

REVIEWS



RENE GUENON

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BOOKS



René Guénon

Reviews

Book reviews

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1932

CESARE DELLA RIVIERA, *The Magical World of Heroes*, a modernised reproduction of the 1605 text, with an introduction and notes by J. Evola (G. Laterza e Figli, Bari)- This hermetic treatise, although far from being as explicit and free of enigmas as the author would have us believe, is undoubtedly one of those that most clearly show that the 'Great Work', symbolically represented as the conquest of the 'Tree of Life', should not be understood in the material sense that pseudo-alchemists wanted to apply to it; in it, true Hermeticism is constantly opposed to its counterfeits. Certain explanatory procedures employed are truly curious, in particular the one that consists, in order to interpret a word, of breaking it down into letters or syllables that represent the beginning of as many words, which taken together form a definition; this method may appear here to be pure and simple artifice, but it imitates the one used for certain sacred languages. The introduction and notes are also worthy of interest, but sometimes attract some reservations: Evola was visibly seduced by the assimilation of Hermeticism to 'magic', here understood in a sense very different from the usual one, and of the Adept to the 'Hero', in which he believed he found something analogous to his personal conceptions, which led him to interpretations that were at least tendentious; on the other hand, we regret that he did not insist further on everything related to the "Centre of the World", which seems absolutely essential to us, since it represents, so to speak, the key to everything else. Finally, instead of "modernising" the text, as was thought necessary, it would perhaps have been better to reproduce it as it is, provided that the terms or expressions that, due to their archaic nature, could be difficult to understand were explained.

1933

GEORGES MÉAUTIS, *L'Ame hellénique d'après les vases grecs* (L'Artisan du Livre, Paris) - This work, beautifully illustrated by

numerous reproductions, starts from an excellent intention, that of "to dispel certain misconceptions about Greek mythology" and to demonstrate "the gravity and seriousness of certain myths"; to what extent has the author succeeded in his intent? The almost exclusively "psychological" point of view in which he confines himself is in no way capable of bringing out a truly profound meaning; and, in fact, what he defines as the 'emotional value' of Greek vases, to which he devotes the entire first part of his work, does not contribute to the understanding of anything: we find no explanation of even the slightest symbol. On the other hand, it seems at least doubtful that 'religion', which did not have the same meaning for the ancients as it does for moderns, was such a sentimental thing for them; psychologists have the unfortunate habit of attributing, quite gratuitously, their own ways of thinking and feeling to people of all ages and countries... The second part, which studies the compositional laws of vase painting, is, in our opinion, more interesting, although the considerations contained therein do not go beyond the 'aesthetic' field; to go further, it would have been necessary to link these laws to the traditional science of forms and numbers, from which they clearly derive. Finally, in the third part, with regard to a Greek vase from Palermo, the author addresses the question of 'Orphism in the Eleusinian Mysteries'; he rightly criticises the misunderstanding of certain modern 'scholars' regarding the Mysteries, but he too, while recognising that 'they were not sermons or preachings', he seems concerned above all with finding a theoretical, or even 'moral' teaching in them, instead of the initiation that they were, and that through its rites was supposed to put the being in a position to become directly aware of certain realities. We, on the other hand, agree with him wholeheartedly when he protests against the habit of reducing Greek civilisation as a whole to the 'classical' period alone; indeed, we believe that the earlier periods, if they could be studied in greater depth, would in many respects be much more worthy of interest, and that the difference between them is comparable to that between the Middle Ages and modern times.

A. SAVORET, *Du Menhir à la Croix, essays on the triple tradition of the West* (Editions Psyché, Paris)- Strictly speaking, this is not a book, but rather a collection of rather heterogeneous studies that seem to have been brought together rather hastily, since the author did not even bother to give them the form of a coherent whole, so much so that, in the volume itself, one chapter is described as an 'article', another as a 'pamphlet'! In fact, most of these studies had previously been published in the journal *Psyché*, and we have already had occasion to discuss some of them, so we are not surprised to find all the 'Western' prejudices that we had noted even then; The author denies wanting to attack the East, but since he deliberately contrasts it with the West, and since he places the latter above everything else, the conclusion can be deduced for itself... Much of the volume is taken up with extraordinarily imaginative linguistic considerations, the presence of which seems justified as follows: since Druidism is combined with Judaism and Christianity to form what the author likes to call the 'triple tradition of the West' (why is the Greco-Latin tradition excluded?), it is a question of finding, in one way or another, points of contact between Hebrew and the Celtic languages; and indeed, by randomly collecting words from the lexicons of various languages, one can find almost anything one wants, especially by relying on more than arbitrary transcriptions (the letter 'ain', for example, has absolutely no relation to the letter 'W'). We will not dwell on this further, but merely observe that it is curious that these 'Westernists' feel the need to indulge in the worst philological extravagances; what could be the explanation for this bizarre phenomenon?

1934

MARCELLE WEISSEN-SZUMLANSKA (M. ME M. GEORGES VI-CREY), *L'Ame archai"que de l'Afrique du Nord* (Nouvelles Éditions Latines, Paris) - The study of prehistoric monuments in

Algeria is here above all a pretext for a sort of more or less literary fantasy about the supposed migrations of the Celtic peoples, largely inspired by Fabre d'Olivet. Much emphasis is placed on a certain 'solar initiation', also described as 'spiritualist', in which 'red ochre painting' seems to play a fundamental role. This initiation is said to have originated in Atlantis, which is believed to be the country of origin of these peoples, who are therefore also described as 'Nordic' or 'Boreal'; we have already had occasion to point out other examples of this astonishing confusion. The attribution of megalithic monuments to the 'Gaels' is hypothetical to say the least, and the story of their return from India to the West in search of their lost homeland does not even have a shadow of plausibility. After all this, there is no need to add that this book tends towards a rather aggressive 'Westernism', which is undoubtedly the main reason for its publication.

PHILIPPE GUIBERTEAU, *Musique et Incarnation* (Cahiers de la Quinzaine, Paris)— It is all the more difficult for us not to approve of the author's intentions and the principles on which he intends to base himself, since he has placed at the beginning of his study an epigraph taken from *The Symbolism of the Cross*, referring to the 'law of correspondence' taken as the foundation of symbolism. We only regret that the 'material' to which these principles are applied is not entirely up to the task: modern writers, lacking traditional data, often believe they are creating symbolism when in reality they are merely indulging in individual fantasies. Without wishing to be unfair, we believe this to be the case, among others, with Paul Claudel, whose *La scarpetta di raso* (*The Virgin of the Satin*) is analysed: his rather arbitrary geographical allegorism only vaguely recalls the 'sacred geography' we have sometimes mentioned; and, when he considers water as 'signifying the Spirit of God', he contradicts the symbolism common to all traditions, in a manner that is all the more astonishing because one need only reread the beginning of *Genesis* to realise this immediately: if 'the Spirit of God was carried over the waters', it is clearly because the waters themselves rap-

present something else... We hope that Mr Guiberteau, who is in no way responsible for these 'oddities', will offer us other studies of the same inspiration, but preferably dedicated to writers or poets who were truly something other than 'literati'.

GEORGES MÉAUTIS, *Les Mystères d'Éleusis* (Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchatel) – This small volume contains, first of all, a description of the sanctuary of Eleusis as revealed by archaeological discoveries, followed by an attempt to reconstruct the celebrations of the Mysteries, a reconstruction that is necessarily incomplete, since information is completely lacking on many points. The author considers the 'spirit' of the Mysteries with obvious sympathy, but in a manner that remains superficial: nothing truly initiatory shines through. When he speaks, following Aristotle, of the 'impressions' that the initiates received, he seems to believe that it is only something 'psychological', following the tendency we have already noted in his previous work on Greek vases; if the neophytes were truly 'qualified', the states provoked in them were of a completely different order; and, if it happened that the Mysteries, at a certain moment, were opened too widely, their purpose remained essentially the same. On the other hand, it is

It is interesting to note that, despite the 'vulgarisation' that necessarily implies a certain degeneration, no indiscretions were ever committed; this is indisputable proof of the strength of the tradition represented by the Mysteries. As far as

regards their origin, Méautis does not believe that it can be traced back to Egypt, as many claim, but rather to Minoan Crete; however, it remains to be seen what the ancient Cretan civilisation was connected to. Unfortunately, Méautis too readily accepts certain pseudo-conclusions of modern 'criticism', which are sometimes of an... unheard-of naivety; for example, the story of 'personified cries', which is beyond imagination; what is going on in the minds of our contemporaries to believe such nonsense?

J. EVOLA, *Revolt Against the Modern World* (Ulrico Hoepli, Milan) - In this new work, the author contrasts traditional civilisation with modern civilisation, the former being transcendental and essentially hierarchical in nature, the latter based on a purely human and contingent element; he then describes the stages of spiritual decline that led from the traditional world to the modern world. We have some reservations on certain points: for example, when discussing the uniqueness of the original source of the two powers, priestly and royal, the author has a strong tendency to emphasise the royal aspect to the detriment of the priestly one; when he distinguishes between two types of traditions, which he links respectively to the North and the South, the second of these two terms seems somewhat inappropriate to us, although it is not meant in a strictly 'geographical' sense, since it seems to refer mainly to Atlantis, which, in any case, corresponds to the West and not to the South. We also fear that the author sees in early Buddhism something that it did not actually represent, since he praises it in a way that is completely incomprehensible from a traditional point of view; moreover, he unjustifiably belittles Pythagoreanism, and we could point out other things of this kind. All this should not prevent us from correctly recognising the merit and interest of the work as a whole, and from bringing it to the attention of all those who are concerned about the 'crisis of the modern world' and who think, like us, that the only effective remedy could be a return to the traditional spirit, outside of which nothing truly 'constructive' can be undertaken.

1935

ARTURO REGHINI, *Per la restituzione della Geometria pitagorica* (Casa Editrice Ignis, Rome) - We know, thanks to various ancient texts, that the Pythagoreans proved certain geometric theorems in a completely different way from modern mathematicians; however, their proofs have not survived: the theorem on the sum of the angles of a triangle was proven independently by

Euclid's postulate, but then it was necessary to admit some other postulate as a starting point, and which one? After examining the various hypotheses that had been proposed, the author came to admit the existence of a postulate of 'rotation' as the one most in line with the general concepts of the Pythagoreans, who established a very close link between geometry and cosmology. He then shows that the postulate of 'rotation', without those of Euclid and Archimedes, is sufficient to prove not only the theorem mentioned, but also that of the square of the hypotenuse, and even to completely reconstruct, by successive approximations, the entire Pythagorean geometry of planes and solids. The considerations on the 'pentalfa' and regular polyhedra are particularly important, not only from a geometric point of view as understood by moderns: as the author points out, for the Pythagoreans and Plato, geometry was a sacred science, while Euclidean geometry, breaking all ties with other orders of knowledge and becoming an end in itself, degenerated into a profane science; on the other hand, we intend to return to some of these issues in more detail in the near future.

ARTURO REGHINI, *Il Fascio litto rio* (excerpt from the magazine *Do- cens*, Stab. Ambrosini, Rome) - In this brief study, the author examines the origin of the Roman fasces, which seems to be linked to the Etruscans, and its symbolic and traditional meanings. In this regard, it should be noted above all that the number of lictors who carried the fasces before the principal magistrates was always either twelve, or a multiple or submultiple of this number; moreover, the number of rods that made up the fasces also seems to have been twelve. The question, therefore, is linked to that of the importance of the number twelve in different traditions; without claiming to exhaust such a vast subject, the author reviews the main similarities that can be found among different ancient peoples. One question that arises here, and which deserves closer examination, is that of the position to be assigned to the zodiacal correspondence among the other applications of the duodenary system; the subject,

being linked to cyclic numbers, can also be traced back to the Pythagorean 'symbol of the Universe', the dodecahedron, discussed in the other work mentioned above.

SERGIUS GORTAN ANCONA, *The Substance of Adam* (Rider and Co., London) - This book is presented as an exposition of "A cosmogonic system based on Western tradition": but which tradition is this? Certainly not Kabbalah, because although the idea of the "four worlds" is taken from the latter, the explanation given has nothing authentically Kabbalistic about it. This "cosmogony", on the other hand, is terribly complicated and confusing, and above all gives the impression of frenetic agitation, which would even involve the angelic hierarchies! Here and there we encounter some notions derived from Hermeticism and, above all, from Gnosticism; but the truth is that the great 'authorities' to whom the author refers are, as he himself says, Eliphas Lévi, Fabre d'Olivet and Saint-Yves d'Alveydre. The works of the latter two have inspired the second part in particular, which contains a history of the 'white race' which, summarised here, highlights their errors and fantasies rather than their truly interesting considerations. All this is far from representing a 'pure tradition of orthodox thought', or, worse still, a tradition proclaimed 'superior to all others'; it is, in essence, a book of distinctly 'occultist' inspiration, which has nothing to do with the traditional spirit. The best part, in our opinion, is towards the end, where the modern era is severely criticised, and rightly so: but if the author set out to write a glorification of the West, it must be said that he ends on a rather unpleasant note, and it seems more like a failed assessment than a triumphant hymn...

1937

D. DUVILLÉ, *Eastern Aethiopia or Atlantis, initiator of ancient peoples, followed by Birth and propagation of the alpha-*

bet" (French Society for Literary and Technical Publications, Paris)

– The author distinguishes between two Ethiopias, one in the west, which is none other than Atlantis, to which certain authors in turn gave this name, and the other in the east, which is generally known as such; but, despite the title, he seems to have had the former in mind rather than the latter, since he limited himself to gathering from here and there what he considered to be traces of Atlantean influence among various ancient peoples. There are very disparate things in it, coming from sources of very unequal validity: but what strikes us most is the disconcerting linguistic ignorance that the author demonstrates at every turn: it is difficult to consider the constant deformation of certain names, such as '*Orzmund*' for '*Ormuzd*', as simple printing errors; and what can be said about statements based solely on the inaccuracy of transcriptions into Latin letters? '*Sepher*' (with *samek*) certainly cannot derive from '*Sephora*' (with *tsade*), nor can '*Reschit*', in which *seh* represents a single letter, be 'the anagram of Christ'... We will not dwell on this further; however, it would be a shame to forget 'the *Sandhérим*, composed of seventy translators' who 'approved the Greek translation' of *the Sepher*, which, moreover, is supposed to have been originally written 'in the Aramaic of the Targum'! The final chapter on the alphabet contains many other things of the same tenor; those passionate about philological curiosities who read this book will hardly be disappointed.

P. SAINTYVES, *Pierres magiques: bâtyles, haches-amulettes et pierres de foudre ; traditions savantes et traditions populaires* (Librairie Emile Nourry, Paris) – The title of this book requires clarification: in reality, there are neither 'learned traditions' nor 'popular traditions', but traditional knowledge can be preserved and transmitted by both the people and the learned, which, ultimately, makes little difference, except that it runs a greater risk of being altered by scholars, since they have, to a greater or lesser extent, a tendency to mix in their own personal interpretations. Especially among modern scholars, the ma-

The tendency to seek 'rational explanations' for everything, which, at least in this order, are almost always false, is much more annoying than simple 'popular' misunderstanding. Examples of this can also be found in this work, but, in general, the author has limited himself to collecting and reporting a series of texts and facts, which is much better, since at least he provides documentation that may be useful to those who see in all this much more than a pile of meaningless 'superstitions'. First of all, we find a series of extracts from various authors, from antiquity to the 19th century, which refer to the subject matter; however, most of the volume is devoted to traditions that still survive in our era, first in various regions of France and then in other countries. The 'betili', which we have mentioned on numerous occasions, are not very relevant here, and the rare references to them do not clearly indicate what they are; if they are aerolites, it is only due to confusion that they could be compared to 'thunderstones'; and the list of the various types of 'thunderstones' shows that many other confusions have been made, all of which essentially stem from the same initial misinterpretation: that of seeing them not as stones symbolising lightning, but as stones that fell from the sky together with the latter, as we explained in an article dedicated to this subject in this same publication (May 1929 issue). The real 'lightning stones' and those to which most of the evidence collected refers, despite everything, are prehistoric axes; we must add stone arrows and certain arrow-shaped fossils (belemnites), variants of the same symbolism; on this subject, we refer the reader to what we have recently written on the theme of symbolic weapons (October 1936 issue). We would also like to point out the particular case in which precious stones or natural crystals are considered 'thunderstones'; this deserves to be considered separately, because there may be a connection with the double meaning of the term 'vajra' in that "lightning bolt" and "diamond", and this would then be another symbolism. Returning to prehistoric weapons, it is not enough to say,

as the author does, that they were considered 'lightning stones' because their origin and real use had been forgotten, since, if that were all there was to it, they could very well have given rise to a myriad of other hypotheses; but, in reality, in all countries, without exception, they are always 'lightning stones' and nothing else; the symbolic reason is obvious here, while the 'rational explanation' is disconcertingly childish!

DION FORTUNE, *La Cabale mystique*, translated from English by Gabriel Trarieux d'Egmont (Éditions Adyar, Paris) - The combination of the two terms that form the title of this volume -

This book is quite contradictory: to tell the truth, on the other hand, the subject it deals with is no more mystical than it is initiatory; it is above all magical, which in turn is something completely different. In fact, it constantly refers to 'powers', 'visions', 'evocations' and 'astral projections', all of which are dangerous, even when reduced to mere autosuggestion, or essentially insignificant, even when, on the contrary, they correspond to some real result. To be more precise, it is 'ceremonial magic', and we can see in it a nice confirmation of what we said some time ago on this subject: it is interesting to note, first of all, the frequency with which the word 'ceremonies' occurs in the book, while the term 'rites' appears only very rarely; secondly, the explicit confession that 'ceremonial is pure psychology' and that it is essentially intended 'to act on the imagination of the operator'; we are of the same opinion, since this is precisely where it differs from authentic rites, but it goes without saying that our judgement on the value of such procedures is completely different from that of the author. From this point of view, the singular idea of defining as 'objective' and 'subjective' what is respectively 'macrocosmic' and 'microcosmic' is in turn rather significant: if the results obtained by a being in relation to its own development are to be nothing more than 'subjective', it might as well be said that they are non-existent! There is a constant appeal to the imagination and, even more disturbingly, to the 'subconscious', to the extent that great importance is given to

relief to Freud's infamous theories; Kabbalah has truly fallen low... Ultimately, this should come as no surprise, knowing that the author was a member of the *Golden Dawn* before founding his own school, called the 'Fraternity of Inner Light', and seeing him cite MacGregor Mathers and Aleister Crowley as his main 'authorities', along with various other occultist and theosophist writers. If the 'Christian Kabbalah' that took shape during the Renaissance was already well established, it was not without its detractors. Aleister Crowley as his main "authorities", in addition to various other occultist and theosophical writers. If the "Christian Kabbalah" that took shape during the Renaissance was already far removed from authentic Jewish Kabbalah, what can be said about "occult Kabbalah", which saw the light in the 19th century, and in which the rare traditional data that still exist are buried under a mass of heterogeneous elements of sometimes very uncertain origin, of correspondences that are tangled up not so much intentionally as by reason of manifest ignorance, all assembled in a "syncretism" which, despite the proclamations of the promoters of the so-called "Western tradition", has absolutely nothing to do with a "synthesis"? In a work such as this, Kabbalah (or, rather, the doctrine of the *Sephiroth*, which is only one of its branches) provides nothing more than a framework, not to say a pretext, for speculations that are more than hybrid, extending to modern science, which occupies a not insignificant position. it seems that this is 'treating Kabbalah in a lively manner', as if authentic Kabbalah were a dead thing and were only of interest as a historical or archaeological curiosity! On the other hand, this intention to 'modernise' is explicitly confessed by the author, who at least has the merit of sincerity, but who, thanks to his clearly stated 'evolutionist' tendencies, sees perfection in what cannot but appear to us as a painful degeneration... In these circumstances, when we are told about certain 'manuscripts known only to initiates', we allow ourselves to doubt strongly, not their existence, but their traditional value; and those who know what we think of modern Western 'initiatory schools' will understand without any difficulty that we cannot help but smile when we hear people invoking 'the real and legitimate occult secrets that only initiation reveals', even if alongside all this there were not...

mentioned "correspondence courses", which say all too much about the quality of this "initiation"! – After all this, it would be superfluous to dwell in detail on the errors, even though some of them are rather amusing, such as those that consist in contrasting the "Eastern Path", as if it existed, with the "Western Path", in taking Confucianism for a "metaphysical law", in attributing to the "Vedantins" the theosophical fantasy of "Rays and Rounds", or in quoting the well-known phrase from the "Emerald Tablet" in terms of "as above, so below". *It is* also very curious that one can present the Quakers as "a purely initiatory school", confuse *Bhakti-Yoga* with religious exotericism, or believe oneself capable of effectively celebrating Mass outside of any "apostolic succession"; indeed, there would be much to say about the very particular mentality revealed by this last point... We also note the exaggeration of considering the "Tree of Life" exclusively as the sole basis of any symbolism, as well as the somewhat excessive importance attributed to the Tarot, and, just out of curiosity, a sort of obsession with the "Green Ray" that reminds us of certain strange stories... Finally, there is a particular issue that we must mention: you may remember that, at the end of our study on *Kundalini Yoga*, we pointed out the correspondence between *the Sephiroth*, considered from a 'microcosmic' point of view, and the *chakras* of the Hindu tradition. It would seem, something we were completely unaware of at the time, since we are seeing it mentioned for the first time, that Crowley and General Fuller also attempted to establish this correlation; However, the correspondences they provide, which are reproduced in this book, are both erroneous, mainly because they failed to realise that, considering each of the three pairs of *Sephiroth* located at the same common level as the representation of the polarisation of a single principle, the denary of *the Sephiroth* can be traced back very simply to the septenary of *the chakras*. Finally, with regard to the presentation of the work, we would add that it would be much better to refrain altogether from reproducing certain terms in Hebrew characters, rather than

print them in such a way that it is almost impossible to find a letter that is correct; and on the other hand, why does the translator always write '*la* Yoga', '*la* Swastika', even '*la* Sepher Yetzi-rah'? Furthermore, as far as translation is concerned, one should be wary of those English words which, although very similar to French words, sometimes have a completely different meaning...

1938

PROF. LEO FROBENIUS AND DOUGLAS C. FOX, *Prehistoric Rock Pictures in Europe and Africa, from Material in the Archives of the Research Institute for the Morphology of Civilisation, Frankfurt am Main (The Museum of Modern Art, New York) in the Archives of the Research Institute for the Morphology of Civilisation, Frankfurt am Main (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)* - In this volume, published on the occasion of an exhibition, the aspect that we find most interesting, apart from the numerous reproductions with which it is illustrated, is the story of the difficulties encountered in the recognition of the first discoveries of prehistoric paintings, which 'scholars' stubbornly denied for many years because, in their opinion, civilisation, and therefore art, could not have existed in such remote times; here is a fine example of the power of certain prejudices! The reason for these denials, after all, is that 'the Western mentality was steeped in the conviction that the culture of our age was the highest that man had ever achieved, that the most ancient cultures could in no way be compared to the grandeur of modern scientific existence, and above all, that everything that had developed before the dawn of history could only be considered 'primitive' and insignificant in comparison to the splendour of the 19th century'. We could not put it better ourselves; moreover, we do not believe that this mentality has changed since then, even if, in certain specific cases, such as the one in question here, it has ultimately been forced to bow to evidence that is too indisputable. — Apart from any discussion of 'aesthetic' appreciation, the interpretation of these paintings, which belong to civilisations

about which almost no other information is available, it is naturally very difficult, if not entirely impossible, except in cases where a ritual meaning can be discerned, more or less clearly. We note that a depiction discovered in the Libyan Desert bears a striking resemblance to a 'Typhonian' representation from ancient Egypt; due to a curious oversight, however, it is presented as that of the 'god with the head of a jackal', whereas the latter is Anubis and not Set; in reality, it is the 'god with the head of a donkey', whose presence since prehistoric times is interesting to note.

H. DE VRIES DE HEEKELINGEN, *L'Orgueil juif* (Revue Internationale des Sociétés Secrètes, Paris)- This book is too 'political' in nature to discuss at length, and we must limit ourselves to making a much more general observation: it seems to us that what is referred to here as 'Jewish pride' is not as exceptional as one would have us believe; after all, is the attitude of the Jews towards the *Goyim* so different, for example, from that of the Greeks towards the 'Barbarians'? In principle, on the other hand, all cases of this kind can be explained very well by the need, in order to avoid any illegitimate mixing of different traditional forms, to forcefully instil in the adherents of each of them the feeling of a difference between themselves and other men; since human nature is what it is, this difference is all too easily mistaken for superiority, at least by the common people, who cannot know its true and profound reason. This inevitably leads, among the common people, to the degeneration of this feeling into a kind of pride, and it is also understandable that this should happen, especially in the case of a strictly 'closed' community such as that to which the Jewish tradition is destined... Why, on the other hand, is there never any talk of 'European pride', which is certainly the most insolent of all and which, for its part, cannot find even a shadow of justification or excuse in traditional considerations? Let us just add a comment on a small

Particular: the author mistakenly believes (and he is certainly not alone!) that the 'Seal of Solomon' (also known as the 'Shield of David', but not 'Seal of David' as he says) is a specifically Jewish symbol, whereas in reality it belongs to Islam and Christian Hermeticism as much as it does to Judaism. In this regard, the author points out that recently, in the coat of arms of the city of Privas, three lilies were replaced by 'three six-pointed Jewish stars (*sic!*)'; we do not know if this is exactly the case, but, be that as it may, what he absolutely does not suspect, and what makes it all really amusing, is that the two symbols are almost the same, both being constructed, like the Chrism , on the same geometric pattern, that of the six-spoked wheel. All this  shows, once again, that it would be better to avoid certain topics if you do not have at least some basic knowledge of symbolism!

1939

FRÉDÉRIC PORTAL, *Des couleurs symboliques dans l'antiquité, le moyen age et les temps modernes* (Éditions Niclaus, Paris)-

This book, which dates back exactly a century, had long been virtually impossible to find; its reissue is all the more timely because, at least in French, it has been the only work to date to deal specifically with the symbolism of colours. Its interest lies not only in its particular considerations and the abundant documentation it contains on this subject; perhaps even more important is that it presents itself as the application of a fundamental idea, whose scope, as the editors point out in the preface, goes beyond the framework indicated by the title, namely 'the idea of a primitive and perfect *Revelation*, deposited in the cradle of humanity, which gave rise to all the traditional doctrines that have nourished its spiritual life over the centuries'. This is what Portai states very clearly in his conclusion: 'A great fact,' he writes, 'dominates the research that we submit

I turn to the world of scholars: *the unity of religion among men*; and, as *proof*, the meaning of symbolic colours, the same among all peoples and in all ages. On the other hand, considering that any doctrine, moving away from its original perfection, can only degenerate and become increasingly materialistic, the author distinguishes, so to speak, three successive stages in this degradation, to which he assigns, in the meaning of symbols, three degrees, which constitute respectively what he calls the

<<divine language>>, the <<sacred language>> and the <<profane language>>. The first, according to his definition, seems to him to be truly primitive and prior to the distinction between priesthood and royalty; the second «arises in sanctuaries» following the establishment of the priesthood proper; finally, the last is nothing more than

"the material expression of symbols", linked to "idolatrous" degeneration due to the incomprehension of the masses. However, there are fluctuations in his application of these principles: it sometimes seems that everything connected with the first 'language' has a truly 'priestly' character, while he includes in the second numerous aspects that could rather be defined as 'regal', in particular everything related to the coat of arms; on the other hand, everything that qualifies as 'profane' is not so in the strict sense, and does not correspond to the previous definition; however, the distinction is no less valid, and it might be interesting for someone wishing to conduct a new study on the same subject to take it up again in a more rigorous manner. Another noteworthy point is that the author has recognised and formally expressed the fact that symbols generally have two opposite meanings; this is what he calls the 'rule of opposites', and he gives numerous examples of this in the use that has been made of the various colours studied below. As for the reservations that would be appropriate regarding some of his interpretations, they depend mainly on two reasons: one, insufficient or inaccurate information on Eastern doctrines, which is perfectly justified for the period in which the book was written; two, a very marked Swedenborgian influence, and, in terms of symbolism and many other aspects, a certain tendency to interpret the Bible in a way that is not entirely consistent with the spirit of the book.

three things, Swedenborg is far from being an infallible guide. Despite these shortcomings, we repeat that this work is nonetheless of the utmost interest; indeed, it is indispensable to anyone who, for whatever reason, is concerned with the subject, since there are no others that can replace it.

MORTIMER J. ADLER, *Saint Thomas and the Gentiles* (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin)- The author, a professor at the University of Chicago, studies the arguments that could be opposed to those who, in the present day, represent, in one way or another, the equivalent of the audience addressed by St Thomas Aquinas when he wrote his *Summa contra Gentiles*: first and foremost, the 'scientists' or 'positivists', who deny the very existence of a true philosophy, and then those he calls 'systematists', who admit an irreducible plurality of philosophies, considering them equally valid, provided that they constitute coherent constructions in themselves. The most interesting thing, in our opinion, is the protest raised against the spirit of the system: the author does not hesitate to rightly reproach certain Thomists for distorting the philosophy of St. Thomas, presenting it as 'a great system of thought', and he preferred to renounce the definition of 'Thomism' because in its form it seemed to suggest the idea of a special system, representing simply the particular conceptions of a single individual, that is, 'a philosophy' among others and not an expression of *the philosophia perennis* ; we only regret that he does not seem to conceive of this *philosophia perennis* outside its specifically Christian form, which, in reality, can only be one of the many expressions of the one truth.

ALBERT GLEIZES, *La Signification humaine du Cubisme* (Éditions Moly-Sabata, Sablons, Isère)- This pamphlet is a reproduction of a lecture in which the author set out to demonstrate that Cubism, known above all as an aesthetic movement, actually exerted an influence on a broader and more truly 'human' field, primarily because it was 'a la-

I work as an authentic, manual painter', and then because he led the painter, in order to resolve certain difficulties, to reflect 'not on external images, but on himself, on his natural tendencies, on what he wanted to do, on his active faculties'. It was therefore, at least for some, the starting point for research that was to lead much further, since "through the multiplicity of viewpoints (replacing perspective unity), it reintroduced time into a human mode of expression, into an art that claimed it could not contain it" and made it clear that "the geometric figure was a means and not an end". We will not dwell further on the more strictly 'technical' considerations, nor on the theory of the 'rainbow' that the author has already expounded elsewhere; However, we would like to point out, because it is more interesting, the idea that "Cubism forced us to modify the unilateral notion of perception that came to us from the Renaissance" and, for this very reason, to return to the artistic concepts of the Middle Ages, which can lead to the "rebirth of a religious expression".

L. ADAMS BECK, *Au coeur du Japon: Zenn, Amours mystiques*, translated from English by Jean Herbert and Pierre Sauvageot (Éditions Victor Attinger, Paris and Neuchatel) - In this book we find the same qualities as the other novel by the same author that we discussed earlier, but also the same flaws, which, it must be said, seem somewhat worse. The way in which Europeans are mixed with certain Eastern environments in these stories may be acceptable once, since an exception as such is not implausible, but when it is repeated, it gives the impression of a very artificial 'procedure'; Furthermore, the consequences of this intervention are translated here, as the title suggests, into 'mystical loves' that are ill-suited to the character of authentic *Zen*. On the other hand, the idea of establishing similarities between a traditional doctrine and the concepts of modern Western science, and of relying on the latter to make the former acceptable, an idea whose futility we have often denounced, plays a rather predominant role here; we know, however, that it really exists in the representations

many branches of contemporary Japanese Buddhism, in which 'modernism' rages unpleasantly, but we want to believe that this is only the case in the more exoteric schools. There is also a rather curious contradiction: the author rightly says that 'when one follows the disciplines of Asia, one does not go hunting for souls, and one does not engage in facile propaganda'; However, this does not prevent him from attributing such propaganda to an initiatory organisation, or one that should be such, which he describes as intent on preparing a sort of 'missionaries' to send to the West, after teaching them not only European languages but also the 'scientific' language that Westerners like. *It is* true, however, that alongside all this, there are some very interesting and precise insights into the methods of spiritual development adopted by *Zen*, as well as the way in which they are reflected in various characteristic aspects of Japanese civilisation. we regret, however, that, as with the *Yoga* in the other book, the results of 'realisation' do not appear very clearly, and that the author seems to have a limited idea of certain secondary aspects; despite everything, however, this may prompt some people to reflect and try to explore these topics in greater depth, if they have the opportunity.

PAUL RADIN, *The Story of the American Indian* (Livreight Publishing Corporation, New York) – This book aims to provide an overview of ancient American civilisations, bringing together, in an easily accessible and enjoyable read, data that had previously been scattered across a myriad of specialist studies. The most interesting aspect, in our opinion, is that relating to 'myths' and rituals, since anyone familiar with traditional symbolism will find material for numerous very significant comparisons with what is found in other civilisations; on the other hand, the author has the merit of reporting the facts impartially, without distorting them or mixing them with the preconceived ideas that circulate among most 'anthropologists'. Everything relating to origins is more hypothetical, and there is nothing strange about this, since the question remains unresolved for many.

dark aspects: according to the author's theories, everything would have had a single civilisation as its starting point, the Maya, which would have gradually changed, and almost degraded, as it spread northwards on one side and southwards on the other. This hypothesis seems rather difficult to prove, especially in the absence of any certain chronology, and the similarities or differences between the customs of the different peoples invoked in support of this thesis could certainly be interpreted in many other ways. On the other hand, this only serves to postpone the difficulty, because then we would still have to ask ourselves where the Mayan civilisation came from: as long as we limit ourselves to 'profane' research methods, instead of referring to authentic traditional indications that are too easily dismissed as <<legends", without trying to explore their meaning, such a question will remain forever unanswerable. Moreover, if we accept the approximate dates attributed to the Mayan civilisation, it would certainly be too recent to truly represent an 'origin', but then why not ask ourselves why 'the period that plays a predominant role in the Mayan calendar is linked to an era long before the very beginning of Mayan history'?

E. AROUX, *Dante hérétique, révolutionnaire et socialiste: Révélations d'un catholique sur le moyen age* (Éditions Niclaus, Paris) – It is an excellent idea to republish the book by Aroux on Dante, whose original edition dates back to 1854 and has, of course, been out of print for a long time. Aroux deserves credit for being one of the first, along with Rossetti, and at almost the same time, to point out the existence of an esoteric meaning in Dante's work; and, despite the numerous works that have been published on this subject since then, especially in recent years, the documentation contained in his work has not lost its interest, and we must always refer to it as an indispensable introduction to more recent studies. It is understood that Aroux's interpretation gives rise to many reservations and needs to be corrected on many points, starting with the accusations of

mulate towards Dante in the title itself; we have already explained, *in Dante's Esotericism*, what we should think of the accusation of 'heresy', which is based essentially only on the confusion between the two fields, esoteric and exoteric, or, if you like, initiatory and religious. Aroux, moreover, was clearly ignorant of the real nature of initiation; so he sees the use of secret and symbolic language as nothing more than a simple precaution intended to conceal what would have been dangerous to say openly, since he seems to conceive of initiatory organisations only as vulgar 'secret societies' with more or less political tendencies, as there were many in the first half of the 19th century. Undoubtedly, the particular mentality of that era is also responsible for the rather paradoxical idea of making Dante, defender of the concept of a universal monarchy that the 'Holy Empire' was supposed to realise, a precursor of 'socialism' and the revolutionary utopias of 1848. Another singular error is that according to which the initiatory organisations of the Middle Ages, transformed into 'sects' due to a misunderstanding of their authentic character, had 'rationalist' doctrines

'rationalist' doctrines; this is not only an anachronism, but the 'rationalism' has always been the most unyielding opponent and denier of any form of esotericism, and therein lies one of the most essential components of the role it plays in the deviation of the modern world. On the other hand — it should be noted in passing — there is something in Aroux's attitude that gives rise to a rather strange impression: his Catholic statements sound false because of their very exaggeration, so much so that one is tempted to wonder which side his sympathies really lay on.

a rather strange impression: his Catholic statements sound false because of their very exaggeration, so much so that one is tempted to wonder where his sympathies really lay

from both a religious and political point of view, especially since the way he presents Dante coincides with that of Rossetti, whose explicit tendencies were completely the opposite. We do not claim to resolve the issue, in the absence of information.

sufficient 'biographical' details, and ultimately this is a matter of pure curiosity, since it is clear that none of this has any bearing whatsoever on the content of the book. One might think that, after so many reservations, there is not much left of the book; however, this would be inaccurate, because,

On the contrary, the documentary aspect remains, as we have said, and this is the most important aspect of a work of this kind: what is more, anyone in possession of certain traditional data can easily rectify for themselves and 'reinterpret' correctly what has been distorted by the author's very particular 'perspective', and, indeed, it is a work that is far from uninteresting.

1940

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY, *The Christian and Oriental True Philosophy of Art*: a Lecture Given at Boston College, Newton, Massachusetts, in March 1939 John Stevens, Newport, Rhode Island

- This pamphlet reproduces a lecture given by our eminent collaborator at a Catholic university, in which he insists on the identity of all traditional conceptions of art, whether Western, particularly Christian, or Eastern; it is, in fact, a truly ~~old~~ doctrine, in the original sense of the word. In this traditional view, no essential distinction is made between art and craft; anything well made and perfectly suited to its use is properly a work of art; here we are not talking about ~~play~~ or even pleasure.

<< aesthetic>> , since «only the contemplative and active life are considered human, and a life whose purpose is pleasure is considered subhuman>> . Beauty resides in the work of art itself insofar as it is perfect in accordance with its purpose: it is independent of the viewer's appreciation, who may or may not be qualified to recognise it; it is, in fact, a matter of knowledge or understanding, not of sensitivity, as moderns would have it, and *ars sine scientia nihil*. A need is the primary cause of the production of a work of art; but here we are dealing with needs that are both spiritual and physical, since man, taken in his entirety, does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God, that is, by the ideas and principles that can be expressed by art.

In primitive times, no distinction was made between the sacred and the profane; all things were made in imitation of divine prototypes, and 'what they signify is even more real than what they are in themselves'. Contemplation of the ideal model must therefore necessarily precede the material realisation of the work of art; only in this way does 'art imitate nature in its mode of operation', that is, God himself in his mode of creation. By conforming to the ideal model, the artist also expresses himself, but *sub specie aeternitatis*, and not in terms of his contingent individuality; This explains the anonymous character of works of art in traditional civilisations; from a complementary point of view, the representation of an individual is more of a 'type' than a physically similar portrait, since 'man is represented by his function rather than by his appearance'. As for symbolic representations of the Divinity, even when they are anthropomorphic, they should not be mistaken for 'depictions'; to understand them, one needs an adequate knowledge of theology and cosmology, since they do not appeal to the emotions but are essentially 'supports' for intellectual contemplation, and art, even the highest art, is ultimately nothing more than a means subordinate to this end.

WALTER H. DUDLEY AND R. ALBERT FISCHER, *The Mystic Light. The Script of Harzael-Harzrael* (Rider and Co., London) – Here it is said that the first of the two authors wrote this work 'under inspiration', and that the second 'interpreted and adapted it to earthly understanding'; we know what we think, in general, of productions of this kind, and this one certainly does not give us a better opinion of them. It contains many things, expressed in an implausible style, some of which are quite banal, while others belong to the most extravagant fantasies; above all, the formation and constitution of the earth, the moon and the starry world (or, as they say, 'constellate') are the subject of endless considerations that cannot be justified in any way, either from a 'scientific' point of view or

dinario, which matters little to us, nor from a traditional point of view, and this is much more serious: the story of the 'four great earthly dispensations' has not the slightest relevance to anything that can be known from real traditions; the whole thing is accompanied by numerous figures that have absolutely no connection with authentic symbolism. On the other hand, it is implied that any criticism levelled against this *script* would risk nothing less than 'offending heaven and earth'; coming from people who all too clearly believe themselves to be 'invested with a mission', this does not surprise us much; what leaves us astonished is that such a book, and above all one so voluminous, has managed to find a publisher...

ANDRÉ SAVORET, *L'Inversion psychanalytique* (Librairie Heugel, Éditions «Psyché», Paris) - This pamphlet is a severe critique of psychoanalysis, which we cannot but approve of.

and that, in fact, it coincides in certain respects with what we have written here on this subject, especially with regard to the particularly disturbing nature of psychoanalytic 'transmission', about which the author cites our articles. The title is justified by the fact that psychoanalysis not only reverses the normal relationship between the 'conscious' and the 'subconscious', but also because it presents itself, in many respects, as a sort of 'reverse religion', which sufficiently demonstrates the source from which it may have been inspired; the pedagogical role it claims to represent and its infiltration into the various methods defined as 'new education' are also quite significant... The second part, entitled *Totemism and Freudianism*, is devoted more specifically to examining Freud's extravagant theory on the origin of religion, taking as its starting point the already rather fantastical and incoherent musings of sociologists on 'totemism' and adding his personal conceptions, or rather his 'obsessions': all this provides a very edifying idea of a certain part of contemporary 'science'... and of the mentality of those who believe in it!

R. DE SAUSSURE, *Le Miracle grec, Étude psychanalytique sur la civilisation hellénique* (Éditions Denoel, Paris) - Here we have a clear example of theories such as those mentioned above: a few lines from the introduction will give a sufficient idea of the spirit in which this book is conceived:

'The cradle of humanity appeared to us as a kind of collective neurosis that hindered the development of intelligence (incidentally, we admire this image of a 'cradle' that has become a

"neurosis" ...). Every civilisation is an attempt, more or less successful, at spontaneous self-healing. First in a temporal sense, Greek civilisation succeeded in lifting the veil that separated it from reality. Needless to say, what is referred to here as 'intelligence' is nothing more than reason, and its 'development' consists in turning exclusively towards the sensible realm; and, as far as 'reality' is concerned, it must simply be understood as things considered from a profane point of view, which, for the author and those who think like him, 'represents man's most complete conquest'! Thus, even when certain facts are accurately presented, the interpretation given is, strictly speaking, the opposite of what it should be: everything that, in the classical period, marks a degeneration or deviation from previous eras is instead presented as 'progress' ... In all this, on the other hand, the author has contributed little of his own, since his book consists mainly of quotations from

"authorities" for whom he clearly has the utmost respect; he seems to be one of those who accept without question all ideas taught more or less "officially"; in this regard, his work could be considered a rather curious "anthology" of everything that is conventionally accepted in current scientific circles

"scientific" circles regarding ancient civilisations. It would be completely pointless to go into detail and insist on the explanation provided for the so-called "Greek miracle"; getting rid of all the Freudian 'mythology' that surrounds it, it could be summed up in these few words: rebellion against family institutions, and therefore against any traditional order, making 'freedom of thought' possible, was the initial cause.

of any 'progress'; ultimately, it is nothing more than the expression of the modern anti-traditional spirit in its most brutal form. Let us add one more observation: for about a century, it has been fashionable to liken 'primitive men' to children, then to savages; now they want to liken them to sick people, and more precisely to 'neurotics'. Unfortunately, they do not realise that these 'neurotics' are, in reality, nothing more than one of the most characteristic products of the 'civilisation' of which our age boasts!

DR. PIERRE GALIMARD, *Hippocrate et la Tradition pythagoricienne* (Ouive et Cie, Paris) – This work far exceeds the usual scope of medical dissertations and could be considered an excellent introduction to the study of a set of issues that seem to have been neglected until now. Hippocrates' interest lies in the fact that he 'appears to us as the last representative, at least in the West, of traditional medicine'; this medicine, which was essentially a 'sacred art' in Greece, had probably already greatly weakened in his time, and we might wonder to what extent Hippocrates himself understood it: but the information he preserved in his writings, which without him would have been lost forever (because before him it was undoubtedly transmitted orally), nevertheless deserves thorough examination, which, especially when compared with similar material that exists in various Eastern countries, might perhaps allow us to recover its authentic meaning. Dr Galimard proposes, in particular, to show the links between the concepts expressed by Hippocrates and those of the Pythagoreans, which in turn belong to the same period of transition between archaic Greece and 'classical' Greece; the symbolism of numbers, the analogy between macrocosm and microcosm, the theory of temperaments and their quaternary correspondences, the affirmation of a close relationship between wisdom and medicine, all of this, in Hippocrates, is clearly Pythagorean-inspired. Of course, here the author has only been able to touch on these topics, which are so different from one another; but, since

He himself states that 'his work, far from exhausting the subject and drawing conclusions, is intended merely as an introduction to the topic'. we must hope that he will be able to continue this study and reconstruct more completely the character of this 'medicine of sacred origin', so different in every respect from the profane medicine of modern times and which, contrary to the exclusively analytical and experimental tendencies of the latter, 'draws all its principles and their applications from above'.

R.P. VICTOR POUCEL, *Mystique de la Terre: II. La parabole du Monde* (Librairie Plon, Paris) – This book, like *Plaidoyer pour le Corps*, which we have already discussed and of which it is the sequel, is fortunately far removed from the 'ideal' banalities and empty 'abstractions' that our age prides itself on, and against which the author rightly rails from the outset. To summarise its main idea briefly, one could say that it is a question of restoring to the sensible world the symbolic value which, in its order, makes it an image of spiritual realities, and which is expressly recognised by medieval Christian thought, as well as by all other traditional thought. If this conception is completely foreign to the modern mentality, we do not think that this is a reason to apologise for referring to it, since in reality it is shared by all 'normal' humanity. The author, who is well-intentioned, does not claim to treat the subject exhaustively, which would obviously be impossible; he only wanted to outline various aspects of it, but even within these limits, he could perhaps have gone further at times. Some chapters are rather disappointing, such as *Earth and Sky*, for which the Chinese, whom he quotes extensively, could have provided him with much more precise information, or *The Heart of the World*, which, in universal tradition, is quite different from what he sees. in cases such as these, one gets the impression that he is not sufficiently aware that authentic symbolism is essentially an 'exact science'. We wonder whether, for this reason too, he seems to have a tendency to diminish the value of his own considerations.

which he expounds, as if, to a certain extent, their real significance escaped him, so much so that he sometimes goes so far as to accept a sort of reversal of the relationships between them and other things that actually belong to a much more 'external' order; is there not in this a concession, probably involuntary, to the modern spirit and its exclusive 'exotericism'? All this is particularly evident in a chapter devoted to the symbolism of numbers (entitled *In Pondere et Mensura*, and, let us say in passing, we cannot explain the omission of the 'number', explicitly mentioned in the text of *Wisdom*, in which the three terms refer to distinct modes of quantity, since in fact here the question concerns numbers from beginning to end); thus, knowing the importance of the numerical value of letters in certain sacred languages and the impossibility of truly understanding their deeper meaning without taking this into account, one is rightly surprised to read that 'one can make better use of one's time' than to dwell on an interpretation of the texts based on the science of numbers. Needless to say, such an interpretation can only be applied to languages such as Arabic and Hebrew (which is entirely natural for those familiar with these languages), and it is absurd to try to transpose it, for example, into modern Western languages. On this point, and many others, we would certainly be much more severe than the author with regard to certain contemporary digressions. This last reflection is justified above all by the surprise caused by certain references to a 'Steinerian' doctor, for example, or to a chemist who would try to adapt astrology to the views of modern science (and who, moreover, proclaimed himself an 'adorer' of Madame Blavatsky, a detail undoubtedly ignored by R.P. Poucel); it would certainly not be difficult to find better and traditionally more reliable 'authorities' than these; and, when it comes to 'sacred science', 'discernment' can never be too rigorous... As far as astrology is concerned, precisely, we cannot help but deplore the fact that the author was led to accept, in the absence of more reliable information, an interpretation of symbolism zo-

dialect that is not without imagination; in this regard, we must also note that the beginning of the year coinciding with the spring equinox, while it applies especially to certain traditional forms (such as the autumn equinox for others, for example the Jewish tradition), is not in any way 'primordial' and, in any case, is not in accordance with Christian tradition, for which the beginning of the annual cycle is marked by the winter solstice. We would add that there is something very important here, for "place" the different traditions in relation to their cosmic correspondences. With regard to the relationships between traditions, we must still point out a point that concerns us directly: a note seems to suggest that the "Abrahamic" tradition is found "more or less altered in Kabbalah and Islam"; we are perfectly certain, on the contrary, that it is not altered at all, since they are two authentic and orthodox branches of the same 'Abrahamic' tradition. Perhaps it will be thought that we are being overly critical, but if we insist on these points, it is because we feel it is more useful than limiting ourselves to the general praise that the book undoubtedly deserves, and because the work that the author has undertaken, and which he intends to continue, is of particular interest from the point of view of restoring the traditional mindset. therefore, we can only hope that this mentality will be reflected in it as fully as possible, and we will be more than happy if our observations can contribute to this.

1945

The reviews collected here were written five years ago and were intended for publication in the July 1940 issue, which was never released. Since then, the works reviewed have been sold out, but we believe that this in no way diminishes the interest of the considerations expressed by our eminent contributor.

RoBERT PoUYAUD, *Sous le signe de la Spirale: Vézelay, centre initiatique* (Imprimerie Maurice Laballery, Clamecy) – This booklet contains many interesting considerations on medieval architecture and its symbolic and esoteric character; but the author's overly exclusive admiration for the Romanesque style makes him unfair to the ogival cathedral, in which he refuses to see anything other than 'a philosophical expression tending towards humanistic ends, reflecting the secular world! It is true that the transition from Romanesque to Gothic must have corresponded to a change in conditions that required a 'readjustment', but the latter was carried out in accordance with traditional principles; the deviation occurred only much later, coinciding precisely with the decline of Gothic architecture. In some parts, which refer to more specific issues, in particular numerical and astrological symbolism, it seems that the author wanted to include too many topics that were impossible to develop in so few pages, which gives a rather confused impression. There are also some minor errors: for example, the winged Sphinx may perhaps be Greek, but it certainly has nothing in common with the Egyptian tradition, in which the Sphinx never included any elements other than

were a human head and a lion's body; as for supposing the existence of seven vowels (in which language?) to make them correspond the seven planets, seems like a completely modern fantasy... As regards Vézelay more specifically, we regret that what he says does not establish at all that there was an initiatory centre here, even a secondary one, since the evidence invoked could be valid for any other church of the same period; it would be necessary to be able to prove that it was the actual seat of an initiatory organisation, and this essential argument

is not even touched upon here. On the other hand, it is not enough to refer to the Benedictine monks as 'the builders of the basilica of Vézelay', a highly debatable statement, especially with regard to the esotericism that was included there; more precisely, if some of them played a part in it, it was not as monks but as initiates in the art of building, which, while not at all incompatible, is nevertheless completely different. We would add, from another point of view, that it is a pity that the text is not accompanied by illustrations, without which certain descriptions are really rather difficult to follow, especially for those who are not familiar with Vézelay.

ROBERT AMBELAIN, *Dans l'ombre des Cathédrales* (Éditions Adyar, Paris) – This book has a rather ambitious subtitle: 'A study of the architectural and decorative esotericism of Notre-Dame de Paris in relation to hermetic symbolism, secret doctrines, astrology, magic and alchemy'. but we must say right away that this is not at all justified by the content, since in reality the book deals almost exclusively with magic, or at least all the topics addressed are traced back, in a certain sense by design, to what could be defined as a magical perspective. Despite this, there is frequent mention of esotericism and even initiation; but the fact is that the latter is confused with magic, with which it actually has nothing to do. We have already explained this confusion sufficiently on other occasions, so that readers know what to think about it, but it will not be useless to insist a little on what makes it particularly dangerous here. In fact, the point of view taken by the author is not entirely his own; we find traces of a certain initiation that we might call 'deviant' (and the dedication 'to the memory of Fulcanelli' is undoubtedly a fairly significant indication of this), of which we know numerous examples, from the Renaissance to the present day. Let us specify that, in principle, this is an initiation of *Kshatriya* (or its equivalent in the Western world), but one that has degenerated due to the complete loss of what constituted its upper part, at the

point of having lost all contact with the spiritual order, which makes possible all kinds of 'infiltrations' of more or less suspicious influences. It goes without saying that one of the first effects of this degeneration is a 'naturalism' taken to its extreme consequences; and this can be linked to the 'dualistic' statements, as we note several times in this work, in which the author goes so far as to claim that 'the four essential principles of Initiation' are 'the existence of two opposing forces, two opposite poles, and their two results' (p. 256); if the unity of the principle is not denied in an absolute sense, it is nevertheless considered only as a mere possibility, which is not worth further consideration, which is essentially an expression of a clearly 'agnostic' attitude towards everything related to the metaphysical field. Another consequence is 'Luciferianism', re-possible from dualism itself, and on the other hand inherent, in a certain sense, in what can be defined as the 'rebellion of the Kshatriyas'; from this point of view, we will note in particular the importance attributed here to a certain version of the legend of Hiram, whose The source can be found in Gérard de Nerval: whether it is solely the product of his imagination, or whether it is based, as he claims, on a story he had actually heard (and, in this case, would appear to be somewhat plausible in relation to some heterodox sect in the Near East), in any case it has nothing in common with the authentic legend of Hiram in Freemasonry, and moreover has had the rather unfortunate fate of becoming one of the 'commonplaces' of anti-Freemasonry, which has taken hold of it with intentions clearly quite different from those that lead to its use in this book, but ultimately to arrive at the same result, namely, apart from any other assessment, to attribute a 'Luciferian' character to initiation. From the same point of view, we also note a kind of obsession with the colour green, which on the one hand is presented (p. 35) as a 'Luciferian colour' (probably because it is the colour of Venus, which the Latins called Lucifer as the 'morning star'), while on the other hand (p. 81) it is the 'colour of Initiation', a combination from which it is easy to draw conclusions; the effort made to give a special meaning

This colour, wherever it is found, is linked to various truly strange stories that we had to deal with a few years ago... Ambelain even goes so far as to state, in a very serious tone, that the letters 'X' and 'P' on Constantine's Labarum owe their importance to the fact that they are 'the two letters of the word "*chloros*", which means "green" in Greek' (p. 73). All this leads us to another characteristic feature of the author's inspiration: the process known as 'Hermetic Kabbalah' (it would seem that, in this case, we should write 'Kabbalah' to distinguish it from the Jewish Kabbalah), or even 'phonetic Kabbalah', which would have given its name to 'Cabaleria', in other words, chivalry! We will surely remember that we have often had to point out the abuse of these verbal associations by certain writers who are overly imaginative and, moreover, quite unaware of what they can be used for when handled by more 'astute' people, but the most important thing is that these 'word games' are nothing more than the distortion and almost caricature of a traditional interpretative process based on real phonetic symbolism, similar to the Hindu *ni-rukta*; Moreover, in general, certain truths that nevertheless persist throughout are in turn presented in a way that completely distorts them, sometimes to the point of reversing their legitimate meaning... Be that as it may, it seems that we must draw significant conclusions from the fact that '*argot*' is also called 'green language', and that phonetically it is '*artgoth*', meaning not only the 'Gothic art' of cathedrals, but also '*art goétique*'¹ (p. 53), which we will now discuss. In fact, this is not simply a matter of magic, but more properly of 'black magic'; after all, does not the author himself declare that 'any practical magic is and cannot but be satanic' (and he specifies that he means this in the sense that it belongs to the realm of the Egyptian *Seth*, who is, let us not forget, the "god with a donkey's head"!), and that "all magical works, however altruistic they may appear, belong to the realm of what the layman classifies as black magic" (p. 147)?

¹ <<Magical art', from the Greek <<goetheia', <<witchcraft>> [Translator's note].

It is true that he strives to explain these statements in a way that mitigates their significance, but there is a great deal of confusion, whether intentional or not. In any case, he is certain that 'magicians throughout history have dressed in black' and have only used accessories that are equally black, which, from a historical point of view, seems false to us, but no less significant. It is understood that the colour black has a metaphysical meaning, which we have already discussed, and which is completely different from the 'sinister' meaning it usually has; but, since this higher meaning is very far removed from the field in which the magician's activity is exercised, it cannot be questioned here; and the very way in which the author wants to modify the meaning traditionally recognised for certain concepts, such as 'Black Sun' or 'Dark Satellite', is also very suspicious... Nor is the justification for the use of black candles (pp. 224-225) any more successful; in our memories (memories that date back a long time, because all this must have happened more than forty years ago), these black candles are linked, in particular, to a matter concerning a specific group, which is mentioned precisely in another part of the book (p. 243) and which we want to defend from the accusation of 'Satanism', saying that 'it is simply a secret occult society, nothing more'; But in our era, are there not many groups that are more or less consciously 'Satanist' and are, in fact, nothing more than that? In this field, we could also mention at least one that did expressly claim its 'Satanist' character, and an allusion we encountered somewhere in the text showed us that it was not unknown to the author; But then, what is the point of this justification, which moreover aims to present such occultist groups as 'serious initiatory circles', which is a real joke? On the other hand, we must point out that we do not want to confuse 'Luciferianism' and 'Satanism', which are two different things, but the transition from one to the other risks taking place almost imperceptibly, just as a deviation that goes further and further inevitably ends up in a total reversal of the normal order; and it is not our fault if, in the case in question, everything is so confused.

point that you never know exactly what you are facing... The applications made of 'dualism' are anything but consistent: thus initiation, assimilated to magic, as we have already said, is opposed to religion, which does not prevent religious rites from being identified, with a reverse confusion, with magical rites; on the other hand, Judaism and Christianity, which unquestionably fall within the realm of religion, are nevertheless opposed to each other ; to which 'poles' can the two terms of these different oppositions correspond respectively? It is difficult to see, especially since, if Christianity is interpreted in a 'Naassenic' sense (pp. 256-257), the God of Moses, for his part, is identified with the 'Spirit of the Earth' (pp. 204-205), not to mention the more than ambiguous insinuation that, in the struggle between Moses and Pharaoh's magicians (p. 37), the role of the black ~~magician~~ could very well belong to Moses! I would certainly find it extremely difficult to untangle all this chaos, but then again, it is not at all necessary to realise that the practices described in this book, and without the reader being warned, as basic prudence would require, are for the most part extremely dangerous, and some of them belong more to witchcraft than anything else. With regard to the dangers involved, we will mention in particular the way in which divination practices are considered, which are 'almost always evocative ~~magical~~' (p. 112), which bears no resemblance to the ancient traditional sciences, of which they are only often misunderstood remnants, but whose logical consequence is that, 'when one attempts divination, one puts oneself in a state of receptivity, of complete passivity' (p. 273). *It is* all too easy to understand what the disastrous results of such an approach might be. The author shows a marked preference for geomancy, which he compares, rather inappropriately, to the automatic ~~magical~~ of spiritualists, and which for him seems to be a way of communicating with the 'Spirit of the Earth'; on the other hand, he develops a very particular concept of it (p. 98), which, despite his assertions, pertains only to the more typically Western 'ceremonial ~~magical~~' since it is certainly not in the East that they have had

need to make a big fuss — excuse the expression — to practise geomancy... Let us add that, if sometimes he refuses, for reasons that are more or less obscure, to see the devil where he actually is, conversely he also happens to see him where he is not: 'Master Pierre de Coignet' (pp. 241-242), which could once be seen in a corner of the choir loft of Notre-Dame, was not a depiction of the devil at all, but simply a caricature of Pierre de Cugnières, Attorney General of the Parliament under Philip of Valois, reviled by the clergy of his time because, at a meeting held in 1329, he had fought against the extension of the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts (see *Mémoire sur les Libertés de l'Église gallicane*, Amsterdam, 1755, pp. 245-248); you mean that it was certainly not the clergy in the 17th century who wanted to make him disappear, but, on the contrary, the partisans of the supremacy of civil power, who could feel offended by this permanent insult to the memory of their distant predecessor. This is, therefore, a gross error, and it is truly a pity, because it lent itself perfectly to the author's intent:

"Pierre du Coignet" is the "pierre *du coin*", meaning the "cornerstone" or "angle stone", and writes elsewhere that the devil "is truly the foundation and cornerstone of all theology" of the Catholic Church (p. 56), and it must be agreed that this is a very unusual way of interpreting the symbolism of the cornerstone; here is a fairly instructive example of where the abuses of the so-called "Hermetic Kabbalah" can lead! There are also, it must be said, other errors whose *raison d'être* is not so clear: thus, Valentin Andreae is given as the 'pseudonym' of an 'anonymous German author' (p. 24), whereas it is the authentic name of a man whose life and works are well known; the Masonic degree of Knight of the Rose Cross is the seventh and last of the French Rite, and not the 'eighth' (p. 25), which never existed; it was Plato, not Pythagoras (p. 61), who had the words 'Let no one enter who does not know geometry' written on the pediment of his school; elsewhere, the feast of St John the Baptist is attributed to St John the Evangelist (p. 168), and it is also claimed that this is taken from the 'Elenchi' (p. 168), which is not true. 'Let no one enter who does not know geometry'; elsewhere, the feast of St John the Baptist is attributed to St John the Evangelist (p. 168), and some significant consequences are even claimed to be drawn from this fact... Alongside

In addition to these historical errors, there are linguistic errors that are no less curious: for example, '*rekabim*', which is a plural (but here the plural of Hebrew words is continually mistaken for the singular), has never meant 'stick' (p. 11); '*emeth*' does not mean 'life' (p. 124), but 'truth', and '*nephesh*' does not indicate 'pure spirit' at all (p. 153); '*heth*' is repeatedly mistaken for '*he*', which completely distorts the hieroglyphic analysis of the words in which it appears, as well as all the deductions that follow from it. Moreover, Hebrew is not the only language that is so mistreated; we will overlook the numerous distorted words that could be attributed to the printing press, even though it is quite difficult to do so, since they invariably recur in the same form; one does not need to be a great Latin scholar to know that "Christ the King" is not said "*Christum Rexus*" (p. 283), or even that "*Omnia ab uno et in unum omnia*" does not mean "One is in the Whole and the Whole is in One" (p. 21), but "Everything comes from Unity and returns to Unity". Perhaps some may be impressed by the appearance of 'erudition' that is, at first glance, quite considerable; but, as the examples we have provided demonstrate, these appearances are very deceptive... It is not surprising that we have decided to dwell at length on such a book and to go into detail as we have done, because it is one of those that can only contribute to increasing disorder and confusion in the minds of many people; for this reason, it is necessary to show as clearly as possible what lies beneath. To conclude, we could say, without resorting to any 'word games', that the 'shadow' referred to in the title must undoubtedly be understood in a 'sinister' and inverted sense; here, it seems, is a good taste of what the infamous 'Age of Aquarius' has in store for us!

CHARLES-RAYNAUD-PLENSE, *Les vraies Centuries et Prophé-ties de Miche! Nostradamus, le grand voyant de Salon, avec sa vie, et un glossaire nostradamique* (Imprimerie Régionale, Salon)

– This new edition of the Centuries, whose title we have abbreviated due to its excessive length, does not exactly shine in terms of presentation: the text is full of errors of translation.

scnz10ne (the 's' and 'f' letters, in particular, are constantly interchanged); the biography that precedes it, accompanied by rather poor illustrations, is as "superficial" as possible and does not even hint at anything truly enigmatic in the life of Nostradamus; the volume, as a whole, has a certain "naive" air that seems to place it in the genre of what are conventionally called "popular publications". As for the 'Nostradamus glossary' at the end, it could certainly be very useful; but, while praising the author for rejecting the somewhat overly adventurous fantasies of certain recent commentators (for example, '*Hister*', the Latin name for the Danube, mistaken for '*Hitler*', which is like mistaking Piraeus for a man...), unfortunately there are still many questionable interpretations, especially with regard to proper names, such as the city of '*Achem*', which is not Jerusalem at all, as we have already pointed out in relation to another book, or '*Annemare*', which is Denmark rather than Carmania, or '*Arda and Zerfas*', which it attempts to explain separately, but which are in fact '*Aredha-Tserphath*', an expression whose meaning in rabbinical geography Nostradamus, being of Jewish origin, certainly knew; we think these examples suffice to show that this glossary should be consulted with caution... It all ends in a rather bizarre way, with a kind of 'tourist' advertisement for Salon and its surroundings!

Trésor Hermétique, including *Le livre d'Images sans pa-ro/es* (*Mutus Liber*), in which all the operations of Hermetic philosophy are represented, republished with an introduction by Dr Mare Haven, and *Le Traité symbolique de la Pierre philosophale* in 78 figures by Jean Conrad Barchusen, republished for the first time with a note by Paul Servant (P. Derain, Lyon).

- The full title, as we have transcribed it, is sufficient to indicate the content of this volume, which is presented as the first in a 'collection of esoteric albums'; these are two treatises composed entirely of figures, without any accompanying explanatory text

We can only recommend this reissue to all enthusiasts of hermetic symbols, who will find abundant material on which to exercise their sagacity.

A. COCKREN, *Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored* (Rider and Co., London) - The title of this small volume is rather ambitious, but it must be said that the content does not live up to it at all; evidently, the author is one of those who, conceiving alchemy as purely 'material', reduce it simply to a sort of special chemistry, or, so to speak, 'hyper-chemistry'. The first part is a sort of summary of the history of alchemy, interpreted, of course, in the sense we have indicated; the other two parts, theoretical and practical respectively, contain an 'exposé of the extraction of the seed of metals and the preparation of medicinal elixirs according to the practice of the Hermetic Art and the Alkahest of the Philosophers', or, rather, we would say, according to the author's idea of it. The most interesting thing, at least from a practical point of view, which in these cases is the only one that really matters, is undoubtedly the medical application; on the other hand, the principle is not explicitly stated, but it is easy to understand that, in essence, it is a question of treating the diseases of each organ by means of remedies extracted from the metal whose astrological correspondence is the same as that of the organ; In fact, all this can give appreciable results, and it is clear that a medicine of this type, even if it cannot be defined as strictly alchemical, would nevertheless deserve to be seriously experimented with.

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?* (Luzac and Co., London) - In this volume, A.K. Coomaraswamy has brought together several studies "on the traditional or normal view of art," some of which are already familiar to our readers. In the first, which gives the book its title, the author first shows the futility of exhibiting the works of living artists in museums, which is justified only by the vanity of the latter, or by the desire to give them a sort of free commercial 'advertising'; moreover, what

Any object, whatever its nature, should normally be made for purposes that have nothing to do with such exposure. Conversely, when it comes to antique or exotic objects, the issue is completely different, and then we can talk about an 'educational' purpose, but only under certain conditions: what we need to understand, first of all, is the point of view of those who created these works of art, which for them were not at all, as they are for modern people, useless objects with no value other than that resulting from 'aesthetic' appreciation, i.e. purely sentimental. According to all traditional conceptions (and Plato's testimony is cited here in particular), a work of art truly deserved this name only if it was capable of satisfying both physical and spiritual needs, that is, if it was simultaneously an object of common use and a 'support for contemplation'. In this case, it is always, essentially, the representation of invisible and intelligible forms, and not the imitation of sensible things, since the authentic model that inspires the artist is an idea that he contemplates within himself; in other words, there is no real art except that which has a symbolic meaning, and, in this sense, art is in some ways the antithesis of what moderns mean when they speak of 'visual education'. On the other hand, the public should naturally be led to wonder why today, objects of comparable quality to those seen in museums in everyday use, and thus realise the profound decline implicit in the current situation, with the absolute separation that has come about between industrial production, which has absolutely nothing artistic about it, and art that no longer has any connection with life. Finally, in order to understand works of art, it is essential to avoid interpreting them in terms of modern Western psychology and, in particular, completely discarding both the 'aesthetic' perspective, with all that it entails, and the idea of 'ornamentation' devoid of meaning, or even that of a supposed 'inspiration' coming from external objects, which is, moreover, only a gross contradiction, characteristic of modern confusion; the role of a

The purpose of a museum should not be to entertain the public or flatter its tastes, but to appeal to its capacity for understanding and show it what the truth and beauty of a work of art really consist of. The second chapter, *The Christian and Oriental or True Philosophy of Art*, the third, *Is Art Superstition or a Way of Life?* and the fourth, *What is the Use of Art anyway?* were previously published as separate pamphlets, which we reviewed at the time (see the April and July 1937, November and December 1937, and January 1940 issues). A note was added to the second of these three studies in response to a critic who had reproached the author for advocating a 'return to an outdated state of affairs', that of the Middle Ages, when in reality it was a 'return to first principles', as if these principles could depend on a question of era, and as if their truth were not essentially timeless! - In *Beauty and Truth*, which quotes St Thomas Aquinas:

"*Ex divina puichritudine esse omnium derivatur,*" the connection between beauty and cognitive faculty, and hence with wisdom and truth, is explained with reference mainly to the doctrines of the Christian Middle Ages; it is applied to the written works and architectural monuments of this period, and the same principles are equally valid for all traditional art forms. - We have already discussed *The Nature of Medieval Art* on the occasion of its publication as an article (see the May 1940 issue). - *The Traditional Conception of Ideal Portraiture* first of all explains the distinction made in Indian texts (Hindu and Buddhist) between the external appearance of a man, with his individual characteristics, and the inner image, invisible to the physical eye but accessible to the eye of contemplation; the latter is properly that of a 'type' that corresponds to the spiritual essence of the being, and it is to this conception that all hieratic representations refer, in which physical resemblance is not taken into consideration in the slightest, so much so that these 'portraits' are often barely distinguishable from images of deities. Next, we examine some Western texts in which the same fundamental distinction is made.

such as the Hermetic and Neoplatonic books up to Eckhart; in this regard, Coomaraswamy rightly points out that the well-known Gospel text: 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father' (*John*, XIV, 9) cannot obviously be understood in the sense of a physically visible human appearance, and consequently implies this same distinction. Medieval Christian art also presents hieratic figures entirely comparable to those of India, and equally devoid of individual character; but the 'naturalistic' and 'humanistic' tendency, aimed solely at reproducing the physical likeness of man, made its appearance towards the end of the 13th century (which is also, as we have explained on several occasions, the end of the true Middle Ages), and its gradual accentuation is linked to the whole complex of modern degeneration. - Next comes *The Nature of 'Folklore' and 'Popular Art'*, which is the English text of an article published in this same magazine (June 1937 issue). Finally, the volume concludes with a note entitled *Beauty of Mathematics*, about a text by Prof. G.H. Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology*; the latter, who seems to know only modern concepts and

<<aesthetics>> of art, places the beauty of mathematical sciences above that of the arts; but Cooma-raswamy demonstrates that, had he been familiar with traditional concepts, he would have seen that in reality, in both cases, it is the same <<intelligible>> beauty.

CARLO KERÉNYI, *Ancient Religion in its Fundamental Lines*, translated by Delio Cantimori (Nicola Zanichelli, Bologna) - This book is certainly far from being written from a traditional point of view, but it contains some ideas that may be interesting to examine closely; and, first of all, it must be said that the author is perfectly right in insisting on the mistake too often made by those who, knowing only one form of civilisation and unaware of its limitations, claim to apply everywhere concepts that are valid only for their own environment. One might wonder, however, whether he himself is always entirely free from this flaw: for example, is it not possible that...

Is this a point of view specific to modern Westerners, one that reduces 'religion' (i.e. tradition as a whole) to just one element of civilisation among many others, even if we add — as a wholly insufficient corrective — that this element permeates civilisation in its entirety? Be that as it may, his criticism is absolutely correct in itself, and in particular with regard to a certain 'psychology of religion'; but we should go much further and say that it will always be illusory to treat religion in a psychological sense: it cannot be denied that it has, among other things, psychological effects, but these effects do not constitute religion itself. The latter is not a 'system of psychic realities'; while admitting that they are not mere 'subjective' illusions, since they correspond to extra-psychic realities, 'in the realm of the spirit or in that of nature', nevertheless, taking them as a starting point means reversing the authentic relationships; here we find once again the 'humanistic' postulate, which is the fundamental error common to all 'historians of religions'. Another error, no less serious, is this: the fact that 'ancient religion' (by which we must understand here only that of the Greeks and Romans) is "well known as a religion of nature," that is, that it is usually considered as such, does not mean at all that this statement is true; that the author means by this only a "veneration of natural phenomena not understood" and means only that his horizon was limited to the "cosmos" changes nothing, since the very idea that "natural religions" exist or can exist is radically false and in formal opposition to the authentic notion of everything that has a properly traditional character, although, conversely, it is perfectly in accordance with all the anti-traditional prejudices of the modern mentality. Moreover, without realising it, the author falls into a rather significant contradiction; he recognises that in everything he considers 'religious' there is always an inherent 'spiritual content', but he does not understand that precisely what is spiritual belongs, as such, to an order of reality that is beyond the "cosmos" (even though we have seen him make a distinction, which is

absolutely incomprehensible under these conditions, between the environment of the spirit and that of nature'); and why should we suppose, as he seems to do, at least implicitly, that the Does 'supernatural' deserve this name only if conceived in a specifically Christian way? Another important point concerns the concept of holidays: it is true that there are moments that have a special 'quality', both in the cosmic order and in the human order; but when we say that between these moments and the rest of existence there is a 'change of plane' and a discontinuity, this implies a distinction between 'sacred' and 'profane' which, far from being 'primitive', corresponds only to a certain stage of degeneration; in an entirely traditional civilisation, where everything has a 'sacred' character, there is nothing more than a simple difference of degree. The observation that all festivals involve an element of 'play', which is like participating in the 'free play of the gods' as it was 'in the beginning', is correct and interesting; it should be added, however, that play itself, understood in its authentic sense (which is not at all, contrary to what the author thinks, the profane sense attributed to it by moderns), has an essentially ritual character in its origin; and only this allows us to explain that not only does it not exclude 'seriousness', but that, on the contrary, it implies it, as do all other types of rituals (see, on this subject, the articles by Coomaraswamy discussed elsewhere). We will not go into the details of the philological discussions aimed at establishing the characteristics of what defines the "Greek and Roman religious style"; we will only say that, in order to truly determine the original meaning of certain terms without reducing them to their most superficial aspects, knowledge other than that of lay linguists would be required... Considerations on *Theoria*, which lead to the characterisation of Greek art as a "religion of vision", are not without interest; but, in truth, we do not see what is specifically Greek about assimilating knowledge to 'vision' or considering the sensible world as a set of symbols through which it is possible to perceive another order of reality (and why

the latter not should never exceed the limits of the 'cosmos'?). This (as well as the symbolism of the ~~divine~~) is found, in essence, in all traditions, and, at most, the assertion of a connection between the corporeal and the spiritual may appear extraordinary only to moderns. On the other hand, when defining Roman *religion* by means of the distinction between a 'world of ~~signs~~' and a 'world of ~~signs~~' in that signs, instead of having a timeless character and a value of pure knowledge, would only have a practical and, in some ways, divinit~~y~~ significance, we wonder whether such a conception is not too narrow, and also whether there is not something artificial about speaking of 'hearing' as opposed to 'seeing'. In reality, the two symbols of vision and hearing belong equally to the universal tradition and, although one people or another may certainly have developed one rather than the other, they are so far from being mutually exclusive that they are sometimes closely linked (thus, the *Rishis* are properly "seers," yet they "heard" the *Veda*). Similarly, if it is true that the Greeks gave greater importance to spatial representations and the Romans to temporal ones, in this case it is only a question of proportion, and one must avoid excessive 'schematisation.' The author then studies worship, considered as an expression of the relationship between man and the Divine; he recognises the limitations (perhaps it would be better to say the complete atrophy) of certain faculties in modern people, who, for this very reason, mistake for a trivial matter of ~~fact~~ (in the vulgar sense of the term) what for the ancients was an authentic

"experience" (and, we would add, an experience that is anything but than 'psychological'). On topics such as the 'divine presence', the 'reality of the golden age', the opposition between 'divine spirit' (identical to *nous*) and 'titanic spirit', there are points of view worthy of attention, but whose conclusions unfortunately remain very vague and, we would say, more 'literary' than truly 'technical'. As for the Romans, the very secondary role of myth, at least prior to Greek influence, emphasises the 'cultic' side; in this regard, there would have been

There is much to be said about the concept of action performed *as a ritual* (cf. the Sanskrit word 'rita'), which is by no means limited, as some have believed, to a purely 'legal' notion (which, on the contrary, would be more of a degeneration of this very concept); but even in this case, there is a lack of direct and effective knowledge of rituals (we are not referring, of course, to Roman or Greek rituals in particular, since they belong to traditional forms that have disappeared, but simply to rituals in general). On the other hand, the life of *the Flamen Dialis*, which is described in detail, is a remarkable example of an existence that remained entirely traditional in an environment that had largely become profane; it is precisely this contrast that produces its apparent strangeness, and yet, although this obviously escapes the author, it is precisely this type of existence, in which everything has a symbolic value, that should be considered truly 'normal'. We cannot prolong these observations indefinitely, and although many other points deserve to be mentioned, we will content ourselves with adding that an appendix containing speculations on non-existence, strongly inspired by certain contemporary philosophical theories, does not seem to us at all capable of elucidating, as it claims to do, the ideas of the ancients on death, which were certainly much less 'simplistic' than those of moderns; but how can we make the latter understand that what does not fall under the bodily senses can still be the object of perfectly real knowledge and has absolutely nothing in common with banal fantasies?

"Psychological"?

P.V. PIOBB, *Le Sort de l'Europe d'après la célèbre Prophétie des Papes de saint Malachie, accompanied by the Prophétie d'Orval and the latest indications from Nostradamus* (Éditions Dangles, Paris) - Various predictions, commonly referred to by the misleading name of "prophecies", are, as is well known, very much in vogue in recent times, and have given rise to a multitude of books that strive to comment on and interpret them in more or less ingenious ways; this one by Piobb, most of which is

dedicated to the "prophecy of Saint Malachy", appeared, by a very significant coincidence, unless it was expressly intended, almost exactly on the day of Pope Pius XI's death. The author first discusses the attribution of the "prophecy" to St. Malachy and concludes that it is actually a "pseudonym," which is indeed very likely; however, one of the arguments put forward is strange, to say the least: Piobb discovered a "heresy" in the fact that the last Pope is designated as *Petrus Romanus*. first of all, this title may be purely symbolic or 'emblematic' like the others, and does not necessarily mean that this Pope will take the name of Peter, but rather alludes to the analogy of the end of a cycle with its beginning; secondly, if it has been agreed that no Pope should take this name, this is only a custom, which certainly has nothing to do with 'dogma'! Now, it is quite plausible that the choice of the 'pseudonym' may have been influenced by an association between the name of St Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh and friend of St Bernard, and that of the prophet Malachy; it is not even impossible that this 'pseudonym' is collective, and therefore we find ourselves 'in the presence of an association that prophesied', although at first glance one might think that this hypothesis further complicates the issue rather than simplifying it; however, we will have occasion to return to this point later. We will gloss over the considerations intended to show the obvious links between the history of the papacy and that of Europe in general, but we will remember this statement: 'a prophecy is a "toy" for the public, unless it is a matter of "propaganda"'; We would say, rather, that it can be both at the same time, and that is why a 'toy' of this kind is never harmless. For his part, the author seems to conclude that if a 'prophetic text' is serious in nature (and he believes that this is the case with the text in question), it does not really constitute a 'prophecy', but, as we say today, albeit in very poor style, a 'directive'; but then, as he himself asks, 'a directive for whom or for what?'. All this

This brings us back to the issue of the 'production' of the so-called 'profession'; what can be most easily observed in this regard is that those who first spoke of it, towards the end of the 16th century, did not tell the truth and invoked non-existent earlier references, which would seem to indicate that they wanted to hide something; But must we conclude, as some have done, that the text was 'created' solely 'for the needs of a ~~and~~ on the occasion of the Conclave of 1590? The author is not willing to settle for such a 'simplistic' solution, perhaps rightly so, since this would not explain the often disconcerting accuracy of the expressions referring to popes after this date; However, he believes that the 'method' employed by the 'prophet' is intended to provoke discussion and reactions among the public in order to achieve a premeditated result, and that therefore, 'at each stage of the prophecy, a particular purpose, derived from the general ~~at~~, which is always to favour certain 'interests', which he is careful to point out are by no means 'venal interests'; ultimately, therefore, the so-called 'prophet' would be only the instrument of a certain particular 'policy'. This would be the reason why 'a prophecy cannot be written in plain ~~language~~ but, in order to 'always leave room for doubt', it must be written 'using a cryptographic method', since 'cryptography has the great advantage that only those who possess the key are able to understand the true meaning of the predictions': must we conclude that these ~~will~~ are, in essence, nothing more than a ~~pass~~ intended for them? It seems to us that an objection could be raised here: it could always happen that a 'cryptography' could be deciphered by someone other than those to whom the 'key' has been entrusted: so what will happen if the latter does not share the "interests" that the "prophecy" must serve, and is it really enough to say that "if he wanted to reveal everything he knows, he would risk causing a catastrophe of which he would be the first victim"? Be that as it may, let us say straight away that, in this regard, reading Piobb's previous works, we already had the impression that he attributes truly excessive importance to 'cryptography'.

goes so far as to want to reduce everything to issues of this kind; of course, we do not dispute the fact that they exist, but, at the end of the day, they are only a negligible aspect of things, and by seeing only this aspect (just as by seeing 'word games' everywhere, based on a similar tendency that derives from a deviant 'hermeticism' of which we could cite many examples), one easily falls into a certain rather disturbing 'naturalism'... We will not insist on the rest: we may be willing to admit that 'the Popes are not the beneficiaries of the prophecy concerning them'; however, if we must limit ourselves to noting that 'the further we go, the darker it gets' until we reach 'absolute blackness', why bother writing so much on this subject? As for the evidence that 'the text attributed to St Malachy is cryptographic' - evidence based mainly on the number of maxims and the main divisions that can be established in it - we will not investigate how convincing it is, because this subject could be discussed almost endlessly; We will only mention the suggestion (and later we will see why) that these numbers could have some connection with the destruction of the Order of the Temple, and the very special importance attributed to '33': of the 112 maxims, the first 100 are divided into $34 + (2 \times 33)$, just like the cantos of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (why has this curious comparison not been pointed out, especially in connection with the allusion to the Order of the Temple?). The last 12 form a separate series, corresponding to the zodiac. On this last point, we would add that the zodiacal correspondences established here are not immune to dispute, since the last four maxims suggest completely different ones, especially if we consider that the sign of 'judgement' must obviously be that of Libra. This is followed by a detailed explanation of the maxims, a purely historical work, which we will not comment on, just as we will not dwell on the predictions to which the last maxims give rise and which are undoubtedly worth... what all predictions of this kind are worth; in any case, the 'anguished dilemma' thus formulated: 'the

Is it the beginning of a new world or the end of an old one? This question is irrelevant to anyone with even the slightest knowledge of 'cyclical laws', as these provide the immediate answer. What interests us most is the last part of the book, devoted to comparisons with information provided by other texts: first of all, the "prophecy of Orval", about which the author admits to having doubts, since it seems to him to be only a more or less skilful "imitation" of the true "cryptographic prophecies"; then Nostradamus, and it is precisely here, as we shall see, that things really deserve to be examined closely. *It is* well known that, a few years ago, Piobb published a work entitled *Le Secret de Nostradamus*; one might wonder whether he now intends to follow it up, or whether he has decided to disavow it, so strange is the way he talks about it; it is not exactly because the predictions contained therein have not come true so far, since it is clear that more or less valid justifications can always be found in this regard, and on the other hand this is, after all, quite secondary; but he himself denounces a series of 'errors' that he allegedly inserted voluntarily, which, frankly, does not give the impression of excessive seriousness because, if one thinks one has good reasons for not telling the truth, one can always resort to silence; if he really wanted to make himself an 'accomplice of the prophet' in this way and if, as he claims, he 'obeyed a prescription', we would be entitled to attribute truly sinister motives to him, and for our part, we would prefer to think that he is slandering himself and that these reflections came to him only as an afterthought, especially since, in general, when one really has plans of this kind, one is careful to avoid letting them leak out... All this, however, does not prevent him from assuring us that 'the directives he had followed were correct'; yet he acknowledges that, in 1927, he was unaware of many things that he has since discovered and which, if they are accurate, are such as to completely change the terms of the question; These are 'three revelations' that are worth quoting verbatim: first, 'Nostradamus did not write a word of his prophecies'; second, 'he was totally incapable of knowing

what the book bearing his signature was about"; finally, "this book, whose most authentic and complete edition bears the date 1668, was printed while Nostradamus was still alive, that is, before 1566". It would seem that this edition is "faked", which is undoubtedly not impossible *a priori*; if, as the author claims, the printing house mentioned did not actually exist, it would be something that in the past, until the end of the 18th century, was not as exceptional as one might think; but in reality this is not the case, and not only did the printing house actually exist, but it also published other well-known books, in particular, in 1646, Guillaume Postel's *Absconditorum Clavis* (as those who own the *Bibliothèque Rosicrucienne* edition can verify) and, from 1667 to 1670, i.e. around the same time as the Nostradamus edition, numerous works by Athanasius Kircher. The falsification of the hypothetical date raises some extremely embarrassing questions: if this edition did not actually date from 1668, but was more than a century older, how could it be that the frontispiece depicts not the death of Louis XVI and the destruction of Paris, as some have imagined quite gratuitously, but, much more simply, the death of Charles I and the burning of London? We will not bother to resolve this problem, since it is up to Piobb to explain it: it is quite astonishing that he did not think of this difficulty. And that is not all: not only does the full title state that this edition has been 'revised and corrected according to the first editions printed in Avignon in 1556 and in Lyon in 1558 and others', which clearly indicates that it is later than these and raises the question of why it is declared 'the most authentic', since the value of the corrections introduced is unknown; but it also contains a biography of Nostradamus, which explicitly mentions his death on 2 July 1566, shortly before sunrise, which does not agree at all with the claim that it was printed while he was still alive! Be that as it may, with regard to all this, any reader who is even minimally demanding in terms of historical accuracy would have every right to ask

Further clarification from the author, what follows is reminiscent, in many respects, of certain 'revelations' about Shakespeare that we discussed at the time, not only because both cases involve 'cryptographic' editions, but also because of more specific similarities inherent in the nature of the subject matter itself. It is here that we see the reappearance of the 'association that prophesied...!'.

Piobb shrouds this topic in thick mystery (in a typically 'Western' manner), but for our part, we obviously have no reason to imitate him: thus, he points out two capital letters on page 126, but without saying which ones; now, they are an 'M' and an 'F', if you look at them 'from bottom to top', as he invites you to do; then, taking into account the observation that 'in 1668, if you believe the ordinary history, these letters taken individually must have had no meaning', and also that in the address of the printing house there is "Jean, son of Jean, and the Widow", it is easy to guess that the author interprets these initials as "Franc-Maçonnerie"; was our comparison with Shakespearean "cryptography" not justified? Later there are other initials, which this time he provides, but without explaining them; they do not appear in the printed text, but he obtained them by translating a certain verse into Latin: <<F.M.B. - M.T. >>; it can certainly mean many different things, but among other things, if you like, <<*Frater Molay Burgundus, Magister Templi*>> . Accepting this interpretation, the rest of the story becomes a little clearer: for example, with regard to 'symbolic dates', it is said that the date of 14 March 1547 in *the Letter to Henry II* conceals 'another 14 March'; unfortunately, could the '14 March' in question actually be 11 March? Unless this is yet another 'deliberate error', this could cast some doubt on the soundness of Piobb's 'construction'; accepting it as it is, at least we understand what you mean when you indicate as the true authors of the text "the signatories of a document predating Nostradamus by several centuries", while being careful, on the other hand, not to provide the slightest indication that would allow the existence and authenticity of this "document" to be verified. The rest is relatively simpler: the successors of the characters

in question would have delivered the text 'already done' to Nostradamus, undoubtedly after translating it, since we must assume that the original was in Latin, and, on the other hand, it could not have been Nostradamus who did the translation, since it is stated, without understanding why, that 'he was unable to understand what the text referred to' that he had been commissioned to publish; under these circumstances, we must even assume that the edition, with its "cryptographic" peculiarities, had been prepared entirely without his involvement, and that his role was essentially limited to putting his name on it or allowing it to be put there, which, according to Piobb, was not even a name, but only a "pseudonym". Let us stop here, because the considerations we have set aside would not provide us with any further clarification. One may wonder whether Piobb is right, in fact and in a certain 'historical' sense, but also, and above all, where he is going with all this. In fact, why should there be many things that make one think of certain "extremely suspicious background" that we have alluded to on other occasions, and which are also closely linked to a whole series of stories relating to so-called "prophecies"? We do not wish to delve deeper into the matter; in any case, if Piobb believes that a 'social secret', which is basically what we are talking about, is 'something much more important than ordinary esoteric truths', by which he seems to mean truths of a doctrinal nature, we beg to differ with him on this point, since only in connection with doctrinal principles, and as an application of the latter in a contingent context, can such a 'secret' truly be worthy of interest? Let us reflect carefully, in order to put everything in the right perspective, on what a 'secret' such as this can still be worth, taken in itself and separated from any consideration of a deeper order, when we go beyond the limits of the European world...

P. ROCHETAILLÉE, *Prophecies of Nostradamus: Key to the Centuries, its application to the history of the Third Republic*

(Éditions Adyar, Paris) – This book refers to the same author as the previous one, but overall less enigmatic; moreover, the author drew heavily on Piobb's *Secret de Nostradamus* to establish his 'key'; and yet we do not think that the latter would be willing, at least at present, to admit that 'the whole work is based on the movement of the planets', since, on the contrary, he insinuates that when they seem to be explicitly mentioned, in reality they are something else entirely. On the other hand, what always strikes us in interpretations of this kind is the disproportionate importance attributed to contemporary events and figures who, in a few centuries' time, will seem completely insignificant; and we cannot help but wonder whether, seen from a certain distance in the future, they could have occupied a more important place than they will have in history when it evaluates them with an equivalent 'perspective' in the past... From another point of view, there are also, in the explanation of certain words, some fairly obvious misunderstandings, and that of many others is rather forced, if not purely fantastical; but it would certainly not be useful to go into detail; we remember having already provided sufficient examples of this in another work on Nostradamus' *Lettre à Henri II*. As for the 'graphics', drawn up for various dates, defined as 'sensitive points' by the author (who, moreover, refrained from indicating any meaning for those that still belong to the future), it certainly takes a lot of goodwill to distinguish, for example, a 'machine gun' or even a hammer and sickle, however much one wants to imagine that they are drawn schematically! No doubt Piobb would classify all this as 'entertainment for the public', and we cannot blame him for doing so. He must have been thinking of things like this when he said that he had 'let people dream about Nostradamus'. What is perhaps a little more disturbing is that here we see the reappearance of the 'Great Monarch' (always interpreted literally as necessarily a 'king of France', which, however, is not at all justified by certain passages in *the Centuries*, and which Piobb himself seems to consider in a rather

ironic), with allusions to the 'Great Pyramid' and its famed 'secret', and also that the author declares that he was 'secretly compelled (?) to publish the results of his research'; could this mean that he too 'obeyed a prescription'? On the other hand, it seems that, a dozen years after Piobb, he believes that the 'prescription' valid in 1927 is no longer valid in 1939? In our opinion, imagination, not to say 'suggestion', plays a predominant role in all these stories; and, to show more precisely what we think about it, it will suffice to add a very simple observation, choosing as an example, for reasons of easy understanding, a passage that refers to a character who died after the book was published: knowing Atatirk's fiercely anti-traditional, and in particular anti-Islamic, attitude (an attitude that even led him to renounce the name 'Mustafa'), it is at least amusing to see the latter being credited with the idea of placing himself at the head of a self-styled

"Pan-Islamic movement"; is someone who cannot even discern what is happening in the present truly qualified to make predictions about the future, with the sole help of an obscure text full of "pitfalls" of all kinds, such as that of the "Great Initiate who was Nostradamus"? "Great Initiate", at least, according to Rochetaillée; yet, if we are to believe Piobb, there was more than one 'Great Initiate' involved in this affair, but the aforementioned Nostradamus was not one of them. *It is* certain that commentators, before 'publishing the results of their research', even with 'occult authorisation', would do well to start by agreeing among themselves!

EM. RUIR, *L'écroulement de l'Europe d'après les prophéties de Nostradamus* (Éditions Médicis, Paris) - Here too, the same topics are discussed, but examined from a slightly different perspective

, since the author is more modest and does not claim to possess any particular 'key'; on the contrary, in his conclusion, he very aptly criticises certain statements made by Piobb. For his part, he intends to limit himself to a 'basic' interpretation.

based on astrology', which in turn is not a perfectly reliable method, albeit for other reasons, and which in any case does not agree with the rather strange assertion of Nostradamus' 'divine inspiration', whose writings he places on the same level as *the Apocalypse!* It should be added that he is motivated by a

!orte anti-Oriental prejudice: it speaks of a 'Muslim Antichrist', a truly inconceivable monstrosity for anyone who has the slightest knowledge of what is said about the Antichrist in Islamic tradition, and who would be only the first in a series of successive 'Antichrists', all 'Asian', who are supposed to lead the invasions predicted for the last quarter of the 20th century... All this is of little interest, at least to us, as is what re-

Consider the inevitable "Great French Monarch" and also the prediction, somewhat further in the future, of a "Translation of the Earth" (?) that should precede the apocalyptic "millennial kingdom". We would like to draw attention to just one thing: in order to try to determine precise dates, Ruir considers the divisions of a certain cyclical period that he calls the 'Adamic era', which essentially represents the duration of humanity as we know it, to which he assigns very narrow limits in the past. He takes as his starting point two so-called chronologies, provided by Nostradamus in his *Epistle to Henry II*, which are completely different from each other, which shows that they should not be taken literally (not to mention that the second places Solomon only 490 years before Jesus Christ, which is clearly historically impossible); the author is right in this, and on the other hand it is certain that in reality, at least for everything preceding Moses, there is no biblical chronology in the ordinary and literal sense of the term. There is no doubt, therefore, that Nostradamus wanted to dissimulate here data that are far from what they seem to indicate (and the same observation could also be applied to other alleged chronologies, such as those in Trithemius' *Treatise on Secondary Causes*, for example); but it is much more doubtful that the more or less ingenious calculations to which Ruir devoted himself led him to discover the data we are talking about. In any case, here is the point about this example: the expression of the sciences

traditional, in the West, seems to have been almost always shrouded in an almost impenetrable darkness, intentional or not; it is true that even in Eastern traditions the actual duration of cyclical periods is more or less concealed, but at least their numerical proportions, which are the essential thing, are clearly indicated; Here, on the contrary, no proportions seem to emerge from this series of fictitious dates. Undoubtedly, we must conclude that this is a completely different mode of expression; but, given its incomparably more enigmatic character, would all the efforts made to decipher it, even if successful, be sufficiently rewarded by the results that could be obtained?

1946

JEAN DE KERDÉLAND, *De Nostradamus à Cagliostro* (Éditions Self, Paris) – This small volume is written from beginning to end in a tone of "Voltairean" derision that we thought had gone out of fashion, and which is extremely unpleasant; the author wants to see only "charlatanism" and "deception" everywhere, which is a very convenient and very simple way of discarding anything that might be embarrassing to his "rationalism". The first part, which is the longest, begins with a sort of 'novelised life' of Nostradamus, followed by what purports to be an examination of his 'prophecies'; Of course, it is not difficult to present everything in such a way as to give the average reader the impression that it is nothing more than a 'monumental' imposture, except 'for a few rare moments' when he is willing to admit that Nostradamus proved himself to be 'a sincere philanthropist and a convinced reformer'. De Kerdéland is not entirely wrong when he criticises recent commentators on Nostradamus; but, unfortunately, his criticisms are all superficial and, moreover, he thought he was 'being humorous' by mixing them with numerous 'misunderstandings' in very poor taste, whose ridiculousness ultimately only affects the author... – Of the three characters mentioned in the book, the

The Count of Saint-Germain, whom we have already encountered in another work in which he is also portrayed as a 'charlatan', is perhaps the least maligned; on the other hand, we find, almost verbatim, a number of anecdotes that we discussed some time ago (in the May 1946 issue). De Kerdéland, however, is particularly harsh on Cagliostro; although he is by no means one of those who consider him a 'Master', he can be seen as something other than a vulgar adventurer, but, of course, on condition that we do not deny this out of hand, attributing it graciously to the 'Stupidity of men' (the capital letters are not ours), everything that goes beyond the crudest and most rigidly limited conception of 'ordinary life'!

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY, *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought* (Luzac and Co., London) – This volume is a new collection of studies "on the traditional or normal view of art" which constitutes a second series following *Why Exhibit Works of Art?* which we discussed some time ago (in the June-July 1946 issue). Most of the chapters that comprise it had already appeared previously in separate articles in various publications, and at the time we mentioned a number of them; for these, we will simply refer you to the issues of the magazine in which they were discussed. In the first chapter, which gives the volume its title, Coomaraswamy once again protests against the 'aesthetic' conception and against the claim to apply it to the interpretation and appreciation of the art of other eras and other peoples: while they saw art primarily as a certain type of knowledge, moderns have reduced it to nothing more than a matter of feeling, and have invented a theory of art which, instead of being 'rhetoric' in the sense understood by the ancients, is nothing more than 'sophistry'. In this way, what were once authentic 'figures of thought', i.e. symbols appropriate to the ideas to be expressed, are now considered mere 'figures of speech', intended only to provoke certain emotions; what is true in this regard for the arts of speech can be extended to all other forms of art.

which have been equally emptied of any real meaning. Instead of striving to understand works of art, that is, to consider them as the 'supports for contemplation' that they normally should be, modern people seek in them only the opportunity for so-called 'disinterested aesthetic pleasure', which is, moreover, a contradiction in terms; Starting from this point of view, they teach a so-called 'history of art', which in reality has no connection with what they want to apply their concepts to, as if they were the concepts of all men. The traditional conception, to which one must necessarily refer in order to understand the art of other peoples, is explained here by means of references drawn mainly from Plato (who in this is nothing more than the interpreter of *the Philosophia perennis*) and from Hindu doctrine, whose comparison shows that this conception was everywhere and always the same, in the West as in the East. - Followed by *The Mediaeval Theory of Beauty* (see the October 1935 and October 1938 issues). - *Ornament* (see the May 1946 issue). - *Ars sine scientia nihil* (see also the May 1946 issue). - *The Meeting of Eyes* is a note on certain portraits, particularly portraits of Christ, whose eyes always seem to look directly at the viewer, wherever they are, and follow them as they move (with particular reference to what Nicolò Cusano says on this subject in *De visione Dei*). This is not an accidental effect, so to speak, but a genuine necessity of iconography: 'if the eyes of an all-seeing God are to be represented truly and correctly, they must appear capable of seeing everything'; and so this effect is an example of *the integritas sive perfectio* that St Thomas Aquinas sets as one of the conditions of beauty. - *Shaker Furniture*, based on a recently published work of the same title, shows the artistic achievements of a community that strove to apply the principles of Christian doctrine to all things, and how, as simple carpenters, by making furniture perfectly suited to its use and whose ornamentation excluded the superfluous, they spontaneously rediscovered a conception in accordance with the 'normal vision of art', in particular that of

of medieval Christianity, while the deliberate imitation of the art of other eras only succeeds in producing caricatures. *Literary Symbolism* explains, with the support of numerous examples, the fact that words have meaning on various levels.

Different and simultaneous 'reference levels', which make their figurative, or more precisely symbolic, use possible and valid, 'since appropriate symbolism can be defined as the representation of a reality on a certain reference level by means of a corresponding reality on another'. However, in order to understand the traditional language of symbols, one must beware of any 'subjective' interpretation; it is not something that can be improvised and, for various reasons, its study is far from easy. It should not be forgotten that this language is in fact 'the universal and universally intelligible language in which the highest truths have always been expressed'.

- In *Intention*, the author defends the method of art criticism that takes into account the relationship between intention and result, or, in other words, that examines whether the artist has truly achieved what he set out to do. As far as the criticism of intention itself is concerned, it has nothing to do with the value of the work of art as such, and can only proceed from a point of view, moral or otherwise, that is completely different from that of artistic appreciation. - *Imitation, Expression and Participation* (see the May 1946 issue). - *The Intellectual Operation in Indian Art* (see the December 1935 issue). - *The Nature of Buddhist Art* (see the March 1938 issue). - *Samvega, 'Aesthetic Shock'*, is the explanation of a Pali term often im- bent to indicate 'the shock or amazement one may feel when the perception of a work of art becomes a serious experience', and which provides the starting point for a reflection that can provoke a profound change in the individual; the effects of such a shock, moreover, cannot be fully explained without appealing to the Platonic and Indian doctrine of 'reminiscence'. - *An Early Passage an Indian Painting* is a text from the *Atthasali'ni* that answers the question: 'How does thought produce its various effects?' and in which numerous technical terms

are presented to us through a play on words between '*chitta*', 'thought', and '*chitta*' (in Sanskrit: '*chitra*'), 'painting'. - *Some References to Pictorial Relief* is a comparison between various Greek and Indian texts in which the representation of relief in painting is discussed in almost identical terms. - *Primitive Mentality* is the English text of the study that appeared in this magazine in the special issue on Folklore (August-September-October 1939). - In *Notes an*

Savage Art demonstrates, through references to two works relating to the art of New Guinea and the Marquesas Islands, how, among those so-called 'savage' peoples, all the work of artisans was strictly traditional and ritualistic in nature, before European influence came along and destroyed everything under the pretext of 'civilisation'. - *Symptom, Diagnosis and Regimen* (see the May 1946 issue). - Finally, *On the Life of Symbols*, which closes the volume, is the translation of the conclusion of Walter Andrae's work, *Die ionische Saule, Bauform oder Symbol?*, in which once again the symbolic value originally possessed by everything that is now considered a simple 'ornament' is emphasised, since the profound meaning that made it properly 'the image of a spiritual truth' has been forgotten or misunderstood.

WALTER SHEWRING, *Art in Christian Philosophy* (The Sower Press, New Jersey) - This booklet is a very valuable summary of Christian doctrine on art, especially as expounded by St Thomas Aquinas: starting from the latter's definition, the author insists that art is first and foremost intellectual, even if it also involves the will, without which the work of art would never be created; the artist's will plays the role of efficient cause here, but the formal cause is the idea conceived in his intellect. On the other hand, art, which is properly that by means of which the artist works, a permanent intellectual *habitus* or inner word conceived in intelligible form, concerns the creation of everything, not just this or that particular class of things, as moderns generally think. Another essential point is that man, as an artist,

imitates God, as he is the Artist par excellence, and the divine Word, "Through which all things were created" is the authentic archetype of the verb or idea that resides in the spirit of the human artist. As for the purpose of art, it is indeed the production of useful things, but on condition that this usefulness is understood in the broadest sense, as applied to everything that can serve in any way to the ends of humankind, both spiritually and materially. After a digression on beauty, which must be considered as 'transcendental' and not as a specific prerogative of works of art, the author moves on to what he rightly defines as 'modern aberrations', opposed to this normal conception of art, and ends by dreaming of the possibility of a 'return to the norm', from the more specific point of view of Catholicism. We would only have reservations on one point: while recognising, of course, the conformity of the Christian conception with any traditional view of art, Shewring seems to have a tendency to claim as properly Christian everything that is, in reality, traditional in the universal sense of the term; one might even wonder whether he does not attribute to 'natural reason' everything that is not Christianity, whereas, on the contrary, every tradition, whatever it may be, possesses the same supernatural and superhuman character without which it would not deserve this name and would not rise above the level of pure and simple profane 'philosophy'. As long as Shewring sticks to the field of his own traditional form, what he says is perfect, but he is undoubtedly still far from conceiving the essential unity of all traditions, and this is a pity, because this would allow him to give a whole new breadth to the ideas he expounds, and to considerably broaden their scope by recognising their truly universal value.

1947

P.-J. GONNET, *Arupa* (Paul Derain, Lyon) - This is a rather unusual book, which gives a somewhat con-

confused and disordered, but this does not justify the title at all, because it mainly deals with matters that are entirely 'formal' in nature. In particular, there are numerous considerations on chemistry, which are clearly linked to the author's professional concerns; there is even a long digression on 'breast milk' which could undoubtedly make a fine article in a medical or hygiene journal, but which is not really appropriate in a work that claims to deal with esotericism and traditional ideas. It does, in fact, contain some interesting opinions on numbers, but unfortunately these are presented in a way that is far from clear; moreover, the information used is by no means all equally reliable. There are also pages with a very bizarre typographical layout, some of which contain only a few words that, at least for us, are completely incomprehensible. As for the author's account in his preface of a 'revelation' he received in a kind of 'second state', according to which the Universe entered a period of 'reabsorption' on 1 December 1944, we want to believe that this is purely and simply literary fiction, because if it were not, it would be rather disturbing...

R.M. GATIEFOSSE, *Les Sages Écritures. Essai sur la philosophie et les origines de l'écriture* (Paul Derain, Lyon) - The idea behind this book is excellent, since it seeks to establish the symbolic value of written characters, as well as their 'prehistoric' origin, in accordance with the ancient traditions of all peoples. Unfortunately, the way in which the author has dealt with these subjects and the conclusions he believes he has reached in his research are far from truly fulfilling his intentions. First of all, there are already reservations to be made about the concordance he has established between traditional data on cyclical periods and the hypothetical chronology of modern geologists. Subsequently, probably due to the particular circumstances in which he found himself, he seems to have been fascinated by the 'Tifinagh', i.e. the

ancient Berber script, and from the Tamachek language, which the Tuareg still speak today, to the point of wanting to derive a pattern from it that can be applied to everything. This scheme, which he calls the 'crown of Tifinagh', may be suitable for the particular case of the alphabet in question; but since there are 10 letters in this alphabet, he tries to find sets of 10 principles everywhere that can be matched to these letters, arranging them in the same way; in Kabbalah with the 10 *Sephiroth*, in the Bardic Triads, in Scandinavian mythology with the 'cycle of the Asa', in Hermeticism, in Aristotelian philosophy with its 10 categories, right up to the theories of modern physics! The least that can be said about these patterns is that they are completely artificial and often very "forced"; and furthermore, there are certain considerations regarding Indian and Chinese doctrines in which it is impossible to find the slightest point of contact with what they actually are... The planetary and zodiacal correspondences of the Hebrew letters, which are well known, are almost the only thing here that conforms to authentic tradition, but to be precise, they do not reproduce the 'crown of Tifinagh' at all; as for those of the Scandinavian runes, if they are indeed accurate, why are there three planets that do not correspond to any character? We do not wish to dwell on this further, but what can be said about the so-called 'Tamachek lexicon' at the end of the work, which brings together terms from a wide variety of languages that certainly have nothing to do with 'Tamachek' and whose interpretation speaks more to the author's imagination than to his linguistic knowledge?

PAUL LE CouR, *Hellénisme et Christianisme* (Editions Bière, Bordeaux) - Some had already sought to link Christianity to Mazdeism and even Buddhism, all in order to deny its traditional affiliation, which is nevertheless evident, with Judaism. Now here is a new theory which, with the same intent, claims to link it directly to Hellenism. This *is* where it would have had its 'source', and Judaism would have intervened only later, altering its original character by introducing certain ideas, including that of 'geocentrism'.

smo" seems, **for** some unknown reason, to take on a special importance. The reasons given in support of this thesis are quite numerous, but no more convincing for that, except perhaps in the eyes of those who prefer quantity to quality; we will certainly not examine them one by one, but we must at least note that the author considers as 'interpolation' everything in the Gospels that says the opposite, which is always a very convenient way to get rid of embarrassing texts, and also that the linguistic fantasies that suit him play a certain role. From this latter point of view, we will highlight in particular some considerations on the name Helena, which would mean 'the sacred nine', a connection between Johannine Christianity and the Ionian school, a supposed Greek etymology of the name Jerusalem, intended to support the claim that Judaism itself borrowed Hellenistic concepts, and finally the idea, curious to say the least, of making Greek the "sacred language" par excellence! Finally, we should also add that the book contains the legend that traces the medal known as 'Boyer d'Agen' back to the early days of Christianity, when in fact it clearly dates back to the Renaissance. It is high time to put an end to this story once and for all, especially since the reasons for which it was spread among the public do not seem to have been entirely disinterested.

PAUL LE COUR, *Dieu et les Dieux* (Editions Bière, Bordeaux)

- This book, intended as a sequel to the previous one, bears a title borrowed from Gougenot des Mousseaux, as the author himself acknowledges, but its content has nothing in common with the latter's work on stone worship. In many chapters, we find topics already encountered some time ago in the *Atlantis* articles and which we discussed at the time, which will spare us from returning to them in detail; there are not even many new ideas, but rather repetitions of those we already know, so much so that it seems that the author's fertile imagination is beginning to run dry, which would be a real shame... He dreams of a 'hierarchy of gods', at the head of which is the 'supreme god'; below these

There are those he calls "Solar Gods," the principal of which for him would be the "Demiurge," and one of its aspects, the "mediator," would have been incarnated in Christ; there are also "Multi-Solar Gods," "Planetary Gods," "Protective Genii," and perhaps other categories as well. Basically, this is simply a repetition of the error of taking divine aspects or attributes literally and not symbolically as distinct and even more or less independent beings, an error that has given rise to all the "polytheistic" deviations wherever they have occurred; to tell the truth, this does not surprise us unduly on the part of such an admirer of Hellenism. What does surprise us is that he can believe that this conception is in accordance with Christianity; it is true that he has very particular ideas about the latter, and also that, in his thinking, it is probably above all a question of what will be 'the future Christian religious form of the Age of Aquarius', about which one can certainly allow oneself all the fantasies one desires!

EAN MALFATTI DE MONTEREGGIO, *Études sur la Mathèse, ou Anarchie et Hiérarchie de la Sciente*, translated by Christien Ostrowski, introduction by Gilles Deleuze (Éditions du Griffon)

d'Or, Paris) - This reissue, which reproduces with a few slight modifications the French translation that appeared in 1849, was certainly not inappropriate, since this book is one of those that are much talked about but few have read. As for its intrinsic value, we must say that, in our opinion, it is mainly of interest as a curiosity, because it is terribly 'dated', and not only in terms of its biological and medical considerations, which certainly bear the mark of their time, but also in terms of its ingenious points of view, which perhaps deserve to be revisited in another form. it is even more 'dated' in terms of Hindu tradition. At that time, it was still little known in Europe, where only fragmentary and often inaccurate notions of it existed; moreover, it was a period in which some had invented a 'symbolism' that was a poor substitute for

their ignorance of authentic symbolism, the influence of which is evident here. By bringing together 10 rather heterogeneous principles, whose choice is no less arbitrary than the order in which he arranges them, the author wanted to see a correspondence with numbers and, starting from this idea, he endeavoured to discover things that are not there at all in the representations he had at his disposal; needless to say, on the contrary, any meaning of a metaphysical nature completely escapes him. Instead of giving priority to such fantasies, he would have done much better to simply present his speculations on numbers as Pythagorean inspiration, which would have been much more justified; on the other hand, on the whole they remain rather vague and obscure, and it is difficult to see clearly how he derives certain applications from them. Perhaps what is most noteworthy, from a so-called 'historical' point of view, is the remarkable role played by this and other works of the same kind in the constitution of late 19th-century occultism; based on such unreliable information, and replacing the authentic traditional data that was completely lacking, is it any wonder that the latter was never anything more than a jumble of fantasies without the slightest solidity? But it is useful to be able to realise this by referring back to the sources, and, after all, perhaps this is precisely the main interest of a reissue such as this.

EAN MALLINGER, *Les Secrets ésotériques dans Plutarque* (Éditions Niclaus, Paris) - This book is similar in genre to the one we have already discussed, and essentially the same things could be said about it; indeed, perhaps the occultist tendencies are even more pronounced. After outlining Plutarch's biography and pointing out the 'difficulty for modern man to understand certain esoteric truths', in which he is certainly right, the author first expounds the 'secrets of living fire'; it seems to us that he takes too literally the statements, which require symbolic transposition, according to which 'fire is an animated being' and constitutes the 'nourishment of the Gods'; on the ritual role of fire as a purifying element and agent of

sacrifice, there would certainly be many other things to say; and this chapter ends with a slightly unexpected comparison between Plutarch and St Francis of Assisi. Then come the 'secrets of animated statues', for which he draws mainly on the work of Egyptologists; in reality, these are the rites by which statues or other objects were somehow 'animated' to become the medium for spiritual influences; but the author considers above all, in the effects of these rites, the production of certain phenomena that were, however, of absolutely secondary importance. A rather short chapter, which ultimately does not clarify much, is devoted to the 'cosmosophical' theories attributed to a mysterious Eritrean mentioned in the treatise *De defectu oraculorum*, theories which, in essence, do not seem to differ from those of the Pythagoreans. On the 'Arcana of Hades' and the 'circumnavigation of the soul', the meaning of the symbolism presented is not clear, and it would seem that the author admits a 'reincarnationist' interpretation in the most literal sense of the term. Finally, the 'Secrets of the Sage', discussed in the last chapter, are reduced to practical precepts that may be excellent in themselves, but in which, except perhaps for the 'law of silence', it would be truly difficult to discover any esotericism; and, when one sees the position occupied by 'social' concerns in Mallinger's thinking, one may wonder how much he followed the advice he gives his readers to 'free themselves from all contemporary prejudices'.

ROBERT AMBELAIN, *Adam, Dieu rouge* (Éditions Niclaus, Paris)

- The title of this book is rather strange, especially since there is essentially nothing in it that explains or justifies the "divinity" attributed to Adam; but what is even stranger is that the opening chapter clearly contradicts the subsequent ones. The first chapter, in fact, is nothing more than an exposition of the most misleading opinions of modern criticism regarding *Genesis*, without the slightest reflection that might suggest that the author does not fully adopt them; now, it goes without saying that such opinions necessarily imply the formal denial

any esotericism contained in the Bible, while later affirming, on the contrary, the existence of such esotericism, whatever conception has been made of it and whatever the quality of what is presented as such. One might wonder whether this is not the effect of a kind of 'mimicry' that allows him to present anything indifferently as if it were his own ideas; if so, this would prove that he does not have very solid convictions... Be that as it may, the esotericism he has in mind is that of the Ophites; but since, ultimately, nothing precise is known about them, as indeed about most of the other so-called 'Gnostic' sects, this allows him to say a little bit about everything: Kabbalah, Hermeticism and many other things, and even to claim to connect directly or indirectly everything in the Judeo-Christian world that has any esoteric characteristics, from the Essenes to the Rosicrucians! We will certainly not attempt to untangle this chaos; what emerges most clearly is that, in the author's thinking, it is a 'Luciferian doctrine', which he apparently conceives as a 'dualism', since he states that 'belief in two opposing gods proceeds from a real esotericism'; on the other hand, he presents as 'Luciferian' symbols that do not have this characteristic at all. It would be difficult to understand what his true intentions may have been; but the least that can be said is that they demonstrate an obvious taste for heterodoxy, and even for its worst forms, since he goes so far as to try to find it even where there is not the slightest trace of it. In the last part, which claims to be devoted to the 'Rosicrucian doctrine', there is in fact nothing specifically Rosicrucian; but the very idea of wanting to establish a link between the Rosicrucians and the 'Luciferian doctrine' seems extremely suspicious to us, as do certain reflections on Freemasonry, or the frequent association of the words 'Luciferian' and "initiatory," or finally this or that phrase about Islam in which we find the bizarre obsession with the colour green that we have already had occasion to point out; in the presence of such things, one can never be too wary...

ROBERT AMBELAIN, *Au pied des Menhirs* (Éditions Niclaus, Paris) - This other work deals with Celtic tradition, a subject that is certainly more appealing than the previous one. The presentation does not ultimately bring anything new to the table, but the author felt the need to mix in some considerations drawn from modern science, which have a rather curious effect. Since this tradition is known only in a very imperfect way, it is understandable that he had some difficulty filling this volume, and in the last part, the way in which he dealt with this problem shows a rather ingenious imagination: after reproducing the bardic *Triads*, he could find nothing better than to complete them... with the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*! The book ends with some information on contemporary "Celtic movement" that are not entirely without interest, provided they are accurate; unfortunately, what raises some doubts in this regard is that they are partly "unpublished information from private archives, which one day we will be able to verify"; and since, after all, they contain nothing that seems to justify such reservations, this reminds us of certain procedures that occultists are all too accustomed to using... In any case, we can note a very disconcerting and unexpected statement, according to which 'the English Masonic rite is based entirely on Celtic traditions': this is a difficult assertion to prove, not only through some similarities that can be found between the most varied traditional forms, but also with truly serious arguments. At most, if the authors of the 'speculative' deviation had really been "Celtic initiates," this would not give a very high opinion of the knowledge they would have preserved; and then, in all this, what do we make of ancient operative Freemasonry?

EAN MALLINGER, *Notes sur les Secrets ésotériques des Pythagoriciens* (Éditions Niclaus, Paris) - We have already seen a work by the same author on Pythagoras; he continues his studies in the same direction, but the result, it must be said, is somewhat disappointing. Here he talks about the Pythagorean *akousmata*, prece-

considered to have esoteric characteristics, which they must indeed have possessed, being generally cloaked in an enigmatic or symbolic form that cannot otherwise be explained; but then there must have been something different from what Malinger saw, since the interpretations he provides are not particularly esoteric or truly profound. Thus, as regards the 'secret of the beans', he has gathered some more or less curious data, but from which no definite conclusion emerges; and if, on the other hand, he has at least understood that 'bread' represents traditional doctrine, his comments on this subject do not go beyond a very elementary level; but we find an allusion to the 'apostolic chain of occult traditions' that we would like to know exactly how it is understood... Much of the book is devoted to questions relating to birth and death drawn from disparate 'sources'; the influence of modern occult ideas is often noticeable, as is a keen concern for 'metapsychic' phenomena; ultimately, the most interesting part is the abundant quotations from ancient authors. In passing, we also noted some amusing details: for example, the author uncritically reproduces, for the 'zodiacal gates', the error of J. Carcopino that we have already pointed out here on another occasion; he seems to believe that Hindus are Buddhists, and even provides, when discussing Buddhist teaching, a reference to *the Rig Veda!* Let us not forget the fact that, in closing, he could not avoid returning to the 'ancient and primitive state' to which we gave an 'esoteric' explanation, so to speak, in relation to his previous work; in our opinion, he would certainly do much better to leave it 'asleep'.

1948

GÉRARD VAN RIJNBERK, *Le Tarot. Histoire, iconographie, ésotérisme* (Paul Derain, Lyon) – This large volume is the result of long and patient research into everything related, directly or indirectly, to Tarot cards; first of all, we must praise

the author for the conscientiousness and impartiality he has shown in his work, and for not allowing himself to be influenced, contrary to what usually happens, by the unfounded claims of occultists and the numerous fables that have been spread on this subject. In the first part, he has collected everything that can be found in books and archival documents on the origin of Tarot and playing cards and the period of their appearance in various European countries. It must be said that he was unable to reach any definite conclusion; in a sense, he cleared the ground, doing justice to certain fantasies, but ultimately the enigma remains complete, and since it seems unlikely that he missed any important documents in this regard, it is likely that there is very little hope of solving it, at least in a purely historical sense. All that can be said is that playing cards were known towards the end of the 13th century, especially in Mediterranean countries, and that the term 'Tarot', whose etymology is impossible to discover, began to be used in the 15th century, although the thing itself is certainly older. The hypothesis of an Eastern origin, which many have insisted on, has not been proven at all; we would add that, even if it were true that the Arabs played a role in 'transmitting' them, it would still be inconceivable, for various reasons, that cards originated in the Islamic world, so that the difficulty would simply be deferred. In this regard, we do not understand why so many more or less strange explanations of the Arabic word are sought.

"*naib*", which is well known and simply means "replacement", "substitute" or "deputy"; whatever the reasons that led to its adoption to refer to cards, it has absolutely nothing in common with "*nabi*", nor is it derived from a root "indicating a magical or divinatory action". We would also point out, while on the subject of observations of this kind, that the Arabic name for 'games of chance' is not '*qamar*', 'moon', but '*qimar*', and that '*pagad*' is certainly not an Arabic term, but that in Hebrew '*bagod*' means 'cheat', which can be applied quite well to a juggler. On the other hand, even the introduction of cards by the Gypsies is no more certain than

Everything else, in fact, seems to indicate that they learned how to use them in Europe; moreover, contrary to Vaillant's claims, Tarot cards were known in Western Europe before the Gypsies arrived there; and so all occult 'legends' vanish as soon as they are subjected to serious examination! In the second part, the author examines everything in the writings and works of art of classical antiquity and the Middle Ages that seems to have some connection with the ideas expressed by the symbolism of the Tarot arcana: some similarities are quite precise, but others are rather vague or distant. It goes without saying, however, that these comparisons are in any case very fragmentary and are based only on certain specific points; moreover, we must not forget that the use of the same symbols never constitutes proof of a historical connection. We confess that we do not fully understand why, with regard to these comparisons and the ideas to which they refer, Van Rijnberk speaks of the 'exotericism of the Tarot', nor what exactly he means by this and what difference he sees between it and what he defines, on the contrary, as its 'esotericism'.

- The third part, which he presents as 'the result of personal meditations and inspirations' and to which he attributes an 'esoteric' character, does not actually contain anything more profound than what precedes it and, let's be honest, is certainly not the best part of the book. At the beginning of each of his considerations on the major arcana, he has placed a sort of motto, consisting of two Latin words, which is intended to summarise their general meaning; the amusing thing is that, whenever possible, he has tried to find words beginning with the two letters S. I.! But let us not dwell on this harmless fantasy; instead, we would like to point out the extensive bibliography and the interesting reproductions of ancient documents contained in the tables at the end of the work, and add that, despite its erudition, it is not at all boring and is, in fact, a pleasant read.

EAN CHABOSEAU, *Le Tarot. Essai d'interprétation selon les principes de l'hermétisme* (Éditions Niclaus, Paris) - This other book on Tarot is written from a completely different perspective

different from the previous one and, although much less voluminous, it apparently has greater pretensions, despite its modest title of 'essay'; we do not dispute, moreover, that it may be legitimate to seek an astrological interpretation and others, provided that none is presented as exclusive; but this condition is satisfied when Hermeticism is considered as

"the very basis of Tarot symbolism"? *It is* true that we should first agree on the meaning of words; it seems to us that the author wants to expand beyond measure what he attributes to Hermeticism, to the point of incorporating almost everything else, including Kabbalah; and, while he marks quite well the relationship and difference between Hermeticism and alchemy, it is nevertheless true that there is a strong exaggeration in claiming, as he does, to identify the former with "total knowledge"! In reality, his comments on the Tarot cards are not strictly limited to Hermeticism, because, while considering it the starting point, he makes numerous comparisons with data from very different traditions; of course, this is not what we reproach him for, far from it, but perhaps he has not sufficiently verified whether they were justified, and, in the way all this is presented, the persistence of the 'occultist' spirit is a little too noticeable; it would be appropriate, for example, to avoid using the figure of *Adda-Nari* (i.e. *Ardha-Nari*, the androgynous combination of *Shiva* and *Parvati*), which has no connection with the Tarot other than the bizarre disguise to which Eliphas Lévi subjected it. The author's intentions, on the other hand, do not always emerge as clearly as one might wish and, in particular, when he quotes passages from our writings, we are not sure from the context that he understands them exactly as we do... Chaboseau, like many others before him, has also attempted to 'reconstruct' the figures of the Tarot in his own way; it goes without saying that in such cases everyone puts a lot of their own ideas into it, and there is no reason to consider one 'reconstruction' more or less valid than another; we think it is much safer to simply refer to the ordinary depictions, which, although they have been slightly distorted over time, are much more likely to have preserved more faithfully

mind, as a whole, the original symbolism. After all, the transmission of the Tarot is very similar to that of the "folklore", if it does not even represent a particular case, and the preservation of symbols is ensured in the same way; in this field, any innovation due to personal initiative is always dangerous and, like the literary arrangements of so-called "popular" tales, can only attenuate or obscure their meaning, mixing in more or less fantastic and in any case superfluous "embellishments". These reflections, of course, are not directed at Chaboseau any more than at his predecessors, and we are indeed willing to acknowledge that the 'medieval' style he adopted in his designs is no more implausible than the so-called Egyptian or Hindu Tarot cards, but it is, after all, a question of proportion. However, here we are only considering the symbolic value; in a more "practices," can we believe that the psychic influences that are indisputably connected to the Tarot cards, whatever their origin and quality, can still find effective support in all these arbitrary modifications of the traditional figures?

LOUIS CATTIAUX, *Le Message retrouvé* (Chacornac, Paris) - At first glance, this book appears in a singular and even unusual form: each chapter is divided into two parallel columns, consisting of two series of aphorisms or detached verses that correspond to each other. *It is* clear, therefore, that it is impossible to provide any kind of analysis or summary; it seems designed to provide, in a sense, topics for meditation, rather than to be read from beginning to end. It should also be said that the correspondence between the verses in the two columns is not always so clear; but, in this regard, it is best to quote the explanation that the author himself kindly provided: 'The two columns naturally appeared as the replica of Earth and Heaven and their necessary union, which is the mystery of the incarnation of life and the awareness of the one who has...

So the right-hand column is an equivalence, but not an explanation of the left-hand column, and by examining the multiple meanings of the double verses, they can be linked through the synthesis of the primordial mystery of creation, which is always more or less present by virtue of the alchemical meaning. The multiplicity of meanings he refers to, however, is not intentional, 'but derives naturally from the mother root', that is, from the alchemical meaning that the author considers to be the central and definitive meaning of his work. If we have understood correctly, this was written in a certain sense under inspiration, and for this reason it contains much more than was expressly intended, although it is certainly difficult to determine exactly the part played by each of the elements that contributed to it. In any case, under these conditions, in our opinion, it cannot be said that it is properly and effectively linked to a defined tradition; but at least the tendencies expressed are, in general, those of Hermeticism, and more precisely of Christian Hermeticism. We say in general because, going into detail, we realise that certain things, consciously or not, seem to come from elsewhere: we have noticed some verses that are strikingly reminiscent of certain Taoist maxims, and they are certainly not the least interesting. Be that as it may, the primary importance given by the author to the alchemical meaning clearly defines the 'perspective' of the whole, and also defines its limits, which are the same as those of the Hermetic point of view itself. We should add that here and there we find some 'oddities', of the kind almost always found in writings on Western forms of esoterism: for example, the titles of the columns on the left are all formed from a series of anagrams starting from the first, creating a rather curious effect; but also, in our opinion more regrettably, certain statements are presented in an enigmatic form that seems truly unnecessary to us; We will not dwell further on this flaw, as we know that the author is aware of it and has largely eliminated it in the changes and additions he has already prepared for a future reissue. We do not know what the 'specialists' in Hermeticism, if there are still any, will think of this book and how they will receive it.

competent minds; but it is certain that it is anything but indifferent and deserves to be read and studied carefully by all those interested in this particular aspect of tradition.

GIAN ROBERTO DELL'ACQUA, *La Pierre* - This pamphlet, published in Milan without any indication of the publisher, and written in French that is often incorrect, is also linked to Hermeticism; but we must confess that we have not been able to discern the author's exact intentions, nor how the content justifies the title. It begins with historical considerations based on the division into twelve parts of the path of a zodiac sign, that of Pisces, for the equinoctial point; but most of it is taken up with astronomical and other rather complicated calculations, the results of which are related to the dimensions of the Great Pyramid, which definitely still preoccupies a lot of people! All this, together with an examination of some symbolic figures of Rosicrucian origin, leads to the highlighting, due to their particular importance, of the numbers 1331 (the cube of 11) and 313, considered a 'contraction' of the former: the author attributes immense significance to this 'discovery', without clearly indicating his reasons, and is so convinced of it that he ends with this disconcerting sentence: 'No one has ever spoken openly about it, as it was agreed that this science should remain hidden until the coming of Elijah'. As for us, we believe that he is harbouring somewhat excessive illusions; and, as far as the 'coming of Elijah' is concerned, we are not aware that it has happened yet.

EAN BÉTESTA, *Delta* (Published by the author, Versailles) - At the beginning of this book, as indeed in the title itself, there are certain allusions to Masonic symbolism that give rise to hopes quite different from what is found in the following pages: which, it must be said, are somewhat disappointing. After various general considerations, which are clearly inspired much more by modern science than by traditional ones, and a kind of very 'evolutionary' outline of the history of humanity, there follow numerous chapters, with...

devoted to the doctrines of as many prophets, whose choice is not explained: Zarathustra, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus; their teachings are greatly simplified, and indeed modernised, so much so that in this presentation it is very difficult to glimpse the slightest truth of a transcendent order. Subsequently, the author has attempted to formulate, 'inspired by the Word of the Prophets', what he defines as 'a rule of life for the individual and the community of the industrial age'; unfortunately, it is a series of precepts of unimaginable banality, and we could say, without exaggeration, that it is a cross between the old books of 'childish and honest education' and the more recent manuals of morality for use in primary schools! Finally, the last part, entitled *The Temple*, sets out the plan for an organisation which, despite the use of largely Masonic terminology, has absolutely no initiatory character whatsoever; we dare say that, if it were ever to be realised, it would ultimately be nothing more than another 'pseudo-religion'. Certain pages give the impression that the author was disappointed at the same time, or perhaps in succession, by the Church and Freemasonry; but was he really able to understand either of them?

1949

DÉODAT ROCHÉ, *Le Catharisme* (Institut d'Études Occitanes, Toulouse) - This booklet is interesting mainly for the historical data it contains; the interpretation of the Cathar doctrine, or at least what little is known about it, raises serious reservations, as it is strongly influenced by Rudolf Steiner's concepts and the author's ideas on reincarnation. On the other hand, the identity of Catharism with Manichaeism is not as certain as one would like to believe, and in any case it remains to be seen what Manichaeism really was, as this is a question that is far from clear. Be that as it may, we do not see how the assertion that the Cathars were Manicheans can be reconciled with the assertion that 'they were purely Christian', nor with the assertion that their doctrine was

"an expression of Platonism" ... In the appendices to the work, there is a reproduction of the article on a Cathar plate that we have already mentioned previously (in the October-November 1945 issue); We will also point out some notes on Manichaean crosses, or supposed ones, and on Mithraic symbols; in this regard, we cannot help but find the assertion that "the chrism was first and foremost Mithraic" disconcerting; is there not perhaps some confusion between a symbol that actually belongs to universal tradition and a form that is derived from it but has a much more particular character? It is not impossible; but when, in another passage, we see the even more precise assertion, without the slightest supporting evidence, that 'the labarum of Constantine was previously a Mithraic banner', we end up believing that the author does not sufficiently distrust his own imagination.

FRANÇOIS HAAB, *Divination de l'alphabet latin* ("Pro Li-bros," Paris) - This small volume is presented, from its subtitle, as an "introduction to the knowledge of the hieroglyphic symbolism of letters." That such symbolism actually exists, i.e. that the entire alphabet originally had an ideographic meaning, is beyond doubt for us and for anyone with some traditional knowledge of the subject; but we certainly cannot say that the argument on which the author bases his interpretation of the Latin alphabet is truly solid or convincing. Firstly, one cannot help but feel a certain amazement when he states that the Latin alphabet is 'the purest of the Greek alphabets' and that, for this reason, it is the most suitable for 'symbolising the fundamental deities of Greek mythology'. He summarises his idea in this sentence: 'Greek mythology is a knowledge of Truth based on rationality, poetry and religious intuition, and it proposes an ethic', and in this we see nothing profound or truly traditional. Moreover, when he presents this mythology as 'an authentic Western Old Testament', to which Christianity is much more closely linked than to the Hebrew Old Testament, we are reminded that a very similar idea has already been put forward by Paul Le Cour, and this

This association is truly regrettable... As for the interpretation of the alphabet, it consists of associating each letter with a deity, in whose name the letter appears, often as an initial, but sometimes also in another position (Greek and Latin names, on the other hand, are mixed here in a way that may seem slightly arbitrary; and these relationships are explained by means of considerations about the shape of the letters, which are, to say the least, extremely vague and have nothing 'surprising' about them; with such a procedure, anyone can easily, following a preconceived idea, find almost anything in any figure, and all this is certainly very far from true symbolism). There is also another reason to be wary: not only are authentic Latin letters taken into account, but also, and on the same basis, additions that have been made in more recent times (distinction between the letters *i* and *j*, *u* and *v*, not to mention *w*), and which cannot have any real symbolic value; The author is of a different opinion, but the reasoning he gives, considering a kind of development of the alphabet that would have continued until modern times to finally bring it to perfection, only makes the whole thing even more serious, or rather disturbing. This can be seen immediately by reading this sentence from his summary: 'This ideography of the letters of the Latin alphabet may be an intuitive and voluntary creation of the ancient priesthood, but it may also be, naturally, the occult fulfilment of a subconscious process of the collective human mind'. The first term of this alternative expresses a traditionally correct view, but the second, on the contrary, which in reality is the one that would necessarily have to be admitted for the development in question to make sense, responds only to one of the current 'psychoanalytical' conceptions, the danger of which we would like to point out. It would seem to be a first essay of a larger work; therefore, it is better to wait for the latter to make a definitive judgement, but this introduction does not contribute to giving a positive impression, and it would be necessary to rectify in many respects the ideas expressed therein in order to ren-

Let us not say valid, but simply acceptable from a traditional point of view.

SAINT-YVES D'ALVEYDRE, *Mission des Souverains* (Éditions Nord-Sud, Paris) – This reissue of a book that has long been out of print is very useful, since the works of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre are among those that are talked about much more than they are read, giving rise to many misconceptions about the ideas they expound. This book, in particular, will allow readers to understand directly what the author himself thought of 'Synarchy', which has nothing in common with what has caused such a stir in recent years and to which the promoters seem to have deliberately given the same name in order to create confusion, which, moreover, has been all too successful, since the books and articles published on this subject have spread the most gross errors about Saint-Yves and his work among the public. The introduction preceding this new edition has precisely the aim, while remaining above any controversy, to set the record straight, and it does so excellently, taking up some of the information that appeared here some time ago (in the July 1935 and March 1936 issues), as well as some observations we made in *The King of the World*. We will point out, in particular, two points that seem important to us: the first is a comparison of dates, from which it is clear that when Saint-Yves published the two main works in which his synarchic system is expounded, namely *Mission des Souverains* and *Mission des Juifs*, he had not yet come into contact with any representative of Eastern traditions, so it is not possible to attribute this conception to influences from such a source, as some have claimed. It is true that Saint-Yves himself presented Synarchy as the application of a metaphysical and cosmological doctrine secretly preserved within various traditional forms, in particular the Brahmanic and Judeo-Christian traditions, but undoubtedly this statement, like many others, should not be taken too literally; for our part, we think (and moreover, the ab-

We noted incidentally in *La Grande Triade*, p. 1422) that he was inspired above all by Fabre d'Olivet, from whom he drew much more than he is willing to admit, while striving to 'Christianise' him, so to speak, and to whom he also owes some disconcerting errors regarding Hindu tradition. The second point to which we wish to draw attention is the real nature of Saint-Yves's relations with occultists, which were ultimately limited to friendly relations with some of them, on a purely personal basis, and without him ever adhering in any way to their 'movement', or even approving of it, since, on the contrary, he always expressed many reservations in this regard: all this is very far from what the occultists themselves wanted us to believe, as they saw fit to make him one of their 'Masters' and, after his death, tried to monopolise his memory, or even exploit it, which inevitably had the consequence of casting undeserved discredit on his work. As for the book itself, we will leave it up to each individual to form their own opinion by reading it; but we must confess that, rereading it after almost forty years, we were somewhat disappointed, despite the interesting opinions it undoubtedly contains. It seems to us that there is a certain amount of exaggeration in presenting the whole of European history, from the beginnings of Christianity, as if there had been nothing but concerns of an exclusively political nature, both on the part of the sovereigns and on the part of the Church; on the other hand, on several points there are assertions that are difficult to reconcile with authentic traditional notions. Although the author makes some allusions to 'initiation', it is difficult to know exactly what he meant; it is to be feared that by this term he meant, at least at the time he wrote this book, nothing more or different than a level of education higher than that imparted in universities, and even this is rather disappointing, since what is lacking in such a conception is precision.

2 P. 168 of the Italian edition [Translator's note].

which, from an initiatory point of view, represents everything that is essential. As for Synarchy, if it is considered solely as a draft 'European constitution', it is as valid as many others, and any objections that might be raised would concern not so much the principle as the methods of the proposed organisation, and also the probably insurmountable difficulties that its implementation would encounter in conditions such as those that currently exist.

R. POUYAUD, *Du « Cubisme» à la peinture traditionnelle* (Imprimerie générale de la Nièvre, Clamecy) - We have already discussed another pamphlet by the same author (in the January-February 1946 issue); in this one, he has managed to summarise in a few pages, and with a clarity that we can only commend, a number of essential notions about painting from a traditional point of view: laws relating to the plane and its movements (modern artists have forgotten that a painting is a flat surface), the symbolism of shapes, numbers and colours. In the initial historical essay, we note above all a curious comparison between the Celtic and Christian traditions regarding the role of certain symbolic forms, particularly the spiral; this is a subject that certainly deserves to be treated in greater depth. The only criticism we have to make is this: he speaks first of all of

"cycles," applying this word only to the period of development of civilisations and particular traditional forms, without anything to indicate that these are only minor cycles, which are integrated into much larger ones; then, in another passage, the cycle corresponding to the duration of the precession of the equinoxes is mentioned incidentally; This may cause some confusion among unprejudiced readers who, having believed up to that point that it was only a notion of an exclusively historical nature, will not understand what relationship may exist between these two things and, consequently, what the true nature of cyclical laws is. Of course, none of this invalidates this study and, in order to better understand the spirit in which it was written, we will not know...

We can only reproduce the last few lines: 'The painter, if he wants to create traditional works, must adapt universal symbols to the technique of the plane, as the early Cubists intuited, making his work a microcosm using cosmic laws; thus constituting the new form proper to the future cycle, but he must not forget that in order to fully benefit from the enlightenment that constitutes the traditional path, he must constantly keep the universal in mind and that at such a height individualities no longer matter'.

1950

STANISLAS DE GUAITA - OSWALD WIRTH, *Le Problème du Mal*, preface and afterword by Marius Lepage (Éditions du "Symbolism", Levallois-Perret) – It is known that Stanislas de Guaita died without completing the work he had undertaken with the general title *Le Serpent de la Genèse*; only two volumes had been published and, of the third and last, *Le Problème du Mal*, he had written only a few parts, the summaries of some chapters and several fragments, more or less complete. These fragments, corresponding to four chapters out of the seven that the work was supposed to have like the previous ones (and in any case only the first two are relatively complete), were brought together in this volume on the fiftieth anniversary of his death, accompanied by comments added by Oswald Wirth, who had been his secretary and who himself never finished the work. A long time ago, almost a quarter of a century, we became aware of these comments, and, as far as we remember, it does not seem that the author subsequently modified them; at the time, we were struck by the rather curious contrast with Guaita's text, not only in form, which would have been natural, but also in content, because, although they were written with the intention of continuing his work as far as possible, the truth is that they proceed from a completely different mindset and correspond to a completely different point of view. Guaita, who from an intellectual point of view

Although he was far superior to most other representatives of the occultist school at the end of the last century, he nevertheless shared some of their mentality, and this can also be seen here, particularly in the importance he attached to things that certainly did not deserve it, such as the extraordinary digressions of Louis Michel de Figanieres. like the others, he knew almost nothing about Eastern doctrines and, in particular, he knew those of India only through the distortions of theosophy; but despite these flaws, which in a sense make his work 'dated' and which would probably have been corrected over time, everything he wrote shows a 'quality' that is unmatched by other works of the same school, such as the popular works of Papus.

In what he left of *Le Problème du Mal*, he was inspired above all by the works of Fabre d'Olivet, and we cannot complain about this at all, even if, going into detail, we must note that he places excessive trust in this author's interpretations, which, it must be said, are not all equally reliable, but which, on the whole, nevertheless represent something for which it is difficult to find an equivalent elsewhere in the West. Guaita's point of view here, like that of Fabre d'Olivet, is essentially cosmological, and one might even say metaphysical, since cosmology, traditionally considered, can never be separated from metaphysical principles, of which it is one of the most direct applications. On the contrary, with Oswald Wirth, we 'descend' in a certain sense to a very different level, since, as others have already noted before us, his point of view is almost exclusively psychological and moral; evidently, this is the main reason for the contrast we mentioned above, and the comparison of the two texts is undoubtedly interesting precisely because of this difference. This is not the only difference that can be noted: Guaita based the outline of his work on the Tarot, but, although this provided him with the general framework, in reality the content of most of the chapters has only a distant connection with it.

with the corresponding 'arcana'; on the contrary, Wirth continually referred back to the Tarot, or at least to those of its many meanings that were related to his personal point of view, so that, in effect, his contribution turns out to be a commentary on the Tarot, or on one of its aspects, rather than Guaita's thinking; here is a curious example of how everyone, even when dealing with the same subject, inevitably considers it from their own particular 'perspective'. Marius Lepage, for his part, in the chapters he added in the form of a long 'afterword', which are by no means the least interesting, did not claim to continue what his predecessors had done, and he was right, because it would have been, it seems, a truly hopeless undertaking; but he brought it to a successful conclusion by adding other perspectives. He sets out the solutions to the 'problem of evil' found in Christianity and Buddhism, where they are cloaked in a more or less sentimental nuance, and then the purely metaphysical solution provided by *Vedanta*. no less remarkable is the ample space given to Eastern doctrines, which, together with Guaita's attitude in this regard, and also with that of Wirth, forms another contrast in which one can see almost a characteristic sign of two eras which, although not very distant from each other, are nevertheless clearly distinct. In a final chapter, Marius Lepage examines some modern conceptions, which can be defined more or less strictly as 'rationalist'; perhaps we may regret that he seems to assign them, in his overall exposition, an importance that we cannot but consider disproportionate, and above all that he has not indicated more explicitly that they cannot be placed on the same level as traditional conceptions. Be that as it may, this work is in any case an important contribution to the study of a question that has aroused so much controversy and which, while not claiming to resolve all the difficulties, excellently clarifies and points out some of the main aspects.

GIUSEPPE PALOMBA, *Introduction to Economics* (Pellerano del Gandio, Naples) – The content of this work is the transcription of

a course taught at the University of Naples, but which, due to the spirit with which it is conceived, differs profoundly, and fortunately, from what university courses in general, and courses in political economy in particular, are usually like. On the other hand, this can be seen from the very first page, as the book bears this quotation from our collaborator F. Schuon as its epigraph: 'Ultimately, there are only two possibilities: an integral, spiritual civilisation, which implies abuses and superstitions, and a fragmented, materialistic, progressive civilisation, which implies certain earthly advantages but excludes what represents the sufficient reason and ultimate goal of any civilisation. History can prove that there is no other choice. The rest is rhetoric and chimera'. The author set out first and foremost to give, or rather restore, a legitimate meaning to 'economy', showing that the Greek words from which this term is composed originally had, in addition to the material meaning that is the only one attributed to it today, a completely different meaning, of a properly spiritual nature, referring to the very principles of which this science was to be an application in the social field. This also applies to the word 'politics', in that it was the ancient and traditional conception of the 'city' (and this reminds us of similar considerations put forward by A.K. Coomaraswamy in *What is Civilisation*). He describes what an authentic traditional economy should be, citing the example of the corporate organisation of the Middle Ages; in this regard, he insists above all on two characteristics that must necessarily be found in every traditional society: 'the religious sense of life and being, and the sense of hierarchy based exclusively on spiritual values'. He then explains the circumstances in which medieval economic concepts were abandoned and the successive phases, from the Renaissance to the present day, through which those that replaced them passed: first 'mercantilism', then 'capitalism', with the increasingly exclusive predominance of the 'materialistic' and 'quantitative' point of view. The 'bourgeois' economy provides, as the author points out, abundant examples of what we have written in *The Reign of Quantity*. In all this, there are numerous considerations...

of the utmost interest, which unfortunately we cannot examine in detail here: on the other hand, the most important chapters from our point of view are mainly the first ones, because the rest is necessarily much more technical and we are not competent to appreciate it, but we can at least realise that, through all these developments, the guiding principles set out at the beginning are never lost sight of. We offer our warmest congratulations to Professor Palomba for the courage he has shown in reacting in this way, in an academic setting, against modern and officially accepted ideas, and we can only recommend this book to anyone who is interested in these issues and knows Italian, because they will derive the maximum benefit from it.

ROBERT AMADOU, *L'Occultisme, Esquisse d'un monde vivant* (R. Julliard, Paris) - Instead of reserving the term 'occultism' for the specifically modern concepts for which it was invented, as he should, the author unduly extends it, on the basis of some apparent similarities, to the most disparate and, in reality, even contradictory things. He confuses under the same term the different forms of authentic traditional esotericism and their many deviations and counterfeits, citing both indiscriminately and putting everything on the same level, not to mention the so-called 'occult' sciences, the divinatory arts and other things of this kind. One can easily imagine the contradictions and misunderstandings that result from such a mixture, in which the best and the worst are confused in an inextricable tangle; the author does not even seem to notice that he quotes with approval writings that are in formal opposition to his own theses; thus, he even goes so far as to mention us, applying the label 'occultist', which is really the last straw! As if this flaw were not enough, there is also a serious error of perspective in the way all these things are considered, since they are presented as elements of a 'philosophy'; now, if these are traditional doctrines, they are clearly of a completely different order, and if, on the other hand, they are only counterfeits, they are still something completely different.

totally different, which in any case cannot be included within the framework of philosophical thought. We confess that we do not fully understand what he means by 'living world', unless it is a way of distinguishing the concept he expounds from that which emerges from ordinary science and which would then undoubtedly be considered as that of a 'dead world'; we remember, in fact, having once heard similar language used by certain occultists; but what can expressions such as those that often recur mean, such as

"occult world" and even "occult phenomena"? It cannot be said that there are no interesting points of view on certain details in all this; but the whole, let's be clear, is utter chaos, and we feel sorry for the unfortunate readers who will not have access to other, better 'clarified' and more trustworthy sources of information on all the topics covered. A book like this can only contribute to increasing the intellectual disorder of our age, of which it is itself a perfect example.

ROBERT AMADOU - ROBERT KANTERS, *Anthologie littéraire de l'occultisme* (R. Julliard, Paris) - The most disconcerting feature of this collection dedicated to 'occultism' is that it does not mention a single occult writer (unless Péladan is considered as such, which may be true to a certain extent). The explanation for this oddity lies partly in the confusion we noted in the previous work, which is expressed again in the introduction to this one. However, we say only partly, because there is also something else: the authors wanted to create an anthology

"literary"; according to their way of seeing things, this means that for a text to have the right to be reproduced there, its form must be "beautiful"; it therefore seems that, among occultists in the true sense of the word, they have not found any that meet this criterion. To tell the truth, we do not see clearly what kind of

'beauty' can be found in certain passages quoted, such as the rather repulsive description of a black mass by

by Huysmans (based on information provided, as is well known, by the notorious Abbé Boullan), or, from another point of view, the detailed description of an administrative organisation, albeit imaginary, such as Ballanche's 'City of Atonements'; but obviously, like everything related to 'literature', it is only a matter of personal taste and 'subjective' appreciation ; as for the claim to consider

the writers of antiquity and the Middle Ages 'literarily', we must naturally see this as one of the usual effects of modern 'aestheticism'. There is also another criterion which, they argue, is the "traditional conformity"; on this point, we strongly doubt the authors' competence, and we wonder above all what will happen in the "philosophical" anthology they have announced. Be that as it may, the texts themselves, at least, retain their intrinsic value, despite the reservations that may be raised about the spirit that presides over their collection; in some respects, moreover, the whole is quite curious, and it is truly significant that a collection that begins with Hesiod, Pythagoras and Plato ends with André Breton!

Reviews of magazine articles

published from 1931 to 1950 in *Le Voile d'Isis*,
which became *Études Traditionnelles* in 1937

The November-December issue of *Atlantis* is largely devoted to reproducing the speeches delivered at the 'third Platonic banquet'. However, a note that purports to respond to our previous clarification compels us to make some further observations: 1 either the use of 'we' is a question, not of

"simplicity" or its opposite, but rather common usage and convenience (such as the habit of capitalising proper names); this plural also has an interesting initiatory meaning; 2° It is not because Le Cour, overly impressed by the fantasies of the late De Sarachaga, believes he finds *Agni* and *Aor* in *Ag-ar-Tha* or in any other name, that we are obliged to admit it; 3° We have always had less than mediocre interest in Gnosticism, firstly because it is currently very difficult to know exactly what it actually was, and secondly because, in any case, its Greek form is among the most repugnant to us. 4° all regular forms of Tradition are equivalent, consequently, the same things, although expressed in different ways, are found at the same time in Hinduism, Taoism, esoteric Islam, etc.; we have never considered the facts in any other way; 5° moreover, we have been dealing with initiatic questions for almost a quarter of a century and have never changed anything, and we would wish the same for anyone else; 6° Finally, we are not obliged to communicate to Le Cour or any other ~~but~~ what we possess or do not possess; as regards in particular the 'power of the keys', as we have indicated in *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, we will give explanations when we deem it necessary; until then, nothing will be 'seen' except what we want to be seen, and Le Cour, whether he likes it or not, will have to resign himself to this. We would add that there is no need

"possess the keys to hermeticism" to know that the feast of St. John did not become that of the Sacred Heart, or that animals called "lemurs" do not live in Central Asia at all, but in Madagascar...

In *La Flèche* (15 January issue), alongside a lecture on Satanism, we find an article that ends with this peremptory statement: "It is the West that knows the truth, and it is from the West that salvation will come." We do not mind that such things are said in a place like this; here are some truly compromising recruits for the "defenders of the West"!

Atlantis (January-February issue) announces its intention to devote more attention than in the past to the study of symbolism. An article by Ph. Lebesgue, entitled *La naissance des symboles*, is largely inspired by *Barddas*, which appeared recently in this very publication. In another article, Paul Le Cour discusses the *swastika*, which he would like to see as 'the symbol of strength'; surely he does not take seriously the use made of it by 'German racists'?

Atlantis (June-July issue) publishes a lecture by J. Toutain on *the Myth of Phaeton* - Since Paul Le Cour feels the need to attack us again in this same issue, we would like to inform him: 1) that we are not obliged to give him the specific reasons why, at a certain time, we had to ascertain for ourselves what various organisations that more or less rightly described themselves as 'initiatory' really were; that the term 'Gnosis' means precisely 'Knowledge', which has nothing to do with 'Gnosticism' and which, for our part, we have never understood in any other sense; 3° that, after that fairly distant period you mention, we have changed so little that you will be able to find, under the signature you refer to, articles whose content is reproduced in full, with further developments, in some of our most recent books. As for Hermeticism, which our article published here last May claimed to provide only a general outline of, which had nothing to do with certain specific knowledge that is not relevant to discuss now, it is only, we repeat, a secondary aspect of the tradition; moreover, we do not see how Christian Hermeticism can be more 'essential' than Islamic Hermeticism, or the corresponding part of al-

three traditional forms... But is it worth considering the opinions of someone who finds it extraordinary to reverse the words *Morocco* and *Suez*, without suspecting that they are nothing more than a vulgar corruption of the Arabic names *Merakesh* and *Es-Swes*? On the other hand, we cannot be surprised by anything from the author of a note on '*baragouin*' (March issue), in which we read this prodigious statement: 'In Hebrew, *BaRa*, the first word of Genesis, means *beginning*! Out of compassion, we did not quote this sentence at the time, but these jokes in bad taste are going on a little too long; therefore, it is better that Paul Le Cour (without capital letters, since he cares so much) spend his time meditating on the mysteries of the term *bafuna*, and apply to himself what he will certainly discover thanks to his extraordinary insight!'

1932

Psyché (October issue) publishes an article by Gabriel Huan entitled *Orient et Occident ou le conflit des métaphysiques* (admirable plural): from a rather confused summary of the ideas set out in our works, and also in those of Matgtoi, the author claims to draw conclusions completely opposite to what we affirm (undoubtedly thinking he knows better than us what we meant), in order to find a so-called contradiction between Eastern doctrines and Christianity; needless to say, the latter is presented in the most exoteric and sentimental way imaginable.

In *Psyché* (February issue), A. Savoret (who, incidentally, is completely ignorant of the meaning of the term '*recipiendaire*', i.e. 'newly elected') titles his article *Délivrance ou salvation?*

1 Unintelligible language or speech. Derived from the Breton 'bara', 'bread', and 'gwin', 'wine', words used by Breton peasants to ask for hospitality in inns [Translator's note].

in which he continues the task begun by his colleague G. Huan, which consists in seeking alleged contradictions between Christianity and Eastern doctrines; naturally, he has it in for us in particular. What emerges above all from this article is that his 'Western eyes', as he himself says, are completely incapable of discerning the things he talks about, to the point that he does not realise that even 'salvation' (said "salvation") has a place in Eastern doctrines, corresponding to a still "human" state, which has absolutely nothing to do with "Liberation". To dwell further on this would be a waste of time; however, we note, in the reviews that appear at the end of the same issue, the significant praise given to a certain... deplorable book, which provides us with a new and interesting indication of the more or less underground ramifications of the current 'anti-Eastern' campaign.

Until now, we had never taken into consideration the attacks, sometimes quite regrettable in tone, by P.E.-B. Allo, first in several articles in *the Revue des Jeunes*, then, more recently, in a book entitled *Plaies d'Europe et baumes du Gange*; but now the same polemicist has published, in *Vie Spirituelle* (1 February issue), a 35-page pamphlet entitled *Le sens de la Croix chez les ésotéristes*, which purports to respond to our *Simbolismo della Croce*. We have neither the time nor the desire to respond to vain philosophical chatter; we operate on a completely different level and have no concessions to make to 'profane' points of view. Besides, what is the point of trying to convince someone who insists on talking about 'pantheism' and 'quietism', after all we have said against the doctrines that these terms legitimately indicate, and , who confuses *adwaita-vada* with , the "monism" and shows himself incapable of grasping the fundamental distinction between the "Self" and the "I"? Does he not himself confess this incomprehension in an absolutely explicit manner, declaring that certain concepts are "incomprehensible to his profane intelligence"? On the other hand, he seems to believe that we write in some kind of jargon, since when we say "form", he translates it as "ani-

ma', which has nothing to do with it; at the same time, he attributes to us a *Weltanschauung* (what does that mean?), a 'mystical' perspective that is completely foreign to us (it is true that he speaks of 'mysticism of the initiated', which is a contradiction in terms), a 'denial of the supernatural', which for us, on the contrary, is the only thing that matters (have we not explained sufficiently what the term 'metaphysics' means etymologically?); it describes the extensions of the human being that we have discussed as 'magical', even though we have repeatedly stated that, for us, magic is negligible (and it is curious that it seems not to notice that these extensions mainly include 'immortality' extended to the religious sense); He repeatedly labels us 'spiritualists', after we have taken the trouble to explain that spiritualism and materialism are exactly the same thing to us... and equally insignificant; how can we recognise ourselves in all this confusion? Be that as it may, as far as he is concerned, he reasons like the crudest materialist, for example with regard to mathematical ideas, to which he attributes a purely empirical origin (he seems to confuse pure mathematics with its physical applications and geometric figures with drawings); and which he considers to be a simple 'creation of the human spirit' (what extraordinary powers these preachers of 'humility' sometimes attribute to them!); and he reproaches us for not having used 'biological symbols' instead! Firstly, mathematical symbolism traditionally exists, and we must neither invent nor innovate, but expose what is; secondly, this symbolism refers, whatever anyone may say, to a higher order of reality than that which constitutes the sensible world, and is completely independent of our imagination; finally, when symbols are borrowed from the sensible order, which can happen, they have nothing to do with the theories of modern science, which we need not concern ourselves with. Regarding "biological symbols", it is curious to see the fact that "a developed being never returns to its germ" presented as an objection against us; now, it so happens that we too have pointed out this fact in *The Error of Spiritualism* as an analogy that

could help to understand the impossibility of reincarnation; but does our opponent not confuse 'transmigration' with 'metempsychosis'? It would be better to refrain from talking about what one does not know; this would avoid, for example, the ridiculousness of confusing *nirukta* with etymology (and what do we care about the 'laws of semantics' and other inventions of profane philologists, who have never even suspected what a "sacred language") or to see a gratuitous fantasy in the formation of the cross from the combination of the two Arabic letters *alif* and *be*, something so elementary and generally known that it is normally taught to children in *katatib*. But our polemicist here speaks of "fortuitous relationships", which unfortunately shows that he believes in the existence of chance; and is this not another way of unconsciously revealing his ignorance? On the other hand, he is strongly imbued with the prejudices of evolutionary scientism, from which he takes up, as a good 'historian of religions', the usual clichés about 'childlike peoples', 'primitive beliefs', 'ingenuous systems born of childish imaginations', 'childish explanatory myths that personified natural agents' (this is how Auguste Comte interpreted theology), and other nonsense of the same calibre; and, as far as the 'primordial tradition' is concerned, he goes so far as to define it as 'this kind of revelation that humanity would have received at its origins from who knows where', which, coming from a Catholic religious figure, is really a bit much: has he never heard of the Garden of Eden? And since, with the spectre of 'pantheism', he seems to want to cast suspicion on the character of this 'primordial tradition', we will tell him instead that it actually constitutes the most transcendent and absolute 'monotheism'! As for what he says about the higher meanings contained in the Bible and the Gospel (which are there and we can't do anything about it), but which he refuses to see because of his exclusive 'exotericism' bias, the fact that they are not at all opposed to the literal and historical meaning seems to embarrass him in a particular way; at most, his arguments on this point could be summarised quite accurately in these terms: what essentially distinguishes Christianity from any other religion is that it is the only one that

another doctrine, is that it means nothing and should mean nothing; it is a statement that we will leave him with, since, as far as we are concerned, we have a better opinion... But that is enough; we will only add, to avoid any misunderstanding, that we have never wanted to 'convince' anyone, being decidedly opposed to any proselytism, and that, on the other hand, having nothing to do with any Western teaching, we have not been 'educated' at all in 'circles' of pseudo-esotericists, whom we have always judged with the most implacable severity, and who in our eyes are only vulgar 'profane'; But will our opponents ever be sincere enough to take these observations into account? At the beginning of this long article, which is so utterly useless from our point of view, there is a sentence that, on its own, is much more interesting than the rest, because it has allowed us to make a truly extraordinary comparison.

P. Allo writes: "The less attentive reader may doubt, seeing the illustration on the cover depicting Ganesha, the Hindu god with the head of an elephant, and reading that the work is dedicated to the memory of a Muslim sage and is dated from the year of the Hegira, that he will find anything other than Christian spirituality in it." And Paul Le Cour, in the article cited above: "Indeed, it is strange that a work on the cross should bear on its cover the image of the elephant-headed god Ganesha... and then to read a dedication to an Arab sheikh (*sic!*) disciple of the crescent (?!), to see it dated to a year of the Hegira (*re-sic!*) and to read that it is the sequel to a work on *the Vedanta*; in all this there is nothing Christian." How well these people agree! The concordance goes a little too far, and we are tempted to ask: which of the two copied the other? Unless, given the simultaneity of the two articles, someone 'else' dictated this same sentence to both of them... sensational!

Atlantis devotes most of its July-August-September issue to *Humanism*; nothing truly sensational, but we note once again how much the meanings attributed to this term often diverge from its true meaning, and

which its very derivation makes abundantly clear. Paul Le Cour takes the liberty of writing, with regard to our article on *Hermès*, that we had 'never dealt with verbal approximations' before, whereas they are found in abundance in almost all our books! On the other hand, it has never crossed our minds to claim ownership of those we point out, for the simple reason that we know they are true, and that only error or fantasy can belong to individuals. That Paul Le Cour should apply for a patent for a combination such as *Sibyl* and *Cybele* (as if the letters 'S' and 'k' could ever be equivalent!) or for his *Iberborea* and other 'berberisms' is all very well; but a true commonality of the root of two words can be ascertained by anyone who cares to do so; and, seriously, he really believes himself to be the inventor of the name *Quetzalcohuatl*, which, with all the best will in the world, is impossible to translate other than as 'bird-serpent'.? As for Hermeticism, to which he returns once again, he believes he can object (confusing 'trinity' with 'ternary') that 'at its base there is a metaphysical idea'; let us suppose that he means 'at its principle'; now, we have said and repeated on every occasion that this is precisely the essential character of every traditional science, whatever order it belongs to, cosmological or otherwise. Thus, in a few lines, we have proof of something we had suspected for some time: the fact that Paul Le Cour, who so willingly meddles in our work, has never read it; he would therefore be so kind as to begin to remedy this deplorable negligence, but above all by reading 'as everyone else does', and not in the truly too ~~bad~~ way in which he deciphers certain inscriptions!

The magazine *Études* (20 July issue) contains an article by P. Lucien Roure entitled *Le secret de l'Orient et René Guénon*; it is similar to the one by P. Allo that we had to deal with a few months ago, in the sense that its main purpose seems to be to deny the existence of any esotericism. Here, the denial is only slightly less 'massive'; thus, P.

Roure admits that there is a certain symbolism, but on condition that we see it as having a very flat and obvious meaning; How is it that, having 'read the *Upaniṣad*', as she says, and even more than read it, as we have read the other sacred books, we have found in it anything other than the moral and social platitudes that it is commonly agreed to see in it, and which would not require divine inspiration at all? And what are we to think of the singular behaviour of those who, wanting to pose as defenders of Christianity, no longer know what to do to diminish it and reduce it to proportions that no longer have anything transcendent or superhuman about them? We also note another inconsistency, no less bizarre: they claim to oppose us with the statements of Orientalist 'critics': 'the Vedic Scriptures form a collection compiled in a later period, the passages denote a certain evolution of beliefs and practices' and so on; they have forgotten what the associates of these 'critics' have done to the Bible and the Gospel using exactly the same so-called *shallow* methods. As for us, we do not accept, in either case, the conclusions of this pseudoscience, in which we see only pure and simple lies, and this is the only logical position; it is not by contributing to the demolition of the traditions of others that one can hope to maintain one's own! Moreover, P. Roure's methods are remarkably simplistic: he has never heard of the symbolism of Janus, so this is nothing more than 'pure fantasy'; the deeper meaning of certain comparisons between words escapes him, so they are merely 'verbal sleight of hand'; he understands nothing of what we have written on the 'symbolism of the *Khanda*' and hastens to declare himself 'disappointed'; Egyptologists do not attribute any 'mysterious value' to the 'cross with a *tau*' so it must not have any; official history recognises only a 'public' role for the primordial legislators, so 'their role has nothing secret about it'; he knows only a few ancient representations of the cross, so 'it occupies a negligible position' and undoubtedly appears only 'as a secondary ornament'; when the word 'cross' does not appear explicitly in certain texts, it is not a question of the symbolism of the cross, etc. Let us take some random examples, and we will not dwell on this further.

on these childish notions; yet we must quote another sentence, truly admirable for its 'modernism', concerning the Three Kings: 'today it is agreed to consider them more simply as wise men or figures devoted to scientific studies'; undoubtedly something similar to the professors of the Sorbonne or the members of the Institut! On the other hand, if we have not mentioned this or that in our works, it is because it had nothing to do with the aim we set ourselves, which is not to satisfy the curiosity of archaeologists; we have better things to do, and we do not mind devoting all our time to much more serious and important matters; unfortunately, however, we doubt that P. Roure is able to understand this, seeing how he speaks of 'erudition', which is precisely the thing we despise most; will he believe us if we say that in our entire lives we have never entered a public library and have never felt the slightest desire to do so? We hope, however, that he will do us the honour of admitting that no tradition has 'come to our knowledge' through 'writers', especially Western and modern ones, which would be quite ridiculous; their works have only provided us with a good opportunity to expound it, which is completely different, and this is because we are not obliged to inform the public about our authentic 'sources', and moreover these do not involve 'references'; but, once again, will our opponent be able to understand that, in all this, we are dealing with knowledge that is not to be found in books at all?² We regret to have to tell him in all honesty: we do not think he is at all suited to opening up the arcane world, even if he is one of those whom his religion vainly presents to 'exotericists' like him, who have 'eyes and do not see, ears and do not hear'... We will add one last observation: since occultists, these falsifiers of esotericism, have taken possession of certain things that rightfully belong to us, while distorting them almost co-

² Since P. Roure seems concerned about the accuracy of the "documentation," we would like to point out two errors we found in his article: the works of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (born in 1842, died in 1909) belong to the 19th century, not the 20th; our study on the King of the World appeared in 1927, not 1930.

Should we therefore abandon them and avoid talking about them, under threat of being labelled 'occultists' ourselves? It would be exactly as if someone who took back what had been stolen from him were treated as a thief, which is the height of absurdity; and if, by chance, Father Roure were to explain a point of Catholic dogma that Protestantism had retained, would it be justified to call him a 'Protestant'? The unpleasant, to say the least, insistence with which he repeats the term 'occultist', against which our entire work protests loudly, not to mention our explicit and repeated statements, makes us strongly fear that, as in so many other attacks directed against us, this is an application of the infamous maxim: 'Slander, slander, something will stick!'.

1933

The January-February 1933 issue of *Atlantis* is largely devoted to *Lemuria*; it is well known that this subject, which seems to give rise to as much confusion as Atlantis, has become topical following the curious similarity noted between the hieroglyphics of Easter Island and those recently discovered in the Indus Valley. We note, moreover, the disconcerting attempt to link Muslim countries... and China to the West; we did not suspect that Western 'annexationism' could go so far! Also noteworthy is a gradually increasing tendency in Paul Le Cour to pose as the heir to the Hié-ron of Paray-le-Monial, 'a centre of Christian esotericism founded by a Jesuit, Father Drevon, in Celtic Father Druid! (*sic!*); and the possession of the 'wand left by the founder to the last survivor' would seem to establish the legitimacy of this inheritance!

The May-June issue of *Atlantis* focuses on *Les Touareg et l'écriture berbère (The Tuareg and Berber writing)*; it contains nothing truly 'sensational', and the first article, by Maurice Benhazéra, also has a strongly secular tone. I recognise...

Let us admit, however, that it would be quite difficult to say anything precise on this rather obscure subject; but that is no good reason for wanting to find, as Paul Le Cour does, *the Ennead* in the name of *Athena!* The July-August issue is mostly devoted to a study of *Les poèmes homériques et l'Atlantide*; more precisely, it deals with the location of part of Ulysses' travels beyond the Mediterranean. It would be a fine topic for someone capable of treating it other than with imagination; but for now we must refrain from pointing out Paul Le Cour's linguistic and historical fantasies, because there are simply too many of them! We will only point out that, since in Greek the name of Ulysses is '*Odusseus*' and not '*Ulysseus*', it is rather difficult to link it to '*Elysium*' and '*Eleusis*', as well as to '*Helios*' and the Nordic root '*Hel*', which means holy, sacred (but in English '*hell*' also means 'inferno' ...); the worst thing is that, apparently, 'these names have an obvious (!) connection with the word '*elected*' ... which simply derives from '*e-ligere*'. There is also, in the same vein of 'pleasant philology', a connection between the word '*Okeanos*' and the name '*Enoch*', which, the author naively says, 'no one seems to have thought of yet'... and rightly so! On the other hand, let us not forget that the editor of *Atlantis*, celebrating *Phé Bus* on the last summer solstice, found a way to talk at length about the Hié-ron of Paray-le-Monial...

A new quarterly magazine entitled *Hermès* is published in Brussels; despite its title, it has nothing hermetic about it, being devoted almost exclusively to mysticism and poetry. However, the first issue (June) contains a *Note sur le Yoga*, signed by Jacques Masui, which is somewhat 'mixed' in nature, which is not surprising if we refer to the references indicated therein. Georges Méautis titles *Les Mystères d'Eleusis et la science moderne* a short article in which he merely hints at the ideas that some 18th- and 19th-century authors had about the Mysteries; it is not of particular interest...

The *Nouvelle Revue Française* (1 August issue) published a short article by P. Masson-Oursel entitled *Le Symbolisme eurasiatique de la porte*, inspired by the works of a German orientalist, Hertel. It talks about the 'gates of heaven'; therefore, one would expect it to focus mainly on the symbolism of the solstice gates, but they are not mentioned at all! Furthermore, although we are accustomed to certain manifestations of incomprehension, we must say that all the interpretations we find there exceed all limits, and we cannot even conceive how they dare to call it 'symbolism'; it is true that Freud also claims to be, in his own way, a 'symbolist'... To all those who are tempted to believe that there are exaggerations in the assessments we have often made of Orientalists, we strongly recommend reading these pages; they will be thoroughly enlightened!

1934

The September-October issue of *Atlantis* bears the general title *Racisme*; it is a topic that is currently 'in vogue'. There are some articles that are reasonable overall, although certain ideas may be debatable; but there is always, alas, Paul Le Cour, who, as usual, indulges in one of his linguistic orgies, mistakes *the ypsilon* for the *gamma*, believes he has found a similarity between *Aryan* and *Aryane* (which, unfortunately for him, has always been written *Ariane* or *Ariadne*), repeats his poor *pun* on *la-bir-into* or 'inner work', imagines he has discovered his famous *Aor-Agni* in the most disparate names (including that of Chief Gris-Nez), and, to top it all off, confuses the orientalist Adolphe Pictet, inventor of the 'Aryan race', with... the chemist Raoul Pictet! He also devotes a note to *the swastika*, which he stubbornly sees as the 'symbol of strength' and curiously identifies with *Thor's hammer* (when in fact it is the *vajra*); and he does not fail to mention *Shiva*, 'the destroyer', following the usual Western cliché, then assuring us that 'India

He only learned about the *swastika* late in life, as if he could really know anything about it!

The magazine *Illustration* (4 November issue) also published an article on 'the *swastika*' (*sic!*) with the title: *D'où vient la croix gammée?* So we find the usual confusion, and it seems that no one really knows what the 'swastika' (called '*gammadion*' in Greek, not in French) actually is; This confusion, however, is not the only one, because in a list of supposed synonyms, we see the "cross pattée," which, in heraldry, is something else entirely. The main interest of the article lies in the accompanying illustrations; as for the thesis put forward, it essentially consists in claiming that the *swastika* originated in Asia Minor and spread from there through successive 'migrations' to the most distant countries; this statement is based on a 'chronology' which, needless to say, can only be ultra-fantastical, and the reference to the authority of Goblet d'Alviella certainly does not help to reassure us of its value. We thought that the craze for making everything originate in Asia Minor had finally disappeared; we must

believe that this is not the case, since here it is claimed that it was the homeland of the Iberians themselves! It is true that in reality the aim is to deny at all costs the Nordic origin of *the swastika*, solely in opposition to Hitler's ideas; when dealing with politics, the pursuit of truth is seriously at risk of being relegated to last place!

The March-April issue of *Atlantis* is entitled *L'Alchimie et l'Atlantide*; but, as far as Atlantis is concerned, Paul Le Cour talks mainly about Bourges ... Our *alchemist* persists in confusing metaphysics and cosmology; does he not speak of 'metaphysical knowledge based on the unity of matter, on the relationship between light and life'? ? On the other hand, he feels the need to launch a new attack against us, to which we will respond as follows: as far as we are concerned, we are purely Eastern, and we have always stated this as clearly as possible; but this does not in any way deprive us of the right to understand Western traditions and

to highlight its connections with other traditional forms; moreover, in terms of 'monstrous hybridism' (*sic!*), we believe it is impossible to find anything better than *Aor-Agni!* As for what we have or have not 'achieved', it is certainly not Paul Le Cour who has the necessary expertise to evaluate this, and besides, it is none of his business; but we sincerely hope never to 'achieve' what, in our eyes, is nothing more than extravagance and crazy imagination; Furthermore, we have no 'opinions' whatsoever, but only some knowledge, which we express as best we can, aimed at those who are able to benefit from it, and this is undoubtedly not your case. You also enjoy finding printing errors in our articles; do you think that, given the distance between us, it is possible for us to correct the proofs? As for 'the existence of Christian esotericism in the Middle Ages', we stand by our statement, which says exactly what we meant: when we say that a traditional form exists, it means that it actually exists, with an organisation capable of ensuring its regular transmission; in the absence of transmission, everything else is nothing more than fantasy or archaeological curiosity... In conclusion, we ask Paul Le Cour not to reverse the roles: it is up to us to ask him 'not to be the one who wants to take care of us rather than us taking care of him'; if he thinks otherwise, it means he really does have a short memory! On the other hand, we would never have bothered to put such an insignificant person in his place if we did not know all too well what motivates him, probably without him even realising it; we kindly warn him that, in his own interest, it would be preferable not to insist any further.

1935

In *Atlantis* (July-August issue), Paul Le Cour talks about a trip he took to Portugal and the Azores in search of the remains of Atlantis; the results do not seem particularly 'sensational'... However, he did make one discovery: the symbolic serpent...

which is found in numerous traditions must have originally been an eel, the 'fish of Atlantis'; and he takes this as a pretext to launch yet another attack on India (curiously referred to by him as the Far East), which 'ignores Aor' and 'has preserved only the symbol of *Agni* in the repulsive (!) figure of the cobra'; aside from questions of aesthetic taste, it would undoubtedly be a waste of time to explain to him that this snake has absolutely nothing to do with *Agni* and also that it is entirely natural that Hindu tradition does not express itself in Hebrew... But at the very least, he would do well to reread the first verses of *Genesis* carefully: perhaps he would notice that there is no mention of 'the light that floated on the waters!'. Let us note a few other secondary findings, such as the relationship between the name of the Sargasso Sea and the Greek 'sax', 'flesh', which would also be that of the octopus (we remember that he once gave a slightly different explanation, according to which 'flesh' had to be translated first as 'pulp' in order to arrive at 'octopus'... which, in reality, simply derives from '*polypos*'), or that of the word 'corrida', whose Latin derivation is evident, with the name of the Celtic deity '*Corridwen*'! - In the September-October issue, Paul Le Cour sacrifices himself to 'current affairs', talking about *L'Ethiopie et l'Atlantide*: he is completely off track, pointing to certain alleged perpetrators of the current conflict: but the most curious thing is to see this 'defender of the West' take sides with Ethiopia, just when others, precisely in the name of 'defending the West', have just launched a manifesto to the contrary; why don't they agree among themselves? One more small observation: it seems that the inhabitants of Atlantis were sometimes called Ethiopians: even if we admit that this is correct, we must then conclude that 'the Atlanteans could only have been black' (which, incidentally, would be in formal contradiction with the

their alleged identification with the Hyperboreans)? The Chinese also refer to themselves as 'black heads'; does this mean they are black-skinned? It is regrettable that someone who prides himself on being a 'hermeticist'

, not to have thought of comparing the similar designations of the ancient name '*Kemi*' with the very name of 'alchemy'!

1936

The December issue of *Atlantis* focuses on *L'Allemagne et l'Atlantide (Germany and Atlantis)*; it mentions the main works recently published in Germany, in which the authors seek to link their country's civilisation to origins that are sometimes Nordic, sometimes Atlantean, since all this is full of confusion, demonstrating that even the most ardent supporters of the so-called 'Aryan race' do not know what this term actually means. Of course, Paul Le Cour does not fail to embellish his exposition with some fantasies *about Aor-Agni* and the *swastika*, 'symbol of strength': in this regard, we would point out that the god Thor does not hold a *swastika* in his hand, but a hammer, which has nothing to do with it, whatever some may say; we do not see at all how the *swastika* can resemble a hammer, any more than it can resemble a tool for producing fire...

Atlantis (February issue) dedicates its main article this time to *L'Atlantide et les Mégalithes*; Georges Poisson investigates what the 'people of the dolmens' might have been and believes they must have been 'of Nordic complexion', which does not fit in at all with the hypothesis of an Atlantean origin; this people would have been called *Vanes*, a name found in many regions in more or less modified forms; we might add that this name is the same as that of the primitive "Phoenicians" to whom we recently referred in connection with the "Land of the Sun", which shows that they were not Atlanteans but Hyperboreans. This is followed by another article, entitled *L'éénigme dolménique (The Dolmen Enigma)*, in which the author attempts to prove, through considerations inspired by a thoroughly 'scientific' spirit, that this enigma does not exist: dolmens were simply burial sites, which 'superstition', which it has been agreed to attribute to 'primitive', would naturally have been transformed into temples and even 'magic workshops'; and it seems that, probably to avoid resembling these 'primitives', we have 'the do-

to banish the obsession with mystery from our minds! On the other hand, returning to the question of *Italy and Ethiopia*, Paul Le Cour, among his various other fantasies, feels the need to name names, in a manner that seems to imply insinuations of an unclear nature. To cut a long story short, we reiterate once again: 1) that 'our doctrines' do not exist, for the simple reason that we have never done anything other than expound traditional doctrines as best we can, which are no one's property; 2. that everyone is, of course, free to quote our writings, provided they do so 'honestly', i.e. without distortion, and that this does not imply, on our part, either approval or disapproval of the personal views of those who quote them; 3^o that, since the field of politics is completely ~~ly~~ foreign to us, we formally refuse ~~to~~ to associate ourselves with any consequences of this order that may be claimed to be drawn from our writings, and consequently, supposing that this should happen, we will be no more responsible for it, in the eyes of all people of good faith and common sense, than we are for certain phrases that have sometimes been gratuitously attributed to us by the overly fertile imagination of Paul Le Cour himself!

The July issue of *Atlantis* is entitled *Les Argonautes et la Toison d'Or*; Paul Le Cour discusses the journey of the Argonauts as it follows the stages outlined in tradition, starting from its original Nordic centre; it could be a good topic for 'sacred geography'... provided that too much fantasy is not introduced. Eugène Canseliet studies the hermetic interpretation of the Golden Fleece, based on the particular concepts of a certain school in which, it seems to us, excessive importance is given to *argot*. Perhaps this is why his article contains so many linguistic explanations that should be taken with caution, but we will content ourselves with pointing out one that goes beyond the limits of common sense: the word '*elixir*' does not derive from Greek, but is purely Arabic; the simple article '*al-*' that forms part of its composition has nothing to do with the sun, and, for the rest, the root "*ksr*" is very far from "*ixis*". It is true that, after all, it is worth

Paul Le Cour's *Iberborea* and that from nautical jargon, it is all too easy to move on to *bara-gwin* ...³

The September issue of *Atlantis* is entitled *Traditions celtiques et américaines*; in fact, it is mainly a collection of notes, extracts and various reports relating, more or less directly, to these two subjects. With regard to one of the published extracts, we noticed a curious illusion concerning megalithic monuments, which we had already noticed in some of the 'measurers' of the Great Pyramid: they take measurements in metres and, from the figures obtained, think they can deduce certain consequences, as if they imagined that the metric system had been in use since ancient times!

1937

"*LAstrosophie* (April issue) dedicates a truly strange note to *The Way of Metaphysics*; we certainly would never have thought it was a 'little book', nor that it could be judged 'full of illogicality' and useful only 'to allow a quick understanding of Chinese metaphysical thought'. Perhaps they read it quickly, but they must not have understood much, because otherwise they would not say that the author 'attributes an ethical character to a system devoid of any divinity' (*sic!*); this depends on what is meant by 'divinity', but as far as 'ethical character' is concerned, there is not the slightest trace of it in the book. As for the two 'gross errors' they claim to have found, the first, namely that "Confucius was a communist" is only true in a beautiful and good anachronism: at the time the book was written, "communism" did not mean "Bolshevism", for the simple fact that the latter had not yet been born. The second point is even better: it seems to consist in saying that "Taoism is non-dualistic, even though *Yin-Yang* is a dual symbol, and the Trigrams of Fo Hi are based on

See note on p. 105.

exclusively on the dual symbol of the whole line and the broken line"; here, evidently, the reviewer confuses "duality" with "dualism", which leads him to see a contradiction where there is none; the knowledge... approximate knowledge of French evidenced by his style is sufficient excuse for such 'gross' misunderstandings?

The May issue of *Atlantis* is largely devoted to *ancient coins*; P. Noel de la Houssaye puts forward the hypothesis that Aeneas' travels represent nothing more than the spread of bronze in the Mediterranean basin, a spread that was linked to that of traditions originating in Atlantis; According to him, this theory would explain the persistence of the exclusive use of bronze coins in Italy, due to the traditional value attributed to them, at a time when other peoples were using gold and silver coins. However, this study will be followed up, and it is best to wait and see whether the arguments put forward are fully convincing. - In an article on *Les unités de mesure préhistoriques*, Xavier Guichard demonstrates that they bear witness to precise geodetic and astronomical knowledge, which is usually considered to be very recent; we too are of the opinion that this knowledge has actually existed throughout history, but we believe that its origin is no more Western than it is Eastern; We wonder how one can believe that Eastern peoples were unaware of the precession of the equinoxes, which is precisely the basis of all the cyclical periods that play such a prominent role, especially in the Hindu tradition.

1938

In Atlantis (March issue), Paul Le Cour, continuing his studies of 'symbolism' according to his own very special concepts, deals with metals, in particular bronze, gold and the enigmatic 'orichalcum'; among other curiosities, this time he has discovered...

I know that 'Michael' is an approximate anagram of 'alchemist', and that there is a similar relationship between the 'dragon' and the 'Gordian knot'! An article by one of his collaborators, *Dioscures et Kabires*, is every bit as imaginative and confusing as his own; it mixes two completely separate issues, each of which is difficult enough to elucidate on its own... - The May issue discusses plants, and especially symbolic trees, or rather some of them; let us not forget to note, for the collection of fantastic etymologies, the one that derives the word 'energy' from *Aor-Agni*, and also the name of *Vishnu* linked to that of mistletoe! - Finally, in the July issue, we move on to animal symbols, whose marine origin is claimed by Paul Le Cour; this is true for those he mentions, but there are many others he does not mention and for which such an origin is by no means tenable. Here we find again the obsession with the 'octopus', which he believes he recognises in the most varied depictions, whether it be a star or an eight-spoked wheel, and fantasies about 'flesh', the flesh, called 'sarx' in Greek, and... the Sargasso Sea. He also believes that the word '*anguis*' refers to the eel, whereas in Latin it is the name for snakes in general, and the eel was so named because it has the shape of an *anguis*, i.e. a snake; but, obviously, this explanation is far too simple for an exuberant imagination such as that of Paul Le Cour!

The Nouvelle Revue Française (August issue) publishes a rather unusual article by Gaston Bachelard, entitled *La psychanalyse du feu*; the author is perfectly right to criticise attempts at rational explanation of myths and legends, which are not only weak and insufficient, as he says, but perfectly insignificant and null in reality; only that the explanation he proposes to replace them with is certainly no more valid, even if in other ways and for other reasons. Any impartial and unprejudiced reader will undoubtedly find this way of intervening, at the origin of prehistoric ~~acts~~ such as that of fire, taken here as typical, the notorious

The psychoanalysts' "complexes" and the very murky "clarifications brought about by the psychological revolution of the Freudian era" (sic!); moreover, all this implies a conception of "primitive mentality" which, instead of being, as in the case of rational explanations, a "mental state" of primitive peoples, is a "mental state" of the psychoanalysts

brought about by the psychological revolution of the Freudian era" (*sic!*); moreover, all this implies a conception of "primitive mentality" which, instead of being, as in the case of rational explanations, purely and simply foreign to what traditional data teach, actually goes back further than these; and this does not surprise us, because ultimately it only confirms once again, with the example of a specific application, what we have said in general about the real nature of psychoanalysis and its role in a new, more 'advanced' phase of the gradual development of modern deviation.

In *Vita Italiana* (September issue), J. Evola develops a 'new theory of race', in which, to tell the truth, the term 'race' itself seems to us to be used in a rather misleading way

and misleading, since in reality it refers to "caste." It is true that distinguishes between what he calls 'races of nature' and races that possess a tradition; he admits equivalence only between the latter, in which he is certainly right; However, there are no 'races of nature' at all, since every race necessarily has a tradition at its origin, and can only have lost it more or less completely through degeneration, as is the case with 'savage' peoples, as he seems to acknowledge in a footnote. Should we not add that this is also the case with modern Westerners? Perhaps this is what is implied by a sentence expressing regret that certain colonialist peoples claim to exercise a right of conquest 'not only over savage peoples, but also over others who have a high traditional civilisation' and who 'know no other way to justify this right than by resorting to a difference in skin colour and to a rationalist, materialist and technicist 'modern civilisation', which is truly the last thing that can justify a spiritual right to hegemony'... On the other hand, the author seems to accept the theory that the caste system in India was related to racial differences, a theory based solely on a false interpretation of the term 'arya'; we also note, in this regard, that द्विद्या (and not द्विद्या) does not mean af-

"divine," but "twice-born," and that this quality belongs to members of the higher castes not by birth, but by the performance of a certain ritual, for which they alone are "qualified." Be that as it may, he ends up considering, within the same race or the same people, differences that exclude any possible equivalence (contrary to what happens between corresponding castes of different races or peoples), differences that are not simply 'biological' in nature, but have a genuine spiritual foundation; if this is the case, then we are indeed dealing with castes, and in this regard we cannot but agree with him; but then, why still speak of 'race', if not as a rather regrettable concession to certain current ideas that are completely foreign to any spirituality?

In *Atlantis* (September issue), Paul Le Cour discusses *La Tu-nisie et l'Atlantide*, or more precisely, a journey he made to Tunisia to try to discover some 'material or spiritual' traces of Atlantis, which does not seem to have been very fruitful from this point of view, which is not surprising, despite the absurd idea of some archaeologists who wanted to place Atlantis in North Africa. The descriptive part of his account contains some typically 'touristy' naivety; he believed he saw in a synagogue 'an ancient copy of the Koran'... which was obviously a *Torah*; but this error, however gross, is still nothing compared to the one that leads him to mistake the Arabs for the 'race of Ham'. His total ignorance of Islam leads him to make some truly unheard-of assessments in this regard; and yet we remember that he once avoided including it in his hatred for the East; what could he have said if this had not been the case? We will content ourselves with pointing out that, if 'Christianity did not hesitate to consider certain women as having attained sainthood, and even magnified women in the person of the Virgin Mary', Islam does exactly the same thing on these two points, and moreover admits women to initiation...

action, something that no Christian organisation seems to have done; it would be really difficult to fall any lower than that... Speaking of what he calls 'Arab secret societies', i.e. Islamic initiatory organisations (which have nothing exclusively Arab about them, apart from the sacred language they use, which is naturally that of the tradition to which they belong), he acknowledges that it is difficult to talk about them 'in the absence of documents' (incidentally, a nice admission of the completely profane nature of his research); but this does not prevent him from declaring immediately afterwards, with disconcerting self-assurance and typically Western vanity, that 'they have nothing to teach him that he does not already know', as proven by the fact that he saw a trident on top of certain mosques; in our opinion, this rather shows that he would do well to have his eyesight checked, the condition of which does not fail to inspire some concern in us! - At the end of the same issue there is a short note, the sole purpose of which is to attack us once again, and which is courageously signed 'X...'. We will simply point this out to Paul Le Cour (in his capacity as 'manager-owner', if not author), urging him, if he has any good faith, as we still want to believe, to take note of it once and for all. firstly, we are by no means an 'Orientalist'; secondly, we have never written anything on 'Hindu philosophy', for the simple reason that, in our opinion, there is nothing that can be defined as such and that, moreover, we deal exclusively with traditional doctrines, excluding any 'philosophy', which does not interest us; Finally, noting that Orientalists have understood nothing of the doctrines they discuss cannot in any way or to any degree imply that readers of a correct and intelligible exposition, provided they are free from any Orientalist or other prejudice, will in turn fail to understand anything. As for the claim that *Vedanta* is 'the form most appealing to Western philosophers steeped in Christianity', it seems, from our experience, that this is exactly the opposite of the truth, unless applying oneself to distorting it outrageously means showing sympathy for a doctrine!

1939

In *Technique Sanitaire et Municipale* (June issue), R. Humery, in an article belonging to a series entitled *L'E-sthétique au Village*, recalls that 'the Druids had chosen the tree as the central symbol of their metaphysics': the evocation of traditional ideas in a publication of this kind is too rare not to be worth mentioning. A fact cited in this same article prompts an important reflection: it seems that the "fighting writers" created a "sacred forest" in the Cévennes; the use of such a definition constitutes a deplorable linguistic abuse, comparable to that which attributes a "religious" character to all sorts of purely profane manifestations; This expresses an unconscious 'parodic' tendency, against which we must warn all those who, in one way or another, are trying to bring some order to the current chaos.

In the *Revue juive* of Geneva (December issue), Paul Vulliaud dedicates an article to *Mysticisme juif*; as he says, it has been disputed whether there is anything to which this definition can be applied, and in fact this depends on what is meant by 'mysticism'; it seems to us that he too uses this term in a fairly broad and ill-defined sense; perhaps it can be admitted that it applies, to a certain extent, to Hasidism, but in any case, Kabbalah is certainly of a completely different order, esoteric and initiatory. The use of the term 'pietist' is also an example of the risk involved in transferring certain words from one doctrine to another for which they were not conceived: 'pietism' is properly one of the many varieties of Protestantism, and is almost synonymous with 'moralism'; all of which is completely foreign, not to say opposed, not only to any esotericism, but also to simple mysticism. At the end of his article, Vulliaud quite rightly protests against the 'rationalist' (and, we might add, 'modernist') view that Kabbalah constitutes a 'heterodoxy' within Judaism, and against the misunderstanding

of "critics" steeped in the spirit and methods of academia, who go so far as to define the *Zohar* as an "incoherent work"!

In *L'Art et les Artistes* (January issue), Albert Gleizes, under the title *Tradition et modernisme*, presents some interesting points of view on tradition in relation to art, and also to crafts, since for him the two are inseparable. He contrasts tradition with 'classicism', which leads to 'aestheticism'; this contrast is also that of 'homo-centrism' and 'humanism'; the classically or humanistically educated man 'cannot reach the object, he who is trained only to discourse on the subject... The man who does must teach the man who says, for the man who does is the traditional man, while the man who says, today, is nothing more than the individual... Tradition, which is true knowledge of the universe, is translated and transmitted through a series of experimental methods that range from man's lower reality to his final transcendent reality, passing through his intermediate reality, that of the direct movement in which transformation takes place... Hence the importance of the crafts that form the basis of man's conquest of his authentic reality; hence the little mysteries of the Compagnonnage, which are like constant preludes to the initiation of the great'. Thus, 'returning to humanism is a step backwards, while starting afresh from homocentrism is a step forwards'; and 'the last word will belong to the unchanging tradition, centred on man... Sooner or later, the artist will regenerate himself by becoming a craftsman again, a worker who thoroughly possesses all the secrets of his craft, thinking less about Art than about the perfection of everything he does in his life'.

In *Symbolisme* (February issue), G. Persigout completes his study on *Le Centre du Monde et de l'Etre*; it is very true that 'in all its parts, the Universe bears the seal of duality', since the polarisation of Being is the preliminary and necessary condition for any manifestation; but why define this duality as 'evil', and why always conceive of it

in such a specific and completely secondary way, as an opposition between 'good' and 'evil'?

In *Atlantis* (March issue), Paul Le Cour discusses *Poseidon et la Chevalerie*. It is very plausible that Poseidon played a role among the Atlanteans that was more or less comparable to that of Apollo among the Hyperboreans; that the horse was a symbol of Poseidon is even less doubtful (on the other hand, in this regard, there are interesting considerations to be developed on the relationship between its two aspects, the land horse and the sea horse); but to believe that it is possible to go directly from the 'Atlantean Temple of Poseidon' to the ... Order of the Temple, requires a good dose of imagination!

- Unfortunately, we are obliged to return once again to the strange way in which Paul Le Cour distorts (unconsciously, we would like to believe) everything we say; First of all, let us acknowledge that the note signed 'X' addressed to us, which we pointed out at the time, was copied from a newspaper, and let us simply point out that he should at least have indicated its source, however 'unillustrious' it may be. On the other hand, we did not 'send' him anything, since, at this distance, it would have been a little difficult for us to do so: but it seems to us that he should not complain if the management of *Études Traditionnelles* decides to send him what concerns him so that he is fairly informed, and also that it would not hurt, on his part, to follow this example. As for the change in the title of *Études Traditionnelles*, this is due to their editor and not to us, as we have no authority in this matter, being merely a contributor and nothing more. Furthermore, until now we had always thought that a magazine had the right to choose whatever title it preferred, without the public being called upon to express its opinion and assess whether it was a 'title' or a 'subtitle'! Finally, the most disconcerting thing is that for Paul Le Cour, declaring that he is 'not an Orientalist' is equivalent to 'renouncing the Orient', while for us it is exactly the opposite, since an Oriental cannot cer-

to be an Orientalist; moreover, perhaps one day we will explain what Orientalists are really for, but the time has not yet come... As for the statement that he never wrote anything on 'Hindu philosophy', in order to define it as 'unexpected and daring' (as if we had not already said so explicitly on several occasions, and first and foremost in our own works dealing with Hindu doctrines), Paul Le Cour is careful not to follow it up with the reason we gave, which is that there is simply no such thing as 'Hindu philosophy', except in the distorted conceptions of Westerners. On the other hand, if we did not think that our explanations are clear and intelligible ~~so~~ for someone to benefit from them, and also that there are no others that duplicate them, we would never have published them, because we are not among those who write for the pleasure of writing, and we really cannot see what reason there could be for 'reproach' in all this; if, moreover, Paul Le Cour finds them 'indigestible', that is his business, but this proves nothing more than his incompetence; evidently, 'literature' is more to his taste and within his reach... But that's not all: to speak today of 'European civilisation seriously threatened by Asian conquests' is truly to exceed the limits of what is permissible; when one relies on a 'civilisation' that aims only to destroy all others and dominate the whole world, one should at least have the basic decency not to turn the situation upside down! Finally, Paul Le Cour is seriously mistaken in attributing to us a 'fiery combative ardour', which no one could be more lacking than us; if he had not felt the need to harass us without the slightest reason and with incomprehensible insistence, we would never have bothered with him, and perhaps we would have ignored his existence forever; It is truly a pity that Europeans of his ilk do not want to understand that we are only asking them to... leave us and the East alone. One more observation: in an attempt to respond to what we said about his assimilation of Arabs to the 'race of Ham', Paul Le Cour confuses Ishmael's mother with... his wife, which is rather amusing; equally amusing is that he seems to genuinely believe that all this is

a question of 'races' in the literal and physical sense of the term, whereas in reality it is always and only a question of traditional affiliations.

1940

Les Cahiers Astrologiques (July-August issue) contains an article by K.-E. Krafft: *Origine et évolution de quelques symboles cosmologiques*, which unfortunately contains more ingenuity than authentic symbolism; to put it bluntly, it is not very serious to want to find real symbolic meaning in signs with such modern and profane origins as those of the planets Uranus and Neptune; it is a bit like looking for hermeticism in coats of arms created outside all heraldic rules, after the Renaissance! This article is followed by the beginning of the translation of a study on *Le sens et l'origine des symboles des planètes*, by Otto von Bressendorf, which in turn does not seem to have a very solid basis from a traditional point of view; it is inspired, moreover, by the works of Hermann Wirth, who is not exactly an undisputed authority on the subject.

In The Art Bulletin (vol. XXI, 1939), A.K. Coomaraswamy, reviewing various works on the history of arts and crafts, returns to the traditional concepts he has already expounded on this subject on various occasions; He insists in particular on the real metaphysical value of so-called 'popular' and 'savage' art, as opposed to modern 'academic' art, which is completely devoid of it, and this ties in directly with the considerations he has recently developed in this same forum on 'primitive mentality'.

The Christian Social Art Quarterly (Spring 1939 issue) publishes a lecture by Graham Carey on 'Catholic art and Catholic principles'; in it, the author denounces the fact that Catholics as a whole currently accept the notions prevalent in the non-Catholic world in which they live, for example the concept

the view that art has pleasure as its main purpose, or that it is essentially about imitation or copying; he demonstrates that, 'according to the traditional Catholic view of art, it is not an escape from reality, but a glorification of reality'; and he clearly states that 'before the Reformation and the Renaissance, not only Christians but people all over the world considered human life, with all that it entails, from a sacred rather than a profane point of view', which is completely in line with everything we have said about the anomaly and degeneration inherent in the profane point of view as such.

In the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (September issue), an article by Paul-Louis Couchoud entitled *Jésus, dieu ou horn-me?* is a good example of the artificial difficulties and imaginary 'problems' that arise from the secular point of view: the author believes he has found an incompatibility between historical reality and symbolic meaning, to the extent that he considers them two alternatives between which a choice must be made; when one understands that historical facts must, on the contrary, carry symbolic meaning within themselves, it becomes clear that the question no longer arises in this way, and that, in fact, it does not arise at all. On the other hand, he expresses some unclear considerations, which are perhaps intended above all to avoid certain accusations of hostility towards Christianity: thus, it seems that the 'God-man' is not a myth, but a 'religious representation'; but it is difficult to understand the difference, since, while stating that 'religious representation is something simpler and more profound' and that 'it is primordial in relation to rites and myths', the author fails to explain with any degree of precision what he means by this. Reading an article of this kind, one can also realise the inability, due solely to "erudition", to yield any valid results: for example, research on the "Celestial Man" could have at least hinted at certain aspects of the truth, but since the author sees it only as a "representation" of purely human origin, which, in his opinion, can apparently be explained by psychological considerations, he finds only confirmation of his theory and discovers absolutely nothing of what is really implied from a traditional point of view.

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In *Atlantis* (November issue), Paul Le Cour discusses what he calls *La Croix rouge des Templiers dans les temps modernes*, or certain "survivals" that he believes he has discovered here and there, but which, in truth, are highly problematic: thus, in particular, it is more than doubtful that the red cross on ambulances bears the slightest resemblance to the Templars... As for the cross that serves as the emblem of Catholic scouts, it is clearly a 'Jerusalem cross', not a Templar cross. It is true that Paul Le Cour imagines that the Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem were 'the origin of the Knights Templar', whereas in reality they were their rivals and even adversaries. Let us not dwell on the bizarre idea of using scouting for the so-called restoration of the Order of the Temple; it is far too difficult to take these fantasies seriously, and in any case, even if one day they were accepted by the organisations we are talking about, all this could only result in a kind of masquerade, in the absence of an authentic transmission, comparable, for example, to that of 'neo-druidism' and 'neo-germanism'; add to this that, if there really is an idea today in Germany to restore the Teutonic Order, this too falls into the same category of simulacra devoid of any real value, since the Teutonic Order, as a traditional organisation, died when its last Grand Master, Albert of Brandenburg, converted to Lutheranism. With regard to the scout hat, Paul Le Cour says that 'it would be interesting to conduct a study on symbolic headgear'; This is absolutely true, but as far as the hat in question is concerned, it should be remembered that it is as anti-traditional as possible. Isn't it curious to note that when you want to divert a people from their traditions, you invariably begin by forcing them to wear hats? We would like to point out another bizarre historical misunderstanding: Paul Le Cour saw 'a painting depicting...

St Bernard preaching the Second Crusade in Vézelay, in the presence of St Louis>> ; he has clearly confused the characters, since there is a mistake in the century, and St Louis was born about 60 years after St Bernard's death, so they certainly could not have met, at least in this world!

In the *Mercure de France* (15 July issue), Paul Le Cour himself published an article entitled *À la recherche d'un Ordre perdu*, also devoted to the Order of the Temple, which seems to obsess him to such an extent that it overshadows even Atlantis in his concerns... We find, summarised, some of the considerations that were developed more extensively in *Atlantis*, especially on the imminent arrival of the infamous 'Age of ^{Apocalypse}' the alleged restoration of the Teutonic Order, the advisability of restoring the Order of the Temple to act as a counterbalance, and also Scouting as a possible starting point for this restoration. This article has the air of a veritable 'manifesto', and one wonders what the real purpose of all this is; after all, if it is a 'lost Order', how could there be anything more than a simple historical-archaeological investigation?

The magazine *Le Lotus Bleu* contains an article by S. Gla-chant entitled *Aspects occultes de l'affaire des Templiers*; it was supposed to have a sequel, but it seems that it has not yet been published. In this first part, after a sort of historical summary, the author examines above all the more or less strange accusations that were made against the Templars, and attempts to explain the symbols that are said to have been used by them, relating them to 'Essene and Gnostic' doctrines, which, on the other hand, is only a rather vague label, since very little is known about the Essenes, and very different things are indiscriminately defined as 'Gnostic'. Ultimately, there is nothing really new in all this, but is it not strange that at this moment in time, so many people are so concerned with the Order of the Temple?

La *Nouvelle Revue Française* (December and January issues) publishes a lengthy study by Roger Caillois entitled *Théorie de la fête*; in fact, it is really only a 'theory', and this is, so to speak, its first flaw. The author starts from a definition that basically concerns only a particular type of festival, what we would readily call 'carnivalesque' festivals, and claims to make it a definition of 'celebration' in general, as if everything should fall within this single type, which, on the contrary, is in reality something quite particular, and whose nature, moreover, raises questions that we may discuss one day or another. He then contrasts festive time with 'everyday existence' and, in this contrast, sees an application of the 'distinction between the sacred and the profane'; but for this to be the case, the 'profane' must first exist, and this, as we have already explained, presupposes a degeneration such as we see in the modern world; in a wholly traditional civilisation, all 'daily' occupations have a sacred and ritual character; in the case of degeneration, however, profane elements are often introduced into the festivals themselves, and when things reach extremes, we end up with completely profane festivals, such as the festivities

"civilians" who, in today's Western world, have taken on a new importance

ever increasing; the distinction, therefore, cannot be applied in any way. The author, like all 'sociologists', willingly seeks his examples among so-called 'primitive' peoples, a term that we must translate as 'degenerate', although they are so in a different way and often even less profoundly than modern 'civilised' peoples, but nevertheless enough for things to appear rather obscure and confused among them, which certainly does not help to clarify matters when they are called into question. We would never finish if we wanted to point out all the misunderstandings and confusions encountered in the course of this study (among which we find above all the misuse of the term 'initiation', wrongly applied to rites common to all members of a people or tribe, as we had occasion to point out in one of our recent articles); so it is better not to

Let us not dwell on this further; but, to limit ourselves to the essentials, what are we to think of a theory that results in making 'parody' and 'sacrilege' the characteristic elements of the 'sacred' itself, and of the conception of a 'mythical time' in which the 'golden age' is assimilated to 'chaos'?

In Atlantis (January issue), the main article is devoted to *the Cathars*; for Paul Le Cour, it is an excellent opportunity to confuse the most diverse things and start a series of imaginative linguistic comparisons in which he excels, and which he likes to decorate with the pompous name of 'hierological': the Cathars, Saint Catherine, Kether, El-Kantara, the Alcazar (which is actually *El-Qasr* and has nothing to do with Caesar and the Kaiser), and the inevitable *Aor-Agni*, which is actually a bit distorted; so, while he's at it, why not the 'cetra' or the number 'four'? As for the implications that may lie behind all this, we prefer not to try to guess them, and we will content ourselves with recording the confession of a disappointment already experienced by Scouting... - Since Paul Le Cour insists on mixing our name with the stories he tells in his own way, we are still obliged to tell him, first of all, that we have never had the various 'pretensions' he gratuitously attributes to us (not even the pretence to the title of 'doctor', which, for that matter, even we would find ridiculous); secondly, that we have never been interested in topics that are specifically Western, such as 'philosophy' and 'mysticism', but only in matters of an esoteric and initiatory nature; Finally, we have never 'moved on' to one thing or another, as is sufficiently demonstrated by everything we have written, to anyone who can read and understand what they read without mixing in the product of their imagination, which unfortunately does not seem to be the case with Paul Le Cour!

The March issue of *Atlantis* is devoted to *the Grail*, and we must congratulate Paul Le Cour for starting off, this time, by saying something sensible: 'since the Grail is essentially a symbol, we should not allow people to believe

that there is a physical "*saint vessel*" that archaeologists could unearth; since all chalices are based on its design, finding an ancient chalice does not necessarily mean that it is the Grail. Where things go a little wrong is when he states that Atlantis was the birthplace of "the spiritual tradition of our earth" and that the symbol of the sacred vessel originated there and then spread everywhere, not only to America and the Celts – which may be tenable – but also to India and China; this is a very peculiar way of considering the filiation of different traditions... – On the other hand, Paul Le Cour discovered the cause of his failure with regard to Scouting: it is that the latter is 'distorted by its connection with animalism' (*sic!*); but he does not seem to doubt that the so-called Scout 'totemisation' is nothing more than an absolutely ridiculous simulacrum, just as would be, in Scouting itself, the imitation he advocates of an 'Order of the Temple' or any other form of chivalry: traditional realities have nothing in common with children's games, and if children enjoy mimicking the actions of adults, this is not a good reason to take them seriously.

In *Cahiers Astrologiques* (January-February-March-April issue), we find an article by Raoul Fructus entitled *Astrology, Magic Squares and the Great Pyramid*. this association may seem rather unusual, but it would appear that these three things form 'an inseparable whole in which the Cosmic or Solar Universe and all the details that compose it are found, without forgetting the secondary causes and their possible effects'; this is something that, at the very least, lacks a little clarity... 'Magic squares' certainly have their interest in a specific order, as an application of the science of numbers, but there is a long way from this to wanting to find everything in them: 'mathematical, physical, mechanical, astronomical, astrological, esoteric and occult sciences', and even 'planetary, interplanetary, human, social and individual cycles'! And, from another point of view, why does the author, indicating the calculation of the sum of the numbers contained in a square...

to, provides as an 'empirical formula' what is only the equivalent, in a slightly different form, of the exact formula he has just stated? As for the 'Great Pyramid', we certainly do not want to enter into a discussion of everything that is claimed to be discovered through sometimes very hypothetical measurements; but when one insists on making it predict current events, and does so by appealing to data drawn from Jewish tradition, the imagination exceeds all limits of what is permissible. this obsession with the 'Great Pyramid' is really strange! Let us quote again the rather curiously precise statement that 'the golden age must begin in the year 2242 of our era'; since it must necessarily be the 'golden age' of another cycle, and consequently the current cycle must end before it arrives, what does this have to do with the dates of 'our era'?

1945-1946

In *The Art Bulletin* (1939), Ananda K. Coomaraswamy published an article entitled *Ornament*, in which he demonstrates that 'the modern preoccupation with the "decorative" and "aesthetic" aspect is an aberration that has nothing in common with the original aims of art'. If we consider the history of the various terms that have been used to express the idea of ornamentation or decoration, we find that most of them referred primarily not to something additional or superfluous, but to the completion of the object itself in view of its proper use; this is the case with the Sanskrit terms

"*Alamkara*," "*bhūshana*" and "*abharana*," Greek terms derived from "*kosmos*" and also Latin terms "*decor*" and "*ornamentum*," which still retained their original meaning in the Middle Ages. No traditional art can be understood without knowledge of its authentic meaning, and in reality, whether taken as a whole or in detail, nothing is without meaning; to make it the object of simple aesthetic appreciation is to

means condemning oneself to complete ignorance of what constitutes its entire raison d'être.

In the same journal (March 1940 issue), referring to a book by Cari Hentze, *Friichinesische Bronzen und Kultur-darstellungen*, Coomaraswamy insists above all on the question of the *T'ao-t'ie* and, more generally, of the 'head of the monster'; we will only add to the considerations we have already set out in our article on *Kalamukha* an observation concerning the Greek *Gorgoneion*. According to Roscher, the latter was originally a solar face, albeit bearded, and only much later did it become a representation of the female Gorgon. On the other hand, we have noted a reference by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata*, V, 8, 49, 4) who assimilates the *Gorgoneion* to the Moon; we suppose that in this case it must be the female form, but this point deserves closer examination. With regard to another book, *Carved Jades of Ancient China*, by Dr. A. Salmony, another interesting question arises from a symbolic point of view: it concerns a toothed motif that appears on prehistoric funerary vases, both in Europe and in the Far East, and which seems to refer to the 'jaws of Death'. The meaning provided by the *Tcheou-li*, according to which 'teeth signify war', could very well have been derived from the latter, and gives rise, among other things, to a curious parallel with Greek myths, in which the hero 'sows the dragon's teeth'.

In *Catholic Art Quarterly* (1943), Coomaraswamy compares the maxim of medieval builders, '*Ars sine scientia nihil*', with Guido d'Arezzo's statement, "*Non verum facit ars canto-rem, sed documentum*", as well as the way Dante speaks of the *doctrina celata* in his verses; and in this regard, he recalls the conceptions of Plato and St Augustine on the essentially intellectual nature of true "inspiration", considered necessary in every traditional and normal vision of art.

In *College Art Journal* (May 1943 issue), an article by the same author, entitled *Symptom Diagnosis, and Regimen*, points out the abnormal nature of the modern conception of art: it has come to be thought that art, instead of 'imitating Nature in its operations', should simply imitate or copy the sensible things that surround us, and even our own individuality; on the other hand, the question of the use of a work of art has been completely separated from that of its meaning. The only remedy for this situation would be a radical change in the methods of interpreting art used by critics and historians: it would be necessary to renounce the 'aesthetic' point of view which, as the word itself indicates, pertains only to sensitivity, and also to psychological analysis which seeks in a work only the expression of the artist's individuality, something completely devoid of interest for its authentic understanding.

Also by A.K. Coomaraswamy, in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, is an article entitled *Imitation, Expression and Participation*, which demonstrates how these three terms are three attributes that define the essential nature of art, and ultimately interpenetrate and coincide. Imitation normally refers to a 'model' that the artist contemplates within himself; expression refers to the ideas that he has assimilated and made his own (which has nothing in common with modern 'expressionism'); finally, participation (which, despite what sociologists say, has nothing 'mystical' about it, a word whose meaning they seem to confuse with 'mysterious') is a kind of 'real presence' of the model in the work of art, implicit in the very fact that the latter must be as accurate a symbol of the former as possible.

The magazine *Atlantis* resumed publication; in the March 1946 issue, the first one we are aware of, the main article is entitled *Les Vierges noires et l'Atlantide*. At first glance, the connection between the two subjects is unclear, but it is actually quite simple: the Black Virgins are said to be

succeeded ancient 'mother goddesses', whose faces, it seems, were made of black stone; now, if we are to believe Paul Le Cour, black stones are of volcanic origin, and we should see in them 'the memory of Atlantis, mother of civilisations, which disappeared in volcanic convulsions'. Unfortunately for this thesis, the black stones, as we still remember with regard to *the lapsit exillis*, were not volcanic stones at all, but aerolites, which is slightly different... We will leave aside various linguistic fantasies, which are not new, and also an attack on India, guilty of ignoring 'Rosicrucian Hermeticism' (*sic!*), but let us note that the question of 'black faces' as a definition of certain peoples, alluded to in relation to 'Ethiopia', could give rise to some very interesting considerations, which the author does not even seem to suspect.

The May issue of the same magazine is mostly devoted to *Compagnonnage*, although it contains only general and somewhat vague information; it is all the easier to link its origins to the Essenes because, ultimately, not much is known about them

. It is true that communion was initially a ritual initiatory; but, from the Christian point of view, the Eucharist should not be confused with the 'agapi' (of which the only trace that remains is the distribution of blessed bread, to which reference is also made elsewhere); and why do they seem to ignore that, in all Eastern Christian rites (including those connected to Rome), communion under both species is by no means reserved to priests? Moreover, it is doubtful, to say the least, that the names of the churches were chosen by the Companions who built them; not all of these churches, after all, bear the uniform title of Notre-Dame. With regard to the artistic character of the "masterpiece," Paul Le Cour does not fail to commit the usual "aesthetic" error of moderns, so well denounced by Coomaraswamy; but what is out of the ordinary is the assertion that "St. Thomas bases Christianity on Judaism"; would Aristotelianism therefore be Jewish? We would also point out to the author that speculative Freemasonry has never called itself "philosophical Freemasonry," this definition being reserved exclusively for a certain series of high degrees; and we would add, finally, that we find once again the same

being reserved exclusively for a certain series of high degrees; and we would finally add that we find once again the "green language" and "Gothic art", which we discussed recently on another occasion; fortunately, this time we don't get to "*goétie*"⁴! Another contributor rightly points out that nothing could be further from the truth than the common assertion that 'revolutions are made by the people'; however, he does not seem to have a clear idea of the difference between initiatory organisations and 'secret societies', which are more or less political in nature; moreover, he makes a gross historical error by tracing the origins of speculative Freemasonry back to the 15th century.

Since we have been prompted to talk about *Atlantis* again, we must say that we remembered that, in the few issues that appeared during the war, they still felt the need to mention us in more or less bizarre ways. Of the various things that have been reported to us, we will consider only one, which is particularly curious: it concerns an article on Janus that we published some time ago in *Regnabit*, and it states that 'we did not see its connection with St John'... for the sole reason that we did not mention it at the time. There are many other things that Paul Le Cour, for his part, does not 'see' at all, and at the moment we need no further proof than the fact that he confuses the letter 'Y' or *yspsilon* with *gamma* and with the 'letter G': but at least he should not have forgotten that, beyond the article cited, and right here, we have explicitly pointed out, more than once, the connection in question. What's more, and this is what makes the whole thing frankly ridiculous, we can assure him that there are very good reasons, which certainly do not date back to yesterday, why we know the two Saint Johns and their solstice role much better than he does!

We received an issue of a magazine entitled *Kad*, "notebooks of Celtic philosophy", which had already existed previously and

⁴See note on p. 42.

which, like many others, had ceased publication in recent years. It seems to us that the intentions of the group for which this magazine is the mouthpiece give rise to many reservations, since the establishment of a 'Fraternity of the Oak, the Yew and the Birch', combined with certain 'spiritualist' (or, more accurately, 'neo-spiritualist' statements), make us fear that there will soon be reason to count yet another 'pseudo-initiation'. On the other hand, we have explained many times the fanciful and illusory nature of all attempts to reconstruct extinct traditions, in which, whether we like it or not, there is necessarily a lack of 'spiritual influence'; certainly one cannot expect to make up for this lack with studies of mythology 'based on the most accredited scientific works', which constitute a 'work of syncretism' (but do the editors of this magazine know exactly what the words they use mean?), nor with 'rituals' (*sic!*) based on the more or less approximate archaeological restoration of an ancient calendar. We would add that this attempt to revive the 'Celtic religion' is accompanied by an openly anti-Christian attitude, which certainly does not testify to a very deep understanding of the essential unity of traditions! And it is interesting to note that they reproach Christianity above all for being 'Eastern'! Finally, an article on 'Celtic magic and its survivals' does not reassure us any further, since, despite the correct statement that 'magic does not belong to the realm of esotericism', and even the rather skilful use of certain data, for example on the double spiral and the "thunderstones", there seems to be a tendency to attribute, based on the hypothetical and completely profane view of prehistoric scholars, a sort of priority to this "magical" use of symbols which, on the contrary, as we will explain elsewhere, in reality can only be a degeneration.

We have received the first issues, dated November and December 1945, of a new Italian magazine entitled *La Porta Magica*: there is much talk of 'Tradition', but it is difficult to understand exactly how it is intended, and the various contributors do not seem to

to be in perfect agreement with each other, because there are some who clearly have very modern ideas, 'scientist' and

"progressive". In general, the "esoteric sciences" in question are reduced almost exclusively to the divinatory arts, dowsing and the like, which in reality is not very esoteric at all, so much so that this magazine, on the whole, belongs rather to the usual type of "occultist" publications. Yet, in the midst of all this, there are a few articles that deal with more serious topics, such as 'the symbolism of ancient China' (i.e. mainly the *I Ching*); but here too, only the point of view

"magical" and "divinatory", that is, the lowest application of this symbolism? We will also quote the beginning of a series of articles on the "emblems of the degrees of the Scottish Rite": after some fairly accurate considerations on the nature of Masonic secrecy, the author demonstrates truly unusual historical knowledge: he does not attribute the creation of the 33-degree system to Ashmole, which surpasses all the other 'legends' we have encountered so far. He then proceeds to examine the symbolic coats of arms of the various degrees, without however indicating where he got them from; but this examination is limited to a pure and simple description, without any attempt at explanation, so that anyone who sees the figures could ultimately do the same; and in any case, there are some rather disconcerting inaccuracies in this description: for example, how is it possible that in the coat of arms of the Master's degree he did not recognise the three tools with which Hiram was subsequently struck? If we add to this the importance attributed to certain 'accidental' details of the design, we may be tempted to doubt the author's real 'quality'... We also noticed an article on the 'secrets of the Great Pyramid', but we must say that, fortunately, this time it is only a matter of geometric observations, with no allusion to the infamous 'prophecies' that caused such a stir years ago.

In *Atlantis* (May 1940 issue), Paul Le Cour contrasts *Siegfried and Perceval*, in whom he sees respectively the expression of the Germanic spirit and the Celtic spirit; this interpretation lends itself to easy development, especially in the current circumstances, but it is really a little too simplistic.

expression of the Germanic spirit and the Celtic spirit, respectively; this interpretation obviously lends itself to easy developments, especially in the current circumstances, but it is really a little too "simplistic". In this regard, he returns to his idea of a supposed restoration of the Order of the Temple, which embodies the Celtic spirit just as the Teutonic Order embodies the Germanic spirit, and even points to Mont Saint-Michel as its future centre, as opposed to Marienburg, the former residence of the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order. but has Mont Saint-Michel ever had the slightest historical connection with the Order of the Temple? Apart from this, and the re-edition of some already known linguistic fantasies, there is nothing particularly important to report.

The magazine Folklore, published by the Groupe Andois d'études folkloriques (April-June 1940 issue), published a study *entitled Sur un plat cathare de Raguse*, in which the unicorn appears as the main symbol, but understood, if the proposed interpretation is correct, in a 'malevolent' sense, as a representation of 'death that always follows the human race and desires to take possession of it'; this meaning would have its source in a parable of 'man and the  found in certain versions of Saints Barlaam and Josaphat, which is generally considered to be of Buddhist origin, but would have undergone Manichean influences during its transmission from East to West. There is something that may seem very strange, since, at least in orthodox symbolism, it seems that the unicorn is always considered in its 'beneficial' sense, which is consistent with the 'axial' value of its single horn, reinforced by its usual association with the 'Tree of Life'. On the plate in question, next to the unicorn there is also a tree, but the unusual inclination of the latter, as well as the attitude of the unicorn itself, quite clearly give the impression of a 'fall'; in this regard, it should be remembered that some have considered the inclination of the Earth's axis to be a consequence of the fall of man, which may have at least a symbolic meaning in relation to the rivo-

cyclical solutions of time. It is precisely also due to the fact that-

the alternating phases of temporal succession, represented by two toads, one white and one black, gnawing at the roots of the tree, that life represented by the tree ends with death; therefore, ultimately, there is a plausible meaning, in a certain respect, but heterodoxy, if it exists at all, would consist in the use of axial symbols, which are essentially linked to an idea of immutability, in a way that makes them participate in the change of things, which, if one wanted to explore the question further, could imply a conception that places, more or less explicitly, every reality in 'becoming'. Such a conception, moreover, is an inevitable consequence of any 'dualism' of the kind attributed to the Manicheans, since, for those who ignore the unity of principle, it is not clear where immutability could consist; and to give certain symbols a deviant position is not also to disregard what, in them, indicates an expression or reflection of unity?

1947

In the journal *L'Age d'Or* (no. 1), Robert Kanters published an *Introduction générale à l'étude de l'occultisme*. He does not take this word in its proper sense, but extends it, on the one hand, to everything that is commonly called 'occult sciences', and on the other, to authentic esoteric doctrines, as well as their modern counterfeits; We regret this, since it can only give the impression, especially to unprejudiced readers, that there is a certain common nature to all these things, when in fact this is not the case at all. With this reservation, we must say that the exposition, while necessarily somewhat summary, is certainly better overall than those intended for the 'general public'; the author shows commendable prudence, believing that nothing should be rejected *a priori*, but that it is better 'never to admit anything in this field without verifying it personally or without referring to authentic sources'. In the first part, he tries to bring some order to the many

there are "occult sciences" or so-called such; one could only reproach him for sharing contemporary illusions about the value of the "statistical method," and also for not making a sufficiently clear distinction between traditional sciences, or their more or less degenerate vestiges , , and certain research completely modern, 'metapsychic' or otherwise. In the second part, which deals with esoteric doctrines, he says something about the various Eastern traditions, then about the ancient Western traditions; He notes that it is much more difficult to know exactly what the latter were, which is not surprising, since they are ultimately lost traditions. The Middle Ages themselves are little known; as for the Renaissance, it saw the emergence of some already strongly hybrid things, and even more so in the 18th century. On 'recent movements', such as theosophy and its derivatives, pseudo-Rosicrucianism and occultism properly speaking, Kanters makes some very valid points. We note again that, quoting "the violent indictment" that a certain populariser published under the title *L'Occultisme devant la Science*, he declares that "at most, one can conclude that scientific rationalism can brutalise a man who has no reason to be considered congenitally stupid"; this judgement is rather harsh, but we cannot but agree with it completely!

In the same journal (nos. 5-6), Raoul Auclair published a study entitled *Le songe de Nabuchodonosor (The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar)*, proposing an interpretation of Daniel's prophecy that differs from the commonly accepted one, mainly because, in addition to the four parts of the statue corresponding respectively to the four empires - Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian and Roman empires, he considers the feet 'of iron mixed with clay' as a fifth distinct part, which would refer to the present time, and the reasons he gives appear entirely plausible. He expresses, on the cycles (noting in particular that 'the vision involves, in addition to its immediate and historical meaning, a broader symbolic meaning in which the four ages of the world are represented') and also on the hermetic meaning of various symbols, considerations that are entirely consistent with the data.

traditional. One can only be surprised that all this leads to an overly 'esoteric' conclusion; to say that, 'in the new golden age, everyone will be Christian in a Christian civilisation,' without forgetting that this "golden age" will be the first of another cycle, in which none of the particular traditional forms that properly belong to the current cycle will be found, and that, moreover, it is absolutely impossible to say what the characteristics of a civilisation that will belong to another humanity might be?

In *Hommes et Mondes* (February 1947 issue), Henry Sérouya published a rather simplified and "superficial" study on *Kabbalah*, which unfortunately contains many inaccuracies: for example, he refers indiscriminately to "initiates" and "mystics" as if they were the same thing; he accepts the interpretation "pantheistic" of certain modern thinkers, without realising its incompatibility with the metaphysical character that he otherwise recognises in *Kabbalah*, and even goes so far as to say that "God is the reflection of everything", which is a strange reversal of the truth; he sees nothing but "deliberate dissimulation" and "artificial procedures" in the way *Kabbalists* comment on the Scriptures, and clearly disregards the plurality of meanings of the latter and the very constitution of sacred languages, as well as the real nature of the relationship between esotericism and exotericism; seems surprised that *En Soph*, of whom he otherwise has a 'Spinozist' conception, is not the 'Creator God', as if the divine aspects were mutually exclusive, or as if the 'Supreme' and the 'Non-Supreme' were on the same level; he provides a diagram of the Sephirotic tree that has nothing traditional about it and in which, above all, there is no indication of the 'middle column'; he confuses the 'embryo' with 'metempsychosis'; and, quoting Lao-Tse towards the end, he attributes to him, from some unknown source, a book entitled *The Doctrinal!* On the other hand, it is really difficult to understand what he ultimately thinks about all this, and it is to be feared that he sees nothing more or different than 'philosophical ideas' or 'abstract speculations' of a somewhat peculiar kind; as for the reasons why he is interested in them, they seem to be of an order

very contingent and more sentimental than intellectual; would he still feel some attraction to Kabbalah if he understood that it has nothing in common with mysticism?

In *Cahiers du Sud* (no. 280, 1946), an article entitled *Magie guerrière dans la Rome antique*, by Paul Arnold, contains interesting information on certain rites, especially those that accompanied declarations of war; but is the interpretation always accurate? One may wonder whether there is only 'magic' at work here, i.e. whether these rites involved only simple psychic influences, or whether they were rather 'theurgical', i.e. intended to provoke the intervention of certain spiritual influences. As soon as one recognises that their essential purpose was to "transforming the enemy into a sacrificial victim" and that, consequently, the battle itself "became a gigantic sacrifice", one should logically also recognise their properly "theurgical" character; but for this one would need to be able to avoid all the current confusion between things of a completely different order ... The same can be said of *devotio*, whereby a general sacrificed himself for the salvation of the army; certain cases of more or less late degeneration, such as the use of the word "*devotio*" to indicate an act of witchcraft, do not change the original character of this rite. Even the consecration of the 'spoils of war' after a victory represented a real sacrifice; and the conclusion that emerges for us from all this is above all that, here as in other traditional civilisations, sacrifice truly constituted the ritual act par excellence.

In the March issue of *Atlantis*, the main article is entitled *Mystes et Mystiques*; Paul Le Cour first attempts to establish a fairly clear distinction between these two words (only the first of which has retained its original meaning, relating to initiation), but this does not prevent him from subsequently giving rise to numerous confusions. Thus, he does not fail to mention 'Muslim mysticism', following the fashion of Orientalists; to this

Incidentally, he states that 'the word "*Sufī*" clearly derives from the Greek "*sophos*"', which is completely false, but not particularly surprising coming from someone who also claims that Christianity derives from Hellenism. We cannot refrain from pointing out, as a matter of interest, a quotation from El-Hallaj (according to Massignon's slightly inaccurate translation) attributed to Mohyiddin ibn Arabi! On the other hand, it seems that there are "mystics of the Demiurge" and "mystics of the Supreme God", which refers to the very particular ideas expounded by the author in one of his works we mentioned earlier, but that, despite this, "mysticism is always and everywhere the same"; one should at least ask oneself whether it ever existed.

"Always and everywhere"... He acknowledges, however, that "anti-ca India did not know mystical life", which is very true, and moreover has nothing deplorable or exceptional about it; but the reason would be that "the word '*Aor*' was unknown to it", that is, ultimately because it did not speak Hebrew! Another piece of information that is no less noteworthy is that certain Hindus "devoted themselves in particular to *Prakriti*, the feminine aspect of the Absolute One"; here, quite simply, has he not confused *Prakriti* with *Shakti*? There are many other things that deserve to be mentioned, but we must limit ourselves; however, when he says that "Certain mystics are mystics," invoking the example of Claude de Saint-Martin, who was "simultaneously" both, we cannot fail to note that he turned to mysticism only after renouncing the initiatory path. In the following article, we find alchemists transformed into "archimists"; they are identified with the "adepts of the Rosicrucians" who, it seems, "prepare the return of Christ announced by the Age of Aquarius"; indeed, it would have been strange if this famed "new age" had not made its reappearance. More unpredictable is the fact that the terms '*Aor*' and '*Agni*' are given as belonging to the terminology of the Rosicrucians; we would never have thought that the Hiéron of Paray-le-Monial could be a Rosicrucian organisation! – At the end, there is a review of our book *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the*

Times in which Paul Le Cour clearly attempted to show us a certain kindness, to which we had not been accustomed until then; we willingly thank him for his good intentions, and we are grateful to him for 'approving of us completely when we demonstrate the degeneration of the modern world and seek its causes'; but this should not prevent us from telling him that, once again, many of his statements are wrong. First of all, there is a 'today' that shows us that his information is slightly behind the times, because, far from being something new, as he would have us believe, the reference he alludes to dates back, as far as we are concerned, to more than forty years ago! Secondly, it is false that we have 'renounced Western doctrines', for the simple reason that one can obviously only renounce something to which one has previously adhered, and this is not the case for us. On the other hand, we wonder how he dares to say that 'in Muslim esoteric schools, the existence of a personal God is not taken into account', when it is recognised that these schools are 'Muslim'. This is in fact a pure and simple contradiction. the truth is that, here as in all authentic esotericism, everything that exists is taken into account, but everything is also put in its proper place, something of which Paul Le Cour proves himself totally incapable... As for claiming that "the Hindu and Muslim doctrines on which we base ourselves (he forgot to mention the Taoist doctrines as well) are part of the current efforts of counter-initiation or incomplete initiation against which we stand," this is truly monstrous, and we protest vigorously against such an enormity; We ask Paul Le Cour to believe that we are in a particularly good position to know how things stand, and not to meddle in matters of which he is completely ignorant, and which, moreover, do not concern laymen like him at all, since, whatever his pretensions may be, he should understand that it is impossible for us to consider him otherwise. Another passage is frankly amusing: the one in which he contrasts us, with regard to India, with the opinion of the 'Hindu scholar (or rather Indianist) Sylvain Lévi' who, he says, 'vigorously denied the accuracy of our interpretations'; this is

It is entirely possible, and would not surprise us greatly, but when one considers our opinion of the doctrinal competence of Orientalists, it is easy to understand that it does not concern us in the slightest! Let us leave aside a somewhat far-fetched fantasy about our 'name and surname', in which , as in his own name, Paul Le Cour would like to find the inevitable *Aor-Agni*; none of this interests us in the least, any more than the said "name and surname", which in reality is for us just a simple signature like any other, something he does not even seem to imagine... Finally, on this occasion, he felt the need to recommend to his readers a booklet entitled *René Guénon et son oeuvre*, by Jacques Marcireau, which he describes as 'very well done', while we are of exactly the opposite opinion; we hope he will be willing to acknowledge that we should be a little more qualified than him to judge. The book in question, which was published without our knowledge and which we cannot in any way approve of, is in itself merely a collection of extracts taken here and there from our works and articles; it contains numerous sentences taken out of context and therefore incomprehensible, sometimes even cut and more or less distorted; the whole thing is grouped together in an artificial, we might even say arbitrary, manner, in paragraphs whose titles are the only thing that belongs in

precisely to the 'author'; it goes without saying that such a work is completely useless for those who are familiar with our work; and, as for those who are not familiar with it, it can only give them the most distorted idea possible.

distorted idea of it. To tell the truth, we suspect that Paul Le Cour particularly liked the fact that he could find something resembling his own methods of quotation; moreover, in reproducing from this book 'a sentence taken from one of our works', he did not fail to come across one that we would certainly never have written in the form attributed to it by J. Marcireau!

In a study entitled *What is Civilisation?* Albert Schweitzer *Festschrift*, A.K. Coomaraswamy draws inspiration from the etymological meaning of the terms 'civilisation' and 'politics', derived respectively from the Latin 'civitas' and the Greek 'polis', both of which mean 'city'.

from the Latin *civitas* and the Greek *polis*, both meaning 'city'. According to all traditional conceptions, human cities must be constituted and governed according to the model of the 'Divine City', which is consequently that of every true civilisation, and which can be considered from both a macrocosmic and microcosmic point of view. This naturally leads to the interpretation of *Purusha* as a true 'citizen' (*purushaya*, equivalent to *civis*), who resides at the centre of the being considered as *Brahmapura*; we believe, however, that we will have the opportunity to return to this subject in greater detail.

We have received the first two issues (December 1946 and March 1947) of the *Rivista di Etnografia* (*Journal of Ethnography*), published in Naples under the direction of Dr Giovanni Tucci. They mainly contain studies on folklore conducted according to methods now referred to as 'scientific', which consist more in simply recording facts than in seeking an explanation for them. Works of this kind are certainly not useless, but there is a fear that those who devote themselves to them consider them sufficient in themselves and do not even think that something much more valuable in terms of knowledge can be drawn from this accumulation of material.

The May 1947 issue of *Atlantis* is the first in a series devoted to *Petits et grands mystères* (Small and Great Mysteries); this time, the focus is on 'small mysteries', which serves as a pretext for a great display of linguistic imagination, though not all of it is original. Among other things, we find the 'variations' on the name Cybele that we have already mentioned on another occasion, the imaginings of de Grave who, some time ago, in his *République des Champs-Elysées*, wanted to explain everything with Flemish, and above all, of course, the multiform combinations given life by the inevitable *Aor-Agni*, which serve to interpret practically everything, including the initials of the name of the Rosicrucians. We also note that the hermetic *Rebis* is transformed into a *rebus*, which is not badly conceived, and that 'the name of *Ge*, goddess of the earth, has become the letter G of speculative Freemasonry'; and for...

Why not also operative Freemasonry? On the other hand, we note a rather bold statement, according to which 'initiations did not exist in India': so what does the Sanskrit word 'diksha' mean? This statement is complemented by another, no less erroneous, according to which 'today only Islam has esoteric schools'; even leaving India aside, there is still Taoism, which is not so negligible... We are mentioned several more times in the magazine, but this time there is really nothing to complain about, except that, given the way a passage is written, one might believe that we said that 'Leibniz was a Rosicrucian', which is certainly far from the truth.

Speaking of *Atlantis*, we must go back to say a few words about another issue that is already quite old (July 1946), but which we had not come across before. It discusses the *Maître de la Terre*, and begins with an analysis of the novel that H.R. Benson published under this title some forty years ago, which dealt with the Antichrist. Paul Le Cour considers this novel to be 'prophetic', and this naturally gives rise to various 'topical' considerations. However, he rightly believes that the true 'Master of the Earth' is not the Antichrist; he says something about the 'legends of Agartha and the priest Gianni', coming to the conclusion that, after the Christian era, 'Gianni is the Master of the Earth and the successor to Poseidon'; we had to end up finding the 'god of Atlantis' in all this, but here is a rather unexpected addition to the list of 'holy successors of the gods'. - But the reason we are compelled to mention this issue is that Paul Le Cour (who, incidentally, attributes to us a book entitled *Qualité et quantité*, which does not exist) has included in it a sort of review of our *Aperçus sur l'Initiation*; since he probably knows better than we do what we wanted to do, he assures us that this work "should instead be entitled *Aperçus autour de l'In-iation*", because "there is nothing in it concerning true Knowledge, which is essentially hermetic". However, he deigns to acknowledge "a curious concern with what Christian Hermeticism and the Rosicrucians are"; we beg him to believe

that this is not a "concern" at all. There is also a fantasy about *Sufi* and *Sophia*, which finally makes us understand why, as we have already pointed out on other occasions, the correct transcription *gu-fi* has the gift of exasperating him. What is more, he claims that we have "now turned to the Muslims after seeking the truth among the Hindus": we would like to put an end to these grotesque statements once and for all: we have never 'moved' from one thing to another, as our writings amply prove, and we do not have to 'seek the truth' here or there, because *we know* (and we insist on this word) that it is found equally in all traditions; but, since everyone is inclined to judge others on the basis of themselves, poor Paul Le Cour imagines that we are simply 'seekers' like him...

In *Psychiatry* (November 1945 issue), A.K. Coomaraswamy reviews a book entitled *The Lady of the Hare*, "a study of the healing power of dreams" by John Layard: it is about a person who dreamed of a hare that she was asked to sacrifice and to which she readily agreed. As the author himself acknowledges, albeit in other terms, and contrary to any 'psychiatric' interpretation, this sacrifice actually represents that of the 'outer man' to the 'inner man', or of the psychophysical being to the spiritual 'Self'. The second part of the book in question is devoted to the study of the symbolism of the hare in various mythologies; what is particularly noteworthy is that the author explicitly states that 'no symbol has ever been invented' and that no artificial effort can ever result in the creation of authentic symbols; does this not mean that the latter are properly 'given' or 'revealed', and that in reality they have nothing conventional about them? Traditional symbols are in fact the technical terms of *the Philosophia perennis*, and constitute the vocabulary of a common 'universe of discourse', from which anyone who is no longer capable of using these 'figures of thought' or, like modern 'symbolists', refers only to analogies based on personal associations, is automatically excluded, as is anyone who lacks any real understanding of myths.

A note by A.K. Coomaraswamy entitled *Primordial Images* in *Pamphlets of the Modern Language Association* (June 1946) again insists that "the use of unusual symbols that express only associations of personal ideas, or of familiar symbols to which an unusual and often inappropriate meaning is attributed, runs counter to the primary function of the work of art, which must be communicative." The authentic symbol, which has a precise intellectual meaning, does not originate in the subconscious, but rather in the superconscious, and implies an understanding of the doctrine of analogy, according to which 'at every level of reference, realities that actually correspond to realities on other levels of reference, and we must know these correspondences if we want to participate in a universe of common discourse.'

In reviewing Henri Sérouya's article on *La Kabale* (see June 1947 issue, p. 118), we noted, among other things, the attribution to Lao-Tse of a book entitled *Il Dottrinale*; now, it has been brought to our attention that in 1944 a small volume with this title did indeed appear, which in reality is nothing more than an anonymous translation of *the Tao-te-King*, albeit cut in many parts. We must therefore acknowledge that H. Serouya is not responsible for this peculiarity; in essence, the only mistake was to accept, without examining things more closely, a title that is due solely to the somewhat excessive imagination of a translator.

1948

Atlantis, in its September 1947 issue, provides, under the title *Vingt années d'études atlantiques*, a sort of summary of what has been done since its foundation; as might be expected, the attacks on Eastern doctrines are emphasised with a certain satisfaction, as is the claim to continue the work of the Hiéron of Paray-le-Monial; This is followed by a reproduction of

a series of letters from readers, which resemble certain advertising 'testimonials' a little too closely... In the November issue, Paul Le Cour, who now signs himself 'Paul le C-R', talks about *Mystères chrétiens*, about which he had the rather curious idea of establishing a sort of parallel between himself and his 'patron', St Paul. The texts he cites to demonstrate the existence of esotericism or *arcane discipline* in the early days of Christianity are generally well known (but it is not true that Clement of Alexandria was canonised); much more debatable is his idea of this esotericism, which he insists on linking to 'Hellenism'; this way of seeing things, moreover, was already well known to us. Of course, he repeats some of his usual fantasies *about Chrism, Aor-Agni* and the Rosicrucians; we will mention only, as a 'novelty', a rather unexpected identification of the word '*arcane*' with the name *Aryane*, and a supposed etymology deriving the French '*Roi*' or '*Roy*' from the Sanskrit "*Rig*," so that the *Rig-Veda* would mean the "Royal *Veda*"! No.

He could not help but evoke once again the 'god with the donkey's head', whose rehabilitation, so to speak, seems to be very close to his heart; it is true that, according to him, it would be a head of an 'onager', a word in which he believes he can still find his inevitable *Aor-Agni*. Alongside all this, we must be grateful to him for protesting against false 'initiations' based on magic and psychic involvement (but the expression we use in these cases is actually 'pseudo-initiations', which seems to us much more suitable for avoiding any misunderstanding, since there is the same nuance as between 'false religions' and 'pseudo-religions') and also to be willing to recognise, unlike many others, that the burning of the Library of Alexandria really took place in 300 and not in the 7th century. Let us not forget to point out to him, however, that the Grand Lodge of England has absolutely nothing in common with 'Scottish' Freemasonry (the latter, moreover, does not have St John as its patron saint, as *Craft Masonry* does, but St Andrew) and also, at the risk of making him shudder with horror, that setting the beginning of the year to coincide with the autumn equinox is indeed 'traditional', as he says, but only... in Judaism!

The *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* (January-June 1946 issue) published an important study by Mircea Eliade on *Leproblème du chamanisme*; what is most interesting, from our point of view, is not so much the discussion on the definition of shamanism and the more or less broad scope that should be attributed to the term, but rather the very decisive affirmation of the existence, in shamanism properly said, of a

'universally valid symbolism' and the integration of the "experimental itself in a much broader theocosmological context than the various shamanic ideologies." We completely agree with the author when he criticises the theory that sees shamanism as merely the manifestation of a 'psychopathological' state that is specific to Arctic religions, and when he considers that 'possession' of the shaman, far from being an original fact, constitutes only a degeneration from a "contemplative" state; However, it could be said that shamanism is truly 'Arctic' for a reason completely different from what some have imagined, namely because it ultimately stems from the primordial Hyperborean tradition, as evidenced precisely by the ecumenical ~~symbol~~ mentioned by Eliade. He considers in particular the rites of 'ascension'; he points out their similarity to what is found in numerous other traditions and insists especially on the role played by the concept of the 'Centre' and the 'Axis of the World', which is indeed the essential point here, since it is only in the 'Centre' that the 'break in ~~the~~', the passage between the different 'cosmic ~~parts~~', i.e. between the different states of being, can be achieved. We cannot summarise everything, but we think it is interesting to quote at least a few excerpts: 'In all these cultures (of the Semitic East, India and China) we find, on the one hand, the concept of a central mountain connecting the different cosmic regions; on the other hand, the assimilation of a city, a temple or a palace to this 'cosmic mountain', or their transformation, through the magic of a ritual, into a 'centre'. Moreover, 'consecrating' a space ultimately means transforming it into a 'centre', conferring upon it the prestige of an *Axis Mundi*. ... The tree on which

The Siberian or Altaic shaman's salt is, in reality, the cosmic tree, just as the central pillar of the tent is assimilated to the cosmic pillar that supports the world. The central pillar is a characteristic element of the dwellings of the primitive Arctic and North American peoples... The same symbolism has also been preserved among the pastoralists of Central Asia, but as the shape of the dwelling has changed, the mythical-religious function of the pillar is now performed by the opening at the top through which the smoke escapes. Among the Ostyaks, this opening corresponds to the analogous orifice of the 'House of Heaven', and the Chukchi have assimilated it to the 'hole' formed by the North Star in the celestial vault... It should not be forgotten that, in Arctic and North Asian cultures, *every* dwelling has its sacred pillar or its opening for sacred smoke, i.e. representations of *the Axis Mundi*, the Cosmic Tree, etc. The ritual ascension of the shaman was made possible because the scenario was already implicit in cosmology and in the assimilation of the dwelling to the Cosmos. This process of assimilation of houses, temples, palaces, cities, to the "Centre of the World" is a spiritual phenomenon that transcends the Arctic and North Asian regions... 'Consecrating' a space, giving it the function of 'centre', is equivalent to saying that it is given a *reality*; ontologically, it *is* not, unless it is a 'centre', unless it coincides with one of the symbolic formulas of *the Axis Mundi*. This "centre" participates in the sacred, "paradoxical" space (all temples, all cities and even all houses, although separated in profane space, are nevertheless located in the same cosmic "Centre"), just as sacrifices take place at one and the same mythical moment (since they all take place "at that time", the dawn moment when sacrifice was established)>> . We believe that the interest of these quotations will excuse their length, and we feel that there is no need to emphasise their relationship with certain considerations that have been put forward by A.K. Coomaraswamy and ourselves. We will only add one observation, regarding the The shaman's extraterrestrial 'journeys': where M. Eliade sees the influence of a 'dual tradition', we see only, in reality,

the indication of two distinct and necessarily coexisting "paths", which are the exact equivalent of the *dèva-yana* and *pitri-yana* of the Hindu tradition.

- In the same issue of *the Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*

There is an article, or rather a series of notes, by Georges Dumézil, entitled *"Tripartita" fonctionnels chez divers peuples indo-européens*: we wonder why he does not simply say "tripartitions", since that is what it is really about. On the other hand, Dumézil seems to have some rather peculiar ideas from a linguistic point of view, which would be difficult to accept without reservation; nevertheless, the article contains some interesting considerations. We note, in particular, the use among many peoples, in connection with a division of social functions into three categories, of the same three symbolic colours: white, red, black (or dark blue), which are precisely, although the author does not indicate this, those corresponding to the three *gunas* in the Hindu tradition.

La *Presse médicale* (25 October 1947 issue) published a study by Louis Irissou on *Le Docteur Fabré-Palaprat, Grand Maitre de l'Ordre des Templiers* (1773-1838), written in a very conscientious manner from a purely historical point of view, but which unfortunately remains rather superficial. It shows that Fabré-Palaprat was in fact a distinguished physician, contrary to what has often been said, but also that there is a pathological aspect to his case that could explain quite well the kind of 'mythomania' from which he seems to have suffered. However, the author seems to admit, without attempting to explore the matter in depth, that Fabré-Palaprat was indeed affiliated, undoubtedly from his arrival in Paris, with a pre-existing 'Order of the Temple', of which he became Grand Master in 1804; in truth, this point is one of the most obscure in the whole story and deserves closer examination. On the other hand, one might believe, from the way things are presented, that Johannism was a creation of Fabré-Palaprat, whereas, even if the latter truly believed in it, he undoubtedly did not understand it.

not much, since his conception of Christianity was far removed from any authentic esoterism and rather bore witness to rationalist tendencies that are the exact opposite, and which, moreover, explain his temporary alliance with Abbé Chatel's 'French Catholic Church'. Finally, we must regret that L. Irissou did not think to mention at least some of the figures that Fabré-Palaprat had managed to gather around him; it is also strange that, except for his successor Sydney Smith, he did not find the opportunity to name even one of them.

The Breton magazine *Kad* (which now has a sister publication entitled *La Tradition Druidique*, written entirely in French) seems determined to adopt a much more traditional perspective than we had previously observed; it explicitly states this in a note prompted by our article *Spiritual influences and 'egregores'* (see April-May 1947 issue), which was in fact based on a sentence that appeared in this magazine. We are pleased to note that not only do they fully accept our clarification, but they also spontaneously approve of what we said about Robert Ambelain's book entitled *Aupieddes Menhirs* (see October-November 1947 issue), whereas at the beginning they had expressed a completely different opinion on this work. In the same issue, we note a long study entitled *Chromatisme planetaire et symbolisme celtique*, which contains many interesting points, although perhaps not all of them are indisputable, and whose intentions, in any case, do not raise any reservations. From this point of view, something has certainly changed, and we can only hope that they will continue in this direction; they assure us, moreover, that 'this effort will not be interrupted'. We must only say that, until further notice, we still have doubts that a regular transmission of the Druidic tradition is possible in our time; that *Kad*'s collaborators are at least very wary of any pseudo-initiatic fantasy!

1949

We have received the first three issues of a mimeographed newsletter entitled *Ogam*, which is the organ of the 'Friends of Celtic Tradition'; this publication is the result of a split among the editors of *Kad* following the events we recently reported on (see July-August 1948 issue); those who wanted to take a clearly traditional stance were not followed by the others, and it is they who founded the new newsletter; we hope they will soon find the means to improve its presentation, which is a little 'rudimentary'. We note, in particular, a study on the constitution of man based on data from Celtic tradition compared with Hindu tradition, as well as translations of some Irish texts and the beginning of studies on Celtic mythology that promise to be interesting; but perhaps, in the latter case, they rely a little too heavily on the work of G. Dumézil, which seems to us to contain some rather questionable points of view and does not entirely agree with the traditional perspective.

In 1948, the journal *Études Carmélitaines* published a special issue on *Satan*; it is a large volume, consisting of exactly 666 pages, a number that in this case seems to have been chosen deliberately. There are many things that derive from different points of view and are of rather varying interest; when it comes to purely theological considerations, of course, there is nothing to complain about, but in articles of a mainly historical or exegetical nature, the influence of certain modern ideas is too often clearly perceptible. There is one, however, in which we found some very apt reflections on the materialism that prevents so many of our contemporaries, even those who call themselves 'believers', from thinking seriously about the existence of the invisible, and on the 'impression of embarrassment and disapproval caused by the idea of the Devil's existence in the minds of ordinary people today', hence the increasingly pronounced tendency to 'minimise' the subject or even to ignore it altogether.

completely under wraps; the curious thing is that the author of the article is not a religious figure, but a professor at the Sorbonne. A study on *L'adversaire du Dieu bon chez les primitifs* contains very interesting data, although the classification of so-called 'primitive' civilisations adopted therein gives rise to some reservations. Be that as it may, we can only approve of the way in which the confusion arising from the use, or rather the abuse, of the word 'devil' is denounced. This word corresponds to a very precise notion and cannot be applied indiscriminately in all cases, even when truly evil entities are involved. Unfortunately, it is not certain that all the contributors to the magazine are themselves free from this confusion; the captions accompanying certain illustrations lead us to believe, in fact, that some of them share the gross error of ill-informed and unaware travellers who mistake the 'terrifying' deities of *Mahayana* for 'devils'! We would also like to mention another study, *Le Prince des Ténèbres en son royaume*, which contains translations of curious Manichaean texts. we think it would be interesting to examine them, especially from the point of view of their symbolism, something the author has not done; on the other hand, they are far from clear, and one gets the impression that these fragments have come down to us in an extremely flawed and rather disordered state; after all, will we ever know exactly what Manichaeism really was? We will omit anything relating to various 'devilry', witchcraft trials, cases of possession and pseudo-possession; we will only mention, as a matter of curiosity, the reproduction of some unpublished documents concerning Abbot Boullan, followed by a dual graphological and psychiatric analysis. Speaking of psychiatry, what can be said about the space given to psychoanalysis, to the point of talking (we want to believe that it is only in a figurative sense) about a 'psychoanalysis of the devil'? Here is yet another infiltration of the modern spirit that we find particularly disturbing; and when it is associated with the advent of this suspicious psychiatry, 'the development of the critical spirit', with visibly benevolent intentions, even this does not reassure us... As for the articles referring to art and literature,

Overall, they give a rather confused impression, and many of the considerations they contain are only vaguely related to the real issue of Satanism. We were surprised that, with regard to Satan's action in the modern world, nothing better could be found than to talk about Hitler and National Socialism; yet there would have been much to say about the influence of counter-initiation and its direct or indirect agents; but, in this regard, we find only a few lines in an editorial note incidentally dedicated to the sinister 'black magician' Aleister Crowley, whose death was announced towards the end of 1947; this is very little... What we would like to dwell on further is a long study (so long that it seems they wanted to make it the main part of this volume) entitled *Réflexions sur Satan en marge de la tradition judéo-chrétienne*, whose author, Albert Frank-Duquesne, is also a contributor to *Cahiers du Symbolisme Chrétien*, which we recently discussed (September 1948 issue), and precisely the one who gratuitously attributed to us an attitude "antithetical to the Christian spirit". Here too, while offering us slightly ambiguous and, if one may say so, 'double-edged' praise, he felt the need to take issue with us over what we had said about the 'ambivalent' symbolism of the serpent, whose beneficial aspect he strives excessively to deny; it would seem that he has never heard of the serpent as a symbol of Christ, nor of the amphibious creature which, in ancient Christian symbolism, brings together the two opposing aspects; it is a pity that the unfortunate incident that occurred with the publication of L. Charbonneau-Lassay's *Bestiaire* prevents us (hopefully only temporarily) from sending it back to him! His work, moreover, is generally very erudite (indeed, he has included too many things, among which we readily acknowledge that there are some excellent ones, for example the clarification of the question of 'pure spirits'), but his erudition is not always perfectly reliable, which, in truth, cannot be too severely criticised in someone who declares himself to be 'almost completely self-taught'... But he must have read several works on occultism, and

He probably also frequented certain circles of the same category, and he is wrong to accept on trust all the more or less bizarre information he has been able to gather. Thus, he attributes to the Rosicrucians theories that are simply the fruit of some modern pseudo-Rosicrucians such as Steiner or Max Heindel, which is certainly not the same thing; similarly, he does not hesitate to repeatedly define as 'initiatory traditions' occultist and theosophical fantasies that have absolutely nothing traditional or initiatory about them; In particular, he seems to be fascinated by Madame Blavatsky's 'Lords of the Flame' and, to make matters worse, the author goes so far as to refer to the ~~BS~~ and their phantasmagorical *Asia Mysteriosa!* We must stop here, but we cannot avoid mentioning another absolutely typical example in the same vein: he assures us, on the word of someone whose name we think it best not to mention, even though he spells it out in full, that he knew 'two victims of Agartha, struck down from a distance after receiving warnings'; what idea do these people have of Agartha? Are they not perhaps confusing it with those highly suspicious 'parodies' that we sometimes see, in which charlatanism often turns into something much worse and far more dangerous? Reading stories of this kind, which play too well into the hands of ~~BS~~ of all kinds, since they could not ask for anything better than to see their baseless claims admitted, it would seem that we have returned to the good old days of the defunct *R.I.S.S.!* One may wonder, however, whether there really is as much naivety as it seems at first glance, or whether all this is not an integral part of the new confusion that is being spread about esotericism and which we have denounced in recent times (and now our readers will be able to understand even better the reasons that prompted us to do so). Even more unusual than everything else, and even more significantly, is the way in which the author attacks *Metatron*, claiming that he has been 'replaced' by *Memra* and wanting to oppose him, declaring that 'it is necessary to choose' between the two, as if they were not two completely different principles, which do not col-

locate at the same level; there is a whole paragraph that we should analyse almost word for word, if we had the time, because it is the one that most comprehensively 'clarifies' the intentions behind all this. The translation of *Sar ha-olam* as

'Prince of *this world*' is truly outrageous, against which

We took care to warn him, and Frank-Duquesne clearly cannot ignore this, since a little further on he quotes the *King of the World*; but this reference is accompanied by a motley list of ' 'secret societies', ending with a reference to 'affiliates of Agartha' (clearly an obsession), and we would like to know who or what this might refer to... We cannot accept these highly tendentious comparisons and insinuations in any way, nor can we let them pass without protesting vigorously; it is not between *Memra* and *Metatron*, but between esotericism and its more or less crude counterfeits that

"A choice must be made"; we know full well that Frank-Duquesne and his colleagues will always avoid giving any clear explanation, saying that "mentioning and quoting is not synonymous with approving and endorsing", which exempts them (or so they believe) from revealing the meaning of their thoughts; but all people of good faith who are familiar with our work will certainly not need further clarification to know what to think of such a way of proceeding!

We previously reviewed (January-February 1946 issue) the first two issues of *Zalmoxis* magazine: a third issue appeared, dated 1940-1942, but we were not aware of it at the time. This issue is largely devoted to the study of certain Romanian customs, but what is most interesting from our point of view is an article by Mircea Eliade entitled '*La mandragore et les mythes de la naissance miraculeuse*' (*The Mandrake and the Myths of 'Miraculous Birth'*). In truth, it is not only about mandrake, but also about various other plants to which similar properties have been attributed, including some that are very difficult to identify with certainty. As for the myths in question, they are those in which a human being is presented as being born from this or that plant; they seem to be very widespread.

Yes, as well as those that are in a certain sense related and opposite, in which the body of a mythical or legendary hero is transformed into a plant after his death. While noting the interest of the remarkable documentation gathered in this study, we will insist above all on the conclusion that is drawn from it and which, although certainly correct, seems to us in some respects a little incomplete and insufficient. The essential point, in short, is this: Mircea Eliade believes that when a specific plant known to exist 'in reality' is designated in such cases, it should be seen as a 'degradation' of what originally referred in reality to cosmic principles represented by means of plant symbolism. We completely agree with him on this point, and we would add that this 'degradation' is in a certain way parallel to that which, as we have pointed out on various occasions, tends to replace the primitive symbolic meaning more or less completely with a 'magical' use. On the other hand, there is no doubt that this meaning has ended up being generally misunderstood in more or less recent times, especially in cases where traditional data has been reduced to a 'folkloric' state, not only with regard to plant symbolism, but also to animal and mineral symbolism: there are numerous examples of this, and we have mentioned them in one of our works (*The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, chapter XIX). However, one fundamental question remains unanswered: why was this particular 'concrete' plant chosen instead of any other as a 'substitute' for the original 'mythical' plant? The truth is that there is still an application of the 'correspondences' on which all traditional symbolism is essentially based: just as the 'mythical' plant is the symbolic expression of a principle, the 'substitute' plant is truly a symbol of that 'mythical' plant, and this is because it participates, in a certain way, in the nature of the same principle, so much so that it can be said to be a representation of it in the physical world, acting as a vehicle for its influence and truly bearing its 'signature': it is on this that is based, ultimately, not only the proper ritual use of certain plants, but also their use

go in traditional medicine. There is one more thing to say on this subject: after all, all 'substitutions' of the type in question always refer to traditional 'readjustments' made in accordance with the conditions of a particular era, as can easily be understood by referring to what we said about *soma* in one of our recent studies (*Parole perdues et mots substitués*, in the July-August 1948 issue). There is therefore degeneration only when symbolic correspondences are no longer understood, and if we can already speak of 'degeneration' with regard to 'substitutions' themselves, it is only in the sense that particular traditional forms also constitute, to a certain degree, by virtue of the very movement of cyclical 'descent', 'degradations' with respect to the primordial tradition.

The *Cahiers du Symbolisme Chrétien* continue to give us a rather "hybrid" impression, since the reservations that should be raised are more or less the same as those already formulated previously (see the September 1948 issue); this time we will highlight above all the articles that seem to us most worthy of interest and most in line with the true traditional point of view. In the August-September 1948 issue, Marcel Lallemand sets out some considerations "in order to give the reader a first idea of symbolism, to make him aware of its primordial importance", which is anything but useless, given the total ignorance of most of our contemporaries regarding everything related to questions of this order: He does so, moreover, in a very clear and generally very accurate manner; but why did he title the article, in a regrettable linguistic abuse, *Initiation au symbolisme*? By the same author, a study concerning *Traditions universelles sur la Vierge-Mère* contains numerous interesting comparisons of data found in this regard in various traditional forms, both Eastern and Western; we can only approve when he denounces as an error the modern opinion that 'the universal cult of the Virgin Mother is of naturalistic origin'. - In the issue of eight...

In November 1948, we will mention in particular Paul Vulliaud's *Aperçus séphirotiques* and a note by Marcel Lallemand on *Le symbolisme du point*. This same issue concludes a study by Dr J. De Wandel begun in the previous issue, entitled *Vers une nouvelle synthèse dans les sciences*, in which, alongside excellent and distinctly traditional considerations, there are clearly more debatable points of view, above all because of the excessive importance given to a certain 'scientific mythology'; whatever one may think of the most recent trends in physics, since it is still a profane science, one should not harbour too many illusions about the real value of its theories; the deepest division lies not between a materialist conception and one that is no longer materialist, but between the very point of view of secular science and that of traditional science, and it is completely unjustified 'optimism' to believe that 'today's modern world' is rediscovering 'the ancient knowledge of symbols'. - In the January-February 1949 issue, *Le symbolisme des nombres chez Pythagore*, by André D. Toledano,

it sticks to considerations that are perhaps a little too basic and insufficient precision; *Analogy and Symbolism*, by Marcel Lallemand, is an excellent exposition of the various types of analogy distinguished by scholastic philosophy, but should we not go beyond the latter's point of view in order to truly get to the heart of the matter? - Alongside all this, unfortunately, there are other things of a more dubious or much less serious nature, which we prefer not to dwell on; but we must at least note a phenomenon that seems extremely curious to us: the considerable space occupied, in the concerns of some, by the 153 fish in the Gospel; Of course, we do not mean to say that this is unimportant, since if this number is explicitly mentioned in the sacred text, there must certainly be a reason for it; but why does this subject, which is, all things considered, very unusual, take on the characteristics of a real obsession?

Following our review, in the January-February 1949 issue, of the volume dedicated to Satan by *Études Carmelitaines*,

For example, we received an eight-page letter from Frank-Duquesne, typed on large paper, which from beginning to end is nothing more than a string of insults of inconceivable vulgarity. It is an unusual and most edifying 'psychological' document; we therefore regret that we cannot reproduce it in its entirety, firstly because of its excessive length, secondly because certain passages refer to third parties who are completely unconnected with this matter, and finally because others contain terms that are too crude to be published in a respectable publication. Nevertheless, we will provide some excerpts, which will suffice for readers to form a correct idea of this character's strange mentality, commenting on them as they deserve; they will certainly be amazed, as we are, that a major Catholic magazine could have called upon the services of such a contributor! First of all, here is the beginning of this libel, whose style and punctuation we scrupulously respect: 'Traditional courtesy obliges me to thank you for introducing me to the idiosyncrasy and intellectual dimensions of René Guénon. In the absence of a platform — I do not discuss my personal affairs in the magazines to which I contribute: to each his own — I take the liberty of responding to your article by means of this letter, certain, moreover, that you will not mind if I send a copy to about fifty friends.' Thus, for this gentleman, questions of a doctrinal nature, since that is what it was for us, are 'our personal affairs'; everyone is naturally inclined to attribute their own 'dimensions' to others, to use his words. As for the publicity he wishes to give to his musings, not only do we see no harm in it, but we consider it absolutely insufficient to be judged as he deserves in the circles he has managed to sneak into, and, as you can see, we too are keen to contribute, as far as possible. First of all, he mocks our 'clairvoyance' (which we make no claim to, as we generally consider it a sign of mental imbalance), because, he assures us, the number of 666 pages was not 'deliberately chosen', at least not by the management and the re-

editors of the magazine, who were 'astonished' by it; if this is the case, we would have been disturbed by such a statement, and, as it seems to emerge from the explanations that follow that this positive result was mainly due to the successive, and in a certain sense involuntary, extensions of the article by F.-D. himself, we would have wondered what singular influences it could unconsciously convey... After treating us as 'profane', which is really the last straw, he adds this sentence: 'When you give yourself airs and graces, my dear sir, you must avoid giving the impression of clowning around'. We bear absolutely no resemblance to Cagliostro in any way, shape or form, and he couldn't be more wrong: as for 'acting like a clown', we can only refer this compliment back to our exquisite opponent, as it suits him down to the ground! He claims that we complained about the fact that 'so little space has been given to the "phenomena" of contemporary Satanism', whereas on the contrary we simply said: 'We will leave aside anything relating to various "devilry" ... because all this is of no interest from our point of view, and what we actually complained about was that he said nothing about the actual action of counter-initiation, which has nothing in common with any kind of phantasmagoria: this is how certain people read! He then reproaches us for 'handling the royal plural with our usual arrogance', finding himself in good company with Paul Le Cour; he is undoubtedly unaware that the use of 'we' is, for anyone who writes, a simple rule of courtesy; it is true that it is no longer in fashion in the West today, and as far as F.-D. is concerned, it is all too obvious that the most basic manners are completely foreign to him... But let us continue with the quotations: 'If you were not bound by the infamous secret - similar to Vaseline, which the sides of English buses proclaim to be "good for all uses" - you would say certain things, but certain things...'. When you know what we have written on several occasions about certain so-called 'secrets' and the abuse of them by occultists of all kinds, the whole thing becomes decidedly more and more comical! Let's move on to something that might seem a little more serious, since...

that this is an attempt to justify having accused us of an attitude "contrary to the Christian spirit"; the motivation provided is truly admirable: 'After the just and salutary expulsion of the Gnostics, after having cast the Paulicians, Bogomils, Cathars and Patarines into outer darkness, the Christian orbis terrarum has clearly made it known that it abhors the esotericism and determinism of their deifying recipes. Now, you undoubtedly place yourselves, as far as I know, in the wake or filiation of Gnosticism.' It is a real pity for F.'s "knowledge"

D. that Gnosticism, in its many forms (which, moreover, was never pure esotericism, but rather the product of a certain confusion between esotericism and exotericism, hence its 'heretical' nature), does not interest us in the slightest and that, 'undoubtedly', everything we know has come to us from sources that have no connection whatsoever with the latter. In the same paragraph, we find a sentence, thrown in incidentally, that leaves us perplexed: 'I have been "following" you since you were one of the Orionids in Rue de Rome (at least occasionally)'; We must confess that we cannot understand what he is talking about, but whatever it means, since it is impossible that we have been this or that without our knowledge, we do not hesitate to issue the most formal denial. What makes even less sense, in terms of truth, is that this gentleman attributes to us <>angry outbursts>>; we challenge him to point out a single one in all our books and articles, without exception; but it is he, in reality, who is seething with rage so much that he is suffocating! But let us continue, since it will be extremely instructive: 'If you represent, in contrast to "pseudo-initiation" and "counter-initiation", true "initiation", this, in turn, in my eyes as a believer, represents the most subtle, most deiform (as the monkey is anthropomorphic), most dangerous form of counter-religion.' Thus, and this is the most important thing for us, F.-D. openly places himself among the worst enemies of any esotericism and any initiation; so now the situation in this regard is perfectly clear, at least as far as he is concerned, and it is understandable that, even if we had managed to obtain only these

clarifications, we could only be happy with this result. Here is an unexpected consequence of this attitude:

«As a Catholic, having no reason to adopt your classification of esoteric groups rather than another, and having only the aim of briefly revealing to an audience completely ignorant of these matters what the countless circles claiming initiation have been able to claim, it was entirely natural to "put everything on the same level". This is equivalent to saying that a Catholic, according to F.-D.'s conception, has the right and indeed the duty, if he considers it interesting, to knowingly confuse, without the slightest concern for the truth, authentic esotericism and initiation with their many counterfeits; as for good faith, one could certainly not find better! Let us now turn to a story which, after the allusion to the enigmatic "Orionids", will finish demonstrating the value of the gossip gathered here and there by F.-D.: 'Where you really surpass yourself is when you write: "To make matters worse (remember this word, 'worse', Guénon: it will come back to haunt you in a moment), the author (i.e. me) goes so far as to refer (sic!) to the 'Polaris' and their phantasmagorical *Asia Mysteriosa!* " But who wrote the preface to *Asia Mysteriosa*? A certain René Guénon. Who 'launched' the Polarians?" (Here we must omit numerous proper names to avoid possible corrections). "... and René Guénon, who did not disdain to operate the little 'astral light' mechanism. Yes, you, Great Epopto, you took an interest in this 'psychic' toy, which I would never have bothered with! It was much later, in February 1931, that you quarrelled with *your* Polarians'. The end of the paragraph is too offensive, in the strictest sense of the term, for us to transcribe it; but what precedes it requires clarification, which certainly does not cause us the slightest embarrassment. *Asia Mysteriosa* was published with three prefaces, none of which were written by us. It is true that we also wrote one, which, moreover, contained some general themes that were as uncompromising as possible, but we did so only to allow us to wait, without rushing anything, for the result of a certain verification.

that we cared about, without having to operate any "mechanism" (no more than "disturbing us", since they had come to us to solicit us, and for this reason honesty obliged us to seriously check the matter before pronouncing ourselves one way or the other); since the result was negative, we simply withdrew the preface, with the explicit prohibition that it appear in the book, where anyone can verify that it does not in fact appear. All this took place, not in February 1931, but in the summer of 1929 (moreover, it was at the end of 1929 that *Asia Mysteriosa* appeared); and since 1927 we had been so unwilling to 'launch' the Polarians that we formally refused to participate in their 'work', having never had the slightest interest in the trappings of 'ceremonial magic', which then suddenly appeared to be the main part of the business. Since it seems impossible that anyone could be so reckless as to assert, in our presence, facts concerning us that they know to be false, we must conclude that we had every reason to reproach F.-D. for blindly accepting everything he was told, at least when it served his thesis; and we can still throw back at him one of those amiable phrases he has the audacity to address to us: 'As for "falling for it" ... undoubtedly, yes, you "fall for it", and often'. We will not dwell on his protests against the

The "secret motives" we would attribute to him, whether he is aware of them or has been led to them without his knowledge like so many others, change nothing and are of no interest to us whatsoever. He then launches into a dissertation on *Memra* and *Metatron*, with which he thinks he can crush us under the weight of his rabbinical erudition: we can assure him that all his "authorities" do not impress us at all, any more than his grammatical subtleties, and they do not prevent us from insisting that *Sar ha-olam* means precisely "Prince of the World" in the absolute sense, that is, of the whole of universal manifestation, just as the expression '*Melek ha-olam*', which occurs so often in Israelite prayers and is addressed to God, can obviously mean nothing other than 'King of the World', understood in the same sense; but, since he declares that

When it comes to worlds, "we only know this one, which is ours," and we can only pity him for being "immersed in ignorance like a lunar calf"! We have not yet seen the worst, and we are obliged to make further quotations for the edification of our readers, while apologising for having to inflict such a nuisance on them: "I cannot, without lying to myself, without betraying what is most dear to me, not consider you the most perfidious, the most dangerous enemy of Jesus Christ 'scattered and communicated' in his Church. Irreconcilable, like the asymptote with the hyperbole. I believe that your *Symbolism of the Cross*, for all that it passes over in silence, except for a furtive and contemptuous allusion in the introduction, is a revolting book and bears a certain *mark*." And what "mark" does F.-D.'s "revolting" prose bear? Then comes a sentence referring to a 'neo-scholastic' philosopher, whose hostility towards us is well known, but to whom he attributes, on one particular point, an intention that, after checking the full text, does not seem at all so obvious to us. 'I would be seriously guilty if I remained silent. I do not see who would give you the right to escape criticism - if only for your priceless 'tone' of anthological 'pomposity' (after the 'If I were king' operation, we would need the 'If I were Pope' operation), the 'tone' that your disciples pitifully echo in your wake, and which gives them all the same impersonal, slavish, pedantic style, without vigour or anything that 'enchants', so much so that I was able to write pieces '*à la Guénon*', which experts mistook for authentic passages of 'metaphysics'! You are a heretic like those whom the Church has known - and fought - by the thousands over the centuries. We must therefore explain one thing to this gentleman, which seemed more than obvious to us: no one can be a 'heretic' in a traditional form other than the one to which they belong; this is a factual situation, which he and his peers must resign themselves to accepting. Furthermore, we are obliged to repeat once again, perhaps for the hundredth time, that we have no disciples, that we never have had and never will have; as for style, it is undoubtedly a matter of taste, but if F.-D. finds his own 'enchanting', it is probably

the only one who thinks so; but let's look a little further: 'I accuse you of kicking down an open door and striking at nothing (but why? After all, you are not that stupid!) when you attribute to me and my mythical 'collaborators' a false 'ingenuity', the propagation of new 'confusion', 'hidden intentions' that you pretend to 'clarify' (like the naive person who, by dint of coaxing, pretends to discover the hump of the hunchback). You speak of 'assimilations' and 'more than tendentious insinuations': when you have specified which ones, I will respond with all the brutality you desire. Until now, I have always called things by their name, and Guénon an enemy of Christ and the Church. And again: "Clear explanations" are a nice formula from someone whose method consists in economising the truth, since initiation involves secrecy! He really insists, as if we had never clearly explained what the true initiatory secret consists of, the only one that matters to us... 'I would not let anyone see the meaning of my thoughts', according to you; anyone who has read or heard me must wonder what game you are playing. 'Systems of this kind', as you say, are a confession of anger: it's annoying to be unmasked, isn't it?» Yes, it is very 'annoying' indeed, not for us, who have never worn any "mask" (and we know only too well how much it has cost us throughout our lives), but for the sad figure we are dealing with, because ultimately, if our observations had not struck a nerve, why get so angry as to lose all sense of dignity and even simple decency? Finally, when you urge me to 'choose between esotericism and its counterfeits', I jump out of this circle of Popilius with a laugh of contempt: to others, my friend! Hypnotise the chickens with your stubby pencil: not me! Counterfeit or gross 'exotericism'... it would be like asking me to choose between true Protestantism, that of the Reformation, and that of the 'liberals'. Neither one nor the other! Both of them into the furnace!».- We would have liked to dwell on this 'enchanting' manifestation of "Christian charity," but, alas, there is still an inestimable post-

scriptum, from which we must quote a few 'significant excerpts': 'Visibly, you are not exactly boiled, but stiff, starched! Your meticulous, pedantic, stilted, pedantic tone will one day end up attracting the lashes of someone more 'well-versed' than you. Admit that certain parts of your article are pretentious! Since you never mince your words when talking about others, I have decided that in future I will not mince my words either, exposing you when the occasion warrants such a gesture on my part. Guénon's pontificate is becoming a grim joke. Your statements may be successful with an audience that does not look too closely at them. With me, you're out of luck! I am not asking you to reproduce, even in part, my reply in *Études Traditionnelles*. First of all... >> (here is a gratuitous insult to our Director). "Secondly, because you could never make up your mind, even if you had the space required (except to reproduce this or that sentence of mine, cut off or taken out of context and meaning) >> . On this point, you will see that you are completely mistaken, and that we are neither frightened nor embarrassed by your insults; it is true that you can still claim that we have 'cut' certain phrases of yours, because the need to abbreviate as much as possible (*E. T.* could never afford to have 666 pages!) sometimes led us to delete an incidental remark that added nothing important to the meaning, or a reference that had the sole purpose of showing off erudition: but let us continue: 'Finally, since I am not interested in filling the columns of your magazine with voluntary contributions. I don't care if your readers see the real Guénon.' We believe, on our part, that they will see the real F.-D.! "The only thing that matters to me is that *you judge yourself* (if you are capable of doing so, if you are not fossilised in your certainty of being infallible). Between you and me, between the two of us, eye to eye, I say to you: Guénon, my boy, you are a humbug. And to this individual, who is certainly much younger than us, and who needs more than one language to express all his anger, we say bluntly: boor! "If you are really

ro a Jivanmukta... ». Here we are forced once again to stop: when did we ever make such a claim, and where did we ever make the slightest allusion to what we may or may not be, something that concerns only us? "If you were truly a Jivanmukta, you would not lie, you would not embellish your writings, you would not make assumptions worthy of Abbot Barbier or the good Delassus, you would avoid like the plague attributing intentions to your opponents when *nothing* justifies them. Above all, you would free yourself from that tone of a child prodigy and top of the class. It must be admitted that the last sentence fits perfectly with someone who is over sixty... I am not talking about the exaggerated spiritual beauty that can be glimpsed in some of your remarks against humility, charity, the way of theological love, mystical "passivity". You are a very cultured man, a powerful, subtle spirit, but your character is not worthy of esteem. You are not 'sterling'. You don't ring true. And your epigones do not measure up to your socks. What importance does our character have, whether worthy of esteem or not (and he cannot know anything about that), when in any case it has nothing to do with what we write and could not in the least increase or diminish its intrinsic value? "Today there are so few thinking heads that it pains me to have to write these things. But, truly, your article in *E. T.*, which could be mistaken for a 'in the manner of', a caricature of Guénon, was such as to provoke laughter or a slap in the face. The latter more charitable than the former." – But enough this time; it will be understood that we will not stoop to responding to accusations that really do not affect us, and of which all those who know us (which is certainly not the case with our uncivilised , whatever he may claim) know only too well what to think; by writing all these fine things (and we would point out that we have not been able to reproduce the most obscene passages of his diatribe), this character has, in truth, judged ~~bad~~, as he says. Apart from the crudeness of language that is characteristic of him, the expressions of this self-styled apostle of 'Christian charity', of which he boasts at every moment, are reminiscent of the shouting disputes of the synagogue.

(not for nothing is he the son of a rabbi) and the poisonous quarrels of the preachers of 'universal brotherhood' who meet in neo-spiritualist circles; and he is truly qualified to speak of 'spiritual beauty'! For some forty years we have been exposed to attacks of all kinds, but until now we had only once witnessed such an explosion of truly 'satanic' hatred (it really must be said), and that from a sinister individual who, by a strange coincidence, liked to include the number 666 in his signature! We regret having kept our readers occupied for too long with such a despicable matter, but it was necessary so that they would know how to judge the worth of certain people, whom we absolutely cannot agree to treat as 'adversaries', as they would like, because that would be giving them too much credit. We will conclude by expressing to this singular gentleman our profound disgust at such an outpouring of ignominy, which can obviously only sully its author.

We have received the first issue (January-March 1949) of *Cahiers d'Études Cathares* published by the Institut d'Études Occitanes in Toulouse and edited by Déodat Roché. Roché is the author of the main articles, one on *Contes et légendes du Catharisme*, which includes Gascon tales whose connection with Catharism is perhaps not as clear as he believes, and the other on *Les documents cathares, l'origine manichéenne et les principales écoles du Catharisme*, in which we find certain ideas that he had already expressed in his book, which we reviewed recently.

(see April-May 1949 issue). The most extraordinary thing is the influence exerted on him by the ideas of Rudolf Steiner, whom he describes as 'the founder of a modern spiritual science' and who, in his opinion, 'described the spiritual evolution of humanity in a profound way'; Another sign of this influence is the reproduction of an article on Bardesane that appeared in the *Goetheanum* magazine in Dornach. René Nelli, in an article on *Les Troubadours et le Catharisme*, acknowledges that 'precise references to the Albigensians and their customs are very rare in the poetry of the

troubadours"; he was able to find very few traces of Cathar influence, and those were very vague. He therefore believes that 'they lived on the margins of Catharism, practising another, milder form of "heresy" that was better suited to the society for which they sang'; as for us, we would rather say that they belonged to another 'movement' that was not heretical at all, but properly esoteric, and that was none other than that of the 'Fedeli d'Amore' (Faithful of Love).

A study on *Les origines et le développement de la Kabba-le juive d'après quelques travaux récents*, by G. Vajda, does not take us beyond 'historicism': it seems that the fundamental question here is above all to determine at what point in time a particular term or formula first appears in a written document, which certainly does not have the significance that some claim it has; of course, if one wishes to see in Kabbalah only the product of a process developed by a series of individual authors, since, in all secular works of this kind, the question of the existence of a 'non-human' element is never even raised, which is tantamount to saying that its implicit denial is, in fact, one of their fundamental postulates. We will not insist further, but we cannot avoid pointing out that here we again find a constant confusion between esotericism and mysticism; it seems, therefore, that the latter is increasingly tending to become one of those things that we have agreed to accept commonly, without examining it and as if it went without saying, so great is the ignorance of our contemporaries regarding the most elementary traditional notions!

The magazine *Ogam* (issue 4 and following) continued to publish a number of interesting studies, among which we will mention in particular a series of articles on polar symbolism in Irish tradition, notes on the *Tribann*, or symbol of the Three Kings, articles on the symbolic colours of the three classes (white for the Druids, blue for the Bards, green for the Ovates), on the Divine Mother, on the symbolism of the "Three Kings", articles on the symbolic colours of the three classes (white for the Druids, blue for the Bards, green for the Ovates), on the 'Divine Mother', on the symbolism of the winter solstice, on the bardic tradition, on music in the Celtic tradition, an essay interpreting the

Welsh tale of "Owen and Luned or the Lady of the Fountain", in relation to the symbolism of the tree and the forest, and also the continuation of the translations of Irish texts that we have already mentioned.

Mr Frank-Duquesne, clearly indignant that we dared to respond to his vile libel, sent us another letter brimming with rage. Our first instinct was to simply throw it in the bin, but on reflection, we decided that would be a real shame, given its value as documentation and for the edification of our readers. He begins by informing us that a 'Parisian friend' sent him the issue of *E. T.* containing our response, which we certainly did not write for him to remain unaware of; and, after transcribing the 'commentary' that accompanied the letter, he adds: 'If I revealed the name of the signatory, you would be astonished... He is mistaken in this, because, without him 'revealing' it to us, we guessed it immediately; it was not that difficult and there was no need to resort to the slightest 'clairvoyance'. As for the opinion of this 'Parisian friend' (who may be from Lyon, but that doesn't matter), it doesn't surprise us in the least, because we have been keeping an eye on him for a long time; someone who has called certain works of ours 'novels' may also have felt that in our response we 'evaded any justification' (on the other hand, we are not obliged to 'justify' ourselves to anyone, our independence being absolute in all respects); one can be extremely erudite and lack judgement, indeed we believe that this case is not so rare. However, we wish to satisfy our "Parisian friend" on the point he specifically mentions, since this can be done easily in a few words: our attitude cannot but be favourable to any authentically traditional organisation, whatever it may be, of an exoteric or esoteric nature, for the sole reason that it is traditional; since it is indisputable that the Church possesses this characteristic, it immediately follows that we are

Far from being an 'enemy'; all this is so obvious that we would never have thought it could be of any serious use—I see it clearly! But let us now turn to what F.-D. writes: 'Go, Guénon, and sin no more! And tell yourself that you do not inspire awe in everyone. The lesson was certainly worth a letter... Finally, if you are capable of it, ask yourself *who started it*... I never attack, I always react.' Such audacity, or such recklessness, is really a bit too much: the question of knowing '*who started it*' should not even arise, since we were completely unaware of this individual's existence before reading the articles in which he felt the need to attack us; evidently, he is convinced, in his inconceivable vanity, that he has the right to say whatever he likes about us, but that we do not have the right to respond to him... As for wanting to '*inspire awe*' in anyone, nothing has ever been further from our intentions: it would be completely pointless, since, throughout our work, we have always carefully refrained from introducing the slightest '*personal*' idea, and we have also always formally refused to have '*disciples*'. Let us continue, since the following is even more

'Instructive', if only in regard to the mental state of the strange character we are dealing with: 'When you claim that 'I like to include the number 666 in my signature', you are lying knowingly, and you are lying deliberately. The reading public does not know this. But I know it, and you know it. And it is enough for me that *you* know it.' What *we* know perfectly well is that *we never lie*; but what we did not know until now, and we must confess (we do so all the more willingly as we have no pretensions to '*psychology*'), is that fury can turn someone's head and cloud their mind to the point of prompting them to assert with such impudence, addressed to us, that we have written something that in reality we have never written or even thought! Anyone in full possession of their faculties need only reread the passage in which the words quoted are actually found to realise immediately that they do not refer to F.-D. at all, but to another '*sinister individual*'; for

To convince him that he is mistaken, we would like to point out that he is a self-styled Cambodian prince who in the past published a grossly exaggerated and hostile article against us in *the Bulletin des Polaires* (what a small world!), and who sometimes included the symbol 666 in his signature to compete with the late Aleister Crowley. The comparison we made referred only to the 'tone' of the attack, which was fortunately exceptional, and as for the 'coincidence' we mentioned, it consisted in the fact that F.-D.'s verbal incontinence ultimately resulted in *Satan* having 666 pages; it is true that this is also a 'signature'... There are still a few words that deserve to be quoted: 'And to think that I made you publish an anti-Semitic sentence in *E. T.* How you fell for it!'. We do not understand very well what intentions might lie behind all this: the sentence in question can only be the one in which we spoke of the 'loud disputes in the synagogue'; this is a simple statement of fact that is obvious to everyone, and which we could have expressed, if we had had the opportunity, even without the intervention of any F.-D.; on the other hand, there is nothing specifically 'anti-Semitic' here (we are not interested in politics in any way or to any degree), but even if there were, we do not see how this could be particularly embarrassing for *E. T.*, who has no Jewish support. Finally, the character, who seems to be afflicted with 'glossolalia' (and we know that only saints exhibit this curious phenomenon), ends his letter with the words '*cave canem*'; for once, he has judged himself and applied a definition that fits him perfectly; only, as luck would have it, it takes much more than a dog's bark to scare us! To use his own words, the 'pretentious donkey' that we are in his eyes will continue, as long as he lives, and without asking his permission, to 'rebuke' whoever he sees fit and to 'whip' (or beat) any 'dog' that intends to bite him, as well as any ill-intentioned, stupid or ignorant person who meddles in things that do not concern him. We intend to be the sole judge of what we should say or do in all circumstances, and we are not obliged to ren-

We are not accountable to anyone; having nothing in common with modern Westerners, we certainly do not have to be 'sporting', as he says in his grotesque language; the reasons why we act in this or that way concern us alone; moreover, they are not of the kind that can be understood by the 'public', and they have absolutely no connection with the conventions current in the secular world in general, and in the world of 'literati' in particular. We hope that our 'Parisian friend' will still be kind enough to forward these reflections 'to whom it may concern'! We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the many readers who have expressed their sympathy and indignation regarding this ignoble affair. Moreover, we can assure them that we have not been affected in the slightest and that, just like them, we have only felt a deep sense of disappointment; such a character is too small and too lowly to be able to reach us, and his filth cannot even touch us!

The *Cahiers d'Études Cathares* (April-June 1949 issue) provides the text and translation of *the Versa* by Raimon de Cornet, a 14th-century Occitan poet. It is a very lively satire on the society of his time, but it is doubtful that it has any connection with Catharism. The most curious thing is that, in all his works, and most often at the end, this poet uses the 'Rose' as a sort of distinctive symbol, attributing different meanings to it depending on the context; it is probably a 'sign of recognition' with esoteric value, but not necessarily 'heretical', any more than in Dante or in the authors of *the Roman de la Rose*. Dédodat Roché publishes a historical-philosophical study on *Saint Augustine and the Manicheans of his time*; he endeavours to demonstrate that Saint Augustine misunderstood Manichaeism, of which he knew only an exoteric aspect, but the texts on which he bases his argument are often very obscure, and his interpretation does not seem to be free from preconceptions; in truth, the enigma of Manichaeism is far from being solved.

1950

The July-September 1949 issue of *Cahiers d'Études Cathares* is almost entirely devoted to articles on the Grail. the first is rather inappropriately entitled *Les trois degrés d'initiation au Graalpaïen*; why use this unpleasant word, 'pagan', to refer to traditions that predate Christianity? The author, Mme Wiersma-Ver-schaffelt, who seems to be very familiar with the debatable theories of Miss Jessie Weston, has in mind more what ethnologists abusively call initiation than authentic initiation, and ultimately it seems that the latter is only involved in a so-called 'third degree of initiation', although the whole thing is rather unclear. This confusion is all the more unfortunate given that the idea of referring to three different degrees in the epilogue of the 'quest' of the three main heroes of the Grail, Gauvain, Perceval and Galahad, could have yielded some interesting results if it had been better applied. – The second article, by Romain Goldron, is entitled *La quête du Graal et son rapport avec l'ésotérisme chrétien moderne* (*The Quest for the Grail and its relationship with modern Christian esotericism*); one may wonder how there could be such a thing as 'modern esotericism', since the combination of these two terms seems to be a real contradiction; but, in fact, it simply refers to the ideas of Rudolf Steiner. It seems that Steiner was particularly 'qualified to address the problem of the Grail', and for a truly curious reason: because 'Goethe was in contact with the Rosicrucian tradition during his *youth* and 'fate placed Rudolf Steiner in the orbit of Goethe's thinking', since, at a certain point in his life, he was 'tasked with editing Goethe's scientific writings and completing them with the unpublished works deposited in the Weimar archives'. This is what, in some people's eyes, constitutes a 'connection' to an initiatory tradition!

Subsequently, under the title *Le Graalpyrénéen, Cathares et Templiers*, Déodat Roché presented his discoveries in certain caves.

in which he found traces of very different eras, since, according to his interpretation, some of them are linked to the mysteries of Mithras, and therefore to the Roman era, while others date back to the Middle Ages and can be attributed to the Cathars and the Templars; this kind of geographical coincidence, which in itself is nothing strange, does not prove at all, although this seems to be the meaning of his thought, that there was any traditional connection, more or less direct, between the successive occupants of these caves. We do not intend to examine in detail the identification of the various symbols depicted on the walls of the latter, which would in any case be almost impossible in the absence of any reproductions; we will limit ourselves to saying that the assimilation established between 'three revelations of the Grail', represented by different cosmic correspondences, and three 'cultural epochs' (Egyptian-Chaldean, Greek-Latin and modern), however ingenious it may be, is not based on very solid arguments, and also that the assertion that the Templars gathered the Manichean tradition in the East is at least highly hypothetical; but, on this point, we know that Déodat Roché likes to find Manicheism a little everywhere. As for the so-called modern grand masters' mentioned at the end, who are said to have the mission of preparing for the advent of the 'Age of Aquarius', we know all too well, alas, what to think of them... – It seems that Déodat Roché is also among those who are dissatisfied with the comments we have made on their work, and he felt the need to complain about it in two large-format pages! He says that, in his studies subsequent to his *Le Catharisme*, we have 'found nothing new' regarding the question of the filiation from Manichaeism to Catharism, and he would have been surprised, he says, if we had not written that 'Gnosticism in its various forms does not interest us in the least'. From this comparison, it seems that he includes Manichaeism in Gnosticism; although this is not customary, we accept it, since, ultimately, it is just one more thing to add to all those already very different from each other that fall under this term; but, in any case, the truth is that, in order to be able to affirm

To understand the connection in question, we would first need to know exactly what Manichaeism was, and so far no one knows anything about it; to express reservations, this is a motivation that has nothing to do with the greater or lesser interest we may have in the subject. Furthermore, Déodat Roché has a very marked taste for 'heterodoxy', which we find absolutely impossible to share; when he writes: 'Let us leave aside the terms "orthodoxy" and "heresy" ... as we do not have time to devote ourselves to Byzantine and obsolete discussions and wish to maintain a philosophical attitude', it so happens that these things he judges 'obsolete' are precisely those that are of essential importance to us, because our attitude is not 'philosophical', like his, but strictly traditional. We do not wish to insist further, but there is at least one point that requires clarification: regarding the 'influence of R. Steiner' that we have noted in his interpretation of the Cathar doctrine, Déodat Roché wonders whether we are not talking about influence 'as a consequence of the idea we have of initiation'; We can assure him that this is not the case, and that we have taken the term in its most common sense: first, because 'spiritual influence' has nothing in common with what is called the influence of one individual on another, which is what is at stake here; second, because R. Steiner certainly had no authentic initiation to transmit. Then, quoting one of our sentences: 'The regular transmission of spiritual influence is what essentially characterises initiation', he adds this very significant comment: 'This is a method that has fallen into disuse; it is not a modern method and it is not ours'. Thus, he considers

"fallen into disuse" >> what for us has an absolutely permanent and timeless value; if you prefer "modern methods", and therefore profane ones, including the "comparative method of the science of religions", that is certainly your business, but then let us no longer speak of esotericism or initiation. In any case, it is worth taking note of this, as it is the most decisive proof that could be hoped for that there is a real gulf between your point of view and ours!

The *Cahiers du Symbolisme Chrétien* (January-February 1950 issue) published an article by Lanza del Vasto on the appearances of Christ after the Resurrection; it is quite remarkable that he too insists on the 153 fish of the miraculous catch, but his interpretation of this number is rather vague, as are his more general considerations on the symbolism of fish. On the other hand, he notes that according to the Gospels there were nine apparitions, but fails to note that 153 corresponds to 9×17 ; Now, in another article on the symbolism of the Marian apparitions of Pontmain, which on the whole seems a little 'forced' to us, Raoul Auclair attributes particular importance to the number 17; knowing the author's very special 'cyclical' ideas, there can be no doubt that this is a pure coincidence.

A study entitled *Structure de la matière et symbolisme traditionnel*, by François Tanazacq, contains some curious considerations, especially on the usefulness of numbers for classifying the 'simple bodies' of chemistry (to which, incidentally, it is misleading to give the name 'elements', which traditionally applies to something else entirely); but certain concepts of modern science are perhaps taken a little too seriously, and, in wanting to push the comparisons with the 'Pythagorean view of the world' too far, there is a risk of harbouring too many illusions, since the gulf between traditional and secular science is not so easily bridged. - Marcel Lallemand, in an article entitled *Spiritualité et Phénoménologie supranormale*, rightly insists on the insignificance of 'phenomena' in themselves from a spiritual point of view, on the dangers they present in this regard, as well as on the 'multiple and essentially different causes that can produce the supranormal'; These are points of view that are completely in line with what we have explained about the distinction between the psychic and the spiritual and the 'rejection of powers'. We must only express a reservation about what he says about the 'collaboration between the representatives of the great religions and humanity, which today seems to be waning'; in fact, the

The examples provided do not inspire much confidence, both because of the dubious orthodoxy of some of these 'representatives' from the Eastern side and because of the more or less suspicious intentions of certain others from the Western side. Unfortunately, in attempts of this kind, there are many 'behind-the-scenes' factors that are best treated with caution.

In *Cahiers d'Études Cathares* (October-December 1949 issue), an archaeological study on *Les stèles manichéennes et cathares du Lauragais*, by Raymond Dorbes, provides some interesting information on the 'Cathar crosses' that are numerous in this region and which seem to have been originally erected in cemeteries. It should be noted that the universal symbol of the cross inscribed in a circle is found repeatedly, with different variations. In an article entitled *Les deux tentations chez les Cathares du XIIe siècle*, René Nelli explains the distinction, probably inspired to some extent by St Paul, that they made between 'carnal' temptation, which, 'corresponding to our physical slavery, is natural and inevitable', and 'diabolical' temptation, which "proceeds from the heart, like error, unrighteous thoughts, hatred and other similar things". - Then comes a lengthy work by Déodat Roché on *Les Cathares et l'amour spirituel*, whose title, however, does not fully indicate its content, since it also deals with various other things, such as the problem of evil, the formation of earthly man and Luciferian seduction (which here is the equivalent of the biblical "fall", but with a curious distinction between the role of Lucifer and that of Satan). It is a conscientious study from a historical point of view

historical point of view, and is particularly interesting for the numerous Manichean and Cathar texts reproduced in it; we only regret that the author has included some 'neo-spiritualist' interpretations, as is his custom, appealing to 'the data of modern spiritual science established by Rudolf Steiner'.

In *Atlantis* (January-February 1950 issue), Paul Le C-R discusses *Celticism and Druidism*; he has patiently gathered together the information he found scattered throughout various works, but naturally he has added his own comments.

He has spouted quite a few fantasies, which we will not dwell on, since they are no different from his usual ones; suffice it to say that, according to him, it is 'remarkable that in Cro-Magnon there is the Great Chi-Ro'... He too succumbs to the obsession with the number 153, but at least he offers a new interpretation: he has discovered that 'this number corresponds to that of Aor Agni'... making R – 100! On the other hand, he returns to the claim of the 'Gallic origin of Jesus', which he had already supported in his book *Hellenism and Christianity*, and some of his arguments are quite amusing; it seems that the name Nazareth should be written *Nagareth*, 'in which we would find Aor, Ag, Ni, Theos'; evidently, with systems of this kind, one can always find whatever one wants. He reproaches a journal dedicated to the study of Celtic doctrines for 'basing itself on the works of F. Schuon', and claims that 'the author declares that truth is found only in the *Vedas* and the *Koran*, which have nothing specifically Celtic about them'; now, it is absolutely certain that our collaborator has never 'declared' anything of the sort, for the good reason that, like us, and as the title of his book clearly indicates, he recognises the fundamental unity of all traditions, which necessarily implies that truth is found in all sacred books, without exception. Let us add another small historical correction: it was not Sédir who reversed the word '*désir*', but L-CL de Saint-Martin himself, who made this reversal the name of one of the characters in his *Crocodile*; for someone who is so fond of recommending Saint-Martin, it is truly regrettable that he does not know his works better!

The March-April issue has the general title *Magnéti-sme et Hyperborée*; this combination may seem rather bizarre, and, in fact, there is a bit of everything, as shown by this sort of summary at the beginning: 'magnetism, calamity, the compass, Hyperborea, glaciations, human magnetism, healers, healing springs, miraculous springs'; in the considerations to which all this gives rise, ordinary modern science and 'metapsychics' occupy a great deal of space. It is necessary to

We should be grateful to Paul Le C-R for no longer confusing Hyperborea with Atlantis as he once did, and for even considering the northern origin of traditions; but then Atlantis will take a back seat in his concerns, as would be logical? Apart from that, there would be nothing in particular to report, were it not for the fact that, alas, there are other matters on which we are forced to dwell a little longer: first of all, Paul Le C-R says he has referred to our article in *Cahiers du Sud* on Islamic esoterism and, after making some rather questionable statements, writes the following: "Imagine my astonishment to learn that Sufism, which is supposed to be the highest degree of initiation, is based on cycle astrology and not on profane astrology, on the science of letters and numbers, on alchemy, which is not that of charcoal burners," sciences which are, he adds, "the three paths of access to the lesser mysteries." Our astonishment is no less than his, since we have not said a single word about what he attributes to us: 'Sufism' is not an initiatory degree, but simply a conventional definition (which we never use, moreover) of Islamic esoterism; and it is not based at all on the traditional sciences in question, which are included only as applications of metaphysical doctrine to the cosmological order. We would add that the

"Koranic schools" have absolutely nothing to do with esoterism and initiation; when one is so ignorant as to confuse a *tariqah* with a *Kuttab*, it would be much better to refrain from speaking! After that, and no doubt following the example of a certain individual whom our readers must remember, Paul Le C-R felt the need to revisit, in his own way, the story of the 'Polaris' and the preface to *Asia Mysteriosa*; we are therefore obliged to repeat once again that we were not 'unprepared' and we are not at all 'misguided', since, as we have already explained, our aim, in acting as we did in that circumstance, was only to gain the time necessary to carry out checks that interested us for various reasons, which certainly do not concern our opponents. We are in complete agreement

with Paul Le C-R when he laments that 'the world is currently full of these false prophets that America generally brings forth'; but the funny thing is that, two pages later, he showers praise on the representative of an American organisation of this type, even showing himself willing to admit his claim to

"possess all the esoteric science of the East and the West," and this is because the character has attacked us, it seems, in a recent book on reincarnation; moreover, he takes advantage of this opportunity to cite Vivekananda and Gandhi as authorities on Hindu tradition, which is still a serious misunderstanding. On the other hand, he mistreats the author of another book because he quotes us favourably and "bases himself on *our* Hindu doctrines" (this is utter nonsense, since traditional doctrines, Hindu or otherwise, are absolutely no one's property, and moreover, for our part, we have never claimed ownership of any idea), doctrines in which, in his opinion, 'there is no spiritual light'; evidently, the authors' attitude towards us is the 'criterion' followed by Paul Le C-R for the appreciations expressed in their books and, no less evidently, it is necessary to devote oneself to sentimental declamations in order to prove 'spirituality' in his eyes!

The Cahiers d'Études Cathares (Spring 1950 issue) publishes the beginning of a long study on *La capitulation de Montsé-gur*, by Ferdinand Niel; it is a purely historical work, conducted with great accuracy, which aims above all to establish precise dates on which contemporary accounts present singular contradictions, probably due to the negligence of copyists. Delmas-Boussagol studies some Bogomil funerary monuments, reproductions of which appear in a recent exhibition of medieval Yugoslav art; there is some interesting information, but the attempt to explain certain symbols does not seem very satisfactory to us, and moreover, the author is certainly wrong to take seriously the claim of the Bulgarian 'Deu-nowists' to be the continuators of the Bogomils, which would not be very flattering to the latter. It comes

Then there is the first part of a study by Déodat Roché on *Pistis Sophia ou l'enseignement du Ressuscité*, which has the subtitle *Esquisse de l'évolution de la gnose* (read 'Gnosticism'); it includes, in particular, an exposition of the 'systems' of Simon Magus and Valentinus, followed by some research on the possible 'pre-Christian' origins of his ideas, both from the perspective of Jewish esotericism and that of the Egyptian and Chaldean mysteries; This is a particularly obscure subject, and we do not know whether the new documents announced as having been recently discovered will finally be able to shed some light on it.

In *Cahiers du Symbolisme Chrétien* (July 1950 issue), Gaston Georgel studies the theories of Dr. Paul Carton and rightly distinguishes between the strictly medical part of his work and that in which he believed he had to venture into considerations of an esoteric nature, but in which, not basing himself on authentic traditional data, he committed numerous errors and confusions, of the same kind as those habitual to occultists. G. Georgel has added to the article, on the subject of temperaments and their correspondences, a note on the Hindu theory of the five elements, largely inspired by our work on this subject, which appeared here some time ago. In another article, entitled *Méditations d'un jour de Paques*, the same author insists on certain mysterious aspects of Christ's appearances after the Resurrection, and draws some conclusions regarding the characteristics of the 'glorious body'. Marcel Lallemand provides an interesting study on *Le Nombre d'or*, summarising its main mathematical properties, as well as the role it plays, in particular, in the structure of plants; in another study, he discusses *Le symbolisme du papillon* and its transformations, referring mainly to the *Psyché* of Abbé Pron and the works of L. Charbonneau-Lassay.

We received the first issue of a magazine entitled *L'Atelier de la Rose*, published in Lyon by a group of 'artist-craftsmen', as they describe themselves, and placed under the auspices of

by the painter Albert Gleizes. As can be seen, this is an effort to restore traditional art, and his collaborators insist first and foremost, and rightly so, on the 'craft' that must form its indispensable basis, which is perfectly in line with what A.K. Coomaraswamy called 'the normal view of art'. In the field of painting, which is the main focus here, the utmost importance is given to mural painting, which must harmonise with architecture and, in a sense, become one with it. On this point, we would particularly like to mention R.-M. Burlet's *Notes sur la fresque*. Another essential point is the role of rhythm in traditional art: one of the articles on this subject makes a curious comparison between painting and Gregorian chant. Finally, from the point of view of symbolism, we would like to mention a very interesting article by Robert Pouyaud, entitled *Astrologie et Harmonie colorée*; it deals with the symbolism of colours, considered more specifically in their planetary and zodiacal correspondences. In another article, on *L'Église romane et la Cathédrale ogive/e*, the same author takes up certain ideas he had already expressed elsewhere: he sees the former as a type of traditional architecture par excellence, while in the latter he discovers elements that 'herald a break with unity' and already foreshadow the approach of modern times 'with their procession of disastrous consequences for human beings'.

Summary

Chronological list of book reviews appearing in the first part of this work, published in *Le Voile d'Isis - Études Traditionnelles* from 1932 to 1950.

Year 1932	9
October	
	CESARE DELLA RIVIERA
	<i>The Magical World of Heroes</i>
Year 1933	9
April	
	GEORGES MÉAUTIS
	<i>The Hellenic Soul According to Greek Vases</i>
	A. SAVORET
	<i>From Menhir to Cross, essays on the triple tradition of the West</i>
Year 1934	11
February	
	MARCELLE WEISSEN-SZUMLANSKA
	(M. ME M. GEORGES VICREY)
	<i>The Ancient Soul of North Africa</i>
	PHILIPPE GUIBERTEAU,
	<i>Music and Incarnation</i>
March	
	GEORGES MÉAUTIS
	<i>The Mysteries of Eleusis</i>
May	
	J. EVOLA
	<i>Revolt Against the Modern World</i>

Summary

Year 1935	14
May	
ARTURO REGHINI	
<i>For the restoration of Pythagorean geometry</i>	
ARTURO REGHINI	
<i>The Fasces</i>	
July	
SERGIUS GORTAN ANCONA	
<i>The Substance of Adam</i>	
Year 1937	16
January	
D. DUVILLÉ	
<i>Eastern Aethiopia</i>	
<i>or Atlantis, initiator of peoples,</i>	
<i>followed by 'Birth and spread of the</i>	
<i>alphabet'</i>	
February	
P. SAINTYVES	
<i>Magic stones:</i>	
<i>betyles, axe-amulets and</i>	
<i>thunderstones: scholarly traditions</i>	
<i>and popular traditions</i>	
December	
DION FORTUNE	
<i>The Mystical Kabbalah</i>	
Translated from English by Gabriel	
Trarieux d'Egmont	
Year 1938	22
October	
PROF. LEO FROBENIUS - DOUGLAS C. Fox	
<i>Prehistoric Rock Pictures in</i>	

Summary

*Europe and Africa, from Materia/ in the
Archives of the Research Institute for
the Morphology of Civilisation, Frankfurt
am Main*

November

H. DE VRIES DE HEEKELINGEN
L'Orgueil juif

Year 1939

24

January

FRÉDÉRIC PORTAL
*Symbolic colours in antiquity, the Middle Ages
and modern times*

February

MORTIMER J. ADLER
Saint Thomas and the Genti/es
ALBERT GLEIZES
*The Human Significance
of Cubism*

April

L. ADAMS BECK
Au coeur du Japon:
Zenn, Amo urs mystiques
Translated from English by Jean Herbert and
Pierre Sauvageot

May

PAUL RADIN
The Story of the American Indian

June

E. AROUX
Dante, heretic, revolutionary

Summary

*and Socialist: Revelations of a Catholic on
the Middle Ages*

Year 1940 31
January

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY
*The Christian and Oriental or True
Philosophy of Art*

February
WALTER H. DUDLEY - R. ALBERT FISCHER
*The Mystic Light. The Script of
Harzael-Harzrael*

March
ANDRÉ SAVORET
Psychoanalytic Inversion
R. DE SAUSSURE
*The Greek Miracle. Psychoanalytic
Study of Hellenic Civilisation*

May
DR. PIERRE GALIMARD
Hippocrates and the Pythagorean Tradition
R.P. Victor Poucel
*Mystique of the Earth:
II. The Parable of the World*

Year 1945 39
January-February

ROBERT POUYAUD
*Under the Sign of the Spiral:
Vézelay, Centre of Initiation*

Summary

March-April

ROBERT AMBELAIN

In the Shadow of Cathedrals

CHARLES-RAYNAUD-PLENSE

*The True Centuries and Prophecies
of Miche! Nostradamus,
the great seer of Salon, with his life, and a
Nostradamian glossary*

May

Trésor Hermétique, including *Le livre d'Images
sans paroles (Mutus Liber)* and *Le Traité
symbolique de la Pierre philosophale* by
Jean Conrad Barchusen

A. COCKREN

Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored

June-July

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

Why Exhibit Works of Art?

CARLO KERÉNYI

*Ancient Religion
in its fundamental aspects*

Translation by Delio Cantimori

October-November

P.V. PIOBB

*The Fate of Europe According to the
famous Prophecy of the Popes by Saint Malachy*

P. ROCHETAILLÉE

Prophecies of Nostradamus

EM. RUIR

*The collapse of Europe according to the
prophecies of Nostradamus*

Summary

Year 1946 66

October-November

JEAN DE KERDÉLAND

From Nostradamus to Cagliostro

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

*Figures of Speech or Figures
of Thought*

WALTER SHEWRING

Art in Christian Philosophy

Year 1947 71

June

P.-J. GONNET

Arupa

R.M. GATTEFOSSE

The Wise Scriptures

PAUL LE COUR

Hellenism and Christianity

PAUL LE COUR

God and the Gods

July-August

EAN MALFATTI DE MONTEREGGIO

*Studies on Mathèse, or Anarchy and Hierarchy in
Science*

Translated by Christien Ostrowski. Introduction
by Gilles Deleuze

October-November

}EAN MALLINGER

Les Secrets ésotériques dans Plutarque

ROBERT AMBELAIN

Adam, the Red God

ROBERT AMBELAIN

At the Foot of the Menhirs

}EAN MALLINGER

Summary

*Notes on the Esoteric Secrets of
the Pythagoreans*

Year 1948 80
June

GÉRARD VAN RIJNBERK
*Tarot. History, iconography,
esotericism* JEAN
CHABOSEAU
*Le Tarot. Essay on interpretation
according to the principles of
Hermeticism*

September

LOUIS CATIIAUX
The Rediscovered Message
GIAN ROBERTO DELL'ACQUA
The Stone
JEAN BÉTESTA
Delta

Year 1949 87
April-May
DEODAT ROCHÉ
Catharism

July-August

FRANÇOIS HAAB
Divination of the Latin Alphabet
SAINT-YVES D'ALVEYDRE
Mission of the Sovereigns
R. POUYAUD
From Cubism to Traditional Painting

Year 1950 93
January-February
STANISLAS DE GUAITA - SWALD WIRTH

Summary

The Problem of Evil

Preface and afterword by Marius Lepage

June

GIUSEPPE PALOMBA

Introduction to Economics

October-November

ROBERT AMADOU

*Occultism: Sketches of a
Living World*

ROBERT AMADOU - ROBERT KANTERS

Anthologie littéraire de l'Occultisme

Summary

Chronological list of reviews of articles from various magazines, which make up the second part of this work and appeared in *Le Voile d'Isis - Études Traditionnelles* from 1931 to 1950.

Year 1931		103
March April	<i>Atlantis</i> <i>La Flèche</i> <i>Atlantis</i>	
November	<i>Atlantis</i>	J. TOUTAIN
Year 1932		105
January	<i>Psyché</i>	GABRIEL HUAN
May		A. SAVORET
	<i>Spiritual Paths</i>	P.E.B. ALLO
November	<i>Atlantis</i> <i>Les Études</i>	PAUL LE COUR P.L. LUCIEN ROURE
Year 1933		11
June	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
October	<i>Atlantis</i> <i>Hermès</i> <i>The New French Review</i>	MAURICE BENHAZERA JACQUES MASUI - G. MÉAUTIS P. MASSON-OURSEL
Year 1934		11
January	<i>Atlantis</i> <i>L'Illustration</i>	PAUL LE COUR
July	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
Year 1935		11
December	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
Year 1936		11 9
March	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
April	<i>Atlantis</i>	G. POISSON

Summary

October	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR	
December	<i>Atlantis</i>		
Year 1937			121
June	<i>Astrosophy</i>		
October	<i>Atlantis</i>	P. NOEL DE LA HOUSSAYE XAVIER GUICHARD	
Year 1938			122
October	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR	
November	<i>La Nouvelle Revue Française</i>	GASTON BACHELARD	
Year 1939			127
January	<i>Sanitary and municipal engineering</i>	R. HUMERY	
February	<i>The Jewish Review of Geneva</i>	PAUL VULLIAUD	
April	<i>Art and Artists</i>	ALBERT GLEIZES	
	<i>Symbolism</i>	G. PERSIGOUT	
May	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR	
Year 1940			131
January	<i>Les Cahiers astrologiques</i>	K.E. KRAFFT	
	<i>The Art Bulletin</i>	A.K. COOMARASWAMY	
	<i>Christian Social Art Quarterly</i>	GRAHAM CAREY	
February	<i>The New French Review</i>	P.-L. COUCHOUD	
	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR	
	<i>Mercure de France</i>	PAUL LE COUR	
	<i>Lotus Bleu</i>	S. GLACHANT	

Summary

April	<i>The New French Review</i>	
		ROGER CAILLOIS
	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
May	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
	<i>The Astrological Notebooks</i>	RAOUL FRUCTUS
Years 1945-1946		138
May	<i>The Art Bulletin</i>	
		A.K. COOMARASWAMY
	<i>Catholic Art Quarterly</i>	
		A.K. COOMARASWAMY
	<i>College Art Journal</i>	
		A.K. COOMARASWAMY
	<i>Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i>	
		A.K. COOMARASWAMY
August	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
	<i>Kad, << Cahiers de philosophie celtique>></i>	
September	<i>The Magic Door</i>	
Oct.-Nov.	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
	<i>Folk/hours</i>	
Year 1947		146
June	<i>L'Age d'Or</i>	R. KANTERS - R. AUCLAIR
	<i>Men and Worlds</i>	
		HENRY SÉROUYA
July-	<i>Cahiers du Sud</i>	PAUL ARNOLD
August	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
September	<i>What is Civilisation?</i>	
December		A.K. COOMARASWAMY
	<i>Journal of Ethnography</i>	
	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
	<i>Psychiatry</i>	JOHN LAYARD
	<i>Primordial Images</i>	
		A.K. COOMARASWAMY

Summary

Year 1948		156
March July-	<i>Atlantis</i>	PAUL LE COUR
August	<i>Review of the History of Religions</i>	MIRCEA ELIADE GEORGES DUMÉZIL
	<i>Medical Press</i>	LOUIS IRISSOU
	<i>Kad. The Druidic Tradition</i>	
Year 1949		162
Jan.-Feb.	<i>Ogam</i>	
	<i>Les Études Carmélitaines - special issue on</i>	
April	<i>Satan Zafmoxis</i>	MIRCEA ELIADE
June	<i>Notebooks on Christian Symbolism</i>	PAUL VULLIAUD MARCEL LALLEMAND Dorr. J. DE WANDEL
	<i>A letter from Mr Frank-Duquesne</i>	
July-August	<i>The Cahiers d'Études Cathares</i>	G. VAJDA DÉODAT ROCHÉ RENÉ NELLI
	<i>Ogam</i>	
September	<i>A new letter from Mr Frank-Duquesne Les cahiers d'Études Cathares</i>	R. DE CORNET - D. ROCHÉ
Year 1950		185
Apr.-May	<i>Les Cahiers d'Études Cathares</i>	M. ME WIERSMA- WERSCHAFFELT ROMAIN GOLDRON DÉODAT ROCHÉ
June	<i>Cahiers du Symbolisme Chrétien</i>	LANZA DEL VASTO FRANÇOIS TANAZACQ MARCEL LALLEMAND

Summary

The Cahiers of Cathar Studies

Raymond Dorbès René

Nelli Déodat Roché

Atlantis

Paul Le Cour

Oct.-Nov.

The Cathar Studies Notebooks

FERNAND NIEL

DÉODAT ROCHÉ

Cahiers du Symbolisme Chrétien

GASTON GEORGEL

MARCEL LALLEMAND

The Workshop of the Rose

R.M. BURLET

ROBERT POUYAUD

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BOOKS

