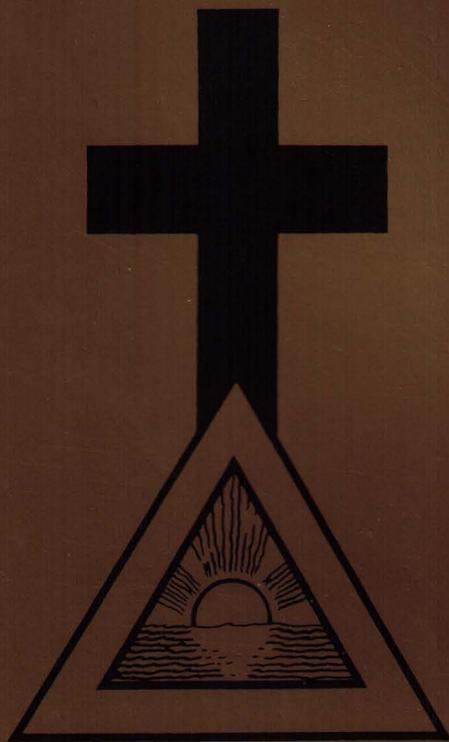


GOLDEN DAWN



THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GOLDEN DAWN CONFERENCE
LONDON ~ 1997

Edited by
Allan Armstrong & R.A.Gilbert

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Allan Armstrong
&
R. A. Gilbert

With an Introduction
by
R. A. Gilbert

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan', with a horizontal line underneath.A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long vertical stroke.

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INTRODUCTION

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was born in 1888, but it had been conceived in 1887 and it was the centenary of the conception rather than of the birth that was celebrated by the first Golden Dawn Conference held in 1987. It was not, however, an historical conference. Much was said about the cultural impact of the Order, but very little was offered on its history and even less on its practices. This second conference has attempted a more balanced approach to the Order, with an even distribution of papers and workshops on the history of the Golden Dawn, on its magical practices and on the theory underlying them.

But why discuss the Golden Dawn at all? In its original form it lasted for only fifteen years; it never had more than a few hundred members; and only a handful of those members ever achieved fame - or notoriety - in the world at large. Perhaps so, but the Golden Dawn did not appear from nowhere, nor did it go back. It grew out of the spiritual malaise of the western world that became increasingly apparent during the second half of the nineteenth century. For complex, but inter-related social, political and religious reasons a significant minority of the educated middle classes either rejected orthodox Christianity or at least sought to supplement it with various forms of 'alternative' spirituality. These forms ranged from the doctrines and phenomena of Spiritualism, through the metamorphosed neo-Buddhism of the Theosophical Society, to the fantastic ceremonies and legendary structures of the fringe Orders of Freemasonry. Each of these avenues of escape - if escape it was - offered something that could, and often did, still the restlessness of these spiritual seekers. Some of them followed more than one path, for they were not mutually exclusive. At least, not on the surface

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The generally accepted term for this upsurge of enthusiasm for 'alternative' spirituality is the 'Occult Revival', but if we accept the term we are entitled to ask just *what* was revived? In essence it was a revival of interest in the Western Hermetic Tradition - the twentieth century term for the whole constellation of ideas and practices that derive from speculative Judeo-Christian and Neoplatonic spirituality. Some aspects of the Occult Revival - Spiritualism, for example - were concerned with only a tiny part of this tradition, while others were unsympathetic to it. This was especially true of the Theosophical Society, whose doctrines and ethos (for despite its stated neutrality over religious beliefs, the TS *does* have doctrines) were and are decidedly oriental, and thus inimical to western spirituality. For many of those who looked outside orthodox Christianity this was not a path that they wished to travel; they had no desire to reject their western spiritual heritage and sought only for those parts of it that had been hidden or lost. At the same time, much that *had* been hidden or lost was being recovered.

By the middle of the nineteenth century a number of important Gnostic texts had been recovered and translated into modern European languages; kabbalistic texts were being accurately translated and presented for the first time; and the spiritual ideals of the Rosicrucians were being given practical expression. Nor were the speculative structures being built with these recovered materials without solid foundations.

Towards the end of the previous century quasi-masonic rituals based on a combination of alchemy and the Rosicrucian Manifestoes were being developed in Germany, while in France the practice of Theurgy - accompanied by sophisticated metaphysical speculation - was being revived by Martines de Pasqually and his disciples. And in England ancient texts

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embodying both the theories of Plato and the Neoplatonists and the practices of the Eleusinian, Bacchic and Orphic Mysteries were being translated and presented afresh by Thomas Taylor.

What was needed was a synthesis of all of this, and a speculative genius who could create such a synthesis - a genius who duly appeared in the shape of William Wynn Westcott. Which brings us back to the Golden Dawn. The Order *does* offer a synthesis of the disparate elements of the Western Hermetic Tradition, indeed it is the only body that has ever done so, and for this if for no other reason it well deserves, and repays, intensive study. What Westcott perceived was the need for a two-fold creation: an Order that would combine initiatory rituals and Theurgy on its practical side, with a fusion of Christian, kabbalistic and Neoplatonic spirituality and metaphysics to provide the theoretical underpinning. With his great breadth of obscure learning and his practical knowledge of masonic (and quasi-masonic) ceremonial Westcott was ideally placed to create such an Order. And whether by inspiration or natural genius he also saw that the ideal flux to hold it together was the Enochian system of Dr. Dee, and that Egyptian imagery was the ideal means of giving pictorial form to the resulting structure.

Of course the fledgling Golden Dawn of 1888 was not the final form of the Order. As W.B. Yeats perceived, a Magical Order is a living organism, and without growth such an organism must atrophy and die. Its numerical growth was paralleled by a ritual growth: as the Temples of the Outer Order expanded, so Mathers transformed the Second Order by uniting Egyptian symbolism with the Rosicrucian myths. There was also dynamism within the Order in the approach to metaphysical speculation. After the demise of Mathers, Christianity, albeit of an unorthodox variety, reasserted itself:

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most openly in Waite's Independent and Rectified Rite, but also more subtly within the Stella Matutina. In more recent revivals of the Order the Christian emphasis has been less obvious but the Golden Dawn remains resolutely western in its ethos.

It is also clear that these changes in spiritual emphasis are accompanied by changes - sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic - in ceremonial practice, which are in turn a reflection of the influence of the often charismatic individuals who have inspired the bewildering number of sub-divisions, offshoots and successors into which the original Order fragmented. Those individuals - Yeats, Mathers, Waite, Crowley, Dion Fortune, Regardie and others - are both fascinating and worthy of study in their own right, for they did not live and work solely within the context of the Order; their literary and cultural significance goes far beyond the confines of the Golden Dawn. But it is their work within the Golden Dawn that is often least known, and it is this aspect of their lives - the Orders they established, and the rituals they created for those Orders - that will repay closer examination. And as the various aspects of the Golden Dawn, its origins, history, personalities, rituals and purpose, continue to be studied, so we realise that there is ever more to learn about the Order and ample scope for further research.

The present conference offers papers on all these aspects of the Golden Dawn but it is far from exhaustive; every new historical discovery, philosophical speculation and ritual innovation provides material for future conferences - but can they offer anything to a wider audience? Is there anything of real and lasting value in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn beyond the fascination of a sidelight of religious history and an admittedly small impact on western culture? Unquestionably there is. Orthodox spirituality seems more unsure of itself than ever; science and Marxism have alike

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proven to be gods that have failed; and the prevailing 'alternative' spirituality - the self-styled 'New Age' movement - offers unreason in place of the intellect. A disciplined system of spiritual growth, for such the Golden Dawn is, cannot be a substitute for a personal religion, but it can provide a foundation on which our own religious experience and understanding can be built. The first Golden Dawn Conference set out, successfully, to demonstrate the cultural importance of the Order, but in doing so it unwittingly placed the Golden Dawn in the glass case of academe. The present conference has removed the artificial divide between cultural historians and practitioners, and has placed the various aspects of the Order in their proper context.

The background and origin of the Golden Dawn's admitted parent - the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* - and the ever-changing picture of the Order's own origins are both presented in fresh form, while the story of one of its unacknowledged offspring - the parallel Rosicrucian Society 'in America' - is told for the first time. And history becomes personalised with papers on the obscure (Frederick Schnitger) and the famous (Israel Regardie). The practical work of the Order also comes alive with workings of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of Waite's Independent and Rectified Rite and with the personified Sephiroth in the workshop on ascending the Tree of Life. In all such practical work pictorial imagery is especially important and this is discussed in papers on the Golden Dawn Tarot and on Art created for, and inspired by the Order.

It is, of course, impossible to make a clear-cut division between the practice and theory of the work of the Golden Dawn and a fusion of the two is presented in papers on the inner meaning of the Pillars of the Temple and on the Nature of Inner Plane contacts. This last subject leads naturally to a

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consideration of the inherent dangers of ceremonial working when wrongly approached. There are also potential problems when both sexes work together and these are examined from a personal point of view. But we should not look at the Golden Dawn from a negative perspective and it is refreshing to examine the work of a more recent fruit of the Golden Dawn tree, the Order of Dionysis & Paul.

The texts of all these papers (but not of the workshops) are given in these *Proceedings*, but stimulating though they are, they cannot convey the dynamic atmosphere of the conference. For that the reader must fall back on what was for Yeats the most crucial attribute of the magician: a true and properly directed imagination.

R.A. GILBERT, *Bristol, England, October 1997*

THE ORDER OF DIONYSIS & PAUL

Its Place in the Western Hermetic Tradition

ALLAN ARMSTRONG

The theme of this address is to inform you about the Order of Dionysis & Paul. About where it came from, about its evolution and purpose, and about its place in the Western Hermetic Tradition, with which I believe most if not all of you are in one way or another involved. However, before I do so I think it is important first to set the context, for it is a context that has significance for us all, the roots of which lie in the distant, though not too distant past of the pre-Christian world; a world that regrettably, in my opinion, has passed away.

Most of you are probably aware that from the time of Alexander the Great to the time of Constantine¹ the ancient world changed. Not that it had remained unchanged before Alexander, or that it ceased changing after Constantine, but that over the course of the centuries that lie between these two great catalysts, the ancient classical world disintegrated and was replaced by the embryo of the world we know today.

So little is left of the essence of that ancient world that scholars have turned into scientists and are using increasingly more complex technology to try to discover what our ancient ancestors did and thought, what they looked like, what they believed, how they lived etc. and it seems that every year or so our beliefs have to change as new technologies disprove current opinions, and when I say opinions I really do mean opinions, because it is obvious that so much of our perception of the ancient world is formed by our own beliefs, beliefs which are themselves questionable!

One thing that is truly amazing about our society is the attitude we have towards our ancestors. We seem to suffer the delusion that our ancestors were less intelligent than ourselves. Perhaps we base such a misconception upon some kind of Darwinian conceit; that because we are further down the line, as it were, we are more evolved - and therefore more intelligent. This might be true, but it certainly isn't proven, and, what is more, there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate otherwise; if

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only we are prepared to look. I would for example draw your attention to the fact that most of the principles governing Reasoning were established in the classical age long before the emergence of our own, as was our highly prized Democracy.

It is not my intention to give a lesson in ancient history, I doubt that I am qualified to do that, rather, I hope to evoke a sense of just how close we are to that ancient world, and how much it still influences our lives, and yet, how little we have remembered.

When I was a child, I like most other children, went to school, where alongside other things, I was taught that when the Romans came to the British Isles some two thousand years ago they found it populated by a rude people wearing animal skins, who painted their skin blue, and to all intents and purposes took every opportunity to run around throwing spears at each other. I must emphasise that this was not the opinion of contemporaries such as Caesar² or Tacitus³. No, this was, and indeed I think it still is, the official line of our modern education system.

Well! you can imagine the shock, indeed the thrill I felt - being led by the Spirit of that which governs all things to explore the history of these islands - when I discovered that contemporary accounts of pre-Roman Britain described it as a well ordered state, exporting surplus products such as grain and timber and metals including Lead, Tin, Silver and Gold. That it had its own mint and that its laws were just and principled⁴.

I further discovered that people from many parts of the world came to these islands to trade; exchanging their produce for ours. But what was more significant was the realisation that they also exchanged ideas concerning religious beliefs, philosophical interests and to some extent technical skills.

This was a sobering experience that made me realise that if we as a civilisation were not so full of self-conceit and

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prejudice our minds would be sufficiently open to recognise that our ancestors were far from being the 'primitives' and 'Pagans' that we believe them to be. Indeed we might even be able to accept the possibility that there had existed for a very long time an intelligent and reasonably well governed interaction between some if not many of the nations of this world. Which, by all accounts, expanded rapidly from the time of Alexander the Great.

Alexander opened up the world in a way that was to have far reaching effects. He gave the world of his day a focal point and if historians are correct, a common language. If he had not died so young who knows what might have happened. In any case his efforts did not completely fail, for what he started the Romans continued.

Within a century of the passing of Alexander Rome became the focal point of the known world. This much is history, and for more than five hundred years Roman civilisation was 'civilisation'. It has been said many times that 'all roads lead to Rome', yet the significance of this famous phrase often escapes us, indeed how many of us have any understanding of the volume of traffic that moved along those roads? Not only booty and slaves, but trade, skilled artisans, ideas and religious beliefs from all over the known world,

The religious beliefs of Ancient Egypt, of Ancient Greece, of Chaldea, of Israel, of Asia Minor, of the Celts, of India, in fact religious beliefs from just about everywhere came to Rome, and Rome became the melting pot of both religious and secular ideas. Rome may have conquered the world but the world also conquered Rome. Everyone lived under Roman Law, and in the main Rome tolerated all religions so long as they kept the peace and obeyed the Law.

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However, as you probably know, Rome's success was also its downfall. It could maintain neither its ever expanding borders nor its economy. Pressure from invading alien cultures⁵ such as the Mongol hordes led by Atilla, and internecine conflicts between member states brought the Empire to its knees.

Though the different forms of government established by such luminaries as Augustus, Diocletian and Constantine all failed in the end, they did shape the political landscape of Europe for centuries after. In fact the political map hasn't changed that much, and one could argue that much of our current European politics still reflects the political situation that existed fifteen hundred years ago.

From the point of view of this address the most significant event to occur in the past sixteen hundred years was the emergence of Constantine and his legions out of Britain. His plans to overcome the Roman Establishment were formed on a massive scale and with long term objectives, which included dramatic reforms in the way the Empire was administered. What might have happened if his eldest son had survived the political intrigues of his court is anybody's guess, but it is a matter of record that Constantine so regretted his hasty action that he seemed to lose the will to govern⁶

However, I digress; what really concerns us here is Constantine's politicisation of Christianity. Within a few years, more through political engineering than warfare, Constantine overcame Rome and was proclaimed Emperor. His allies were not only military factions, but also consisted of the expanding Christian communities that had spread throughout the Empire.

One may be forgiven for wondering why? However, a little study illustrates clearly that it was in more ways than one a stroke of genius, for Constantine recognised that one of the

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most significant features⁷ of the Christian culture of his time, was the resilience of its administration - a fiercely independent administration that was no friend of the State hierarchy. What is more it had been severely tried and tested by many years of persecution, without succumbing to the might of Rome. He also recognised the absolute power Bishops had over their expanding communities, and in their hierarchical structure, untainted by Roman politics. In this Constantine identified the means to transform completely the way the Empire was governed. Thus he legitimised a long persecuted religion and gave it political authority.

This in my opinion was the turning point of history. For within a few decades the ancient practices of religions, hoary with age, were banned in public places, temples were converted to Christian usage and the systematic destruction of ancient records began.⁸

The Christian administration eventually took over the governing of the Empire and found it necessary to consolidate its affairs. Thus, not only did it suppress the ancient religions, taking over the popular religious festivals and feasts etc., but it also found it politically necessary to eliminate the more diverse religious cults that had evolved within Christianity itself. Many of these so called heretical movements are more familiar to us under the heading of Gnosticism, a word that even now has offensive connotations in certain circles. It is interesting to reflect upon how attitudes change with time; initially, the early Christian practice of dealing with those they called heretics was either to ignore them or banish them from their communities, but after Constantine, as time passed, the full force of the Empire was brought to bear upon heretics and dissenters.

Except for the brief reign of the emperor Julian, otherwise known as Julian the Apostate - who was the nephew of

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Constantine - the progress of Christianity as a political force continued without interruption. Julian attempted to reverse the dominance of the Christians over the ancient religions and may well have succeeded, but unfortunately he was fatally wounded on a campaign against the Persians in the year 363. And that was the end of any real attempt to challenge the New World Order.

The emperor Theodosius I, who reigned in the latter part of the 4th. Century, closed in the year 391 all non-Christian temples and banned all forms of pagan cults. He also invoked the death penalty for certain extreme forms of heresy. It was during his reign that a major part of the library at Alexandria was destroyed and many of the temples attacked, in particular the magnificent Temple of Serapis.⁹ And during the reign of Justinian in the early 6th Century, drastic penal laws were passed against Pagans, Jews and Heretics. He closed the schools of philosophy in Athens, and to all intents and purposes, whatever remained of the Mystery Schools.

What we need to focus upon at this point is the fact that the pre-Christian religions, and in particular the more esoteric 'Mystery-Schools', had been in existence for a very long time, indeed far longer than we can actually grasp with our imaginations. Consider for a moment the School of Eleusis, it was ancient in the time of Plato. Indeed Orpheus, who is believed by some to have been a great religious reformer, who lived somewhere between 800 - 1,000 BC., is said to have reformed the *already ancient* mysteries of Eluesis¹⁰. Yet compared with the Mystery Schools of the Ancient Egyptians the Mystery Schools of Greece were mere newcomers, and in all probability derived much of their inspiration from the Egyptian.

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There is still a great deal of debate going on concerning the dates of Egyptian civilisation, much of which orbits around the dating of the Pyramids etc., New evidence keeps pushing back the clock further and further, and will probably continue to do so. However, whether the Pyramids were constructed 5,000 or 10,000 BC. is academic, what is important to recognise is that the both the culture and its mysteries existed before the Pyramids were built, and I guess we should leave it to academics to worry about for how long!

So, when Constantine empowered Christianity, he handed over not just an empire, but a legacy consisting of most of the religious heritage of the Northern Hemisphere, and sadly, within two centuries most of it had disappeared.

Where did these religions go? Undoubtedly many faded away into obscurity, but some, recognising the signs of the times, moved beyond the influence of Rome into Eastern Europe and Asia - I am thinking of the Manicheans for instance. Others went, as it were, underground, only to rise again in a new form more suitable to the epoch in which they found themselves. I cannot help but think of the Albigensians who appeared in France and Italy shortly after, that is within a couple of centuries of the closing of the Mystery Schools¹¹. Whether they were influenced solely by Manichean ideas or had an indigenous font of inspiration is yet to be established but one thing is certain, the Albigensians did not survive the wrath of Rome. Nor did any whose views differed from the orthodox.

Up until the Reformation Roman Theocracy dominated Western Europe, and was involved at every level of social activity and interfered in every political situation. The papacy effectively controlled the lives of everyone and everything. Any deviation from orthodox views and practices could, and often did, invoke punitive action from the authorities. Investigative

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science and religious speculation were extremely hazardous careers, in short Europe had been reduced to a state of barbarism from which it did not emerge until the effects of the Reformation had settled down.

The Reformation was probably the most significant event to happen in Western Europe since Constantine empowered the Christian Administration more than a thousand years before. It began early in the 16th century, and by the time the Century was over the political control that Rome held over the peoples of Europe for so long was broken, never to return. However, the Reformation didn't just begin in the 16th. Cent. It didn't just come from nowhere, its direct formation goes back a little further to the Renaissance, which was not only a flowering of artistic culture, but also a time of new and challenging ideas, of new technologies and, new discoveries. Yet the Renaissance would probably have never have happened without the Crusades.

The Crusades, which began in the late 11th. Cent., and ended in the late 13th. Cent., opened up Europe to the influence of the East, and in particular to the influence of Islam. For centuries Islamic expansion had been checked in its western ambitions by the Eastern Roman Empire, which is probably more familiar to us as Byzantium, the alternative name for the capital city Constantinople. This status quo was broken by the invading armies of Western Europe, otherwise known as 'Crusaders' who were supposed to help Byzantium, but instead helped to destroy it, but that is another and different story. Suffice to say that the positive outcome of the long term involvement of Western European Culture with Islam, which was an inevitable consequence of the Crusades, brought about that rebirth of intellectual curiosity and learning that we now

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call the Renaissance. Within this period, which spanned several centuries, emerged the ideas that led to the Reformation.

The Reformation was without doubt a bloody affair, but the outcome was worth it: for what was won was Freedom, freedom from the decadent administration of Roman Theocracy, and from institutionalised ignorance and superstition. In this period, for the first time in the best part of a thousand years religious views differing from the orthodox could generally be expressed without fear of persecution.

The Albigensians had been persecuted in the 13th. Century, and the Templars suffered a similar fate not much later in the 14th. Century. However, the 15th. Century was by comparison a remarkable time, it saw the flowering of the Renaissance, the advent of the printed book, the beginnings of the Reformation, and the discovery of a new world - America. A remarkable and epoch making century in which an irrepressible sense of space and freedom swept over Europe as never before.

It wasn't plain sailing at first, resistance to change was strong, but over the course of time the flames of fear and aggression subsided and religious tolerance became more and more widely accepted throughout Western Europe and its dominions. In this increasingly tolerant climate there emerged the first tentative shoots of those religious beliefs that had been suppressed for so long by Rome.

Such shoots can be seen in the efforts of Marsilio Ficino, who translated into Latin so much of the Hermetic, Platonic and Neoplatonic Teachings, making them available to a much wider circle than had ever existed before. And in the writings of Pico della Mirandola and Johann Reuchlin who made so much Jewish Qabalistic thought accessible. Such people contributed greatly to the revival of European spirituality.

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The emergence of Rosicrucianism in the early 17th. Century inspired many fine minds to explore spirituality, and not only in new ways. People started to seek for what had been lost for generations, and in looking to the past it was inevitable that they should look to the East. Indeed the whole basis of Rosicrucianism rests upon Christian Rosencreutz's acquisition of Spiritual wisdom during his travels in the East - a wisdom, it was thought, no longer openly available in the West. Now whether we recognise his journey as a metaphysical journey or not is a matter of personal inclination, but the fact remains that many people of the period believed that Christian Rosencreutz was a real person who travelled in the still mysterious East of the mundane world.

Other luminaries such as Jacob Boehme, Paracelsus, Johann Valentin Andrea, Thomas Vaughan, Francis Bacon, and many more contributed to this regeneration of the Western Psyche.

The Albigensians, who were dispersed in the 13th. Century and the Templars who were dispersed in the 14th. Century, the Humanists, who appeared in the 15th. Century, the Rosicrucians of the 17th. Century, the Freemasons, and indeed the Swedenborgians of the 18th. Century were all symptoms and expressions of a spiritual undercurrent that had been forced underground by the religious fascism of the Roman Theocracy of the 5th. & 6th. Centuries.

By the mid 18th. century the zeal for religious reform was cooling, the urgency of the moment had lessened and the political impetus had changed. The nations of Europe were no longer easily de-stabilised by religious differences. The reason for this lay, perhaps, in the fact that most religious administrations had been divested of direct political power. On

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the other hand Europe was experiencing the beginnings of the industrial revolution that is even now dominating the world.

The spirit of invention that had developed throughout the Renaissance, and been freed by the Reformation, was by the mid 18th. century in full flood. The development of superior technology, both military and commercial, gave the European states an incredible advantage over their neighbours. Political and commercial expansion through the exploitation of India, Africa, China, America, Australia, and elsewhere, dominated European interests. Roman and Italian political power was declining, and the focal point of political power in Europe gravitated towards London, the capital city of the emerging empire of Britain.

Throughout the 19th.century Britain prospered and by the time Victoria began her reign a New Order had been established. The British Empire was to become the largest in recorded history. However, what is not commonly recognised is that for all of its faults, it was in comparison with what had gone before, a stabilising regime that was very tolerant of other religions.

From the time of Marsilio Ficino in the high days of the Renaissance, the thirst for spiritual knowledge had become irrepressible, and as time had passed, a growing interest in the beliefs of our ancestors had developed. Archaeological exploration increased dramatically, particularly in Biblical lands, and the discoveries in Egypt and Babylon dominated the attention of our so-called civilised world. The beliefs and philosophies of different cultures were enthusiastically explored as more and more of the world became accessible.

The urge of spiritual curiosity unleashed through the Reformation started to consolidate. The long suppressed desire to 'Know' by other means than Faith had been fermenting for

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centuries and as the results of research and enquiry became available, ideas generated in that fermentation turned into catalysts of change, not only in Religion but in the world of politics too, and organisations began to emerge that expressed them.

The 'New Church' based upon the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, was probably the first to be openly established on supernatural lines. I am not a student of Swedenborg, but I think it is more true than false to say that his experiences of a multi-dimensional cosmos represented more of a reflex of the past than something entirely new. His model of the Cosmos seems to me to have direct affinities with Dante, and allude through him back to the pre-Christian vision of Creation.

Freemasonry was never a religion or a Church, although I believe history will prove that as an organisation Freemasonry was ever an enthusiastic supporter of the Church. Whilst Spiritualism merely high-jacked many of Swedenborg's ideas, and over the course of time, developed from a serious concern about posthumous conditions, into a cult of Hades, furthering the popular taste for Seances, Table-rapping, Channelling etc.

Orthodox Christianity was unable, or perhaps, unwilling to address the major issues concerning the supernatural life of the soul. In fact it seems that the Church reacted against both the progress of esoteric knowledge, and honest scientific endeavour, preferring to entrench itself deeper into superstition. And as history has proved, the window of opportunity for the Church to integrate itself, particularly in the sciences, faded away. By the mid 1800's an increasing number of the population was turning away from the Church and orthodox religion.

The Church of Rome, it appears, had learned little in the way of humility during the post-Reformation era, for by the

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latter part of the 1860's a major row was brewing with the Dutch Catholic Church concerning Rome's claim that the Pope was Infallible - which was and remains obviously untrue - and which the Dutch Church found so unacceptable that it left the Roman Communion in 1870. In the year 1866 Julius Ferrette was consecrated as Bishop of Iona by the Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius Peter III. for the purpose of re-establishing an indigenous Church of Britain.

Other things were happening too! The interest in the esoteric side of religion, both past & present, which had emerged during the Renaissance, blossomed in the middle of the 19th. century. Organisations were established for the purpose of conducting serious research into different aspects of subjects commonly recognised as esoteric: Hermetica, Qabala, Alchemy, Astral travelling, Posthumous survival, Re-incarnation, Fairies, Magic - transcendental & otherwise. Many of these organisations have since disappeared, although a few do remain.

Such phenomena could be viewed as evidence of the decline of Christianity, however, I am inclined to view the decline, not of Christianity, but of State Religion, and the various phenomena as evidence of a developing spiritual maturity and a re-awakening of spiritual independence.

It seems to me that the spirit of exploration in Western Spirituality, had in its divergence from Christianity, taken two main directions. The first was embodied in what we now call Spiritualism, and which, through divers paths led to the formation of the Theosophical Society in the 1870's. The second, and perhaps more significant direction, was that of the Hermetic sciences, whose manifestation was embodied in the Rosicrucian movement.

In the 1860's the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia - the SRIA, was formed to promote research into the Hermetic

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Sciences. Members of this society were later to form the Hermetic Order of The Golden Dawn, the history of which is reasonably well known and does not bear re-telling now. Suffice to say that out of this fruitful organisation emerged the Stella Matutina and the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross of which more will be said later.

Retrospectively, it seemed inevitable that for the first time since the 6th. century, an alternative Church was about to emerge in Western Christianity, a *Mystical Church*, or bona fide Mystery School that would be based upon something other than blind faith in what to all intents and purposes had been reduced to mere superstition.

However, Madame Blavatsky, a Spiritualist Medium of some years standing, claimed to be receiving telepathic communications from Tibetan Adepts and on the basis of information received from these Adepts she founded the Theosophical Society. The interest in this movement was immense, unfortunately it diverted the growing spiritual impetus away from the formation of a mainstream Mystery School of the Western tradition towards Eastern, and particularly Buddhist, ideas. The consequence of the success of the Theosophical Society was that the indigenous spiritual culture embodied in the form of the Hermetic teachings was effectively subverted and in a short space of time faded from the limelight and would have completely disappeared were it not for a committed minority. With the growing popular interest in Eastern Religion the impetus towards the fusion of Western esoteric and exoteric religious ideas evaporated.

This, then, is the context in which the Order of Dionysis & Paul must be viewed. It is a small part of a greater movement, a movement impelled from the depths of the Western psyche to give a cultural form and expression to the long repressed

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instinct to 'understand' and to 'know' the fullness of human spirituality. Though we may gain a great deal through the cross-cultural exchange of philosophical ideas, the sacred rites of Purification, Elevation and Consecration do not readily cross-fertilise. Each culture must develop its own, from within its own soul, for the archetypes will not be denied.

Now with this in mind and disregarding the personality issues that arose within its ranks, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn gave a fresh impetus just when it was needed most to the fading inspiration of Western Spirituality. Its effect upon esoteric thought was immense, and I am sure that its influence in preserving much of the inspired vision of the pre-Theosophical Society era will one day be fully recognised. The subject matter of the Golden Dawn genius is too profound for such an address as this, suffice to say that in this context the phenomena of the Theosophical Society will prove in time to be no more than an interruption in the process.

I am sure that you are all aware that out of G.D. emerged the Stella Matutina, under the authority of Dr. R.W.Felkin, and the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, under the guidance of Arthur Edward Waite. I believe that the FRC may still be active, as are the two lines I am aware of that emerged from the Stella Matutina. The first is that established by Israel Regardie in the USA and other places, of which I know too little about to comment. The second is that of the Order of Dionysis & Paul, established early in the 1950's by Dennis Claude Green in Bristol.

Dennis Green was born in 1904 and died in 1970. He was a member of the Hermes Temple in Bristol for fifteen years or so, demitting I believe around 1948-49. I never met him, for he passed into the Invisible some four years before I was to meet his most accomplished student - Morris Saville, who

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subsequently became my Teacher until he too slipped into the Invisible in 1991.

Dennis Green was a man of many parts, but I recognise him to be an inspired man who lived the spiritual life to the best of his ability. He was also a very brave man in the sense that he set about inculcating, if this is not too strong a word, the Hermetic Philosophy into 20th. century Christian culture. This was no small undertaking in post-war Britain. Even if he was unlikely to be burnt at the stake for his efforts, he did suffer the animosity of those around him who didn't understand or like what he was doing.

It was also apparent to him, legend has it, that most of his fellow members of the Hermes Temple either thought him mad or they derided him for his interest in Christianity, and from a certain perspective it is easy to understand their point of view. The Church has never been well-disposed to the 'Esoteric', and for an individual, obviously well versed in esoteric disciplines, to approach the Church from the outside, as he did, seemed foolish indeed. After all, many of those interested in the Golden Dawn were never very keen on Christianity. However he was inspired!

Dennis was in many ways a proud man, who upset as many people as he pleased, but his integration with his spiritual nature was sufficiently strong to overcome his naturally proud disposition when necessary. Thus he was able to partake in a task that had been subverted by the Theosophists almost a century before, which was, as you know the regeneration and re-integration of the Western Mystery Tradition within our Christian based culture. It was to this end that Dennis Claude Green, following the inspiration of his Higher Genius, bent his Will.

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What I am telling you is far from being new. I discussed the implications of this socially foolish venture with my teacher more than twenty years ago, and he with his teacher probably twenty years prior to that. It was understood and accepted by us all that, although we may work for it, we will in all probability never see it happen, but that over the course of time it would come to pass, and that in the meantime the day to day work of the distillation of the Spiritual Gold that lies 'Within' must be continued. For after all has been said and done it is the Spiritual Evolution of the soul that is paramount, and it is the purpose of religion to assist in that evolution.

Returning then to the development of the Order of Dionysis & Paul and the path taken by Dennis Green. After several false starts he was ordained in 1953 as a Minister of the *United Presbytery of the Fellowship of Christian Free Churches*. Later that year he began his ministry by opening the Church of the Mystics in Bristol, and established shortly after the embryo of the Order in the form of the Order of St. Raphael, based to some extent upon the Anglican Guild of St. Raphael, and dedicated to Healing. However, his esoteric views eventually brought him into conflict (*something that was to occur frequently as time went by*) with certain senior members of the Free Church movement and in due course he left their communion.

In 1954 he joined the Western Orthodox Church¹², under the authority of Mar Georgius, and was consecrated to the Priesthood by him in 1955. Dennis stayed with the Western Orthodox Church for fourteen years or more. It was also in 1955 that the Bristol chapter of the Order of St. Raphael became the Arcane Order of the Great Pyramid, which was dedicated after a particular fashion to the Interior Life, as its title implies.

In 1962 The Order changed again into the form of the Order of St. Gilbert of Sempringham of the Modified

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Observance. One of the main benefits of this change lay in the fact that it was a re-establishing of an English medieval Order which had been open to both men and women, and as such was in keeping with the primary aims and objectives of the Order. In 1965-66 Dennis acquired several acres of land and a few buildings at Severn Beach, near Bristol and established his Priory there. However, his attempts to influence Mar Georgius in esoteric matters came to nothing, which eventually led to them going their different ways in 1966-7.

Dennis then joined the Western Orthodox Church under the authority of Mar Phillipus (Bishop Singer) and, as Mar Dionysis of Aust, was consecrated to the Episcopate by him in June 1967. Unfortunately in 1968 he was diagnosed as having cancer of the throat. Extensive surgery during the latter part of 1968 did nothing to halt the cancer, and his condition continued to deteriorate, until in 1970 he passed away into the Invisible.

It is my considered opinion that Dennis (Mar Dionysis) did not realise the true extent of his affliction. Thus when he went into hospital in August 1968 he fully expected to return home within a short time and continue in the Work. However, as things transpired he was to remain in hospital until November of that year. When he returned to the Priory he was in no fit state to take part in a ceremony by which he could effectively pass on the line, and any expectations of him regaining sufficient health to do so eventually faded with his vitality, and the consecrating clergy for the Work came to a halt, although the training in metaphysical philosophy and science continued.

Bishop Singer was also extremely ill with Emphysema, and his condition seems to have deteriorated in parallel with that of Mar Dionysis. Consequently he was unable to pass on the Episcopacy to Dionysis's successor; he died shortly after Dionysis in the following year. It was then left to my teacher -

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Father Morris Saville - to pick up the standard, as it were, and continue the development of the Order. He was eventually consecrated to the Episcopate by Bishop Illtyd Thomas in 1983, as the replacement of Bishop Williams of The Holy Celtic Church, who had gone into retirement, and has since passed on. In 1987 Francis consecrated myself (Allan Armstrong) as Bishop to the Holy Celtic Church to continue the line. After a long period of ill-health Mar Francis passed away on the 10th of May 1991.

You might ask Why all the effort? Well, the answer is quite simple - *both Magic & Mysticism are extensions of religion, not alternatives*. All of the magical systems used by our ancestors were developed in the context of the religion of their day. Our current exoteric & esoteric systems are different only in that there is a polarisation of attitudes between the two parties, the principle objective remains the same - *the evolution and sublimation of SELF in the Divine Godhead*. Christianity might evoke a lot of bad feelings with some people, particularly today, but it is still here and has to be dealt with. Bull and Hypocrisy will always be with us, we don't just find it among Christians, I've heard that even Hermetic philosophers are prone to it! What I'm trying to say is that no one group or profession has a monopoly on ignorance or wisdom. Furthermore, it is much easier to influence a religion from the inside than it is from the outside, just think how much saner the world would be if the Wisdom teaching was not only accessible through orthodoxy, but also supported by it.

Now the main objective of the Order of Dionysis & Paul is the accomplishment of the alchemical process of transforming the base metal of human consciousness into the alchemical gold of Spiritual Illumination. It is accomplished in four phases that divide naturally into two parts, the first can be described as the

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preliminary or Outer Work and the second as more advanced Inner Work. However, I must say, that it is my conviction that both parts are equally difficult and profound.

The Outer Work consists firstly of: **Purification**, which is the laborious process of extracting the Will from the controlling influence of the lower or instinctive nature that we call the Genetic or Cell-level Consciousness. Secondly: **Elevation**, which is accomplished by the refining of the Will through spiritual disciplines and raising the emerging consciousness along the Middle Way. The Inner Work consists firstly of: **Sacrifice**, which is the surrendering of the purified Will unto the Logos. Secondly: **Consecration**, which is the transformation of the purified Human Will in its union or Celestial marriage with the Logos or Christ.

Much of the Order's day to day activities are orientated towards teaching its members the rudiments of Prayer & Meditation, and developing the metaphysical philosophy and science as outlined in the Order Curriculum.

The Order is also concerned with preparing those who are called to the Priesthood within the Holy Celtic Church. This training is outlined in the Order Curriculum, and in a sense has no bearing here.

One feature, a simple thing, yet of paramount importance, is the fact that the Order has a **Formulary**; which determines its hierarchical structure. It also has a **Rule**; which defines its way of life and it has a **Vow**; which defines the parameters of the obligations taken under oath by each and every member. These three apply to everyone within the Order from the Prior to the Novice.

Without a Rule, any Order leaves itself open to the infectious disease of Egoism that is so often mistaken for charisma. So many well intended organisations are destroyed by

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this unnecessary affliction. A 'Rule' should govern every member and as such becomes a good yardstick for judging not only one's own actions but that of one's peers. So many times the follies and indiscretions of senior members, particularly in esoteric Orders, go unchecked because there is no datum mark by which judgements can be made. This serious problem occurs so many times in esoteric groups that the list of licentious 'Business Gurus' appearing in the press is growing so fast it is embarrassing. The public expect politicians to tell lies and business corporations to be devious and cheat, and scientists to be two-faced and deny responsibility, but it is still not publicly acceptable for those claiming to have transcended their lower nature to misbehave.

With regard to such human weaknesses, the Order of Dionysis & Paul expressly forbids any member, whatever their status, to levy charges for instruction, or for the exercise of 'Spiritual Gifts' such as healing, divination etc. Nor can there be any question of charging a pilgrim on this difficult path a fee for knowledge. Funds for projects are raised by members according to agreements reached at Chapter meetings where real costs are discussed and understood, (e.g. organising a garage sale). Finances are managed by a Finance Committee that reports to the Chapter and whose records are open to all members, whilst the Prior has no direct access to funds. Consequently everyone knows where they stand concerning financial issues.

Another issue that I don't know how to express clearly in a polite form of English, but it is a fundamental rule within the ODP that teachers must keep their hands off students' wallets and bodies. After all, if a person cannot rise above their appetites then they have no business instructing anyone, not even themselves.

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SUMMARY

I set out with the intention of informing you about the Order of Dionysis & Paul, about where it came from, its evolution, its purpose, and perhaps more importantly, about its relationship to the Western Hermetic Tradition. The Order is not a run of the mill organisation, it does not comply with the perceptions of either mainstream Churches or Esoteric Orders. It has elements of both and elements which are unique to itself. However, one thing it shares in common with many Esoteric Orders is that its cosmology is essentially Qabalistic, though not necessarily Jewish.

Its relationship with mainstream Christianity is more difficult, there are philosophical and theological issues that complicate matters. For instance; is the Doctrine of Emanation implicit in Qabalah? How does that affect one's attitude to the 'Will' and what of Reincarnation, Predestiny and Karma? These subjects do have a bearing on the matter, they are important issues that are regrettably too complex to be dealt with here. Yet they are issues that do need to be qualified by those representing the Western Hermetic Tradition if it is to be acknowledged and respected by the world at large.

Another issue is that of form. Let me explain what I mean by this: If we accept the Qabalistic development of the Cosmos through the four worlds, then we must accept that what is here in Assiah is a reflection or gross expression of the higher worlds. That not only do objects and forms have Yetzirach and Briatic counterparts, but organisations do too! So many emerging Esoteric Orders seek in their enthusiasm to express themselves in a new and unique fashion that they miss the obvious. The outward form must have an inner content, it must be based upon something that is first and foremost spiritually

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countenanced, it must be acceptable to the egregore of the culture involved. For example a new religious Order based on Roman Catholic lines, with a Roman liturgy, dress code and place of worship would not last very long in Saudi Arabia.

Therefore, when we consider Magic and Mysticism as extensions of Religion and not as alternatives, we can understand in part what is meant by the words “the soul of the Law”. Putting it bluntly, Christianity exists by Divine Warrant, its form is established in Yetzirah, it is ratified in Briah and sustained from Atziluth. And like all created things it is not static but is subject to change and alteration, and the Western Hermetic Tradition is an integral and essential part of it. Mar Dionysis the founder of the ODP understood this, and in accordance with his inspiration formed the Order that it may articulate that ‘Soul of the Law’ within Christianity, and, in the due course of things contribute to effecting wholesome changes therein.

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ENDNOTES

¹ 330 BC. - 300 AD.

² *De Bello Gallico*

³ The Agricola & Germanica

⁴ Celt, Druid & Culdee, Isabel Elder. Geogr. III Strabo

⁵ *Attila* Marcel Brion

⁶ *Constantine the Great*, G. P. Baker.

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, F. Cumont.

The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, S. Angus.

⁹ Destroyed by the zealous Theophilus.

¹⁰ *Forerunners & Rival of Christianity*. F. Legge.

¹¹ *Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics*, J. Hastings.ed.

¹² otherwise known as the *Catholic Apostolic Church* (United Orthodox Catholicate)

THE TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS OF A FEMALE INITIATE

GERALDINE BESKIN

For many years I owned and ran The Atlantis Bookshop in what remained of the old Literary Bloomsbury and saw a fair cross-section of occultists from around the world. I would have difficulty accepting directions to the bus station from a high percentage of them let alone to a station on the Tree of Life! Your honourable selves accepted of course.

Many years ago when I was a slip of a thing and seen by every amateur Magus in the Western Hemisphere, there were frequent invitations to join the various groups that mushroomed up like Fly Agaric. Not nearly so rare, or as exciting as the real thing but members were fed on the “keep in the dark and force feed bullshit” principle just the same. I was young and eager and credulous and probably would have got into all sorts of bother, but I had a saviour in the form of a profoundly cynical boyfriend who would curl his lip and sneer loudly at each new group. As we spent yet another evening in the pub whilst they droned on about how deeply fabulous, ever so esoteric and the best thing since the Golden Dawn they were, he would ask me why they were such sociopaths. I didn’t know why, but he was the only one with a job; who didn’t live in a leaky bed-sit and who had bought the drinks all night. Knowing not to use Magic for one’s own ends and being capable of getting half way organised somehow gapped in the middle. Happily it wasn’t just my generation that was hopeless as there is an equally incompetent one around at the moment. As a consequence I don’t have many initiations to talk about but there have been a few I should love to have collected.

We all know how to spot a Satanist don’t we? Too much cheap symbolic jewellery, rings on each finger, mis-spelt tattoos, an addiction or two and generally, a low literacy level. The final clue, and the real universal give-away, is the well-bitten fingernails. I can only suppose they sit up in bed at night,

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clutching their pillows, scared to sleep in case they really did conjure up something unpleasant this time and it is all true!

My favourite non-initiation was by Satan's Representative on Earth. I never did learn his real name. He was a little wisp of a man who lived on a god-forsaken estate somewhere North of London. A long bus journey, and a walk of no more than a mile and a half took people to his shabby lair. His mum would open the door and show the Questors to the garage where he would put on an expensive though cheaply made robe to greet his guests. After interminable occult gibberish from both sides he would invite any pre-menopausal women who were still awake to be initiated by him. Without waiting for a startled refusal, he would unfurl a thin roll of grubby foam rubber to be used as the Altar. Perhaps it was the heady combination of sweat, dandruff and terminal boredom, or perhaps it was his mum putting her head round the door to remind people they had a long walk back to catch the last bus, but no nubile, willing and unhysterical young woman ever lay supine for him. That was one initiation that I have sort of regretted not getting as the best thing about 'Satan's Representative on Earth' was that he was a World Class maker of Malapropisms and to hear him recite the Lord's Prayer backwards or big chunks of the *Malleus Malleficarum* would have been truly memorable.

Another prospective initiation that I didn't pursue was for the tiniest of reasons. There is a highly respected and not particularly famous Group that have been doing fine work for a number of years. They have never courted fame or large membership but have quietly soldiered on and performed some very fine rituals including the Gnostic Mass. They did this for its power and beauty rather than tell people how daring they were, and used to invite small numbers of people to each Rite. I was young, it was my first formal invitation to such a well run

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event and all I hoped was that it would be a more awe-inspiring affair than anything that my direct contemporaries managed to put together. We arrived, were shown into a candle-lit room and the ceremony began. Great care had been taken and the Temple was impressively furnished with a long high altar that had three faux-marble steps leading up to it. There was a mysterious red velvet enclosure and from it emerged a very tall cadaverous looking man. He intoned mightily and raising his lance, he advanced towards the Priestess who was sitting on the High Altar. He slowly ascended the steps and supplicated himself before her. This was where I had to exercise masterful control as the steps were covered in sticky backed plastic and his feet stuck to each one. I know this because of the funny squelching sound that happened each time he climbed higher. Hysteria in strange places is impolite and I had to elevate my mind to a Higher Plane rather fast. Later, when we were at the cakes and ale stage, I was invited to “sit on the floor over here dear” and turned to look straight up the front of a crusty old Pagan’s knee length tunic. As I said, it is the small things that can change the course of one’s life.

Which brings me to socks. I know we live in a Northern climate, but a gentleman always removes his hairy grey socks first. They just don’t go under a formal robe and are distractingly risible. Shoes and socks are worse, and slippers that look as though they have lost their pipe and armchair are also a no-no. Sherlock Holmes ones look nattiest I always think. Outside, balaclavas and thermal underwear are de rigeur as everyone knows.

I was having dinner with Bill Breeze - as one does - and he said a group in America had done one of the Gnostic Masses Cowboy style. I thought this was great and then somewhat archly said “You Americans do things, but you don’t do them

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properly, formally, played straight. I'll show you how they should be done." So, that was it, by the time the pudding had arrived I was already plotting how to stage the full cycle of the Gnostic Masses.

As Caxton Hall was unavailable I booked the Conway Hall in Holborn and only later realised that four of the performances would fall on the same dates as the ones Aleister Crowley had so famously produced in 1910. Logistically it was a nightmare as getting seven occultists to talk civilly to each other is bad enough, but organising seven groups for seven nights spread over seven weeks might have been thought impossible. Instead, we had people co-operating happily with each other throughout. Groups and individuals that had circled around each other for many years suddenly found they had much more common cause to be friendly than to be hostile. Finding seven occult groups which actually had enough experienced members was an eye opener and erstwhile avowed enemies filling gaps in other performances was most surprising. The music for one of the rites was written by the very dear, and sadly now deceased, Christopher Johnson. It fitted the performance in Time as well as Spirit as that particular grouping produced a very strong interpretation without all the members ever being able to rehearse together before the performance. The old phrase "Be careful what you pray for" came back to haunt me when I persuaded a group of magical musicians to do one of the rites. Having seen all of their tattoos I knew they weren't shy and I rashly said "You can do it naked but for a feather if you want" - and of course that is what they did and of course, that was the only night the Hall Bookings Manager sat in to see what the Astrological Mystery Plays were all about. I had to decide barely to advertise the Rites of Eleusis as it was felt wrong to attract sightseers to sincerely performed workings. What came

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from them was a new found respect for Alexandrians by the Gardnerians, Astrologers for Chaos Magicians and some enduring friendships. The only rule had been that each group had to stick exactly to the Crowley text. Whether this counts as an 'initiation' I'm still not sure but it does teach one not to mess with people who hold High Administrative Office!

My Masonic Initiation was awe inspiring, but before I go on to describe it I should like to read Annie Horniman's initiation by Moina Mathers as described by Mary Greer in her book *Women of the Golden Dawn* (Park Street Press. 1995):

Annie Horniman arrives at the temple location on Fitzroy Street for her Neophyte initiation. In Mina's familiar flat she is robed in a white gown, hoodwink over her head so that she can see nothing, and a rope tied three time around her waist. A sense of strangeness descends as she waits anxiously by herself until a temple officer, called the Hegemon (who is also robed and smelling of frankincense) arrives announcing "Child of Earth, arise and enter the path of darkness." He guides her sightlessly stumbling to the door of the temple.

Annie feels herself being sprinkled with water and fumigated with incense before being conducted into the inner room. Asked why she seeks admission, she is prompted by her guide to respond: "My soul is wandering in darkness seeking for the Light of Occult Knowledge and I believe that in this Order the knowledge of that Light may be obtained."

Helped to a kneeling position, her right hand is placed on a triangular symbol, and she is again prompted in a lengthy speech of Obligation to the Order. She

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promises to keep secret everything relating to it, to maintain kind and benevolent relations with all Fratres and Sorores, to not suffer herself to be hypnotised or mesmerised or placed in a trance state, to never use occult powers for any evil purpose, and to persevere through the ceremony of admission. Then with trepidation, she swears that should she violate any of her oaths she will voluntarily submit to “a deadly and hostile current of will set in motion by the chiefs of the Order, by which I should fall slain and paralysed without visible weapons as if slain by the lightening flash.” She suddenly feels the heavy touch of cold steel against the back of her neck. Then it is gone.

The Hierophant (or Revealer of Mysteries, representing the Highest Self of the candidate) reminds Annie that the “Light shineth in the darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not.” They now circle the temple following the light of a lamp that the Hierophant has called the “Light of Occult Science,” although Annie, blindfolded, can see nothing.

Suddenly stopped in the West, her hoodwink is raised, and she finds herself looking down the point of a sword. Enjoined by one called “Darkness” to be without fear, she is then hoodwinked again. In the East she is threatened with a sceptre by one called “The Light of a Golden Day.” The Hierophant reminds her of the evil of unbalanced force, and she is once more hooded.

The Hierophant, speaking as a voice from her Highest Self, then calls to her:

I come in the Power of the Light.

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I come in the Light of Wisdom.
I come in the Mercy of the Light.
The Light hath Healing in its Wings.

She kneels as the Hierophant invokes the Lord of the Universe. The from all around her, she hears voices calling:

Inheritor of a dying world we call thee to the living beauty.
Wanderer in the wild darkness we call thee to the gentle Light.

As though responding to their call she is raised to her feet and her hoodwink removed. She is standing under a circle of wands and swords, points touching directly over her head, while a voice enjoins:

Child of Earth, long hast thou dwelt in darkness.
Quit the night and seek the day.

There is a loud clap, and for the first time she hears herself called by her magical name.

Fortiter et Recte we receive thee into the Order of the Golden Dawn.

She is given secret signs, a hand grip, a Grand Word, and a password of the Neophyte grade, then is led between the two pillars of the temple, the symbolic Gateway of Occult Science, as through a birth canal, for

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the final consecration. The meaning of each symbol in the ritual is now explained, as is the knowledge she must acquire to progress to the next grade. The initiation is over but not the ritual.

With the hall of the grade of Neophyte symbolically closed, Annie finds herself present at her first ceremony, making the signs she has just learned and partaking with the others in the Mystic Repast. When her turn comes, she approaches the altar, where she inhales the perfume of a rose as the symbol of Air. She then warms her hands over the sacred Fire. She then eats bread dipped in salt representing the Earth. And finally she drinks the wine, a consecrated emblem of elemental Water.

With the words used in the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries, KONX OM PAX, "Light in Extension," meaning "Light moving out in a single ray," the ritual is over. Changed forever, Annie will henceforth be Fortiter et Recte.

The gatherings I have described so far have been essentially like-minded souls attempting and succeeding in establishing an extra demanding dimension to their lives. The women that I now encountered had nothing amateur or ramshackle about them. These women meant business. They had a love of and a deep understanding of each word they said. The formality and strict adherence to the text was rather alien to me - as was so much learning by heart. Being out of the wild heathland with my old cloak about me as I shouted into the wind was enormously tempting as I stood in my simple gown, slipshod, bound and blindfolded. The clanking and clattering, the knocks and batteries were really powerful as I stood there in the dark.

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When the blindfold was removed my Guide and mentor's eyes were the first thing I saw. They were the bluest blue, tremendously wise and more than humanly ancient. The temple had been used for sixty years - A.E. Waite is the obvious big name to drop as a user of that space - and every one in the room was word and action perfect. The atmosphere was of purposeful Unity and I knew they would have never have accepted me if I hadn't met their rigorously high standards. I don't consider I have ever lived up to them really. It was a privilege to have worked with such a dedicated and esoterically knowledgeable group. When we had our Midsummer Meeting, people from the other Lodges attended. Little old ladies, who before robing had looked like a convention of Silver Service waitresses, were transformed into representatives of a much higher Order. Sadly some of the Old Guard have died and the whole tenor of the Lodge has changed with lots of younger people attending who 'want to be Masons'. They won't ever experience the grace and elegance or understand the Inner Workings the way those admirable women did.

Working in that single sex environment was obviously different from having the other "polarity" standing alongside one. It felt very pure and differently intense and differently understood. I do wonder about the lost opportunity male masons have had for so long. If they were working the rituals on the Other Levels, then they would have been self-balancing with their femaleness. The British Masons I've met have not been very good at that. Because women have not been physically let into their Lodges, they have denied that they have some validity there. When I worked in a women only Lodge, we somehow all knew about Maleness and became female-Neuter working towards The Great Architect of the Universe, whom we all knew to be a chap.

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Now I come to the question most often asked of lady masons by sad middle-aged men who have no real academic interest in the answer. I feel able to give the words in full here. The Inner Guard says “ As the point of a sharp instrument pressing your naked left breast is a momentary torture to your flesh so may the recollection of it be an everlasting torture to you, should you ever attempt unlawfully to reveal the secrets of Freemasonry”. This single phrase is mused over and its enactment in women’s Lodges pondered upon by men who otherwise show no real interest in the similarities of our workings. The ‘Naked Left Breast’ question must remain unanswered as I have no intention of breaking my oath!

RECREATING THE GOLDEN DAWN TAROT

TABATHA CICERO

According to MacGregor Mathers in his pamphlet *The Tarot*, the word “tarot” (taro) was an anagram for the words which pointed to its occult meaning: *Tora*, or the Hebrew word for law; *Troa*, or Hebrew for “gate”; *Rota* which was Latin for “Wheel”; *Orat* was Latin for “something that speaks”; *Taor* the Egyptian Goddess of Darkness; and *Ator*, the Egyptian Venus. This implied that the tarot is a gate hidden in the darkness for those who are unable to tap into its riches. It is a gate of initiation just as Venus or Ator is the gate or door of initiation. The tarot is a book that speaks, and what it describes is divine law and the eternal wheel of universal cycles that power the manifest universe. It’s quite a book.

Actually, the tarot is composed of two different decks, the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The *Major Arcana* is composed of twenty-two trump (or Key) cards. The earliest surviving tarot trumps still in existence date from about 1450 A.D.¹ The name “trump” was taken from the word “*trionfi*” meaning “triumph”. Whatever its magical uses were in the beginning, there is quite a lot of evidence to suggest that the most common early use of the tarot cards was as a game.

But thanks to the work of Eliphas Levi and the later work of MacGregor Mathers and Dr. Wynn Westcott, we now have a tarot which is quite mystical in flavour, having a whole host of occult associations. There is one trump card for every letter of the Hebrew alphabet. And each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is a *hieroglyph* - a pictorial image which corresponds to a certain meaning. In the case of the Hebrew hieroglyphic language, each letter contains a literal meaning, a hidden meaning, a numeral value, a colour, a musical note and numerous other associations.

Besides the Hebrew alphabet, the twenty-two trump cards of the tarot are each associated with one of the following: a zodiacal sign, a planet, or an element. So you can see that a multitude of ideas is woven into the fabric of the tarot.

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The tarot does not predate the ordinary deck of playing cards, which were introduced into Europe soon after 1375 AD. But the images of the four suits of the numbered cards in the original playing decks were the same as the suit emblems of the tarot deck as we know it today. The suit emblems of modern playing cards are derived from the fifty-six cards of the Minor Arcana. The four tarot suits of wands, cups, swords and pentacles were transformed into clubs, hearts, spades and diamonds in modern playing cards. The *knights* of the tarot deck were eliminated and the pages became known as jacks, bringing the final number of the cards to fifty-two. This left the ordinary deck of playing cards with forty numbered cards and twelve face cards, which can be said to represent the twelve signs of the zodiac. The *joker* in modern playing cards is clearly a descendant of “The Fool” from the Major Arcana

It is surprising that MacGregor Mathers felt that the suit of diamonds was descended from the tarot suit of wands. He also felt that the suit of clubs was related to the tarot suit of pentacles. Mathers stated this in both his published pamphlet on *The Tarot* and in “The Second Knowledge Lecture” of the Golden Dawn. The French Marseilles Tarot clearly shows that *Batons*, (or clubs) are related to wands, and not to pentacles. These attributions are almost universally accepted today, and I can only speculate that Mathers made a simple mistake, like the rest of us mere mortals.

What do I mean by the phrase - *recreating* the Golden Dawn tarot? Isn't there just one Golden Dawn tarot? Well, no, actually there are several. What constitutes a Golden Dawn tarot deck sometimes depends on which temple and what time period it comes from. I don't know if any of Moina Mathers' original drawings of the entire deck are still in existence. Westcott's original drawings of the court cards have survived. And

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members of the Golden Dawn were required to copy drawings of the tarot trumps which were used in the grade ceremonies of the Outer Order. But these only included about nine of the trump cards. So where are the originals of the rest of the Moina Mathers; and Westcott's trumps and the pip cards? I can only hope that they remain in someone's library or attic somewhere, and that sometime in the future they will be shared with the rest of us.

The tarot cards used by the Stella Matutina were slightly modified from those of the original Golden Dawn, especially in regard to the Court Cards. According to some sources, Dr. Wynn Westcott who helped design the original Golden Dawn tarot, also assisted Dr. Felkin with some of the changes made in the Stella Matutina deck almost two decades after the original was drawn up. In an unofficial paper circulated to Adepts of the Stella Matutina, Mrs. Felkin presented her own version of colouring the tarot trumps based on the four colour scales.² And there was even a paper by MacGregor Mathers floating around that described a completely new set of designs for some of the tarot trumps.

So, the tarot of the Golden Dawn has been evolving ever since it was first set down on paper. French tarot decks, such as the popular Marseilles deck, were the basis for the Order's deck. The evolution of the tarot continued through the work of Eliphas Levi, the French occultist who in the mid-1850s associated the twenty-two tarot trumps to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the ten numbered cards of each suit to the ten Sephiroth of the Qabalistic Tree of Life.

The influence of the Golden Dawn's tarot can be seen in some of the most popular tarot decks available today, including Aleister Crowley's Thoth deck, and even in the veiled symbolism of the Rider-Waite tarot, which remains the single

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most popular modern tarot deck ever published. Both of these decks were designs by former members of the Golden Dawn. This constant evolution in the tarot shows that occult teachings rarely stay the same over long periods of time. The magicians of the Golden Dawn were always striving to emphasise different correspondences within each tarot card, or to push the official explanations of the cards to new limits.

Much of this is due to the fact that the early tarot manuscripts of the Golden Dawn were rather thin. The few written explanations of the trump cards tended to be restatements of certain sections of the grade ceremonies and the Outer Order Knowledge Lectures which didn't have a lot to say about the tarot.

The bulk of the information on the tarot was given out in the grade of Adeptus Minor.³ But even here, basic information on the design of the trump cards was meagre. The meanings assigned to the trump cards were briefly given, but written descriptions of the drawings of the trumps themselves, beyond those used in the grade ceremonies, were very scarce. It is possible that in the original Order, members were encouraged to do their own research on the tarot. This might help explain why variations in the tarot designs occurred.

It also seems evident that the tarot of the Golden Dawn was drawn up in the late 1880s, before the creation of the Second Order of the RR et AC. In a forthcoming book on the *Magical Tarot of the Golden Dawn*, Pat Zalewski has pointed out that a careful study of the Golden Dawn trumps shows a peculiar change in theme. The first trumps contain a great deal of Celtic symbolism. This is particularly evident in The Magician card. The original Golden Dawn and Stella Matutina versions of this card show the magical tools of the Magician as "the Four

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"Talismans of Ireland" - the spear, the sword, the chalice and the stone; pre-Christian symbols of certain Irish deities.⁴

When Israel Regardie commissioned Robert Wang to produce a new version of the Golden Dawn deck, he based his drawings on the Stella Matutina model. But he changed the Magician card's four "Talismans of Ireland" to the Elemental Weapons of the Adeptus Minor, as was indicated in Mrs. Felkin's manuscript on "The Tarot Trumps". Personally, I like this adaptation a lot. I think that the elemental weapons are much more appropriate to this card.

It is also clear that the court cards have been heavily influenced by Celtic symbolism, which clearly stem from the Grail Legend of Wolfram Von Eschenbach.⁵ At some point in the creation of the trump cards, however, the Celtic input stopped, and the trumps began to reflect more of the French Marseille tarot with a good dose of Qabalistic symbolism thrown into the mix.

The most pronounced difference between the Golden Dawn and the Stella Matutina decks are in the court cards. In the original Westcott versions of the court cards recently published by Darcy Küntz, certain symbolism known as the "Sigils of the Scales" was used. These were symbols of heraldry often derived from the family crests of those individual patrons who had printed tarot decks in medieval times. These symbols were used by the Golden Dawn to represent the five elements in the Four Colour Scales of the King, Queen, Prince and Princess. These symbols do not seem to have made it into the decks of the Stella Matutina, at least in the version of the deck that we have seen. As a result, they never made it into the tarot decks painted by Robert Wang or myself, since both of these decks were based more on the Stella Matutina version.

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The directions that the royal figures faced in the court cards was considered significant since it was important in the card-reading method known as the “Opening of the Key” or, as we like to call it, “The All-Day method”. A court card was usually chosen to be the Significator, a card that represented the Querent in a reading. Part of the reading included counting a certain number of cards in the direction that the Significator was facing. But the directions in which court cards faced varied widely between the Golden Dawn and the Stella Matutina.

Another indication that the Golden Dawn tarot was created long before the Second Order was established is the colouring of some of the cards of the Minor Arcana. According to the oral tradition, the predominant colours of the four suits were as follows: wands were red, cups were blue, swords were yellow and *pentacles were green*. The suit of pentacles represents the element of earth, and in the teachings of the Second Order, the colour *black* is assigned to the element of earth.

This can be seen in the Enochian tablets, and in the Kerubic squares of the Vault of the Adepti. So the assignment of the colour green to the element of earth and the suit of pentacles must have occurred before the teachings of the Second Order were fully developed. The colour of earth was probably changed to black because green was also the complementary or flashing colour of red, so green had to be considered one of the two colours associated with elemental fire. By changing the earth colour to black, four separate pairs of flashing colours could be assigned to the elements. In our deck we use black as the predominant colour of the suit of pentacles.

In the grade ceremonies, initiates were shown black-and-white versions of the Trump cards. Once initiates had advanced to the grade of Adeptus Minor, they were required to copy all the cards in black-and-white from a single master set of cards,

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and colour them in using the four Qabalistic scales of colour. Instructions given out, regarding the colouring of cards, kept changing as the Golden Dawn continued to add new instructions to the original teachings. There also seems to have been quite a lot of messing around with the colour scales themselves. Some temples, such as the Whare Ra temple of New Zealand, eventually came up with their own versions of the colour scales which were totally different from those of the other temples.

The same sort of thing seems to have happened in the later temples of the Alpha et Omega. We've seen one diagram from an American temple of the AO which listed the Atziluthic or King scale of colour for the path of Beth (The Magician) as orange rather than yellow - and the paths of Ayin and Tau (The Devil and The Universe cards) as black instead of their original indigo or blue-violet.

But getting back to my original point, that the Golden Dawn deck has been in a constant state of evolution. This is also true of many aspects of Golden Dawn teachings, not just the tarot. The initiation ceremonies of the Golden Dawn differed depending on which particular branch of the Order you were talking about, and they sometimes differed from temple to temple.

Here are two examples of different ways in which the same tarot trump, "The Wheel of Fortune", is described by two chiefs of different Golden Dawn Orders. The first is taken from Mrs. Felkin's unofficial Stella Matutina paper on "The Tarot Trumps". It reads:

"In the Etz Chayim or the Tree of Life, the Wheel is placed on the Pillar of Mercy, where it forms the principal column linking Netzach to Chesed, Victory to

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Mercy. It is the revolution of experience and progress, the steps to the Zodiac, the revolving staircase, held in place by the counter-changing influence of Light and Darkness, Time and Eternity - presided over by the Plutonian cynocephalus (or dog-faced ape) below, and the Sphinx of Egypt above, the eternal Riddle which can only be solved when we attain liberation. The basic colours of the Trump are blue, violet, deep purple, and blue irradiated by yellow. But the zodiacal spokes of the wheel should be in the colours of the spectrum, while the Ape is in those of Malkuth, and the Sphinx in the primary colours and black."

In this, Mrs. Felkin's version, the primary components of the card "The Wheel of Fortune" are: the sphinx above, the dog-faced ape below and the wheel between them. Some of the colours that Mrs. Felkin referred to here - blue, violet, deep purple, and blue irradiated by yellow - are the colours of the path of Kaph, to which "The Wheel of Fortune" is attributed, in the four scales of colour.

There is another version of "The Wheel of Fortune" from an undated Second Order paper probably written by MacGregor Mathers entitled, "Of the Tarot Trumps Attributed to the Seven Planets and the True Designs and Interpretation Thereof." This paper describes the wheel as the shaft of the Lotus Wand of the Zelator Adeptus Minor bent round in a circle with the Lotus Flower in the centre and four telesmatic figures formed from the combined images of the triplicities of the zodiac around the wheel itself.

This description of "The Wheel of Fortune" is certainly colourful and different. I think it's fairly certain that this design was never actualised in any Golden Dawn tarot deck. In the

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same manuscript, Mathers describes the figure of “The Magician” dressed in the regalia of an Adeptus Minor, complete with Lotus Wand, Rose Cross Lamén, and the four Elemental Weapons. “The Empress” card is described as the Telesmatic Image of the angel Aniel (or Anael), who was the feminine counterpart to Adonai ha-Aretz. All-in-all these are some very different versions of the tarot with which Mathers was experimenting.

The tarot served many purposes in the Golden Dawn. Of course certain tarot trumps were used in the initiation ceremonies as prescribed by the ritual outlines in the Cipher Manuscripts. And naturally they were used for divination. Outer Order members used Waite’s Celtic Cross spread, while in the Inner Order, the Opening of the Key was employed. Incidentally, the Opening of the Key, when properly performed, included an entire ritual, complete with ritual clothing, Elemental Weapons, banishings, invocations and more. The outline of the ritual for divination is found in the manuscript known as Z2, the Formula of the Magic of Light.⁶

One of the primary purposes of the Tarot is as a tool for meditation. Tarot images help focus the Initiate’s mind on the Qabalistic ideas that they represent. They are also used as skrying symbols. That is, they are used as doorways to see into other realms of reality. In the Golden Dawn, “Skrying in the Spirit Vision” is performed using a painted symbol such as a *tattva* or a tarot card as the point upon which the mind focuses as it becomes aware of alternative states of consciousness. This is actually a form of self-hypnosis which uses symbols in order to reach higher levels of consciousness, which are purer and more focused than our normal waking consciousness. From these higher levels of consciousness the magician often tries to see the underlying causes of things - to work at a problem from

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a higher angle or perspective - to get inside the machinery of the universe and see just what makes it tick.

The cards of the Major Arcana are used in pathworkings to skry the Tree of Life following the paths that connect the Sephiroth. The Minor Arcana cards are used in much the same way to skry into the Sephiroth themselves. Two Adepts of the Golden Dawn, Florence Farr and Elaine Simpson, co-authored a side lecture called "Flying Roll Number 4", which was entitled "An Example of the Mode of Attaining to Spirit Vision and What was seen by Two Adepti." This short paper, written in 1892, explains how a type of pathworking or skrying with a tarot card may be performed. I want to read to you a couple of brief excerpts from the lecture, to show how this was done. The authors describe the basic methods of skrying into tarot cards as follows:

"Secure for an hour or longer absolute freedom from interruption. Then alone, or with one or two other Adepts, enter the vault, or a private chamber. Remain in silence and contemplation for several minutes.

"Rise, and perform the Qabalistic Cross and prayer. Then proceed to contemplation of some object, say a Tarot Trump: either by placing it before you and gazing at it, until you seem to see into it; or by placing it against your forehead or elsewhere, and then keeping the eyes closed; in this case you should have given previous study to the card, as to its symbolism, colouring, analogies etc. In either case, you should then deeply sink into the abstract ideal of the card; being in entire indifference to your surroundings. [...] Consider all the symbolism of the Tarot Card, then all that is implied by its letters, number. and situation, and the paths connected therewith.

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The vision may begin by the concentration passing into a state of reverie; or with a distinct sense of change, something allied in sensation to a faint, with a feeling urging you to resist, but if you are highly inspired, fear not, do not resist, let yourself go; and then the vision may pass over you."

Farr and Simpson go on to describe their experience as follows:

"The Tarot Trump, the Empress was taken; placed before the persons and contemplated upon, spiritualised, heightened in colouring, purified in design and idealised. "In vibratory manner, pronounced Daleth. Then, in spirit, saw a greenish-blue distant landscape, suggestive of medieval tapestry. Effort to ascend was then made; rising on the planes; seemed to pass up through clouds and then appeared a pale green landscape and in its midst a Gothic temple of ghostly outlines marked with light. Approached it and found the temple gained in definiteness and was concrete, and it seemed a solid structure.

"Giving the Signs of the Netzach Grade (because of Venus) was able to enter; giving also Portal Signs and 5=6 signs in thought form. Opposite the entrance perceived a Cross with three bars and dove upon it; and beside this, were steps leading downward in the dark, by a dark passage. Here was met a beautiful green dragon, who moved aside, meaning no harm, and the spirit vision passed on.

"Turning a corner and still passing on in the dark, emerged from the darkness on to a marble terrace brilliantly white, and a garden beyond, with flowers

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whose foliage was of a delicate green kind and the leaves seemed to have a white velvety surface beneath. Here there appeared a woman of heroic proportions, clothed in green with a jewelled girdle, a crown of stars on her head, in her hand a sceptre of gold, having at one apex a lustrously white closed lotus flower; in her left hand an orb bearing a Cross.”

The vision goes on to describe “The Empress” as the great goddess Isis, who reveals her mysteries as the Holy Grail, and the Divine Love given unto humanity through the figure of Christ.

This is fairly typical of the skryings that were done by the Golden Dawn, especially with regard to the tarot cards. It’s pretty obvious that the Order used tarot cards for several spiritual purposes, not just for divination.

Getting back to my original statement - that the Golden Dawn tarot has been evolving for quite some time. New decks based upon the teachings of the Golden Dawn have been painted in recent years, and will continue to be painted in the years to come. I’m certain that the wellspring of inspiration which created the original Golden Dawn tarot in the first place has not yet been tapped dry. Perhaps it has not yet even reached its full creative potential. In the future, there are bound to be magicians and artists who wish to explore several different facets of Golden Dawn teachings which have not yet been fully developed. As more and more unpublished documents of the Golden Dawn continue to be discovered and brought into public view, I can only imagine what new areas of creativity will be forthcoming.

This is because the Golden Dawn system of magic, far from being dead, far from being the final gasp of an “Old

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Aeon”, continues to provide the basic knowledge, the framework, and the inspiration for many ceremonial magicians working today. Its knowledge continues to evolve as new discoveries in areas such as Egyptology are made, and as new generations of practising Golden Dawn magicians add their own experiences to the legacy of the Order. These are certainly the hallmarks of a living magical tradition. We will have to wait and see what the future holds for the Golden Dawn. In the meantime, I’d like to show you some slides of the *New Golden Dawn Ritual Tarot*.

COVER DESIGN: Here we have the Cross and Triangle, the symbol of the Golden Dawn. The White Triangle represents three principles: positive, negative and neutral, in their highest and most pure aspects as the Supernal Triad or the Divine Light. This could also be expressed in anthropomorphic terms as a trinity consisting of divinity, male, and female. It can also be symbolised as father, mother, and child.

The Red Cross with its four arms not only represents the four elements of fire, water, air and earth but also the archetypal human being, who is ultimately composed of these same four elements. It is also the four directions in space. The Cross and the Triangle together represent Life and Light. They also symbolise Light manifesting through Life.

In a Second Order paper by Mathers entitled “The Tree of Life as Projected in a Solid Sphere”, Mathers describes the triangle as representing the three decanates of each zodiacal sign. He goes on to say:

“And the central Rising Sun will represent the hidden influence of Tiphareth in the centre of the Sphere, [...] rising above the waters of space. [...] But in the Golden Dawn Initiation, the Cross surmounting the triangle is

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preferably represented by a Calvary Cross of six squares, as still more allied to Tiphareth.”

KEY 0: PATH 11: THE FOOL: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Spirit of Aether”. It represents the element of air, and its Hebrew letter is Aleph - meaning “ox”. Here we see an innocent child holding the leash of a dangerous wolf. We also see the yellow rose of elemental air, and the alchemical symbol of air. The child is about to have his first experience.

The child represents Harpocrates, God of Silence. The Path of Aleph connects Kether to Chokmah on the Tree of Life. The card represents the first thought of experience. It is the first current of potential vibration. The precursor of the first Thought. It is a stage of innocence - where all things are possible because nothing has happened yet. Air is the element of intellect - of thoughts and ideas. The thought forms created here have not yet led to action. There is potential for either positive or negative results. Again anything is possible at this point. The card colours are yellow and violet, colours associated with elemental air.

KEY 1: PATH 12: THE MAGICIAN: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The magus of Power”. It represents the planet Mercury. Its Hebrew letter is Beth - meaning house or structure. The Magician stands at a transparent altar. Upon the altar are the tools of the magician: the Fire Wand, the Water Cup, the Air Dagger, and the Earth Pentacle. Above his head, thought forms are created with turn into infinity signs. He is about to invoke.

The figure represents Hermes-Thoth, the god of wisdom, communication, and magic. His symbol is the Caduceus Wand, shown on his chest. He is the builder or architect of experience. He is the invoker, acting on thought. The Path of Beth connects Kether to Binah. It represents the creative force - skill and

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wisdom - a step toward manifestation from the previous card. The Magician represents The Fool acting upon this first thought. No longer just potential, this card represents first action. The card colours are yellow and violet, colours associated with the planet Mercury in the King Scale.

KEY 2: PATH 13: THE HIGH PRIESTESS: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Priestess of the Silver Star”. It represents the Moon. Its Hebrew letter is Gimel - meaning “camel”. This card portrays the Goddess Diana, the Moon Goddess, shown by her symbol, the arrow, formed from the lower part of her body. She holds the cup of water, the Cup of the Stolistes, and she is hidden behind veils to symbolise the unconscious mind, hidden from view. Energy forms surround her in the shape of a cup.

She is the bringer of consciousness who guides and regulates the flow of energy from its pure source in Kether to the lower parts of the Tree of Life in Tiphareth. This path represents the purest root-essence of universal consciousness. That which connects us all. It also represents the ultimate source of water which symbolises the subconscious mind of every human being. The card colours are blue and orange, colours associated with Luna in the King Scale.

KEY 3: PATH 14: THE EMPRESS: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Daughter of the Mighty Ones”. It represents the planet Venus. Its Hebrew letter is Daleth meaning “door”. Here a goddess wears a crown of twelve stars which symbolise the zodiacal signs. She sits upon a brown throne which symbolises the earth. In one hand she holds a royal sceptre surmounted by a golden globe of the sun to indicate that she dominates the heavens. Above her is a dove, a symbol of love, the bird sacred to Venus. Also above her is the white Hebrew letter Shin representing Spirit. In her other hand and at her throat is the Ankh - symbol of eternal life. She sits in front of a green veil

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which parts to reveal a doorway shaped like a gothic arch. (This is Daleth, the doorway to initiation).

Her duties are to build form and to start the process of manifestation. The Path of Daleth is reciprocal - a shared, mutual path that straddles the three pillars (from Chokmah to Binah). It is therefore the path of unity which unites the three pillars. It is also the root essence of emotion in its most pure form. The path alludes to the idea that emotion (or Venus) is the key to the unification and formation of the universe. The card colours are green and red, colours associated with Venus in the King Scale. (They also refer to Venus and Mars united and in equilibrium.)

KEY 4: PATH 15: THE EMPEROR: The Esoteric Title of this card is "The Son of the Morning, Chief Among the Mighty". It represents the zodiacal sign Aries. Its Hebrew letter is Heh, meaning "window" (as well as "sight"). The card shows a warrior king seated and holding a ram-headed wand. There is also the ram of Aries playing amid fresh spring vegetation. The Emperor holds a golden orb surmounted by a cross (representing Tiphareth) to show that he holds absolute rule over his kingdom. He is seated on a throne which is backed by a window - the meaning of Heh.

The card symbolises spring and rebirth. It is pure energy which acts upon form (form which was received from the Empress). The Path of Heh runs from Chokmah to Tiphareth. Outwardly masculine, this path contains both masculine and feminine energies since the virile, stimulating forces of Aries is masculine, yet spring and rebirth are feminine qualities. Also the letter Heh is the great feminine letter of the Qabalah. Therefore this card is outwardly masculine, but inwardly feminine. The card colours are red and green, the colours of

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Aries in the King Scale as well as the colours of spring vegetation.

KEY 5: PATH 16: THE HIEROPHANT: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Magus of the Eternal”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Taurus. Its Hebrew letter is Vav, meaning “nail” or “pin” - something which holds two separate things together. *Hierophant* is the Greek word for “teacher” or “initiating priest” in the Mysteries. Here we see the figure of the Hierophant enthroned upon the bull of Taurus. He wears the triple crown of the Supernals because the Hierophant acts as a living channel for the divine light of the Supernal Triad. He holds the Banner of the East, which is a Golden Dawn symbol of the divine light. He also holds the Crook of Mercy, a symbol of Chesed. The Hierophant is illuminated by the Supernal Light above him. In his lap is the crown-headed sceptre and a scroll which contains the Logos or divine word of creation. Nails (symbols of the Hebrew letter Vav) hold together the fragments of the universe in the background of the card. The Path of Vav runs from Chokmah to Chesed on the Tree. This path also represents that which connects what is above to what is below - the Heavens and the Earth. The Hierophant is the priest of the Mysteries and the initiator. He is the great teacher. One of the esoteric meanings of the letter Vav is “hearing”. This path symbolises esoteric teaching and inner illumination - teachings that only come from within. The *hearing* alluded to is an inner hearing. Thus the whole card points to the truth that we must listen to the teacher within. The card colours are red-orange and blue-green, the colours of Taurus in the King Scale.

KEY 6: PATH 17: THE LOVERS: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Children of the Voice Divine, The Oracle of the Mighty Gods”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Gemini. Its Hebrew letter is Zayin, meaning “sword” or “armour”. The card

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reveals the Greek myth of Perseus and Andromeda. Here the winged hero Perseus is shown rescuing the maiden Andromeda from a dragon-serpent. The three-headed dragon is the Sephirah of Binah, or the subconscious. It is that which threatens, yet also initiates the process of unification. Perseus and Andromeda are symbols of the higher self rescuing the lower self from the material world by integration, unity and wholeness. It is a path of inspiration and divine love. The sword of Perseus is a weapon of the will. Therefore this path represents a wilful and conscious fusing together of the lower personality with the higher self. It also represents the unification of the higher self with the divine self. On the Tree of Life, the Path of Zayin runs from Binah to Tiphareth. The card colour is orange, the colour of Gemini in the King Scale.

KEY 7: PATH 18: THE CHARIOT: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Child of the Powers of the Waters. The Lord of the Triumph of Light”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Cancer. Its Hebrew letter is Cheth, meaning “fence” or “enclosure”. This card draws upon the symbolism of Jewish mysticism which describes the *Merkabah*, the chariot which is said to carry the throne of God. The Biblical Vision of the Prophet Ezekiel is also stressed, showing the four Kerubim or angels of the four elements.

The card shows two horses (one black and one white) pulling a chariot through the etheric planes. The black-and-white horses indicate that a balanced union of opposites is what powers the chariot. Other animals seen represent the Kerubim of Ezekiel’s vision. In the centre of the chariot is the sun, alluding to the Solar chariot of Apollo (Helios the Sun god). Also shown are the symbols of the sign Cancer and the Lunar crescent. In the centre of the sun is an eagle’s head in the form of a cup (both are symbols of water). At the top of the Chariot is

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the vault of the heavens with the rings of Saturn. The Charioteer is a sphinx-like figure in armour, who controls the horses not by reins, but by the force of his will. A white pentagram of spirit over his head controls and guides his actions.

The Chariot is the enclosure for the divine Spirit. One of the esoteric meanings of the Hebrew letter Cheth is “speech”. Speech, therefore, is an aspect of the Divine Spirit. Prayer is the way in which we speak to the Divine. Symbolic visions are used by the Divine to communicate back to us. This card shows a vision of the Divine descending through the planes. It is the descent of spirit into the manifest universe. The card indicates triumph and victory. The Path of Cheth runs from Binah to Geburah. The card colour is yellow-orange, the colour of Cancer in the King Scale.

KEY 8: PATH 19: STRENGTH: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Daughter of the Flaming Sword”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Leo. Its Hebrew letter is Teth, meaning “snake”. Here a woman is shown standing next to a fierce lion. The woman represents the will of the higher self which controls the power of the lion (or the power of the lower self). In Qabalistic terms it is the higher Neshamah controlling the Lower Nephesh. A line at the top of the card is the horizon line of the Abyss on the Tree of Life. Above it are the colours of the three Supernals - white, grey and black. The golden nugget seen at the centre of the three is the Philosopher’s Stone which represents true spiritual wisdom. This card also portrays some alchemical symbolism - the green lion alludes to raw, wild, untamed energy. The red lion is the tamed energy, controlled and harnessed by willpower.

Harnessing this raw energy through will is the essence of strength and courage. The lion represents brute strength. The

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serpent is a symbol of transformation - here it shows the transformation from feral energy to that which is controlled and made useful and ever more powerful. The Path of Teth is the second reciprocal path which straddles the three pillars from Chesed to Geburah. The yellow streaks in the background of this card refer to the colour of Leo in the King Scale.

KEY 9: PATH 20: THE HERMIT: The Esoteric Title of this card is "The Prophet of the Eternal, Magus of the Voice of Power". It represents the zodiacal sign of Virgo. Its Hebrew letter is Yod, meaning "hand". This card shows the old and wise master magician, standing in a desert holding a lighted lamp in the darkness which is all around him. His staff is surmounted by the Orphic Egg which symbolises the universe encircled by the creative fiery spirit.⁸The serpent on the staff also alludes to the Caduceus of Mercury, and Mercury is the planet which rules Virgo.

The Hermit uses the controlled power of the previous card. He transforms darkness into light through his creative will and his power (derived from the card of Strength). He is the light-bearer, holding out a hand for us to grab, showing us the way out of darkness to hidden wisdom. Yod means "hand", and thus the hand of the Hermit holds a lamp which throws light out into all dimensions. The Hermit represents the supreme will. This is the path of vibration - all things exist within the universe through vibration. It is also the path of the Logos, the creative word and divine inspiration. This path also has qualities of fire and earth, Yod and Virgo. Fire and earth are the first and last of the four elements, symbolised by the Oroboros, the snake which holds its tail in its mouth, another symbol of infinity. The Path of Yod runs from Chesed to Tiphareth. The cactus in the background is a tribute to Israel Regardie, our personal master magician, who lived in Arizona during the later years of his life.

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The card colour is yellow-green, the colour of Virgo in the King Scale.

KEY 10: PATH 21: THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Lord of the Forces of Life”. It represents the planet Jupiter. Its Hebrew letter is Kaph, which means “palm of the hand” or “an open hand”. A great revolving wheel is shown, spinning out cycles of energy. It is the wheel of life and death - a perpetual motion machine spiralling out the currents of individual lives.

The sphinx at the top of the wheel is the higher self of the individual which acts to stabilise the motion of the wheel. The dog-faced ape (Hermanubis) at the bottom is the lower personality or ego holding on to the wheel for dear life. The spokes of the wheel are the twelve zodiacal signs. Also shown are the triangles of fire and water which form a Hexagram. They are the two great opposing energies, whose interaction powers the wheel. The symbolism of Eliphas Levi is portrayed, showing his version of the Wheel of Ezekiel⁹ in alchemical symbolism around the rim of the wheel, along with the words *Taro* and *Rota*, and *Yod Heh Vav Heh* (the Tetragrammaton). The Path of Kaph runs from Chesed to Netzach. It is a path of karma, reincarnation, and cycling of energy. The card colour is violet, the colour of the planet Jupiter in the King Scale.

KEY 11: PATH 22: JUSTICE: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Daughter of the Lord of Truth. The Ruler of Balance”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Libra. Its Hebrew letter is Lamed, which means “ox goad” (cattle prod), a device that pokes us in the ribs to keep us on the path of spiritual growth. The card depicts the goddess Maat holding the scales of balance - law and truth - along with the Sword of Justice. Maat’s symbol is the feather, which is weighed against the contents of each individual’s heart. Two large pillars are also seen, but they

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have become huge scales balancing life and death symbolised by the candle and the skill. Fire and water triangles at the bottom of the pillars represent the two great opposing forces between the Sword of Justice must balance.

The serpent at the top of the card refers to the path of “Strength”, for strength is needed on this path as well. The double-edged sword of Justice can swing either way, to the side of Mercy or Severity. It can confer knighthood or chop off a limb - whichever is called for. The sword may seem like harsh medicine, but sometimes it becomes necessary to chop off a limb in order to save the patient. Maat is the Weigher of Souls, the equilibrator of imbalance. I like to refer to this card as the path of attitude adjustment. Maat gives us what we need, not always what we want. This is a path of equilibration and necessary adjustment. It runs from Geburah to Tiphareth. The card colours are green and red, colours associated with Libra in the King Scale. The colour red also reminds us of Geburah, the sphere of Severity.

KEY 12: PATH 23: THE HANGED MAN: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Spirit of the Mighty Waters”. It represents the element of water. Its Hebrew letter is Mem, which means “water”. The card shows a figure hanging from a tree. This is Osiris, the god-aspect of the card. Behind him is a figure of a drowned giant with a rainbow at his feet, the human aspect of the card. This card is totally reversible - when the human aspect is exalted, the God aspect is sacrificed, likewise when the God aspect is exalted, the human aspect is sacrificed.

The card symbolises a baptism of water along with the whole idea of baptism and rebirth after death. It is the concept of the divine death associated with all dying and resurrected god-myths (Osiris, Christ, Tammuz, Ishtar, etc.) It is a path of self sacrifice for the sake of divine knowledge. Sacrifice for

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something greater. This is a trance-state. Suspension. Temporary withdrawal and time-out for self-examination. It is also a reversal of normal secular thinking. Turning your world upside down in order to examine it closely. The Path of Mem runs from Geburah to Hod. The card colour is blue, the colour associated with elemental water.

KEY 13: PATH 24: DEATH: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Chief of the Great Transformers. The Lord of the Gate of Death”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Scorpio. Its Hebrew letter is Nun, meaning “fish”. One of the esoteric meanings of Nun is “movement”. In the card a skeleton is depicted holding a scythe amid a patch of fresh grass. The skeleton is a form of Osiris, the slain and resurrected god of Egypt. He is shown giving the signs of Osiris, Slain and Risen. Body parts in the grass represent pieces of the old personality which provide nourishment to the new lush vegetation - the new self which rises like a phoenix from the old self.

This is, in reality, not a card of death but of birth - new life forms are seen incubating in the grass. The old life has given way to the new. A blackened pot upon the head of the figure contains the gold of the alchemists - signifying dross matter harbouring the purest essence of the Divine. On two towers in the background are figures of Typhon and the Dragon of the Waters - both symbols of the corrosion which purges away the dead matter, leaving only the divine core of Spirit. This is a path of transition, transformation, and regeneration. The scorpion and the serpent in this card represent the lowest forms of water, while the eagle surrounding the form of the skeleton is the highest, most purified state of water. The path of Scorpio is a watery path. Yet water is the only one of the four elements which can become a solid, a liquid, and a gas. It is therefore the element of transformation which is attributed to this card. The

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Path of Nun runs from Netzach to Tiphareth. The card colour is greenish-blue, the colour of Scorpio in the King Scale.

KEY 14: PATH 25: TEMPERANCE: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Daughter of the Reconcilers. The Bringer Forth of Life”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Sagittarius. Its Hebrew letter is Samekh, which means “prop” or “support”. This path is also called the “Dark night of the Soul”, a difficult condition which refers to tempering opposites of fire and water within the personality. The “Dark Night of the Soul” is a special type of depression and loneliness that overtakes the mystic just prior to the experience of illumination.

One of the experiences attributed to this path is the “Vision Of Beauty”, or the vision of the higher self. But another experience of this path is the “Trial By Fire”. Both refer to the perfecting of the physical vehicle or temple - the body of the individual in preparation for spiritual ecstasy. This path is like a foundry where the psyche of the individual is tempered by fire and water, and shaped on the metal-smith’s anvil until it is strong and free of impurities. This tempering can have a very physical effect as well as a spiritual one. The Path of Samekh joins Yesod to Tiphareth (the fiery sphere of the Sun with the watery energies of the Moon). *Golden Dawn ritual calls for two versions of this card.*

THE FIRST VERSION shows the older, more corporeal form of Temperance. Here we see a woman with solid chains which bind the lion of fire and the eagle of water to her. She mixes the elements of fire and water in a cauldron before her. This card shows the physical and sometimes harsh “Trial By Fire” aspect of the path.

THE SECOND VERSION shows the newer, more spiritual form of Temperance. A great female angel is shown standing

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upon earth and water (representing physical matter and the creative mind). Her robe is blue, the colour of Sagittarius in the King Scale. She holds two vases, one of water and the other of liquid fire, which combine to form the infinity sign. The arrow of Sagittarius is poised to strike upward, initiating spiritual ecstasy. This version emphasizes the “Vision of Beauty” aspect of the path.

KEY 15: PATH 26: THE DEVIL: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Lord of the Gates of Matter. The Child of the Forces of Time”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Capricorn. Its Hebrew letter is Ayin, meaning “eye”. In this card a great demon is portrayed standing upon the altar of material existence - the cubical altar of the physical universe. The figure is made of the body parts of several different creatures which represent the elements of the physical universe. (The wings symbolise air, the hairy legs refer to earth, the eagle’s claws represent water and the figure holds the torch of fire.) The fire at the groin of the figure alludes to the sexual power of this path. He holds the ram horn of Aries which refers to martial power. The devil is also seen trampling protective white pentagrams underfoot. Two smaller demons are tethered to the altar, held prisoner by their own illusions of incarceration. Beyond them is a vast pile of gold and riches, the illusionary goals of mundane existence. The intended meaning here is that inner vision is necessary to overcome the illusionary obstacles in our spiritual path.

The Hebrew letter Ayin (“eye”) points to the true meaning of this misunderstood card. It refers to the Third eye - inner sight - seeing beyond mere physical appearances. This card shows also that mirth is required since “mirth” is the hidden meaning of the Hebrew letter Ayin. We must laugh at the illusions which bind us. Many times these illusions are of our own creation. This is the path of giving up illusions and seeing

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things in their proper light. It also means understanding the nature of illusion. The Devil here is not to be viewed in Christian terms of evil. Here he is presented as the ruler of manifested (and therefore *false*) form. He is a comic illusion made up of various animal parts which suggest the elements of the physical universe. Rather than run from this hideously comic form, we should learn to laugh at it. Laughter is the breaker of illusions and mirth is an important tool of spiritual well-being. The Path of Ayin runs from Hod to Tiphareth. The card colour is blue-violet, the colour of Capricorn in the King Scale.

KEY 16: PATH 27: THE TOWER: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Lord of the Hosts of the Mighty”. It represents the planet Mars. Its Hebrew letter is Peh, meaning “mouth”. Here we see the crown of the stone Tower sheared off by a lightning blast in the form of the Mars symbol. The figures falling from the top of the Tower are the Lords of Chaos, who represent imperfect forms sent back into the void whence they came.

This path indicates complete destruction of the old in order to rebuild the new. The Hebrew letter Peh (“mouth”) is used to indicate the mouth as a vehicle of vibration. It is the harsh vibration of Mrs and Geburah which has rocked the tower. The mouth, seen at the bottom of the card, emits the vibration of martial force which destroys false towers. (A false tower could be defined as an outmoded belief system; an old harmful habit, or a destructive life-style.) This path symbolises sudden and unexpected illumination or realisation. This is a natural consequence of spiritual evolution and growth. The Path of Peh is the last reciprocal or shared path on the Tree which runs from Netzach to Hod. The card colours are red and green, colours associated with Mars in the King Scale.

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KEY 17: PATH 28: THE STAR: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Daughter of the Firmament. The Dweller between the Waters.” It represents the zodiacal sign of Aquarius. Its Hebrew letter is Tzaddi, meaning “fish hook”. The woman shown in the card is the same as the High Priestess and the Empress. She is the great goddess Isis and Aima Elohim. She holds a grey vase and a black vase (referring to Chokmah and Binah) which pour forth the Waters of Life (pure fluid consciousness) forming a river at her feet. The Waters blend and form crystals, symbols of transformation of one form of energy into another. In the water are Lotus flowers, sacred to Isis. The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil are seen in the background.

An Ibis, the bird of Thoth, god of knowledge, sits in the Tree of Wisdom, showing that this is a path of conscious and focused meditation. A large heptagonal star, representing all the planets, is the source of all energy of the card. The hidden meaning of the letter Tzaddi is “imagination”. The tools of imagination are meditation and intuition. Tzaddi is a fish hook and therefore this card indicates that using the imagination is like casting the fish hook into the ocean of the subconscious mind - angling for spiritual knowledge. The card is also a vision of the upper astral, the realm of higher spiritual beings, such as angels. In addition, it signifies a change of energy from one form into another. The Path of Tzaddi runs from Netzach to Yesod on the Tree. The card colour is violet, the colour of Aquarius in the King Scale.

KEY 18: PATH 29: THE MOON: The Esoteric Title of this card is “The Ruler of Flux and Reflux. The Child of the Sons of the Mighty”. It represents the zodiacal sign of Pisces. Its Hebrew letter is Qoph, meaning “the back of the head” (the hidden meaning of Qoph is “sleep”). The card depicts two wild

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dogs baying at the moon. In the background are two towers with paintings of the twin Anubian sentinels who guard the path of evolution and truth. A crayfish, a lower animal form, symbolic of low-level consciousness, starts up the path of evolutionary progress. It seeks the path which leads out of darkness to the light of the Sun beyond. The Moon is seen waxing on the side of the Pillar of Mercy. A face is seen in the Moon, half light and half dark. It is the synthesis of all moon gods and goddesses. Four Hebrew Yods falling from the Moon refer to the Four Worlds of the Qabalah.

This path portrays the lower astral and the illusionary forms and phantoms created from the collective mind of humanity. This is also the path of the subconscious mind. It is the overcoming of one's fears and personal deceptions or personal demons of our own creation, and it is the path of evolution. The Path of Qoph lies between Netzach and Malkuth on the Tree. The card colour is red-violet, the colour of Pisces in the King Scale.

KEY 19: PATH 30: THE SUN: The Esoteric Title of this card is "The Lord of the Fire of the World". It represents the luminary of the Sun. Its Hebrew letter is Resh, meaning "head". The card depicts a sun shining its rays on two children. The sun is actually a large head, a face that has no mouth, alluding to the fact that communication with the Divine cannot be achieved through human speech but through an inner language of symbols. The Sun has twelve zodiacal rays, half of which are waved to symbolise vibration, and half are straight to symbolise radiation, two methods of energy movement. There are also the two currents of masculine and feminine energy. The two children are the twins of Gemini ruled by Mercury (or intellect) playing in a garden surrounded by a wall. The boy represents Taurus (earth) while the girl is Cancer (water). The stones of

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the wall represent the various degrees of the zodiac. It is the wall of knowledge. Once the children learn how to use knowledge, they can climb over the fence, but they must use the knowledge wisely and depend upon inner communication with the Divine to make wise decisions. This is the path of human intellect. It is Intellect acting upon the dualities of the human condition. It is also a path of inner communication with the Divine. The path of Resh is the conductor of the human thought process or intellectual energy. Human knowledge can be either beneficial or harmful - we have the knowledge to cure terrible diseases, as well as the knowledge to destroy the planet. That is why we are like naive children playing in a garden. We must tap into the higher mind represented by the Sun. The Path of Resh runs between Hod and Yesod on the Tree. The card colours are orange and blue, colours associated with the Sun in the King Scale.

KEY 20: PATH 31: JUDGEMENT: The Esoteric Title of this card is "The Spirit of the Primal Fire". It represents elemental fire. Its Hebrew letter is Shin, meaning "tooth". At first the image seems to express the Biblical scene of the last judgement, where a heavenly angel summons the dead to rise from the earth. But what this card is really expressing is the experience of initiation. Here we see four figures all of whom represent different forms of fire: The archangel Michael at the top symbolises solar fire, the dark angel Samael is volcanic fire. The feminine angel Anael is astral fire. Connecting these three figures is a green fire triangle. In the centre is Arel, who represents the Initiate - the latent or hidden fire. The fiery vision of Michael is surrounded by Seraphim (fiery serpents) in the form of a rainbow. The fire above and the water below causes steam and mist to rise in the centre of the card. The initiate rises from a tomb engraved with a red Hebrew letter Shin. This card

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shows a kind of baptism in fire, because spiritual energy is often described as fiery or passionate.

The Path of Shin truly represents the initiatory experience. It is spirit descending into physical matter and awakening for the first time to the divine presence. The experience is that of seeing for the first time that there is something eternal and divine that lies beyond the material world. The Path of Shin runs from Hod to Malkuth on the Tree. The card colours are red and green, colours associated with elemental fire.

KEY 21: PATH 32: THE UNIVERSE: The Esoteric Title of this card is "The Great one of the Night of Time". It represents the planet Saturn. Its Hebrew letter is Tau, meaning "cross". This card shows a veiled woman dancing within the vast space of the galaxy. This is Isis, or Aima Elohim, the Great Mother who represents the ocean of the subconscious mind. It is also the Great Mother of Binah (corresponding to Saturn) who is responsible for bringing all matter into form, as well as for breaking down matter. She is the door to life and death, the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega. The goddess holds the Wands of double Power, the positive and negative currents of energy which drive the entire universe. She dances in an oval shape made of twelve zodiacal spheres held together by seventy-two beads (representing the Schemhamphoresch as well as the seventy-two quincunxes of the zodiac). The whole image alludes to the womb of the universe out of which we are born. The seven pointed star symbolises the seven Qabalistic palaces of Assiah and the planets. The Kerubim on the outer corners of the card symbolise the four elements. This card actually has much in common with "The Fool" card, the beginning and the end being nearly one and the same. The Path of Tau refers to completion, synthesis, and culmination. The experience on this Path is that of a descent into the underworld,

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the astral plane, or the subconscious mind. It is the beginning of exploration into the Inner Self. Here the student is given the keys to the vehicle of the universe, in the form of the zodiacal signs, the planets and the elements. The Path of Tau runs from Yesod to Malkuth on the Tree. The card colour is blue-violet, the colour of Saturn in the King Scale.

THE FOUR WORLDS OF THE QABALAH:

The Qabalah teaches that there are four distinct levels of existence. These are the Four Qabalistic Worlds. Each world emanates from the one before it. Each world of being is progressively more substantial as the divine energy of the Tree reaches manifestation into physical form. These worlds are attributed to the Tetragrammaton *Yod Heh Vav Heh*, the four elements, fire, water, air and earth, the four tarot suits and the four-fold model of the manifest universe. These Four Worlds are:

Atziluth: archetypal, pure deity. This world corresponds to fire and the suit of wands.

Briah: archangelic, creative. This world corresponds to water and the suit of cups.

Yetzirah: angelic, astral, choirs or groups of angels. This world corresponds to air and the suit of swords.

Assiah: material, active world. This world corresponds to earth and the suit of pentacles.

The Four Worlds are each assigned their own scale of colours. These colours of the Golden Dawn are also given royal names: *The King Scale*, *The Queen Scale*, *The Prince Scale*, and *The Princess Scale*. Each of the numbered or small cards in the Minor Arcana from Ace through tens, represent of the ten Sephiroth in one of these four Qabalistic worlds. For instance, each of the four Aces represents the Sephirah of Kether (the

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first Sephirah) as it descends the Four Worlds toward manifestation. All of the Two's in the deck refer to the second Sephirah of Chokmah as it descends through the four planes of existence toward physical manifestation. And so on.

FLASHING COLOURS: The Flashing Colours are an important part of Golden Dawn teaching. These are complementary colours that lie opposite each other on an artist's colour wheel. Each element is given a pair of colours that flash together: wands symbolise fire, and the fire colours are red and green. Cups represent water, and the water colours are blue and orange. Swords refer to air, and the air colours are yellow and violet. Pentacles symbolise earth, and the earth colours are black and white. These colours are shown in the background of each card of the Minor Arcana or numbered cards of this deck.

Colours are important in magical work because they are symbolic images which speak directly to the subconscious mind. Colour can instigate changes in the emotional and psychological states of human beings. And colour is caused by differing qualities of the light. Colours, like other forms of light and energy, have their own vibrational rates, which can be applied to the workings of magic through the law of correspondences.

ACE OF WANDS: "The Root of the Powers of Fire." This card is the key to the colour scheme of the rest of the Minor Arcana cards of this particular deck. It shows a single wand that has three branches which end in a total of ten flames - one flame for each Sephirah on the Tree of Life. Each flame (or Sephirah) is divided into four colours which represent that particular Sephirah in one of the four Qabalistic Worlds: Kether in *Atziluth*, Kether in *Briah*, Kether in *Yetzirah* and Kether in

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Assiah. Also Chokmah in *Atziluth*, Chokmah in *Briah*, Chokmah in *Yetzirah* and Chokmah in *Assiah*, and so forth.

Thus the wand yields a total of forty colours which are each shown in the background of all the rest of the Minor cards in the deck. All of these colours are used in the remainder of the deck. Therefore in the Three of Cups the background colour will be black, the colour of Binah (the third Sephirah) in *Briah* - the creative world represented by the suit of cups. In the Two of Wands the background colour will be soft blue, the colour of Chokmah (the second Sephirah) in *Atziluth* - the archetypal world represented by the suit of wands. The twenty-two Yods in the card refer to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This card primarily represents the divine Spirit.

THE ACE OF CUPS: "The Root of the Powers of Water." Flashing colours are blue and orange. The background colour is white brilliance, the colour of Kether (the first Sephirah) in *Briah*, the creative world. It shows a feminine angelic hand holding a cup of flowing water. This card represents the divine consciousness. Traced in the water is the Hebrew letter Heh, the second letter of Tetragrammaton. Heh is the letter of the Great Mother. The card symbolises pure creativity, fertility, and productivity.

THE ACE OF SWORDS: "The Root of the Powers of Air." The flashing colours are yellow and violet. Background colour is white brilliance, the colour of Kether (the first Sephirah) in *Yetzirah*, the astral world. It represents the divine mind, the intellect or reasoning powers. It is invoked force as opposed to natural force such as shown by the Ace of Wands. A masculine angelic hand holds the sword, a double-edged weapon which must be used with caution. Also shown is the crown of Kether and on one side, the olive branch of peace, on the other side is the palm branch of suffering. This indicates two possible

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courses of action. Again, the sword is double-edged, it can be used for good or for ill. The six Hebrew Vavs refer to Tiphareth, the seat of the mind on the Tree of Life.

THE ACE OF PENTACLES: “The Root of the Powers of Earth.” The flashing colours here are black and white. The background colour is white-flecked gold, the colour of Kether (the first Sephirah) in *Assiah*, the world of action and matter. This card signifies manifestation and materialisation. Physical completion. A white feminine angelic hand holds a branch upon which is a large pentacle divided into five circles (the four colours of Malkuth and the white of spirit). The pentacle has twelve white rays which are the forces of the zodiac and it is charged with a red equal-armed cross. Again this alludes to the four elements guided by the fifth element of Spirit. The red roses refer to the process of manifestation, while the winged Maltese Cross above implies that the four elements must pass through all the stages of the Four Divine Worlds before manifesting into physical form.

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ENDNOTES

¹ What was thought to be the earliest tarot deck, the “Gringonneur Tarot” painted for Charles the 6th in 1392, has recently been dated to only the middle of the fifteenth century and is of Venetian origin. The oldest known tarot deck was painted for the Visconti-Sforza family in Milan around 1428 AD.

² Called simply, *The Tarot Trumps*.

³ Contained in “Book T” comprising Manuscripts N, O, P, Q and R.

⁴ Chalice or Cauldron related to Dagda, the Spear was associated with Lug, the Sword is assigned to Nuada and the square stone related to Fal.

⁵ Von Eschenbach wrote his *Parzival* around 1200 AD.

⁶ Five types of Magic which are categorised under the letters of the Pentagrammaton, YHShVH. Under YOD are attributed evocations, HEH corresponds to the consecration of talismans, SHIN to all higher workings of Spirit including (Aleph) invisibility, (Mem) Transformations, and (Shin) Spiritual Development. Divination is assigned to VAV, and Alchemy falls under HEH Final.

⁷ Printed in Francis King’s *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic and Alchemy*, Second Edition, 1987. The date of this paper is Nov. 10, 1892, according to Farr and Simpson.

⁸ It also represents the soul of the philosopher and the Mysteries. At the time of initiation, the shell is broken and the man emerges from his embryonic state. The Greek god of light - Phanes - was said to be born out of the Orphic egg.

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⁹ From his book on the Tarot, *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum*. 1896

ISRAEL REGARDIE

As I knew Him

CHIC CICERO

Before I talk about how I first met Israel Regardie, I'd like to give a very brief summary of his accomplishments. In the early years of this century, little was known about the techniques of western ceremonial magic because of the secrecy which kept these practices hidden. Unless a person happened to be a member of a magical group, there was little chance of learning the practices of high magic. This changed in 1937, when Israel Regardie published a book entitled *The Golden Dawn*, a collection of ceremonies and teachings from the famous magical order of the same name.

Who was Israel Regardie? Before his death in 1985, Israel Regardie was considered by many to be one of the last living Adepts of the Golden Dawn. The tradition represented by the Golden Dawn and its spin-off groups, the Stella Matutina and the Alpha et Omega, attracted many influential magicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among these were Dr. Westcott, MacGregor Mathers, Arthur Edward Waite, William Butler Yeats, Dion Fortune and Aleister Crowley. And among this extraordinary group of knowledgeable magicians was Israel Regardie.

Regardie was born in London on 17 November 1907 as Israel Regudy. His parents were poor Jewish immigrants. During World War 1, his older brother joined the army and his last name was mistakenly written down as "Regardie". This was adopted as the family name. In 1921, when he was 13 years old, Israel Regardie moved with his family to Washington DC

At an early age he developed an interest in the works of Madame Blavatsky, Hindu philosophy, and yoga. Sometime around 1925 or 1926, Regardie discovered a book which captivated his curiosity. The book was Part One of *Book Four* by Aleister Crowley. Regardie wrote to Crowley in Paris and eventually received a letter back. Soon after, Crowley offered

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him a job as his secretary in Paris. Regardie took the job in October of 1928, hoping that Crowley would teach him magic. Crowley never volunteered to teach him, however. So Regardie learned what he could from books.

Crowley's problems came to a head when he had a falling-out with his agent, who told French police that Crowley was a drug addict. As a result Crowley, Crowley's girlfriend and Regardie got kicked out of France altogether. Eventually they ended up in England again. But because of all the bad press, Crowley's new publisher soon went bankrupt. And Crowley could no longer afford to keep Regardie as his secretary. After attempting to fix Crowley's image by co-authoring the book, *The Legend of Aleister Crowley*, (1930), Regardie and Crowley drifted apart.

In 1932, Regardie published his first two books, *A Garden of Pomegranates* and *The Tree of Life*. The first book represented Regardie's own Qabalistic studies. The Tree of Life is considered Regardie's Great Work, and one of the most comprehensive texts on practical magic ever written.

About five years later, in 1937, Regardie sent his old friend Crowley a copy of *The Tree of Life* with a warm note. But after receiving the book, Crowley's response to Regardie's kindness was less than kind, Crowley insulting him with an anti-Semitic slur about his adopted name of "Francis", (a name given to him by a lady friend). So Regardie wrote Crowley an angry letter. Crowley took revenge by sending a slanderous letter about Regardie to all of his friends. The result was a final and complete break between the two men. Regardie was deeply wounded by the break-up of the friendship, and was only able to forgive Crowley in his later years.

The publication of *The Tree of Life* caused a lot of excitement in magical circles of the time. In the book, Regardie outlined some

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of the magical teachings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Although the Golden Dawn had ceased to exist in 1903, it continued to live on in its spin-off orders, the Stella Matutina and the Alpha et Omega. With the support of Dion Fortune, Regardie was invited to join the Stella Matutina. Around January 1933, Regardie joined the Bristol Hermes Temple, and made rapid progress through the grades. However, Regardie was terribly disappointed with the chiefs of the Stella Matutina. The order itself seemed to be in a state of decline. Regardie thought that the teachings of the Order would not survive much longer. Shortly after attaining to the grade of Theoricus Adeptus Minor in 1934, Regardie left the Order in December of that year.

In 1937 he published most of the Golden Dawn's ceremonies and teachings in four volumes *entitled The Golden Dawn*. He clearly stated his reasons for doing this in his book *My Rosicrucian Adventure* (1936) which documented his personal experiences with the Golden Dawn:

“... it is essential that the whole system should be publicly exhibited so that it may not be lost to mankind. For it is the heritage of every man and woman - their spiritual birthright.” “My motives have been to prove without a doubt that no longer is the Order the ideal medium for the transmission of Magic, and that since there have already been several partial and irresponsible disclosures of the Order teaching, a more adequate presentation of that system is urgently called for. Only thus may the widespread misconceptions as to Magic be removed.”

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Some members of the order were angry at this action, but others were quite happy that they no longer need to copy all the Order materials by hand.

In the aftermath, most temples of the Stella Matutina and the Alpha et Omega slowly stagnated and died. But because of Regardie's actions, all students of magic today owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. According to Francis King and Isabel Sutherland:

“That the rebirth of occult magic has taken place in the way it has can be very largely attributed to the writings of one man, Dr. Francis Israel Regardie.”

Regardie made a very difficult decision to break his oath of secrecy to a lethargic Golden Dawn in order to save the valuable teachings of the order. I personally believe it was the right thing to do. As a result all true seekers, regardless of their education, background, location, or finances, could benefit from the Order's teachings.

In 1936-37, Regardie wrote *The Philosopher's Stone*, a book about alchemy from a Jungian perspective. At the time he did not believe that laboratory alchemy could be successful. (Later in the 1970's, he worked with practical alchemists such as Frater Albertus of the Paracelsus Research Society who caused him to change his mind about laboratory alchemy. Unfortunately, one of Regardie's alchemical experiments went wrong and he seriously burned his lungs in the lab. He gave up the practice of alchemy and suffered from the effects of the accident until the end of his life.)

Regardie returned to the US in 1937, where he studied psychology and psychotherapy. Previously in London, he had studied psychoanalysis with Dr. E Clegg and Dr. J L Bendit.

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He entered the Chiropractic College of New York City to study psychology. His training encompassed the techniques of Freud, Jung, and Reich. After graduating in 1941 he took up practice as a lay analyst.

In 1938 he published *The Middle Pillar*, which gave step-by-step instructions on how to perform practical exercises of Golden Dawn ceremonial magic. In the same book, Regardie compared these magical techniques to the methods and theories of psychoanalysis. He wanted to tear down the artificial walls that had been built up between magic and psychotherapy.

For a time Regardie explored Christian mysticism, and wrote about his ideas in *The Romance of Metaphysics* (1946). In 1947, Regardie relocated to California and set up practice as a chiropractor and a Reichian therapist. He also wrote several more books including: *The Art and Meaning of Magic*, *Roll Away the Stone*, *Twelve Steps to Spiritual Enlightenment*, *A Practical Guide to Geomantic Divination*, *How to Make and Use Talismans*, and *Foundations of Practical Magic*.

Regardie retired from his practice in 1981 and moved to Sedona, Arizona, where he continued to write. His later books included *Ceremonial Magic*, *The Lazy Man's Guide to Relaxation*, and *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*. He continued to give advice on health matters and magic until the end of his life. Although Regardie is gone, his written works continue to teach and inspire new generations of students.

I first began corresponding with Israel Regardie in 1981. By that time we already had an independent Golden Dawn Temple in Columbus, Georgia. My ex-wife, Eva, and I had initiated ourselves and about 17 other people. We finally met Regardie in 1982 when he came to our temple for the purpose of consecrating our Vault and performing initiations into the Adeptus Minor grade of the Golden Dawn.

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Before I get into that, I would like to back up a minute and describe just how I got involved in all of this. It started in 1968, though like many magicians, I had been practising magic all my life - from the time I was a kid, I thought that travelling on the astral was normal. Throughout the 1960's I was a professional musician, playing the saxophone and travelling around the US with my own band. I was also studying any magical book I could get my hands on. But during the 60's there just weren't that many magical books to be found. One of my favourites at the time was Francis Barrett's *The Magus*, based on Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*. I learned how to make talismans and charge them to whatever purpose I wanted.

In 1968, I was travelling around the country with my ex-wife, who was a professional dancer. At that time I was making jewellery, props and elaborate costumes for showgirls. My wife was booked at a club for a two week engagement in Columbus, Georgia. One night while we were there, I had a very moving mystical experience. I was directed to bury a talisman in the centre of a crossroads. This was easy to do, because a new main road was under construction at the time. So, I took my personal talisman, which was dedicated to the god Indra - and which I had carried with me for ten years - and buried it in the middle of Victory Drive.

We continued to travel for a couple of years and then my wife and I separated and I moved back to Buffalo, New York, where I had grown up. One night I got a phone call from someone named "George" who had heard from a friend of mine that I was interested in buying a nightclub. Well, George had just taken over a nightclub and he needed a partner to run it. This club was called the Inferno Club, and it was located (you guessed it) in Columbus, Georgia. So in the early 1970's, I found myself being drawn to the city where I had buried my

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talisman years before.(Looking back I wish I had buried the talisman in Beverly Hills, or Las Vegas, or Palm Springs - anywhere north of the Mason-Dixon line! But the gods work in mysterious ways, and so Columbus, Georgia was where I was directed to go.)

You really need to have a clearer idea of just what kind of city Columbus, Georgia is. This will help you to understand why it is such an unlikely place to establish a Golden Dawn temple. Columbus is the second largest city in the state of Georgia in the heart of the Bible Belt. It is a military town, next door to Ft. Benning Army Base, home of the 82nd Airborne division. Drive down any street in Columbus and you're likely to see Confederate flags, pickup trucks with rifle-racks in the back window, and bumper stickers that say "God, guns and guts made America great." It's the type of city where you are likely to see a Ku Klux Klan parade marching down Main Street.

And just across the river is its sister, Phoenix City, Alabama. This town had its hey-day in the 1930's and 1940's when it was known as the Las Vegas of the South. Gambling was a big business, and so was hustling soldiers. Phoenix City jails specialised in locking up soldiers from Ft. Benning until they could pay for their freedom. Phoenix City gambling joints specialised in rolling soldiers and dumping them into the river through trap doors. According to local legend, things got so out of hand that at one point General Patton positioned tanks on the bridge between the two cities and threatened to blow Phoenix City off the map if his soldiers were not released. Gambling was outlawed in Alabama in the 1950's, and Phoenix City became just another little Southern outpost of Family Values. So this is the place where I was directed to build a Golden Dawn temple. (No one can say that the gods don't have a sense of humour!)

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Meanwhile, I became the sole owner of the Inferno Club, which featured exotic dancers. It provided me with a good income, and I was able to concentrate on my magical studies. After two years, I was reconciled with my ex-wife, who came down from Boston to live with me in Georgia.

As she was unpacking her belongings, I was immediately attracted to one of the books that she had bought in Boston. It was *The Golden Dawn* by Israel Regardie. After paging through it, I knew that I had found my path. I was very impressed with the ceremonies and the quality of work that the Golden Dawn produced. It felt just right to me - here was a system of magic that was effective and beautiful. I felt like I had just discovered a new purpose in my life. But to my despair, I discovered that there were no active temples of the Golden Dawn still in existence - or if there were, they must have been extremely secretive, and on the other side of the world. Eva and I decided to create our own Golden Dawn temple, using whatever information was available.

My business was going well, and it gave me the resources and time that I needed to begin building a Golden Dawn Temple. In 1977, I rented an old house that would be used only for the temple. The house was set back away from the road in a grove of very old Pecan trees. It was located on an acre of land with a long narrow shed. Behind one of the walls in the attic, we found a hidden door. This led into a little room over the carport, where we found an Altar and some ritual implements dating back to the early 1930's. Someone had been using this hidden little room for masonic rituals.

We immediately began to transform the house into a Golden Dawn temple. The two things I started to build right away were the Neophyte Hall and the Vault of the Adepti. The dining room was transformed into a Neophyte Hall, and the

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parlour was where I started to build the framework for the Vault. I also hired some of my employees to paint the other rooms in the house according to the planetary and Sephirotic correspondences. The bedroom was purple for Yesod, the office was yellow for Tiphareth, the class room was green for Netzach, the hall was red for Geburah, and the attic was black for Binah. The kitchen and bathroom I left alone. But it was a very colourful house. And the important thing to remember here is that I was renting this house.

I began constructing the Vault of the Adepti in the parlour. It had to be solid and soundproof, so I made it out of 2 x 4's and plywood and nailed them with spikes into the hardwood floor of the parlour. I wanted to make the Vault into a hidden chamber, as it is described in the story of Christian Rosencreutz. I didn't want anyone to discover the Vault by accident. The usual route to the parlour where the Vault was located was completely blocked off. You could get into the Vault through a small door that I had cut into the back wall of a closet. (Now remember, I was renting this house. So the landlady was never allowed into the house to see what we were doing. I'm sure she wouldn't have appreciated it.)

Between the parlour containing the Vault, and the dining room containing the Neophyte Hall, was a pair of sliding wooden doors. The Sun Wall of the Vault was constructed so that it opened outwards into the Neophyte Hall. For the Pastos of Christian Rosencreutz (or the Chief Adept), I had purchased a small coffin at a local funeral home, and painted it with the appropriate designs and colours.

When the Neophyte Hall was finished, we initiated ourselves into the 0=0 grade. We then initiated about fourteen other people who wanted to become members of our temple. We called our temple Isis-Urania, after the original London

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temple of Mathers, Westcott and Woodman. And at the time, we had nothing except Israel Regardie's *book The Golden Dawn*, to go on. So our temple formed a study. One night, a young man walked into my club and handed me a flyer about a group called the OTO (the Ordo Templi Orientis), which was based on the teachings of Aleister Crowley, who I knew had once been a member of the Golden Dawn. There was something about the guy I didn't like, so I threw him out of the club. Later we had a chance to read the flyer and I became curious about the OTO. We decided to call the number on the flyer and check it out. Once we explained our interest in the Golden Dawn, we were told that since there was no more Golden Dawn, the OTO was the next best thing. Eva was particularly drawn to the Thelemic current. It seemed like a good idea to join the OTO and receive more formal magical training. So that is what we did. I decided that I would fly in Grady McMurtry, the Caliph of the OTO for formal initiations and instruction in magic. It was at this point that we were now involved with two magical systems, the Golden Dawn and the OTO. Half of the temple house was dedicated to the OTO, and half was dedicated to the Golden Dawn. We had the Isis-Urania Temple of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and Camp A.O. Spare of the OTO. (It was truly a house divided!)

In 1978, we had to prepare the OTO half of the house for Minerval initiations. I hung a large parachute from the ceiling of the dining room, which made the room look like a tent in the middle of an oasis. The parlour, where the Golden Dawn Vault of the Adepts was being built, was not quite blocked off from the rest of the house. But the framework for the seven walls was already up.

Grady McMurtry was an impressive looking man - a tall man dressed in jeans, a worn-out jacket, and a round straw hat. He

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had a great white beard and a long pony-tail. He looked like a large lanky garden gnome. Naturally, we stayed up and talked about magic until the early hours of the morning. I don't think anybody got any sleep that first night. As we were giving Grady a tour of the temple, he walked through the parlour and could not help but notice the uncompleted framework of the seven Vault walls. I'll never forget the expression on Grady's face as he walked through this structure. He turned to me and said "What the hell does this have to do with the OTO?"

After the Minerval initiations, we began a programme of study under Grady's direction for a couple of years. But I also continued to work on the Vault and we performed the Opening of the Neophyte Hall on a regular basis. And we continued to initiate people into the Golden Dawn. Although I'm sure that the Thelemites wouldn't appreciate it, we often used the OTO to screen prospective candidates for admission into the Golden Dawn. At one point, we had about 40 people initiated into the OTO, and about 14 people initiated into the Golden Dawn.

Grady could see that our primary interest was still the Golden Dawn. Eventually he gave us the postal address of Israel Regardie. We were somewhat stunned by this, because we thought that Regardie was dead. We never imagined that he was alive and well and living in Sedona, Arizona.

At Isis-Urania, I was in charge of building the Vault of the Adepti and the day-to-day running of the temple. My ex-wife was in charge of all our magical correspondence at the time, so soon after, she wrote a letter of introduction to Regardie, telling him about our Golden Dawn temple, our connection to Grady and the OTO - and our magical work in general. It wasn't long before we received a letter back from Regardie. The following is an excerpt from his letter of 26 September, 1981. In it,

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Regardie addresses us for the first time with the standard Thelemic greeting:

“Cara Soror,

‘Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

‘I enjoyed getting your letter of the 21st, but was particularly excited by the idea that you had the ingenuity, the strength and the ability to build a Vault. That, to me, is very exciting. The truth is I haven’t seen a Vault since about 1935, and if your Vault is a functioning one, with a pastos, etc., one of these days, if and when I feel more like a human being, and have a few excess bucks, I might pay Columbus, Georgia a visit just to see your temple and the Vault.

‘Good luck, Soror. Keep up the good work. And don’t worry about changing the Vault of the 5=6 Ritual because of the new Aeon. I think the phrase “rituals of the old time are black” or however the phrase goes has no reference to this at all. I will say, however, that I think the elemental ritual - between the Neophyte and the Adeptus Minor grade - can and should be altered. Some are too long and tedious. See my new book “Ceremonial Magic” which is based entirely on the method of consecrating the vault, or of opening the Vault on Corpus Christi Day. I call it Opening by Watchtower.

‘Good luck to you, and may the Gods bless and keep you.

‘Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally,
Regardie”

Eva continued to write letters to Regardie and we eventually contacted him by ‘phone as well. Constructing the Vault was

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my responsibility. By now the Vault was almost finished and I spent several days and nights working on it. I also spent a few exhausted nights sleeping in it. Regardie was very interested in the Vault's progress, and he sent us a paper on the Vault, called "The Book of the Tomb" - a Golden Dawn manuscript describing the symbolism of the Vault. This helped me quite a bit. And by May of 1982, the Vault was completed.

It was about this time that Regardie wrote us a letter asking our permission to bring a student of his to our temple to be initiated into the 5=6 grade. He was also in contact with a resourceful individual who had also founded his own independent Golden Dawn. The following is a letter that Regardie wrote to this individual, whom I will refer to as (D), on the 6th. May, 1982 in response to his inquiry.

"Care Frater,

'Nice to hear from you again. Your letter was very interesting. I will be very brief. Most of your questions are answered by a paper on the Vault which I have sent to a friend in Georgia - of whom, more anon. Flying Rolls are all published in a book by Francis King entitled Astral Projection (etc. etc.) Written examinations. No, I don't have any of them now. But they were all very straight forward; no catch questions or similar nonsense. If you are familiar with the material, the questions will pose themselves.

I hesitated at first, but now I think I can tell you what was on my mind when I first heard from you. A correspondent of mine is also attempting to found a Temple of the Golden Dawn there. She has already (with her own team, members of course) initiated several into the Neophyte grade. And has anticipated future growth

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by spending the last several months on building a Vault of the Adepts. Since you are working the Order system and have started your own temple, I'd like to suggest you get in touch with them. Both of you have something to contribute to the other.

Her name is Mrs. Eva MacGregor Cicero, of (address), Columbus, Georgia. Her phone number is (#). She has a paper on the Vault and its accoutrements which I loaned her. It would answer some of your questions. Do get in touch with her. As I say, if you are both operating independent Temples, you may be useful to one another. She has the Vault which you could see and use. You have the magical experience which her group could certainly use. Etc. Etc.

Let me know the outcome of this correspondence or meeting.

Vale Frater.

Fraternally,

A.M.A.G.

Ad Majorem Adonai Gloriam"

We continued to communicate with Regardie and with those individuals he suggested we get into contact with. The result was that in June of 1982, Regardie came to Columbus, Georgia to perform initiations into both the First and Second Orders of the Golden Dawn. He was accompanied by (M), a student from California. (D) also arrived later that same weekend. Regardie arrived on Wednesday, 23 June, because the following day was Corpus Christi, the day the Golden Dawn traditionally consecrated the Vault of the Adepts.

When I first met Regardie, he was in his seventies. He insisted that we call him Francis - a name that had been given to

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him years ago by a lady friend, Clare Cameron, who *wrote The Green Fields of England*.

Regardie impressed me very much with his warmth, his ready smile, and his wonderful Scorpio sense of humour. He was small in size, but great in spirit. When Regardie arrived in Georgia, we had to get a large canister of oxygen for him. Years ago, he had burned his lungs in an alchemical experiment that went wrong. Every now and then, he would say that he had to go and “take a puff of air” - and he would disappear into the bedroom where his oxygen was kept.

The day of his arrival, we took him out to eat at one of our favourite restaurants, called “Crowley’s”. Regardie loved it.

We gave him a tour of our temple and the Vault, and he was quite pleased with our work. However, he didn’t like the idea of a Golden Dawn Temple and an OTO Temple in the same building. He told me time and time again: “Chic, you can’t do this. Golden Dawn and OTO don’t mix. The currents are different.” Grady McMurtry had told me the exact same thing - many times. But in those days, I thought that I could bring the two systems of magic together. Now I know better.

At one point we showed him a large round table in the OTO section of the temple house. This table was covered with OTO symbolism that we had painted on it. Regardie stared at it, circled it, and frowned at it for several minutes. Suddenly, he made a Projection Sign (also called the Attacking Sign) at the table a number of times - very forcefully. Finally he made the Sign of Silence at the table and walked away from it, never giving it a second glance. (I sometimes wonder if this marked the beginning of the end of our OTO temple.)

On the day of Corpus Christi, Thursday, 24 June, with all members of Isis-Urania Temple of the Golden Dawn present, Regardie, acting as Chief Adept, consecrated our Vault.

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Members of our temple who were not acting as officers in the ritual sat in the Neophyte Hall and watched the ceremony through the sliding double doors between the Neophyte Hall and the Portal area in front of the Vault. I don't think that anyone who was there at the time will ever forget it.

The following day was Friday the 25th. That afternoon Regardie gave a lecture at the temple house to all Golden Dawn members. This entire lecture was recorded. (D) and his wife arrived later that evening.

Some people have the impression that Golden Dawn magicians are stuffy armchair occultists. Well, NOT Regardie. Francis loved wine, women and song. Friday night, we took Regardie to our nightclub, which featured exotic dancers. Some of our dancers were initiated into either the Golden Dawn or the OTO. Imagine a group of beautiful women wearing little more than G-strings and high heels flocking around Regardie with copies of *The Golden Dawn*, asking for his autograph. Needless to say, he loved every minute of it.

The following day was Saturday, June 26th, and it was time for more ritual. As a note of interest - you'll remember that I said the entrance leading into the Vault was through a door cut into the back wall of a closet. On the door to this closet was a reproduction of a painting that I had owned for several years. It was a Rembrandt entitled "A Man in Armour". I had hung it on the closet door because I thought it was a nice painting. Well, (D) pulled out a book called *A Christian Rosencreutz Anthology* by Rudolf Steiner. In the front of the book was a picture of this same painting, and it was said to represent none other than Christian Rosencreutz himself. So, unknown to us at the time, we had a painting of Christian Rosencreutz hanging on the secret entrance to the Vault of the Adepti. We took this as a good sign.

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Later, with a small initiating team consisting of (D) and his wife, my ex-wife Eva, and myself, Regardie initiated one person into the 5=6 grade of Adeptus Minor. On the following day (Sunday), Regardie initiated another individual into the 5=6 grade. On Monday, Regardie asked Eva if she wanted to be initiated into the Adeptus Minor grade. She declined, and asked to take an initiation into the Neophyte Grade instead. Although we had initiated ourselves into the Neophyte Grade years before, Eva wanted to go through the ceremony with Regardie as her initiator. And she wanted to experience all of the grades in order. With Regardie as the Hierophant, we initiated Eva into the 0=0.

On Tuesday, Regardie asked me if I wanted to take an initiation into the 5=6 grade. He acknowledged that in building the Vault, I had undertaken 6=5 work and I was entitled to a 5=6 initiation from him. He considered me every bit as responsible for the initiations as he was. But a week of rituals and lectures had taken its toll on him. I could see that he didn't feel well, and he was very tired. So I declined his offer, and told him that we would do it next time around. So in the middle of the week, we went with Regardie to New Orleans, for three days of sight-seeing and relaxation.

But there was never to be a next time as far as initiations from Israel Regardie were concerned. He never quite felt up to doing it again. This was the only time that Regardie ever initiated anyone into either the First or Second Orders of the Golden Dawn.¹ Ever. (If anyone tells you otherwise, they are lying.) And now he had two Adeptus Minors who could perform any initiations that were required. So he really didn't need to do any more initiations. He had done what was necessary to pass on an initiatory current to our group. I personally believe that this was his last great magical act - a

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duty that he was directed to carry out. So, I didn't take a 5=6 initiation from Regardie. Instead, I later when through all of the grade ceremonies with one of the individuals whom Regardie had initiated.

Regardie himself did not want to be bothered with running a temple. He was content to leave that responsibility to those he initiated. It wasn't long before (M's) temple in California was experiencing personality and ego conflicts. Regardie wanted no part of that. He never actively participated as an office in a temple or ritual again, although he sometimes sat in and watched. He became an adviser of sorts. And he was happy to lend out Golden Dawn manuscripts, and offer personal instruction and magical insights to his students.

Some of the things that Regardie personally taught me were: The correct way to project energy and charge talismans using the Projection Sign and the Sign of Silence: Charging talismans using the Middle Pillar ritual: Certain methods of healing using the Middle Pillar ritual and colour visualisation: The Opening by Watchtower.

Regardie never missed an opportunity to tell me, over and over again, that Thelema and Golden Dawn were incompatible, and I could not mix the two systems. One would eventually win out. He would get angry when people associated him with Thelemic Magic because of his past friendship with Crowley. (He would say "God-damn it, I'm a Golden Dawn man!")

But for the time being, I was still exploring both magical currents. I considered Grady McMurtry a close friend. It was Grady who had given me Regardie's address in the first place. If not for Grady, I would have probably quit the OTO. Grady and I used to argue about magic for hours. And in spite of their magical differences, Grady and Francis were friends. It was a kind of friendly rivalry.

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One time, when Grady came to Columbus to do OTO initiations, he asked to see the Vault of the Adepti. This was after the Vault was finished and after the 5=6 initiations. I told him flat out “NO”. This infuriated him. I remember Grady sitting at my kitchen table, pounding his fists up and down, and yelling, “Don’t you know who I am? I’m the Caliph of the OTO! And you’re refusing to let me see the Vault of the Adepti?” “Absolutely,” I told him. “You haven’t been initiated into the Golden Dawn.” He wasn’t happy about it, but eventually he stopped pounding the table. I told Regardie that I refused to let Grady see the Vault. He got a big laugh out of it. “Good for you, Chic!” he told me.

On another occasion when Grady came to Columbus, we just got home from the airport, and we were sitting around and talking. Then we started to notice a couple of big green flies in the house. A few minutes later there were more flies. And then there were more flies. Soon the house was filled with big green flies. It was really a sight to see. Within half an hour after we got home, Grady, Eva and I were opening doors and windows, trying to shoo hundreds of flies out. In the middle of all this, the ‘phone rings. I pick up the ‘phone and Regardie is on the other end. “Hi, Chic!” he says, “Has Grady arrived yet?” I told him yes, and that we were all busy trying to chase big green flies out of the house - flies that had come from nowhere. Regardie laughed and said “You better go take care of the flies. I’ll talk to you later.” He was still laughing as he hung up the ‘phone. (I’ll let you decide for yourself what you think about this event.)

As far as Regardie’s attitude toward Crowley was concerned, he had a tendency to poke fun at “The Old Man” as he called Crowley. Regardie would often make insulting or comic remarks about Crowley and his teachings. He often psycho-analysed Crowley. He made a joke out of the name

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Aiwass, the intelligence that transmitted *The Book of the Law* to Crowley - and called him Eye-wash. He jokingly referred to Thelemites as “termites”. He criticised Crowley a lot, but if anyone else criticised Crowley, he would strongly defend the “Old Man”. I guess Regardie felt that his past personal experience with Crowley gave him the right to criticise him - and those who didn’t know Crowley had no such right.

Regardie thought that some of Crowley’s teachings were useful for any student of magic. He especially liked Crowley’s Liber Resh, a series of four solar adorations that are performed at certain times of the day. But he disliked many other of Crowley’s rituals. There was a time when I was performing Crowley’s Liber Reguli on a regular basis. This is a ritual designed to invoke the energies of the Aeon of Horus. It is also designed to shake up one’s personal universe. At one point, Regardie called me up in the middle of the night and he told me: “Chic, stop doing that God-damn Liber Reguli! Do the Watchtower ritual instead!” He wanted me to do Golden Dawn rituals, not Thelemic ones.

The following letter dated 12 November, 1982 was written by Regardie and addressed to Eva and Isis Urania Temple. It shows that Regardie no longer addressed us as Thelemites but as Golden Dawn magicians. It was his desire to pull us away from Thelema and strengthen our ties to the Golden Dawn and the Rosicrucian traditions.

Cara et V H Soror,

Roseae Rubeae at Aureae Crucis.

This is the form of greeting that apparently our ancient Brethren employed. Upon greeting one another, one

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would say *Roseae Rubeae*, and the other would reply et *Aureae Crucis*. Then both would repeat in unison *Benedictus Dominus Deus Noster qui dedit nobis hoc Signum*.

It occurred to me that, since the Crowley people always begin their correspondence with *Do what thou wilt, etc.*, and end it with *Love is the law, etc.*, there is no reason why we should not adapt the old rule to our modern praxis. This is offered merely as a suggestion. *Benedictus Dominus Deus Noster qui dedit nobis hoc Signum*.

Fraternally yours,
A.M.A.G.

In 1983, I drove across the country to visit Regardie in Sedona and Grady in Berkley, which was the home of the Grand Lodge of the OTO. Of course Grady wanted to strengthen my ties to the OTO. In Berkley, he initiated me into the 3rd Degree. He also took me to a performance of the Gnostic Mass, and he invited me to sit in on a meeting of the 9th Degree Council.

On my way to California, I had stopped in Sedona first to visit Regardie. On my return, I stopped in Sedona as well. By now I was getting somewhat confused about the differences between Golden Dawn and Thelema. I remember asking Regardie about how the gods of the New Aeon fit in with the old gods of the Golden Dawn. Regardie just laughed and said that the Thelemic gods were just the old gods with new names. Crowley had changed the name of the gods to fit the gematria of his own magical system.

In addition to teaching me certain magical techniques, Regardie also taught me how to lose in chess. He was a very good chess player. His skill probably developed during those chess games in Paris with Aleister Crowley and Gerald Yorke,

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when Crowley - blindfolded - would beat both of them at the same time.

Regardie also used to sing while he was beating me at chess - it was always a song about Macroprosopus and Microprosopus. (He was the Macro, and I was the Micro.) The one time I did beat him was the one time he let me win.

Sedona is a very modern tourist town in northern Arizona that caters to people on vacation who are looking for a piece of the Old West out in the painted desert. It is also a Mecca for several New Age communities. It is surrounded by an area of beautiful red rock mountains, which drew Regardie to the area. He used to tell me that Sedona was the only area in the world outside Egypt where you could find such red stone mountains. Every evening we used to watch the sunset create shadows on the mountains from the large picture window in Regardie's living room - we sat and watched the shadows transform the mountains into different Egyptian gods - Isis, Horus, and others.

Regardie used to tell me that he was the world's worst businessman. He deeply regretted selling his copyrights to *The Golden Dawn* to Aries Press. This was around 1947, when he had moved to Los Angeles and needed money to set up his practice as a chiropractor. In the late 1960's, Aries Press sold the copyrights to *The Golden Dawn* to Llewellyn Publications. Regardie tried and failed to buy back the copyrights from Llewellyn. He was quite upset about this. His frustration with Llewellyn resulted in the establishment of a Trust Fund that Regardie thought would legally protect both him and his writings.

In the early 1980's, Regardie began to work on a new version of the Golden Dawn book, called *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*. Regardie was able to get a complete set of original Golden Dawn documents from Gerald Yorke, who

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had in his possession the GD papers of Frederick Gardner from the original Isis Urania Temple in London. Carr Collins travelled to England to get these papers for Regardie's new book.

Since *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic* was similar to *The Golden Dawn*, Regardie was very worried about getting sued by Llewellyn Publications for copyright infringement. To protect himself, Regardie had a publisher friend of his, whom I will call (N), set up a Trust Fund. All of Regardie's worldly possessions were put into this trust fund.

Regardie's nephew was the beneficiary, and (N) was the trustee. The whole point of it was to protect Regardie from any lawsuits (real or imagined) from his other publishers. It was simply a business arrangement. Regardie was afraid of litigation. And he was quite fond of (N). He considered him a street-wise businessman who would protect his interests.

Regardie also began plans for the Israel Regardie Foundation, which was to be run by his publisher - Falcon Press. Plans were made for the foundation to be a library and a temple in Scottsdale, Arizona. (Regardie wanted to move to Scottsdale, because the climate there was better for his health.) Regardie never intended this Foundation to interfere in any way with the Golden Dawn temples that he was working with. He made this clear in *The Regardie Tapes Series 2* which were produced in 1984. On Tape One, Regardie states: "It should be noted that the Foundation shall not interfere in any way with those temples now already established or will be in the future." The temples that he was referring to were ours, run by those individuals who had been present at the consecration of the Vault in 1982. The centre in Arizona was mainly to be a centre for Golden Dawn studies.

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The Foundation was set up, but Regardie died before he moved to Scottsdale, and before the plans for the library or the temple ever really got off the ground.

Before his death, I continued to visit Regardie in Sedona whenever I could. At one point I drove across the country to Sedona, picked up Regardie, and drove on to California. The two of us sat in on a Golden Dawn meeting of the LA temple. It was in 1983 that Regardie went to New Zealand with (M) to meet with Pat Zalewski. Regardie had gone to New Zealand in the hope of finding some additional Golden Dawn manuscripts for his book *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*. After returning from New Zealand, Regardie had a falling out with (M). He ended his relationship with her and had no further dealings with her. He continued to work with us, however. Around this time, (M) was also having problems with her temple in LA. In 1983 a number of people resigned from the temple due to personality conflicts and endless bickering.

It was about this time that Eva and I separated and eventually divorced. Eva moved to Tennessee to attend a state university, and I continued to support her financially. 1983 was the year I met Tabatha, and we've been together ever since.

After *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic* was published in 1984, Regardie was starting to regret his business relationship with (N) and Falcon Press. The book was badly designed and poorly put together. While autographing two copies for Tabatha and myself, Regardie noticed that some important speeches were missing from the Neophyte Ritual. Cursing at the publisher, and at himself for not being a better proof-reader, Regardie typed out the missing speeches on his typewriter and pasted them into our books with scotch tape. He often called the book "the Doorstop Edition" because he said "it was big enough to stop a door with". To this day, many of our

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members refer to that book as “the Doorstop Edition”. (It’s easy to see how some traditions get started - a few of our members now refer to *The Golden Dawn* by Llewellyn as “the Junior Doorstop”.)

Regardie was also upset with the direction that Israel Regardie Foundation was taking. He felt that the foundation was becoming more of a money-making enterprise, rather than the elitist organisation he had originally wanted it to be. One person, who had resigned from the LA temple, became the Temple Chief of (N’s) newly formed Golden Dawn group, which began under the umbrella of Israel Regardie Foundation. Regardie was now being asked by the Foundation to do a series of expensive lectures on the teachings of the Golden Dawn - something he was steadfastly opposed to. He felt that this was an abuse of the Order’s name for money. Although Regardie believed that no magician should be poor or have to struggle to make a living, he was adamantly opposed to the idea of magical groups exploiting students for personal financial gain.

Regardie expressed his concerns about the Foundation in a series of letters to me. These letters were designed to be preserved by me, in order to protect Regardie’s name and the name of the Golden Dawn - and to let people know that he did not approve of the way that the Foundation and the Falcon Press Golden Dawn group were doing things.

A letter dated 3 May, 1984 states this in clear terms. (The parentheses are mine.)

Dear Chick,

Thanks for ringing me this morning. It was nice talking to you. Good luck be yours, now that you’ve sold the

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nightclub. Hope you find something else into which you can sink your energies successfully and happily.

I am enclosing copies of some agreements I had with (N) and the Falcon Press. You already have a copy of the Irrevocable Trust agreement. I am sending them to you because frankly I am fed up to the gills trying to explain to enquirers how come I have got involved in giving a lecture or workshop to people like (K) - whom I actually detest. I am not in favour of schisms in any Temple. Too reminiscent of the earliest days of the Order.

Anyway, I want you to have them. If I kick the bucket sometime, you are the only one with copies of these documents. So that you can tell people like (M) or anyone else to go screw themselves if they present a bunch of falsehoods, etc.

All the best to you,
Always,
Francis

A complete letter dated 6 June, 1984 states:

Dear Chick,

Just a brief line to let you know that the so-called Workshop in Los Angeles has been cancelled. In other words they didn't get the requisite number of subscriptions first. Thank Heavens!

All that remains now is to break or change the existent contracts which bound me. I shall be seeing (N) sometime within the next several weeks, at which time we shall talk about them. If we can, so far so good. If

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not, then I'll have to procure a damned good attorney and break them that way. The Irrevocable Trust will have to wait until the threat of a couple of legal actions has past. Hope all is well, and all the best.

As ever,
Francis

P.S. The reverse is an old piece of stationary I used over 20 years ago, which I've just discovered and will start using again. I love it.

And here is an excerpt from a letter dated 24 June, 1984:

Dear Chick,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a note from Falcon Press. It is the first step in breaking up the stupid way in which I permitted myself to be bound so whole-heartedly to them which enabled them to put over that ridiculous exploitative set of lectures. That can't happen again. The rest of the contracts can, with a little time, be cancelled equally. I want you to have them, and the other papers I sent you, in the event I kick the bucket, and some people whose name need not be mentioned endeavour to state that I betrayed the G.D. with exploitation.

Do give me the dates when you intend to come out Westwards I want to put it down on my calendar, so that I will know how to fit in other friends who are trying to make arrangements to come to Sedona.

Regardie made me promise that I would defend his name and the name of the Golden Dawn from exploitation and lies. This is what I have tried to do ever since.

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In late 1984, I was still supporting my ex-wife, Eva, who was obtaining a college degree. At that time she expressed an interest in being initiated into the Portal grade, stating that she had initiated herself through the elemental grades. I asked Regardie if he wouldn't mind coming to Georgia to do more initiations. Regardie considered it, but his health would not allow it. He suggested that I send Eva to the other Adepts for initiation.

The following is an excerpt from a letter dated 5 December, 1984:

Dear Chic,

Am glad you'll be out for Xmas. Forgive me for refusing your invitation to come to Georgia, but carrying suitcases is forbidden for the next couple of months, and I'm still feeling lousy.

Eva and the Portal. Why not ask (D) to do it? [...] Or, why not ask (M) in LA. The same reason - she is just as indebted to you as anyone. Give her or (D) a ring on the 'phone.

Sorry I'm declining again, but I'm really not in any condition to initiate. Every 15 years or, when Saturn is in opposition or transiting my Ascendant and Sun and Mercury, I feel low, and never attempt any magic of any kind until my energy level returns to par.

Until later then,
Always,
Francis

In 1984, Grady McMurtry died of congestive heart failure. With Grady's death, my ties to the OTO were lessened. I had

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remained in the Order just because of my friendship with Grady, and for no other reason. With Grady gone I felt no real connection with the OTO, and I was not at all happy with the way the Order was being run after Grady's death. Grady had given me the authority to initiate up to the third degree. After Grady's death, I had performed a small number of initiations into the OTO. But I was starting to have an ethical crisis. One week I was performing Golden Dawn initiations, and the next week I would be doing OTO initiations. I gradually became aware of what both Grady and Regardie had told me all along - that the two currents don't mix. I felt that I was not being true to either current, or the people that came to me from both traditions for initiation. I was not doing either current any justice. But I also knew that my real love was the Golden Dawn. So I stopped doing initiations for the OTO and gradually pulled away from the Order entirely. I made my choice to continue with the Golden Dawn.

At the end of April, 1985, Tabatha and I went to visit Regardie in Sedona for two weeks. As always, Regardie was a gracious host. Tabatha had been working on a series of drawings for her Tarot deck, and Regardie was very interested in it. He had a large collection of Tarot decks. He was never happy with the Golden Dawn Tarot Deck by Robert Wang, and was hoping to commission an entirely new deck. He encouraged Tabatha to continue her work on the tarot and indicated that he might back its production.

We also discussed breaking the contracts that bound him to Falcon Press and the Israel Regardie Foundation. I firmly believe that if Regardie had lived another year or two, he would have been able to distance himself from the Foundation. But Regardie still had a certain fondness for (N), who was a fellow psychologist. Regardie described (N) as someone who was only

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marginally interested in the Golden Dawn, but who deserved to be initiated into the Golden Dawn. We made plans to go to New Zealand to initiate (N) into the Neophyte grade. But of course this particular trip never took place, since Regardie died only days after we discussed this.

Regardie loved company. We spent the days dining at Regardie's favourite restaurants, driving around the red rocks overlooking Sedona, and going to an art gallery to see several works by Salvador Dali. Our evenings were spent talking about magic and many of the colourful magicians that Regardie had met and worked with over the course of his life. We also did some Middle Pillar exercises and talisman consecrations with him. One day, the three of us drove down to Phoenix for a day and saw the movie *Amadeus*, since Regardie was fond of Mozart.

Regardie always had a ready smile, a no-holds-barred honesty, and a mischievous Scorpio sense of humour. He enjoyed good food and drink, women, boxing, professional wrestling, and classical music. He enjoyed the unique red rock outcroppings of Sedona as much as he enjoyed playfully teasing the local New Age inhabitants of that town.

One time when we had stopped at a local Arby's for a quick lunch, Regardie could not resist teasing a group of New Agers who were in line behind us. Regardie acted as if he was complete novice and asked them what they were talking about. "Oh, it's very cerebral," one lady replied, and she continued to explain how they were interested in the mind's psychic abilities. "Oh," said Regardie, "you mean the mind has pish-ic abilities!" (Pish-ic was Regardie's favourite way of mispronouncing the word psychic.) Regardie continued to play this game until our food arrived. I'm sure the group in question never had an idea who they were talking to. But we could tell by the look in their

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eyes that they were thinking to themselves, “Just who is that nice old guy?”

Our vacation came to an end, and we left Regardie around 1 March, 1985. Regardie had developed a nasty cold and he did not want us to leave. But I had to get back to my club.

On 10 March, 1985 Regardie died of a massive heart attack while entertaining friends at a restaurant. We had visited him in his home just ten days prior. His death was a great blow to us. A few days later, we performed the Requiem Ceremony from The Golden Dawn in his honour, in conjunction with the reading of one of his favourite pieces, “The Prayer of the Sylphs” from the *Theoricus* Ritual.

Shortly after Regardie’s death three of us, who had been a part of that magical weekend in Georgia in 1982 when Regardie had consecrated our temple’s Vault and re-established a working Second Order, decided to form a traditional triad of Order Chiefs who would govern all of the temples working with us - those temples that had initiatory lineage through Israel Regardie.²

There were basic principles that we abide by: (1) that the Golden Dawn is not a profit-making enterprise, (2) initiation is not for sale, (3) our teachings are free, and all the grades of the Order are earned and are not honorary. For over a decade, our Order continued to work and grow in silence, gaining students only from word of mouth. As far as money is concerned, I can tell you in all sincerity that the Golden Dawn has cost me thousands of dollars. All of our Adepts have a day job. The Golden Dawn should be a labour of love, not a way to make a living. We don’t care if our Order has 600 members, 60 members, or 6 members. We would have continued to work in complete secrecy if other groups in the US, who were calling

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themselves the Golden Dawn, had not come forward to make money from the name of the Order.

Since his death, many of Regardie's fears and predictions about the exploitation of the Golden Dawn's name have come to pass. Soon after, (N), who was not even initiated into the grade of Neophyte before Regardie's death, was claiming the degree of 7=4, and was also claiming to be the head of the Golden Dawn in the US. Students who were receiving training from (N) assumed that they had initiatory lineage through Israel Regardie, even though no one who was at the Israel Regardie Foundation ever received any Golden Dawn initiations from Regardie.

In 1987 (N) was interviewed for *Magical Blend Magazine*. One of the questions he was asked was "How many official members of the Golden Dawn are there at this time?" In the interview (N) answered, "If we look at previous sales of Golden Dawn books and make lots of assumptions I'd say probably thirty or forty thousand people."

Pardon me, but I don't think that merely buying a book makes anyone an official member of anything.

Around the same time, advertisements for books by an author whom we will call (B), published by Falcon Press, were appearing in magazines like *Gnosis*. According to these ads, the author was "the official astrologer of the Golden Dawn, and a 4=7". Well, we thought this statement was bizarre, especially since we had never heard of this author.

It just so happened, one of the members of our Order was a close friend of (B) at that time. We were able to get his 'phone number and I called him up. I asked him why he was calling himself "the official astrologer of the Golden Dawn and a 4=7". (B) told me flat out that he had never even been initiated into the Golden Dawn and was, in fact, not even interested in it. I

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asked him, “do you think it is fair to those people who have been initiated into the Golden Dawn - who have had to study hard to reach the level of 4=7 - that you are calling yourself a 4=7 and you haven’t even been initiated and couldn’t care less about the Golden Dawn?” (B) responded that this was his publisher’s idea and it was thought that it would help sell books. Shortly after this conversation, advertisements promoting (B’s) books no longer mentioned the Golden Dawn.

Sometime after this, the same people who were in charge of the Israel Regardie Foundation began promoting another magical group known as The Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn. This group was based mostly on the Thelema principles of Aleister Crowley and had very little to do with the Golden Dawn. Remember, I had already tried to bring the Golden Dawn and Thelema together. I tried and failed. And I knew that Regardie had been absolutely against such a thing. He would have been horrified.

Then rumours about Regardie started to surface - people were claiming lineage from Israel Regardie and Aleister Crowley through the Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn because they claimed that Israel Regardie had been initiated into the Ninth Degree of the OTO by Crowley. This was nonsense. Even if this theory of lineage made sense - which it didn’t - Regardie had never been initiated into the OTO by anyone. Officials of the OTO have confirmed this. Regardie was given a purely honorary Ninth Degree by the OTO in recognition of his written works which have helped many magical students. This ridiculous rumour was based on a postcard that Crowley had once written to Regardie, addressing him as he would a Ninth Degree. This was certainly a sign of respect towards Regardie, and nothing more.

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Then there was another groups calling themselves the Thelemic Order of the Golden Dawn. When they realised that this name was already being used by the people at Falcon Press, they changed their name to the Hermetical Order of the Golden Dawn. In this group, the candidate could choose whether he wanted a traditional Golden Dawn ceremony, or a Thelemic one. The grades from neophyte to Adept could be taken in whatever order the candidate wanted, or not at all. The Hermetical Order did not last very long and collapsed after a year or two.

Around 1992, a group known as the Eternal Golden Dawn began to advertise in magazines and on the Internet. Before this group became well known its leader, (Z), used to call me about once a week to ask me questions about grade materials, ritual, techniques and several other things. What I really found interesting was that every question I answered for him would be posted on the Internet. It seemed to us that (Z's) students would ask him questions he couldn't answer, so he would turn around and ask me. My answers to (Z) would then be posted as his official answers to his students.

In those early days, (Z) confided in me just how he got his initiation into the Golden Dawn. According to what he told me, he and his wife did a channelling. They were led to a bookstore where they were directed to buy *Regardie's The Golden Dawn and Modern Magick* by Donald Michael Kraig. With these tools in hand they went up on top of a mountain and self-initiated themselves into Adepthood.

It wasn't long before (Z's) wife, (S), came to visit us in Florida. Her main mission was to see if our Order and theirs could link up and be one big Order, jointly run by (Z) and myself. (S) assured us that our books were invaluable in helping their group get started. The other reason she came was to ask us

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if we would help them build a vault. They wanted any papers or materials that we could give them. In other words, they wanted all of our Order's private materials, work, and research that our members had gathered or compiled over the last fifteen years. We politely told them "no" on both counts. After this, (Z) began to call us less often.

Shortly after, (Z) began to call his group The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, International, and he now claims that his group is the only valid Golden Dawn group in the world, that self-initiation is impossible, and that all aspiring students must go only to their group to get a real Golden Dawn initiation. They even go so far as to publicly state that Israel Regardie was actually trying to destroy the Golden Dawn, and that I, Chic Cicero, am following in his footsteps by publishing books like *Self-Initiation into the Golden Dawn Tradition*. This all seems to be a rather pathetic attempt to build up the "authority" of their group by tearing down Regardie's reputation - even though they owe Regardie for whatever knowledge they now claim to have.

I will leave it up to the individual to decide what to think about the character of the HOGDI group. I will say that several people have come forward in recent years to talk about their experiences with this particular organisation. Many of their stories are quite revealing. But feel free to check things out for yourself, talk to people who have been involved with that group, and draw your own conclusions. As a good friend of mine likes to say, "Think for yourself, question authority." This always proves to be good advice.

The Aftermath:

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As I said earlier, the main reason we decided that our Order should become a bit more public was because of the way various groups were exploiting the name of the Golden Dawn for money. We felt that there was a need to let the magical public know that there was a place where students could go to learn the Golden Dawn system without spending a fortune, or far worse, the possibility of suffering real abuse at the hands of unethical group leaders. We felt that there really was a desperate need for this.

As a result, we have opened ourselves up to public attack from those individuals who have a lot of money to lose as a result. Given a choice, I would have done it over again. I promised Regardie that I would try to protect the name of the Order from exploitation. By removing some of the veils of secrecy, our Order has benefited by allowing us more contact with some very fine individuals who I am proud to know. Every time I get a letter from someone who has been helped by one of our books, it makes everything worthwhile.

And if people accuse me of “following in Regardie’s footsteps, by making Golden Dawn material available to the general public”- then I must say that I am honoured to be named in the same sentence as Israel Regardie, a man for whom I have nothing but the greatest admiration. A man who was known as a great Adept by several respected authorities. A man who had far more magical ability, knowledge, and guts than any of the occult pygmies today who wish to tarnish his memory. A gentle, ethical man who committed his entire life towards helping others find their spiritual path. A man whom I am proud to have known as a friend.

Regardie was fond of the following quotation, and invoked it to stress that any person of normal intelligence and emotional

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stability could accomplish the Great Work. I would like to close by reading it:

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

ENDNOTES

¹ Regardie did sit in as an officer in one initiation in New Zealand (1983), but he was not an initiating adept.

² In 1994, (M) left our Order to set up her own. As a result, we are no longer affiliated with her group.

TRAIL OF THE CHAMELEON

The Genesis of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

R. A. GILBERT

Ultimately, I suppose, we must blame Christian Rosencreutz, for the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was essentially a Rosicrucian Order - and if he should prove to be a chimaera, then it will be only one more in a long chain, for working backwards from 1888 in search of the origins of the Golden Dawn involves us at every step in clearing away layer after layer of fantasy, imagination and deceit. And as we go back so we find that nothing is quite as it seems. But how far back must we go in our quest for the source of the Order? In the world at large the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn sprang into being early in 1888: specifically on 16 February when the Pledge Forms of Woodman, Westcott and Mathers were counter-signed by their *alter-egos* who, by some feat of legerdemain, had entered the Second Order (and entered their names on the Order Roll) five days earlier on 11 February. The three Chiefs clearly knew something about the Order's history and one of them, Westcott, knew *all* about it. Our problem is that the story he told constantly changed its shape, even when he told it to members of the Order, and unkind critics may be forgiven for suggesting that the precise shape depended on the relative predominance of credulity or cynicism on the part of the audience (Edward Garstin put it another way: 'the very considerable discrepancies between the original and later version of the Order's *Historical Lecture* would have been apparent to several persons then living who had seen the earlier edition, and to whom, also, he had made statements which flatly contradicted the story in the 4th [1895] edition'.) In general terms the story is in two parts: the first concerns the Cipher Manuscripts from which the rituals of the Golden Dawn were worked up, together with the correspondence between Westcott and the putative German adept, Soror Sapiens dominabitur Astris or, if you will, Fraulein Anna Sprengel. For this part of the story we have the indisputable fact of the physical existence

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of both cipher manuscripts and letters. The problem lies in establishing their provenance.

Solving that problem is difficult enough, but the second part of the story poses an even more intractable problem: what lies behind the manuscripts? Were they part of the workings of a developed and structured order, or were they the outlines of something that never was? Were they old or were they new? For the last hundred years no satisfactory answer to any of these questions has emerged and I doubt that my proposed solution to these problems will satisfy everyone. Which will be a pity as it has the merit of being correct. But before we consider it, let us go to the starting point of any enquiry into the origins of the Golden Dawn and look at the 'official' history¹.

The earliest version of the *Historical Lecture* by V. H. Frater Sapere Aude (i.e., Dr. William Wynn Westcott) was withdrawn and no copy is known to have survived (no-one has subsequently seen the copy that Garstin claimed *did* survive). Nor was any official reason given for its withdrawal, although careful analysis of later versions offer a reasonable explanation. According to the historical lecture the Cipher manuscripts were handed to Westcott 'by a most eminent and illuminated Hermeticist (since dead) whose title was Frater 'Vive Momor Lethi' '(and whose name in the real world was the Rev. A. F. A. Woodford). And there were other manuscripts: 'This collection of the MSS has since been supplemented by a varied collection of MSS chiefly in cypher, which have been either given or lent to the Chiefs of the Temple by our Continental Fratres and Sorores'. So far the manuscripts.

The Sprengel letters figure in the claim that the three Chiefs of Isis-Urania were given permission from 'the G. H. Soror Sap: Dom. Ast in Germany' to consecrate their temple as 'a successor to Hermanubis No. 2 which had ceased to exist,

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owing to the decease of its Chiefs' while Fraulein Sprengel's 'Temple No. 1 of Licht, Liebe, Leben' is described as 'a group of continental Mystics' Elsewhere in the *Historical Lecture* is the implication that the 'eminent adepts and Chiefs of the Order' whose decease 'during the second half of the century' caused its 'temporary dormant condition', included Eliphaz Levi, Jean-Marie Ragon, Kenneth Mackenzie and Frederick Hockley.

The name of the order is then given in a variety of languages, including French (L'Aube Dorée), German (Die Goldene Dämmerung) and Hebrew (Chabrath Zerek Aour bokhr), While prominent occultists who were members of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia - Robert Wentworth Little, Dr. Woodman, F. G. Irwin and Kenneth Mackenzie - are brought into the story to bolster up the notion that the 'Rosicrucian Society... was reconstructed' and 'made by intention and permission essentially Masonic'. There is much more of a discursive nature in the *Historical Lecture* but only one other salient feature: the importance of lady adepts is stressed and two are named, Anna Kingsford and H. P. Blavatsky. With these two all the elements of an enduring myth are now in place.

Most of the various published commentaries on the official history (all of which have been reprinted in *The Golden Dawn Source Book*, Edited, with an Introduction, by Darcy Kuntz. Edmonds, WA, 1996) attempt - when they are not contradicting each other or busily, if unwittingly, exposing the holes in the fabric of the history - to justify some if not all of Westcott's mendacious lecture. It will be as well to knock down the straw men they have erected.

Let us start with the chronologically earliest elements and work forward. Beyond the official history are the various gnostic comments that Westcott placed judiciously in appropriate

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journals. Two of them concern the 'ChaBRat ZeReCH AVR BoQR' - translated in the *Historical Lecture* as 'Society of the Shining Light of the Dawn' allegedly active 'about 1810, in London' and which 'order of mystics' Westcott claimed was 'still at work in England'. Much ink and not a little bile has been spilt in trying to present this body as a legitimate 'contemporary German Rosicrucian group'. Alas, it was not. In his 'Precursors of the Golden Dawn' (see Kuntz, pp115-122) Ron Heisler quite rightly avoids claiming a Rosicrucian nature for the Frankfurt masonic lodge of this name - but he does suggest a Kabbalistic ethos for it and also implies a link with English Kabbalists. Gerald Suster, in 'Modern Scholarship and the Golden Dawn' (see Kuntz, pp129-146) suggests much the same. Both authors have drawn the wrong conclusion from the real existence of the masonic lodge in question.

What then is the truth of the matter ? The Loge zur Aufgehenden Morgenrothe (of the Nascent Dawn), which met at Frankfurt -am-Main, had been constituted by the Grand Orient of France on 17 August 1807 during the French occupation of the city and initially had an associated Rose Croix Chapter - but this was strictly masonic and was not, in any meaningful sense, Rosicrucian. Unlike the German Grand Lodges of that time, which restricted membership to Christians, zur Aufgehenden Morgenrothe admitted Jews. After the defeat of Napoleon the lodge applied to the United Grand Lodge of England for Constitution and came under English masonic jurisdiction on 30 April 1817 having enrolled as lodge No. 684 - at which point it became strictly a Craft lodge. It also seems to have escaped the notice of would-be Golden Dawn historians that the very name of the lodge - which clearly derives from the ceremonial opening of a Craft Lodge - was more appropriate to a masonic than to a Rosicrucian or kabbalistic body².

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When the German Grand Lodges finally began to accept Jewish members, in 1872, the lodge transferred to the Eclectic Union Grand Lodge (on 10 January 1873) and was erased from the English roll of lodges. More to the point, all of this information was easily accessible to Westcott as it had appeared in John Lane's *Masonic Records* of 1886, and its chequered history had been recounted in R.F. Gould's *History of Freemasonry*, of 1883-84; it was also eminently suitable for his story as, from the English point of view, it was defunct.

Nor were dead organisations Westcott's only concern. He also had a penchant for calling dead adepts to his aid. Woodford, who allegedly gave him the cipher manuscripts, had died in 1886 and the letter he had supposedly written was simply a copy in Westcott's hand. Wentworth Little, Levi and Ragon were long dead, while Hockley and Mackenzie - both supposed stalwarts of the Hermanubis Temple No. 2 - had also passed away, in 1885 and 1886 respectively. In 1887 Anna Kingsford had also died. And if any of the early members of the Golden Dawn had been disposed to query the role of these respected and revered figures answers could have come only by way of a Spiritualist medium.

By the time that the revised *Historical Lecture* was written in 1893 Mme. Blavatsky and F. G. Irwin were also dead, as were Woodman and Fraulein Sprengel herself. Thus supported by legions of dead occultists Westcott could safely be as creative as he wished in compiling his history of the Order. But might they not have really been involved in earlier Rosicrucian Orders? In the sense that the English freemasons among them all (with the exception of Woodford who, as his published writings make clear, had little if any interest in occultism as such) belonged to the S.R.I.A., yes, they *had* been involved - but nothing in any known manuscript or printed document

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emanating from any of them suggests that they had any connection with any other esoteric Order save two that Westcott carefully refrained from mentioning in Golden Dawn circles. We shall come to those Orders in due course. And might not Fraulein Sprengel have truly been an adept? Indeed she might - had she ever existed, which she had not.

Here it reasonable for one to ask, what of the Sprengel letters?, and equally reasonable for me to refer to Ellic Howe's demonstration of their English origin. This is, to my mind, conclusive. Mr. Suster's attempt to blame Gabriel Jogand-Pages - creator of the fictitious Palladian Order - for them is crass: Westcott had no connection whatever with Jogand-Pages save to be labelled by him in the pages of *Le Diable aux dix-neuvième Siècle* (1894). There is also the difficulty of explaining Mathers's charge of forgery in respect of the letters - and the even greater difficulty of accounting for Westcott's devious attempt in 1910 to obtain from Mathers a back-dated retraction of the charge³.

What does deserve examination is the question of the names. In his paper 'Deeper Roots of the Golden Dawn' (see Kuntz pp150-154) Rafal Prinke correctly pointed out that 'Sprengelrecht' is a German masonic term equivalent to the English 'territorial jurisdiction' and that Westcott may have come across it in connection with the change of allegiance of the Loge zur Aufgehenden Morgenrothe. This is plausible indeed (even if Mr. Prinke's assumption that Bulwer Lytton somehow had a hand in the affair is not - his involuntary association with the S.R.I.A. as an unwitting 'patron' has convinced all too many students that the author of *Zanoni* was a Rosicrucian in his own right) and it leaves us only with Fraulein Sprengel's Christian name and her motto of Soror Sapiens Dominabitur Astris.

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In 1886 Westcott was actively involved in the Hermetic Society that had been founded by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland to propagate the Western Hermetic Tradition. In their eyes this tradition was being rejected and ignored within the Theosophical Society, which had received a great influx of members after the publication in 1881 of A.P. Sinnett's *The Occult World*, a book filled with tales of the practical wonders of Mme Blavatsky and her eastern adepts. But the Hermetic Society came to an end with the illness and death of Anna Kingsford in 1887, thus denying Westcott (and Mathers, who also lectured for the society) an active non-masonic outlet for his Kabbalistic and Rosicrucian enthusiasms. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn provided Westcott with a vastly more active substitute but it is not unreasonable to assume a wish on his part to preserve the memory of Dr. Kingsford, whose learning, eloquence, beauty and grace he had lauded in the *Historical Lecture*. To provide her with a new surname (although one must admit that Fraulein Sprengel began life simply as A. Sprengel, Anna came in after 1900) was a beginning, but a motto with which she was already associated was a fitting memorial.

One of Anna Kingsford's less well-known works is an edition of the English translation of Valentine Weigel's *Astrology Theologised* (1886), to which she contributed a Prefatory Essay on 'The True Method of Interpreting Scripture'. On the book's title-page appears the Latin motto, 'Sapiens Dominabitur Astris'. Enough said. Here we may leave the realms of conjecture and enter those of documentary history; and if latter-day occultists object to my conclusions so far they may take heart from Mr. Suster's essay in which he decries documentary history and takes unsupported suggestion to its *ne plus ultra*.

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Through the sterling work of Darcy Kuntz, in his *The Complete Golden Dawn Cipher Manuscript*, Edmonds, WA, 1996, most of you will be familiar with the appearance and the text of the cipher manuscripts. You will also, I trust, be aware of my own essay 'Provenance Unknown: a Tentative Solution to the Riddle of the Cipher Manuscript of the Golden Dawn' which introduces Mr. Kuntz's book. On that assumption I will summarise my findings rather than set them out again in full.

The S.R.I.A. was not the only string in Westcott's occult and masonic bow. He was an enthusiastic member of most of the other fringe and quasi-masonic Orders that were being created and distributed by Yarker, Irwin, Mackenzie and others in their circle, chief among them - for Westcott at least - being the 'Primitive and Original Rite of Freemasonry' or 'Swedenborgian Rite'. This curious body⁴ had been imported into England by Yarker in 1876 and after an initial burst of enthusiasm among esoterically inclined masons effectively fell into abeyance. Mackenzie had been Grand Secretary of the Rite until his death in 1886 when Westcott, who was eager to revive it, took up the post. When collecting all the relevant papers held by Mackenzie's widow Westcott collected also some 'Loose Papers' that were almost certainly the sheets of the Cipher Manuscript. He translated them without difficulty (Trithemius's *Polygraphiae*, which contains the cipher, was available at the British Museum and Mackenzie possessed his own copy of the book) and with Mathers's aid set about creating the rituals of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. From then on, in one sense, the cipher manuscript enters the public domain.

What all this does not explain is how and why the cipher manuscript was created - nor how Westcott made the transition from an amplified set of rituals to a fully-fledged magical Order. Let us consider the manuscript first. Given that

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Mackenzie owned the manuscript it is virtually certain that he also wrote it out, and probably the case that he compiled it - certainly Westcott implies that he was involved in so doing. But for whom was it written, and when?

The outline rituals in the cipher manuscript were designed for an Order admitting both men and women, which rules out any orthodox masonic connection, and clearly esoteric in conception and ethos. Did such an Order exist in the 1870's or 1880's? (Internal evidence shows conclusively that the cipher mss. cannot predate the early 1870's) It did.

Within the ranks of the S.R.I.A. were many competent occultists and a few very able magicians, some of whom were frustrated by the lack of practical work - much as western oriented members of the Theosophical Society sought for a *praxis* to go with the *theoria* of that body. Both Westcott and Mathers were eager to combine practical work with theory, as Mathers made clear in an early letter to Westcott: 'If we Rosicrucians ... simply practice a Ritual, without studying that to which the Ritual is an introduction, we are simply the husk without the grain, the shell without the kernel'⁵ Nor were they alone. Frederick Holland, a neighbour of Mathers at Bournemouth who joined the S.R.I.A. on the same day - 20 April 1882, was equally keen and little more than a year later had set up his 'Society of Eight' - with the enthusiastic support of Kenneth Mackenzie and John Yarker. Ayton, whom they hoped to draw in, seems not to have joined but Irwin did, presumably having taken Mackenzie's bait. 'I am glad to welcome you as a Brother of the Society of Eight', wrote Mackenzie, 'this Society means work and not play. It is by no means poor Little's foolish Rosic. Society. We are practical and not visionary and we are not degree-mongers.'⁶

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However, if they *were* practical the members of the Society of Eight left little trace of their activities in the 1880's. And Mackenzie was suspicious of Westcott who, he told Irwin in the same letter, is 'not to be admitted'. Mathers, too, assumed that Westcott was not involved and inveighed against Holland whom he claimed was not a competent occultist – an unjust claim, for Holland was deeply learned in alchemy and had constructed a highly individual Tarot pack. But Mathers was mistaken for Westcott *did* join the Society of Eight, although whether before or after Mackenzie's death is unknown.

No detailed records of the Society of Eight survive but there is a bound volume of *Transactions* of the Society compiled in 1895 and preserved in the Yarker Library. 'Transactions' is, perhaps, an inappropriate word for it consists almost exclusively of 'The Researches of Brother Frederick Holland' which are concerned largely with hermetic, masonic and biblical symbolism, with a brief excursus on the Tarot (based on material in his two published works *The Temple Rebuilt* (1886) and *The Revelation of the Schechinah* (1887); it is worth noting also that a copy of the second work was in the library of the Golden Dawn). Of ritual working there is no trace and the most intriguing point about the manuscript is the list of members given on the title-page: Frederick Holland, K. R. H. Mackenzie, John Yarker, Fr[anci]s George Irwin, Fredk. Hockley, Benj[amin] Cox, W. Wynn Westcott - and McGregor Mathers. The last name is in pencil and since Mathers had by that time physically left England, morally left the S.R.I.A. and was warring with many of his Golden Dawn magicians, it is almost certainly an apocryphal membership (added to which Holland had no time for Mathers's Jacobite pretensions, which he called 'Tosh').

Westcott is a different matter. Independent of these *Transactions* are two letters, now in the High Council Library

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of the S.R.I.A., dated 1 February and 8 February, 1895 and both from John Yarker to R.S. Brown (who had joined the Amen-Ra Temple of the Golden Dawn in 1893). In them Yarker proposes to revive the Society of Eight. He lists the members of the 'old Hermetic Society of Eight' – 'Holland, Self, Irwin, Mackenzie, Westcott, Hockley &c', the &c being presumably Cox and Ayton - and suggests that the revived society would comprise himself, Holland, Westcott, Brown, Schnitger (who had been admitted in 1894) and W.S. Hunter of Glasgow, and that it would make use of Papus's Martinist ritual. From these letters it is clear that the Society of Eight was intended to include ceremonial workings in its activities and that Westcott had been a member *ab origine*.

Thus the Society of Eight could have been a model for the Golden Dawn and the cipher manuscripts may have been intended for use within it. Save for one thing - the Society of Eight was exclusively masonic in membership and admitted no women. It may have provided partial inspiration for Westcott, and teaching materials as well, for Holland gladly loaned his books to Westcott - including his copy of Hartmann's edition of *The Secret symbols of the Rosicrucians* (1888). The first plate in this text, 'Mysterium Magnum Studium Universali', was certainly the pattern for the Rose-Cross Lamen of the Second Order but it is impossible to tell if it was Holland's copy of the translation or Woodman's copy of the original text of the *Geheime Figuren* (Secret Symbols) from which Westcott took the design.

The Society of Eight was undoubtedly one source of nourishment for Westcott's baby as it grew in the womb of his brain - but the women had to come from elsewhere. There is, fortunately, one quasi-masonic Order which Westcott had joined (in 1875; he rejoined some ten years later) and which did

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admit women - including H.P. Blavatsky, who was an honorary, and presumably inactive member. This Order was the Royal Oriental Order of the Sat B'hai; it had been the brainchild of one J.H. Lawrence-Archer, who brought it to England in 1871 claiming an Indian origin, but by the time that Westcott joined it was one of the runners in Yarker's stable of degrees. That women and other non-masons could participate in its lower Mysteries (they were permitted to rise through the first five of the nine degrees of the Order) was not the only feature that distinguished it from the other degrees on the masonic fringe. It also had a teaching programme.

This consisted of thirty-five 'subjects for Investigation by circles of the Sat B'hai', a list of which was carefully written out on 1 October 1886 by Benjamin Cox who would later become the Chief of the Osiris Temple of the Golden Dawn at Weston-Super-Mare⁷. It reads suspiciously like a catalogue of the subjects in which members of both the Outer and Inner Orders of the Golden Dawn were expected to be proficient. There are a few nods to the East (Yoga and Indian initiations) but for the most part it is firmly in the Western Hermetic Tradition, including Alchemy & Hermetic Philosophy; Astrology; Crystallomancy & Magic Mirror; Geomancy; Pythagorean, Paracelsian, and Agrippa's Occult Philosophy; Tarot, Exoteric & Esoteric, and Thaumaturgy. In addition are the Eleusinian Mysteries - from which were derived the titles of the officers of the Golden Dawn, And the Isiac Table of Cardinal Bembo - on which Westcott's book, complete with its comments on the Tarot, would appear in the following year.

Even more to the point as far as the Golden Dawn was concerned is a letter of 21 September 1886 from Benjamin Cox to Yarker. In this Cox refers to Westcott, whose membership had presumably lapsed:

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Before Sending Dr. Westcott Rules &c had I not better fill up one of the proposition forms and send him for signature and for his remittance of 21/0 ... then on receiving his fee and signed form back, I could send him certificate, rules &c.

The fee and signed form evidently were sent back and Westcott was restored to the Sat B'hai Register (now in the Yarker Library) with his address altered from Martock (his home in 1875) to London. From all of this I would suggest the following scenario. As a member of both the Society of Eight and the Sat B'hai Mackenzie was enthusiastically involved with practical occultism, and given that the former had no ritual and those of the latter were constantly being altered and revised, he set out the outlines of rituals that would be appropriate for working by an Order composed of both men and women. Because of his untimely death in 1886 these rituals were left unfinished, to be passed in all innocence to Westcott by Mackenzie's widow.

Westcott recognised the cipher, translated the manuscript and realised the potential of what he had. But because he controlled neither the Society of Eight nor the Sat B'hai he determined to create another Order *de novo*. To give this credence he arranged that one of his non-masonic (and non-occultist) friends - one whom he could trust implicitly, perhaps because he or she was also an employee - translate into German letters prepared by Westcott but purportedly written by a German lady Adept modelled on the recently deceased Anna Kingsford. Here it should be pointed out that while all of the 'Anna Sprengel' letters, together with the English translations in Westcott's hand, have been carefully preserved, not one of the English drafts of the letters supposedly sent by Westcott to Fraulein Sprengel, as translations into German done on his behalf, has

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ever been seen. This is decidedly odd given that Westcott was so meticulous a hoarder of correspondence.

With the cipher manuscript and the Sprengel letters safely in the bag, Westcott brought in Mathers to help him work up the outline rituals into a working ceremonial structure, with a teaching content derived variously from the Society of Eight and the Sat B'hai. Once this task was complete Westcott was ready to give birth to the Order - which he did in February of 1888. Such a scenario explains much but there are still difficulties. Let us consider them.

First, Mathers must have known - or come to have known, perhaps by talking to Westcott's employees when the Second Order vault was set up at Thavies Inn, in premises rented from Westcott's Sanitary Wood Wool Company - that the letters were forgeries. As he brutally exposed them as just that in 1900 this was clearly the case.

Second, neither Yarker, nor Irwin, nor Holland made any public or private comment about the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn although their close involvement with Westcott in other Orders suggests that they were well aware of his various occult activities. Nor did they join the Order. For each of them there is a good reason for this. Holland had quarrelled with Mathers and jeered at his pretensions to a Jacobite ancestry, as can be seen from his letter of 1910 to Westcott, while Mathers's hostility to Holland comes out in *his* letters to Westcott during 1883. It is inconceivable that Holland, who was involved with his own occult baby - the Society of Eight, would have any desire to enter an Order that was virtually controlled by Mathers.

Irwin, who died in 1893, spent his later years pre-occupied by the death of his son Herbert and withdrew from many of his earlier activities - but he did join another occult Order with which Westcott never had any dealings. Moreover he had been

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brought into it by Yarker. Both men were taken up - taken in would perhaps be a more appropriate expression - by the unfortunately named John Thomas, a Manchester astrologer and herbal botanist who for several years from 1885 onwards published an odd journal *The Occultist* (it later metamorphosed to the even more odd *Magic Mirror*). Thomas was the Chief of the Celestial Brotherhood, an occult Order known to the outer world as the British and Foreign Society of Occultists* and both Yarker and Irwin were drawn in as active members in 1890. The Celestial Brotherhood had nothing like the panache of the Golden Dawn but its pedestrian occultism evidently suited its earnest if unadventurous members. Yarker, it should be remembered, was always more concerned with Freemasonry than with occultism and did not look upon the ceremonies of his various Orders as of any great significance. Thus when writing to Irwin about the reconstruction of the Sat B'hai rituals he stated that 'we consider these [the ceremonies] of no importance'. (Letter of October 1886).

There is also proof that he was quite ignorant of the Golden Dawn until 1910 - in which year he copied into a notebook (now in the Yarker Library) the rituals of the Order as published in *The Equinox*, adding to the rituals two pages of introductory notes. 'This Order', he wrote, 'was engineered by McGregor Mathers, who is very badly spoken of, and Dr. W. Wynn Westcott'. Whether because of his involvement with John Thomas or for some other reason, the Golden Dawn had for twenty-two years passed Yarker by.

There is little more to add. My evidence is largely - but not entirely - circumstantial and objections will doubtless be raised. But the argument fits the known facts and answers most of the questions. To misquote Bruce Bairnsfather's famous phrase, 'if you know of a better theory, then go to it'. I rest my case.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Brief extracts from the *Historical Lecture* were printed in Israel Regardie's *The Golden Dawn*, Vol. 1 Chicago, 1937; and the whole of one of the later recensions of c1900, was printed as appendix B of my own work, *The Golden Dawn, Twilight of the Magicians*, 1983, pp99-104.

² Part of the ceremonial opening of a Craft masonic lodge is a catechetical resumé of the position in the lodge and the function of each of the officers. The Worshipful Master's role is described thus (in English Emulation working which has changed very little since the early 19th century):

Q The Master's Place?

A In the East

Q Why is he placed there?

A As the sun rises in the East to open and enliven the day, so the Worshipful Master is placed in the East to open the

Lodge, and employ and instruct the Brethren in Freemasonry.

³ The story of this affair - and the relevant parts of the letters concerned - is printed in my paper on Westcott, 'William Wynn Westcott and the Esoteric School of Masonic Research', *AQC* 100, 1988, pp6-32

⁴ For details of the Rite see my paper 'Chaos out of Order: the Rise and Fall of the Swedenborgian Rite' in *AQC* 108, pp122-149.

⁵ 16 October 1882. Original in the High Council Library, S.R.I.A.

⁶ Letter of 28 August 1883, in the Library of UGLE

⁷ The full list is as follows: 1 Magism; 2 Magnetism (animal & terrestrial); 3 Somnambulism; 4 Clairvoyance; 5 Ecstasy; 6 Mesmerism; 7 Oneiromancy; 8 Phrenology; 9 Chiromancy; 10 Geomancy; 11 Science of numbers; 12 Pythagorean occult Philosophy; 13 Paracelsian (occult philosophy); 14 H.C. Agrippa's (occult philosophy); 15 Jerome Cardan's Rational Philosophy; 16 Crystallomancy & Magic Mirror; 17 Iatric Occultism; 18 Thaumaturgy; 19 Prophetic Inspiration, or Divination of future events;

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20 Alchemy & Hermetic Philosophy; 21 Yoga practice of India; 22 Indian Initiations; 23 Egyptian (Initiations); 24 Western (Initiations); 25 Astrology, Eastern & Western & the planetary system; 26 Eleusinian Mysteries; 27 Bacchic or Dionysian Mysteries; 28 Psychology; 29 Physical Adeptship; 30 Spiritual (Adeptship); 31 Psychic (Adeptship); 32 Theory of the Occult Sciences; 33 Mythological Astronomy; 34 Isiac Table of Cardinal Bembo; 35 Taro, Exoteric & Esoteric

⁸ For an account of Thomas's career see my paper, 'The disappointed Magus: John Thomas and his Celestial Brotherhood' (delivered at the Theosophical History Conference, in London, July 1997. The paper will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Theosophical History*.

THE LOST STEP-CHILD

Tale of the Societas Rosicruciana in America

R. A. GILBERT

The philosophy and ideals of the Rosicrucian movement reached the New World in 1694 when Johannes Kelpius and the first wave of German Pietists settled on the Wissahickon River in what is now a suburb of Philadelphia¹. But the enthusiasm of individuals was not transformed into an organised body and almost two hundred years would pass before a true Rosicrucian Society was founded in America.

The English Masonic Rosicrucian Society, the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* was founded in 1866 when two English freemasons, Robert Wentworth Little and William James Hughan, were admitted to an already established Scottish Rosicrucian body at Edinburgh². The Society rapidly expanded and in 1873 the earlier, but by now moribund, Scottish Rosicrucian body was revived under English control. In 1876 this Society again became independent but it was not the first sovereign body to spring from the English parent³. Four years earlier Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis, a colourful and controversial figure in the Victorian Masonic world, had been made an honorary Magus of the Society and had proceeded to establish - on paper, it had no active existence - a *Societas Rosicruciana in Graecia*. But if this illegitimate offspring was of no interest to the S.R.I.A. it caught the eye of John Yarker who pressed it into service in his activities as a masonic empire-builder.

During the early months of 1876 Yarker was engaged in importing from Canada the Swedenborgian Rite - or Primitive and Original Rite of Symbolic Freemasonry, to give it its full title. This he obtained from another collector of masonic rites, Col. W.J.B. Macleod Moore and perhaps as part of the *quid pro quo*, Yarker ensured that Prince Rhodocanakis (with whom he had extensive masonic dealings) should make Moore a Magus and issue a charter for 'The Rosicrucian Society of Canada'. This charter was issued on 19 September 1876 and within a

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year the first college - Dominion College No. 1 - was formed and a High Council established to govern the Society.

It was this Society that in April 1880 wrote to Albert Pike, who wished to learn more of this new Rosicrucian body, to 'give you the grade of magus, or IX the highest, and attach you to our College as an Honorary Member'. The Canadians went on to advise Pike that they were 'quite willing and even desirous to grant to you and two other associates that you may name (whom we will create Hon. IX of Canada) a charter acknowledging you to be the supreme and independent College of the Rosicrucian Society of the United State, the territory to be embraced to be the same as that at present included in the jurisdiction of the S.J. of the A. and A.S. Rite'. Moore also informed Pike that he had been pipped at the post in his desire to found a Rosicrucian College in the USA: 'I believe the Society has an existence and an organised body in the United States. I think Frater Meyer of Philadelphia has instituted a college. I think he derives his authority from England as he entered the Society at York, and he is an Hon. Member of the College there'⁴. Indeed he was, but it was not from England that Meyer obtained his authority.

Although Charles Meyer was a member of the English Rosicrucian Society he failed to obtain an English warrant for his projected college at Philadelphia. Instead it was granted by the Scottish Society which was eager to colonise America. Its High Council had issued a charter for an Illinois College in 1878, but this proved to be still-born and so on 12 December 1879, they happily chartered the Pennsylvania College. Within six months they had issued further charters for colleges in New York, Massachusetts and Maryland, all of which eventually became dormant. Only one of them, the Massachusetts College,

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would revive - albeit to find itself split into two vastly different components. But for now let us return to Albert Pike.

With four Colleges established the next move was to institute a Rosicrucian Society of the United States of America. This was done in 1880, not once but twice: on 17 May it was established in theory by Albert Pike (with himself as Archi Magis), and on 21 September in the real world at Boston, as the Societas Rosicruciana in the United States of America, with Charles E. Meyer as Supreme Magus. Pike does not appear on the first list of High Council Officers but two years later was elected 'Honorary Past Supreme Magus', which office he cheerfully accepted - pointing out in his reply to Meyer's official letter that he had 'determined to permit to become dormant the Grand Body for the United States of the Rosicrucian Society' in order 'to avoid dispute'⁵.

Pike thus passes out of the Rosicrucian tale. But why had he come into it? The reason was simply that both Macleod Moore and Meyer wished to use his remarkable gifts as a ritualist to reconstruct the ceremonies of the S.R.I.A. and to fashion something more appropriate to the work of practical Rosicrucians. 'You can', wrote Moore, 'Alter, add to, change or abolish the rituals as you may see fit. Indeed it is very desirable that you should do so, as it must be confessed that what rituals we at present have are very poor affairs. If you will take the matter in hand and bring your store of Rosicrucian and Hermetic learning to bear on the matter, you will confer the greatest favour on the Society generally'.⁶

For good or ill Pike did nothing with the rituals but his belief that a Rosicrucian Society should be exactly that is clear from the second of his proposed Rules for the Rosicrucian Society of the United States of America:

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It is not masonic. Its field of study and action is far wider than that of Free masonry, with which it has no other connection than this, that it selects its members among the Masonic Brotherhood.⁷

If we may judge by the content of the papers read at meetings of the Massachusetts College (the only active College) other masonic Rosicrucians agreed with him: the emphasis of the Society in its early days was markedly hermetic rather than masonic - and it was a determination to maintain this emphasis in the resuscitated body that eventually led to a schism that has persisted to the present day.

During its sixteenth year of active life the Massachusetts College admitted thirty-three members, the most active being Frater Sylvester Clark Gould (1840 - 1909); by a nice touch he was 'the eighteenth Frater enrolled'⁸. In literary terms Gould was also the most prolific: in addition to his seven papers for the College he edited his own journal *Notes and Queries* at Manchester, N.H., during the 1880's and '90s, and followed it with *The Rosicrucian Brotherhood* which survived from 1907 until his death in 1909.

Gould's Attitude to Rosicrucianism is summed up in his paper 'The Rosicrucians in the United States' that he printed in *The Rosicrucian Brotherhood* in July 1908. 'It was not necessary', he wrote,

'to be identified with a Lodge, Society, or Order to be a *Rosicrucian*. There have been many such in even this country; there are many such today, but the world does not know them, neither are they *members* of organised societies, but we know some of them. Suffice it to say we *became* one in the '50s, the theosophical sum of which year is 16, but no matter here how, and identified myself with the English Order, February 10, 1885, in Boston, so as to be in touch with other congenial

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spirits, and other avenues of fraternal strength.’ (Vol. II, No. 3. p108)

Gould’s coyness about just how he became a Rosicrucian is frustrating, but there is little doubt as to what he meant. It is highly improbable that he took up with any Rosicrucian body in the 1850’s - in 1852, the year whose sum is 16, he would have been twelve years old - but a date in the late 1860’s makes more sense.

In 1867 Paschal Beverly Randolph - ‘Spiritualist, Rosicrucian and Sex Magician’ in his biographer’s description⁹ - established a ‘Rosicrucian Club’ at Boston and it is not unlikely that Gould had some informal connection with it. He was not happy with Randolph and considered that his Rosicrucian Society ‘had scarcely any fundamentals pertaining to those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, nor even the Rosicrucians of modern times’¹⁰. These other Rosicrucians probably included Randolph’s successor, Freeman B. Dowd, ‘Grand Master Imperial Order of Rosicruciae’, whose Temples of the Rosy Cross followed in the wake of his book of the same name (*The Temple of the Rosy Cross*, San Francisco, 1882) and with whose organisation Gould was on friendly terms (he was an honorary member of the High Council of Dowd’s Temple). They would not, however, have included ‘one of the Apponyi family of Austria’ who figures in the various versions of Henry Parsell’s *Outlines of Mystical and Rosicrucian History* as one who, ‘realising that Frater Gould was not receiving true esoteric Rosicrucian work in Massachusetts College’, ‘conferred upon him the grades of the Continental Rosicrucian Brotherhood up to and including the Ninth Degree, and also presented him with a Mark’. At least Parsell had the decency to qualify this supposed meeting with the words ‘how and where I know not’.

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The sticking point for Gould, as far as Randolph was concerned, was the sensuality of Randolph's brand of Rosicrucianism, which was absent from Dowd's version even though he had been one of Randolph's foremost disciples. Awareness of the importance of sexual polarity in ceremonial working was one thing, but active sex magic (if that is what it truly was) was quite another. When Gould sought to revive the dormant masonic Rosicrucian Society he wished to incorporate occultism and to open membership to both sexes while keeping out the sexual philosophy that had bedevilled the earlier non-masonic bodies. This last wish was destined not to be granted.

If Gould is to be believed the Massachusetts College had been dormant since 1896: 'The untimely decease of four of its leading spirits within a few years so disheartened many of the Fraters that it¹¹ became inactive, and has not yet [1908] recovered, although several efforts have been made to revive it'.

While all this inactivity was going on the parent body, the Societas Rosicruciana in the United States, maintained a nominal existence on paper - although Harold Voorhis's claim that there is 'ample evidence' for its meeting at 'irregular intervals' between 1896 and 1908 has no documentary support - and from 1911 onwards began fitfully to stir itself in the resurrection of old and the propagation of new and emphatically masonic Rosicrucian Colleges. But by then it was too late: Gould had made his final effort and a completely new Rosicrucian body had come into being to preserve the hermetic as opposed to the masonic traditions of the old Massachusetts College.

In 1906 Gould had been approached by George Winslow Plummer (1876 - 1944), a young New Jersey mason who had been directed to Gould as a result of his seeking advice from William Wynn Westcott, the Supreme Magus of the S.R.I.A.,

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about masonic Rosicrucianism in America¹². Over the course of the next two years Gould came to look upon Plummer as his natural successor, and on some unrecorded date during the winter of 1908-9,

‘Brother Plummer met Frater Gould in Boston and received at his hands initiation up to and including the Ninth Degree, and was also given the custody of all rituals, and memoranda relating thereto which Frater Gould had acquired from the Adept Apponyi, as well as from his previous years of research and correspondence with a world-wide circle of students and occultists’.

Thus fortified Plummer began at once to work towards the ‘formation of a reconstructed body in the United States, a body which should be based upon the broadest principles of the true Rosicrucian Art, eschewing fads, fancies and isms, and opening its doors to all *true* seekers’.

Thus began the present Societas Rosicruciana In America¹³. But not quite as Gould envisioned. Admittedly, it possessed the ‘rituals, traditions, landmarks, customs and practices as carefully gathered by Frater Gould’, but it held them ‘for purposes, as it now appears, which were to far transcend even his liberal concepts’ Initially, however, Plummer observed masonic niceties. He wrote to the S.R.I.A. requesting a charter and in their reply of 21 June 1910, ‘the English body sent forms for organising colleges’, but they also requested from Plummer, ‘signs and words of recognition’ which he could have given (he had Gould’s manuscript copies of the official S.R.I.U.S. rituals of the four grades of the First Order) had he not felt that the requests ‘were such that no obligated Frater could meet them through correspondence’. A less kind interpretation would be that he was asked for the signs of the Ninth Grade, the ritual of which he did not possess. In the absence of the original letters,

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however, charity requires us to allow that Plummer acted from integrity rather than from ignorance.

Having failed in his attempt to obtain recognition from the S.R.I.A. Plummer determined to act independently. On 11 December 1911 he set up 'a preliminary meeting for instruction and organisation', at his home, 82 Columbia Avenue, Grantwood, New Jersey. Eleven days later Grantwood College, as it now was in the hermetic world, held its First Regular Convocation, following this with the first meeting of the newly established High Council of the Societas Rosicruciana in America on 21 May 1912. What was next needed was a foundation in the everyday world - which came on 12 January 1912 when the Society of Rosicrucians in America was incorporated in the State of New York, giving its stated objects as:

The study and teaching of moral philosophy and ethical principles, through the exploration of the archaeological, historical and traditional subjects of ancient and aboriginal societies such as Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Druidism and other arcane organisations.

But the new society was now in the position of the buried atheist: 'All dressed up and no place to go'; more than ever it needed a ritual.

The members would not use the old rituals of the S.R.I.U.S., and could not use those of the S.R.I.A.: the English Society had finally cast them adrift in 1912 when it gave recognition to the newly revived and purely masonic 'original Rosicrucian Society in America, which was an offshoot of [the S.R.I.A.]'¹⁴ Plummer, however, was already looking elsewhere. In September and October of 1912 he was writing to Aleister Crowley to enquire about membership of the Argenteum Astrum and to solicit free copies of *The Equinox*. Crowley

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replied by proxy in the person of his American disciple and mistress, Victoria Cremers whose rambling letter to Plummer (25 November 1912) told him that, so far as Rosicrucianism was concerned, ‘the interest of charlatans leaves us cold and indifferent’.

Unquashed by this dismissal, Plummer persisted and on 23 March 1913 Crowley himself replied hinting at the possibility of ‘cementing the bonds of fraternity between our various bodies’. Later in the same year Plummer received a charter from the O.T.O. but he made no use of it, and by 1917 the ‘degenerate’ ‘Saint Edward Aleister Crowley’ was ‘dropt’ from the roll of members and considered to be ‘officially deceast’ (Plummer used reformed spelling) because he was ‘said to be under indictment in England for Sodomy and Treason’. What Plummer had wanted from Crowley was what he found in the pages of *The Equinox*: the rituals of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

These were rapidly pressed into service, modified, mixed judiciously with parts of the First Order Grade rituals of the S.R.I.U.S., flavoured with Craft masonic ceremonial and turned out as the nine degree rituals of the Societas Rosicruciana in America. They are, to say the least, an eclectic mix and somewhat wordy, perhaps best described as picturesque. Plummer clearly had an eye for spectacle and while he was not a ritualist of genius he was certainly inventive; to the degree rituals he added, in 1917, The Mass of the Four Elements, ‘As celebrated in the Societas Rosicruciana in America, and in Accordance with the Rites and Ceremonies of the Most Holy Order of the Ruby Rose and the Golden Cross and the First Rosicrucian Church of America, Incorporated.’ However odd they may now seem, the members of these various bodies were quite content with the rituals that Plummer provided.

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And who were these members? Initially they were all men, but by 1916 women were regularly admitted and the Society was expanding. Early in 1914 Grantwood College was metamorphosed into Metropolitan College and moved to New York City where it met in various masonic premises. Two years later, on 23 June 1916, a second college was chartered for Washington DC, to be followed by colleges at San Francisco (West Gate No.5, 1917); Freetown, Sierra Leone (Freetown No. 6, 1917); Atlanta (Phoenix No. 7, 1918); Spokane, Washington (Mizpah No. 8, 1920); Yakima, Washington (Yakima No. 10, 1921); Detroit (Trinity No. 11, 1921) and Indianapolis (Rosencreutz No. 12, 1923).

The would be Rosicrucians who flocked into these colleges (by 1919 Metropolitan College had reached its statutory limit of 144 members) sought more than rituals - and more was what they found. Besides the 'Elementary and Advanced Astrological Classes', members were provided with private lessons on esoteric subjects and public essays in the Society's journal, *Mercury*, that began publication in January 1916. In addition there were Annual Pilgrimages to sites of Rosicrucian interest in New England, New York and Canada (usually a combination of natural wonders and the graves of prominent Rosicrucians such as Col. Macleod Moore and S.C. Gould) and the services of the First Rosicrucian Church of America, which was constituted on 24 April 1918. But the Society's progress was not always smooth.

In July 1916 Plummer had offered his resignation from Metropolitan College for reasons unstated, only to have the offer refused by the members of an investigating commission who found 'that statements ... made affecting the moral character and private life of Frater Khei [i.e. Plummer]' were 'absurd, baseless and malicious' and who resolved to 'extend to

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Frater Khei its expressions of fraternal goodwill and implicit confidence in his personal integrity and moral character'. What lay behind this episode is unknown but 'dishonest charges' had been made by Marion Hamilton Carter whose 'Resignation' offered in May was accepted on 5 July 1916 'without regrets'. It was also noted that she engaged in 'subsequent activities in trying to discredit the Order and some of its members'. In this she must have met with some success as four members either resigned or were expelled later in the same year - including two who had earlier exonerated Plummer but now resigned in a 'discreditable and theatrical manner'. The *lacunae* in this affair are tantalising indeed.

Soon after this members of the Society made overtures to Edward Brown, F.B. Dowd's successor as Grand Master of the Temple of the Rosy Cross. Brown had urged S. C. Gould 'to undertake the organisation of a body' to preserve the 'rituals and traditions of the Brotherhood' and looked upon the S.R.I.A. with favour, so that when in 1919 a 'fraternal call was made on Frater Eulis [i.e. Dowd]', 'the entente cordial between the two organisations [was] more firmly cemented' and Brown was made an honorary member of Metropolitan College. And this to the fury of R.S. Clymer, head of the Rosicrucian Foundation, based at Quakertown, Pennsylvania, who saw himself as the true heir to the Randolph-Dowd succession and next in line after Brown's death. Brown, however, saw things in a different light - he thought that Clymer 'has to some degree harmed the public conception of the Rosy Cross and its ideals'¹⁵ Thus when Clymer fulminated in a most intemperate manner about Plummer's book *Rosicrucian Symbology*, the author simply referred his publisher - J.W. Robertson of Macoy Publishing, who was a member of the S.R.I.A. - to Dr. Brown. No further

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rant was forthcoming and later correspondence from Clymer was much more friendly.

Such squabbles did not affect the rank and file of the membership who were more concerned with their advancement in hermetic knowledge. This covered 'Occultism, Rosicrucianism, Hermeticism and Esoteric Freemasonry' and culminated, for advanced adepts, in the twelve lessons in Spiritual Alchemy. For those who made 'meritorious and satisfactory progress in the preceding Instructions' there was the reward of eligibility for the 'Secret Thesis devoted to the Kundalini' - which was clearly the sexual philosophy and putative 'sex magic' that was restricted to members of the Tenth Degree, referred to in the *Constitution* of 1935 (but not in that of 1919) as 'a Tenth Degree, the nature and conditions of which cannot be committed to writing'. Plummer's *Rosicrucian Manual* of 1920 laid down that 'Any man from the age of twenty-one, and any woman from the age of sixteen is eligible for membership' and elsewhere implies that sexual union - which is considered to be psycho-spiritually beneficial - need not be confined within marriage: 'With conventional marriage, occultism has nothing to do'. Promiscuity was roundly condemned, but at that time 'advanced' view on sexual relations were guaranteed to produce controversy. It is only surprising that Plummer was not accused more often of other nameless (or named) offences.

The Society's sexual philosophy should not, however, be overstressed. Other aspects of occultism were considered to be equally important and students received a balanced course of teaching - always within a Rosicrucian framework. And Plummer recognised the need to temper open-ness with caution: his early and innocuous printed documents had been replaced by others with frankly erotic seals, but in the 1920's his naked

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trinity was supplanted by the Holy Grail, an unquestionably wise move. And the Society continued to grow.

Most members and Associate Members (of whom there had been over 5,000 by 1995) were United States residents but there was no bar on overseas membership: the sixth college was established in Sierra Leone, and two of the earlier members of the Metropolitan College were the English masonic scholar Capt. C.C. Adams and his wife. Nor was there any religious barrier despite the organic unity between the Society and its associated Church. The most famous non-Christian member was undoubtedly Israel Regardie who joined the Washington College in 1926 and was welcomed as a visitor to meetings of Metropolitan College during his brief sojourn in the Society. His membership may also have been the most significant event in the Society's history. What has never been clear about Regardie's involvement with the Golden Dawn is just how and where he was initiated. The presence of substantial slabs of Golden Dawn ritual in the S.R.I.A. ceremonies - and the open use of Golden Dawn titles on its documents; petitions, for example, were for 'Acceptance in the Congregation of the G.D. of the Outer, Societas Rosicruciana in America' - would have convinced Regardie of the validity of his initiation and justified his later entry into the Stella Matutina. But in the absence of further documents this must remain as speculation.

Gradually, however, overtly religious elements in the organisation came to the fore. In 1920 Plummer was ordained as a priest and immediately consecrated as a Bishop by Manuel Ferrando of the Reformed Episcopal Church (although Ferrando later denied having taken part in the ceremony), his first Rosicrucian Church of America being converted into the Universal Anglican Church. Subsequently, on 8 May 1934, he was re-ordained and consecrated by Ignatius Nichols of the

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American Orthodox Church. Assuming the title of Archbishop Georgius, Plummer went on to found the Holy Orthodox Church in America, with Henry Parsell (one of his earliest and most stalwart followers) as fellow Bishop with the name of Irenaeus. Since the 1930's the ecclesiastical pre-eminence in the Society has been maintained - but not to the detriment of its female members.

Towards the end of his life Plummer married Gladys Miller, the Secretary General of his Society, and after his death, in 1944, she married Stanislaus Witowski, or rather Theodotus Stanislaus de Witow, which name he assumed when Plummer consecrated him in 1936. De Witow succeeded Plummer as both Primate and Supreme Magus, but on his death in 1969 the widow de Witow only assumed the latter until 1980 when she was herself consecrated by Herman Spruit and took the Primacy also. Mother Serena, as she was then known, passed on both offices to Sister Lucia Grosch, the present holder who had been consecrated at the same time as her predecessor. Which brings to an end both this bewildering series of consecrations and the story of the Societas Rosicruciana in America. But the end of my story is not the end of the Society.

In 1923 Henry Parsell had written to Frederick Leigh Gardner, of the English S.R.I.A., in the hope that the death of Cadbury Jones (he did not know that Cadbury Jones, who seems to have been a most obnoxious man, had been expelled from the S.R.I.A. In 1917 for attempting to foment a rebellion against Westcott) would improve the climate of fraternal relations between the two societies. Parsell pointed out that the admission of women was a stumbling block as far as the S.R.I.C.F. was concerned but hoped that the 'Tentative Basis of Affiliation' proposed by the American Society would prove acceptable to the English S.R.I.A.

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No response was forthcoming but the document deserved some consideration. It advocates autonomy of legitimate Rosicrucian bodies with affiliation to be 'interpreted as mutual recognition of legitimacy, harmonious co-operation in whatsoever lines may be indicated, and united effort to prevent further progress of charlatantry, clandestineism and deceit now prevalent under the guise and nomenclature of pseudo-Rosicrucian organisations'. All of which is laudable and in no sense contentious. The document also deals with the problem of female members. Rosicrucian bodies that demand masonic qualification for their members would not be expected to admit lady Rosicrucians to their meetings, but the S.R.I.A. (US) would 'freely extend the right of visitation to all regular members in good standing of all legitimate Rosicrucian Bodies, and in the Degree to which the visitants themselves may severally have attained'. It is, perhaps, a pity that English Rosicrucians did not take up the offer.

At some time in the future attitudes may change, but for now it is enough to reflect on the history of this remarkable step-child of English masonic Rosicrucianism and to admit the injustice of A.E. Waite's statement that, as a Rosicrucian body 'it has obviously no tradition, no claim on the past and no knowledge thereof'¹⁶. On every count he was wrong

ADDITIONAL NOTE

Subsequent to the delivery of this paper Maria Babwhasingh has discovered further information in the archives of the S.R.I.A.(U.S.) that enables precise dates to be given for the progress of Israel Regardie in the Society. Regardie makes his first appearance, in somewhat picturesque form, in the Minutes of Washington College on 21 January 1926, when the Secretary was 'instructed to inquire of Metropolitan as to admission of a

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Hebrew, under age.' That this *was* Regardie is confirmed by the Minutes of 18 February which record that 'Application for membership [was] received from Israel Regardie'

The initiation itself took place on 18 March 1926, but it was more than twelve months, on 2 June 1927, before Regardie advanced to the Grade of Zelator: 'The Zelator Degree [*sic*] was conferred on Fr. Regardie'. Metropolitan College was duly notified of this but there is no further record of any advancement, or indeed any activity at all, by Fr. Regardie after this date.

Mrs. Babwhasingh also discovered many other relevant documents. These include the original letters from Westcott and Cadbury-Jones, which indicate that Plummer did *not* have the requisite signs of even the lower grades; correspondence between Plummer and Aleister Crowley from the years 1912 to 1916 which imply that the hostility to Crowley developed only after the United States entered World War I; and a delightful series of letters to and from H. Spencer Lewis that demonstrate clearly how great a charlatan Lewis was. It is hoped that some, if not all, of these documents will soon be published under the auspices of the S.R.I.A. (US).

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END NOTES

¹ A full account of kelpius and his successors is given in J.F. Sachse, *The German Pietists of provincial Pennsylvania, 1895*

² The precise date was 31 December 1866. This society, which seems to have been working as early as 1857, claimed to have descended from an earlier English body concerning which no documentary evidence has ever been found.

³ Details of the early history of the S.R.I.A. are given in T. M. Greenshill, *History of the S.R.I.A.*, Privately Printed, 1987

⁴ The letters from Macleod Moore are quoted in H.V.B. Voorhis, *Masonic Rosicrucian Societies*, new York, 1958

⁵ Pike to Meyer, 18 October 1882. The letter is reproduced in facsimile in Voorhis, *op. Cit.*, p79

⁶ Moore to Pike, 26 April 1880. Voorhis, *op. Cit.*, p73

⁷ *Ibid.* p80

⁸ The masonic Order of 'The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite' – in England and Scotland, 'The Ancient and Accepted Rite' – consists of thirty-three degrees, the eighteenth degree being that of Rose-Croix of Heredom. Gould was admitted to the massachusetts College on 10 February 1885

⁹ John Patrick Deveney, *Paschal Beverly Randolph. A Nineteenth Century Black American Spiritualist, Rosicrucian and Sex magician.* Albany, SUNY, 1997

¹⁰ Quoted in Deveney, *op. Cit.*, p498

¹¹ S.C. Gould, 'The Rosicrucians in the United States', p106

¹² Westcott's letter to Plummer, of 17 October 1906, is referred to in Parsell's *Outlines*. The whereabouts of the original are unknown.

¹³ Parsell, *Outlines*, (typescript), p91. Quotations in the following two paragraphs are from the same source.

¹⁴ Letter, A. Cadbury Jones (Secretary-general of the S.R.I.A.)

¹⁵ Letter of 22 September 1917, Edward H. Brown to Henry Marston. In the archives of the S.R.I.A.(US)

¹⁶ A.E. Waite, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, 1924, p616

FERDINAND F. SCHNITGER

The Magus of the North

ANTHONY MARKEY

Some of you may be familiar with the name Schnitger and I'm sure most will be wondering why the paper is subtitled: "Magus of the North"? When compiling it, and in fact over the past few years of researching this man's life, I was tempted, mostly may I say by the prompting of others, to call it: "Schnitger. Magus or madman?" The reasons why will shortly become apparent.

I first heard the name Schnitger in June 1992 when reorganising the Masonic Library & Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne. There I found a clothbound book with typed lectures transcribed from the hand-written notes of a freemason called Ferdinand Fritz Schnitger.¹As I quickly scanned them I could see that this man was literate, erudite and had researched his material very well. But what particularly caught my eye was the last few pages which gave a brief resume of the man's life and the fact that he died a pauper in a workhouse hospital in Sheffield with only 10/6 in his wallet (52p), and was buried in a public grave with four other people. This seemed such an injustice for such a great thinker of his day, I just had to know more. That one afternoon's reading was to occupy me on and off for the next five years.

Ferdinand Fritz Schnitger (variously called Fritz, Frederick or more usually: Fred)² was born in Schwalenburg, Lippe, Detmold, Germany (which is mid-way between Dortmund and Hanover) on 11 September, 1848. Little is known of his time there or his reasons for leaving. One may assume, however, that based on the prevailing industry in Detmold at the time as well as his career in England years later, that he came to England to apprentice himself to the Iron Merchant industry.

He came to England in 1869, aged 21, and apprenticed himself to William Dawbarn Iron & Timber Merchants of Liverpool. He was to stay with this career, variously in Liverpool, Newcastle and Sheffield, until his retirement. He

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was initiated into Freemasonry in Downshire Lodge, No 594 in Liverpool on 25 January 1872.³ However his masonic 'career' did not take off until he moved, in 1883, to Newcastle. Once there he joined Lodge De Lorraine and was installed as its Master in 1892.

What made him, in my opinion, a special mason and worthy of the title Magus of the North, was his interest and signal success in the many other Orders and Degrees of Freemasonry. One must remember that here was a German immigrant who not only spoke and wrote perfect English with all the colloquialisms of a native born but was also a very accomplished translator.⁴

He amassed a large library of books in German, French, Latin and English on many subjects including Theosophy, Mysticism, Alchemy, Rosicrucianism and the Kabbalah. Most of which he donated to the SRIA Library in Newcastle, of which he was a founder member and librarian (including a 1616 edition of *The Chemical Wedding*).

He had an inordinate interest in the other (non-Craft) degrees in Freemasonry as well as the mystical side of our nature. I have in my possession many hundreds of pages of hand-written notes in which Schnitger was compiling a 'Chronological arrangement of matters. With Chronological Tables.'⁵ This takes the form of page after page of eclectic references beginning with the 'Chronology of Historic Data' connected with Jewish historic dates, Christian Historic dates, Babylonian, Egyptian and Phoenician historical dates all beginning in 7000 BC. But what is just as illuminating is the fact that he used, as page spacers, issued of a weekly newspaper: *Spiritualism* (dated 1886) and other newspapers dated 1916. Which would suggest that this Chronology was a long time in the writing!

F. F. Schnitger – Magus of the North

Many theories abound about Schnitger. Most, it must be said, stem from his many detractors and are not too complimentary. This stems, I believe, from the fact that so little is known as fact about this man. I have sent countless letters and made many trips to places that purport to have information about him, only to find that they have nothing new, or just dates of his masonic life.

He was an avid collector of anything he thought could serve his researches and I have a copy of a report from a police inspector dated 25 May 1916⁶ after a member of the public had accused Schnitger of being a German spy (this was during the First World War). he was, of course, exonerated and there is a note from the detective that Schnitger has a Box in the Midland Railway Station left luggage department which he could not afford to collect. Armed with a warrant, the detective examined this box and found it full of books, masonic Certificates and Jewels as well as proof of “A large number of Masonic ... Honours which had been bestowed upon him in various parts of the world”. This obviously gives an indication of the high esteem he was held in during his own time. I did eventually track down this box,⁷ with the help of Bro. Mark Flather (Grandson of the eminent mason David Flather of Sheffield) but unfortunately it was empty, all its contents have been passed to the Rosicrucian college in Sheffield by David Flather. Yet another dead end!

So why could this man be considered a Magus? To some, if not most, he was just a rambling old man who could no longer support himself in his later years, relying on lightly veiled handouts from the likes of David Flather.

The era that concerns us encompasses the late 1880s until the early 1920s. This was very much the age of ‘mystical and spiritual enlightenment’. It was the age of Theosophy, the

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Hermetic Society, mesmerism, Clairvoyance, Frederick Hockley's Crystal Visions, Spiritualism, and of course the age of the Golden Dawn. It was, to quote R A Gilbert an age 'when many were spiritually unsettled by religious doubts arising from the Darwinian controversy.'^{7a}

Schnitger achieved very high office in all the various masonic orders and I have a Charter of Transmission passing all authority to confer the Masonic Degree of Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests and Knight Grand Cross of the Holy Temple to Schnitger and eight others.⁸This is important because, combined with the high rank he held in some of the Orders it meant that he was regularly mixing with the very people who would be forming the basis of the more mystical rites such as William Wynn Westcott, S L MacGregor Mathers, A E Waite and John Yarker. The fact that he was held in high regard by Yarker is evident from a post script on a letter I have from Yarker to David Flather on Antient & Primitive Rite paper dated 11 April 1911. He asks for his regards to be sent to Schnitger (by this time he was not in the best of health) and refers to him as a "... very able and well informed mason, therefore I respect him."⁹

However from the information available from his lectures he seemed to be a committed Protestant Christian and a very moral freemason¹⁰ who would not (in one lecture) discuss aspects of a ceremony long since defunct, as there were brethren present who were not members of that Order and so not entitled to its secrets should the Order ever be revived.¹¹ For these reasons I doubt very much whether he would have had anything active to do with either Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society with its idea of a kind of composite religion or the Golden Dawn with its ceremonies being open to women. (Schnitger was lifelong bachelor.)

F. F. Schnitger – Magus of the North

He was however very involved in the Rosicrucian movement in the form of the SRIA, a Masonic Rosicrucian Order, whose ideals mirror the Alchemical and Cabalistic ones of the early Rosicrucians. He was admitted to the York SRIA College (whilst living in Newcastle) and was then to become a founder member, Secretary and Librarian of the Newcastle College in 1891. Yet another anomaly of this man is the fact that he was Vth Grade when he was a founder and then at the first meeting he was promoted to VIIIth Grade. However, four months later it was discovered that he was not obligated in the intermediate VIth and VIIth Grades, so then he was retrospectively Obligated!

By 1917 he was concerned that the Royal Order of Knights of Eri was becoming dormant. It had been passed to Yarker in 1886 and had remained mostly inactive since then, its custodianship being refused by both Westcott and the Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees. Schnitger then asked Westcott to revive the order and reorganise it into a coherent working body. This Westcott did enthusiastically and by 1919 Westcott had revived it and placed himself at its head.¹² Schnitger, after being admitted to the Order by Yarker in 1899 and being made a Knight Grand Cross, was to become Commander of Connaught and one of the ruling council.¹³ All this, despite having resigned from Newcastle SRIA college in 1898, when membership of the SRIA was a de jure pre-requisite of Eri membership! Another enigma!¹⁴

His affection for the Order is shown by his lectures and the fact that he considered it to be directly descended from the ancient Irish order (possibly dating back 3000 years!) with distinctly Stuart overtones. He tried to convince Westcott to keep this tradition in the Rubric but Westcott thought it too fanciful.¹⁵

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Did Schnitger desperately want to find occult and mystical meanings in everything? Was he just a deluded old man too engrossed in the sweeping mystical movement of the day? Or was he a genuine free thinker convinced of the provenance of the various masonic and non-masonic Orders?

That he was conversant with the more esoteric Orders is evident from notes of his lectures where he shows an intimate knowledge of the 2nd and 7-8th degrees in the Rite of Mizraim, although he also says he has “Not seen the 5th degree of the Antient & Primitive Rite of Yarker”. He was also very well acquainted with the Bible and quotes it freely Chapter & Verse in his writings, as well as demonstrating an intimate knowledge of Church and religious history as he refers to many Christian heretical sects such as the Cathars, Doketes, Monophysites, Adoptionists, Gnostics, Nominalists, Sabaei and others.

But with regards to our particular concerns and his possible epithet as Magus, it is his intimate and extensive knowledge of the Jewish Kabbalah that is of most interest. Among his many note books on various subjects is a folio of approximately 10,000 words on the Kabbalah written at some time between Mather’s *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (1887) and Waite’s *The Holy Kabbalah* (1929). From newspapers cuttings used as spacers I would date them to around 1887-8. I think it is worth quoting from the first page to demonstrate his eloquence and intimate understanding of this complicated subject. The piece is entitled: *The Jewish Cabbalah. Its connections and Precedents:*

.“In the rough idea, it seems to me to be an attempt to account for the existence of the Universe and its seen and unseen contents. To explain the unexplainable as well as the possible, such is, at least, my view of this complex subject.

F. F. Schnitger – Magus of the North

I see the starting point of the Cabbalah System thus:

The GRAND POINT is the existence of an always existing 'PRIME CAUSE' which is call EN SOPH, but is obviously called by others younger and older.

CHAOS, i.e. undeveloped pre-existing state, before order was established or the AGE OF THE AGES the SELF EXISTING and THE ALL. Not because THE ALL is the PRIME CAUSE itself, that would be calling the least important part, the whole, but it is so called because the PRIME CAUSE: EN SOPH, contained within Himself absolutely all.

The EN SOPH as the ALL before any development took place also contained within himself ready formed but, so to speak, in a dormant state, the first TRIAD or TRINITY, which because the first step in the transition from the GENERAL DORMANT STATE of (say) CHAOS to Co-ordination and Order by Development. EN SOPH Himself is too exalted, too far removed from the state of minor existence to attend to this orderly development or to look after it Himself. Although its conception, like everything else, was naturally contained within Him and would not have been, but for His pre-existent state and His decisive will and intention. So He proceeds to (let us say) awaken the first TRIAD already in existence within Him. Now in order to facilitate the understanding, symbolism has been called upon as follows:"

Schnitger then goes on to explain the First Emanations of the Spirit World, i.e. KETHER (Crown or Apex), CHOCHMAH (or Wisdom) and BINAH (or Intelligence). How Kether is

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nearest to EN SOPH and so genderless, Chochmah is the Masculine Principle and Binah the Feminine. The SPHERES OF ANGELS and BLESSED SOULS, the JACOB'S LADDER and so on through to the lowest level of the MINERAL KINGDOM.

There are pages that explain the right or Dexter Side being ADAM (CHESED) or male and the left or Sinister, EVE'S (GEBURAH) or female; joining to create the 6th Sephirah: TEPHEREH (Beauty).^{15a} There are many more pages of close written text detailing every aspect of the Kabbalah, its history, use and principles. Joined to these are constant cross references to other folios where further more detailed explanations are given of words such as ELOHIM or LADDERS. These Folios contain many hundreds of pages of close written text with many hundreds of thousands of words. Even if Schnitger did produce fanciful rubbish, he certainly produced it prolifically!

Most people I have encountered who are familiar with Schnitger think of him as somewhat of an eccentric, with high ideals and a disproportionate wish to find the mystical side to every coin. I tend to see him as a researcher who begins his research with an empty head and was willing to accept any explanation however obscure it may seem. He did look for a certain holistic element in his work and I believe he thought there was underlying interconnectedness of all Rites and Orders and only by reviving and working them all could that Holism be perfected.¹⁶ He certainly believed that the Royal Kent Masonic Bodies in Newcastle were the sole repository of the original Occult meaning of Freemasonry.

He believed that the original Christian story was corrupted and fragmented by its de-Christianising, and that (to paraphrase Schnitger's own explanation): "First we have a continuous architrave running along our Mystic Temple composed of a

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large number of stones of varying value and size. The Temple falls into ruins and men with the best interests in the world, meaning to preserve such parts as to them were most attractive, pick out what they think most valuable and rearrange those picked pieces into a brand new system of course leaving a lot of matter behind them But after these systems have used all the old architrave as a useful quarry, for establishing their brand new system of degrees torn from its surroundings and from its extracts there is still a large surplus containing in many instances the connecting links between the various degrees as formerly given in lectures and the historical connection of the whole.” That such lost or dormant degrees were worked in the Royal Kent appears inter alii.¹⁷ Part of this occult knowledge was to form part of the Harodim workings of Freemasonry¹⁸ worked in Newcastle in the early 19th Century and on which Schnitger was a recognised authority¹⁹ and Chief Harod.²⁰

So what is being said here? That at one time there was a contiguous story woven into lectures and lore which at some distant time held the whole story of the Orders, Rites and Degrees practised. This may very well include Orders such as A E Waite described, e.g. Rite of Eons, Exegetical and Philanthropical Society, Seers of Light^{20a} and of course the Golden Dawn. But it also demonstrates the rivalry and causation in the development of Rites where two or more people are engaged in a power struggle, such as happened with the ranks of the Golden Dawn, and led to its eventual demise.

I think we should remember here, that we should not judge Victorian methods by our own contemporary standards. The late 19th century and early 20th century saw the very beginnings of what we now consider the ‘Scientific method’. We now take an hypothesis, observe results and accept or

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discard it accordingly. But it was not always so unacceptable to begin with the conclusion and accept results that proved it. So should Schnitger be decried for finding links between Orders and Degrees that nowadays with our modern methods of trains of thought might seem unacceptable? I think not. He was using all the methods and trains of thought that were available to him and seemed acceptable in his day.

Schnitger, in a letter to David Flather of 21 December 1910, inquires whether he would be interested in having the degrees of Sat Bhui (Sat B'Hai) conferred upon him. Presumably by Schnitger.²¹ This Order was later re-worked as The Order of Light and is concerned with Eastern Religions as well as ancient cults of Egypt, Greece and Rome. Although he claims membership of no Temple, it is unknown whether he was conferring the degrees with his own authority.

He was himself an enigma. He held Grand Rank in most masonic orders (including Grand Steward of the Mark Degree) and yet he was excluded from many Orders for non payment of his subscriptions.²² It appears he devoted all his life and energy to his Masonry and his researches, to the absolute exclusion of all else. His various businesses failed. He crept eclectically from employment to employment, sometimes on his own, sometimes for others, but never with any great success. All his money appears to have gone into Masonry and his almost obsessive collecting of great books.

He donated many very rare and expensive books to the SRIA Colleges in Newcastle and Sheffield²³ and he would have travelled back and forward to London fairly regularly to attend meetings of the Grand Bodies to which he was attached. He was a great writer of letters and I have much correspondence between him and Charles Matier at Mark Grand Lodge over the governing of what would become the Allied Degrees which

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Schnitger insisted the 'Royal Kent Bodies' had the absolute (albeit not Sovereign) right to confer.²⁴

That he was a proud man is evident in the correspondence between him and David Flather during Schnitger's last years whilst living at Rotherham. He wouldn't accept any kind of charity (even though he was Grand Secretary of the Masonic Veterans Association) and so David Flather 'employed' him on various tasks such as searching newspaper archives for certain references or writing masonic lectures for which he was always credited as writer or co-writer. For this Flather paid him sums up to £6.00, which did just keep him from penury.²⁵ He did, however, whilst Flather was away on business, die in the Firvale Hospital in Sheffield on 29 March 1924, aged 75.

Due to Flather's absence there was no one to arrange his burial or payment and so he was buried in a public grave, number 103, Section U1 of Burngreave Cemetery at a cost of £12.19s.6d.²⁶ The cost was later met by David Flather. As a post script, Schnitger did have many valuable books, jewels and other masonic items that Flather was willing to purchase for the Hallamshire SRIA College in Sheffield, but Schnitger would never sell them, preferring to make a permanent loan to the college, only on the conditions that: the loan was to be kept anonymous, they would be returned to Schnitger if need be and most importantly; no one who was not suitably qualified (masonically) was to have access to the rituals etc. of the various degrees, to which end, even David Flather had to undertake a written Obligation of the various extinct Degrees before the rituals were handed over to him. All this of course was agreed to and Schnitger managed to talk himself out of money that he so desperately needed.²⁷ All his effects and belongings were passed to Flather on his death and many remain today the property of the Hallamshire College, although

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some of the jewels etc. have found their way on to the marketplace.

So you can see quite how difficult it has been to piece together a coherent story of this man. For although he lived just 100 years ago, and left a wealth of written work and his many bequests of books to libraries, there is almost nothing save his correspondence with Flather to relate to the man himself. That he was a quiet unassuming man is obvious. That he was a great thinker and researcher is, in my opinion, equally obvious. He has left us a legacy of Occult knowledge veiled within the reconstructed masonic degrees of Knight Grand Cross and Knight Templar Priests. He re-discovered the Harodim workings and was an important elemental of the group of influential thinkers that spawned the Theosophists, Rosicrucians and the Golden Dawn.

So Magus or madman? I firmly believe that Ferdinand Fritz Schnitger was a visionary and a man well ahead of his time. Had he had access to the financial resources of the likes of Yeats, Westcott or Mathers he would be a name on the lips of every student of the mystical rites of that era. I also believe that lack of funds definitely precluded him from a participation in many of the movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was well regarded by Yarker, Westcott and others. He was on conversant terms with the likes of Charles Matier, The Earl of Euston (who was present for many of Schnitger's lectures to Royal Kent in Newcastle) and although I have no correspondence, A E Waite is a likely recipient for many of Schnitger's missives. So no, I do not believe he was a madman, a charlatan or a sad old man too wrapped up in his own Holistic world. I believe he was a man of his time and, as his unencumbered circumstances allowed him to be, he was a great free thinker, able to connect seemingly disassociated facts into

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coherent stories and theories. I just hope more can be found about the man so he may take his just place among the luminaries of that age.

F. SCHNITGER'S MASONIC AFFILIATIONS

CRAFT

Initiated Downshire Lodge No 594 Liverpool 1872

Joined lodge De Lorraine No 541 1883

Master 1892

Joined Newcastle upon Tyne Lodge No 24

Founder of Delaval Lodge No 2568

Joined QC Correspondence Circle & was the Local Secretary

ROYAL ARCH Exalted Downshire RAC No 594 1883

Joined de Swinburn RAC No 24 1883

Past High Priest (Z)

MARK MASON Advanced in Northumberland &

Berwick Mark Lodge T I 1888

Past Master

PProvGSO Northumberland & Durham

Past Grand Steward

Excluded in arrears 1900

ROYAL ARK MARINERS

Past W C Noah Northumberland & Berwick T I

Past Master Royal Kent Council T I

ALLIED

Past Grand Steward

ROYAL & SELECT MASTERS

Past Thr III Master Royal Kent Council T I

Past Assistant Grand D C

RED CROSS OF CONSTANTINE

Past M Puis Sov Royal Kent Conclave No 152

Past Grand Hospitaller of Grand Patriarchal Council

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre & of St John & of Grand Imperial Council

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Knight Grand Cross

KNIGHT TEMPLAR

Past Em Preceptor Royal Kent Preceptory No 20

Pprov 1st Constable of Northumberland & Durham

KNIGHTS OF MALTA

Past Prior Royal Kent Priory No 20

HOLY ROYAL ARCH KNIGHT TEMPLAR PRIESTS

Past Grand High Priest & Commander Royal Kent

Tabernacle T I

Knight Grand Commander of St John of Palestine

Member Honoris Causa of ALL Scottish Appendant

Orders & Knight Grand Cross of Scotland

KNIGHTS GRAND CROSS OF THE HOLY TEMPLE

OF JERUSALEM

Knight Grand Cross

ANCIENT & ACCEPTED RITE

Past MWSov Royal Kent Chapter Rose Croix No 8

30°

ROYAL ORDER OF SCOTLAND

Pprov Senior Grand Warden of Northumberland &

Durham

Member of the Grand Lodge of Edinburgh

SRIA

Zelator York College 1889

Founder Newcastle College 1890

Past Celebrant Newcastle College High Council 1895

Secretary & Librarian of Newcastle College

ORDER OF ERI Admitted by John Yarker 1899

Knight Grand Cross Chancellor Preserved Succession

1913-1916

GRAND SECRETARY OF THE MASONIC

VETERANS ASSOCIATION

I must express my indebtedness to W Bro. Mark Flather, Grandson of David Flather, for allowing me unrestricted access to his Grandfather's personal papers and journals, and for the use of copies of the same. To the Provincial Secretary of the Provincial Grand

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Lodge of Northumberland for allowing me access to any material I requested and to all the various people who provided me with answers to my questions. The story would be bare without them.

ENDNOTES

1 One of a series of booklets typed by H C Booth of *Schnitger's notes & lectures*. All in the Library of Provincial Grand Lodge of Northumberland.

2 Headed business stationery dated 6 January 1912, as "Fred Schnitger. Trent St Sheffield".

3 Copies by Bro. Jones of Membership Register of Downshire Lodge, showing the dates of Schnitger's initiation.

4 *AQC* Volume 97 p193.

5 File cabinet drawer full of notes hand-written by Schnitger in Provincial Grand Lodge Museum.

6 Deposition forming part of H C Booth Booklets (see 1).

7 The Box was in the cellar at Tapton Hall Sheffield and belongs to the Hallamshire SRIA. It was full of correspondence from David Flather but all Schnitger's things were missing.

7a *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians* 1983. R A Gilbert p22.

8 Hand written Charter. Framed and in the Provincial Grand Lodge Library.

9 Copy of letter from Yarker to Flather regarding an SRIA meeting. From Flather's own collection.

10 *AQC* Vol 91 p117.

11 Lecture given to Royal Kent Knight Templar Encampment. In Booth booklets (see 1).

12 *AQC* Vol 100 p9.

13 Copy of Eri Statutes & Circular sent by Flather to all Hallamshire SRIA members with himself signed as 'GCE Ulster'.

14 Letter from R E Rowland IX^o S M SRIA with

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Schnitger's dates of resignation and Eri admittance.

15 *AQC* Vol 100 p9.

15a Loose leaf folio on the Kabbalah in Schnitger's hand.

16 *AQC* Vol 91 p134

17 Lecture to Royal Kent Knight Templar Encampment in Booth collection (see 1).

18 *AQC* Vol 97 p53

19 *AQC* Vol 91 pp116-155

20 Letter from Bro. Reid of Gateshead granting Schnitger the authority to refer to himself as 'Chief Harod' in Provincial Grand Lodge Library. (Also vide *AQC* Vol 91 p125)

20a A E Waite. *New Encyclopædia of Freemasonry* 1921. Vol II pp 183-197

21 Letter in the Flather collection.

22 Confirmed at Mark Masons' Hall archives.

23 *Catalogue* of Newcastle SRIA library compiled by V W Frater Trevor Stewart. Also a written inventory by David Flather of books given to the Hallamshire College by Schnitger dated January 1911.

24 Correspondence between Matier (Mark Grand Secretary) and Schnitger regarding the working of degrees at the time worked by the Allied Council. (Also vide *Ancient & Accepted* by J Mandelberg p506).

25 From the deposition to the Police Inspector in the Booth collection (see 1).

26 Correspondence with Mrs Janet Haastings. Sheffield City Council Cemeteries Department.

27 Letters of receipt to Schnitger from the Flather collection

AN EXPLORATION OF THE PILLARS

A study of their Inner meaning

JOHN PATERNOSTER

In a piece of masonic ritual the two pillars that stood at the porchway or entrance of King Solomon's Temple are described as being made hollow, in order that they might hold the masonic scrolls. The five noble orders of Architecture are also deemed to be very significant and indeed certain styles of columns are attributed to the three Grand Masters. Namely Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram the architect all of whom held power during the building of the Temple. However, these two examples of many must cause the thinking mason to reflect on the seemingly obvious errors that abound in this branch of the Mysteries. Freemasonry was not in existence at this time and neither is there any indication that Solomon's Temple was adorned by any of the classical architectural styles. I therefore decided to look at the nature of the two Pillars of the Temple and to try and find out whatever I could. I turned to the first. Book of Kings Chap 6.

“And it came to pass in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel that he began to build the house of the Lord.”

“And the house which King Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits”

“And the Oracle in the house was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in height.”

“And the temple before it (the Oracle) was forty cubits.”

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“And within the Oracle he made two Cherubim of Olive tree, each ten cubits high and with a wing span of ten cubits.”

It is therefore clearly seen that the Cherubims defined a perfect square, the Oracle a perfect cube and that the Oracle left the remaining temple floor in the shape of a cross-section through a double cube. Indeed the vertical cross-section of the whole temple is also that of a double cube. Solomon's temple was built to simple, yet profound, proportions and these proportions have a fundamental resonance with the Divine music and harmony of life. Plato said that 'arithmetic' was the study of number; that 'geometry' was the study of number in space and that 'music' was the study of geometry in time.

In common with most other visitors, I too have stood and marvelled at the sheer beauty, magnificence and grandeur of the Gothic Cathedrals. Yet what I have failed to appreciate was that the perfection of the masons' art was in reality only the silver foil wrapping that surrounded the Divine Chocolate. The whole purpose of the stonework was to glorify the sacred space, which it contained. That sacred space which is bounded by the same simple yet profound proportions and ratios of whole numbers, square, cubes, roots and of course that 'Divine Proportion' or Golden Number which abounds in the natural spirals of sunflowers, sea-shells and our cellular DNA. Thus as we listen in awe to the perfection of the acoustics and resonance demonstrated by the Cathedral choristers, so too should we stand in awe at the harmony and perfect music of God's Symphony of Creation in which we are all as a note in those chords.

It is my belief that whilst all the numbers in the Bible may not be entirely numerically accurate, they do never the less have

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a very real significance and because of my masonic interest I decided to look at the two pillars of Solomon's Temple. What truth, if any, there is in what I found, I leave to the reader, however it seems to me that pure coincidence or not it does illustrate another facet of that symbolic building.

“And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month that he began to build the house of the Lord.”

In their inner meaning, the months days and years are more to do with the unfolding of degrees of consciousness rather than the literal span of time. *Ziv* is the second month and has a literal meaning of 'radiance', 'brightness', 'beauty' and 'flowering or coming into flower'. This signifies the flowering of Solomon's ideals and the beginnings of the emergence of the literal manifestation of the Solar Logos in the Temple. Incidentally the Temple was completed in the month of *Bul* which means 'pouring forth copiously', 'rain', 'abundance and change produced by rain' This alludes to the time when the Temple was completed and there was a down pouring of the Holy Spirit as of a Baptism.

“And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He (Hiram) was a widow's son. A worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass.”

The Masonic Tradition informs us that “There was nothing, however, in connection with this magnificent structure more

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remarkable, or that more particularly struck the attention, than the two great Pillars which stood at the porchway or entrance of King Solomon's Temple."

"For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did encompass either of them."

"And he made two chapters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits."

The text continues to describe the decoration of each of the chapters as being covered with seven nets of checker work and chain work and as having four cubits of lily work and two rows of pomegranates each of which contained one hundred pomegranates.

"And he set up the pillars in the porch of the Temple: and he set up the right pillar and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar and called the name thereof Boaz."

Boaz means 'alacrity', 'in strength', 'fleetness', 'in power and might'. It also indicates 'a cheerful willingness'; 'a richness and power of thought' as well as 'great strength of character'. Jachin has a literal meaning of 'foundation', 'He will set upright', and 'He shall establish'. This alludes to a loyalty and steadfastness of character which results from the opening up the consciousness to the Truth of God. The whole symbol of Solomon's Temple is one for the regeneration of man and it

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shows that only by the complete acceptance and adherence to the upright principles of Truth, Power and the Love of God, can mankind be brought into a state of union. For God said “In strength I will establish this mine House to stand firm forever”.

We also learn from Jeremiah Ch. 52 that the pillars were made hollow and that the thickness of the metal was four fingers, or a hand’s breadth and as I have already said, the Pillars, according to masonic tradition, were made hollow so that they might better serve as repositories for the masonic constitutional rolls and secrets. Yet Freemasonry was not in existence at that time, or was it? Freemasonry and the Western Mystery Tradition are both built on common mystery bedrock and this, for the most part, is the essence of the Qabalistic Tradition. Hence it might well be true to say that the Pillars do indeed contain an aspect of the Mysteries because the Temple and all that it contained was based entirely on a practical realisation of those beliefs.

We also learn from Masonry that “These Pillars were set up as a memorial to the Children of Israel of that miraculous pillar of fire and cloud which gave light to the Israelites and facilitated their escape from their Egyptian bondage.” But they are also symbolic of the Pillars of Fire and Snow from which issued primary manifestation and this is the first hint of that primary law of polarity and their deep symbolic significance. Solomon was a man of wisdom and believed in the unity of the ‘sky or sun’ god. He obtained much of his building materials from Hiram King of Tyre who, being a Phoenician, was a follower of the ‘sea’ gods. Thus Solomon’s Temple was built with a fusion of the Old and New religions. It is not surprising therefore to find that Solomon is the Pillar of Fire, that of Wisdom, and that Hiram, King of Tyre, represents the Pillar of Snow or Water. In other words Solomon is Jachin and Hiram is

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Boaz, or in Plato's terminology of his 'Trivium', Solomon is the Pillar of Grammar of a language and Hiram is its Pillar of Logic. But who is the Middle Pillar, that of Rhetoric?

Solomon sent for a man called Hiram (not King Hiram) who was very cunning in the working of brass. However, Biblical authorities assume that it was more likely that the alloy that was used was bronze because both metals were found in the area. As we know, bronze is an amalgam of copper and tin and this suggests to me that Hiram the architect was very skilful in the blending of the two metallic principles in general, rather than the two specific metals. He could judge and mix this metallic polarity and thereby get the maximum strength. Hiram therefore stands on the Middle Pillar, that of equilibrium, and if we refer back to Plato then Hiram the architect is the Pillar of Rhetoric, or that of Beauty (of the language). Hiram, the architect walks the middle path between the two pillars and shows us the Path that we ought to follow, that of perfect equilibrium. Yet who, you may ask was Hiram? Hiram the architect was a widow's son: but the widow was not just of this world. Hiram is Adonis killed by the bear; he is Krishna slain; He is Osiris murdered and he is our Lord Jesus Christ. This then is the depth of the symbolism of the Pillars.

However, let us return to the physical pillars. The height and circumference are measured in cubits, but the thickness is given in handbreadths or palms. If the circumference of 12 cubits is used to ascertain the diameter, then it yields a value of 3.8 cubits, but this is of little value other than for the scientific mind. I thus turned my attention to the measurement of a palm. In a dictionary of the Bible, a certain Julian of Ascalon (a Byzantine writer of uncertain date) gives a reference to the measures that were in use and in this work he gives 1 cubit as measuring 6 palms. Since the circumference was 12 cubits, then

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this was also equal to 72 palms and 72 is a very magical number - the number of rounds on the ladder of Jacob; the orders of the Angels and the number of Chesed etc. It just so happens that if 72 is used in that familiar school day equation of $2\pi R$ then the exact whole number of 23. So what? I hear you ask.

Since a pillar has two sides, then the internal diameter must be 23 palms minus 2, giving 21. 21 = Eheyeh (Aleph 1, Heh 5, Yod 10, Heh 5). In other words the pillars tell us that no matter what the structure of manifestation might be, it is the power of Eheyeh that maintains and runs through it all and this is why the harmonic space of the Gothic Cathedrals is so sacred. It is this I believe which gives a valuable insight into the nature of the Lightning Flash and Who and What it really is. Now there's a thought! You might even consider the Cosmic Doctrine and whether it is possible to have the three separate principles of the Rings or whether they are only extensions of each other - just look and ponder on the coils of an electric light bulb and the helix of DNA. There are no deep mysteries in this life; there is little that is occult; it is all brilliantly and openly displayed in Nature - we only have to look!

The Pillars stood 18 cubits high and were crowned by a chapter of 5 cubits which makes a total of 23 cubits and gives a total of 138 palms (1 cubit = 6 palms). Since the diameter is already established as 23 palms, the vertical cross-section is 138 palms high x 23 palms wide, which gives the perfect whole number ratio of the length to the breadth of the Pillars as being 6 to 1. This is the length of the Temple to the two Cherubim that stood like two Pillars beside the Ark of the Covenant and this clearly demonstrates the simple laws of proportion which operate as worlds within worlds.

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The height and circumference of a Pillar also holds another fascinating mathematical relationship. If the height of 108 palms is factorised then the result is:- $2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 = 108$. Factoring the circumference of 72 palms yields :- $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3 = 72$. The total height of the 138 palms yields:- $2 \times 3 \times 23 = 138$. The internal diameter has already been given as 21 palms and this factorises to 3×7 . Therefore the external diameter can be described as being 3×7 plus 2 palms, or:- $2 \times 3 \times (3 \times 7 + 2) = 138$.

From these figures can be seen the fundamental relationship of the dimensions of the Pillars which are based on the square and the cube of both 2 and 3 in conjunction with the prime number of 7, a number already defined by the number of nets covering the chapters. It is relationships such as these that abound in the Gothic Cathedrals and which give them the 'feel' of being a sacred space. Yet to many a casual observer, these great pillars are no more than a couple of pieces of brass piping from King Solomon's mines.

I then decided to look at what I could find out from the numerical value of the measurements (in palms) of the Pillars, in terms of word associations. Here it will be remembered that as the Hebrew letters are also numbers, then it must follow that every word has a numerical value.

Internal Diameter = 21 = Eheyeh

External Diameter = 23 = Cheth Yod Heh = Life

Diameter + Circumference = 23 + 72 = 95 = Mem, Lamed, Kaph, Heh = Malkah - the Queen - a title of Malkuth.

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Diameter + Height = 23 + 138 = 161 = Aleph Daleth Mem.
Ayin Yod Lamed Aleph Heh = Primordial Adam.

Circumference + Height = 72 + 138 = 210 = Aleph Daleth Heh
Resh = Adam Primus - a suggestion of Adam Kadmon.

These can be linked to give the story that God dwells within all his Creation and this must include ourselves: it is more difficult to miss God than to contact Him. When this Divine Life is implanted into the Queen then a true and royal Prince will emerge. Similarly, it is only when our own imperfect life is embedded within Malkuth that we can aspire to become as one with Adam and then as a cell in the body of Adam Kadmon. It is only through life here on earth that we can be refined into a fit and perfect ashlar to be incorporated within the New Temple which is eternal in the Heavens. However, there is yet more to be gleaned:-

Diameter + Circumference + Height = 23 + 72 + 138 = 233.
233 = Ayin Tzaddi. Heh Cheth Yod Yod Mem = Otz Chayim -
THE TREE OF LIFE.

So perhaps the old speculative masons were right after all and secrets were indeed enshrined within the two pillars of Boaz and Jachin especially as the original symbol of the Tree of Life was the Menorah, the seven-branched golden candlestick that stood deep within the Holy Temple.

As I began, there may or may not be any truth in any of this, but I do not think that it can be denied that there are many, many secrets and reflective facets contained within the sacred volume of the Bible that are never realised.

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There is one other thought and it is this; that there are two rows of pomegranates on each chapter and therefore there were a total of 400. 400 is the value of the letter Tau, the symbolic letter of the 32nd. Pathway on the Tree. It means perfection and a completion of the Great Work. Thus it is that the pillars embody some of the primary Divine Harmonics which strike the perfect musical chord of the spheres and ultimately lead to the attainment of the Perfect Work. Then will we resound with the music of God's Creation and stand firm in and with God forever and ever as promised by the two Pillars of Boaz and Jachin.

There is a postscript to all of this Geminian and Hodian ramble and it concerns a piece of music. Music, I realise, is a very personal thing and musical tastes vary enormously but the famous 'Canon' by Pachelbel is one of the best loved pieces and one which is well known by many. The bass line comprises 8 notes which are repeated 28 times with no variations. Each note in that bass line is followed by three shorter notes (semi-quavers for the musical minds). Thus:- Bass line of 8 notes = $2 \times 2 \times 2$. Bass repeat 28 times = $2 \times 2 \times 7$. Each Bass note is followed by 3 semi-quavers and therefore, once again, there is profusion of 2's; 3's and the 7.

However this is not all. The first six notes of the bass scheme are three pairs of descending musical 'fourths' (a 'fourth' is the 4th note going up or down the musical scale). You will have probably forgotten by now, but the Bible gave the girth of the Pillar as 12 cubits with a length of 18 cubits. This is a ratio of 1 : 1.5. If we begin with Middle C on the musical scale then the fifth note up, 'G' is in fact the fourth note down in the sequence. In other words Pachelbel's Canon is based on the repeating of the musical interval defined by Boaz and Jachin. Not only this but a full examination of the theme shows

An Exploration of the Pillars

that the full number of 'fourths' contained within it are 3 going down followed by 2 going up to lead in to the repeat of the theme. Once again the same ratio that is found in the Pillar dimensions. I will now turn to Netzach and try to balance this Hodian ramble.

I would like you to come with me on a short journey. Therefore listen to this piece of music in a meditative frame of mind and with your eyes shut. The bass theme begins and here is Hiram the architect standing between two tall golden Pillars, defining the sacred space of some great Astral Temple which has yet to be built by mortal hands. Firstly the walls are raised and then gradually, little by little, all of the ornamental masonry is sculptured and built in and about them, until with the final chord a brilliant radiance streams out of the Holy of Holies in the East, flashing on the golden sides of the two Pillars between which you stand.

I now venture to suggest that you have just listened to and experienced a secret of the Pillars of Boaz and Jachin in a musical form. The circumference of the Pillars was 72 units and this is the frequency of the note 'D'; it is also the key that the Canon was written in and the first and last note of the piece. The Pillar length of 108 units also just happens to be the frequency of the note 'A', which is the second note of the Canon and the musical interval of the fourth below the 'D'. I trust this might lead you to a further exploration of the music of the Temple, after all, we are told at length that David was a musician of some repute and all Solomon did was to convert that Divine music into Divine geometry.

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The Nature of Inner Plane Contacts

JOHN PATERNOSTER

The Tree of Life is a diagrammatic representation of both the macrocosm and the microcosm and as such defines for us the nature of Divinity and the balance of the perfect man who after all, as it was said, was made in the image of God. It also illustrates the interaction of the forces behind all of creation as we know it, whether it is that which has its roots in the Supreme Being or that which is made by mortal man. The reality is that unless all of these principles which are embodied in the Tree are perfectly matched then the structure will inevitably fail and this applies no matter whether this be the Cosmos; the perfect alchemy of a steam locomotive, or perhaps even a developing baby who when not viable is aborted.

As a reminder of the practical relevance of these principles of the Sephiroth and to realise the basic nature of any of the hierarchies let us consider the birth and development of the child according to the Tree of Life.

Before the Beginning, there is No-Thing, it is like the womb which rests together as a unity, full of nothing save itself. Yet into this No-Thing emerges the void of the ovum. It is nothing in itself but is at least something in comparison to what was before. Suddenly this potential is made vital by the ionic flash of divine light as the sperm penetrates this void and brings into manifestation Kether, the Crown, the Monad that contains, as the acorn does the Oak, all that is to be for this individual.

The stage is set. The Word "Love" is uttered and the Being of the baby is called forth, created, formed and made, through the four worlds of Fire, Air, Water and the Earth of the material body.

Thus does the fertilised ovum, like the acorn lie barren on the surface of the ground and like the fertile fruit the vital, life processes of Chokmah drive onwards for this seed to take root and to begin to grow and to fulfil its basic potential as governed by the primal form of Bináh. Between the third and fourth

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Sephirah is the portal called Da-at. It has many connotations; for example it may be regarded as an examination portal where the Grand Overseer does that final check prior to take-off; it also marks the boundary of a change of state, for example the interface between water and ice. Thus in this context, if the ovum is deemed to be viable then the veil of Daat is passed, implantation takes place and the explosive process of manifestation begins.

Cellular growth breaks out from the fourth and expansive Sephirah of Chesed. Yet once again this has to be controlled, or else an erratic and cancerous growth can result. This controlling factor is the fifth principle of Geburah and it is this which regulates and maintains the discipline of the cellular growth into its predestined form. I say “predestined form” because what seems to happen is that the cellular growth fills out the Yetziratic form of the bodily shape that pre-exists, rather like a hand does a glove. This may well be contrary to most people’s beliefs but it is well worth consideration because it answers so many things that otherwise are regarded as coincidences and also negates the assumption that a particular cell is sufficiently conscious to know of itself where it should go. Thus it is only a balance between these two principles that gives a healthy bodily growth and thereby a healthy baby.

There is an old maxim that says “As above so below” and just as two complementary principles must resolve into a third, so too do those of Chesed and Geburah. This resolution occurs with the sixth Sephirah called Tiphareth which is the point of perfect balance and control. Tiphareth is like Apollo riding his chariot across the heavens, that charioteer who has a perfect command over each of his sephirotic horses and of his vehicle below. In the symbolism of the baby, it is that central position of control which is the Central Nervous System which now

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develops and which will enable the individual to steer his physical body along the road of life.

Still, at this stage of life, there is total dependence upon the mother but preparations have to be made for the time when the baby's existence will be totally independent. The two principles that are concerned with this level are Netzach and Hod. Netzach has a meaning to do with a sense of completion and the formation of the circle and cycles. In the body, these cycles are of breathing, circulation, digestion and albeit later, ovulation. The principle of Hod is one of reverberation and it gives the idea of fine tuning and of adjusting or synchronising the other cyclic functions. Consider when the baby is born how the temperature control see-saws and how erratic the breathing is. This is Netzach in the raw state awaiting the fine tuning of Hod which brings about the steady state. Now these cycles and their adjustment are not under our conscious control, but rather they are governed by the third principle of this triad, Yesod, the Automatic Nervous System. In Hebrew, Yesod is the 'foundation' and so indeed is the Automatic Nervous System which is the foundation of the general functioning of the body because it co-ordinates the basic material functions that keep the body operational and ready for our conscious control.

Lastly is the tenth Sephirah or principle called Malkuth, the Kingdom. It is the physical and elemental carcass of the body which is the manifestation of that primal seed, now all geared up, systems set and ready for the start of life. Though still contained within the womb, the heart is now beating the digestive tract is beginning to function and the swallowing reflex starts; in fine the baby waits. Yet still the same principles operate, for isn't a space made (the nursery) to receive the baby and aren't the first two principles of the Father and mother waiting in potential to come on to the scene after the birth? The

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same Divine Laws operate over and over again, so let us now consider the journey of life.

The baby is the kingdom, the perfect elemental body, and the first actions are purely reflexes, those of breathing and of sucking. Gradually, however, the baby begins to react to all of its sensory input and begins the process of learning and of being aware that it can do things, as well as manipulating its parents. This manipulation is the first sign of the development of the ego-centric child, where everything revolves about that child and where the imbalances in that child's personality start to show themselves. Thus according to our environment, so we build up our psychological Foundation - Yesod, as we construct our own personal ninth Principle. Our next step is one of education, of learning and activating our intellectual faculty; our eighth Principle of Hod. Following this comes the next stage, that of adolescence and a feeling for the instincts of puberty, as the cycles and instincts of the seventh Principle - Netzach - come into conscious operation. However, whilst these mark stages of growth, they are always present throughout our lives and they must be always kept in balance. For example are we thinkers who always act from the intellect, letting the mind rule the heart? Or is our action taken from our instincts and feelings, without regard for a logical course of action? If Hod is out of balance then dishonesty and falsehood is clearly seen in the individual, the fine tuning is out of focus and not only that, but consciously so and we lie because we want to. On the other hand, if the operation of Netzach is uncontrolled, then lust rules where love did before.

The child develops to bodily maturity, the perfection of the physical form and the individual is, or ought to be in complete control of the body. Here is the sixth principle, namely that of Tiphareth, of Beauty of truth and of integrity. This is where we

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are seen to have reached physical maturity and when we ought to be in charge of our lives and well able to embark on our own crusade. The next period is that of early middle age when there is still the drive to make a name for ourselves in the world and still a determination to challenge for the top. This is the age of Geburah, but the challenge for the position of Managing Director gradually levels off into late middle age, that of Chesed. Chesed marks the time when there is a realisation that all that has been possible has been achieved. There is now a sitting back and instead of the grasping of Geburah, there is now a giving back with a generous and encouraging hand of a person who has achieved his goal.

Da-at is when we get our first glimpses into the higher worlds which is marked by our first contact with death; perhaps a parent or an older relative dies. Then comes the age of Binah; that of early old-age when the person looks back at their life and begins to formulate their own philosophy and their own understanding of the direction and purpose of their life. Understanding may seem subjectively very easy, but how many could honestly say that they could show the depth of understanding of the Virgin Mary as she watched her Son being crucified. This is the nature of real understanding. Finally there comes the old-age of Chokmah when the person begins to die. There may well be revelatory flashes of insight in the closing stages of life as death approaches as the closing breath of this mortal life marks the passage of Kether. The Beginning and the End.

It is thus that the Divine Principles operate both forwards and backwards. They are in reality so straight forward, and as one excellent teacher put it “The Laws of GOD are so simple, that man has to complicate them to understand them” and so it is with the hierarchy of the Inner Planes, the principles are

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always the same, it is just the scale of the power which varies according to the world in which they operate.

There is an old maxim which says “As above so it is below” and in the light of this we can get a clear understanding of the nature of any hierarchy by an examination of our physical world. Indeed you will also find a similar plan of these principles in any of Shakespeare’s plays when the actors are compared with each other.

Therefore the human hierarchy in the World of Assiah, our practical and physical world can be classified something like this. The workers who operate with the principles of Malkuth are people like farmers, gardeners and miners, whilst the examples of the principle of Yesod would include actors and beauticians. Hod marks the writers, teachers and tricksters and thieves of the world, whilst all artists, musicians and designers are examples of Netzach. The principles of the overall control of Tiphareth are or should be those exercised by the chairman and department supervisors; the principles of Geburah are those of the policemen, soldiers and guards and those of Chesed are merchants, social workers and charity operators such as the Red Cross. The operation in the level of another world which would be associated with Daath would be the under-cover agent. The Law maker is an example of Binah; the inventor and priest are examples of Chokmah and I suppose that the position of King or President must be an example of Kether.

These examples however, whilst illustrating the hierarchy of our world, only give a clue as to how the principles operate in the Angelic and higher worlds. Our human examples have at least some degree of consciousness and can very often exercise some control over themselves and their operation. Not so the Angelic powers, they are pure function, devoid of any will and consciousness and operate as a river in full flood until their

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action is terminated. Herein lies the trouble caused by the amateur invoker of these forces, when he or she acts out the part of the lion tamer who tries to work in the dark. These forces are easy to rouse but almost impossible to reset back to their original position and balance. Thus all who want to play the part of God must realise that having distorted the Cosmos to suit their own ends, no matter what the supposed good was meant to be, they must be prepared to be hit by the return swing of the pendulum. If you think that you are safe then remember that the pay-off might not be for several incarnations. How many of you might still be paying for the abuse of power in the time of Atlantis? Consider this and do you still want to repeat the same mistakes? Even Crowley issued this same warning when he said - "Do what thou wilt shalt be the Law - But be prepared to pay the price".

Always remember that you 'Invoke' an Angel and that 'conjure' is what you do to evil spirits. Do not try to invoke an evil spirit or to Conjure an Angel because they are simple souls and are very easily confused and then you will get more than you bargained for. At this point I am minded to point out that Angels have their own means of communication. They speak Enochian which has its own grammar and syntax which is about as easy to understand as the northern dialect of Serbo-Croat. Luckily for all of us Dr. John Dee gave them all a crash course in Hebrew and English shortly after.

There are a whole host of various angelic powers which are well documented in various published books. However, care must be exercised because one must never believe all that one reads, or that every book is totally correct. For example you would look a right fool if you phoned for a taxi to go somewhere and an aeroplane landed in the road outside. It seems to be that the average A-Z directory of the Angels is

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about as accurate as the Railway Timetable. Another unfortunate example is an invocation to the benign angel Lumiel that has been printed recently in an "Angel Book" which I understand was copied from a lady's work by someone who failed to understand that this name was used as a front for the real angel power whose name is Lucifer; consider these implications. Always remember that there is a simple rule concerning the naming of Angels and that the first part of the name describes the function while the second part designates that aspect of God under whose Will the Angel operates. Thus Barak, spelt Beth, Resh, Qoph, meaning 'Lightning' with Y-EL (Yod, Aleph, Lamed) meaning 'Of-God' affixed to the end, yields the Angelic Power of Barakel (Beth, Resh, Qoph, Aleph, Lamed), literally meaning "The Lightning of God".

The Angels are said to originate from the sweat of the Four Holy Living Creatures which are said to rule the four levels of the world of Yetzirah. These four levels are therefore ruled by the Man at the top and then through the Eagle, the Lion and the Bull at the bottom. Countless Angels are formed and are grouped into the principles of the Sephiroth in this Yetziratic World and these groupings have a dramatic effect on our lives. Thus when the powers of the Seraphim - Gevurah, are in the ascendant then a nation becomes suffused with a general mood of Puritanism or rigor as for example the rigidity of the old Soviet Union. However, when there is the routine swing of the pendulum and the powers of the Chashmalim gain the ascendant then there is a general expansive freedom for all that is now seen to hold sway in the new Russia.

Whilst the human examples of various jobs just relate to the general running of our lives, the work of the Angels operates at the national or global levels of our existence. The nature of the Archangels however is Cosmic. Their concerns are

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for the order of the galaxies and thus Samael is the function of Cosmic discipline and yet because this function is omnipresent throughout creation, Samael is also the controller over the function of the sub-atomic particles. Michael, who stands in Tiphareth of Briah is given charge over all of the hosts of the Angels because he also stands within Kether of Yetzirah and thereby in the Crown of Yetzirah.

Within this scheme of functions within Briah there are other great beings and these are needed because the maintenance of all Cosmic balance needs a general feedback and control. The Archangels operate from their Pillars and view their work solely from that perspective, they operate from pure principle and total objectivity. There is therefore an Inner Council which is sometimes called the "Watchers who never sleep" and it is their function to maintain direct contact with the Unchanging World of Atziluth and to communicate the knowledge of the Divine Plan and intentions through the Worlds to Sandalphon. Michael and Gabriel who operate from the Middle Pillar are part of this team and Sandalphon who resides at the Malkuth of Briah, the Tiphareth of Yetzirah and the Kether of Malkuth oversees the manifestation of these directives.

I suppose that I must acknowledge the existence of the Negative Tree, where reside all of the evil entities. Their Tree is exactly the same in structure and is crowned by Lucifer also called Satan, the Devil, Beelzebub, Baphomet, Mephistopheles and Old Nick. I have to say that I sometimes wonder whether he really is the embodiment of evil or just going for the record in *Roget's Thesaurus*. And with Lilith's name meaning Screech Owl it is quite easy to see why Adam got shot of her in favour of Eve.

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There remains however, one further aspect of the hierarchy of the Inner Planes which needs a careful understanding, for whilst we genuinely invoke the Archangels for their protection from malefic entities there is also the possibility of invoking the lower world representatives of the various inner councils for their guidance and assistance. Invoking various Angelic powers whose functions we do not really know is dangerous, but the contact with those beings who have trodden the path which we are following can be of great help. However, fully to understand the degree of evolution attained by these individuals, we must consider the levels of growth achieved by them with regard to the Tree.

Most Eastern Faiths have always accepted that the cycles of life and death are repeated over and over again and it was only with the Convention of Nicea in 381 A.D. that Constantine laid down the articles of faith as we know them now, which denies the essence of re-incarnation which is found in the Jewish Mystery tradition of the Qabalah; the bed-rock of Christian Mysticism. This life marks but one cycle in a whole multitude of cycles for as I mentioned when dealing with the aspect of the baby at Yesod, we should not confuse the baby with an innocent individual. Here is an older soul, once again in a baby's body because if you observe the eyes of a baby who is but a few days old, you will see the eyes of a person who is most certainly innocent and certainly not a baby. They are the eyes of someone who knows, yet they are also the eyes of someone who is forgetting.

One great tenet of faith is that everyone is born equal and this is true. However, life shows us quite clearly that everyone is not born equal and this is also true. There is no such thing as a paradox, only two truths which are misunderstood. Therefore, what is also very true is that everyone has exactly what they

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need, although it is rarely what they want. Now consider what the Qabalistic tradition tells us. There are four aspects to each person and these are:-

- 1, The Divine Spark; that essence of the Godhead whence we originated.
- 2, The Evolutionary Self; the synthesis of all our past lives.
- 3, The Incarnatory Self; the personality of the current life.
- 4, The Physical Body; the physical form of the Incarnatory Self.

During our lives we make many mistakes which have to be corrected and we also make some good decisions which will ensure some credit. In order that these aspects of our lives can be addressed there is a post-death process where our life's actions can be assimilated. Immediately after death it is said that the discarnate being has three days to detach itself completely from this physical plane, during which time it is at liberty to watch over friends and relatives and to say those 'final farewells'. Then it is shown a very quick replay of its life before being given a period of rest and here we are reminded of the masonic reply from the Junior Warden "To be called from labour to refreshment that profit and pleasure may be the result". After this period the individual returns to analyse that life by watching the whole of it frame by frame as though on some vast cinema screen. Here the person sits in judgement on himself and assimilates the lessons learnt. These lessons are absorbed by the Evolutionary Self prior to a further projection into matter in the next attempt to purify the previously manifested deviations and so it is that all of our imperfections are gradually trued up like the rough ashlar into the perfect ashlar of masonic tradition. In the Jewish tradition we are all

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one cell in the body of the primal man - Adam Kadmon - and when we have perfected our own cell, we can then take our place in the Divine body and when every other man has also reached that stage of perfection, then Adam is complete and God beholds God in His Divine reflection.

This is the path that all of us must tread and it is the same path that all of the great sages throughout time have trodden and in order to understand the level achieved by our contacts, it is important to comprehend their degree of attainment. This is quite obvious because the last thing that one wants to do is inadvertently to summon up some Succubus who materialises into the barmaid from the Rose and Crown - there's no way that this would go down well with the wife!

We quite naturally assume that we have a reasonable control over our personalities and are quite able to act from Tiphareth. Well, isn't this what all of our training is for? I fear that in reality this is often a delusion and a fantasy. There is a Tree in every Sephirah and whether the action is taking place from the Tiphareth of Tiphareth or from that in Yesod or even Malkuth, I will now leave for your self judgement. There are many who act from the pivotal point of the egocentric personality and there are many more who are still waiting for their psychological birth into Malkuth and this certainly puts the universal attainment of the psychological Kether - let alone the spiritual Kether - into its proper perspective.

We will begin, as ever, with Malkuth and ask the question "What is psychological birth"? Perhaps the word "Awakening" gives the best idea, but we must also consider from what are we awakening? What is human consciousness? It not only includes the mineral consciousness of its bodily composition but also that of the vegetable and animal levels and all of these have to be experienced and understood long before we aspire to what

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may be described as human consciousness. It is therefore reasonable to start from the vegetable level. Here the person is learning to master the art of the simplest form of life, most probably they are the very young Souls who are just beginning their incarnatory lives. An example of such a person might be a forest native, a being who learns the art of feeding himself, of procreating and who recognises his own territory. On the other hand, Karma might force an individual back to this level to relearn a lesson forgotten; such is the fate of many a tramp. Indeed some tramps have sunk below the vegetable because they fulfil none of the criteria of vegetable man, and I use the term “man” in this context just to mean a member of “Homo Sapiens”. They cannot feed or house themselves although they might still manage to copulate. Visit the local pub and there you will find many a vegetable person; in between the pints or sherries; they eat, may work or draw benefit and have sex, but that is all that there is to their lives. Now animal man not only includes the vegetable level, but has the added dimension of a social parameter. This is a world to be manipulated to one’s own advantage. Here is a hierarchy to be exploited as with pack animals. Observe the leader of the pack in the pub, club or amateur committee, here is animal man in all his glory. However, out of the millions of our population there are many who begin to ask the question “Who am I”? and this marks the beginning of their awakening to the level of human consciousness and to their psychological birth. This marks the arrival at the Sephirah of Malkuth at the nadir of our journey of descent to ascent and it can also mark the passing of many, many lives and thereby hundreds of years in human life.

The level of Yesod marks the psychological infant. At this level we are naturally egocentric; the only thing that really matters is Me, but while we can be very obedient like a child,

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we can also be very manipulative so as to get our own way. At this level our attitude to life is governed by the exclamatory thought "I want!". There is excitement in everything new, no matter whether it is a new car, dress, holiday or job. How we look forward to the Birthday and Christmas presents - how we love to be Psychological infants! How we enjoy these adult toys. Another aspect of this level of Yesod is a dependence upon somebody for psychological support and this parent substitute can be anybody from a priest to an analyst, or even a group and especially occult groups. Indeed the substitute does not have to be human; it can be the single person who is devoted to their cat or dog, or one who constantly demands the cigarette nipple, the finger-nail, or the person who always seeks the approval and praise of their friends. Here at Yesod are found leaders of many worthy causes but they are those who have no Humility which is the hall-mark of Tiphareth. So before leaving Yesod, examine your own reaction to criticism. Well, if it is a reaction then there are no prizes for realising just what your psychological age really is. This is Yesod and this is without doubt very familiar ground to most of us.

Hod and the childhood age bring psychological responses which are again familiar. This is the age of the exploration of our environment and in order to understand it, we ask countless questions from our elders and friends but there is a common thread that emerges and this is that all we do at this level is to store facts. This is the classic case of the person who reads the book and knows it all, or thinks that they do, when in reality they know nothing. How often would we commit ourselves to the charge of the pilot who has read every book on flying, but who has no practical knowledge? This psychological childhood is the level at which the imagination and the realms of fantasy are allowed a free rein. This is the age of experience of

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knowledge, but most definitely not the age of knowledge of experience. On the negative side there emerge the actions of deceit and trickery; both falsehood and being economical with the truth are all imbalances of Hod. Don't forget that able crooks are usually very clever people and lay down elaborate plans. Hod is the home of all analysts who search by means of logic and those who have to take their own temperature after having a kiss (to work out how they FEEL). The Hodian just thinks it thinks, yet for the great spies, Hod is their strength.

From childhood we move towards adolescence and the coming to terms with the great instinctive drives. One thing that must be remembered is that the instincts have terrific power. This is the level of the fanatic for whom the effect is more important than the outcome and who usually ends up dead. Consider the passionate drive in the pursuit of both love and lust. Netzach is a very powerful energy which requires understanding and this only comes with experience. Prior to this stage of development the energy, like steam, dissipates from the top of a kettle but when we seek to contain it we forget that it is the containment of energy that so easily drives the great steam locomotives. Trial and error, the agony and ecstasy of the adolescent age as we come to terms with the instinctive powers. Here too are the present day Peter Pans and to use a modern cliché - mutton dressed up as lamb. These drives mark our puberty as we rebel against orthodoxy, decide to take risks, seek the approval of our peers and go out on our personal crusade because after all isn't the world our oyster, we its pearl?

Well, are any of the individuals of these levels worth invoking for their help? I fear not. It is only after growing up through these several ages that we even approach to Tiphareth and psychological maturity and this after many more lifetimes and hundreds of years. Many people hover in this proximity but

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very few can be said to hold this level of maturity for any length of time. This is the abode of truth and balance in both thought and actions. Here is found humility and a perfect contentment with life. This is where the real individual is totally aware of all of the lower levels that we have already talked about. Now the person is beginning to become truly “Awake” and to adopt an individuality as opposed to being one of a number. Only now does there begin to emerge an objectivity and a mode of life that is under Self-control. At this stage our whole perspective changes, not only is there an awareness of a shadow side of our being, but that there are influences that are far greater than ourselves. Yet our biggest problem comes with the negative aspect of Tiphareth and is one of the most seductive temptations. It is Pride. How those feelings of self-importance, self-congratulation and superiority flood in at any opportunity. Yesod and infancy pull us down from that sense of maturity just as surely as gravity acts on the surface of the earth. Truth and maturity come only with a crucifixion and transformation. It is only through the trials of the cleansing fire that the sweet incense of self-truth is liberated from the coarse ego-centric crystals of youth.

Well, I suppose that I must now ask what the score is? Are you still with us or have you dropped out in the reality of your age? If you have, then in the words of a great Teacher “keep practising!” because you are still at the student level. Yet can it really be true that those of us who cannot master this psychological level of objectivity presume - yes, presume to work magic and to invoke any old spirit? Summon up some Angel whose name has been miss-spelt in a second-hand book? Or even summon up poor old uncle Fred who died last year? Can it really be that we have any idea of the grand designs of the Supreme Architect as communicated by the Watchers of the

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Inner Councils and yet believe that we can modify his plans with some discarnate layabout who has still got more than his own problems? Can we honestly say that we know so much about another's Karma that we can interfere with that person's life with the help of a total and perverted spiritual stranger? What supreme arrogance this really is. Consider the following: A group worked a magical ritual to promote healing for one of their number. It worked so well that he recovered sufficiently to leave them the following note:- "Thank you for giving me the strength to commit suicide."

Is this how we want to interfere? If it is, then forget about the hierarchy of the Inner Planes and go back to the Ouija Board and back to the level of life which is marked by fear which was at one time the hall-mark of Malkuth because that is the level for you. Consider how fear rules one if not all of the three areas of life; at work, at play, and in relationships. We obey because we fear that we might lose our job; we fear that we might lose when we are at play and we capitulate lest others will no longer love us. We live in fear so we live in Malkuth yet we still want to invoke God knows what and then to talk with it!

At this point it is worth considering what so many Malkuth-bound occultists have striven so long to do and that is to communicate with the dead and get some inner help. Firstly there is Spiritualism which now seems to have been taken over by many sweet old ladies, with that lovely blue rinse, who can certainly make contact with a loved one who is recently departed. However, what one usually hears is "Yes Mabel, your Albert is very happy here on the other side." Which is fine for Mabel but little help to you on your evolutionary quest in life. Strange too. How no-one asks the really probing questions like "How come every other spirit is a Red Indian?" Now secondly there is the Ouija Board but this has even less to commend it

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unless you are into playing rugby football with the discarnates and using the Board for the ball, but they never play by the rules. Then there is Geomancy, but after spilling one's beer over the sand the entities are usually more drunk than me. I had thought that I might try Scrying but I could never master the art of keeping the Goldfish out of the way.

Lastly we come to Necromancy. Now this is more promising because at least you can stand in the middle of your pentagram, brandish your sword and command some unfortunate to give up the information as to who is going to win the Grand National. No longer do you have to hang around and hope that someone interesting will happen to pass by, your seance, which is just as well because no-one of interest is ever going to push their way through all those Red Indians anyway.

However, for those who really want to ask for help, then the level of Geburah marks that level where there is an objectivity and an understanding of karma, where the ways to set it all in order are found. However at this level, there is more, there is a total purity of judgement, discrimination and an incisiveness that speeds to the very essence of any matter like an arrow cleaving the air. Here are the warriors and heroes who will die for their cause, but here are also the zealots and bigots who must do everything by the rules and by what the book says. Here are those who will incisively cleave you in two with a perfect objectivity if you ask them to do so; just like the story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

The age of Chesed is one of expansiveness. The king sits on his throne and there is warmth and radiant beneficence to all, the loving hand of forgiveness is forever extended, not just to friends, but also to the whole of mankind. Together with Geburah, this is the level of the lesser saints and adepts, but as you are aware, there is still a long long path ahead to travel.

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Da-at is at the centre of the transpersonal triad of Binah, Chokmah and Tiphareth and gives direct access to the Spiritual World of Briah. Here those of the real mystics who have that ability perceive those higher worlds. I use the word “perceive” because the Briatic World is formless and this causes so much misunderstanding and difficulty when the mystic tries to translate the experiences into a “form” that others are then able to understand. However since Da-at is not a Sefirah, it ought not to be included in this scheme or have a particular level designated to it. Instead, if the Sephiroth were to be likened to the levels on a spiral staircase, then Da-at would be the looking up or down through the central stair-well.

With Binah the patterns of life are seen laid out not just by themselves, but woven into that glorious tapestry of existence that hangs before the Presence. This is the level of those individuals of Destiny and at this level we are in the company of our Lady Mary.

The level of Chokmah brings us into the company of the Saints and Sages. Here is the true wisdom and the revelation of that Perfect Light that illuminates all things; no longer here, is the dark glass needed. Here one is but a single step away from having one’s name called by the Holy One. Here we wait for that summons which commands us to rise up and to walk with Him so that after one’s perfected regeneration we might rest within Him and He in us. Here in Kether we reign with God’s Supernal Crown one with Him and Him with us.

I will now recall to you some words of the English Master. He tells of Societies, Fraternities and Orders and they have a distinct relationship with the three higher worlds. Firstly the Societies (Assiah) which are similar only to straightforward study groups; secondly there are the Fraternities (Yetzirah) which are contacted by the Inner Planes and have members

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some who are initiated into the Mysteries and lastly there are the Orders such as the Great White Lodge (Briah).

“The Masters of whom we speak have no physical plane existence and as you picture them they are all imagination - note well - I did not say that they were imagination - I said the Masters as you picture them. What we are you cannot realise and it is a waste of time to try to do so, but you can imagine us on the Astral Plane and we can contact you through your imagination and although your mental picture is not real or actual, the results of it are real and actual. The Masters as they are supposed to be in popular esoteric thought are pure fiction, but as long as you have a concrete consciousness you will have to use the Astral to reach the abstract.”

This extract therefore gives an exact level reached by the Masters, for remember Assiah is the physical world and Yetzirah is the world of images, but Briah is formless and the English Master says quite specifically that we must use the world of Yetzirah as a meeting place. Now consider the level at which the Spiritualists work, which by the definition of most of their contacts must therefore be in the world of Yetzirah and not anything higher.

Now permit me to continue with the English Master who was canonised in 1935.

Greetings my Brethren

There are a number of Beings on the Inner Planes who have come through the rounds of humanity and who have no need to enter into incarnation again. Some of these you call Masters but there are many grades of them so that the all inclusive term Inner Plane Adepti is possibly a wiser expression. The Beings of whom I am going to speak are all human, I shall not speak of certain remote

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guides who are not men and who never have been. The Inner Plane Adeptus of the human kind has come through many incarnations until it is no longer necessary for his further development to continue living the Earth life. Therefore according to their grades and their particular esoteric needs, such either retire to very far off spheres or they remain, not indeed on Earth, but within touch of it. How do they remain in touch? They do so by a very remarkable and age long system of telepathy which flashes sudden messages into the consciousness of many people on Earth or as in the case of the mediums they can send a message in a continuous flow and keep the whole contact near to the Earth for a certain time. As I have said there are many grades among the Inner Plane Adepts and you must realise that all of them, though they have no further need for Earth lessons obtained through incarnation, still have need for evolving themselves in different ways on other Planes. There are many forms of development for them which I cannot dwell upon now but broadly speaking they may be counted as a kind of Planetary Initiation beyond the Earth - there are several such. According to the Inner Plane Initiation which a Master has taken, so is his esoteric grade. The Initiation of occult groups are shadows of these grades but there is a certain likeness. There among the Masters, I use the word Master here deliberately, who have reached a certain grade on the Inner Planes then occupy themselves not only with the general helping of humanity but also with the special work connected with the forces behind evolution as they show themselves in different countries. Such Masters have, as it were, areas of National force allotted to them. Sometimes a whole continent is allotted

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to one for his particular sphere of work. There are also great Adepts who live upon the Earth in the ordinary way for a certain time in order to teach certain aspects of truth. Rudolph Steiner was one such and there are of course others. But unfortunately, as so often happens, when the Adept lives on Earth in a physical body, his power corrupts him and he falls - you will all know figures in occult history who illustrate that statement.

It has often been said that certain Masters and Adepts have been such and such a well known historical figure in an incarnation. Very possibly they have been, but you must remember that there is another possibility, namely that the spirit of the Master or Adept may well have worked in a very developed pupil and have been so incorporated in that pupil's mind and spirit that it may give all appearances of an incarnation though in fact it was not one.

This then is our goal and these are the levels of attainment of the great Masters who have walked this way before us. This is why such great teachers as the Greek Philosophers are so very important because of their experience of life and the wisdom that they can impart to us from the lower levels of the Councils on high. The object of our incarnation is to regenerate and perfect ourselves and only when we have done this can we offer service and be of any use to the Inner Planes. Anything else and all we are is a loose cannon which wreaks havoc. Therefore remember who you seek to contact; what is their level of attainment and then listen to what they say. Never take it as gospel truth but examine it and weigh it up because any student can easily be deceived by a malefic entity who is only too eager to latch on to an enthusiastic amateur on the one hand and by the intrusion of the coloration of his own personality, on

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the other. Hence we should always seek the protection of Michael and his boys.

This then is my view of the hierarchies of the Inner Planes and our contacts and it behoves us to treat our contacts with the respect that they deserve and to accept any admonishment that they may direct at us. Ever remember that when approached with humility even the greatest of powers will be as gentle as the lightest stroke of the artist's brush. But if approached with arrogant pride then the pressure of that artist's brush will be as strong as the power of the atomic bomb.

THE SIEGE PERILOUS

Avoiding the Dangers of Ceremonial Magic

ANDREW STEPHENSON

Let me put a proposition to you: Suppose we think of this world as a school, a school for errant human beings and therefore 'tailor-made' for our 'odd' behaviour; a world containing all manner of interesting things and providing many dangers - all there to stimulate our minds whilst providing punishments for the careless, one of which is early demise. However, this 'school of life' is not the same as the school we knew when young. There discipline was imposed by very visible teachers whereas in this school our teachers are unseen and discipline is of our own making. We are free to learn or to idle, with the need to keep our bodies functioning as the only compulsion (try to stop breathing!). We are free to argue, fight, kill, do the most stupid or pointless things, play with our toys, or just behave badly.... *or* learn to grow up. But 'growing up is the prime reason for our existence here and, I imagine, *any* effort in that direction will prove invaluable when the time comes for us to leave school.

Perhaps it would be better to describe this world as our University. With reluctance, I would add, for our general behaviour is not better than that of a group of very small children who have yet to learn how to play together in harmony. Instead of a teacher and a classroom we have what is called our personal 'guardian angel', sitting at our shoulder. Invisible, of course, and thank goodness! For if that hymn we love to sing at Christmas '*While shepherds watched their flocks by night*' is correct, we too would be 'filled with mighty dread' at the sight of an angel. Still, we casually mention being saved by our guardian angel from some terrible accident. It is also said that an angel of the devil sits at our other shoulder. This I doubt for we are quite capable of doing 'bad' things on our own account, without any help! Particularly today we seek to blame someone or something else for our own stupidity.

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Not that the guardian angel does much usually. It will make suggestions and place opportunities in our path, but we are too busy playing with our toys to take notice, or dismiss them with the thought "*I could not do that!*" It is only when we pay attention and actively seek to grow up that the angel can become a real tutor. Much of its advice is to get us to expand our horizons, to discover what we CAN do and our limitations. Our boundaries are very much further away from us than we think. In practical terms, the jobs we can do around the home are very varied. Useful when something fails on a Saturday night - essential if the water storage tank springs a leak at the beginning of a Bank holiday! But we need to know what to do.

Having survived the years until now, I can assume that we have all learned to avoid many of the risks of this material world. For example, we will happily sit in a car travelling at a mile per minute surrounded by far too many other vehicles also travelling at that speed, confident that all drivers have received training and passed the driving test. Does this include joy-riding children? Yet we know that it takes only one driver to lose concentration for a moment to cause a horrendous accident *which could easily involve us*. Indeed, so commonplace are accidents on our roads that only the most serious ever get reported by the media. Of course, 'it will not happen to ME'!

If our bodies have problems, we happily submit them to the skill of surgeons who *we assume* have had the necessary lengthy training, and who will handle their scalpel with a precision and delicacy of touch seldom found these days in other walks of life. We react with horror on those rare occasions when a bogus person fools the hospital authorities into allowing him (it is usually a man) to perform surgery, however minor.

When, however, it comes to things of the mind, most seem to be happy to ignore the questions of training, qualification, talents.

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It is assumed that we can do-it-ourselves easily, and that anyone with the slightest amount of charisma can persuade us to entrust our minds to that person's bumbling attempt to follow a 'system' mentioned in a book. We are perhaps, regarding the printed word as possessing some supernatural power. It is, however, only print and subject to printers' errors just as its author is subject to as much error of thought as everyone else.

Have you ever tried to understand the workings of our 'toys' - the computer, the television, the mobile phone, the car, or even what electricity *is* and where it comes from (no, nobody knows)? Do you care? We accept that somebody understands and has tested them to make them safe for us. Someone is trained and so we play happily with our toys.

Yet if I produced a battered black-cover notebook (the standard colour until quite recently), hand-written, claiming that "this was Count Dracula's ritual I found in the gutter in the Portobello Road", folk would flock to examine it and seek to work the system - despite finding that it had been hand-written in modern English rather than in medieval Latin.

This Conference is concerned with Magic. Yes, but what do we mean by 'Magic'. Strictly speaking, it means anything we do not understand - and we are surrounded by toys the working of which few can attempt to understand. So I will narrow my meaning to 'that which is not of this world and which we can only experience, and then only individually or within a small group'. Any individual can have an *out-of-this-world* experience without having done anything, frightening but usually harmless. Actively to seek out magic or the 'inner world', however, calls for much effort and patience.

How do we start to discover this 'inner world'? In former days most would hear the exhortations of church leaders - study the Bible, find a puzzling passage, then pray and meditate upon

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it. In these days I wonder, with the closure of so many churches, whilst those that function seem too often to offer 'entertainment' rather than worship. The meditation part is the most difficult as its purpose is to train our minds to concentrate on a particular something and to keep out all extraneous thoughts. This takes a long time to achieve and, as our current worldly demand is for 'instant' everything, the chances are that we turn to some book on the subject. Alas, many such books are bland, superficial, downright misleading, especially those on trendy churches' bookstalls. Sensible and helpful books are available and it is our duty to guide when such opportunity arises. At last the learner is making a real start, and here the guardian starts to make its positive contribution.

For real meditation involves both quietening and then opening the mind to 'the powers'. Here one needs protection from the evil powers and I think that the guardian must be providing that protection in one's early attempts. Hopefully the novice will soon appreciate the need for positive personal effort before starting to meditate. It is a pity that most churchgoers do not appreciate the real significance of the genuflection which, when properly carried out, provides a genuine personal protection. Not that it originated at Rome, or is intended to be the sign of the cross. The action is extremely old, with words in Sanskrit. The sign should be made with the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand touching the five main chakra points, starting with the forehead. I have little idea how to pronounce these words and use an English translation which I hope is near enough to the original - "*Unto Thee - art the glory - the strength - and the splendour - throughout the encircling ages - AUM.*" Others will prefer Hebrew, Latin or Greek, and I feel sure that any are acceptable provided that the intent is there.

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The guardian will, when the novice is ready, introduce appropriate books for study. I hear much talk about ‘chance’ but these things are deliberate. The serious and determined novice will be able to achieve a considerable advance alone - and indeed a few, usually lone monks and nuns, achieve full communion with their inner selves without contact with other human beings. The rest of us require the interchange of ideas, problems and encouragement with others on the Path. So we seek out a Group.

Unfortunately there is a vast range of Groups, many of them spurious and some decidedly dangerous. I would want to know something of their track-record, or at least that of the leader, before entrusting *my* mind to their practices. Some systems *are* based on solid foundations and have genuinely enlightened a number of their members.

Let us consider, now, the *Golden Dawn*. For the purpose of this Paper, I will ignore the who or what were the mysterious Fraulein Ann Sprengel *et. al.* What matters is not who contributed what or why or how, but the *result*. And the result was brilliant. It was the ideal vehicle for the Theosophists of the day to make a real personal advancement towards enlightenment. They were required to work, and to work hard, in order to make progress. Also they were ruled in fact by Dr. William Wynn Westcott, probably *autocratically as many medical practitioners were accustomed to behaving in their daily lives*. So long as he remained in control he kept the others in check. Naturally the system was not perfect - nothing is - but it satisfied the needs of the ordinary members, as some of the ‘flying rolls’ indicate. When, however, the Home Office forced him to resign from office in the Order, the senior members fell out with one another and the Order disintegrated. On the surface it was all about ‘improvements’, but I detect signs of inflated

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egos - undoubtedly the greatest danger to all esoteric movements because it has nothing to do with outside 'forces' and everything to do with our flawed human nature.

Not everything was lost, however, for one member - another Doctor of Medicine please note - Dr. Robert William Felkin, set up a Temple in New Zealand. Another authoritative figure, it is recorded that he did not hesitate to expel anyone who deviated from the rules or who attempted the astral work outside of the group's regular meetings. His wife's comprehension of the system, and her gifts in understanding, were greater even than his so that, when the Doctor died, the Order became even stronger under her leadership. His daughter, by his first wife, had lived with them in the Order, indeed was left in charge by her father when he made his last visit to England. Thus she was able to take control, and maintain the group intact, after the death of Mrs Felkin. However, once his daughter died, the Temple started to split up into factions and within a few years ceased to function. The story of the Whare Ra Temple is a fascinating one, not the least of which delights is the discovery of the door leading to the secret 'inner vault' by the present owners of the house a considerable time after they had moved in. (I have brought along a brochure which you may find of interest, although the subject is the life and work of the architect whose first important work was the house. He was one of the first recruits to the Order in New Zealand.) Whilst writing this Paper I was sent a photo-copy of a chapter of the latest book about the Temple, published only in Honolulu for sale in New Zealand.

The *Golden Dawn* was not alone in meeting this problem. Indeed, any and every 'esoteric' organisation comes up against this problem sooner or later. Even our long-established churches and chapels, and oriental temples too, do not escape -

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they, too, are ‘esoteric’ or ‘magical’ through prayer and sacrament. Happily for us, the Christian Church normally follows the system used by much earlier religions. It is worth a brief examination to see what we can learn from them.

First of all there is the building, room or area, consecrated and set apart from mundane activities. Consecration, whether simple or elaborate, provides the initial protection. But it is the ‘setting it apart’ from ordinary activities, and its regular use for worship, which strengthens the protection until there is an ‘atmosphere’ about it. This means that only the ‘good’ or ‘white magic’ can enter, leaving all undesirable elements outside. The Services, whether liturgical or ‘free’, are designed to add their own modest protection which, in time, is absorbed by its walls. I admit to being sorely puzzled when acts of wanton or evil vandalism (between Services) do not seem to diminish the ‘atmosphere’. It is to be regretted that ‘free’ can be misused - initially for the best of reasons - by adventurous priests who, alas, do not realise the implications. Perhaps you have encountered the Charismatic Prayer Meetings, very informal, free and easy, spontaneous ‘speaking in tongues’, etc. which start well but end in tears. In many instances the leader becomes deluded by early success and becomes filled with a sense of becoming God’s chosen prophet. In all the instances I have come across the personal ego rather than outside forces is at fault, for our ego is a tough customer to tame and, being within the protective envelope, is extremely difficult to eradicate. Thus Jesus’ exhortation to his disciples to “deny themselves” and “to become as servants”. And to us, to strive for humility and “to love God with *all* our heart, mind and strength”.

It would take another to determine where the line should be drawn concerning usage of the consecrated place other than for

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Services. Clearly, no harm has been done by a performance of Handel's *Messiah* or a Mystery Play. Nor have there been any problems where the place has been de-consecrated (and used as stables or storehouse, for example), before being re-consecrated when times were more favourable. Most esoteric organisations, other than churches, make use of convenient Halls. What about them?

Much depends on who has control of the Hall. If this is the organisation concerned, and one can trust the Committee, all will be well. Usually, however, the Hall is controlled by others and the Lettings Committee may be under pressure to increase the rental income. How much 'atmosphere' do you think would remain after the Hall had been used by a male stripper party? (I have heard of much worse uses.) Therefore, whenever in the slightest doubt, a group should always start with the 'protection' ritual. I feel sure that all here join in those parts which allow an additional personal protection - but do you regularly impress the importance of this to other members of your group?

I have mentioned the angels of God and the angels of the devil. We tend to overlook the third type, probably the most dangerous because so unpredictable. They are the imps. These are uncontrolled, and seem to possess great delight in causing mischief among humans. They are very difficult to 'chase away' and, if one is not on guard, they can upset any or all of one's careful arrangements. One might, for instance, feel perfectly secure inside a ring or pentagram - but an imp might lift an edge behind one's back and let in trouble. On one occasion we were using a white cord, its ends fastened together with a safety-pin. We stopped our work when we sensed that 'something' was wrong and discovered that the pin had opened

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and the circle broken. (I accept that we should not have used a metal pin anyway.)

Being uncontrolled, these imps seldom cause problems on a regular basis. Perhaps they tire of a particular group of humans and go elsewhere, only to reappear when the humans become overconfident. They are very difficult to banish from the group. I know of one place where they congregate in considerable numbers and the task of banishing them is beyond our strength, so we avoid meeting there. Meditation, for instance, is utterly ruined if one is constantly on guard against mischief-makers. Earlier I mentioned training. We know that the Golden Dawn is arranged in a lengthy series of steps, ceremonies, stages, states or degrees, with tests before one may advance to the next higher step. There is a course of work to complete before each test, and it is hoped that this is maintained for all who seek advancement within the system. For we need to progress only when we have mastered the work. I fully appreciate the frustration felt by some who find their progress painfully slow. But we absorb and understand at a different pace from that of our fellows, and I ask you to bear in mind the story of the race between the hare and the tortoise. I speak as one who plods very slowly, albeit along a mystical path. Patience, I find, grows upon one - an advantage when in traffic holdups! Perhaps that, too, is an aspect of 'growing up'.

Having dwelt upon protection and training, and practised those exercises, we should find ourselves closer to the 'divine spark' within, and become aware of that 'small voice' which advises, especially when we awake in the morning. It should become our 'personal protection', warning us of dangerous situations and advising us to withdraw when they arise. It is not enough to rely upon the everyday emotion of fear. By contrast there is the ultimate confidence in one's guardian angel should

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we ever reach the final test of the abyss, although very few make that much progress and then only after a long and difficult training, mainly found in the Orient. Nevertheless we should learn to trust that angel and to recognise its voice.

What then are the dangers we face when we open our minds to the non-material or higher worlds? First of all there is the danger of trying to run before we can walk. This is very understandable; we are conscious of our mortality and wish to progress as fast as we can, the exercise of patience is difficult when we appear to be making progress. The powers will swiftly 'slap us down' and close that particular path - permanently. There is no 'second chance'. Perhaps one is seeking to heal a sick person and one's first efforts are rewarded. If so, we should then study further before making another attempt. The books of Alice Bailey are recommended.

Then there is the taking up of a path which appears to be exciting. Yes, and risky. I would say that the greater the risks, the more one should stick to thorough training step by step. We would not think of going mountaineering in a strange location without strong boots and an experienced guide plus whatever equipment is considered necessary. Nor should we venture upon such a higher path unprepared. A fall from the heights is much more painful than a stumble among the foothills.

Another danger lies in our companions. What is one's real motive for joining a group? Secretly, and probably unconsciously, many seek POWER. Power over others, power to force people to do one's bidding. It is a human characteristic to excel, to stand out from the crowd, and there are many ways by which this can be achieved, with benefit to Society in general. But this urge brings with it such undesirables as pride, arrogance, etc. Indeed, these are usually the cause of the breaking-up of an organisation. I think of the local gardening

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club which split when certain members became over-enthusiastic over ‘organic’ methods, eventually forcing the magistrate to intervene. In any esoteric work the only proper power obtainable is power over one’s lower nature, which is greatly to be desired as an aspect of growing up. Finally there is ‘possession’, although this is rare among sensible and hard-working groups or individuals. Exorcism requires a highly-trained specialist and should never be attempted otherwise.

My particular concern about the Golden Dawn lies in the easy access of its rituals to the public at large and the publicity surrounding each new book on the subject. Understandably, publishers seek to promote their latest books by gimmicks which might just receive a mention in the popular press, ‘Sales’ is all. Unfortunately there are many gullible people around who will be persuaded to buy or borrow from the local library. Such folk do not read any warnings or disclaimers. They tend to find the early Chapters tedious and turn to the middle or end hoping to find something of real interest. They will then attempt to work the ritual they find, without any of the safeguards I have mentioned. On their first occasions they may well find it stimulating. Before long, however, they can be in very serious trouble. I will mention two such ‘troubles’ known to me at second-hand only (i.e. not third, or fourth, or fifth-hand.)

The former of these concerned a group of three men. They had enjoyed several meetings and were keen for more. On this occasion they had ‘had a few beers’ - not many, but enough to give them a thirst to work a ritual. They assembled in a room on the second floor of a Victorian tenement block. Opening the book somewhere near the end, they found that two were required to work it whilst the third went in a corner to meditate. The third man ‘came to’ whilst in the process of hurling one of the others out of the window. Fortunately he did not let go as

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there was concrete below; both men were bruised but alive. They seem to have learnt their lesson.

In the latter instance there were three men and one woman. they did not appear to have had any alcohol. They assembled on the ground floor of a bungalow and worked their ritual. They then went into the garden, via the toolshed where they collected various spades, forks etc. They made a small bonfire and then proceeded to chop the youngest man of the group into pieces with the garden tools - a difficult task if those tools were as blunt as mine are - after which the three sat cross-legged around the fire singing softly. They made no attempt to burn the body. They had made little noise (no screams from the victim, apparently) but a neighbour eventually noticed and called the police. The three were carried away still cross-legged and looking like zombies. One photograph was taken and shown on the News - thereafter there was a complete clamp down by the Authorities, which remains to this day.

Need I remind you that the Rosicrucians of old, especially the Alchemists (who were so often a husband-and-wife team, by the way), when they felt the need to communicate in writing, disguised their work in fanciful stories and in complex diagrams, so that only those for whom they wrote would understand. When printed and in small numbers, their writings were carefully distributed so that few copies ended up in the hands of the profane (and greedy) princes.

These cases concerned the Golden Dawn or variations on that system. However I would not like you to think that such are confined to it, or to systems of that type. Serious problems can arise with any esoteric system whose rituals get into the wrong hands. There is a current problem involving a mystical system where very advanced rituals are being worked by a small group having no idea whatever of the implications of what they are

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doing. In fact the rituals are on too high a level to be safe for any Westerner now alive and have never, to my knowledge, been attempted previously. Yet another group is cheerfully working on a corrupted version of a French quasi-masonic system. The effects upon these persons is not yet known, nor the consequences to their families and friends. 'Publish and be damned' is the cry. Yes, but who is damned? The poor mutts who butchered their companion? What about the author, all authors, who place such material before the mutts of this world?

Only over last weekend I read an article warning us that the complete details on how to assemble a nuclear bomb are freely available on the Internet, whilst there is a thriving black market in Russian plutonium supplying fanatics everywhere, especially in North Korea, Iran and Iraq, but elsewhere too. Is this how our civilisation is to end, not through some asteroid from space but through our own stupidity? There is an interesting Upanishad which describes what may well have been a nuclear war in what is now Northern India many thousands of years ago and which may well account for the many mysteries of the past, including the sudden advance from primitive existence to technical excellence beyond our capabilities in Egypt and Central/South America. Only, we seem incapable of raising anything to last more than a few years.

I see a considerable number of books on display. Whilst their contents could not destroy our civilisation, I do wonder what damage twisted minds could wreak through studying at least some clues. Pass a whole bag of primed grenades around a group of children; One is bound to pull out the pin.... What fun! Stand well clear!

THE ENGLISH ROSICRUCIAN IMPULSE

The Role of the SRIA in the Western Hermetic Tradition

TREVOR STEWART

Some Beginnings

Before the emergence of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia on the cultural landscape there had been hints of a more or less continuous Rosicrucian tradition in England and these have been charted many times. I suppose that the most comprehensive and sympathetic of these accounts has been that of A E Waite (*The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, 1924). The delineation of the story has been done so well that there is no need for that work to be repeated now.

But, at the outset, I would like to voice a concern about the use of the word “tradition” in the singular. In the West it was at the beginning of the Renaissance that the idea of an unbroken succession or chronology of sages or custodians of a *philosophia perennis* began to gain acceptance and this was continued down to the eighteenth century when scholars, such as the German Pietistic theosophist Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782), began to introduce the somewhat wider term ‘*philosophia sacra*’ into the idea (by then commonly accepted) of a single body of secret, hidden primordial tradition of divine truth that was being kept alive and pure among the members of isolated circles who were devoted students of “the occult” and who handed this body of doctrine to their carefully chosen successors when they judged that the time was right. But more perceptive, more recent studies of Western intellectual and cultural history (e.g. Antoine Faivre’s *Access to Western Esotericism*, 1994) have shown that the story is far from being so simple; that there have been several inter-weaving strands of teachings, not just one and that there have been gaps, intervals when the successions have been broken, not continuous. Indeed, the anonymous author of *Kurzgefaste Geschichte der Rosenkreuzer* (1784) emphasised that the ‘true’ Rosicrucians in his day had long ceased to operate as a united body. It is a fact that a gap of about 140+ years of any kind of ‘Rosicrucian’ activity existed to separate the original European manifestation (i.e. the publication between 1614 and 1616 of the *Fama*, the

Confessio and the *Chymische Hochzeit*) and the founding of the second German manifestation, Die Gold-und Rosenkreuzer in c. 1757. And such has been the story of the ‘Rosicrucian’ tendency. It has been an approach to esoteric investigation/study which gained currency and, some may even claim, notoriety; has eventually fallen into disuse; has been forgotten for a few generations, only to be ‘resurrected’ by enthusiastic occult archaeologists who have adapted what traces of former teachings they have been able to retrieve to their own purposes. Beyond some obvious biographical connections between individual scholars who have travelled around Europe or corresponded with others of like minds, there seems little direct evidence of a clear, ‘apostolic’ succession in the tale as told up to now.

The whole issue of the possible origins of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia is problematic. The truth may lie still buried in the archives of its High Council Library in London and it is promising that the recent refurbishing and decoration have revealed other unexpected ‘treasures’ already. Moreover, other clues may also be found among the records of the sister Society in Edinburgh. Some of the early ‘histories’ of the SRIA mention that there were previous groups of such scholars in London and these draw attention to, for instance, Dr. Ebenezer Sibly MD (d. 1800) in his *New and Complete Illustration of the Celestial Science of Astrology* (1787). Francis Barrett in his *The Magus* (1801) and Geoffrey Higgins in his monumental *Anacalypsis* (1836) who all mentioned the existence of groups of scholars whom they claim to have functioned corporately in London and which groups they label as having been ‘Rosicrucian’. In particular, Higgins referred to the activities of a Kabbalistic College of freemasons who were presided over by a jeweller, Johann Friedrich Falk (d. 1824?). According to Westcott, in his *History of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (1900), there was an earlier Dr. Samuel Jacob Falk who claimed

to have theurgic powers and who was connected with a somewhat shadowy 'Fraternity'. The Abbé Pierre Fournier also gave details of this somewhat mysterious figure who is stated to have died in England in 1782. Mackenzie, in his *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* (1878), quoting from the testimony of a German chronicler, Archenoiz, that had been published in 1788 and from Chevalier de Rampson's *Memoires* refers, however, to a [possibly different] Cain Chemul Falk who was an active 'Rosicrucian' leader in London for more than 30 years.

It is now more or less established, however that, while there may have been isolated individuals who pursued their researches into esoteric matters alone, there was no Society of Rosicrucians operating nationally in England before the mid- to late- 1860s. According to the most recent narrative of the fortunes of the English Society (T M Greensill: *History of SRIA*, 1987) there was, however, a small Scottish Society of Rosicrucians, monotheistic in outlook, based in Edinburgh and led by a prominent freemason, Anthony Haye, who was editor of *The Scottish Freemason*. The origins of this Scottish group are still shrouded in mystery but some efforts have been made recently to seek out the original archives and correspondence which may reveal more of the connection with Germany and England. The present Secretary-General of the Scottish Society (SRIS) made a quick check through some of the archival material that were easily to hand and these reveal a surprising discrepancy. The little data that is contained therein contradicts English source material and would seem to indicate, initially at least, that there was no Scottish Society prior to 1873. It was only after that date and for three subsequent years that the first East of Scotland College met in Edinburgh and operated under the jurisdiction of SRIA! Clearly a lot of basic research in the now scattered Scottish archives needs to be undertaken soon in order to present a coherent narrative and a systematic attempt should be made to compare Scottish data with that available in London.

It is known, however, that entry into membership of this earlier Edinburgh-based group was limited severely to those who had already established their merit with reputations in the academic, journalistic or clerical professions. It appears to have worked nine Grades, arranged into three Orders or Classes, each of which had its own ritual. This structure recalls that of the neo-Rosicrucian body which had flourished briefly through the German-speaking parts of Europe in the late eighteenth century under the name of 'Die Gold-und Rosenkreuz'.

The grades of this anti-Enlightenment 'movement' were: (1) Junior; (2) Theoreticus; (3) Practicus; (4) Philosophus; (5) Adeptus Junior; (6) Adeptus Senior; (7) Adeptus Exemptus; (8) Magister and (9) Magus. The Order may have been international because an 1805 source claims that there were groups meeting in German, Austrian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Maltese and Smyrnian cities and that its seven Magi were living in Egypt, Persia, Italy, Spain, Holland, Germany and England. However, a recent commentator on its activities, Christopher McIntosh (in his *Rose Cross and the Age of Reason - Eighteenth Century Rosicrucianism in Central Europe and its Relationship to the Enlightenment*, 1992), concluded that these largely unsubstantiated claims may have been just propaganda designed to impress prospective members rather than a true representation of the actual state of affairs especially as the various contemporary estimates of the total membership (e.g. that made by the pseudonymous 'Chrysophiron' in 1782 and that of Johann Christof Wollner in 1785) vary so much.

There were several other parallels between the early manifestation of the Scottish and English Societies and this previous German phenomenon.

One of these was the requirement that Candidates for membership had to be freemasons on the supposition, perhaps, that not only would they have proved their reliability already in

matters of ritual and the need for secrecy but they would have been exposed already to a body of quasi-philosophic and moral teachings, shrouded in symbols and allegories which they could not encounter or experience in any of the official churches. Hence, the likelihood of their being receptive to further instruction which the 'Order' might impart was assumed to be more guaranteed.

A third parallel was the requirement for members to adopt their own Latin mottoes. This not only carried historical overtones (thereby lending a kind of historical authenticity) but also helped to reinforce members' perception that by entering into membership and assuming the responsibilities of continuing the work of the 'society' they were indeed becoming separated from the rest of the unenlightened world outside who would remain in ignorance.

A fourth parallel was the heavy emphasis which both bodies placed on elaborate rituals which were markedly Pietistic and Christian in their recurring imagery as well as having a close association with some of the traditionally Kabbalistic doctrines.

A fifth parallel was in the First or 'Junior' Grade when the entrant stood with his arms outstretched in the centre of a large floor covering on which there were four concentric circles coloured (from the outer) black, white, yellow and red in allusion to the successive stages of the alchemical processes: i.e. Putrefaction, Albation, Gradation and Rubifaction. On these circles were depicted schematically the various traditional zodiacal and alchemical symbols. This is something similar to the present-day SRIA Zelator ceremony.

A sixth parallel was the fact that the nine Grades were kept distinct, with signs, recognition words and cyphers restricted to each; their titles were almost identical; internal communication was always downward and the organisation was severely hierarchical.

The whole sequence was dedicated to the progressive induction of alchemical knowledge and to actual laboratorial experimentation, the entire corpus of teachings being carefully interwoven with Pietistic, Gnostic and Kabbalistic features but, interestingly in the present connection, the Fifth Grade used a diagram of the 'Tree of Life'. Waite's judgement on this Grade was that for the candidates it was "a great and holy event". The preliminary teaching which accompanied the diagram of the 'Tree of Life' calls to mind SRIA's Fifth Grade. Leaving his fellow Philosophi behind, the candidate for advancement into the Fifth Grade entered into a new pledge to the Order - one which he was advised would bind him throughout a three-fold sequence of ceremonies or stages. Indeed, the Adept Grades formed an unbroken sequence, something which is echoed in the fact that their opening and closing ceremonies were identical and that nothing much in the form of superior occult knowledge was confided to candidates in the Sixth and Seventh Grades other than their separate signs, Words and Cyphers. What is clear, however, is that the emphasis of the Order's teachings in this second group of Grades became philosophical and theosophical. Members' souls were to become divinely transformed by the regenerating illumination of the Holy Spirit, in much the same way that base metals could be transmuted into noble ones in the alchemist's laboratory.

Although no rituals of the German Order's Eighth Grade have remained extant, Waite seems to have had access to some materials concerning it (e.g. in *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*, pgs. 457 & 468) which led him to judge that in passing through to that Grade, the Rite's emphasis was suddenly changed from a symbolic alchemy into a profound, mystical one and this calls to mind the abrupt 'acceleration' which is meant to occur to a Candidate's level of spirituality when he is granted entry eventually into SRIA's present Eighth Grade.

I have mentioned these parallels in so much detail because the congruity is so distinctly marked that it is probably that Mackenzie's testimony that "the modern Rosicrucian Society of England [had] been reformed upon the basis of the original body" (*Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, pp615f) contained more than a grain of truth. The congruity is not really all that surprising, of course, when we recall that in addition to the 1805-6 source mentioned already there were yet two other slightly earlier published versions of the rituals and statutes: the pseudonymous version of 'Magister Piasco' entitled *Der Rosenkreuzer in seiner Blosse*, 1781 and the anonymous version of the rituals, *Die theoretischen Bruder oder zweite Stufe der Rosenkreuzer*, 1785. Little's personal finances were always limited and the calls on his meagre resources were large and continuous (see e.g. Mackenzie's letter to F G Irwin, dated 9 April 1875: "... he has so many irons in the fire it is impossible for him to keep them all right.") While Little may not have had enough money to indulge himself with the purchasing of a comprehensive collection of such sources, Woodman suffered no such restriction as his huge library which he bequeathed to the Society's High Council testifies.

According to Tom Greensill's *History of SRJA*, it was the Edinburgh-based Society which, on 31 December 1866, admitted Bros. William James Hughan (1841-1911) and Robert Wentworth Little (1840-1878) into the First and Second Grades. They were not the first English freemasons to have been accorded this privilege for a Bro. William Spencer had been admitted into membership in Edinburgh nine years previously. Little and Hughan both received their Third Grade on 4 February 1867 and Little (presumably) also received his Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grades at about this time. On 6 March Hughan was promoted successively into the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grades. On 18 May Little was further advanced from the Sixth to the Seventh and finally to the Eighth (or Magister) Grade. On 1 June Hughan was given his Seventh Grade in person and

Little was accorded his Ninth (or Magus) Grade in absentia. Later that same year Hughan also received his Eighth and Ninth Grades.

The only explanation possible for this rapid promotion through the entire sequence of Grades is that Little and Hughan intended to found a similar Society in England as soon as they could and the Scottish 'authorities' were willing to facilitate the expediting of this plan.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the inaugural meeting of the English venture, held in London on 1 June 1867 while Hughan was in Edinburgh receiving his Seventh Grade, was chaired by Little who appears to have declared that the other six freemasons in attendance then were now Zelatores in a new Rosicrucian Society of England. He was, of course, elected 'Master-General' but he also assumed the even grander title of 'Supreme Magus' shortly afterwards. The position of Master-General was initially to be subject to annual election by the members but that of Supreme Magus, a position which did not then appear in the Scottish Society, was not and Little held that office until his early death in 1878, during which period his influence in determining the aims and general character of his new Society was crucial. Hughan was accorded the position of Senior Substitute Magus in 1868. The seven who were present then elected each other to various administrative positions: for example, a Bro. Buss was to be the Treasurer-General and a Bro. Turner was to be Secretary-General. Subscription and Grade fees were set and the By-laws of the new Society were to be drafted by a tiny sub-Committee chaired by Little, of course.

What is interesting is that although this new-born English Society was younger than its Scottish counterpart, there was no Warrant granted by the latter to Little and Hughan to legitimise their venture. Hughan did obtain a sort of Warrant dated 15 July 1867 (i.e. six and a half weeks after the inaugural meeting) from Haye authorising him "to receive such gentlemen as, after

submission to the Grand Council [of Scotland], are by them deemed eligible” but this was to admit freemasons into the Scottish Society not into the English one of which the Edinburgh Society must have been aware. Since the latter received no Warrant from Edinburgh, it could not have been regarded by either as junior or subordinate. Besides, relationships between members of both Societies remained friendly and fully co-operative, which would hardly have been the case if Edinburgh had perceived the English Society as acting irregularly in contempt of Scotland. Right from its inception, the Rosicrucian Society of England, under Little’s direction, considered itself as autonomous and free to operate independently. And this it did in certain features of its organisation, administration and ritual. For instance, it is clear that from 1867 onwards, the English Society was intended by Little to be somewhat monolithic and even international in its organisation and this evidence, for instance, by the somewhat grandiose titles which the pioneers accorded to themselves and by the fact that the second College to be founded outside of London in 1886 was in far away Victoria, NSW, Australia.

Some Early Contributors

Some study of the biographies, personalities and literary contributions of some individuals who were active in the early days of SRIA may reveal something of the general ‘tone’ or atmosphere of the times in which SRIA came into being.

The first Supreme Magus, Robert Wentworth Little, had been intended and educated for the church but decided to try the Home Civil Service as a career. He found employment as such in Dublin but in 1862 returned to England and soon obtained a lowly clerical job in the Grand Secretary’s staff at Freemasons’ Hall in London. He became extremely active in many of the masonic Orders, attaining high office in several, especially in the Order of the Red Cross of Constantine which he and Hughan helped to found in 1865.

Little developed an obsession for studying occult literature and, according to Westcott, he became an adept student of the works of the French occultist, Alphonse Louise Constant (i.e. 'Eliphas Levi'). He personally proposed many of the early Aspirants into membership. He edited and largely wrote the quarterly journal for 'his' new Society which was entitled *The Rosicrucian* and which was issued from July 1868 until 1874 when its title was changed to *The Rosicrucian and Masonic Record* - a change which signified perhaps Little's desire to widen the circulation by including articles and news items which he judged would appeal to a wider readership. Of course, the change in focus was probably forced upon Little because the number of SRIA members at that stage would have been too small for the venture to be worthwhile from an economic point of view.

The idea of starting such a publication for such a small Society not only displayed a remarkable ambition on Little's part but also showed his eclectic interests in its contents. One of the first series to be included were the 'Chronicles of the Ciceronian Club' - a fictitious group which was claimed to function under the presidency of a "Frater Mysticus" (i.e. Little himself) and which was concerned with the systematic examination of Egyptian and Persian 'mystery' cults. Other articles on esoteric subjects included one on 'Symbolic Language' by a Fra. W Carpenter; one on 'Church Symbolism' by a Fra. A S Allum and many on the Kabbalah by a Fra. G H Felt.

On Little's early death, Dr. William R Woodman (1828-1891), a general practitioner from Stoke Newington, became the second Supreme Magus - an office which he also held until his death. He had co-operated with Little in editing *The Rosicrucian* from its inception. He also contributed three of the *Claviculae* which are still issued to Zelatores on their entry into membership: No. 1, which provides a lengthy explanation of

the Zelator certificate; No. 2, which comments on the SEPHIROTH and No. 4, which provides a fascinating commentary on BERAISHEETH. Perhaps one of his other important contributions to the general life of the Society was to bequeath his entire extensive collection of books to form the nucleus of the High Council Library. It is true to say that during his 'rule' the character of the Society was changed from being merely a relatively small, London-based (and London-oriented) group to one which had the beginnings of its present international dimensions.

William W Westcott (1848-1925), also a general medical practitioner and the Coroner for various districts of North London for over thirty years, was the third holder of the office of Supreme Magus. He was another enthusiastic believer in the validity of the Rosicrucian myth as well being a skilled Kabbalist and student of theosophy. Not only did he make contributions on esoteric subjects to some of the early volumes of *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (e.g. Vol. 6, 1893, pp12-16 - 'On the Symbolism of the Tabernacle' and Vol. 7, 1894, pp36-47 and 83 'The Rosicrucians, their History and their Aims'), he wrote a series of substantial papers that were published (1885-1910) in the occasional *Transactions* of SRIA's Metropolitan Study Group. In addition, he produced translations of the *Sepher Yetzirah* (1887) and of Eliphaz Levi's *Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum* (1896); edited the *Collectanea Hermetica* series (1893-1896) and wrote papers for the annual *Transactions* of the Colleges newly established at York, Newcastle, Bath and Sheffield.

It is interesting to note, in this particular connection, that these relatively tiny groups were clearly fired with sufficient enthusiasm for their newly acquired 'cause' for them to engage in such publications. These are generally of a uniformly high standard of presentation and, taken as a whole, they indicate a remarkable sense of self-assurance and of well-being among members of the Society in the early years. They felt, rightly no

doubt, that they were thereby making a contribution to the literature of the Rosicrucian 'movement' of which they envisaged themselves to be the heirs.

On a much more personal level, Westcott seems to have developed a somewhat curious penchant for wearing robes for it was during his tenure of office that the practice of increasingly elaborate costumes for Magistri and Magi in the Society was introduced. He even seems to have been busily occupied for several years with studying the variations in foreign parts of women's clothing and there is, for instance, a remarkable collection of his MSS notebooks containing masses of material which he had patiently assembled on this subject from huge numbers of published sources over several years in the archives of Newcastle SRIA College.

Kenneth Robert Henderson Mackenzie (1833-1886), whose story has been ably told by Ellic Howe ('Fringe Masonry in England, 1870-1885', *AQC*, Vol. 85, 1972, pp252-257), was also on the staff at Freemasons' Hall. He was fluent in German having spent some of his early years living in Vienna. He claimed to have been initiated into Rosicrucianism by certain German Adepts but no trace of any such group has ever been found. Moreover, at the time when his family were living in Vienna, he was far too young to have been initiated into such a rarified organisation - assuming that it did exist. He claimed to have achieved some foreign medical qualifications and to have been awarded doctorates in philosophy and law, styling himself 'Ph.D' and 'LL.D' and it is not without some significance, perhaps, that later on in his masonic career he adopted the literary pseudonym 'Cryptonymus'.

When he was only 19 years old, Mackenzie translated into English and had published a new edition of C R Lepsius' then recently issued *Briefe aus Aegpten, Aethopen* etc., 1824-5. His learned footnotes and other additional material to this were judged by contemporary reviewers to have displayed an

impressive knowledge of classical and ancient Semitic languages as well as an unusual degree of familiarity with the current literature concerning Near and Middle Eastern antiquities. He also had published in the *Freemasons' Quarterly Magazine* (1853-1872) a series of his translations of Lessing's *Masonic Order*. This was the first time that this work, which presented many theories as to the possible origins and ancestry of Freemasonry, had appeared in English. It was largely because of these early incursions into academic print and his astonishingly proficient series of seventeen contributions to *Notes & Queries* from 1851 onwards, that he was elected to membership of at least three prestigious learned Societies in London: the Society of Antiquaries (from 1854, i.e. before he was even 21 years old), the Royal Asiatic Society (1855-1861) and the Anthropological Society (1864-c.1870)

Mackenzie eventually became a freemason in 1870 and entered briefly into membership of SRIA two years later. He was immediately very active in its affairs. He made several valued contributions to the *Transactions* of the Metropolitan Study Group including, for example, 'The Hermetic Cross of Praise' (1873), 'The Aims of Rosicrucian Science' (1874) and 'Rosicrucianism - Religious and Scientific' (1874). He was soon appointed Assistant Secretary-General by Little with whom he quarrelled bitterly almost immediately on taking office. He resigned his membership and thereafter was inclined to refer contemptuously to SRIA as "poor Little's foolish Rosic. Society" (letter to F G Irwin of 28 August 1883). Nevertheless, he continued making his contributions to *The Rosicrucian* after Little's death even though he had become heavily involved with John Yarker (1829-1893) in introducing the Swedenborgian (Primitive and Original) Rite from Canada into the UK from 1876 onwards. His partnership with Yarker was enhanced further by his editing the early issues of that Rite's journal, *The Kneph*, but they quarrelled eventually and Mackenzie resigned from all involvement with that Rite too.

Mackenzie's most interesting literary contribution to the literature was his *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* which was issued in serial form (1875-1877) and which he designed especially for English-speaking freemasons. It has been described as "a distillation of the essence of Victorian esoteric thought". It was published by John Hogg who had proposed him into membership of the Craft and included contributions from other enthusiastic students and devoted practitioners of the 'occult': Benjamin Cox, Francis G Irwin and Yarker. Some of his contemporaries had very little time for him and Waite was particularly strident in his criticisms of Mackenzie's 'scholarship'. Waite, a perceptive commentator on the esoteric landscape, had low opinions of Mackenzie. For instance, he accused Mackenzie in some private correspondence of being subject to "the extravagancies of a lying fancy" and in print he was even more vitriolic. In his *Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* he asserted that "on Rosicrucian subjects at least the record of Kenneth Mackenzie is one of recurring mendacity" (p566) and repeatedly in his *New Masonic Encyclopaedia*, he lampoons Mackenzie as "a worthless make of paragraphs" (Vol. 1, p64) "with a characteristically crass manner" (op. cit., p272) "who was manifestly opposed to fact" (op. cit., p393)[and consequently] "a most dubious source" (Vol. 2, p197), Waite was tartly dismissive of Mackenzie's adherence to and exposition of some of the many esoteric Orders which had proliferated: e.g. the Order of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Egypt (op. cit., p146); the Knights of Morning (op. cit., p153); the Order of Harmony (op. cit., pp190f) and especially the Order of the Sat B'Hai (op. cit., pp404ff). In the case of the latter Rite, Waite commented that Mackenzie "bore false witness concerning it by presenting its mythical history as literal matter of fact and by creating the impression that it was spread widely over the world".

Among the many fantasies which he appears to have entertained about himself, Mackenzie claimed to Westcott to have been in contact with certain anonymous German Adepts of former generations, that they had admitted him into some of the Grades of their system and that they had 'authorised' him to found a similar esoteric group when he returned to live in England. But he did not found SRIA and he was balloted for when he did apply in the ordinary way. If he had received the 'apostolic' succession from the German source(s), then this would hardly have been appropriate or, indeed, proper. It is just possible, however, in view of his skill in German, that it was he who translated the mysterious foreign documents which are supposed to have been discovered accidentally by Little while working in the archives at Freemasons' Hall in London and which contained details of the rituals. These were claimed formerly to have dated from the early part of the nineteenth century which 'authorised' the English pioneers to found their Society but generations of researchers have failed to re-discover them. In view of the strong parallels between Die Gold-und Rosenkreuz, it is tempting to speculate that these elusive documents were nothing more or less than the German Order's rituals in pamphlet form, *Rosenkreuzerey*, which had been edited by Ignaz Aurel Fessler and Friedrich Ludwig Schroder and published in Rudolstadt c. 1805-6¹

Samuel Liddell Mathers (1854-1918), alias MacGregor Mathers, was another mass of contradictions and perhaps deliberate obscuration and self-aggrandisement. Educated at Bedford Grammar School where he acquired some grounding in the Classics, he inherited a sustained fascination with Celtic symbolism and with his (claimed) Highland ancestry. According to his family 'legend', one of his ancestors was one Ian MacGregor of Glenstrae, an ardent Jacobite who had been obliged to escape to safety in France after the 1745 debacle and who had been created Comte de Glenstrae by Louis XV. Mathers' father had assumed this title when he lived in France

as did Mathers himself in the 1870s. Apparently he delighted in his somewhat dubious claim to Scottish aristocratic origins and even hoped for the eventual restoration of the Stuart dynasty. W B Yeats, who came to know him very well during their association in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, commented in his *Autobiography* (1926) that Mathers “at night would dress himself in Highland dress and dance the sword dance and his mind brooded upon the ramifications of clans and tartans....” (p413) He had even some pretence to military ardour and prowess and entertained the ambition for a time that he might be allowed to serve in some active capacity in Africa. Yeats reported that he “believed himself to be a born commander” (op. cit., p226) and “imagined a Napoleonic role for himself, a Europe transformed according to his fancy, Egypt restored (to France?), a Highland Principality and [he] even offered subordinate posts to the most unlikely people” (op. cit., p415).

Although he was in fact only a lowly clerk of modest circumstances, Mathers acquired considerable skills in translating Hebrew and other ancient Near Eastern languages. He achieved the highest Grade in SRIA and it was he who provided the texts of some of the *Claviculae*, which are still used today. He also left a useful corpus of published material: e.g. *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (1887), *Fortune-telling Cards* (1888), *The Key of Solomon the King - Clavicula Salomonis* (1889) and, of course, *The Book of sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage ...1485* (1898). But he was paranoid and irascible; he found it very difficult to relate to people, even those who were similarly obsessed with progressing the various ‘occult’ enterprises.

The story of the bitter quarrels which Mathers and these other SRIA pioneers entered into, with a fervour that may even have resembled enthusiasm at times, has been narrated, for

example, in the story of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn so there is no need to repeat it here.

What are of some interest are the general features of the personalities of these participants. With the exception of Hughan, who became a distinguished member of Quator Coronati Lodge and was the author of many internationally respected books on masonic history, these freemasons and pioneers of SRIA seem to have lived “curious lives of fantasy”. According to one commentator, they seem to have displayed “the confusion of fantasy and reality in both esoteric speculation and real life”. This is a judgement echoed by others who have charted this period of esoteric activity recently. There certainly seems to have been shared by most of them a fondness for designing and dressing up in elaborate costumes. They were obsessive about preserving secrecy and were almost pathologically obscurifacious. They were clearly fascinated by cyphers and other coded writings. They loved the symbology of personal Latin mottoes. They all had a marvellous ingenuity in devising ever more elaborate hierarchical structures of organisation. They were elitist, reserving entry into membership of ‘their’ organisations to carefully selected freemasons. They all had a sustained interest in devising and working rituals that were heavily laden with Kabbalistic language and imagery.

Apart from any judgement that might rely merely on a superficial consideration of these individuals’ personality traits (e.g. that they went on investing considerable time, effort and private finances in the creation of ever smaller ‘worlds’ in which they would play increasingly larger roles), it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that these participants may have been unwittingly and collectively susceptible to rather more subtle, more persistent and more widespread forces than have been acknowledged hitherto. Recent studies, like Massimo Introvigne’s *Il Capello del Mago* (1990) and Pierre Riffard’s *L’Esoterisme* (1990), would enable us to compile a more or less complete repertory of the many esoteric ‘Orders’ (I prefer the

term 'initiatives') which proliferated in England and elsewhere during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Among the most obvious were the Theosophical Society (1875), the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (1887), the Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix (1888), the Esoteric Rosy Cross (1888), the Ordre de la Rose-Croix catholique (1890) and the Ordre Martiniste (1882) but there were many others, of course. Together, these phenomena can be categorised as having formed "an occult revival".

But what was it about that period in history which gave rise to such 'Orders', to such a 'revival'? As one historian of the period, Norman Cohn, has indicated, "In the prevailing atmosphere of political and religious tensions and spiritual malaise, many people turned, in their dismay, to the old millenarian dream" (*The Pursuit of the Millenium*, 1970). Can these occultist 'initiatives' have been a component feature of a fin de siècle mentality? That post-Darwinian mentality was characterised, in the European academic and literary classes at least, by a growing disgust with the barrenness generated by the century's rampant materialism and recurrent brutalities, by a world-weariness and, occasionally, by quasi-millenarian expectations. It was a mentality that featured a corresponding retreat in search for 'higher', more spiritual values. The century created its own brutal story with the slaughter of recurring wars, however these may have appeared to some contemporary commentators to be justifiable on the pragmatic grounds of national expediencies - a story which was reported internationally in newspapers and via the new telegraph services - and which generated a genuine desire, felt by many as the century drew wearily to its dismal close, for a 'religious' renewal. This 'esotericism' can be seen, therefore, as the century's response to the prevailing secularism and a desire to end the monstrosity of a world without God by revealing the universality of a surprisingly effective synthesis of science and

religion. It contributed in timely fashion to the emergence of a Weltanschauung that was both pessimistic and even 'apocalyptic', one that sponsored a sustained retreat into adopting the religious values and teachings of former times. It is not without some significance surely that, even as the nineteenth century came to its close, one of these 'initiatives' (now long forgotten, except by students intent on charting the cultural landscape of which it was a part) was aptly called Le Mouvement Cosmique and another was the still active Universal Order. Even the very titles which these seekers gave to their 'initiatives' seem now to have been redolent of this end-of-the-century holistic yearning. They reveal that their members entertained an ambitious perspective of their enterprise which had cosmological proportions.

Of the many such Orders which came into being during the latter half of the nineteenth century, very few managed to survive for more than the lifetimes of their founders. One of the notable exceptions has been SRIA which leads one to the question: what is it about this Society that has helped it to continue (fitfully at times) when others failed? It is true that, during Little's lifetime, 'his' Society achieved little more than his modestly stated aims of examining and reconstructing systematically possible answers to "the great problems of life" and "[understanding] the wisdom, art and literature of the Ancient World". He and his immediate successor, Woodman, left SRIA as nothing much more than a very small quasi-masonic association, the two component Colleges of which met quarterly in London and York, worked some brief rituals, listened to lectures on arcane subjects and enjoyed some table festivities occasionally. It is clear from the published *Transactions* of the Metropolitan College from 1885 onwards, however, that a distinct expansion of interests and activities had taken place. Lectures on the Kabbalah and some highly speculative papers on masonic symbolism became regular features of the Society's programme of activities so that there

are, at present, about 2000+ members throughout the world, of which sixty-five, or 3.25% hold the highest, or Ninth Grade and 105, or 5.25% hold the Magister, or Eighth Grade. They are organised into sixty-one Colleges that are united in a loose 'federation'. After a 'gap' of almost forty years of stagnation, the 1980s became a decade of remarkable expansion when twenty-six Colleges were founded: four in different parts of Canada; three in Australia; two in France and one in the Netherlands. The remaining thirteen are to be found scattered in various parts of the UK. Unlike many of the so-called "additional" Orders that grace the masonic landscape, SRIA is not and never has been just a purely British phenomenon. The fact that membership of the Society has never been limited to just English freemasons is part of the explanation for its continued existence. Indeed, it is one of its less obvious virtues for ordinary, London-based members at least may encounter foreigners who also participate in the activities of the prestigious Metropolitan College - something which they may not be able to enjoy in the course of the usual activities of their masonic Lodges.

Another factor in its survival may have been that its organisation, though elaborate and hierarchical in structure, has never been completely prescriptive and the teachings contained in the Grade rituals have never been so tightly defined as to limit individual members from making their own pilgrimage or 'archaeological' investigations into the history of alchemy, religions and philosophy. The kind of spiritual 'enlightenment' espoused by the Society is not something kept secure by any 'Unknown Superiors'. The leading exponents, at nearly every period of SRIA's history to date, may have been erudite scholars but they have rarely regarded themselves as sole custodians of the 'truth'. Indeed, SRIA appears to have carefully avoided most of the autocratic tendencies exhibited in the other such 'initiatives' and the institutionalised, rather

formal proceedings of the High Council, on which every constituent College is represented, may have played some very useful, indeed essential communicative functions over the years.

A third factor may lie in its various publication ventures. Not only have some famous texts been rescued from centuries of obscurity in the 1920s (e.g. *The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of R C* by 'Eugenius Philalethes', 1652) but all members have been encouraged to deliver papers to the Convocations of their respective Colleges. Not everyone has managed this sort of task but those who did submitted copies of the text of their lectures to the Library of the High Council and eighteen of the very best of these have been published in pamphlet form so far. This recent venture not only gives the clearest demonstration possible of a perceived need to preserve in an easily accessible format what has been judged to have been the best of these contributions from 'ordinary' members but is also offered to the wider membership now as a stimulus for their own future work. It also provides clear evidence of the Society's underlying syncretism that is Judaeo-Christian in origin as well as being characteristically Pietistic and Gnostic in its thrust. (Incidentally, a similar kind of analysis of the contents of the High Council's Library might be usefully attempted now that the refurbishment of the Society's London HQ has been more or less completed. What would be even more revealing would be a comparable analysis of members' borrowings if one could be reconstructed from the Library's records.)

The point about the Society's publishing enterprise is that nothing is viewed as being too secret for all members (of whatever Grade) to be granted access to it in this way even though the Society does have an inbuilt feature of the revelation of deeper and more complex spiritual insights to individual members as they progress through the sequence of nine Grades. This sort of 'openness' is not something which most of the other nineteenth century 'initiatives' ever practised or, perhaps,

would ever have countenanced. Moreover, and unlike some of these ‘initiatives’, the leaders of SRIA have never claimed that the ‘truth’, which every member on entry is encouraged to seek for himself, will be eschatologically efficacious. The best proof of this interpretation is, of course, the fact that the Society has retained its close ties with Trinitarian Christianity.

Some Ritual Matters

Some fairly recent studies of the morphology of the esoteric ‘initiatives’ of the latter half of the nineteenth century (e.g. those by Edward Tiryakian: ‘Towards the Sociology of Esoteric Culture’ in *American Journal of Sociology*. 78, 1972, and Antoine Faivre: *Access to Western Esotericism*, 1994, esp. pp10-35) may assist us eventually in the compilation of a much-needed taxonomy. In the absence of such a useful research ‘tool’, a brief examination of some of the more important features of the three key SRIA rituals (i.e. the First or Zelator Grade, the Fifth or Adeptus Minor Grade and the Eighth or Magister Grade) may help us to assess what contribution SRIA has made to the so-called Western ‘Hermetic Tradition’. It is a well-known feature of most initiatory cults that there are three revelatory stages, or a gradual opening of the individual to full knowledge. The three-fold character of this illumination is mirrored, of course, in the stages in the mystical pilgrimage towards ultimate union with the divine.

My membership of the Third Order of the Society means that I cannot be anything but very general in this analysis. Nevertheless, there are four key features which have been identified and which may allow you to see something of the similarities between SRIA’s practices and the other nineteenth century ‘initiatives’. I propose to delineate these common factors as follows.

(a) In these three crucial rituals of SRIA which mark off the three Orders of the Society, there are two kinds of symbolic and

real correspondences, seen and unseen and distributed throughout the universe according to the ancient principle of inter-dependence between the microcosm and the macrocosm. One of these is the natural correspondence alleged to exist between mankind and the cosmos. The other type is the correspondences that are said to exist between the manifested universe and revealed (sacred or 'hermetic') texts. The entire corpus of such 'hieroglyphs', that forms a kind of inspired concordance, is to be read and decoded synchronistically.

(b) Throughout the same three rituals, the material world which mankind inhabits is seen as a living, multi-layered, concrete, pluralistic and hierarchical operation. It is to be perceived and experienced as being essentially a 'living' entity, inhabited and riven through by a circulating 'fire' and, being capable of providing the perceptive inquirer with potential revelations of every kind, Nature is conceived as a rather passive 'book' that is only waiting for him to turn its 'pages'. This perception is underpinned by a mutually dependent and inter-active triune theosophy of God, Nature and Man. In particular there is a recognition of, and simple (though not necessarily unquestioning) respect for, all established religions and philosophies which makes it easy for members to accept the validity of the concept of a 'hidden' *philosophia perennis* which overarches all of the religious and esoteric traditions hitherto.

(c) These three rituals contain two connected and complementary notions: imagination and mediation. So far as SRIA is concerned the concept of mediation or transmission of wisdom means the presence of and function of initiators. It distinguishes the Order as esoteric rather than mystical in as much as one of the principal determining characteristics of mysticism is the deliberate suppression and even obliteration of images and intermediary 'transmitters' which are seen as obstacles to the mystic's primary object: eventual union with God. This emphasis on the steady, staged transmission of 'gnosis' via initiatory intermediaries would seem to imply that

SRIA has existed on the working principle that esoteric teachings can be transmitted from ‘master’ to ‘disciple’ along pre-established, institutionalised channels. As a corollary, in these SRIA rituals, the candidates’ imagination is permitted at each stage to use the intermediary ‘transmitters’ or initiators as well as the images and symbols contained therein to develop his own particular vision, or ‘gnosis’, to decipher and interpret, with ever more complex significations, Nature’s ‘hieroglyphs’ and actually to practise the theory of microcosmic and macrocosmic correspondences.

(d) There runs through these three initiatory stages in the SRIA progression the supposition that the candidates will experience a gradual transmutation of their inner-life because of the nature and intensity of the ‘gnosis’ or insight which they have developed.

With these contiguous factors in mind, perhaps it will be a little easier for readers themselves to identify the part which SRIA occupies in the mainstream of Occidental ‘esotericism’.

¹ Editor’s note: In fact the ‘Rosicrucian documents’, found by Little were an English translation (c1810 – 1820) of the *Gerheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer*