain a correct representation of it.

c) I do not see why, in the "ascent" from one state to another, the modalities would necessarily move away from the centre, since in each state there are modalities that correspond to those of the others. All we can say is that, since the multiplicity of states is indefinite, the "ascent" would continue indefinitely if the being, in a certain state (which may be any state), did not actually reach the centre itself, which would then allow it to escape through the axis, instead of continuing to revolve indefinitely around the cylinder (in the rotation of "samsara").

4. If the freedom of the individual human being is of the order of infinitesimal quantities, it is because individuality itself is also infinitesimal when compared to the whole; it cannot be that this is not strictly proportional. On the other hand, it is quite obvious that, if we are talking about the freedom that belongs properly to the human individual as such, it can only apply within his cycle of human manifestation, which amounts to saying that it appears to be null and void as soon as we leave that cycle; but, of course, it is not null when we consider the activity of the individual human being.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(M)

Cairo, 23 September 1935.

Sir,

First of all, thank you for the parcel you mentioned; I have not received it yet, but that is not surprising, as postal parcels generally take about a month to arrive! I will therefore talk to you another time about the contents of this parcel... Thank you also for the coupon enclosed with your letter.

What you say about Leconte de Lisle's poem does not surprise me, and confirms what I thought: the last two lines must represent a formula

he found somewhere and reproduced without really understanding it...

All I know of J. de Gaultier is his "Sensibilité métaphysique" (Metaphysical Sensibility), which he sent me and which I found terribly difficult to read to the end; and I was never able to figure out exactly what he was getting at... If the "Bovarysme" you mention can give a clearer idea of his theories, I gladly accept your offer to send it to me, as it may help me understand his views better!

1. I have just reread Granet's note (page 280), but I cannot see how the two semicircles, which together form a curve winding around the relatively vertical axis, could be generated by the line of the other axis; The question, as you say, is undoubtedly of secondary importance, but in any case I must admit that there is something about the way you view the figure that escapes me...

2. Regarding the passage about the "Gift", the explanation you offer this time is certainly correct, and I don't see anything to add to it.

3. Regarding the question of limitation, perhaps the difficulties you raise stem mainly from the fact that a purely logical point of view can no longer be of any help beyond a certain domain; in any case, it can then represent nothing more than a kind of very imperfect translation... In any case, it is clear that, from the point of view of the absolute (so to speak), that is, from the point of view of the Principle, there can be no errors or, to be more precise, no illusions; illusions can therefore only be found on the side of manifestation, and they are necessarily inherent in manifestation itself, since manifestation implies a multiplicity whose elements, considered separately, cannot help but limit each other. This is, in short, what conditions all manifestation, which is therefore only relative and contingent, which amounts to saying that it is illusory in relation to the Principle. The illusion disappears with the distinctive point of view, but so does the manifestation itself. Now, if we ask ourselves why this is so, the question is essentially irrelevant: it is simply because every possibility is realised in the manner that its nature entails, and the nature of the possibilities of manifestation necessarily and by definition entails this realisation, which can only be in an illusory mode; but it must be clearly understood that illusory does not mean unreal, but only of a lesser degree of reality, since illusion always has its foundation in the principled reality of possibilities. I do not know if I am able to explain this very clearly, but at least what is certain is that the difficulties here are only related to language, as is always the case when things must be considered from both the perspective of Principle and that of manifestation.

4. It is obvious that a being who expands his domain (whether vertically or horizontally) and thereby frees himself from certain limitations cannot be said to be moving away from the centre; rather, he could be said to be moving closer to it, although, strictly speaking, it is always at the same distance as long as some limitation remains, because of the incommensurability of the absolute and everything relative (and this is why Deliverance implies a radical discontinuity with regard to any conditioned state, being outside the indefinite series of these states). Basically, it

It is still the same inevitable imperfection of geometric symbolism; it should also be noted that, in this symbolism, the centre of being must be considered as infinitely distant from the axis of the cylinder, the points of which we can represent only as the respective centres of the different states. But in any case, I do not see how one can use a word such as 'mechanism'; one could no doubt say that this is also just a figure of speech, but I think that it can only too easily lead to misconceptions. Moreover, in all cases, and even when it is only a matter of ordinary physics, mechanism is certainly only an erroneous representation, and therein lies one of the main flaws of modern scientific theories; perhaps I will be able to explain myself more fully on this subject in the volume I intend to write as soon as I can finally find the time..

5. It is well understood that nothingness is pure impossibility, and consequently the "conversion" that you envisage at the confines of the indefinite is indeed necessary; there is a kind of "stopping point" there, as there is also, analogously, from a cosmic point of view, in cyclical periods. A nothingness with any positivity is truly inconceivable; it is true that there are, especially in Western philosophical conceptions, many other "pseudo-ideas" that are no less contradictory...

What is found on page 169 of "The Symbolism of the Cross" is a quotation from "The Metaphysical Way", and what you say about it seems correct to me, because the hypothesis considered is obviously only feasible if one places oneself outside the two states under consideration; the words "current" and "previous" then only serve to indicate the order of their causal sequence; and it is clear that individual consciousness cannot extend beyond the limits of individuality.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(N)

Cairo, 12 October 1935.

Sir,

I received your letter the day before yesterday, which crossed with the note in which I informed you of the safe arrival of your parcel; your other package also arrived at the same time, and I thank you for it. -- I prefer, when I can, to reply to letters immediately, because otherwise they pile up so much that I can no longer keep track of them...

Thank you for the treatise by Nâjârjuna; I agree with you on this dialectic, which is quite common among Buddhists and is almost as valuable as that of the Greeks! Ultimately, it is more of interest to the curious, as it is obvious that these subtleties cannot touch on the essential... The translation is not always very comprehensible; its author, although Japanese, seems to follow the methods of European Orientalists (and in particular Sylvain Lévi), who care little about whether what they translate makes any sense.

I will tell you more about J. de Gaultier's book when I have read it; judging by his other, more recent work, I very much doubt that he has been influenced by

...

The passages from Shakespeare that you quote are certainly curious; it is undoubtedly difficult to know exactly how far the conscious intention goes in the use of such expressions, but there seems to be no doubt that Shakespeare, or those for whom he served as a mouthpiece, had some esoteric knowledge.

You mention Mr. de Gaigneron's work; I must admit that I have no idea how he dealt with certain issues; what I fear a little is that, despite all the good will I know he has, he does not manage to express himself perfectly clearly on all points... -- In any case, "mechanism" is one of the great errors underlying modern scientific concepts; perhaps I will be able to explain this more fully in the next work I intend to write as soon as I finally find the time...

As for the Tai-Ki figure, one may wonder in what sense exactly the two inner semicircles are "equal" to the outer semicircle, for it would not be accurate to take this to mean quantitative equality. On the other hand, I confess that I do not understand how a semicircle can be generated by the tracing of a semidiagram; it can only be generated by the rotation of the latter, which then no longer has a fixed position like that of the perpendicular to the relatively vertical axis; there is still something here that escapes me. As for the sentence taken from Shankara's "Introduction", your interpretation seems to me to be entirely correct, and I see nothing to add to it.

Finally, with regard to the "Secret of Mantras", I see that there has been some confusion that needs to be cleared up. When Shiva is considered as one of the terms of the Trimurti, he is indeed the "Transformer" principle (a more accurate term than "destroyer": he destroys manifestation as such, no doubt, but in order to bring it back to the Principles); but in a Shaivite text such as this, Shiva is taken as synonymous with Paramâshwara, who contains all aspects (and then the "transforming" aspect is called Rudra).

Please accept, Sir, my best and most distinguished regards.

R. G.

(O)

Cairo, 18 October 1935.

Sir,

This week, I received two new issues from you: "A. Esculape" and "Esprit médical," in which I found some interesting articles; thank you again.

In the article on Avicenna, there are a few inaccuracies to point out, notably the usual confusion about "mysticism" (it is curious to see how common this is becoming in the West), and the translation of the word "Hokmah", which means "wisdom", as "philosophy"; in Arabic, this is never referred to as anything other than "falsafah", which is an alteration of its Greek name...

Incidentally, among the announcements of collaboration with "Esprit médical", I see one from a rather sinister character: Elian J. Finbert, who is all too well known here, and in a very unfavourable light in every respect! Two

or three years ago, to publish an article about me in the "Nouvelles littéraires" that was as inept as it was untruthful. I do not know if you were reading "Le Voile d'Isis" at the time, or if you saw my response to him... after which he was careful not to show any sign of life.

I have just read "Bovarisme"; it is certainly much easier and more pleasant to read than "metaphysical sensitivity", but I found the same tendencies already asserted: a radical "agnosticism", and even something more, since it goes, as with the Greek sophists, as far as the negation of truth (and not just the possibility of knowing it); a rather crude empiricism at heart, constantly confusing the idea with the image; and this way of treating everything as a "game"... There is also something curious about the author's confidence in "physiology", "heredity", etc., when at the same time he wants to appear sceptical about current scientific theories as well as everything else; this is rather contradictory! It is also obvious that when he talks about "metaphysics", he uses the word in a sense that has nothing in common with ours; and as for possible Eastern influences, I can see little else, for my part, than a rather poorly understood and distorted idea of "mâyâ"...

I have not yet had time to look at Oldenberg's book, which is more voluminous; but I now have so many things to send you that I think I will have to send them in two parcels because of their weight. If this is the case, I will divide the books according to their size so that the parcels are less likely to be damaged or come apart in transit.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(P)

Cairo, 31 October 1935.

Sir,

I have received several more items from you since I last wrote; I do not wish to delay any longer in acknowledging receipt and thanking you for everything.

The issue of Visages du Monde devoted to India is very well illustrated; as for the articles, since they are essentially "picturesque" in nature, there is nothing to complain about... except for certain notes on the temples, whose tone, intended to be "pleasant", is rather in poor taste. Do you know exactly who this "Titayna" is, whom I had already heard of as an aviator, but about whom I know nothing specific?

By a rather curious coincidence, I received at the same time a copy of the Larousse mensuel, which contains an article on "Indian thought"; but to tell the truth, it is only a summary of the current opinions of Orientalists...

Dr Carrel's interview surprised me a little, pleasantly so, because I didn't think he was one of those who realise the inevitable outcome of modern civilisation; what he says about the repercussions of certain inventions on human beings is perfectly true.

The review of Chesterton's book on Saint Thomas does not give the impression of being very profound; I once read a book by him whose

title escapes me; he seems to have some rather curious ideas at times, but perhaps this is mainly due to the paradoxical form in which he presents them.

As for Ravaisson, I wonder if it is true that Bergson understood him as well as people say: it would seem that Ravaisson did indeed glimpse something of intellectual intuition, although it always remained vague for him; for Bergson, on the contrary, it is always a question of sensory intuition; what confusion arises from not knowing how to make this essential distinction!

The story reported in the article in Gringoire is quite curious; unfortunately, articles of this kind are generally so "romanticised" that one can never know exactly how much truth there is in them...

Finally, yesterday I received the continuation of the study on mandrake, and I see that it is to be continued. There are some truly curious things in it from a "documentary" point of view; moreover, the author obviously has a rather singular idea of esotericism in general and Hermeticism in particular; it must be said that he seems to owe much of it to modern "occultists", especially Eliphas Lévi; we will never know how many false ideas these people have helped to spread!

I think I will be able to return four volumes to you shortly: those by J. de Gaultier, Mukerji, Tucci, and "Buddhist Meditation". Because of the format, as I told you last time, I will keep R. Jollivet's brochure and send it back to you at the same time as Oldenberg's book, once I have read it.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(Q)

Cairo, 17 November 1935.

Sir,

This week I received your letter dated 5 November. Since I last wrote to you, I have also received your package containing three articles from Passiflora. The illustrations reproduced therein are truly curious, and I thank you for them.

For my part, I sent you a package last week containing four books, as I had promised; there is therefore no longer any need to consider another method of delivery, but in any case I do not think the difference in cost would be very significant. All that remains for me to send you is the brochure on "metaphysical intuition" and Oldenberg's book; I have not yet had time to look at the latter.

Thank you very much for your offer to send me Grousset's "History of the Far East"; if it really does not inconvenience you, I would be delighted to accept it.

The "Tales of Goha the Simple" are not by Finbert, but by Georges Adis, who died quite some time ago. As for Finbert, he had once founded a magazine in Alexandria called "Les Messages d'Orient" (Messages from the East) with Carlo Suarès (an admirer of Krishnamurti); but Suarès soon realised that it was mainly a pretext for extracting funds from him, and the magazine ceased publication after five or six issues.

As for J. de Gaultier, the connections you mention could undoubtedly be sustained, but I believe that, if they exist, it is without his knowledge; this does not

change anything with regard to his general tendencies, which are obviously opposed to any traditional doctrine.

I know nothing about Calderon apart from what has been said in "The Veil of Isis"; the first article seemed a little vague to me and gave me the impression of things that Calderon himself may not have been very clearly aware of; but I must admit that the last one seems much more precise and convincing in this respect.

1. I now understand better what prompted your remarks about Tai-Ki, but, as you yourself admit, these comparisons do not seem entirely accurate to me. If we consider the circumference as representing a passive aspect, its correlative, corresponding to the active aspect, is nothing other than its centre itself, which is, moreover, the trace of the vertical axis in the horizontal plane; and this correlation cannot be assimilated purely and simply to that of the two axes of the horizontal plane (which are two rectangular diameters of the circumference).

2. For the evolutionary helix, the ascending direction is not a simple postulate, but a necessary consequence of the continuity that exists between all states of manifestation due to their causal sequence. As for the expiratory phase, which you consider to be descending, the truth is that it does not involve any state of manifestation; what we might call the "emission" of beings into the stream of manifestation must be considered as taking place at a point infinitely far below, just as the return to the Principle takes place at a point infinitely far above; but in reality, these two extremes coincide, as the origin and the end can only be identical in the absolute. -- I would add that expansion and concentration cannot be considered as simply following one another; they are always found together at all levels of manifestation, which gives rise to seemingly "antithetical" aspects in the latter; there are some rather complex considerations to be taken into account if we wish to go into more detail on this point...

3. Your point of view could indeed be supported if the being were assured of finding, in another state, a "central" position corresponding to that of man in ours, but this is only one possibility among an indefinite number of others; there is therefore a much greater chance that it will find itself disadvantaged by its passage to another state. It is in this sense that we must understand what is said in I don't know which text, that "human birth (or its analogue) is difficult to obtain".

4. I do not have the time at the moment to examine closely the passages from the Chhândogya Upanishad that you refer to, but I do not think there are any great difficulties there.

5, 10, 7. -- You are right to say that these should only be seen as analogies; there are similar ones in many other texts (for example, in Plato); but theosophists and others who understand nothing of symbolism take everything in the most crude, literal and "earthly" sense...

6, 2, 1-2. -- The interpretation of the passage may give rise to doubts, because the expression "Non-being" does not always and everywhere have the same meaning and may not

necessarily refer to That which is beyond being (e.g., Plato's (???) , which is only undifferentiated potentiality). Now, it must also be said that Râmânuja's point of view corresponds to a certain level of reality; there must therefore be passages in the Upanishads that can relate to it, as is the case for any other legitimate point of view in its order.

8, 11, 1-3. -- It seems to me that "deep sleep" is considered here as "non-knowledge" only in relation to manifestation; and it is indeed beyond distinctive knowledge.

8, 12, 1. -- The difference between "jîvan-mukti" and "vidîha-mukti" is ultimately only in the appearances they present to others; the "jîvan-mukti" itself cannot really be regarded as "incorporated", since it is no longer affected, conditioned or limited by the body in any way; moreover, since the conditioned state is null in relation to the unconditioned, what difference could the presence or absence of the body make in terms of the possibility of obtaining Liberation?

The coupon enclosed with your letter is not valid, as it has not been stamped by the post office; I am therefore obliged to return it to you enclosed herewith, and I hope that you will be able to rectify this omission without difficulty.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(R)

Cairo, 24 December 1935.

Sir,

I recently received your letter dated 10 December, along with the articles you mentioned in it, for which I thank you. You should also know that your parcel arrived safely last week.

I will return the Journal Médical along with the two books I still have; I have only managed to read the introduction to Oldenberg's book so far: what a complete misunderstanding of Vedic doctrines!

I have not received the Lama aux cinq sagesses, so I gladly accept your offer to send it to me as well. What you say about it may correspond to the conception of certain Buddhist schools; there are certainly some that would be very difficult to exempt from any reproach of contradiction... On the other hand, it is true that theosophists, at least in the beginning, were mainly influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, but I think this was quite wrong; there, as elsewhere, human "rebirths" have, in short, only a symbolic meaning. As for the "magical" phenomena you mention in connection with Milarepa, they may well be real; I see no reason why they should not be; the question that arises in connection with such things is not that of their reality, but that of the importance that should be attached to them.

No, I am not familiar with Sénart's translation of the Brihad-Aranyaka Up. The sample you quote does not seem to show a great deal of understanding, which does not surprise me. I do not know if I have told you that the one published under Hérold's name is in fact a collective work, to which Sylvain Lévi, Foucher and others contributed; but because of their "official" positions, they preferred not to sign it and hid behind Hérold, who, I believe, never knew Sanskrit...

"official" positions, they prefer not to sign it and hide behind Hérold who, I believe, never knew Sanskrit...

I haven't had time to read Gaigneron's book yet, so I can't really comment on it at the moment; I must say that, generally speaking, I'm not very fond of the dialogue format... On the other hand, from what I have seen, I fear that he has sometimes ventured into considerations, for example on theology, that should have been approached with greater caution. As for his "checkerboard" theory, I suppose that this development is his own, as I have not seen it anywhere else; as for the sentence you mention, I admit that, until further examination, it does not seem perfectly clear to me.

I do not think that the passage in Abdul-Hâdi's article where he refers to "collective hallucination" in relation to the sensible world should be interpreted in a "subjectivist" sense, but rather in the sense of the Hindu "mâyâ"; after all, hallucination is never, in essence, anything more than an error concerning the mode or degree of reality of something, for it is impossible to perceive anything that is absolutely unreal. There is also, in this passage, an allusion to the cosmogonic role of man, in relation to the "central" position he occupies in this world, and as a result of which the world as a whole effectively depends on him in a certain way. -- With these reservations, the connections you note are nonetheless interesting, especially with regard to Daudet. However, I have the impression that there is something in his ideas, as far as I can understand them from these articles, that is not entirely "clarified" and developed; it is a pity that he never takes the time to explore the issues he touches on more thoroughly... On the other hand, it is perhaps regrettable that he has used the word "universals", which can lead to confusion, as it is a term known in scholastic philosophy, but with a meaning quite different from the one he gives it somewhat arbitrarily.

Thanks to the article in the Journal Médical, I now have a clearer and more complete idea of Dr Carrel's book; you are undoubtedly right about this, and it seems that the critical part is indeed the best; as for what he envisages to remedy the harmful effects of modern civilisation, it is permissible to doubt that any of it will be very effective. Moreover, it seems that many people are finally realising the disadvantages of so-called "progress", but they can hardly see how it would be possible to get out of this situation, because they still lack the principles...

I was completely unfamiliar with Pawlow's work; it is curious, but I wonder if it can go very far; it is well understood that the "psychic" and the physical are linked, contrary to the Cartesian conception, but, despite everything, it seems that methods of this kind only allow us to grasp the most superficial manifestations.

I see that Finbert continues to claim to be concerned with the East, which he knows little about, because, like all his peers, he has only ever lived here in Western or "Westernised" circles. -- This reminds me of the Voronoff brothers, who are of similar origin: I recently learned that they had once practised

medicine here, and that they left because of their lack of success with their clientele...

1. Your statements seem entirely correct to me, except that, when speaking of the helix as a whole, it cannot be called an "individual trajectory", since its different coils correspond to all states of manifestation, individual or otherwise. As for the other aspect, if it cannot be represented, it is because it is reduced to the point that mathematicians improperly refer to as "infinity" on the axis, that is, the point where the two ends of the axis meet and coincide.

2. I do not think we can really say that the human state and the non-human state that follows it are "foreign to each other", since they are two manifestations of the same being; they are only foreign insofar as we consider them separately as individualities; but once we go beyond the limits of a single state, it is not individuality that is to be considered, but rather what it is a manifestation of among others.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(S)

Cairo, 26 January 1936.

Sir,

I received your letter dated 7 January, along with the clippings you mentioned, then an issue of "Art et Médecine" and the rest of the study on mandrake, and finally I have just received "The Lama with Five Wisdoms", which I was waiting for before replying to you; I thank you very much for this, and I will discuss it with you once I have read it.

I think I will be able to send you back what I still owe you shortly, as I have finally almost finished Oldenberg's book. it is certainly a conscientious work from a historical point of view, but his Western prejudices sometimes assert themselves with a curious naivety, for example when he wants to make certain comparisons with Christianity, of which he seems to have the most foolishly sentimental idea imaginable! I won't go back over the introduction, as I have already told you what I think of it; there is a total lack of understanding there...

As for the magical phenomena you mention, I know they exist, but I must say that I have never been curious enough to seek them out; it is enough for me to understand their possibility, which is the only interesting thing about them. --This reminds me of a story: someone once boasted to Mohyiddin ibn Arabi about a person who could levitate and do other extraordinary things of that sort; Mohyiddin simply replied, "I suppose he must be a man with not much else to do!"

Regarding Dr. Pron's article on "metagnomy", I see that, in short, he tries to give credence to all hypotheses, including those of spiritualists, which is somewhat unfortunate; as for the story of the "Akashic records", it is pure and simple borrowing from theosophists, and it is quite obvious that there is a great deal of confusion here between

the physical order and the subtle order.

I have never written anything about Plotinus, and I confess that I have never had the time to study him closely; but I know that there are indeed many similarities with Eastern doctrines, so I am not at all surprised by those you have pointed out, which seem to me to be entirely justified. However, there is one thing that has always surprised me: it is this story of states that Plotinus is said to have attained a number of times in his life, and which, by that very fact, seem to have been anything but permanent, which is difficult to understand from an initiatory point of view; in any case, there would have been something very incomplete in terms of realisation.

1. The difficulty you note in the use of the word "informal" seems inevitable to me, for we are forced to apply it to everything that escapes, in any way whatsoever, the individual condition.

2. The successive states of manifestation are undoubtedly foreign to each other in a certain sense, but only if we consider them in themselves and separately, which never corresponds to the most external point of view, and in no way to the very reality of being. I am glad that my last article has clarified things for you somewhat, but can we really speak of something that is legitimate for the 'ignorant' man, when, in fact, it is 'ignorance' itself that is illegitimate?

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(T)

Cairo, 30 April 1936.

Sir,

Yesterday I received the package of books you mentioned, and although I wrote to you a few days ago, I do not want to delay any longer in thanking you for it, as well as for another package that arrived at the same time, in which I found the issue of "Art et Médecine" on Syria, as well as some articles and excerpts from Gobineau; Should I return the latter with the books?

Gobineau's ideas are, on many points, certainly not compatible with traditional doctrines; to speak of a sacred book as a human composition is, for us, something truly unheard of! As for Babism, it is quite impossible to find Mazdean influences in it, as he claims; it is an Islamic heresy and nothing else. There are applications of traditional sciences in terms of letters and numbers, but they are largely misused in a heterodox sense. None of this has survived, as Babism has become Bahá'í, which is now nothing more than a vague "moralism" for Westerners...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(U)

Cairo, 2 June 1936.

Sir,

Your letter arrived at the same time as the article on Rasputin, for which I thank you. I have often noticed that the natural "powers" of healers and others of their kind are found mainly in people who, intellectually speaking, are very crude and narrow-minded. In the present case, however, there is something else at work, in the sense that there seems to be no doubt that the character was used as an instrument, probably more or less unconsciously. Curiously enough, the organ of a pseudo-Rosicrucian organisation in America recently published an article presenting Rasputin as both a great politician and a true saint!

Last week, while continuing to tidy up my books, I found Gobineau's book, which I didn't know I still had; as you say, there is very little of interest in it, and it is very superficial.

Thank you for your offer regarding Madame David-Neel's books, but I already have all the ones you listed. I met her nearly thirty years ago; she was a theosophist at the time; she is certainly intelligent, but seems never to have been able to shake off her fascination with "phenomena"; on the other hand, she is rather intriguing and not very disinterested, and I have always wondered whether her travels had some political motive behind them.

As for Wells' book, The Island of Doctor Moreau, I only know the title; since you are kind enough to send it to me, I gladly accept.

Contrary to what we thought, Mr Riv. has done us the favour of sending us his book; I therefore found myself obliged to write a review, which you will see in one of the next issues of E. T. I will therefore be able to return your copy along with the other volumes you lent me.

I have read Chevillon's book; what it says about Bhagavan Dos is very much in line with what I thought; the author has certainly not distorted the words of his interlocutor, which are indeed those of a theosophist, not a "pandit". The Central Hindu College in Benares has never been anything other than an institution dependent on the S. T., and Arundale was its director for a long time.

I am not surprised that you cannot find The King of the World, as it has been completely out of print for a long time, as has Dante's Esotericism. I fully intend to have them reprinted, but I am not sure when this will be possible, as I would like to make some fairly significant additions to both.

It is quite true that the gross state represents only one modality, and not the entirety of a degree of existence; but one can nevertheless envisage a "centre" for this modality, because the analogy applies to all degrees; according to the words of the Prophet, "Everything has a heart". On the other hand, it is obvious that gross manifestation could not even exist without subtle elements, just as subtle manifestation, in turn, would not exist without an unmanifested principle; this is, in short, a question of "causal" hierarchy to be observed...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(V)

Cairo, 1 July 1936.

Sir,

It has already been a fortnight since I received a copy of "Aesculape" from you, and I apologise for not having thanked you sooner.There are some rather curious things in this issue, particularly the story of the Sciapodes, which made me think of other things of the same kind: I have often wondered what could be the origin of these descriptions of fantastical beings found in ancient texts, and whether there might not be a good deal of symbolism there that, at a certain point in time, ceased to be understood. It is also quite likely that geography was once very different from what it is for modern people... -- One story of this kind that still persists is that of "dog-headed men": I know people here who are convinced that they really exist somewhere in Sudan or Ethiopia...

I also found in the same envelope an article about a so-called "case of reincarnation"; even if the facts reported are accurate, it is obvious that they must be explained in another way. As the interval is not long enough for it to be a case of "ancestral memory", this would be a case of almost complete transfer of the psychic elements from one individual to another, which, although exceptional, is certainly not impossible.

As I am unable to finish my reading at the moment, I will, so as not to keep you waiting too long, send you back at least the two books by Marquès-Rivière and Chevrillon, as well as Bréhier's article on Plotinus. -- It would probably be impossible for me to send everything back to you at once by post because of the weight, and although I have no difficulty receiving parcels here, I would have more difficulty sending one.

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(W)

Cairo, 3 July 1936.

Sir,

Just after I wrote to you and sent you some of the books, as I mentioned, I received your letter containing new excerpts from Plotinus, as well as your shipment of "Visages du Monde" and various articles; thank you for everything!

As for Plotinus, the titles you have given to the various passages seem to me to be very appropriate; moreover, it does not seem improbable to me that Plotinus, in Alexandria, could have been in direct contact with representatives of various Eastern doctrines. However, with regard to the question of "mâyâ" that you mention, I must admit that things are not entirely clear to me: he has a theory of "intelligible matter" that may relate to it, but I have never seen it explained very clearly anywhere... -- As for "movement", it should actually be translated as "change", because the Greek term has a much more general meaning than that of "local movement" or change of situation,

which is only a special case.

Thank you for your offer to send me the published volumes of the "Enneads", but I really cannot accept, at least for the moment, as it would be quite impossible for me to find the time to read them with the necessary attention.

I know Dr Fiolle very well, and I had known for some time that he was preparing this book; apparently he even sent it to me, but strangely enough, I never received it, so I wonder whether it got lost in the post or whether it was negligence on the part of the publisher, which sometimes happens; In any case, I think the matter will soon be cleared up and that I will finally receive the volume, which, in any case, is indeed inspired by traditional doctrine, as you have noted.

I did not know what you told me about Dr Carrel's wife, which may explain certain things about his ideas, where there is certainly a lot of "confusion"...

Elie Faure's article is, as you say, rather obscure, but quite modern in inspiration, if only because of its tendency to take change as an end in itself; and if life were really nothing more than what he says in his conclusion, I don't really see how it could be taken so "joyfully", or even given any interest at all!

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(X)

Cairo, 18 August 1936.

Sir,

The package you mentioned, which I thought had been lost, finally arrived yesterday, and everything you mentioned was there; it was simply a delay in the post, which is often very irregular, especially for printed matter.

It seems that Daudet has realised quite well some of the "shortcomings" of Carrel's book; but does he himself know exactly what "the spiritual" really is and all that it implies? I fear that, on this point, he sticks to religious notions of a wholly exoteric nature...

As for Claudel, I wonder if he really takes himself seriously; it seems to me that, in his case as in Valéry's, there is a lot of "playing with ideas"!

I am told that Bergson has converted to Catholicism, but I wonder if this news is really true or if it is just a rumour; have you heard anything about it?

As for the "discoveries" of modern physics, I do not know if anything less confusing will eventually come of them; for the moment, even what may be true in them is presented only as more or less inconsistent theories and hypotheses; and can it be otherwise in a "science" that does not start from true principles, and only "by chance" manages to find a few

fragments of truth?

As for monsters, you are absolutely right; there is certainly a great deal of confusion between very different things in all this. Pliny's "Natural History" is one of the finest examples I know of this mixture of observed facts and misunderstood symbolism... In any case, as for the story of Pythagoras' "golden thigh", which is mentioned in the article you sent me, there is no doubt about its purely symbolic nature; it is directly linked to the symbolism of the Hyperborean Apollo.

I have read The Island of Doctor Moreau, which also deals with monsters, but artificial monsters; and it reminded me of the lost island mentioned by Diodorus of Sicily, where extraordinary men and animals are said to have lived, who were also the product of certain experiments; it is possible, after all, that Wells knew this story and that it contributed to the idea for his book...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(Y)

Cairo, 24 August 1936.

Sir,

I have finally finished reading everything I still have for you, namely the two volumes by Maeterlinck, the one by Valéry and the one by Wells. I prefer not to keep them any longer, especially since, if others were to be added, it would end up being too bulky for a single shipment. So I am making a parcel of them, which I will probably send to you in two or three days, along with other items I will have to post at that time.

Regarding "The Island of Doctor Moreau", I've been thinking lately that the whole story could easily be transposed into the subtle order, like that of a magician who has given false individuality to "wandering influences", which one day turn against him and kill him, and then, when he is no longer there to maintain them, gradually disintegrate and return to their original state; But, of course, it is highly unlikely that Wells had this idea!

As for Valéry, my impression is, as I told you the other day, that of a simple "play on ideas" with little substance (or, if there is sometimes something there after all, he did not intend it); this kind of parody of intelligence, if I may say so, has always been quite common in France, unfortunately... I remember reading, by the same Valéry, an "Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci" which contained many more or less questionable views, but which, despite everything, was certainly less "empty" than his chapter on "Leonardo and the Philosophers". "The Fear of the Dead" is truly unheard of!

As for Maeterlinck, his case is different, because there is apparently much more sincerity in him; but if the reflections of his entire life could only lead to this kind of "agnosticism", it is truly sad... I am not very surprised, after what I had already seen of him, but it seems that there are even fewer

"glimmers" and that his mental horizon is narrowing; and I believe, moreover, that this happens quite often to those who have been unable to go beyond a certain "philosophical" point of view...

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(Z)

Cairo, 3 September 1936.

Sir,

This morning I received your letter of 27 August, your shipment of articles and your package of books; everything you mentioned was there, thank you very much. -- It is understood that I will return the "Contes pâlis" and "Idée fixe" to you; as for the Wells book, I have already sent it back with the others, and you may even have it by now. While I am on the subject of Wells, he was indeed part of a group that had developed a plan for a social organisation called "panarchy", which included people who had belonged to theosophical circles (this was before the war); but to go from there to calling him an "esotericist" is really going too far...

I have G. Le Bon's "Psychology of Crowds"; he was certainly very intelligent, but rather dishonest in some respects; for example, he never wanted to acknowledge that it was during his stay in India that he developed many of his ideas.

I have no idea what "Kodo" means, which is obviously a Japanese word; in any case, the way Japan's current policy is being conducted is as far removed from Taoist principles as can be!

What you say about Daudet is quite right. As for Lavelle, I have never been able to define his tendencies very well, but I have always had the impression that he was incapable of going very far; moreover, university philosophical training is truly a terrible thing, and I believe it must be very difficult to break free from the limitations it imposes...

The article on Freud reminded me of old stories: R. Dalbier, the author of the book mentioned in it, who is a disciple of Maritain, has shown fierce hatred towards me on various occasions!

As for the article on Newton, it is indeed curious, but while it clearly shows his interest in alchemy, it in no way proves that he had any actual connection with Freemasonry; his relations with Desaguliers, which the author forgot to mention, do not prove anything in this regard either.

The "Spiritualist Error" and "Theosophism" are two entirely separate books. As for "The Crisis of the Modern World", it is by no means out of print; like "Man and His Future", it was taken over by Denoël and Sterle (19, rue Amélie) following the Bonard bankruptcy; but what I find really strange is that several people have already been given the same answer as you.

Obviously, when it comes to the "democratisation" of Catholicism, I thought of the trend you mention, and also of the current "movements" that are singularly illustrated by the emblem you sent me a reproduction of. -- Mauras' article is still in line with what I said in the same review; it is even quite

surprising coming from him, but I suppose that certain things eventually become a little too apparent... -- It is true that all this is part of the universal order, as you say, but that is no reason to retreat into a kind of "quietism"; on this point, I would ask you to wait for the articles I intend to write for the next issues of "Et. Trad. ", which may shed some light on all these questions.

As for 'organisation', I do not think it is very useful to try to give many details in the current circumstances; in any case, it is a fact that initiatory organisations that have not undergone a certain degeneration do not take the form of 'societies'.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(Z1)

Cairo, 19 September 1936.

Sir,

I have read the contents of your last parcel, and I will send you back Valéry's book and the "Contes pâlis" in the next few days, as agreed. I believe my other parcel has reached you safely.

The Contes pâlis (this is the first time I have seen this word written with an h) are really good; However, the title "Roi du Monde" is not entirely justified, and I also have doubts about the accuracy of the note at the beginning concerning certain statues adorned with royal ornaments, which are usually considered to simply represent the Bodhisattva before he attained Buddhahood.

The "Magical Tales" are less interesting, as you told me; however, I wonder if some of them at least might not have a double meaning, which, of course, can hardly be discerned in a version like this one.

The "Song of Hiawatha", which I knew only by name, contains some truly curious things; it is a pity that one sometimes senses a certain "arrangement" in it, especially at the end...

As for "L'Idée fixe", you were quite right to speak of "virtuosity", but it is a rather disappointing virtuosity, which ultimately only confirms my opinion of its author; I would be very surprised if, deep down, he were anything other than a kind of sceptic who enjoys turning ideas upside down... What strikes me even more in this regard is his formal denial that there is anything immutable in the mind; and it is quite clear that what he conceives of as "mind" is in reality nothing more and nothing less than the mental...

In "Unity of Asia", what is particularly interesting to note is the recognition of the "spiritual" nature of Eastern civilisations; but, after that, how can anyone continue to resolutely place themselves on the side where they admit that spirituality is lacking? These are the enigmas of the Western mentality... There are some correct points, but also some errors, for example regarding Russia, which

has little real affinity with Asia; the author seems to have based his views mainly on the assertions of a certain "Eurasian party" which, even among Russians, almost no one takes seriously; these people once sought to establish contact with me, but I quickly gave up on a correspondence that was completely devoid of interest...

We have not received Madame David-Néel's book on Buddhism, and it is very unlikely that we will receive it now; I therefore accept your kind offer to send it to me, and I thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(Z2)

Cairo, 26 September 1936.

Sir,

I received your letter and your package of articles at the same time; thank you very much. For my part, I sent you the two books the day before yesterday, as I mentioned in my last letter.

I am not familiar with Au pays des brigands gentilshommes, which you mention; I believe it is the only book by Madame David-Néel (apart from her latest) that I have not read.

Semenoff's article is a real mess; but that doesn't surprise me coming from him... As for the article on yoga, it's even more ridiculous; However, I have been told that the book by C. Kerneiz (F. Guyot) mentioned in it is better than most Western works on the same subject; moreover, I have seen various articles by him which, without going very far, were at least quite sensible (particularly against the agitation of modern life).

The article in La Croix against Buddhism is particularly notable for its abusive attacks; it is curious that there are people for whom this seems to serve as an argument! Apart from that, it mainly contains the usual confusions found in the West... On the other hand, it must be said that Japanese Buddhism, at least as far as the branches mentioned in this case are concerned, is itself a kind of "modernism" heavily influenced by Western ideas.

I had already seen stories about the "Talking Mongoose" in English magazines; it is not clear how much truth there is in them, but in any case, if the story is authentic, it can only be a manifestation of a "wandering influence"; as for the "canshee", I was not familiar with the word, but these "premonitory" phenomena, in various forms, are indeed quite common in certain countries.

I don't think Mr. de Unammoro's statement can be interpreted any other way than you do: since he expressly rules out alcoholism as a pathological cause, it is likely that it must be syphilis; but is syphilis really so widespread in Spain? I confess that I have no idea...

The article on Blondel surprised me somewhat; according to it, he seems to have undergone a certain change, for what I knew of him indicated above all very modern tendencies, in many ways similar to those of Bergson. Perhaps this change is due to the death of Father Laberthonnière,

who had a very great influence on him; some even claim that, in the work on "Action", there is in fact more of Father Laberthonnière than of Blondel himself.

I do not know much about Ch. Nicole, but the way you view his conversion seems to me to be the most plausible; the importance given to facts of this kind does not really seem very justified... As for the impression made by Duhamel, it is easily understandable when one knows how sentimental he himself is!

The extract from M. de Saint-Aulaire's book is indeed interesting; the only reservation concerns the expression "sage of Zion", which is merely an allusion to the infamous hoax of the "protocols". In any case, there is no doubt that the person in question seems to be involved in "counter-initiation" to one degree or another; this is not uncommon among Jews who have lost touch with their traditions. However, we should not exaggerate their role in this; we could also cite figures who are not Jewish at all and who play an even more important role in this regard...

What is most astonishing is Daudet's article on the Great Pyramid; I have often noticed his rather bizarre admiration and enthusiasm, but this time it really goes too far. I have just read Barbarin's book, and you will see what I have to say about it in my reviews; for the moment, I will simply point out that the propaganda surrounding "pyramid" prophecies, so to speak, is yet another mystery of English politics; so I find myself wondering whether Daudet's extreme "Anglophilia" might have something to do with his interest in this story...

I have long had the English edition of the "Bardo Thodol", but I have not seen the French translation, which was not sent to us; therefore, I have not had the opportunity to discuss it in "Voile d'Isis". The transposition you mention seems entirely correct to me; moreover, looking at it this way, it is still the "intermediate world" where the transition from one state to another takes place. I completely agree with you about "Shûnya" and, more generally, Mahayana doctrine is truly traditional in many respects, appearing to be much more Shaivite than Buddhist in the ordinary sense of the word. On the crucial "dorje" (karma-vajra) and various other forms, you will find something in an article on "symbolic weapons" that I wrote for mid-October.

Your remarks about Ulysses are very accurate; his travels have always been regarded in antiquity as having initiatory significance (as have those of the Argonauts). It even seems that there was a whole esoteric and traditional interpretation of Homer, which was only lost in relatively recent times; Mario Meunier, who naturally had the opportunity to study these questions more closely, is quite convinced of this.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

(Z3)

Cairo, 18 October 1936

Sir,

Thank you for sending me the books, which arrived at the same time as your letter of 4 October. If I understand correctly, I should only return the two volumes by Mme David-Néel.

I have already read several books by Seabrook, but I was not familiar with this one. In general, however, there are some quite interesting things in his books, because he does not have the usual bias of Western travellers. But what you tell me about this volume makes me fear that it is not as good as the others...

I have Stinilberg Oberlin's Japanese Buddhist Sects; it is indeed an impartial work, which is already a merit in such cases.

I cannot remember whether Mario Meunier mentioned Heraclides' "Homeric Allegories" to me; I thank you for your suggestion regarding the text, but I must confess that I am quite like you in this respect: I have largely forgotten my Greek, having had almost no opportunity to use it.

As for the story of the "Talking Mongoose", I did not mean to say that, assuming it is true, it is a real mongoose, especially since it is not clear how it would have got there, but it may be that it is a form taken by a kind of "coagulation" of a wandering influence, without the need for any intervention by the girl or anyone else, since such things sometimes happen in completely uninhabited places. What is curious is that in our time, the spiritualist theory of the necessity of "mediums" seems to have caused us to lose sight of the existence of spontaneous manifestations.

It seems that the book on the Great Pyramid has been extraordinarily successful and is selling by the thousands thanks to propaganda that is too cleverly organised not to be suspicious; there are some completely absurd things in these so-called "prophecies"; you will see what I say about them in my reports (probably in November)...

I had already heard about K. Mansfield and his stay with Gurdjieff, who some even say hastened his death; I knew people who were in contact with this Gurdjieff, about whom it was never possible to ascertain whether he was Russian or Bulgarian. In any case, it seems that he was not only a charlatan, but also a rather sinister character. I do not know what became of all this or whether anything remains of this organisation.

I am glad that you were finally able to obtain The Crisis of the Modern World. As for the difficulty you mention, it simply boils down to this: the development of a cycle, considered in relation to the evolutionary helix, only takes place on a horizontal plane; but, considered in itself and in isolation from the whole, it takes place in a downward direction. there are two points of view here that must not be confused.

As for the "protocols", the deception lies in the fact that the pseudo-document was fabricated by the Russian police and attributed to a Zionist organisation, which is as "exoteric" as can be and devoid of any "secrets". Whether the "spirit" corresponds to something that actually exists is another matter

entirely different matter; this is, moreover, the most surprising thing, given that most of the document was simply copied from an old pamphlet directed against Napoleon III!

Please accept, Sir, my best regards.

R. G.

(Z4)

Cairo, 17 November 1936.

Sir,

I have received both your letter and the envelope containing the various clippings you mentioned, and I thank you for them. I am pleased to hear what you say about La crise du monde moderne; did I mention that an Italian translation of this book is due to be published shortly?

Thériet's article is not bad this time; he is not lacking in intelligence, but there is something about him that makes him want to remain "superficial". As for Ramon Fernandez, whom he mentions, I am surprised by his "evolution" when I remember him as a friend and disciple of Augustin Cochin!

The passage from Proust is indeed curious, but it shows once again that it is not enough to "feel" certain things when knowledge is lacking, which cannot be invented or improvised...

The "silver cord" is a symbolic expression like the "sunbeam"; it is understood that some people may have "visions" that take this form, or that they translate into these terms; but the mistake is to take them literally and, so to speak, "materially", and that is when things become incomprehensible.

I read The White Monk of Timbuktu (it's a quick read, by the way); your assessment was correct, and it is certainly inferior to Seabrook's other books. There must be something else there besides what he says; the allusions to various initiations, which you have pointed out, tend to indicate this... But then there is a kind of contradiction with the role of French political agent played by the character, unless, in acting in this way, his real intention was to limit the damage caused by "civilisation" in some way. His marriage is another enigma, because, contrary to what is claimed, it cannot be considered legitimate from either a Muslim or a Catholic point of view....

I have seen, not the volume "India, Magic", but the articles in the form in which it first appeared; it is certainly not "transcendent"; some of the stories about animals are still the best part of it. As for "In Pursuit of Wisdom", which, if I understand correctly, has also just been published, I wonder if Magre will send it to me as he has done with several other books; I will let you know in due course. It's not that Aurobindo Ghose is so Westernised, but it's his entourage, mostly French, that is terrible, "arranging" what is published under his name, preventing people who are not liked by the "disciples" from approaching him, etc. I have never really understood this strange situation...

I am a little surprised by the article in La Croix on Otto Rahu's book, especially so long after its publication; there is a lot of fantasy in this book, and

it is not entirely the fault of the author, who was rather unlucky in his "investigations". As for the so-called Iranian "Parzieval-namah", no one has ever seen it; its existence was only supposed by an Austrian writer whose name escapes me.

I read H. Hesse's "Siddhartha" a few years ago when it was published in a magazine (I believe it was in "Europe"), and my impression of it is consistent with what you say. So, for the moment, I accept your offer to send me L'Ombre de Makoui, which I am not familiar with, and the volume of short stories by V. de l'Isle-Adam; thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

R. G.

René Guénon to Reverend Father Victor Poucel

Cairo, 14 July 1946

My Reverend Father,

I have just received your letter, and I am glad to hear that you have received my latest books, or at least three of them; perhaps you now have the fourth as well.

I saw the perfectly understandable review of The Reign of Quantity that appeared in Études, where I also learned of the current tendency to accommodate all modern "scientific" and "evolutionary" ideas, which I find truly deplorable. I have even heard that you yourself were not treated with much more understanding there, so I can well understand why you do not expect the notes you sent to be accepted...

Recently, I have heard about you from various sources, and I have been told that you have published several more volumes (I was only aware of the first two), but I did not know that your work had been interrupted by illness. I hope, however, that this is only temporary, and I wish you a speedy recovery. Who knows if you will come here... and if we will ever meet?

I was very saddened to hear what you told me about our poor friend Ch. Grolbeau, as I was not yet aware of his death. To tell the truth, I was worried that I had heard nothing from him since communications resumed, and I knew no one from whom I could obtain information; I wondered whether his health, which had been fragile for a long time, could have withstood the events; but what exactly happened? I understand your point of view very well, and I admire that you have managed on your own to to conceptions that contrast so happily with the "diminished" idea that most of our contemporaries have of Christianity. — On the other hand, I also understand that there are certain things in my own point of view that may surprise those who are not accustomed to them, even though I strive to explain them as clearly as possible (perhaps too clearly in the eyes of some.)

It must be understood that the esoteric and initiatory point of view (which must be carefully distinguished from modern counterfeits), to which the awareness of the essential unity of all traditions beneath the apparent diversity of external forms properly refers, is quite distinct from the exoteric and religious point of view, which is not my concern. Another point on which any ambiguity must be avoided is that everything that truly deserves the name of "Tradition" (and this is always how I understand it) is properly "supra-human" and that, consequently, the "human initiatives" to which you allude cannot have the slightest part in it. In fact, I am simply setting out certain truths for those, wherever they may come from, who are able to understand them more or less completely, and my role must be limited to that; it is up to each individual to draw conclusions in accordance with their own tendencies, for the same path cannot suit everyone indiscriminately (which is why diversity of form is necessary). However (and I draw your attention to this in particular

) as I have written somewhere, one can be above particular traditional forms (through an effective awareness of one's unity) or below them, and the "religious indifference" of which you speak is unquestionably below them; those who lean in that direction would therefore simply prove that they have understood nothing....

Please accept, Reverend Father, the expression of my respectful sentiments.

René Guénon

28 September 1946

My Reverend Father,

I have received your letter informing me of your arrival here, and I would have liked to see you these past few days; but unfortunately, I have been quite unwell for some time, which is all the more unfortunate for me in every respect as I am always overloaded with work and really have no time to be ill.

I am therefore forced to ask you to wait a little while, and when I am feeling better, I will write to you again to try to arrange a meeting.

I hope you will excuse this involuntary delay, and I beg you, Reverend Father, to accept my best and most respectful regards.

René Guénon

Paris, 21 June 1948

Esteemed Master,

It was with great joy that I learned from my friend Maridort that you were willing to accept me among your correspondents. I greatly appreciate this welcome, for I realise how much time correspondence must take up, time that could certainly be better spent on other tasks of greater interest.

I became acquainted with your work in 1936, and the first book I read was "The Esotericism of Dante," followed shortly thereafter by all the others, including "Roi du monde" (King of the World), which, unable to find, I was obliged to copy from the copy belonging to one of your friends, Mr Gallo. For many years I have been a subscriber to "Études traditionnelles" (Traditional Studies), of which I have the complete collection.

I belong to the Grande Triade, which I joined as soon as I learned about its programme. I have known Patrice Genty for a long time, and he introduced me to Clavelle.

I am still only at the beginning of the Path that leads to the Light, and perhaps this path is not even my path, for I feel so far from even the slightest hint of realisation, and my being is still too scattered. Nevertheless, I persevere, knowing full well that it is only through effort that we can realise our inner potential. I would be very happy if this correspondence could provide me with advice on how to avoid some of the pitfalls that every beginner inevitably encounters.

Maridort tells me that you want to know what Georges Lagrèze, whom I knew before the war, was like. It is quite difficult to form a fair opinion of an individual, and especially to know the degree of sincerity they display. Lagrèze always seemed to me to be distorted by the theatre, as he was the stage manager at the Strasbourg theatre and played small roles on tour. He undoubtedly had a taste for titles and parchments, like many obscure characters who suffer from an inferiority complex. His esoteric pseudonym was MIKAEL. He was a member of Martinism around 1907, I believe, and was appointed inspector for Egypt, where he was to go on a theatre tour. It was there that he met Sémélas and Dupré. I remember a photo showing the three of them engaged in excavations that unearthed relics from a Templar commandery (it was Dupré who had them; I am only recounting what Lagrèze told me, as I never had the opportunity to see them myself). there was also, apparently, a magic dagger that disappeared during the bombing of Dupré's house in Épernon. It was the only thing that disappeared, even though the house housed the extremely valuable collections of his son-in-law Roland Dorgelès, the famous writer.

He was also a friend of Mallinger and Dr Crampon, as he was a Chevalier Bienfaisant de la Citée Sainte (the highest degree of the Rectified Rite to which he belonged). He also claimed to have received the consecration of the "Universal Priesthood" and was 96th degree of

1 — According to photocopies of the manuscript

Memphis-Misraïm, 33rd degree REAA, and a member of more or less ephemeral orders such as those of the Unknown Samaritans, Hermes Tetramegistus, and many others.

During a visit, he showed me a box full of diplomas, charters, decorations and insignia that he possessed. He had been consecrated as a Gnostic bishop by Genty's coadjutor and subsequently consecrated several bishops, including, I believe, Ambelain and Amadou, and perhaps others, but I have no way of knowing.

What always surprised me most was that he had received so many initiations, even though his strongly divergent views seemed to disqualify him from any initiatory qualification.

He possessed the archives of Téder (or at least part of them), and it was through him that Ambelain came into possession of papers concerning your expulsion from the Humanitad lodge, which he mentioned during his last lecture, which I attended with Maridort, but he was careful not to print anything about it in his brochure reproducing the text of his lecture.

Lagrèze was connected with Meslin, Chaboseau père et fils, Ambelain, and had insisted before the war that Augustin Chaboseau be appointed president of A.M.O.R.C., which would undoubtedly have allowed him to be his deputy delegate or more or less general inspector.

He died in 1945, I believe, and I think his archives are in Ambelain's possession, or at least that the latter has a copy of them.

I hope this information will enable you to form an opinion of the man. On various occasions, I had the opportunity to discuss metaphysical questions with him, and I realised that these subjects did not interest him very much and that his knowledge was not very deep.

Regarding the "Brothers of the East", about whom Maridort has asked me to write what I know, I can only repeat what Dupré said about them. It was from them that Martinès Pasqually is said to have received his initiation (?). Their seal was the Chi-Rho symbol of the Labarum. I believe that Sémélas must have forged this legend to give more weight to the notebooks he wrote for the Martinist Order of Papus. Dupré was killed during an air raid towards the end of the war.

It would be necessary to confirmation of this fact from the town hall of Épernon, where he had been living since the war. I also knew that he was Sémélas' successor at the head of the Society of the Lily and the Eagle (his wife was DEA and Sémélas DEON, both representing the divine intermediaries at the head of this order). Dupré seemed to be very sincere in his statements.

All this information, though fragmentary, will hardly give you the details you were hoping for. Ask me about the details, and if I can provide you with further material, I will be happy to do so.

I look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely,

A. Bastien
90 rue de la Jonquière
Paris 17°

Cairo, 10 July 1948

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

Thank you for your letter, which I received a few days ago. It is true that I have a rather heavy correspondence load, as you imagine, but it is also very important, since, given the distance I am from home, it is the only way for me to keep track of many things...

I had no idea you knew Gallo; I hadn't heard anything about him for many years. What has become of him?

I was naturally aware of your affiliation with the G.T. at the time, which I had anticipated based on what our friend Genty had previously told me, as he often spoke to me about you. I hope you are satisfied with it; the
G.T. is of course still in its infancy, but it promises to yield very interesting results.

I met Lagrèze nearly forty years ago (he was already an actor at the time), but I have not seen him since, and I have only a very vague impression of him. So I was somewhat surprised when I learned of the role he had played in various circumstances, first and foremost in the establishment of the famous F.U.D.O.S.J. It seems that at the time he was more or less associated with Victor Blanchard, but that they must have fallen out afterwards; but not long ago I learned that he was connected with the Chaboseaus. As for the implausible story of the "Frères d'Orient", I first heard about it from Genty, about ten years ago; I always thought it was just a hoax by Séméléas, who seems to me to have been quite capable of fabricating the whole thing. In any case, there was certainly never a Commandery of the Temple in Egypt; As for the objects discovered during an excavation, they could very well have been placed there on purpose, and I have heard of other similar stories here... I agree with you that Dupré was acting in good faith and was simply duped by Sémélas. As for Lagrèze, I have no idea what the truth is, but his taste for titles and diplomas could very well have made him inclined to believe anything he was told, as long as it brought him some satisfaction of that kind.- Regarding Dupré, from what Maridort tells me in his latest letter (which is a few days more recent than yours), I understand that you have finally had confirmation of his death; I was interested in this from a completely different point of view: Genty and I thought that he might have had Abdul-Hâdi's manuscripts, and we would have liked to know what had become of them...

One thing that surprises me is that Lagrèze had Téder's papers, as I would have thought they were in the possession of the people of Lyon; there is something there that I cannot quite explain. This would also confirm Gloton's statement that the papers were in the hands of Jules Boucher; it is very possible that Ambelain, if he received them from Lagrèze, passed them on to him. I did not know that Ambelain had returned to the subject of the history of L. Humanidad in his lecture; it is understandable that he omitted this from his

brochure, if only because of the foreword in which he quotes me at such length! What is astonishing is that this brochure constitutes a veritable refutation of his previous book on Martinism, both with regard to the "Brothers of the East" and on various other points. I wonder where all this is leading exactly; there are some confusions that do not seem entirely unintentional to me, particularly between the degrees of the Elus Coëns and those of the Rectified Regime; but to what extent is Ambelain really mandated by the latter? In any case, the Rectified Regime is really unlucky, because it attracts many people who are more or less suspicious; shortly before the war, there was talk of establishing a Grand Priory in Belgium, but nothing came of it, and I must say that I had something to do with it, knowing what the people they were planning to call upon were worth!

One point on which I would have been curious to have some clarification is this: according to what Ambelain recounts in his book, Lagrèze, during the war, claimed to have replaced the [redacted] of the Scottish Rite on his own authority, on the pretext that the latter was then dormant, and he thus conferred the thirty-third degree on a certain [redacted] Aurifer; Do you know who this person is, who played a leading role in the alleged reconstitution of the Elus Coëns, and could it be Ambelain himself, even though he acknowledges that this transmission of the thirty-third degree under these conditions was irregular? I cannot think of anyone else it could be, especially since it is said that "Mikaël and Aurifer were both holders of the Cathar episcopate according to the lineage of J. Doinel".

Could you also tell me a little about Amadou, about whom I know very little? Genty told me about his pamphlet on Saint Martin, which I have not seen, and Clavelle only told me that he was a rather uninteresting young man; he is currently in America.

Returning to Sémélas, it seems that the "Order of the Lily and the Eagle" must have continued after his death, because in the last few years before the war I saw issues of a kind of newspaper entitled "Justice and Truth ' (if I remember correctly, as I am unable to find them at present), which did not mention it directly, but on the title page of which the insignia of the Order in question was prominently displayed; are you aware of this?

Thank you in advance for anything you can tell me about these rather confusing stories, and please accept, T.C.F., my warmest regards.

R.G.

Paris, 18 September 1948

Venerable Master

I found your letter on my return from holiday and thank you for your lengthy reply to mine. I will try to provide you with the information you

you requested, regretting that I am not better informed.

Gallo is still a draughtsman and, together with his wife, prepares microscopic specimens and histological drawings which he sells to microscope dealers. This work allows him to live very simply. I see him once or twice a month and have told him that you would like to hear from him. He often thinks of you and remembers the times when you shared bread and peaches for your meal. He has stayed away from more or less spiritualist movements and is content to receive a few friends from time to time. He continues to study Far Eastern and Hindu philosophies without abandoning the Divine Comedy, which he reads in the original. He asks me to convey his best regards and to tell you that he still takes a keen interest in reading your books and articles.

What you learned about the Brothers of the East through Genty came from the Chabouseaus, who got it from Dupré, who had told them this fable, which most certainly originated with Sémélas. I will try to find out if Dupré's wife still has her husband's papers and Abdul-Hâdi's manuscripts. I will take advantage of a day off to go to Épernon, but I will first try to find out if Mrs. Dupré is still in Épernon by writing to her.

Téder's papers (or at least some of them) were in the hands of Lagrèze, who entrusted or passed them on to Ambelain, with whom he was very close. The latter, being a friend of J.B., will undoubtedly have shared them with him. Aurifer is Ambelain's pseudonym, and Lagrèze conferred upon him the thirty-third degree of the R.E.A.A. of his own accord, even though the S.C. had been officially dissolved. Its members undoubtedly continued to meet from time to time, since most of the workshops had maintained contact between their members. Ambelain acknowledges in his brochure that this elevation was not valid.

All I know about Amadou is what I have read in his little book, and I only know that he is in America, where he has published a small magazine, poorly written in French, entitled Les Cahiers de l'Homme-Esprit, which claims to be the organ of the Friends of Saint Martin group.

The magazine "Justice et Vérité" was indeed the continuation of D'EON, Sémélas' magazine; I also saw issues of it before the war, and it was printed using a mimeograph or similar process (the text was hand-drawn and calligraphied by Dupré, who was a draughtsman by trade). In 1939, "Lys et l'aigle" still existed but had been reduced to a few members who met at each other's homes. They had begun publishing Molitor's work using the same typographical process as their journal; I had the first issue in my hands but cannot find it now. At that time, I also saw a mimeographed booklet on tarot, which is cited by Chaboseau in his book on the same subject. If I remember correctly, the key to interpreting the arcana was the graphic symbol of the famous "Brothers of the East".

I believe that Dupré had a son-in-law who was also interested in the same questions and who must have continued the "Order of the Lily and the Eagle". I think he was a schoolteacher. In any case, I will try to find out what remains of it.

I had the opportunity to see Patrice Genty again during the holidays because I stopped

stopped in Auray and made a detour to Quibron. He is in excellent health and knew from you that we were corresponding.

Your letter arrived opened by the Egyptian censor; the side of the envelope had been cut and a strip of adhesive tape with Arabic characters had been stuck over the opening. Do you also receive your letters checked?

I am currently reading articles by Grasse d'Orcet in the "Revue Britannique"; I think you are familiar with them, as they were published between 1888 and 1900. His explanations seem very ingenious, but what should we make of them? Is his explanation of the texts or sculptures using the phonetic method, similar to a rebus, based on solid foundations? I would like to know your opinion on this point.

Thank you in advance, and I look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely,

A. Bastien

Cairo, 11 October 1948

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

I have just received your letter of 18 September; this can be considered normal at present, as many letters take more than a month to arrive. Letters addressed to me always arrive intact; as for those sent from here, what you mention has already happened to a few others; but since there is no question of politics or commercial affairs, there is no cause for concern.

Since you see Gallo often, please be so kind as to thank him for me for his kind thoughts and convey my regards to him and his wife. I had no idea what they were doing now; do they still live on Rue Bonaparte? He was certainly right to keep his distance from various occult circles; on the other hand, I do not believe he ever resumed his Masonic activities since the distant days when he was in Bologna.

Genty also told me in his last letter that he had seen you during the holidays. I cannot find the old letters in which he told me about the Brothers of the East. Perhaps he told me that this story came from the Chaboseaus, but I cannot remember. However, I do remember very clearly that, among other implausibilities, it was claimed that Martinism initially had only one degree, and that the other two were added only after Lagrèze's trip to Egypt, whereas in reality the three degrees had existed since its establishment by Papus. I cannot understand how A. Chaboseau, who surely knew better, could have contributed to spreading such a myth. Moreover, there is proof of the falsity of this assertion that anyone can verify: the publication of the notebooks of the three degrees in Jean Kostka's Lucifer démasqué (Lucifer Unmasked), which predates Lagrèze's

Lagrèze's theatre tour, the exact date of which I do not know, but which certainly took place after 1900.

I did not know that Madame Dupré was still alive; it would be interesting to know if she has any manuscripts by Abdul-Hâdi, because so far, despite all our research from various sources, it has not been possible to find anything.You told me earlier that Roland Dorgelès was Dupré's son-in-law, but I suppose that the person you are referring to this time, who continued the Order of the Lily and the Eagle, must be someone else. I see that I was not mistaken about the magazine.
"justice and truth"; there was no specific mention of the Lily and the Eagle, but there was a drawing on the cover that I recognised. I believe the address of this magazine was in Pré Saint Gervais, under a name that was completely unknown to me, and which may be that of Dupré's son-in-law.In the bibliography of A Chaboseau's "Tarot", I find mention of a "Tarot" under the name of Dupré, which may be the notebook you are referring to, and also another "Tarot" by Sémélas, described as "not for sale", and I wonder if this might not be the one in question.

The irregularity of Ambelain's 33rd degree is obvious, and I had noticed that he himself acknowledged this. On the other hand, as he seems to present himself as more or less authorised by the Rectified Scottish Rite, I would be quite interested to know exactly what his position is within it; do you have any details on this?

Genty and Faugeron once told me about Grasset d'Orcet's articles, but I never had the opportunity to read them; from what they told me, it seems that there are some very curious things in them, but that one cannot accept them entirely without reservation, especially since, from a historical point of view, they are obviously very difficult to verify. As for the kind of interpretation you mention, it is not purely fanciful, as it might seem, but this makes it all the more serious, for it is most certainly linked to one of those deviant initiations to which I have referred on several occasions. We also find things of the same origin in a number of other more or less recent writings, starting with Vaillant's "Rômes" (the role of the Bohemians in the transmission of these things is particularly noteworthy), and notably in the works of the so-called Fulcanelli. I also remember, among other things (and I am thinking of this now because you mention sculptures), a bizarre book entitled L'Art sacerdotal antique (Ancient Priestly Art) by a certain Antoine Monnier. Ambelain himself inherited something of this, albeit probably indirectly, and I pointed this out in relation to his book on cathedrals; and even poor Paul le Court, who is surely completely unaware of the nature of what is at stake here, is not entirely free from this influence, given his relationship with the late Dujols (from whom everything published under the name of Fulcanelli actually originates).On this subject, I hardly need to tell you that the so-called Brothers of Heliopolis are just as imaginary as the Brothers of the East (but perhaps this other invention serves to conceal something more real); what is really curious is the ease with which people like to locate all sorts of non-existent things in Egypt!

Yours sincerely

René Guénon

P.S.: I think you must have seen J.B.'s book; it's not without interest, but there are a few fancies on certain points, and above all far too much
"magic"...

Paris, 15 December 1948.

Esteemed Master,

I just realised, while replying to a letter from Genty, that I had completely forgotten to reply to your last letter of 11 October. Please accept my apologies, as I have been extremely busy with work in the run-up to the holidays.

I have conveyed your kind regards to Gallo, who has been living at 34 rue du Dragon since 1939. He has not resumed his Masonic activities since his arrival in France.

I did indeed meet Genty during my holidays and, regarding what he told you, it is perfectly true that A. Chaboseau spread the rumour that it was following the writing of the notebooks by Sémélas that Martinism came to comprise three degrees. Chaboseau said that the transmission he had received consisted only of the two letters and the six points, which is rather poor. I was able to verify the validity of your correction in Kostka's book, which I own.

Due to lack of time, I have still not been to Epernon to find out whether Dupré's widow had Abdul-Hâdi's manuscripts. Dupré's son-in-law, who was in charge of Le Lys et l'Aigle and the publication of the newspaper Justice et Vérité, was called Marcel Camus and lived before the war in Pré Saint Gervais, probably at the newspaper's address, which I searched for in vain among my belongings without managing to find it.

The bibliography of Chaboseau's tarot mentions the tarot of Sémélas, a mimeographed edition not available in shops, and the tarot of Dupré, a series of articles published in the magazine EON. The two works are different.

I am due to meet Ambelain one of these days, and I will see him in the company of Maridort, and we will ask him about his current situation in the Rectified Scottish Rite; I believe that Lagrèze conferred upon him the title of Chevalier Bienfaisant de la Citée Sainte (C.B.C.S.) according to what I remember from conversations dating back to 1943.

You tell me that everything published under the name Fulcanelli comes from Dujols. From what J. Boucher has told me, I believe that Fulcanelli was actually Champagne, the illustrator of Fulcanelli's books. This Champagne was Boucher's teacher and dedicated his books to him, signing them Champagne (I have seen them), and Boucher has a photo of the grave of the aforementioned Champagne, who is buried near Paris (I cannot remember all the details that J.B. gave me, but I think I will ask him again when I see him). On this subject, J.B. had intended to explain everything: the origin of the pseudonym Champagne and the creation of the so-called Brothers of Heliopolis, at the time when a book by Canceliet on the Logis

Alchimiques. Canceliet tried to pass himself off as Fucanelli, taking advantage of the obscurity surrounding the true author of the two books (Mystères des Cathédrales and Demeures Philosophales). Since then, Boucher has abandoned all alchemical speculation and is currently devoting himself more specifically to Masonic symbolism. He is preparing a sequel to his recently published book, which will focus on the symbolism of the High Degrees. He is currently publishing a kind of autobiography entitled "Les mésaventures d'Hugues Colbert, etc..." (The Misadventures of Hugues Colbert, etc.) in serialised form in the magazine Destins. He became interested in alchemy while working as a chemist at Poulenc and frequenting Dr Rouhier, who also worked there.

Due to lack of time, many current events have passed me by, and I do not have the opportunity to learn in detail about all the groups that continue to operate in the shadows.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As usual, you will probably receive this letter at the appropriate time.

I look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely,

A. Bastien

Cairo, 12 January 1949.

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

I have just received your letter of 15 December; you are certainly excused for not having replied sooner... Thank you for running my errand to Gallo.

As for the question of Abdul-Hâdi's manuscripts, there is of course no rush, and I know only too well that it is not always possible to find enough time for everything!

Curiously, I am no more successful than you in finding the issues of Justice et Vérité, which I am sure I have somewhere; I remember that the address was in Pré Saint Gervais, but I cannot remember the name of the director or manager, or whether it was Dupré's son-in-law that you mention.

As for Martinism, A. Chabouseau's transmission was independent of Papus's, but, if my memory serves me correctly, Papus also received nothing more than what Chabouseau said. As for the notebooks of the three degrees, they were surely written by Papus himself at the beginning of his organisation; further proof that the three degrees did indeed exist at that time is the initiation speech for the degree of S.. ·J.. by Stanislas de Guaïta, which appeared in "Initiation" almost at the beginning and was reproduced, along with various other articles, in the collection entitled "La Science Secrète" (Secret Science), published in 1890; the title, as I have just verified, expressly bears the mention: "Tenue .du 3° degré" (Meeting of the 3rd degree)! Following the publication of Kostka's book, Papus claimed to have made certain modifications to the notebooks.

(He wrote this, I believe, in his pamphlet entitled "The Devil and Occultism", which I cannot find at the moment), but in reality nothing has ever changed at all, because all the autographed copies I have, which are those that were in use after 1900, are exactly identical to what is found in "Lucifer Unmasked".

As Maridort, in his latest letters, which are more recent than yours, does not mention Ambelain to me, I think that you have probably not yet met him as you intended; I am curious to know if you will be able to clarify this question of his position in the Rectified Regime. It certainly seems that Lagrèze has meddled in everything; I wonder if he could be more qualified to regularly confer the degree of C.B.C.S. than that of 33rd degree Scottish Rite...

It is likely that the name Fucanelli was invented by Champagne, as was the story of the so-called "Brothers of Heliopolis"; but this does not seem to me to contradict the fact that the books he published under this name were written entirely with Dujols' documentation; Faugeron, who was a frequent visitor to Dujols, was very assertive on this point and shared Madame Dujols' indignation at this practice.I never had much information about this Canseliet who later became involved in this affair; I believe I was told that he lived in Bordeaux, and he must be or have been in contact with Paul le Court, as the latter once published something by him in Atlantis.

When I knew Rouhier, he was indeed working at Poulenc, but I had no idea that J. Boucher had also worked there. In his Symbolique maçonnique, Boucher had already announced his intention to publish another book on the symbolism of the High Degrees.Regarding J.B., do you know anything about the Kad group (he contributed to its journal), which recently split? According to Marius Lepage, it seems that the defunct Traditional Martinism still exerted a rather unfortunate influence in this area!

Thank you for your good wishes; I would also like to send you mine for the new year, regretting only that they are arriving a little late.

Best regards.

René Guénon

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4 March 1949.

Venerable Master

I had hoped to be able to give you more information about Abdul-Hâdi's manuscripts, but I have not yet been able to go to Épernon. Nevertheless, I have learned that all of Dupré's papers are in the possession of his son-in-law. Having found the numbers of Justice et Vérité, I noted down two addresses: that of the newspaper, 97 rue Campans in Paris 19°, and that of Mr Gaston Pascal, 8 rue des écoles in Pré Saint Gervais. I hope that

I will be able to obtain information at these addresses.

I completely agree with you about the rituals mentioned in "Lucifer Unmasked", but there were some photocopied notebooks in circulation, which were the work of Sémélas. These instructions expanded on Papus's texts. If I can find the text, I will send it to you.

I met Ambelain, who stopped all Masonic work following incidents he told me about. The Saint André d'Égypte lodge, which was created during the occupation, followed a ritual of the Rectified Rite; at the liberation, this lodge was to be integrated into the G.L., but dissension arose and it was put on hold, its members dispersing to various other lodges. It was during the closing session that incidents occurred: Ambelain was criticised for his conduct during the liberation of Paris, where he allegedly wanted to pillage notorious anti-Masons (at least according to Ambelain's version of events).Following this suspension, he lost interest in the matter, and if he makes references to it in the brochure devoted to Martinism, it is only out of bravado towards those who criticised his conduct. Incidentally, he told me about the Equinox works that were successfully attempted by a group controlled by Ambelain between 1942 and 1944. Following Martinist rituals, he personally had a vision of the Angel of the Earth. He is to show me the minutes of the evocation sessions that he recorded on a daily basis.

The degrees of 33° and C.B.C.S. were given to him by Lagrèze, in communication, and are without the slightest value. Moreover, he does not claim that they are valid.

I do not know Cancelier's address, but I believe he lives in seclusion in the suburbs of Paris. I can find out if you are interested.

I have not heard anything about KAD. I hope to be able to give you more details later.

I had the opportunity to leaf through the notice sent to booksellers announcing the publication of a book by Philippe Encausse on Papus. It is his old text that he has expanded, as the book must be over 500 pages long. In the table of contents, I draw your attention to the following title:

The Martinist Order – Papus' initiation into Martinism – The first Parisian lodges – Téder, Jean Bricaud, Chevillon – The expulsion of René Guénon – Martinism in Lyon, etc.

The book is available for subscription and will be published shortly... OCIA, 3 rue Cardinal Mercier, Paris IX°, is launching the prospectus.

I apologise for my late reply; I was hoping to be able to provide you with information about Dupré, which is the reason for the delay.

I look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely, Venerable Master, with my warmest regards...

A. Bastien

Cairo, 31 March 1949

☒.∴☒.∴☒.∴,

I received your letter of 4 March the day before yesterday; I need not tell you that your delay in writing to me is entirely excusable.Last week, Maridort told me what you mention about the manuscripts of Abdul-Hâdi. Hopefully, you will be able to obtain them and, if they contain anything of real interest, make a copy. This would be the first time, despite all the research carried out so far by various parties, that anything has been found! -- From another point of view, I would be curious to see Sémélas' notebooks if you can find them; it is quite certain in any case that they are much later than those of Papus, and I still cannot understand how some people could dispute something so obvious...

As for Ambelain, I knew nothing of the incidents you mention, and, based on his pamphlet on Martinism, I had no idea that he had ceased all ☒☒☒☒☒☒ activity; under these circumstances, his insinuations suggesting that he plays an important role in the Rectified Rite are really not very serious; but at least it is fortunate that he has no illusions about the validity of the degrees that Lagrèze conferred on him on his own authority! From the point of view of the Rectified Rite, the L.. Saint Andrée d'Egypte must have been irregular, because, as I recently wrote to F.. Mercier on another subject (it concerned the current possession of this Rite by G.. O..), the condition of regularity is recognition by the Grand Priory of Helvetia, which, as the successor to the former Helvetic Romand Directory, is the only Obedience of the said Rite that has existed without interruption since its inception.

I thought I heard that Canseliet lived in Bordeaux, but it is true that he may well have changed his place of residence since then; I would be grateful for any information you might have about this person, but of course you should not go out of your way to do so.As for the minutes of the evocation sessions that Ambelain is to show you, we will just have to wait for him to keep his promise, as this is obviously not a matter of urgency.

Thank you for letting me know about Ph. Encausse's new book; it will be good to see it when it comes out... This new reissue of the same story leads me to wonder whether he might not be in more or less close contact with Boucher, Amblain, etc.; do you know anything about this?

Regarding the "Kad" group, according to what Marius Lepage told me, it would seem that Chaboseau's "traditional" Martinism has still exerted a rather unfortunate influence in this area. There are now two distinct groups, the "Friends of Druidism" and the "Friends of the Celtic Tradition"; I suppose that the former persist in their ideas of artificial and more or less fanciful ritual reconstruction, while the latter have had the good sense to abandon them entirely.

Yours sincerely

René Guénon

19 June 1949

Venerable Master,

I am always late in replying, and I apologise once again for this; since May, my wife has been ill, and surgery has only been avoided, if indeed it can be avoided, by a narrow margin.

I have seen Mrs. Dupré twice and she has assured me that her husband never had Abdul-Hâdi's manuscripts in his possession. She has not destroyed any of her husband's archives and her research, carried out at my request, has yielded nothing new. The Lys et l'Aigle group continues with about twenty members in the Paris region. They do not proselytise, and their group consists only of loyal pre-war members who knew Dupré.

Eugène Dupré was killed in Épernon on 12 June 1944, following the explosion of bombs dropped from an aeroplane before it crashed to the ground.

I have seen Ambelain's notes in which he recounts his experiences of "equinox work" following Martinès' methods, which took place from September 1942 to June 1944. He ceased his evocations following advice given by Dr Rouhier, and after obtaining the physical manifestation of what he believed to be the angel Ariel. He animated a luminous apparition of gems and the altar lamp flickered as if breathing, while he had a very clear sensation of a superhuman presence. These experiments were conducted in the presence of his wife and daughter. He was followed in his experiments by a dozen of his friends, who did not obtain conclusive results. Since then, he has renounced all evocation, in a kind of "sacred terror".

Dr Encausse's book has still not been published. He probably obtained his information through Boucher-Ambelain, but he undoubtedly knew and frequented Lagrèze, who was behind this campaign and possessed Téder's papers, which he displayed at every opportunity.

I have learned nothing about Kad, the Friends of Druidism and the Friends of Celtic Tradition, but perhaps through Genty you will be able to find out more.

Lately, due to my wife's illness, I have had little time or opportunity to meet with friends whom I could have asked about these more or less fanciful groups. Ivanof's former disciples must have continued to meet on their own or to form dissident groups, but again, due to lack of time, I have learned nothing new. From time to time, articles appear in the 'modern' press about all the 'Magi' who continue to wreak havoc among those attracted to the marvellous. Counter-initiation is still very much alive today.

Henri Meslin died on 9 March from generalised oedema, and Chaboseau took his place as director-manager of the Blue Lotus.

Always at your disposal, and apologising for the delay in my reply, I remain, Venerable Master, yours sincerely,

Bastien

Cairo, 25 July 1949.

☒.∴.☒.∴.☒.∴,

I have only just received your letter of 19 June, and I am very sorry to hear of the worries that Madame Bastien's health has caused you and continues to cause you. I want to believe that an operation can definitely be avoided, and I send you my best wishes for her recovery.I understand all too well that, with these concerns, you have hardly been able to see each other at all recently; I need not tell you that your delay in writing to me is entirely excused!

Since Mrs. Dupré found nothing in her husband's papers despite her further searches, this is yet another dashed hope regarding Abdul-Hâdi's manuscripts, and it was, in a way, the last one. It is truly extraordinary that everything has disappeared without a trace...

Maridort gave me a glimpse of the contents of Ambelain's minutes; what struck me as most curious about them was the series of "coincidences" that were clearly not intentional and seem to show that there was something more than self-suggestion at work; But apart from that, I must say that I do not really see what experiments of this kind can achieve, nor, above all, what spiritual benefit can be hoped to be gained from them!

Ph. Encausse seems to be taking a long time to publish his book, unless the delay is due to his publisher, which would not be surprising in the current circumstances. What you assume about the origin of his information is indeed very likely; I never knew if he was in contact with Lagrèze, but it is also quite probable, because I remember that in the past he seemed very concerned about finding all the people who had known his father.

It seems that Kad has ceased publication, or at least I have not heard anything more about it; it is true that this publication has always been very "intermittent". On the other hand, I continue to receive the newsletter of the Friends of Celtic Tradition, "Ogam", which shows a real effort in the direction of traditional ideas; the only thing that is a little worrying is that I noticed, in one of the latest issues, the reappearance of J. Boucher... It seems, moreover, that he has got himself into rather unfortunate trouble with the G.. L..; with a character as aggressive as his, this is hardly surprising.

I learned from Genty some time ago of Meslin's death; I did not know who was replacing him at the Lotus Bleu, but I immediately suspected that it could only be Chaboseau.

Best regards to you.

René Guénon

René Guénon to René Burlet (*1*)

Cairo, 31 July 1949

[...]As for your painting using the swastika, if you do not think you can exhibit it in public, that is certainly no reason to want to destroy it, for you need only "reserve" it for yourself and a few others. Neither direction of rotation is beneficial or harmful in itself; it all depends on the traditional form being considered, as what is beneficial for one may be harmful for the other and vice versa, according to their specific characteristics. In the same traditional form, the opposite direction to the one considered beneficial is sometimes used, not for harmful actions, but for things related to unfortunate events, such as funeral rites. Sometimes the difference in meaning serves as a distinguishing feature between two traditions that circumstances have led to coexist in the same region, such as Lamaism and Bön in Tibet. The opposition between swastika and sauvastika is pure fantasy from a linguistic point of view: the name swastika is the only one that applies to both cases indiscriminately, and sauvastika is only an adjective derived from it, designating what relates to the swastika. As for the expressions "to the right" and "to the left", they are very ambiguous and unsatisfactory; what must be considered in reality to avoid any error is whether a person performing the rotation would have their right or left side turned towards the centre.

Please accept, dear Sir, my best regards.

René Guénon

Cairo, 22 November 1950

Dear Sir,

The first issue of your journal (2) arrived shortly after I wrote to you; I find that, on the whole, it is very good for a start, particularly your notes on the fresco, because, as I told you, I think it is absolutely essential to emphasise the "craft" aspect, and also, of course, the articles by R. Pouyaud, whom I still find a little too biased against Gothic art; on the other hand, the comparison between painting and music, from a rhythmic point of view, is really very curious. I wrote a review straight away, and you will see that I preferred to gloss over the few points that could have given rise to objections; in this regard, I am referring in particular to the article by Dom Angerico Surchamp, which I found rather unsatisfactory as it expresses a very narrow view of symbolism; I think everyone would agree that theology should be taken into account, but that is not all, and this does not prevent us from including many other things that go beyond this field.

1 — *Les Cahiers de l'Herne*, 1985.
2 — *On the Craft.*

as was constantly done in the Middle Ages; only, exclusive exotericists see none of this [...].

René Guénon

Paris, 24 November 1924
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir,

I would have liked to thank you immediately for your kind gifts, but I have not had the time to do so; I hope you will excuse my delay.

Thank you also for your complimentary review of my Théosophisme; I like to think that Orient et Occident will also be of interest to you, even though it is a work of a completely different kind.

There is some confusion in Monsignor Janssens' lecture: confusion between theosophical theories and Hindu doctrines (which is most pleasing to theosophists, whose claims are thus taken seriously instead of being exposed as nonsense), between Brahmanism and Buddhism, etc. These misunderstandings, moreover, are due to Father Mainage, whose initiatives are not always the most fortunate, because he too often speaks about things he does not know well enough.

Your latest article in Regnabit is very interesting, and I think that a number of important conclusions could be drawn from the facts you point out, especially since it is not only in Egypt that such similarities are found. The role attributed to the heart in Hindu doctrines is no less remarkable; I will give some indications on this in my next book. On the other hand, there is also research to be done on the traditions of Central America and Mexico, in which ? ? ? or Quetzalcohuatl ? ? ? was called "heart of the earth" or "heart of the world".

I have also thought of a possible connection between the hieroglyphic vase and the symbol of the Grail; there would be much to say on this subject.

If I did not fear being indiscreet, I would ask a small question: was it intentional that you brought Melchizedek and the three Magi of the Gospel together in the same sentence? It is curious, to say the least, because it corresponds to things I have had occasion to think about often lately.

Regarding the symbols of Christ that we discussed, you may recall that, in the case of the horse, I told you that I saw it as an allusion to the white horse of the Apocalypse, to which you objected that Christ should rather be represented by the rider; but I replied that he could be represented by both the rider and the horse itself. Since then, I have found confirmation of this view in a work by Cardinal Billot, who says exactly the same thing; I have noted the passage: "Wherever a mounted figure appears in the Apocalypse, the mount and the figure together represent the same thing... The white horse with its rider represents a single object, which is Jesus Christ the Victor" (La Parousie, p. 283, in note). I believe I told you that the symbol of the white horse also exists in India, and precisely with the same meaning.

I also thought again about the symbol of the six-pointed star, which may well, as you said, represent the union of divine nature and human nature in the person of Christ. The triangle▽ would be human nature, "made in the image

of God", thus represented as the inverted reflection of the divine triangle△ . In the Middle Ages, the human triad "spiritus, anima, corpus" was very often assimilated to the triad of alchemical principles "sulphur, mercury, salt".

On the other hand, from a Kabbalistic point of view, the double triangle is the figure of the number 6, which is the number of union and mediation; it is also the number of creation, and as such, it is still appropriate for the Word: in this latter respect, the symbol is nothing other than the translation of the "per quem omnia facta sunt" of the Creed. It is also noteworthy that in China, six lines arranged differently also represent the mediating principle, which unites within itself the two natures, heavenly and earthly.

Of course, these various interpretations are by no means mutually exclusive; there is always a multiplicity of meanings in the same symbol, and this is one of the main advantages of symbolism, which is much less strictly limited as a means of expression than ordinary language.

So where exactly in the Gospel do we find the words, "I am the Door"? I have not been able to find the reference. A curious fact (and I am thinking specifically about the door) is that a number of symbols are common to Christ and the Blessed Virgin; this point seems worthy of attention.

There is much to be said about the symbol "Sol et Luna", which was in constant use in Hermetic symbolism; I hope we will have the opportunity to talk about all this again.

Do you ever pass through Paris during your travels? If you happen to come here one day, we would be very happy to have you visit us.

Mr. de Frémond, to whom I had referred your article on the counterfeits of the Sacred Heart, wrote to me that it was he who had found the multicoloured star-shaped insignia in Bordeaux in 1916; perhaps you knew this, but I was unaware of this detail.

My wife sends her regards, and I, dear Sir, remain yours sincerely.

R. G.

Paris, 23 December 1924
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir,

I am truly sorry for taking so long to reply to your letter. I would have liked to be able to give you some information about the sign at the Carmelite monastery, but unfortunately, I have not yet found anything. I have never seen any sign resembling this one; I have spoken to friends who have also been unable to decipher it, but who are looking into it on their own. It appears to be a monogram, but even if this is the case, its layout is surely not arbitrary and must have some symbolic meaning. - Is this sign engraved in stone? If so, it could be one of those 'master's marks' that are quite frequently found on old buildings. I am well aware that, in most cases, the main element is a variation of the Constantinian sign,

such as or there is one of this type in the chapel of the Château de Champigny-sur-Vende), but there may have been other types as well. I know that research (?) has been done in England on these corporate signs, but I have not found any specific information on this, and I do not know where it has been published. In any case, if I do end up discovering anything interesting on either side, I will be sure to let you know. Do you have any details about this Brother Guyot you mention, who included the swastika in his signature? I find this fact quite noteworthy.

As for the seal forming a heart, I think there is no doubt or hesitation, and that we cannot see it as anything other than a representation of the Sacred Heart, to be added to all those you have already discovered; we are in complete agreement on this point.

The same applies to Melchizedek and the Magi: in both cases, there is indeed a union of priestly and royal powers in the same characters; and I am even convinced that, by referring to certain Eastern traditions, it is possible to establish a much closer link between them. I thought that the connection indicated in your article was not accidental; I was all the more struck by it because I have met very few people who have had the idea of such a connection, which is nevertheless quite natural.

I do not believe that the six-pointed star and the double triangle can, strictly speaking, be regarded as two truly distinct symbols; rather, they are two different forms of the same symbol. In any case, the meanings associated with the number 6 are certainly common to both forms. We might also see a certain connection between the former and the star of the Magi, which, incidentally, would not take us as far from the other meanings as it might seem at first glance.

As for the multiplicity of meanings and applications of the same symbol, what you say about the fish is very true; the same could be said of many others, notably the deer, which also represents Christ and the faithful, and even more often the faithful, because of this passage from Job (VII, 2) ((*)): "Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum." - Regarding fish, you are no doubt aware that this symbol is very ancient and is almost always associated with an aspect of the Word. I am not referring only to the Chaldean Oannes and the Syrian Dagon (which have often been discussed in the publications of the Hiéron de Paray-le-Monial); in India, too, fish represent the first manifestation of Vishnu.

I recently learned that there is a representation of the Trinity on the south porch of the church in Perros-Guirec, in which the Son is depicted in the form of a lion. Did you know that? I believe this is quite rare. I hope to obtain a photograph of it, which I can send to you if you do not already have one.

I hope you will soon have an opportunity to return to Paris; if so, just send us a quick note to let us know you are coming, so that we can be sure to meet up; I don't go out very much.

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* — Ps 42-2

My wife sends her regards, and I, dear Sir, remain yours sincerely.

R. G.

Paris, 25 February
1925. 51, rue St Louis en l'Ile
(IVe)

Dear Sir,

We were sorry to hear that you were still suffering from the effects of your unfortunate asphyxiation; we trust that you have now made a full recovery.

I will endeavour to answer your various questions, for which you need not apologise, as it is always my pleasure to provide you with any information that may be useful to you, if I am able to do so.

Firstly, the double triangle is called the "Seal of Solomon" because Solomon is said to have had a ring engraved with this symbol, the possession of which gave him the power to command all the forces of nature; this tradition is shared by both Jews and Muslims. The same sign also has other names, notably "Shield of David" and "Shield of Michael"; the latter designation is particularly interesting because of the special role attributed in Hebrew angelology to Michael, the solar archangel, through whom divine glory is manifested.

As for the triangle in which the name h w h y is inscribed, I do not believe that it can be said to be merely a meaningless emblem in Christian churches; its meaning remains unchanged. On the other hand, I do not think that it is mentioned in the liturgical prescriptions of the Bible, nor that it currently appears in synagogues, where the most common sign is the double triangle with the name y d ש (Shaddai = the Almighty). Moreover, you know that Jews are very reserved in their use of the tetragrammatic name h w h y, which they write as rarely as possible and never pronounce, replacing it with Adonai (the Lord) when reading the sacred text. It is said that in ancient times only the High Priest had the right to pronounce it once a year, when he entered the Holy of Holies. It is likely that the triangle containing this name was a reserved sign, which was not displayed publicly because it was particularly sacred; there is something similar in India, but the word inscribed in the triangle is Aum.

For the inscription from Antinoe, I see no other possible literal translation
than this: "One God again". I showed it to a professional Hellenist, and even to a Greek; they saw nothing else in it. Now what could this mean? Of course, we can only speculate; here is the interpretation I would propose: a return to the idea of divine unity, which was known in the beginning, then obscured, and which reappears in all its purity with Christianity. I offer this explanation for what it is worth; in any case, it seems quite plausible to me.

I think I was able to read the other inscription, the one on the seal key, almost immediately. I can clearly see a proper noun in the genitive case: Χρυσωγονου, 'of

Chrysogone (probably the name of the owner of the object), followed by two isolated letters, λ. N., which can only be initials, and whose meaning I cannot guess. You know that the sign σ is usually used for ου; there is indeed a spelling mistake, as it should be Χρυσογονου, with ο and not ω, but this often happens in inscriptions; there is also a mistake in the other one, as παλλιν with two λ does not exist, and the only correct form is παλιν. This is undoubtedly because
you thought you saw the number of Christ at first that you were unable to read the
rest; however, you may not have been entirely wrong, as it is very possible that the first two letters XP were intentionally isolated to recall this number. If I manage to find something for the meaning of the last two letters, I will be sure to let you know.

I come to ουροβορος; I understand what Mr Le Cour means: Aour-φορος, "light bearer", would be equivalent to Lucifer; but this distortion of the word and this hybrid etymology are purely fanciful. It is in Hebrew that Aour (or rather Aor) means "light"; but Mr Le Cour, since finding this word in the teachings of Hiero, wants to see it everywhere; it seems to me that he has notions
rather unusual linguistic features! In reality, the word ουροβορος is not mysterious at all: it is formed from ουρα, "???" and βορος, "devouring" (the same word as the Latin vorax, as b and v are easily interchangeable). There is
indeed, as you say, a word ουρος which means "guardian", and this is why the name of the star Arcturus means "the guardian of the Bear" (what is curious is that
Arthur is exactly the same name as arth, meaning "bear" in Gaelic, and this form is very close to the Greek αρχζορ). There are also other words ουρος: one refers to the ? ? ? or aurochs; another is for ορος, "mountain?", there is even ο ρος for ορος, "limit". But in compounds, ουρα, "tail", also changes to ουρος, as in αιλουρος, "cat", i.e. the animal with the changing tail (and not the "guardian of Aeolus", as one might translate it very literally, which would be just as incorrect as Mr Le Cour's interpretations).

As for the origin of this symbol of the snake biting its tail, it is very possible that it is Egyptian; moreover, there is no evidence that it does not date back further than the Alexandrian period. I am always wary when something is attributed to the Gnostics without further clarification; there were so many different kinds, and what we know about them is so incomplete! Moreover, it is quite likely that they used many symbols that they did not invent. The most common meaning of
The ουροβορος is the one, not not of eternity, but of perpetuity, that is to say
temporal indefiniteness; it is a cyclical symbol, which does not prevent it from having
other meanings at the same time. Moreover, in general, you know that the serpent has a beneficial aspect and a malevolent aspect, and that the same is true of many other symbolic figures; the lion, in particular, is also in this case. There is a whole theory to be developed on this subject, and I believe it has never been done; it is true that these things are rather difficult to explain.

I forgot to mention, with regard to Aor, a rather remarkable connection with the Latin aurum; alchemists represented gold by the sun, and Hindus

call it "mineral light".

Another thing: some interpret the name Orpheus with two Hebrew words: Aor-rophê, meaning "he who heals with light" (the second of these words is found in the name Raphael, the angel of Mercury); this may even be one of the reasons why Orpheus was taken to represent Christ. We remember very well seeing this figure of Orpheus that you mention at your home; I will read with great interest the note you are preparing on this subject.

I do not recall seeing any figures associating the cross with the pomegranate, but I am not surprised that they exist; for the pomegranate is a symbol quite analogous to the rose, which also has, among its various meanings, that of fertility. This symbol is not only Phoenician, it is also Hebrew, since pomegranates appeared on the capitals of the columns of the Temple of Jerusalem. Regarding the Phoenician symbol, I saw monuments from the Roman era in Algeria on which the cross and the crescent were associated, and yet they were neither Christian nor Muslim (the crescent was the emblem of Tanit).

You ask me what the Word is called among the Hindus; it does not have just one name, it has many, depending on the aspects under which it is considered. In fact, first of all, the Trimurti does not correspond to the Christian Trinity as has sometimes been supposed; but it is in reality constituted by three aspects of the Word, in which all things have their beginning (productive aspect, Brahma = A), their support (preserving aspect, Vishnu = U), and their end (transforming aspect, Shiva = M). The monosyllable Aum is a synthetic name encompassing the three aspects, to which these three letters correspond as I have just indicated, not to mention their other symbolic meanings. On the other hand, a very general name is Îshwara, "the Lord"; another is Swayambhû, "He who subsists by himself"; and there are many others. In the case in question, that of the white horse, it is the last manifestation of Vishnu, at the end of the world, that is, of the current cycle; you can see that it is identical to what is found in the Apocalypse.

Last week, we had a visit from Mr. de Frémond, who came here for a few days; I had sent him the manifesto of the Society for the Intellectual Radiation of the Sacred Heart, and he told me that he had shared it with a vicar general in Nantes, who seemed quite alarmed by it, finding it to be a much too bold plan, etc. It is astonishing to see how many people are afraid of anything that is a little out of the ordinary!

So far, I have not yet been able to find the time to prepare anything for "Regnabit" as Fr. Anizan had asked me to do; I hope I will be able to do so, but first I must finish the book reviews that I have had for nearly a year! It seems to me, if you don't mind, that I could take as a starting point some of the things contained in your articles that have already been published, which are very directly related to those I have seen (for example, in your article on Egyptian symbols). The difficulty is presenting things in a way that seems acceptable to people who are not familiar with these considerations.

Do you know on which days and at what times Fr. Anizan can be found at home?

If I were sure of meeting him, I would try to visit him on a day when I have some free time.

The ladies send you their best regards, and I too, dear Sir, send you my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 18 June 1925.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir,

I did indeed receive your letter of 8 June, but I never received the issue of "Regnabit" in which you mentioned the pelican and which you sent me. As you told me you would send me the issues published since March and I have not yet received anything, I am beginning to worry a little and fear that the package may have been lost again or stolen from the post office, which would be very annoying. Moreover, the postal service seems to be performing very poorly at the moment; packages sent to me from Paris itself have taken four or five days to reach me recently!

Thank you for the issue of La Croix containing the article on India; the correspondent for La Croix in that country, who is probably the author of the article, is Mgr Rossillon (?), coadjutor of Vizigapatam (?). Unfortunately, like most missionaries, he does not seem to have a very deep understanding of the Hindu spirit; thus, for true Hindus, the affirmation of the fundamental unity of all traditional doctrines has never implied any temptation to merge the multiple forms, each of which has its own raison d'être. He certainly attaches too much importance to the manifestations of a few more or less Europeanised circles, which are of little interest and whose influence is virtually nil. Sects of European and especially Anglo-Saxon inspiration have very little success in India; the "Ramakrishna Mission", mentioned in the article, is headed by an Australian woman! What is certain is that Hindus in general have a great deal of sympathy for Catholicism, whereas they have none for Protestantism. It is all the more regrettable that missionaries are only in contact with the least interesting elements of the population. The Jesuits seem to have understood this and are currently seeking to establish closer ties with the Brahmins.

Thank you for your very interesting information about N. D. du Charmier (?); I will be very happy to see all this with you when we go to Loudun. I had not thought that Ruma (?) could be a Frankish name (I only thought of a Gallo-Roman name), but it is indeed very likely.

Before your letter arrived, I received a note from Father Anizan, and I went to see him last Tuesday; he is very pleased to know that you and I have reached the same conclusions on many points, albeit by very different means. I hope to give him a first article before I go on holiday; we are in complete agreement on the essential ideas.

Yesterday I received a note from Genty, who will not be back in Paris until the end of the month; I will then tell him that you accept his offer, but as it will be July, where should

send the plate? If you can use this one directly for your drawing, it will simplify things considerably.

When I sent you (regarding the ibis) the announcement for "Dante's Esotericism", I did not intend to give you the idea of bringing it over immediately; on the contrary, I intended to offer you a copy; but since that is the case, I will at least have the pleasure of sending you my other volume in the next few days, the first copies of which arrived yesterday.

The ibis is, for the Egyptians, the hieroglyph for Thoth, that is to say, for Wisdom. In Central America, the white heron represents the spiritual centre of the world. By applying these symbols to Christ, we have not altered their meaning. - On the seal you have given me the drawing of, it is difficult to tell whether the bird depicted is a heron or a stork, but it is almost certainly one or the other. - In the Far East, it is rather the crane that holds the same place in symbolism.

So where does this monogram attributed to Henry III come from, in which the shape of the double serpent S is truly curious? As for the Merovingian symbol whose impression you sent me, I have no doubt that it is indeed the same symbol. As for the ouroboros, you are quite right to associate it with the "annual cycle"; moreover, in the Pistis Sophia, an Alexandrian work generally attributed to the Valentinian Gnostics (but which could just as easily belong to the Ophites), the body of the serpent is represented as divided into twelve "aeons" (the original meaning of the Greek αιων is also that of "cycle") corresponding to the twelve signs of the zodiac. On the other hand, the symbol of the "annual cycle" is very important in many ancient traditions and can give rise to a host of very curious considerations, allowing us to explain certain peculiarities in the arrangement of the zodiacs that appear on church portals. Perhaps one day I will be able to conduct a study on this question, although it is quite complicated and difficult to explain clearly, as is everything related to cyclical theories; so far, I have only had the opportunity to make a few references to it here and there.

With my best regards to the ladies, dear Sir, please accept my warmest regards.

R. G.

Blois, 22 August 1925. 74, rue du Foix.

Dear Sir,

We plan to leave next Thursday for Chiché, and stop in Loudun on the way back; but when exactly will that be? Perhaps next week, perhaps not until the beginning of the following week. In fact, there is another complication: it seems that our sister-in-law is currently in Charroux, and we do not know for how long; my wife wrote to her yesterday to ask when she planned to return to Loudun. As soon as I know anything more specific, I will write to you; but I am sorry that I cannot give you a more definite date in advance, and I would be even more sorry if this were to cause you any inconvenience in your travel plans

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Yesterday I received the proofs of my article on the Grail; I corrected them immediately and sent them straight back to the printer as agreed.

Thank you very much for your kind offer to do the engravings yourself that will be needed for my next article; I am embarrassed to cause you this trouble, but I must admit that I was a little concerned about it, firstly because of my lack of skill at drawing, and secondly because of the plates that would have had to be made, which could have been a nuisance for Father Anizan, as I believe that until now you have made all those that have appeared in Regnabit. I should add that, in this case, the figures are very simple and, for the most part, almost geometric. I wonder if I will be able to prepare this article before we leave, and yet I would very much like to, so that we can examine it together when I have the pleasure of seeing you. Time passes with incredible speed, and we never manage to do everything we would like to, far from it; at least that is how it is for me, and I believe, alas, that I am not the only one in this situation.

I have already forgotten several times to ask you whether you have published the study on Christ-Orpheus that you mentioned to me some time ago; I am very interested in it.

I wonder if the Chauvet whose study I mentioned to you the other day on "Sol et Luna" is not Dr Chauvet, from Nantes, who was very interested in Hermeticism and published various articles and brochures under the pseudonym Saïr; do you know him?

I have just found something curious about the ibis in Elien, indicating the various symbolic reasons why this bird was revered by the Egyptians, saying in particular that when it pulls its head and neck under its wings, it takes on the shape of a heart.

I have also just read Mr Le Cour's article in Le Mercure Gaulois, and I found some of his usual peculiarities in it; it is true that in the same issue of the Mercure de France, there is an article on the Etruscans, signed by Gabriel Arthaud (a name I was completely unfamiliar with), which far surpasses it in terms of linguistic extravagance! One wonders whether this magazine is going to make a speciality of this sort of thing. - Returning to Mr Le Cour, what is particularly fanciful this time is his explanation of the name Gavr'innis (?) (and not Gavrin-is as he breaks it down in his own way); there is something about this name that is indeed very curious, but it is not at all what he says it is; I will try to remember to talk to you about it again, as it is a rather remarkable example of verbal symbolism. - On the other hand, I remain convinced that Montmartre is in fact "Mons Martis" and not "Mons Mercurii". There were certainly many mountains of Mercury in Gaul, but that was not all, and there may well have been a few mountains of Mars as well. I have noted another inaccuracy: Le Beuvray, the ancient Bibracte, is not in Autun, but some distance from that city; the latter (Augustodunum (?)) was founded only by the Romans and subsequently supplanted its neighbour, the ancient capital of the Aedui, whose name Le Beuvray has retained in a modified but still very recognisable form. What I find most interesting and accurate in the article is

The question is the comparison, which is easy to make, between the Gallic god Lug and the Greek Logos; but we could draw other conclusions than those he suggests, in which he still goes a little off track. It seems very likely to me that the name Loudun must originally have been identical to that of Lyon (Lugdunum or an equivalent form), and I had already thought of this; this must also be your opinion, according to the note in which you are quoted.

I am quite like you, I am waiting without the slightest impatience for Mr Le Cour's revelations on religion (?) which is to take the place of Christianity... Moreover, I believe that if he really finds anything, whatever its value, he will hardly be able to refrain from saying so and even publishing it without delay. I have known many people like him who claimed they could not speak... simply because they had nothing to say!

I hope to see you soon, dear Sir; please accept my warmest regards from the ladies and the expression of my cordial sentiments.

R. G.

I think you will find this letter on your return to Loudun. You can always write to me here, because even if we have left, our correspondence will follow us; or, from next Friday, 28 August, to Mr Émile Clisson, Vins en gros, in Chiché (Deux-Sèvres).

B (?), 27 August 1925.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter this morning before leaving Blois; we were looking forward to seeing you on our way to Loudun. We were therefore very disappointed not to find you there, nor my brother-in-law; what bad luck!

The last time I wrote to you, I realised when my card was posted that I had left blank the time of the train I wanted to add at the station. I now wonder if this oversight was the cause of a misunderstanding, but it seems to me that there was no other train than the one we took.

- In any case, I sincerely hope that nothing untoward has happened to you.

I have decided, upon arriving here, to send you my manuscript so that you may have it without delay. Whatever you do will surely be well done; therefore, do not wait for our arrival in Loudun to send it to Father Anizan. There should be no delay. Thank you again for your kindness in taking on this task; I hope you will not mind if I encroach a little on your domain this time!

The bird you sent me a drawing of is very curious, and it seems to me that the connection with Elien's passage is obvious. As for "the bone of a man", it is amusing, but not serious; it is fortunate that Mr Le Cour was not enthusiastic about this absurd story!

As for our stay in Loudun, I know nothing more than what I have already told you. Please excuse my handwriting: I am writing to you from the post office and am very uncomfortable.

In haste, and with warm regards.

R. G.

Paris, 28 October 1925.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir,

About ten days ago, I sent Father Anizan a short article for the December issue; as I told you, the main part of this article concerns the symbolism of Janus, and I have added a few considerations relating to symbolic trees, in particular the "Tree of Life" in its various forms. I concluded with a response to the objection raised about the Grail, a response which, incidentally, is essentially a development of the one that Father Anizan had already attached to the objection itself.

In acknowledging receipt of this article, Fr. Anizan writes to me that he is very pleased with what I say about the fundamental identity of all traditions, because he feels it is very important to remember that the Church of Christ has existed since the beginning. This is exactly what I think, and I am very pleased to see that we understand each other perfectly.

Fr. Anizan also tells me that he has sent you some texts on the spiritual habitat in the Heart of Jesus, which will enable you to "document" an article on this subject. I hope you will give us this soon; after the references we have both already made to this question, it seems to me that it would be quite appropriate to deal with it in some detail.

The first proofs of my November article were full of mistakes, and a photograph had been misplaced, so I asked for other proofs, which I received last week. The printer says that it is not usually possible to send two proofs, but it seems that this month there will be some delay because of the tables.

As for your Breton bar (?), it would certainly be interesting to publish that somewhere; to make a booklet out of it, you might need to add a few other things related to the same or similar subjects. In any case, it does not seem impossible to me, and if I have any ideas, I will let you know. In any case, when I have the pleasure of seeing you again, I will not forget to ask you to show me this document. I will also try to think about Wirth's "Hermetic Symbolism".

As for the figure of the "Quest for the Grail" that I mentioned to you, I think it is only important in that it shows that the swastika was known and even quite commonly used in the Middle Ages, because otherwise it would not have occurred to an artist to use it as a kind of diagram for the construction of certain figures, even without any symbolic intention.

Thank you for the photograph, which I will give to Genty the next time I see him.

Thank you also for forwarding Mr Le Cour's letter, which I am returning to you in this envelope. Needless to say, once again, his objections do not

affect me much. First of all, if he has only seen what I have published on Agartha in the Cahiers du Mois, he can hardly know what I might say in my work in preparation, as I did not want to go into considerations that would certainly not have been understood by the audience for which it was intended. On the other hand, as for the meaning of the word, I can see where he is coming from: Ag-ar-tha, ag=Agni, ar=Aor; it is always the same story. It is not the same thing to be unaware of the meaning of a word, as he says, or to consider it inappropriate to take into account a supposed meaning that is not based on anything serious. I will have to find a way, in some article for "Regnabit", to slip in a note about this Agni and Aor business, which needs to be clarified.

Another thing about Mr Le Cour: a few days ago, he wrote to my aunt to thank her for a photograph of her father that she had had for a very long time and which she had sent to him via my friend Faugeron (the editor of Cahiers du Portique), who sees him from time to time. Perhaps, as a result of this, we will see him appear here. It seems that he did not have this photograph and that, as is his habit, he saw in it some kind of "extraterrestrial" sign!

Abbé Pron's "Psyché", the second volume of Cahiers du Portique, has just been published.

What you have been told about the marble of St Denis d'Orques is rather curious; I had not noticed that the wound in the heart was in the shape of a iod, and I do not know whether we should believe that this shape was given intentionally. If so, the whole thing would have a very interesting meaning and should be interpreted by means of a certain relationship that exists between the symbolism of the heart and that of the egg, a relationship to which, before receiving your letter, I had just alluded in a note in my December article. If you do not quite understand what I mean, I will explain it more fully next time. In any case, even if the interpretation in question were justified, it would simply add to the one you have given and would not change anything at all.

The ladies send you their best regards, and I, dear Sir, remain sincerely yours.

R. G.

Paris, 2 December 1925.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir,

I am a little concerned that I have not heard from you for so long; however, I would like to believe that this silence is not due to any unfortunate circumstances and that your health has nothing to do with it. I wonder if you received my last letter, in which I returned Mr Le Cour's letter that you had sent me, or if it is your reply that has not reached me; the postal service is still very poor. But perhaps it is simply because you have been too busy or away from Loudun that you have not been able to write to me.

In any case, I do not wish to delay any longer in thanking you for

mentioned me so kindly in the article in which you responded to Fr. Hamon, and to congratulate you on having maintained such a courteous and measured tone in your response, which Fr. Anizan was very pleased with. It is indeed best to avoid, as much as possible, the discussion taking an unpleasant turn, which happens all too often and all too easily.

I saw Father Anizan about ten days ago, and I gave him an article for January in which, following on from what he himself had written, I emphasise the appropriateness and necessity of symbolism. He had just received the proofs of the new appeal from the Société du Rayonnement Intellectuel, which bears our signatures; we reviewed them together.

Following my last article, I received a long letter from a parish priest in Nièvre, who was very pleased with it and who shared some very interesting thoughts on the symbolism of triangles; there will undoubtedly be occasion to return to all this again.

On the other hand, I have been told that in Egyptian hieroglyphics, the cross is found in the form ☥ (a sign different from the ankh cross) to express the idea of "salvation" (for example, in the name of Ptolemy Soter); did you know that?

I spoke to Father Anizan about what you told me concerning the heart of St Denis d'Orques and the shape of the wound; he agrees with me that this interpretation should not be dismissed out of hand, especially since there is a print by Callot, dating from 1625, in which three iods are depicted inside the Heart of Christ; he himself mentioned this in "Regnabit" (December 1922). If you have received my last letter, as I hope you have, please let me know if the explanation I gave you about this iod was understandable, albeit a little brief. In any case, sooner or later, I will no doubt be led to write an article about the "Egg of the World" and the relationship between the symbols of the heart and the egg.

I was recently sent a brochure on the capitals of the church of St Nectaire, an iconographic study by Abbé G. Rochias. I found something in it that I think might interest you; I will transcribe the passage:

There are two similar capitals, each showing three eagles with outstretched wings spread in the shape of a cross. The one in the middle has its head upright and appears to be alive. The other two have their heads bowed on their chests and appear to be dead: the beak of the one on the right remains half-open, in the position in which death surprised it. In symbolic fauna, the eagle, king of the skies, is an image of Christ. Those on these capitals seem to represent Christ on the cross: the one on the main face, Christ still alive on the cross, and those on the side faces, Christ dead."

I am enclosing a rough tracing of a photograph of one of these two capitals, which date from the 12th century.

I have a request to make on behalf of Mr Charles Grolleau, who edits the "Bulletin des Écrivains et Artistes catholiques" (Bulletin of Catholic Writers and Artists); He had been forced to suspend publication recently due to lack of funds, but the appeal he included in the last issue (published during the holidays and also containing an article by Fr. Anizan on the Société du Rayonnement intellectuel du Sacré-Cœur) attracted a large number of new subscription promises, and he hopes to be able to resume publication soon. The drawing that appeared on the cover of the Bulletin was

too large to accommodate the summary, which was inconvenient; he would therefore like to replace it with a smaller one, and he thinks that the best option would be to reproduce some ancient iconographic document. He would therefore like to know if, among all the symbols of Christ that you know, there might be one that would be particularly appropriate for the character of the Bulletin.

I forgot something about the capitals of St Nectaire: on several of them, the devil is depicted accompanied by arum fruits (?); do you know what the origin of this symbol might be, as I have never come across it before?

I hope to hear from you soon.

The ladies send their regards, and I, dear Sir, remain sincerely yours.

R. G.

Paris, 30 December 1925.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir,

This time it is my turn to be very late in writing to you; I have been overwhelmed with work lately, and I am taking advantage of a few days off to finally catch up on my correspondence. I like to believe that your health is better now, despite the bad weather we are experiencing.

It is only natural that I should quote your work and draw on your documentation; you are really too modest... Your December article is very interesting, and I look forward to seeing the rest. For my part, I have prepared two other short articles for January and February, while waiting for more important studies that I have not yet had time to finalise.

I saw Father Anizan last Thursday; we discussed a meeting that could probably take place in February, and we very much hope that, as last year, you will be able to come to Paris for the occasion.

I think you received the Bulletin I sent you in response to your letter (it was a duplicate copy I had); naturally, I have not yet mentioned anything to Mr Grolleau; it seems to me that the eagle with the book on its breast would be perfectly suitable.

Regarding the Saint-Nectaire brochure, it is indeed unfortunate that many important details are not clearly visible in the photographs; by contacting the author, you may be able to obtain better documentation; I would be grateful if you could keep me informed. Please do not return the brochure until you no longer need it; there is no great urgency.

I was unaware of what you told me about the arum (?), which explains its association with the devil; it would be useful to know whether this plant has also been given a similar popular name in Auvergne.

Your fish-shaped amulet is really very curious; it makes me think that the Phoenician Astarte could well have been identified with the Syrian goddess Atergatis or Dercéto. There would be some very interesting considerations to develop

on the symbolism of the fish; it seems to me that we have already discussed this. You also know that, at Hieros, Oannes and Dagon have always been considered figures of Christ, and it seems to me that this is justified; perhaps it has simply never been explained clearly enough.

I would be pleased to know what you think of what I have written on the symbolism of Janus; these are only simple indications, which need to be developed and completed; I will certainly return to them one day or another; in truth, there is enough material there for a small volume.

As for Father Chaux-Bertrand, he did not share his ideas on noble heraldry with me, so I did not have the opportunity to appreciate his knowledge on the subject. There were some interesting points in his letter, but they certainly need to be clarified; I believe he would readily embark on considerations that he could not support on a sufficiently solid basis. This is what I said to Father Anizan, who asked me if I thought he should be invited to contribute to Regnabit; I think it is better to be too cautious than not cautious enough.

Enclosed is Mr Le Cour's letter, which is indeed quite amusing. It seems that the story of the fleur-de-lis and the chi-rho struck him particularly, as he also went to talk about it to my friend Faugeron. I confess that I do not see the danger in saying something like that; and, while there are indeed some things that it is not wise to say too openly, for reasons of expediency, I believe, without boasting, that I am better able to judge this than he is. It is truly curious that, after only two or three years of studying these subjects, he imagines himself to know more than anyone else. In any case, his astonishment simply proves that he has understood nothing of what I do; the 'evolution' he speaks of does not exist in me, and for nearly twenty years I have never changed my orientation; I accept equally all traditions, Eastern or Western, which are but different expressions of one and the same unity. My Janus has probably frightened him again, unless he doesn't understand that either: in any case, fortunately, everything he threatens us with doesn't scare me any more than it scares you. I wonder where he's going with all this talk of Aristotle, scholasticism, etc. He confuses the initiatory point of view with the philosophical point of view, which have nothing in common, and I am tempted to conclude that the former completely escapes him. On that subject, if he mentions Agartha again and everything I may or may not know about it, tell him to wait for my "King of the World"; it would be the least he could do, since I have not yet explained myself on this subject. Has he already told you about the "militia of the Grail"? I will tell you another day why I am asking you this. I would be most grateful if you would continue to share his thoughts with me; we don't have many distractions of this kind! I have only skimmed through his latest article in Le Mercure; I will try to remember to talk to you about it.

The cobblestone in the wheel is very curious; it is still the same symbol. Thank you for the smear on your marble; I will examine it again and try to compare it to other figures.

Thank you for your kind wishes; please accept ours in return, and

believe in my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 23 January 1926.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir,

We are sorry to hear that your health is still not up to par, and we hope that you will recover quickly.

Mr Grolleau has asked me to convey his warmest thanks for your kind offer to engrave the eagle and book for the title of his Bulletin, and he accepts it with great pleasure in the event that he is able to resume publication. So far, the subscription pledges and donations he has received are not yet sufficient to cover the costs, so we must wait...

I saw Father Anizan on Thursday; he showed me the proofs of your article on Orpheus, which I find very good and extremely interesting. On that note, has the note you wrote on the same subject finally been published? He also told me about the extraordinary visit you received recently; if you would be so kind as to give me some details about it, I would be very grateful, as you can imagine that I am very interested.

We discussed various projects, in particular the transformation of "Regnabit" into a more specialised organ of the Société du Rayonnement intellectuel; it seems to me that this could be done very well and that it would be better than having a bulletin alongside the Revue, as the contributors to both would necessarily be the same. As for the meeting we had planned for February, it will be postponed until after Easter, as Father Anizan is too busy until then. We sincerely hope that your health will be better by then and that you will be able to attend. Your absence on this occasion would be most regrettable.

For the March issue, I contributed a short article in which I return to the question of symbolic trees (in relation to the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge). I have many other ideas in mind, but I never seem to have enough time to gather my notes and put them together. Father Anizan has asked me to write something on the ideas formerly associated with the concept of the "Centre" and the corresponding symbols. If we need to include some illustrations, we will again call on your kindness for the photographs; in that case, I will try to do the drawings as best I can and send them to you early enough so that you have plenty of time to do this little job.

In recent days, I received a letter from Abbé Martin, who was particularly pleased with my January article and who fully agrees with my point of view, especially with regard to the fundamental unity of all traditions. It seems that an Italian newspaper mocked Mr Le Cour's etymologies in his latest article on Atlantis; I have even been told that, following this criticism, Le Mercure is no longer willing to publish any more of his studies. It is quite possible that he drew on Schuré's works, which contain

nothing serious: in them, anything that is not more or less disguised plagiarism is pure fantasy. But Mr Le Cour protests that he has borrowed nothing from anyone, and claims to write under a kind of inspiration, which he undoubtedly believes in good faith; let us not forget that he was a spiritualist, and he has such an imagination! ...

Thank you very much for what you said to Mr. Camille Aymard on my behalf; I take good note of it, and I will be sure to bring him my work when it is published (but when will it be ready? I can't seem to finish it); it will be a very good thing if he mentions it in La Liberté.

Your idea for the congress of learned societies to address the question of the signs of the Loudun Carmelites is an excellent one.

As you say, there are indeed several types of Janus; that is why I took care to point out how complex the symbolism of this deity is and how it has many different aspects.

Astarté, Itar and Tanit are in fact identical (the first two names are actually one and the same, just in two slightly different forms). Regarding your statuettes, it is worth noting that the triangle ▽ , the cup it represents, and also the lotus flower in one of its meanings, are all symbols directly related to water, which is universally the symbol of the feminine principle.

I am well aware that one of the meanings of the rose is that of the source of life, but unfortunately I do not know of any representations relating to this, although they almost certainly must exist. Have you been able to find the Italian fountain? If I happen to come across anything on this subject, you can be sure that I will not fail to let you know.

Please accept, dear Sir, our warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 25 February
1926. 51, rue St Louis en l'Ile
(IVe)

Dear Sir,

Today (in agreement with Father Anizan, incidentally) I am bothering you with a request for engravings, as if you did not have enough work already! As I believe I mentioned in my last letter, it is for an article on the idea of the Centre in ancient traditions, which I plan to prepare for the May issue; it would therefore need to be ready by 25 March, which is just one month away.

In fact, it boils down to very little: three images in total. First, the circle with a dot in the centre (the astrological sign for the sun); I think you will be able to do this so that the dot is clearly visible. ⊙ Next, the circle divided by the cross (I will also reproduce the six- and eight-spoked wheels, but

photos already exist, as they appeared in my November article). ⊕

Finally, the swastika in its two forms oriented in opposite directions, 卐 卍

which you can easily combine in the same photograph by arranging them as shown above

above. Thank you in advance for taking the trouble to do this.

Regarding the swastika, this word is masculine in Sanskrit; there is therefore no reason to make it feminine in French.

But no, it was not I who sent you the Zoroastrian moked (?), and I even regret not having seen him when he was in Paris. If he happened to meet Mr Le Cour or someone from his group, they certainly refrained from sending him to me. I would be delighted to hear the details of your meeting when I have the pleasure of seeing you; it must indeed be rather difficult to summarise in a letter.

There were certainly relations between the Lamas and Christian organisations that existed in Central Asia during the Middle Ages, and which are usually regarded as "Nestorian" (but what precise meaning should be attributed to this designation?). As for whether there was any influence in the strict sense of the word, that is a little difficult to say, and I think it is hard to be very assertive on this point; it is all rather complicated.

Yesterday, I corrected the proofs of my article on the "Trees of Paradise". For April, I sent Father Anizan a short piece entitled "The Radiant Heart and the Flaming Heart", in which I consider the two main meanings of the Heart (Intelligence and Love) in relation to the symbolism of fire in its two complementary aspects (light and heat).

I look forward to reading your pages on the emblematic Rose; is it for the next issue? Everyone I pass on "Regnabit" greatly appreciates your articles and praises them highly, which is well deserved.

Have you finished your memoirs for the Congress of Learned Societies? I didn't think it was going to be held so soon.

Did you find the time to write to the parish priest of Saint-Nectaire, and did you get anything out of it? I would be happy to hear about it.

You have no doubt heard about the terrible accident that caused the deaths of Mme de Noaillat and Mlle Lépine. It reminded us of what happened to you here last year; fortunately, you escaped without too much harm!

I think it would be better to keep the current format for Regnabit, which is more convenient than a larger format, and increase the number of pages when necessary. We must consider people who read while travelling, as there are many of them, especially in Paris. It is only a detail, but I think it is nevertheless important. In any case, everyone Father Anizan consulted agreed that Regnabit should be the Society's organ and that there was no need to create another special journal, which would inevitably be redundant.

Please accept, dear Sir, the best regards of the ladies and my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 13 March
1926. 51, rue St Louis en l'Ile
(IVe)

Dear Sir,

The brochure on Saint-Nectaire arrived almost at the same time as your letter. There is no need to apologise for not sending it back to me sooner, as it was not particularly urgent. Please let me know if you have received a reply from the author and if you are satisfied with it.

This morning I received the proofs of your photographs; thank you very much for doing this so quickly. The article hasn't even been written yet; I'll have to get started on it right away so that I can send it to Father Anizan before the 25th, as I promised him. The photographs are very clear; I see that you have slightly modified the layout you indicated in your letter, but that does not matter, and it is fine as it is. Thank you also for taking the trouble to redo the wheels, despite all the work you have.

I am pleased to hear that your two papers for the Congress of Learned Societies have been accepted; would it be indiscreet to ask what they are about? You mentioned to me that one was about the signs of the Carmelites; does the other also relate to a similar subject?

I am also pleased to hear that your friends have responded very favourably to my articles; I hope that the rest will also satisfy them. For my part, I have already obtained a few subscriptions and I expect to get more.

What you tell me about the Radiant Heart and the Flaming Heart is entirely consistent with my interpretation, and it makes me think that perhaps you could add to my article, particularly from an iconographic and heraldic point of view; I think that would be an excellent idea. What are you doing with the lions for April? I'm a little intrigued.

I haven't received the March issue yet; there's quite a delay this month.

It is not easy to read on the streets of Paris, but people mainly read on the underground and buses; you have to remember that many people here have little free time and so use the time they spend travelling to and from work. As you say, we would need to see whether the savings made by increasing the format would really be worthwhile and would compensate for the disadvantages of this change; I must admit that I have no precise data on this.

A few days ago, I wrote to Father Anizan; he had communicated to me Mr Foussier's suggestion to replace "Sacré-Cœur" with "Cœur Sacré" in the title of the Society. For my part, I do not see the advantage of this change, which would hardly be understood, and I do not believe that it would dispel certain prejudices; we must rather rely on what we will do to achieve this result. What do you think?

Genty has pointed out to me, for your consideration, Didron's Histoire de Dieu (History of God), which apparently contains a large number of representations of the three persons of the Trinity, together and separately; perhaps you are familiar with this work. Are you also familiar with Abbé Boiteux's "Les Symboles de la Croix" (The Symbols of the Cross)? I have only been given the title of this book, so I do not know if it contains anything of real interest

interesting, or even from what perspective the subject is treated.

For some time now, I have been meaning to ask you if you know of any works on St Bernard; I have been asked to write a short piece on him for a collection of saints' lives due to be published towards the end of this year, and I am trying to gather information from various sources, as I will have to work on it after the Easter holidays. Father Anizan has pointed me to the work by Vacandard (?), but perhaps you could give me some other information.

It seems that Le Mercure de France has decided to no longer accept articles by Mr Le Cour, who accuses one of our fellow citizens from Blois of having spoken ill of him to the management. I do not know if this is true or if it is yet another product of his overactive imagination. Are you still corresponding with him, and does he continue to be indignant about our untimely "revelations"?

The ladies send you their best regards, and I, dear Sir, remain sincerely yours.

R. G.

Blois, 4 August 1926. 74, rue du Foix.

Dear Sir and friend,

Here we are in Blois, and we are not unhappy about it; but I had to bring some work with me that I had hoped to finish before leaving Paris. I have not yet been able to work on the life of St Bernard, and it must be finished by the end of this month!

My wife continues to do as well as possible, but still tires quite easily, which is not surprising. Please believe me when I say that you are completely excused for not asking for news directly; my brother-in-law has only written to us once, and my sister-in-law was in Vichy at the time, which is why your request was not fulfilled. Moreover, to simplify correspondence, I did not write to the whole family, as I would not have been able to manage it; those who received news passed it on to the others.

I am finally rid of my flu, but I still feel the fatigue that resulted from it; anyway, it will pass little by little, at least I hope so.

Do your frequent trips to Poitiers tire you too much? It is surprising that the libraries in that city do not have collections of journals as extensive as those you mention; but could you not, thanks to your position as correspondent for the Ministry, have them brought in from other libraries?

Your new acquisitions do indeed look very interesting; I will be delighted to see them if we go to Loudun; but will we get there, and when? I don't know yet, but you can be sure that I will let you know.

I understand that you may sometimes feel a little daunted by the task you have undertaken, and that the necessary research takes up a lot of your time; but I am convinced that you will do very well. It is certainly better not to rush things than to risk making mistakes or leaving out important information; on the other hand, it may not be possible to produce something that is entirely complete, but

the mass of documents you have gathered is certainly already far more considerable than anything that has been used by others for work on the same subject; I am not referring to work of the same kind, because I believe that, in truth, no such work exists yet.

You can keep the St Francis Xavier newsletter; I still have several copies, and I can even get more if necessary.

Yesterday I sent Abbé Buron my article for September-October, on "The Holy Land and the Heart of the World"; it follows on from the one I told you about, which will appear in the July-August issue. We had one concern about this one: the photograph of the marble from St Denis d'Orques, which was absolutely necessary, could not be found; Hirt said he had sent it to Tiqui, and Tiqui said he did not have it; in the end, it was found, and we will only be a little late.

My article on the Omphalos will be included in large part in my study on the "King of the World", the manuscript of which I finally handed over to the publisher before leaving Paris; he must send it to print without delay, as he would like it to be published around November, and with printers, you have to plan well in advance.

Mr Le Cour is very fortunate to be able to afford a trip to Greece and Crete; I wonder how he manages it, as he is apparently not wealthy and his ministry salary is not very high, and travel is terribly expensive at the moment; anyway, good for him if he can do it. However, I wonder what benefit he will derive from it and what fantastic discoveries he will bring back to us! As for his "Society for Atlantean Studies" and all the projects associated with it, I very much fear that it will all come to nothing, especially if there is no funding. It seems that he is announcing the creation of a "The Atlantean Institute, centre of Western traditionalism, whose magnificent plan already exists"; I suppose this plan is none other than that of Landowski's "Temple", which was featured last year at the Decorative Arts Exhibition, and to which he alludes in his letter. Where did he get the idea that 24 June was the Feast of the Sacred Heart? Unfortunately, many of his statements are of this nature! I also admire his postscript on the Eucharistic Congress that took place at the end of June, which, in his opinion, should undoubtedly have been reported in the issue prepared for June; and then "Regnabit" is not a news outlet after all! - It's good that he has somewhat reconsidered his prejudices against me, but I must admit that his criticisms have never impressed me much. However, I know that he has the unfortunate habit of spreading rumours left and right, which is always unpleasant.

Genty went to spend the month of June in Brittany, as he does every year; there, he was told more or less the same things about Marcel Baudoin that you told me; so we must assume that the man is well known, and not in a favourable light.

Thank you for your information about the symbol I sent you a reproduction of last time; it seems that your explanation must be entirely accurate. Om told me that it was probably a lock and key, but that was a little vague, and I prefer your explanation. When I return to Paris, I will have to find out exactly where the capital is located.

question; I only know that it is somewhere near Autun. It is a pity that the drawing you have given me is indecipherable; it would be curious if the two objects were from the same source. In any case, there would be some very interesting things to examine concerning the symbolism of the key, which, as you know, is linked to that of Janus, and also to representations of the 'Axis of the World'. You are therefore quite right to think that there is a connection between the cross formed by four keys and the swastika; there seems to be no doubt about that.

In his last letter, Mr de Frémond sent me issue no. 4 of Le Lion; I would be curious to see the previous issues when I get the chance, but based on this one, I do not think there is much to be gained from them. It is all vague and nebulous, even seemingly insignificant; yet these stories involving prophecies of all kinds are never completely harmless. We need to know who is behind this publication and what their intentions are; they are undoubtedly working for some pretender, but who? I wonder if it might not simply be a certain Louis de Bourbon, who is a Naundorff of I don't know which branch; and here is what gave me this idea: the said Louis de Bourbon publishes a newspaper entitled "Le Crible", which is rather poorly written, and which I receive from time to time; now, in each issue of this newspaper there is a note worded as follows: "The newspaper 'Le Crible', wishing to remain completely free, does not accept subscriptions. For the same reason, it accepts neither advertisements nor publicity. It invites its friends of today and those who will become its friends tomorrow, convinced of the usefulness of its campaign, to send it their contributions, which will enable it to expand and intensify its propaganda." Now, you will find in
"Lion" an identical opinion, with only a few words changed; I cannot believe that this is a mere coincidence. I would add that the pretender in question, who clearly presents himself as such and believes himself called upon to save France, has frequented occult circles; this may explain many things.

I agree with you that Cardinal Dubois' patronage should be enough to protect us from certain attacks, but there are people who are not satisfied with so little... But is someone who contributes to magazines that have no more imprimatur than ours really qualified to pick a fight with us on this subject? I am thinking of the Revue de Philosophie, which does not have one, despite being the organ of the Catholic Institute, and which quite often publishes articles by Maquart. He is not the author of the work referred to by Fr. Anizan, who told me the name, but I cannot remember it.

Mr Thomas is indeed very cautious, and at the same time very un-liberal in the negative sense of the word; I was very pleased to note that he was as unwilling as I am to be drawn into making unfortunate concessions or compromises. If I have the pleasure of seeing you, you must remind me to tell you about a rather unusual conference that took place in June. I must also tell you more about Maritain; he is doing himself a great disservice in serious circles by associating with Cocteau and other equally extravagant characters.

There is a question that was raised at our last meeting and which remains unresolved: should we, at the beginning of the first part of "Regnabit", put "History and Doctrine" instead of simply "Doctrine" as we have done until now? I don't see any problem with that; what about you? From our point of view,

Doctrine" instead of simply "Doctrine" as we have done until now? I see no problem with this; what about you? From our respective points of view, the two things can hardly be separated.

Please accept, dear Sir and friend, the best regards of the ladies, and believe in my most cordial sentiments.

R. G.

Blois, 25 August 1926. 74, rue du Foix.

Dear Sir and friend,

We will arrive in Loudun the day after tomorrow, Friday, at 6:30 in the evening. I would have liked to have been able to give you more advance notice, but our trip was decided very suddenly. Everything depended on the completion of my work on St Bernard, which had to be sent before the end of this month; I have only just finished it and sent it this morning. Furthermore, it was not possible for us to postpone, as I will be teaching here in September and we will have to return on the 3rd; so we have just one week. I sincerely hope that we will find you in Loudun and that you will not be obliged to be away during these particular days; I would be very sorry if I were unable to take advantage of this opportunity to discuss with you everything that interests us. I also hope that we will be able to find a day to go to Chinon together, as we had planned.

Abbé Buron wrote to us that he would arrive in Loudun on[1]September; we will undoubtedly still be there. He promises to stop in Blois as well; that would be for the 5th. I am writing to him at the same time as I am writing to you.

I forgot to mention in my last letter that, due to all our misadventures, I was unable to visit Mr Camille Aymard as you had urged me to do. I will therefore do so in the autumn, when Le Roi du Monde is published. I am told that the manuscript was sent to the printer a fortnight ago, so I expect to receive the proofs soon.

I also forgot to respond to a point in your letter concerning Desvallières; I believe he imagines, quite wrongly, that we want to compete with the groups of artists he leads with Maurice Denis: Arche, Société de St Jean, etc. That is one probable reason for his hostility; and there is another, which is Maritain's influence on all these circles.

Here is another interesting reference to add to your countless notes, if you do not already have it: St Bernard represents the union of the Word with humanity, in the person of Christ, in the form of "a pure lily whose dazzling white corolla forms a graceful cup, a crown representing human nature, and whose golden pistils symbolise the rays of divinity " (Sermon LXX, 5). This is very similar to what you told us about the daisy; it is exactly the same symbolism.

On the other hand, here is what I note in a report from one of the latest sessions of the Académie des Inscriptions: "In Syria, in Homs, the ancient city

From Emesa (?), Mr Cumont discovered an engraved stone bearing a kind of coat of arms. It is the very beginnings of heraldry. On this intaglio, we can see the crescent moon, the symbol of Julius Caesar's family; above it is the sign of Cancer. On the other side, there is an eagle carrying a sun; to its right is a lion, and to its left a griffin. The object seems rather curious, but what do you think of the interpretation? For me, it has nothing to do with Julius Caesar or coats of arms; it is purely astrological: the sun on one side, the moon on the other; Cancer is the zodiacal domicile of the moon, just as Leo is that of the sun; the eagle and the griffin are also animals with solar symbolism. It is astonishing that some scholars do not even notice such simple things!

See you soon, dear Sir and friend, and best regards.

R. G.

Paris, 19 February
1927. 51, rue St Louis en l'Ile
(IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

I should have written to you sooner, as I heard that you had a bad start to the year. Let us hope that this unfortunate period is now over. We too have all had the flu to a greater or lesser extent; it has finally passed, but the effects of this nasty illness linger for a long time.

Thursday's meeting went well; the dissolution is now complete, so we are free on that front. The most difficult issue was the change of name; if removing the word "Société" is sufficient from a legal standpoint, as we believe it is, then we will leave it at that. Mr Buron told me he would try to write to you in a few days.

I am very late this month with my article, which is not yet finished; I will have to hurry; fortunately, it takes less time to prepare than yours, with all the work you must have with all those photographs! What you do is always very interesting; I have read your study on the Lamb, and I saw that you asked me a question; I will try to answer it later. The Christian influences in certain Lamaist rites seem indisputable to me; but as for the "King of the World" (who, incidentally, may not reside in Tibet), the question is quite different, and in this case, it is certainly a symbol that predates Christianity. This is also linked to apocalyptic symbolism, which I do not believe can be sufficiently explained by the role of the Lamb in Judaism alone. Regarding the "King of the World", you will have seen from Mr Le Cour's letter that my book has finally been published; I should rather say that it is half published, as the printer has so far sent only some of the copies, so I do not yet have any at my disposal; as soon as I do, I will be happy to send you one. At that point, I will ask for an appointment with Mr. Camille Aymard, as you suggested.
committed to delivering the volume to him myself.

Les Éditions de la Sirène no longer exists; the collection was acquired by the Crès bookshop. Yesterday, Mr Grolleau gave me the information you requested: Guillaume Apollinaire's

Bestiaire by Guillaume Apollinaire, which was published at a rather prohibitive price, is now out of print; but you need not regret this, as it is simply a rather fanciful poem, like the engravings themselves, which, although partly inspired by ancient figures, have no documentary value; so you would certainly not have found anything of use in it.

I am very pleased with your approval of my supplementary article on fish; there is undoubtedly much more to be said on the subject, but I believe it clarifies a few points that you had only mentioned in passing, particularly regarding the dolphin and its relationship with the octopus (I had added to my notes on this subject in the proofs after reading your January article). Regarding the octopus, there is some truth in what Mr Le Cour says, in the sense that this emblem does not always have a satanic character; but, apart from that, what a lot of fantasy! His comparison of octopus and pulp does not hold water; it all falls apart when you realise that the word octopus is simply an alteration of polyp, so that it only refers to the animal's many legs or arms. As for Medusa's head and its linguistic interpretation, this also seems risky to me, no less so than the assertion that the word eureka does not appear in the Greek dictionary; perhaps he was unable to find it there because it is the perfect tense of an irregular verb. I also see here the influence of an idea put forward by Mr Dujols, who claimed that a large number of words had been removed from Greek dictionaries published since the 17th century; I am not sure on what basis he made this assertion.

I had something to point out to you about a figure that could well relate to the crustacean, but I haven't been able to find the note about it, which dates back many years; I'll save it for next time.

There is a symbol of Christ that I have always forgotten to mention to you and which has a certain importance: it is the griffin. Do you have any examples of it in iconography? It seems to me that there must be some. In any case, this symbol is found in Dante, for whom the dual nature of this animal represents the union of divine and human nature in Christ. It should also be noted that, in ancient times, the griffin was often depicted holding the wheel of the world.

In recent days, at the Louvre, I saw an Etruscan vase on which both the ordinary swastika and the claviger swastika similar to the one you sent me a drawing of, are depicted. On the other hand, on archaic Greek vases, alongside the swastika in various forms, there is another sign or frequently repeated, which I had not noticed until now; I wonder what its exact meaning might be; perhaps you know something about it.

Mr. Martin, who was at our meeting on Thursday, showed me a note from Mr. de Sarachaga in which he mentions hearts depicted on mummy bandages; have you ever heard of this? This would be worth checking; some of these hearts have a swastika in the centre (which Mr. de Sarachaga wrote as zwadisca, I really don't know why, as this form does not correspond to anything linguistically, unless it exists in some dialect of Russia or the Baltic countries, which is possible after all).

I see that all is not going well in the Atlantean Society, whose

committee lacks homogeneity; under such conditions, it is highly doubtful that it will succeed. However, what Mr Le Cour says about the large attendance at the lectures is correct; we attended the one on 22 January, having received an invitation from the lecturer, whom we know, and it is true that not everyone was able to get in. Mr Le Cour, who always thinks big, dreams of celebrating the anniversary of the foundation in the large amphitheatre of the Sorbonne.

I now come to the letter concerning me, which I thank you for sharing with me; you can rest assured that I do not take it too seriously. What Le Cour says about my supposed "evolution" had already reached me from another source; he is greatly mistaken in imagining that I have changed my mind on any point, not only since my first books, but for much longer than that. Also, when he says that I am now on his side, he is somewhat reversing the roles, because I have been on that side for a good twenty years, while he has only been there for three or four years. It is he who has 'evolved', fortunately for him, because before that he was mainly concerned with turning tables, which has never happened to me; and if, as he says, I have frequented various circles in order to see if there was anything interesting there (I was quickly convinced that there was not), this does not imply any change in my ideas.

I do not regret what I wrote about Greece, even if it means I will be denied the honour of joining the Atlantis Society, an honour I would have declined anyway if the offer had been made to me, as I have little time to waste. From what we have seen and heard, it seems to be mainly literary and artistic events; it lacks a serious foundation.

Criticism of my style does not affect me much, as I only seek to be correct and as clear as possible; I am not writing poetry or literature, and that would even be contrary to my intentions. This is science, albeit a very different kind of science from that of the "officials", and I do not really see what "lyricism" has to do with it. Finally, if I often use numerous notes and references, it is because everything I have to say could not fit into the text without detracting from the rest of the presentation.

I never wrote the sentence supposedly taken from the "Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines"; Mr Le Cour read the passage in the same way as the Chinon inscription! It concerns different hypotheses concerning the end of modern Western civilisation; the first, the most unfavourable, would be the loss of all civilisation in the West, "a state of degeneration more or less comparable to that of today's savages". Then comes the sentence in question: "The second case would be that in which the representatives of other civilisations, that is to say, the peoples of the East, in order to save the Western world from this irremediable decline, would assimilate it willingly or by force, supposing that such a thing were possible and that, moreover, the East consented to it" (p. 333). Note that this is only a remedy to be applied in a completely desperate case; and I then consider a third hypothesis,
"a return to true and normal intellectuality, which, instead of being imposed and enforced, or at most accepted and endured from outside, would then be effected voluntarily and spontaneously". This other solution, which I declare to be the best if it is

possible, is nothing other than the West's return to its own tradition. So, how have I changed my mind since I wrote that?

On the other hand, I have always considered that all traditions, whether Eastern or Western, have the same basis in different forms; it is therefore not a question of making an "attempt at association" between these traditions (which are, moreover, far more than two), but of becoming aware of their essential unity, and also of the reasons for their external differences.

As for Atlantis and Hyperborea (the latter being much more important than the former when one wants to go back to the very origins), if I have not yet mentioned them, it is simply because I have not had the opportunity to do so; however, there is an allusion to these things in the "Introduction" (pp. 45-46). What I know about them comes mainly from India: Mr Le Cour is therefore quite wrong, from his own point of view, to speak ill of Eastern traditions, which are perhaps only Eastern in the present state of terrestrial humanity. The question of this present state and that of origins must be carefully distinguished; however, I believe I have explained myself quite clearly on this point on several occasions.

As for claiming that I am ignorant of certain things or that I have "not yet found" them, what can Mr Le Cour possibly know about that? I do not feel at all obliged to share with him the data on which I am working, nor to reveal everything I know at once (and there may well be many things that I will never write about). He may also say that I am unaware of his linguistic discoveries because, considering them to be pure fantasy, I would be careful not to take them into account. As for his predictions, he certainly senses something, and he is not alone in this at present; but if it comes to specifics, I think I would find it difficult to agree with him, and I very much doubt that he is aware of the true cyclical laws.

These are some lengthy reflections on Mr Le Cour's letter; you may draw on them in your reply as you see fit.

The ladies send you their best regards, and I, dear Sir and friend, remain as always yours most cordially.

R. G.

Paris, 18 October 1927.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

It has already been a fortnight since we returned to Paris; so far, the weather here has been better than what we enjoyed (so to speak) during the holidays; has it improved where you are too?

Mr Buron wrote to me from Mettray to ask for the address of Mr de Frémond, to whom he wanted to send a few copies of the October issue containing his poetry; he told me then that he was due to be back here on 28 September; since then, I have had no further news.

Thank you for sending me the passages from Fr. Anizan's letters concerning me; you were luckier than Mr. Chauvet, who, having made various references to my works in his letters to him, did not receive the slightest reply on this subject, which makes him doubt that Fr. Anizan is familiar with the said works. It seems to me, moreover, that in what you quote to me, there are many vague phrases, as vague as the last letter I received in Loudun, to which I must tell you that I did not reply, finding it perfectly useless to pursue a discussion that was beside the point (I told Abbé Buron this when I sent him the information he requested). I see that this business of "criteria" keeps coming up, as in the letter from Abbé Martin that I showed you; I have no desire to get drawn into this "philosophical" debate, which, for me, is completely pointless; it would be a waste of time, and I prefer to occupy myself with more interesting things. Speaking of philosophy, I have noticed a quite extraordinary change in Father Anizan's latest articles: he now quotes St Thomas in almost every sentence; and when I recall certain remarks he used to make to me, it seems to me that he is no longer the same man. I do not know whether this change of attitude has been imposed on him, or whether it is simply the fear of the difficulties that might be raised against him that makes him act this way. In any case, if he thinks that I see too much of the influence of Maritain and Co. in all this, it is because he is not, as I am, aware of all the machinations of these people, who are nicknamed here "the Meudon gang".

I was very surprised to see, in the latest issue of Regnabit, the letter written over a year ago by my friend Faugeron to Fr. Anizan to thank him for his article on "Psyche"; why is this letter being published after so long?

What do you think of the Glozel affair and all the discussions it is currently giving rise to? I would be interested to hear your opinion on this; it seems to me that "official" prejudices are playing a certain role in this story. Whatever the solution may be, if there is one, the diversity of hypotheses put forward shows sufficiently how wrong it would be to trust the supposed results of a certain science...

Has Mr Foussier finally decided to come to Loudun?

I have recently been proofreading my next book; I was surprised that the printers were working so quickly this time, as this is completely out of character for them; I therefore think that the volume will be published next month.

Do you have any views of the sculptures in the Church of St Sauveur in Dinant? Genty asked me to ask you this question; he told me that he had set some aside for you, in case you didn't have any.

Have you sent Father Hoffet a reply to his Dante-esque enquiry? I haven't done so yet; I'll have to get round to it in the next few days. It's curious that he used exactly the same formula for both of us; however, I believe that if he hadn't been genuinely interested in our articles, he wouldn't have said anything at all.

Have you done the work Don Leclercq asked you to do for his dictionary?

The end of your article on the ram seems very good to me; what you say about the symbolism of the horns is quite accurate; this point could, moreover, give rise to many developments. Horned helmets are found almost everywhere,

even in Japan, and they certainly have the meaning you indicate.

Best regards to all, dear Sir and friend, and my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 8 June 1928.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

I have been meaning to reply to your letter, which is now almost two months old, for a long time, but until now I have been unable to find the time. In addition to my classes and lessons, I have been constantly busy with urgent and rather tedious work: first, an English translation of L'Homme et son devenir, which was so poorly done that there were misinterpretations on every page, and I had to rework it from start to finish, which, I believe, gave me almost as much trouble as if I had had to do it myself. Moreover, instead of submitting the manuscript to me as I had expected, the publishers had it typeset first and sent me only the proofs; they were frightened by the additional costs that the corrections would cause them (even though it was their fault), and I had some difficulty in making them understand the necessity of the said corrections; they finally gave in. As soon as that was finished, I had to start preparing additions to Theosophism, which is out of print and will be republished very soon, and which needed to be updated with events that have occurred since the first edition; as the composition of the latter had been preserved, the text did not need to be touched, but only a sort of appendix needed to be added, in the form of a series of notes referring to the passages they were intended to supplement; this work, while not seeming very important, required a great deal of research on my part, and I was only able to finish it last week.

It was indeed Mrs Lurreau (?) who wrote me the story you know, but it was not Mr Le Cour who told it to her. She told me later, in another letter, that she had heard it from a priest who is a friend of yours; perhaps you can guess who it is.

We were very sorry that you were unable to come to Blois during the Easter holidays, since you were so close by, firstly because it would have given us the pleasure of seeing you, and secondly because I could have explained many things to you more easily and more completely in person than in writing.

Shortly after our return here, one of my correspondents from the South, Dr Peyre, sent me some letters that Father Anizan had addressed to him, containing further proof that Father Anizan had not told me the truth, particularly in claiming that his questions had been prompted by my response to his communication to the Committee. At that point, feeling that I now knew everything I wanted to know and that it was time to put an end to a story that had already wasted too much of my time, I sent my letter of resignation, not only from the Committee, but from the "Rayonnement Intellectuel" society itself.

believe that you are also aware of this last part of our correspondence, as I asked Father Anizan to communicate the entire correspondence to all the members of the Committee. You can see that I have only partially followed your advice, because, far from thinking it preferable that my resignation should go unnoticed, I am keen that the real reasons should be known; my case is in no way comparable to that of Mr Thomas, and my intellectual position does not allow me to give the impression that it is.

There is one thing in your letter that is quite right: you say that "we do not speak the same language"; Dr Peyre, for his part, wrote exactly the same thing to me. However, contrary to what you think, the question of the true nature of Eastern spiritual centres, which Fr. Anizan is completely unaware of, seems to me to be the most important question in all this, and even the only essential one. if he had been able to understand that these centres have absolutely no connection with religion, he would not have written to me all the more or less incoherent things that he wrote. Moreover, even in your letter, I still find, if I may say so, a trace of the same ambiguity, for you speak at one point of "religious truth", whereas, for me, that is not what it is about at all, but rather truth without any epithet, outside of any special form, religious or otherwise. religious truth must not be confused with total truth, and it is this confusion that is the real cause of all misunderstanding.

It is understandable, of course, that Fr. Anizan should take precautions with regard to the publication he edits, since he is subject to the authority of people who, in many matters, are ignorant and incompetent (I remember what you wrote to me last summer about the censor in Reims); but if he had to take these precautions with regard to me, he should have done so before asking for my collaboration and before automatically enrolling me in his Committee; I never asked anything of him, and as a result, I retained my complete independence from him and his organisation; moreover, if he had told me that my membership would entail any commitment on my part, I would have declined his offers outright. He has shown, in every respect, a complete misunderstanding of the real situation; on what basis could he have imagined that he had some kind of right to control me? When I pointed out things that were embarrassing for him, he was careful not to respond, and he thought he could get away with throwing the word "errors or other such things" at me, as if that could impress me! He must not know me very well; I don't know exactly what kind of people he usually deals with, but what is certain is that they are people with whom I have nothing in common. In short, in his letters, I found only arguments that proved his ignorance of the subject (I couldn't even get him to understand that philosophy didn't interest me and was, for me, a non-existent thing), threats that couldn't affect me, and, especially towards the end, rather vulgar insults; all of which is truly childish, and would be rather laughable if it were not so sad to have to observe such a mentality.

You say that Father Anizan asked me to "clarify my intellectual and religious position"; I see two things here that need to be clearly distinguished. As for my intellectual position, which cannot be explained in a few lines, I do not

I could explain it better than I have done in my books; however, to understand it, one would have to read those books, including the strictly doctrinal ones, and above all understand them, which I do not think Fr. Anizan is capable of, nor perhaps any theologian. As for my religious position, I do not have to have one, since, as I told you earlier, I do not place myself in that position at all.

It may be that, as you say, Fr. Anizan is not directly involved in certain intrigues, but that he is nevertheless influenced by people who are involved in them. Those of my friends here to whom I have had occasion to show our correspondence (and among them priests) have been unanimous in thinking that the attitude he has taken has been imposed on him; I prefer that for him, because he has been, in a way, in this whole affair, nothing more than an irresponsible instrument. Moreover, I know too much about how things work in certain ecclesiastical circles to be surprised; and I would even add that, regarding the 'Roman centre', as Father Anizan puts it, without claiming to be fully informed, I know many things that he himself is certainly unaware of. It is not that I am particularly interested in this, but I cannot prevent people from telling me certain stories, which I simply record in my memory for purely documentary purposes. If only you knew, for example, all the very edifying things that various priests and religious have told me about the Index! The conclusion that emerges from all this is quite simple: there are things that must impress the masses, and I would even say that this is necessarily so, but... Cicero said long ago that two augurs could not look at each other without laughing; it seems that this is still exactly the same today. This is strictly between us, of course, because unless I am absolutely forced to, I do not want to get involved in things that, after all, are none of my business; I believe that everyone should be master in their own home and in their own domain, and it is only if someone tries to encroach on mine (I say "mine" to make myself understood) that I will have to put things in order; I confess that I would prefer not to have to do so; but, whatever happens, the imprudent will have only themselves to blame. You may have some opportunity to make this known, at least indirectly, to people who may be affected, since even in certain Catholic circles there does not seem to be the basic caution (which theosophists and vulgar spiritualists had) to be wary of what I may have in store. There is even this very curious thing: people from various walks of life to whom I have spoken very harsh truths have remained silent; Catholicism is the only thing in the Western world today to which I have shown sympathy and which I have declared respectable, and Catholics are also, so far, the only ones who have addressed insults and threats to me. One may conclude whatever one wishes from this; for my part, I conclude above all that Westerners, taken collectively, are only "possible" when shown the stick... Moreover, I see no appreciable difference between the spirit of domination that asserts itself in Father Anizan's letters and that which presides over colonial conquests; how "unspiritual" it all is!

Another thing: Father Anizan always kept me in the dark about the criticism levelled at my latest articles in Regnabit; he didn't even have the basic courtesy

He did not have the courtesy to inform me of this (nor did he have the basic courtesy to wait for my resignation before removing me from the Regnabit service); without you, I would still be unaware of its existence, and I see that it was not through him that you learned of it. Similarly, I had some difficulty getting him to admit that it was the "Crisis of the Modern World" that had triggered his attack, and he was careful not to tell me that he was echoing certain criticisms made by theologians; I suspected as much right away, and besides, I don't really care, because I cannot be affected by criticisms that are necessarily false; but what devious methods! You must realise, moreover, that I will not waste my time arguing with a few more or less anonymous theologians, firstly because I am completely convinced of the futility of discussion in general, secondly because I have no business allowing myself to be drawn into a field that has nothing in common with my own, and finally because there are things which, by their very nature, are and must remain above discussion. As I have never asked anything of anyone, no one has anything to demand of me either; and, as the considerations I am setting out relate to a strictly 'initiatory' point of view, people will have to resign themselves, willingly or unwillingly, to being satisfied with what I deem appropriate to tell them. I will always be willing to explain certain things to those who are qualified, if there are any, but only to them, and on condition that they prove to me that they possess effective knowledge; this, I beg you to believe, is something quite different from philosophical-theological arguments. I am sure that the theologians who are busy criticising me would not last long on this ground; and without going any further, I would like to see what they would say, for example, if I asked them certain specific questions about the "power of the keys". ... But let us leave that aside; it may well be, after all, that what has happened should be seen merely as a manifestation of the untimely zeal of a few subordinates, and that those in high places are not prepared to allow themselves to be led by them into more or less unfortunate adventures; Personally, once again, it matters little to me, but it may be interesting to know exactly how far modern decadence has gone. In any case, this story is the most beautiful confirmation of everything I have written; I do not know why my last book provoked such an explosion of fury, because, after all, it contains nothing very different from what is already in the previous ones. If I issued certain warnings, it was because I had to, without however harbouring any illusions about the outcome; those to whom they are addressed are free to ignore them, that is their business and no longer mine.

I am still thinking about your Mazdean visitor; would it have occurred to you to ask him, before entering into conversation with him, whether he recognised the "absolute supremacy of the Roman centre" in all areas? The very idea would surely have seemed absurd to you; it is just as absurd to ask me such a question. All this makes me regret a little that I did not adopt an Eastern name to sign my writings, which would have been very easy for me and would have had the advantage of cutting short in advance any more or less absurd intervention.

Now, as I wrote to Father Anizan, I see this affair as an

"experience" that I do not regret, because it was worth having; but once is enough, and from now on I will carefully keep away from all circles of this kind; it is very likely that my collaboration will no longer be sought, but even if it were, I would refuse without hesitation.

I apologise for the length of these explanations; I felt I had to give them to you because of the great esteem I have for you and because they may be useful to you on occasion to set certain things straight. I have only one regret, which is that I can no longer follow your work; everything else, as you can imagine, is of no concern to me whatsoever.

I was recently asked a question that I was unable to answer accurately: when did people begin to depict Christ on the cross? I would be very grateful if you could provide me with this small piece of information, as it is something you surely know.

My aunt and Françoise ask me to convey their best regards to you, and I, dear Sir and friend, remain, as always, yours sincerely.

R. G.

Blois, 25 August
1928. 74, rue du
Foix.

Dear Sir and friend,

About eight days ago, shortly before your letter arrived, I did indeed receive one from my brother-in-law inviting me to visit Loudun this week, which was completely impossible for me, as I replied immediately. So it seems that my arrival was announced a little too hastily. On the other hand, I have also been invited to Champigny; according to a letter I received this very morning, it could only be around the
15 September; but at that time, i.e. after the start of the hunting season, will I still be welcome in Loudun? I have no idea, but in any case, I couldn't possibly make two trips, and to tell the truth, I'm still very hesitant and wondering what to do. Indeed, not to mention the difficulty of arranging everything with everyone to make the dates coincide, this trip will be rather difficult for me this year... Moreover, my aunt, who had been feeling better since we arrived here, fell ill again last week and has not been doing very well since, so I wonder if it would be wise to leave her alone. In any case, even if everything worked out, you can count on it being around mid-September at the earliest, certainly not before; I wanted to let you know as soon as possible so that you can make arrangements for your time between now and then. I too would be delighted to see you again and discuss many things with you.

I heard that your conference, for which you sent me the programme, was very successful and interesting; my congratulations.

No, I have not seen the article against Cocteau that you mention; I only know, somewhat vaguely, that a book was published a month or two ago that caused quite a stir (I could not remember the name of the author, who was completely unknown to me) and which must have been the cause of this article. In any case, as far as

Maritain, it seems that he found a way to distance himself from Cocteau on this occasion; the ease with which he changes his attitude is quite extraordinary. But there is something else that must have been a much harder blow for him: the condemnation of the "Friends of Israel" by Rome a few months ago. Have you heard about it?

A few days before we left Paris, I saw Dom Leclercq getting on a tram in front of Saint-Germain des Prés; do you think he will visit you again this year?

Would it be possible for you to provide me with the information I requested in my last letter regarding when Christ began to be depicted on the cross? This would be very helpful, as I do not have any specific information on this subject and have not yet been able to provide this detail to the correspondent who asked me about it. It seems that Mr Le Cour is back in Crete; he is very fortunate to be able to afford such trips. I notice from time to time that he seizes on any excuse to make disparaging references to my work; it is a real obsession. As you can imagine, I couldn't care less, and he is mistaken if he thinks I am going to waste my time responding to him (which is perhaps what he would like); I will simply have to, when I have the opportunity, put an end to the claim he repeats everywhere that I spoke of a "Hyperborean Atlantis", which is something quite comparable to a "square circle"; let him take the West for the North if he wants, but let him not attribute to me his Confusion!

I would be delighted to know how your research is progressing; are you still discovering new things?

Please accept, dear Sir and friend, my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 9 November 1928.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

I hope you will excuse me for being so late in replying; following the recent misfortune that has befallen me, I am faced with all sorts of organisational difficulties and am obliged to deal with many matters for which I am ill-suited. As you can see, my fears about my poor aunt's health during the holidays were not exaggerated; it was truly impossible for me to leave her alone. I deeply regret not being able to see you, especially since I now have no idea what will happen next. If I were sure of keeping Françoise with me, we would be able to manage somehow; but her mother has expressed her intention of taking her back, without any concern for what might become of me if I remain completely isolated. After all we have done, I never expected this; there are things that are incredible and extremely painful; naturally, I ask you to keep this to yourself.

Thank you for your information on the date of the appearance of the Crucifix, which I have communicated to the correspondent who asked me for it; it is more or less what I thought, but I did not have sufficient details.

What you have been told about an offensive by certain French ecclesiastical circles against everything related to the East does not surprise me in the least, and in fact, this offensive began a long time ago; what happened to me with Regnabit is, in essence, just one manifestation of it. However, I do not know whether the appointment of Father Pinard de la Boullaye to the chair of Notre Dame has anything to do with these manoeuvres; I have not heard anything about it apart from what you told me in your letter, and, having never read any of his publications, I am completely unaware of his attitude in this regard; I only feel a certain "a priori" mistrust of any "historian of religions", whoever they may be. If by chance you have any clearer information, I would be grateful if you would share it with me.

On a similar note, a few months ago (I believe it was in June), there was a completely extravagant article in the Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secrètes: after a few insinuations about my latest book, it denounced a great conspiracy between the Jesuits and the Jews to transfer the seat of the Papacy to Jerusalem, with a view to moving it even further east; and the funniest thing is that Maritain was named as one of the main agents of this conspiracy! This is undoubtedly due to his falling out with Massis, but I still did not expect such a story; it would be laughable if it were not so lamentable to see such nonsense published in Catholic journals and given credence in certain circles.

I was recently told that you had published a very interesting article on the Sphinx; if you have a copy available, I would be very grateful if you could send it to me; I hope this request is not too intrusive.

You should know that Mr Le Cour is going to publish a volume on "Crete and its mysteries" in the "Cahiers du Portique" collection; I am curious to see what

That will be it. As for what you suggest I clarify regarding myself, he might indeed agree to include it in Atlantis, but I will tell you quite frankly that I prefer to remain entirely aloof and give no pretext for establishing direct relations between him and me; I have many reasons for this. I will find a way, one way or another, in a book or an article, to say a few words about this so-called "Hyperborean Atlantis", without giving it more importance than it deserves.

Regarding "Atlantis", what do you think about the question of the Triple Enclosure? This morning I received a letter from Mr Florance, to whom I had sent your brochure on the Heart of Chinon, which he did not know about and which interested him greatly; he would like to know the meaning of this symbol. Do you have any thoughts on this? I have one of my own, which I will share with you next time.

Please accept, dear Sir and friend, my warmest regards.

R. G.

I heard that Mr Lévrier had left Loudun to return to Poitiers; has he already sold his practice? It seems to me that he had only had it for a very short time.

Paris, 25 November 1928.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

Mr Grolleau recently informed me that there was a note in the latest volume of Abbé Brémond's Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux in which you were mentioned. I have made a copy of this note and am sending it to you in case you are not yet aware of it.

I trust you received the letter I wrote to you some time ago.

I have had a rather bad bout of flu for the past eight days or so, which is very inconvenient when you have to get around, but that is nothing compared to all the troubles I mentioned last time; you can imagine how difficult it is to work in such conditions!

Yours sincerely

R. G.

Paris, 11 January 1929.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

It has been a long time since I heard from you. I trust you received my last letters, particularly the one in which I sent you a

quote about you; but you are no doubt still overloaded with work, which is why you have not been in touch. However, I do not want to delay any longer in sending you my best wishes for the new year, even though they are already long overdue.

I like to believe that your health is better than mine, for mine still leaves much to be desired; for nearly two months now, I have been suffering from a kind of flu that I cannot seem to shake off. It is true that the weather is not very favourable, but the troubles I have had and still have are certainly also a major factor in the persistence of this condition; no matter how hard one tries to persevere, the body's resistance unfortunately has its limits.

I was finally able to read your article on the Sphinx, as a friend who had obtained a copy lent it to me. I found it very interesting, as I had been told, and I admire your ability to convey certain things, particularly certain quotations, without attracting the ire of a censor who is as suspicious as he is unintelligent. I will only allow myself one small comment on this article: why do you say that "the ancients knew little about the Divinity", that "they conceived it as best they could"? I would like to believe that this is merely a kind of rhetorical precaution on your part, simply intended to make the rest more easily acceptable.

I have been unable to find out anything about what you told me regarding the appointment of Father Pinard de la Boullaye to the chair at Notre Dame; have you had any further information on this matter?

You are no doubt aware that Mr Le Cour has announced a work on the "Cretan Mysteries", which will probably be published in the "Cahiers du Portique"; I wonder how he will deal with this question. Speaking of Mr Le Cour, do you have any idea about the history of the "Triple Enclosure" that I mentioned in a previous letter?

The new edition of Théosophisme, updated to reflect recent events, as I believe I mentioned to you, was published last month.

I was truly astonished to learn recently that Dom Leclercq had just published a book on early Christian life with Rieder. Two or three years ago, I refused to give anything to this publishing house, whose tendencies are all too well known; I see that not everyone has the same scruples.

Françoise sends her best regards, and I, dear Sir and friend, remain, as always, yours sincerely.

R. G.

Paris, 30 January 1929.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

No, I did not receive your previous letter; many are getting lost at the moment, and I have noticed this several times now.

I was very surprised by the news you gave me; I knew nothing about it, and besides, since the trouble we had with Françoise, we have

hardly heard anything from the family. I must admit that I never imagined such a change in your life; I hope that the consequences will be happy ones for you. In any case, you will certainly be less isolated; it is sometimes very painful to feel alone, as I now know only too well, alas!
... I am happy to hear that you are going to live so close to Paris, as I hope we will have the pleasure of seeing you from time to time.

Thank you for kindly sending me your article on the Sphinx, which arrived almost at the same time as your letter; if you could also send me the one you mention, on the dove, when it is published, I would be very grateful.

So the censorship of Regnabit has changed? Otherwise, I cannot explain what you say this time on the subject, as it is so different from what you wrote to me when my article was rejected. In any case, we should be very pleased that you are being given such freedom. As for me, I have had enough of this experience, and in future I am determined never again to submit anything I write to the judgement of ignorant and incompetent people (and the censors in question are necessarily all ignorant and incompetent when it comes to Eastern doctrines and, more generally, all matters of an esoteric or initiatory nature).

As for the publication of Dom Leclercq's book by Rieder, it may indeed be that, as you say, there are hidden reasons for this, let's say "diplomatic" reasons if you like; nevertheless, it is true that this has made a rather unfortunate impression on many people.

The figure of the triple enclosure was preserved until the Middle Ages, like many other ancient symbols; there is at least one example of it in your brochure on the Heart of Chinon. For me, the three enclosures simply represent three degrees of initiation; this is a symbolism that was widespread in many different times and places. As for the circle within the square, it undoubtedly has multiple meanings, but it seems to be above all a figure of the "Anima Mundi"; I even wonder if there might be some indication of this in Plato's
Plato's "Timaeus", but of course my memories are not precise enough for me to say for sure.

I have already thought about an English translation of "Theosophism", but so far it has not been successful; moreover, it would be necessary to try to have it published in America, as it would be very difficult in England because of the political (and especially police) support enjoyed by those people.

I like to believe that you are still in good health; here, thanks to the awful damp weather we are having, there is flu everywhere. However, I feel a little better, or rather a little less ill, but the difference is not very noticeable yet.

Best regards from Françoise. Warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 8 February
1929. 51, rue St Louis en l'Ile
(IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

Many thanks for sending me your two articles on the dove, which once again arrived at about the same time as your letter, and which I read with great interest, as you can imagine. Regarding the passage you specifically pointed out to me, I see that you have handled it very well to make it acceptable, which otherwise could indeed have raised difficulties. I must tell you, however, that I believed that the concept of the Holy Spirit as feminine and, consequently, identifying her with the Blessed Virgin (or rather presenting the latter as an earthly manifestation of the Holy Spirit) was fairly well known, as it is found in certain Gnostic schools and also, it seems, among the Albigensians. There are still, apart from what you mention, people who support this theory; I knew a brave lady, a little extravagant, who thought she had a mission to make Rome accept it, and who annoyed all the priests in Paris with this story. What is certain is that the dove is indeed a feminine symbol among all peoples; but one could argue, on the contrary, that the Holy Spirit is also symbolised by fire, an essentially active or masculine element. What you say about certain organisations is very curious; but I think we should distinguish between those that are merely mystical and those that are truly initiatory in nature, for the former are much less interesting than the latter. In the case of the "Estoile Internelle", is it certain that it really dates back to the 15th century through an unbroken line of succession? I have known groups that were also in possession of authentically ancient documents, and which used them to present themselves as the legitimate continuation of the organisations from which these documents originated; but, after verification, it turned out that these had been collected from anywhere, so that there was no basis for these claims. This is what makes me somewhat suspicious, perhaps quite unjustified, moreover, in the case in question.

As for the symbol of the triple enclosure, it is certain that, in addition to what I told you last time, there is a meaning relating to the three worlds; but it is closely linked to the one I pointed out to you. Indeed, the degrees of initiation (when it comes to real initiation, of course) are everywhere and always correlated with certain states, which are represented as so many worlds. The symbolism of the heavens in Dante is based on the same principle; it should even be noted in this regard that, in India, the planetary circles are sometimes depicted as concentric circles surrounding Meru. The true initiatory meaning is infinitely multiple, one might say, and, because of the correspondences it entails, it encompasses all the others without ever being limited to them; this is why it has nothing in common with profane interpretations (I use this last word in what might be called the "technical" sense).

Dom Leclercq's book, published by Rieder, is entitled "La vie chrétienne primitive" (Early Christian Life); the most extraordinary thing is that it was Couchoud himself who did the press work!

On reflection, I think you were right to decide to break out of

your isolation; it is certain, in fact, that one can never count on one's family for much; at least you still have yours, whereas I have none left on my side. I still hope to keep Françoise, despite the incredible persecution I am facing. Without her, I don't know what I would do, as I am completely incapable of taking care of practical matters. She has changed a lot recently, and you may have some trouble recognising her. We will certainly come to see you in Orly, and we hope that you will also come here sometimes.

Please accept, dear sir and friend, my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 18 March
1929. 51, rue St Louis en l'Ile
(IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

As I have made a few references to my serious family troubles in my letters to you, I must bring you up to date on what has just happened. After attacking me relentlessly for several months with unprecedented ingratitude and malice (it would take too long and be of little interest to recount, even briefly, all the stages this affair has gone through), my wretched sister-in-law burst in here last Wednesday and took her daughter away in absolutely appalling circumstances. I have learned things that are beyond imagination: without my knowing it, I was surrounded by a veritable network of spies and traitors. The most frightening thing is that the child herself was playing a double game: while she protested every day that she would not leave me, that she wanted to stay with me, she was writing letters to her mother, without my knowledge, to be used if necessary, in which she said she wanted to go with her. There were people who broke into my house in my absence and made her write these letters; but even so, at her age, she must have known what she was saying and doing. So now that I know all this, I would not want her back at any price; I can truly say that I have nurtured a viper. It would be a relief to be freed from all this ignominy, if the situation did not seem to me to be almost insoluble from a material point of view; but anything is preferable to this abject situation. I feel a disgust and revulsion that exceed anything imaginable.

Everything has been orchestrated with truly diabolical skill, arranged in such a way as to make it impossible for me to act. Naturally, I no longer wish to have any dealings with this family who, in gratitude for all we have done, have ganged up against me, resorting to despicable methods.

I wanted to tell you these things, first because I consider you a true friend, and also because, as you know this family, it is good that you know what is going on; above all, I urge you never to mention me to them.

This affair has made me ill once again; on Thursday morning I found myself completely voiceless, and it is only now beginning to pass; I do not know if my body will be able to withstand all these assaults. When I think of everything I have had to endure in just over a year, I am surprised to still be here.

I trust you received my last letter; will you be coming to our region soon? I would be very happy to see you again, especially since it will now be impossible for us to meet in Loudun.

Please accept, dear Sir and friend, my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 30 March
1929. 51, rue St Louis en l'Ile
(IVe)

Dear Sir and friend

I believe that my last letter, in which I told you what had happened to me, reached you safely despite the vagaries of the postal service, which is losing a lot of mail at the moment. However, that is not why I am writing to you again today, at the risk of being a nuisance, as you must have many other concerns; it is to tell you something that partly concerns you and which, without attaching excessive importance to it, I think it is good that you should know about.

I was recently shown one of the latest issues of the Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secrètes (International Review of Secret Societies), which is increasingly resorting to Léo Taxil-style stories and has published an extravagant article against Mr Le Cour, accusing him of being the external agent

of an organisation called A.·.A.·. (Adepts of Atlantis) and led by a certain
Aleister Crowley. I am probably much more familiar with this than the author of
the article; and Aleister Crowley is a highly unsavoury character who was imprisoned in England during the war as a German spy; but he is above all a charlatan and a swindler, rather than the representative of any kind of "occult power". As for Mr Le Cour's connection to the organisation in question, I do not believe it at all, and it seems simply grotesque to me; can one not talk about Atlantis without knowing Aleister Crowley? There are many others, starting with Plato, who spoke of it before him!

But there is something else, and this is what I wanted to get at: the article ends with a perfidious insinuation directed against both of us, against you because one of your files was reproduced in Atlantis, and against me because it is thought that this publication gives me a lot of publicity! Now, you know that although Mr Le Cour often talks about me, it is not to promote me, but on the contrary to attack me unjustly, since he is fixated on seeing me as an 'adversary', even though I have never concerned myself with him. I have just had further proof of this obsession: to inaugurate his Cahiers d'Atlantis, he felt the need to republish the two articles he had previously published in the Nouvelle Revue, in which he attributes to me statements that I never wrote. He included a letter also aimed at me and addressed to Dr Delobel, editor of the Voile d'Isis, without, however, following it up with Dr Delobel's reply, which set the record straight in a very fair manner.

I return to the R.I.S.S. article; there is a sentence that concerns you: "There is much to be said on this subject" (I cannot guarantee the exact wording, but that is the meaning), which suggests that we may not leave it at that. I

assume that this must be an allusion to some of the things contained in your recent articles in "Regnabit", and in particular to what you said there about various mysterious organisations; it would not be surprising if this were used to present you as affiliated with I don't know what more or less diabolical enterprises. One never knows what might come out of that den; for me, as I am completely independent, it is of little concern, but it could be more troublesome for you; in any case, you have been warned.

Either these people are completely dishonest, or they are dangerous lunatics; I prefer Mr Le Cour's whims, which are more harmless!

My health is not improving much; there are times when I am so tired that I cannot even read.

Do not reply if you do not have time, I will not hold it against you; but send me a simple note to tell me that you have received my letters, because with everything that is getting lost at the moment, one can never be too sure.

When you leave Loudun, which I hope will be soon, I trust you will not forget to give me your new address.

Yours sincerely, dear Sir and friend, with my warmest regards.

R. G.

Paris, 11 April 1929.
51, rue St Louis en l'Ile (IVe)

Dear Sir and friend,

I received your two letters, the first of which crossed with mine. Of course, your delay is entirely excusable; thank you for your sympathy.

For the moment, I am managing to get by with the help of the housekeeper we had before my aunt passed away; I am trying not to think too much about what might happen next. However, there are all sorts of issues that I find it very difficult not to worry about: for example, I will be forced to go to Blois during the holidays, even if only for a short time, and I have no idea how I will manage to get by there. Everything is more complicated for me than for anyone else, because I know nothing about practical organisation. And then, what makes the situation even more worrying is my health, which is still not improving; I am so tired that it is impossible for me to work, apart from the essential tasks, which are of no interest anyway; how long will this last?

Françoise's attitude was particularly painful for me, as you can imagine: I would never have thought her capable of such insincerity. She was certainly influenced, but even so, that does not excuse her. I learned many other things that prove her ingratitude and lack of heart; she was truly unworthy of interest. Moreover, she could not have felt the isolation you mention here, as many people took care of her and did their best to provide her with entertainment. She must be in boarding school now; she will find a change, and no doubt regret what she has lost, but it is too late; I do not know

how, with her character, she will be able to bear it. Besides, I am completely uninterested in her; I would not want her back at any price, for I have no need of spies in my house; I would be much more at peace without the material difficulties and also without the fear of falling completely ill; in the end, whatever will be will be. I would like all the more to be in a position to resume my work soon, as the main aim of the people who have brought all this about is precisely to make it impossible for me to continue.

In the last few days, I have received the first proofs of the book I finished in August, which has been delayed in all sorts of ways; I hope it will be published next month.

Yesterday, Mario Meunier informed me that Mr Le Cour had read the infamous article I mentioned to you; apparently, he is absolutely furious, which is hardly surprising. As I predicted, he is particularly indignant that he is being accused of wanting to advertise himself, and also that he is being linked to a so-called Masonic organisation (I say "so-called" because it is not actually Masonic, but the R.I.S.S. claims it is for the purposes of its thesis).

Even if you did collaborate with Atlantis, it seems to me that this is nobody's business, nor is the way in which you may have obtained certain information that is certainly better than much of that provided by the R.
I. S. S., where there are constant errors and confusions (but are they really unintentional?). You are quite right to say that it is impossible, for symbolism, to ignore secret groups; but these people want to monopolise certain issues and cast suspicion on anyone outside their circle who deals with them. I understand your point of view very well; mine is much less 'theoretical', of course, but that does not mean that I am affiliated with any group, especially since that is often quite unnecessary. If I learn anything else, I will be sure to let you know.

I hope to hear from you soon, dear Sir and friend, and send you my warmest regards.

R. G.

René Guénon to Jean Tourniac (excerpts)[1]

Letter dated 10 August 1950

[...] For your group, the changes to the ritual that you have indicated to me seem fine, and there is only one point that I cannot quite understand: since the diagram is drawn on the floor, how can it be turned over without erasing it? Even with your sketch, I cannot imagine how this is possible. Regarding the plumb line, it is obvious that its position must be central, but it would be difficult to say whether this is compatible with the presence of the table, since the layout of an operative ☒.∴ is naturally quite different. On the question of the letter G and the swastika, you will find my article in the July-August issue, for which I am, incidentally, still running very late.

In his last letter, Maugy told me about the 2nd degree ritual he is preparing, and he promised to send me a copy soon. From what he told me, it seemed to me that he was planning to place the square on the recipient's chest so that it touched it with only the two points; I pointed out to him that this was surely incorrect and that it should in fact be placed flat, as your figure indicates. In your figure, the upper part of the circumscribed circle does indeed pass through the throat, but I do not understand why you seem to say elsewhere that this circle reaches the frontal eye, which is certainly much too high for that. What you say about the position of the heart reminds me of something else: it is said that there is a "subtle heart" which is located symmetrically in relation to the ordinary heart, i.e. on the right side, and which even manifests itself in a perceptible way in certain states. Shri-Râmana made several people feel its beating very clearly. On the other hand, I do not know exactly where the representation of Christ's heart in the middle comes from, but I learned from Charbonneau-Lassay that the wound in the side was traditionally supposed to be on the right and not on the left, contrary to certain modern representations in which people felt they had to correct what they imagined to be due to the ignorance or clumsiness of people in the Middle Ages!

[…] I am pleased to hear that you intend to include something on "Masonry and exotericism" in "Symbolism", as there are many things there that are in great need of clarification. Corneloup's article in the latest issue is particularly unfortunate (it is, moreover, only a development of what he had already outlined last year in his report [...] ☒☒☒.∴; Clavelle, who is directly involved, has sent me a reply which I think is very good.

Letter dated 8 February 1949

[…] I am delighted to hear that you will soon be receiving your Master's degree, which will give you more freedom in every respect; I will no doubt hear about the

1 — According to a copy of a copy... of a typescript.

work you have to do, since you will be communicating it to the ☒.∴.☒.∴, and I will also be interested to see your article, which is due to appear (or has already appeared) in "Symbolisme".

What you tell me about the reactions provoked by F∴ Marty's lecture does not surprise me too much, for it is quite certain that many still seem to have retained that incomprehensible mentality which, thirty or forty years ago, was that of the vast majority; it is rather thanks to young people that the change we hope for will come about, but it is obvious that this can only happen gradually...

Thank you for what you have told me about ☒.∴ Peillon, and, of course, you can be sure that I will keep this to myself. I must say that I have never noticed anything in his letters that would lead me to suspect such an attitude on his part, but he is undoubtedly, as you say, very different when he speaks, and in any case he would probably avoid letting me know about this way of thinking. Now I wonder, like you, what the reasons for this might be; it may be that there is a certain amount of misunderstanding involved, and indeed the opposite would be surprising; if it is deliberate, I cannot see what advantage there could be in it, as it could only be explained if he had [...] ideas of his own to promote, which does not seem to be the case... Apart from that, I have a somewhat 'mixed' impression of him, in the sense that I cannot quite figure out what he is looking for, and [...] that he may be more interested in 'scholarly' curiosity than in any real aspiration of another kind; but naturally, having never met him, I don't want to be too assertive in this regard. It also seems to me that he would readily tend to 'collect' various rites, so to speak, which obviously does not give rise to any objection in principle, but which does not seem to me to be of any direct use and [...] rather leads to a certain 'dispersion'.

As for this ☒.∴ who ended up turning to spiritualism, it is really quite [...] indeed; and unfortunately, it is to be feared that this is not an isolated case. It is also certain that there has always been everything in Lyon, the best and the worst, and that this has resulted in a rather troubled psychic atmosphere that should be treated with caution.

At ☒☒☒ ☒.∴.☒.∴, it is not precisely the formation of a new ☒.∴ that is at issue, but the transformation of an already existing ☒.∴, "Akademos", which [...] deemed preferable in order to avoid certain possible difficulties. I had heard about this project quite some time ago; I had thought [...] that it was only a particular idea of F.∴ Corneloup, and I wondered if it would be followed up; but, according to the latest news, it seems that it is now a done deal. Regarding the relationship between the Ark and the Temple, I seem to recall that there must be something in the instructions of the Elected Coëns, but I no longer know where to find it; in any case, the question would certainly be interesting to study in more detail. I had never thought about what you mention regarding the origin of the word "bauhut", but the etymology you suggest is indeed not implausible.

Your interpretation of the Master's words is quite correct; the correct form is "Mah ha-bôneh", which is not too different from the English form, since

differs only in that the ending has become mu (which can be explained by an intention to reduce the whole to three syllables; the other forms are much more distorted, and that of the French rite is even almost unrecognisable, since it has sometimes been questioned whether it could be a Hebrew word! I think you did very well to start studying Hebrew; as for Fabre d'Olivet, you will surely find many interesting things there, but you must read him with caution, because not everything in his work can be accepted without reservation. As for Arabic, it is very similar to Hebrew in terms of roots, but it is true that the grammar is much more difficult and complicated.

You mention Vulliaud, but are you familiar with his "Jewish Kabbalah"? It is undoubtedly the most serious book on the subject, although it is somewhat overshadowed by discussions that obscure the essentials; he intended to write another edition, pruning away all these "side issues", and it is regrettable that, at least so far, he has not done so. I have not seen the work [...] by H. Sérouya, but what I have been told about it, and also an article by the same author that I have read, give me a very unfavourable opinion of it. As for Kabbalistic initiation itself, it can be said that it is practically inaccessible...

On the subject of exotericism, for those who wish to remain within the Christian tradition, orthodoxy surely represents the best solution, since the validity of its sacraments is not questioned by anyone. On the contrary, there is always a certain amount of doubt regarding Anglicanism; it is true that it has been trying to remedy this situation for some time by having its bishops consecrated by Orthodox bishops, but I do not know exactly how far this kind of 'regularisation' has spread at present. There are certainly representatives of Hesychasm in the West, but I do not know if any of them are capable of acting as true spiritual guides. Perhaps I will be able to obtain more precise information on this subject. I am only familiar with the works of S. Boulgakoff through a few quotations and glimpses, but I have the book by W. Lossky, which I find very interesting.

I did not know, from what you had previously told me, that you had maintained or resumed contact with Armenia (I had even thought that the attitude of this modernist deacon had discouraged you, but we should probably not attach too much importance to an individual deviation that is probably only an exception).As for Armenia's relationship with [redacted], I am not sure what the situation is, but there must be something, because the various connections you mention are really interesting; above all, what you tell me about St Gregory the Illuminator, whom I did not know, is very remarkable in this regard. I wonder if we will be able to shed more light on this question. Clavelle also alluded to it some time ago, but he never found the time to give me more explanations on the subject. In one of his last letters, he also mentioned the Armenian bishop of New York and the "Symbolism of the Cross"; I may soon have the opportunity to meet [redacted]. Missak, who reported this to him, as it seems he intended to stop here during a trip to South Africa. I was unaware of the existence in Edjmiadzin of a bell bearing the inscription "0m mai dmê hûm (?)"; it must surely come from Tibet.

or at least from some region of Central Asia, but do we know since when and under what circumstances it has been there?

Letter dated 19 May 1949

[…] Since you now have the Master's degree, that is essentially what matters because, strictly speaking, the higher degrees are not an integral part of [illegible] (which, of course, does not mean that they should be neglected for that reason) . It is certainly regrettable, as you say, that the Royal Arch does not exist in France, and you are not the first to point this out; but, unfortunately, I believe that there is practically no way to fill this gap, at least as long as there is no relationship between French [illegible] and English [illegible]. I am not at all surprised by the unfortunate "neo-spiritualist" tendencies you observe in certain [illegible]∴ of your [illegible]∴; I would even say that, in Lyon, it would be rather surprising if the opposite were true! However, I thought that the infamous Memphis-Misraim rite had been dormant since the war. Has it been revived in recent times?

I read your article in the January issue of Symbolisme, and I find this point very well written and very timely; naturally, I will mention it in my reports, but there has been so much going on lately that they will be quite delayed... On that note, I must tell you that Marius Lepage, in the last letter I received from him, said that he now realised it was a mistake to describe the Church as an 'initiatory organisation', as he had done, and that he would [...] take care not to confuse the exoteric and esoteric aspects in future; I believe that this confusion played a large part in the attitude you criticised in him.

As for the question of exoteric affiliation, it certainly requires careful consideration, and I see that so far this has not been without [...] for you; I hope that you will ultimately be able to find a satisfactory solution.In short, in Christianity, the practice of [...] Catholics is excluded, and only the Orthodox Church is indisputably 'regular', since, as far as the Anglican Church is concerned, there are doubts about its validity from the point of view of apostolic succession; it is true that, for some time now, efforts have been made to remedy this by having Anglican bishops consecrated by Orthodox bishops, but I do not know how far this kind of regularisation extends; until it is complete, it is obviously less certain. I must say that not all Catholic priests think like the one you addressed; I know of a [illegible] who was recently initiated and who, before his initiation, asked the chaplain of an association of engineers of which he is a member what he should do. The chaplain replied that he need not worry about it at all, that he should simply continue to practise Catholicism as he always had done. He too had considered joining the Orthodox Church if the answer had been negative, but he preferred to remain Catholic if possible. There are aspects of Orthodox doctrine [...] that are little known in the West, but it seems that certain Catholic circles have now realised that these are far from insignificant and

that it was very worthwhile to study these questions from a […] There are surely also differences in terminology which, as you […] know, can be quite confusing until one gets used to them; it inevitably takes a certain amount of time and effort to recognise and establish a correspondence between concepts, some of which may relate to genuinely different points of view. The question of "uncreated energies", which you mention, is far from […] clear; the assimilation to "Elohim" that you envisage seems correct to me, but I would not dare to be too assertive, having never had the opportunity […] this sufficiently. The Tetragrammaton expresses a more divine aspect than Elohim, which, one might say, it contains in a kind of synthetic form, and I do not think it is inaccurate to equate the ☒.∴.☒.∴ with the Tetragrammaton. I would like to draw your attention, in case you are not familiar with it, to W. Lossky's book "Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church", which I find very interesting and which clearly explains certain differences with the Western Christian point of view; the word "mystical" itself does not have the same meaning in [...] as it does in others.

Letter of 4 June 1949

Your impressions of the ☒.∴.☒.∴, as things stand at present, seem to me to be entirely accurate; it is unfortunately certain that the ☒☒☒.∴, alongside his undeniable qualities, also has flaws that make it difficult to rely on him, not only this pride individual of which you speak but also a sort of 'instability' such that one never quite knows what to expect from him. As for the other founders, there are a number of them who seem decidedly uncomprehending, and it is doubtful whether they even realise what our real goals are; I believe that Coën in particular is one of them. We must hope, despite everything, that the ☒.∴.☒.∴ will manage to hold its own, but it is certain that this is not enough to do truly serious work, and that we will undoubtedly have to consider setting up something else for which it can serve as a recruitment base. Clavelle had mentioned, albeit in less detail, what happened to you with […] Father Kern; I was very surprised by this, especially since it is hardly possible that he is unaware of Mordvinoff's Masonic status, with whom he seems to be very close and who had spoken to me about him some time ago in connection with Hesychasm. Be that as it may, the reasons for his attitude are most likely those you suppose, particularly with regard to the [...] union of the Churches; it is true that this would be highly desirable in many respects, as you say, but who knows under what conditions it would take place? What I fear for the Churches is that they would decide to attach themselves to Rome, and you will see in a moment why: that certain promises would be made to them with no intention of keeping them. As for you, since Father Kern seems to have changed his mind after what you told him, you would certainly be wise not to break off relations, and we must hope that, despite these unexpected difficulties, this will still lead to a satisfactory outcome. As for the Jesuits he mentioned to you, I am convinced, like Clavelle, that it is

much better not to contact them. I cannot say anything specific about Father de Lubac. As for Father Danielou, what I had read about him initially gave me a fairly favourable opinion, but unfortunately this has changed considerably following the article, a review of which you will find in
"E.T." of [...].

Regarding Syrian and Lebanese ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ belonging to Eastern rites affiliated with Rome, I must say that the situation is far from clear; in practice, they act as if they were unaware of the ban on ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨, and some even thought that it should be included among the "exemptions" they enjoy; but after making enquiries, it appears that this is not the case. In looking into this matter specifically, we have discovered something even more extraordinary: the privileges granted to these Churches when they were attached to Rome, and which they believed to be definitive, have been shamefully misrepresented! This is particularly true of the age of priests, or, to be more precise, the ordination of married men (because, as in the Orthodox Church, they had to be married beforehand), so that it became almost impossible to find candidates for [...] secular ministry (almost all unmarried men become monks), with the result that for some time now, they have resigned themselves to "turning a blind eye" and once again admitting married men to ordination; I have just learned this from ▨∴ Risk, from Beirut, who is himself Melkite and who recently came to spend a few days here.

What you tell me about the initiation you attended at […] does not surprise me at all. Of course, there has been some aberration on that side too, but it has remained very limited so far and is not felt throughout the ▨▨∴ ▨∴ Mercier tells me that he has noticed a resurgence of politics there recently, which is not very reassuring for those who would like to do something else entirely...

Letter from August 1949 (?)

[…]

As for Fr. Danielou's article, there is certainly some misunderstanding on his part, but there must also be another, entirely "personal" reason: his bad mood caused by his brother Alain Danielou's attachment to Hinduism!

Maugy has indeed told me about the results of your research concerning '[...] de la Roche'; in a more recent letter than yours, which has just arrived, he also tells me that you saw two medals of [...] both bearing the same age and date [...] portrait by Dürer, which seems rather strange... On the other hand, how do you think we can explain the fact that he was buried at night and that his death was kept secret for several days? It is not surprising that there is nothing in the documents that directly relates to an initiatory activity; there can only be certain clues, particularly after his relationships; his relationships with the Reformers particularly concern Maugy, but I must say that Clavelle seems much less surprised by this; it may be

that at the origin of the Reformation there were [...] very different from what one might think it to be [...] later on. The prank played on the Germans is really amusing; but is there really a statue of J.K. in Lyon?

I know that there are still Waldensians in Piedmont (⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ Saverio, who was ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ of the ⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠⊠ Council of Italy, was a pastor of the Waldensian Church);

but the fact that they have, in a way, rallied to Protestantism seems to indicate that there must have been a certain degeneration among them (I mean from a doctrinal point of view), although they may still have retained some of their ancient [...]. I cannot remember where I saw the opinion expressed that the Waldensians originated from a Franciscan-inspired movement, whose tendencies they merely exaggerated; I cannot say how much truth there is in this. In any case, I do not think that your requests for information on this subject could have any serious drawbacks; it seems to me that you will be able to find, if necessary, some plausible reason to give, and that you can always simply refer to historical research (which is true, moreover) without giving any further details.

Letter dated 5 October 1949

[…] I would also like to thank you in advance for the copy of the reply from […] that you have promised me, because, even if it is not of great interest (which does not surprise me too much), I will still be curious to see it. […] that you are right about the antiquity of their origin, and that it was only later that a Franciscan movement became involved; on the other hand, the question of their relationship with the Albigensians seems far from clear.

Clavelle sent me the text of his work on Elijah, and I saw in it […] that regarding the numerical value of "Om", which is really curious; on the other hand, he pointed out to me in his last letter that, in addition, there is also, as a Hebrew word preserved in Christian liturgy, "Alleluia" (hallêlu-Jah), which is indeed correct.

The impression you currently have of 'standing still' is not necessarily a bad thing, as it may simply be a period of assimilation of what you have previously acquired.

[…] I see that you are still hesitating about your final choice of exotericism, and I understand that only too well; have you had a reply from the Greek priest you met in Paris? I have never had any precise information about "French orthodoxy"; could you give me some? Everything you say about yourself seems very accurate to me; it seems that the only thing to remember is the […] orthodoxy, and it is certain that, for both, there are, as you say, pros and cons. The difficulty of learning the language is about the same in both cases […]

Letter dated 30 October 1949

[…] I received your letter of 26 September a little earlier; thank you for all the information it contains about St Jean de Luz, which gives me the impression that there must be something really interesting there. The site itself is certainly quite significant, and I have always wondered if the name
"Luz" could have some connection with Hebrew here, or perhaps the Spanish word meaning "light" is more likely. The fact that the church is dedicated to Andrew of Scotland is rather strange, and I cannot see how it could be explained other than by a connection with the Orders of Chivalry [...] The note you enclosed with your letter seems to be [...] mainly concerned with proving that the Knights Templar could not have been there [...] but his argument is not very convincing, nor even very [...] in terms of chronology; what does it matter if the enclosure [...] only dates from the secondth half of the 14th century and must therefore be attributed to the Hospitallers [...].

[…] Your remark about the motto "De medietate Lunæ" is truly curious ("mediate" does not exist in Latin and is a barbarism due to [...] and it may indeed be that there is something there, although it does not quite refer to the end of the cycle, since, if I remember correctly, there must still be three Popes after the one it refers to.

Letter of 9 January 1950

[…] I see that you have definitely had no luck in your dealings with the Orthodox, both Greek and Russian; I am always surprised by this attitude, which seems to be new among them and whose reasons I do not understand, unless it has something to do with the question of […] the Churches […]

I have just received the December issue of "E.T."; I therefore think that you may have already had the opportunity to read all of my articles on Christianity; you will no doubt mention this to me next time. Your thoughts on this subject coincide […] to a large extent with those that Clavelle has shared with me recently; now that you are in Paris, he will be able to easily communicate to you the most important aspects of what we have in all this. As a result of the historical research he has undertaken (and is still pursuing, for that matter), he seems to be increasingly perplexed […] about the question of the original character of Christianity; and it must be said […] that it is indeed very complex and very difficult. You are no doubt aware that attempts have been made to link early Christianity in one way or another to the Essene schools, but the problem is that we actually know very little about the Essenes themselves. In any case, it is at least certain that, as long as Christianity remained within the framework of Judaism, it could not have had a distinct exoteric law; under these conditions, it is difficult to see what else it could have been other than an initiatory path [...] must we admit that 'externalisation' began as soon as Christianity spread outside the Jewish milieu, i.e. very early on, since

[...] being thus related above all to the activity of St Paul himself [...] would explain why we already find, in ancient texts, things that seem hardly compatible with an initiatory and esoteric character (the baptism of children, for example, as Clavelle pointed out). It is true that there would still be, in any case, certain embarrassing passages [...] the Gospels themselves, such as those you mention; [...] the expression "all nations", which sometimes seems to refer to all the countries included in the Roman Empire, and sometimes only to the Jews who were then established in various countries outside Palestine [...]

Letter dated 9 February 1950

[…] As you can imagine, I was very pleased with the good news I have received so far about your meetings, and I hope you will tell me more about them soon. […]

Letter dated 20 June 1950

[…] I understand your reservations about the atmosphere at the ☒.∴.☒.∴; it is a pity that things have not turned out as satisfactorily as we might have hoped, but I believe that, for want of anything better, we must nevertheless continue to do everything possible to maintain the status quo. As for the National ☒.∴.☒.∴, which is not without its drawbacks either, it seems to me that it would be too early to make a decision, and that it would be preferable to reserve this for the event that things should go completely wrong on the other side; Clavelle also returns to this question in one of his latest letters, and [...] I will try to discuss it with him at greater length in my reply. As for the 4th degree, everyone has told me more or less the same thing, and it goes without saying that I am not very surprised; we just have to wait and see until further notice... [...]

[...] It seems that the word "triple" in the Royal Arch ritual has, through misunderstanding, sometimes been distorted into "Zabulon" (I remember a phrase in this regard: 'Zabulon is a good Mason', but I cannot say where it is found); but in reality, Zabulon is a purely Hebrew name, whose [...] and meaning are completely different (derived from Zabal, ha [...] to die), and, moreover, there is no possible assimilation between the letters *Yod* and *Zain*. It is possible that we should also look at definitions of the same word in "Zubelas, Zubelos, zubelum" which are found in certain rituals of the Elected degrees, and which seem completely insignificant; but we would have to admit that they were taken completely out of context, since they were used as the names of Hiram's three murderers; it is likely that, upon examining these ancient rituals of the higher degrees, we would find [...] other misunderstandings that are hardly less extraordinary than this one. Regarding my last review of Speculative Mason, the ancient Egyptian word for "Being" is *Oun,* which is very close to the Greek *On*, and [...] royal" of Osiris is *Oun nefer*, which literally means "the Good Being".

René Guénon to Maridort

Cairo, 20 April 1948.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I received your letter of 14 April, along with the accompanying journals, for which I thank you.

Chacornac told me in his last letter that the Grande Triade was selling much less than L'Homme et son devenir (he had already sold 400 copies of the latter), even though he had published a similar advertisement for both volumes in the Bibliographie de la France. I cannot quite understand why this might be. In any case, it is good that 200 copies were sold and that this enabled us to settle part of what was still owed to Didry. As for the price increase you mention, it would probably be nothing unusual at present, but of course I cannot foresee what effect it would have on sales; I will ask Allar to discuss this matter with you, and I will abide by whatever you both decide.

I am very pleased to hear that your admission to the third degree will take place soon; I do not believe that there will be any opposition from A. Coën. I did not think that the initiation of Bouyer and de Taeck would take place so soon; I understand from what you have told me that it took place in a collective meeting; I wonder whether this way of proceeding, which is quite common, might not have some disadvantages, because not all ☒☒.∴ are equally strict from a ritual point of view; for this reason, it was not allowed in Thebes in the past.

As for Cerf, I see that it is still difficult to know exactly where he stands, which is a pity, because under these circumstances we cannot rely entirely on him; F.S. (Schuon) has given me some thoughts on this subject, which I will pass on to Clavelle the next time I write to him. Like you, I wonder if he will ever actually write to me; that is another thing I do not quite understand. As for his return to the Federal Council, it is certain that this would give him more to do, but I agree with him that it would not be useless, especially from the point of view of the influence that the ☒.∴.☒.∴ can have in general within the Obedience.

Thank you for the information concerning 1e ☒.∴ Nordberg; I will share it with Hillel at the next opportunity. Barquissau seems to be a singular character; could it be that most of the former members of the ☒.∴ Agartha have moved over to the ☒.∴ Chéops?

I understand that ☒.∴ Corneloup had a very favourable impression of his visit to the ☒.∴.☒.∴, much more than I would have expected, and that he was particularly struck by Clavelle's work; I am therefore not surprised that he wrote to him, but I would be curious to see this letter.

As for Symbolise, I do not believe that Chacornac receives it, as I remember very well that he did not want to exchange it for E.T., on the pretext that there is a disproportion between the subscription prices of these two magazines... In any case, Marius Lepage finally sent me a package containing all the issues from January 1947 to March 1948; so I now have a few duplicates, and the only one I'm missing is the December 1946 issue, but I don't know if I will continue to receive regular deliveries.

The statement issued by the "Peace Committee" reveals a lack of understanding that does not surprise me too much, as it stems from a mindset that is shared by the vast majority of Freemasons today. It is always the preponderance given to the social point of view that will, for many, be one of the greatest obstacles to understanding matters of a different order...

I would not have thought that the note referred to on the last page of the Bulletin was separate from the brochure Clavelle had told me about; it would be desirable for someone to prepare this as soon as possible, as it would certainly be very useful; Rocco already intends to translate it into Italian.

I am astonished by the story about Sartre having a place in the G.T.; who could have said such an enormity?

I am glad that Maugy received my letter this time and also that you are going to help him with his work on the Ritual, which now seems to have to fall "officially" to Marty alone. There are many questions that deserve close examination, and naturally, for the moment, I have only been able to point out a few that immediately came to mind. It is a little surprising that the question of the formula
"In the Name of ☒☒☒ ☒.∴☒.∴ of ☒☒☒ ☒.∴" did not catch Cerf's attention, as it seems to me that it is far from insignificant.

The correspondence of the Triad "Wisdom, Strength, Beauty" is always given in this order: Solomon, Hiram — King of Tyre, Hiram-Abi, that is to say, ☒☒☒.∴,[1st]☒☒☒☒.∴, 2nd ☒☒☒☒.∴, whatever the reasons that may justify it. In the Royal Order of Scotland, the first three Officers are respectively designated, in the exercise of their functions, by the names *Wisdom*, *Strength*, *Beauty*.

Regarding what you have told me about the degree of ☒☒☒☒.∴, it is possible that the number of tools was originally five because of the prominence given to this number in the degree, and besides, you know that there are many variations in this Ritual; However, there is no necessary relationship between the number of tools and the number of journeys, since the latter must be made with empty hands. In Gloton's Ritual, the tools are listed as follows: 1° mallet and chisel; 2° square and compass; 3° ruler and lever; Plantagenet indicates the same order, while noting that it is not always followed; he also points out that in Germanic countries, the journeys are made without tools and by forming a chain of union, and that in Switzerland and Austria, their number is even generally reduced to three, which is obviously completely incorrect...

Best regards. R. Guénon

Cairo, 27 September 1949

Dear Sir,

Yesterday I received your two letters dated 17 and 19 September (with six coupons in each).

I see that, all in all, there were no unfortunate incidents at the Convent, as had been feared, concerning the question of rituals, and I am naturally pleased about that; but on the other hand, the result is not very brilliant, since it is simply a matter of maintaining the rituals previously in use, which are certainly not very satisfactory from a traditional point of view; I wonder if these rituals will now be made compulsory... Despite the shortcomings of Marty's project, it is somewhat surprising that it did not attract more attention from ▨▨▨ ▨▨.∴, especially after the success of Marty's report at last year's Convent; I suppose that what Cerf said some time ago must have been based on the information he already had at that time for the preparation of his report. As for the motion concerning the revision of the 2nd degree ritual[nd] degree, it is certainly true that this one is in even greater need than the others; but it seems a little difficult to me to take it in isolation, without doing anything to "harmonise" the three rituals as a whole, because, whatever one may say, there is no doubt that they must be considered as constituting a whole.

The unpleasant impression you had was probably due to the 'atmosphere' created by the gathering of people whose ideas and tendencies are undoubtedly discordant in many respects; if there is nothing similar in ordinary times, there is probably no need to worry too much about it...

When you see Cerf, please be so kind as to convey my congratulations to him on his election to ▨▨▨ ▨.∴▨.∴; but has he not resumed the office of ▨.∴ ▨▨▨▨.∴ or any other? I assume that, as far as the ▨.∴ ▨▨▨.∴ are concerned, there are no other significant changes than those you have indicated to me.

I am glad to hear that Mordvinoff received my letter; as for what he told you about Cerf's possible succession, it is not only I who agree with him, but also the ▨.∴ ▨▨▨▨.∴ ▨▨▨.∴, who for several reasons does not want to hear of taking on the task himself, which naturally changes the situation; as it goes without saying that you could always count on his help and come to an agreement with him on everything, I really do not see what could be objected to under these circumstances.

Yours sincerely.

T

Mr René GUENON;

Mrs Edmond LOURY

Mr and Mrs Emile CLISSON, Mrs Emile BELILE, Mr and Mrs Alfred MASSE, Mr and Mrs Henri Loury, Mr and Mrs Armand Loury, Mr and Mrs René Loury;

Mrs DURU, Mrs BERGER;

Mrs Henri PERROCHON, Mrs Emile de LASAULAIE;

Mr Henri and Mr Pierre CLISSON, Miss Simone and Miss Bernadette CLISSON, Mr Jean Belile, Miss Françoise and Miss Madeleine BELILE, Mr René and Mr Henri LOURY;

Miss Madeleine Berger, Mr Pierre Berger, Mrs Gasnault.

Mrs Tourlet, Mr and Mrs Paul Perrochon and their children, Mr and Mrs Muray and their children, Mr Louis de LASAULAIE, Mr and Mrs Maurice de LASAULAIE and their daughter

Mrs BOUCAULT and her son, Mrs DION and her daughter, Mrs Henri TOURLET and her daughter, Dr and Mrs René TOURLET and their children, Miss Jeanne ROUSSEAU;

Mrs. LAURENT, Mr. and Mrs. René THOREAU and their children, Mr. and Mrs. GROLLEAU and their children, Mr. and Mrs. Marcel THOREAU and their children, Miss Jeanne LIBAUD;

The GROSSET, PALLU, Boucher, Melin, HARMONIERE and BILLETTE families

Are saddened to announce the cruel loss they have just suffered in the person of
Mrs. René GUENON, née
Berthe LOURY
their wife, daughter, sister, sister-in-law, niece, grandniece, aunt, first cousin, cousin and second cousin,
who passed away, having received the sacraments of the Church, in Paris on 15 January 1928, in her 45th year.

Pray for her!

51 rue Saint-Louis en l'Ile,
Paris 4th

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