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## EDITORIAL

Although I now rarely use the word "occult", one has to recognise and accept it has become an all-embracing term established in the popular vocabulary as including the hermetic and esoteric traditions. This term "occult", however, carries with it an unfortunate constellation and accretion of ideas. It bears with it the suggestion or image that the practitioners of "occultism" are continually

involved in dark secrets, strange conspiracies, and are not at all open about themselves and their work.

Now, in contrast with those "occultists" who enjoy and find some thrill of satisfaction from working in the atavistic way of cloaked secrecy, half truths and hinted suggestions of their secret contacts, I have always sought to be entirely open in my dealings with people. I believe the success of the work initiated through the Hermetic

Journal rests upon this openness. I have never taken refuge in the illusion of secret masters, or any privileged body of wisdom handed down to me. I hope that those subscribers and colleagues who have taken the trouble to meet and talk with me, will have gone away with some impression of my openness to sharing the sources of my own research and ideas, and the enthusiasm I have to work with others on various projects. In the established sense of the word, I am not an "occultist" or dealer in secret knowledge.

With the immanent reconstitution of the work of the Journal and publishing ventures as a Charitable Trust, this openness will be enshrined in its constitution. The Hermetic Research Trust will be an educational charity dedicated to promoting interest in the Hermetic Tradition, and such openness is an essential pre-requisite element to such charitable work.

The growth and development of hermetic studies in this disturbed materialistic age rests, I believe, on such a free and open exchange of information. We must recognise that this area of human spiritual strivings labelled "occult" is, however, so often befuddled by the purposeful and cynical manipulation by its more unscrupulous practitioners, of myths of secret adepts, or hints at privileged streams of knowledge to which only they have access. People with only a limited marginal knowledge of this area have a natural and understandable tendency to project all sorts of images upon the "expert practitioners" of these arts and sciences, and some of these practitioners are not above exploiting such innocent projections to gain

influence and authority over such a group of followers.

I believe the true test of a spiritually developing individual lies in their willingness to share their insights and learn from the experiences of others, and that those who create barriers or hide behind some screen of secret privileged knowledge, are often merely players of a convoluted game (tied into their own personality limitations and weaknesses), and are frightened that an open revelation of their sources and ways of working will expose the illusory nature of their spiritual development.

In the past months since moving to Warwickshire, I have been privileged to have met a number of my colleagues and fellow researchers. One delightful impression remains with me, of their free sharing of their insights with me, their admissions of the limitations of their present views as well as the excitement of the discoveries they had made in this field. Such meetings reinforce in me the awareness that I have always wished to work with this current, and I believe the future of esoteric and hermetic studies lies in such freedom of information, in the open and fearless exchange of ideas and perceptions. That is the direction the Hermetic Journal will continue to pursue through its reconstitution as an educational charity.

Adam McLean

## THE GOLDEN DAWN : ITS PLACE IN CULTURAL HISTORY

On the the weekend of April 25th and 26th 1987, a major Conference will be held at Regents College (in Regents Park, London) to mark the 100th anniversary of the conception of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1887. This will be an important event which is hoped will give impetus to serious research into the Golden Dawn, its history and its continuing influence on western esotericism, and literature. There will be a number of lectures by well known writers and researchers in this field, as well as the opportunity for a number of contributions at a Symposium. There will be an exhibition of original Golden Dawn memorabilia, and an enactment of one of the Order ceremonies. To coincide with the conference Magnum Opus is to publish important Golden dawn source material.

This event is to be organised by the Hermetic Research Trust, and the conference fee which includes lunches and coffees, has been held to only £15.00. Donations would be welcome to help defray any additional expenses. Places are limited and as attendance at this conference should be essential for all serious students and researchers of the tradition, provisional advance booking and reservation of tickets should be made to The Hermetic Journal.

## THE GOLDEN DAWN CONFERENCE SYMPOSIUM

Within the Golden Dawn Conference there will be held a Symposium in which various speakers can read short papers presenting their own research into aspects of the history of the Golden Dawn, its impact upon the Western esoteric tradition or outer culture.

Contributions should be about 1500 words and take not longer than 10 minutes to read. It is proposed later to publish these short papers in a Sourcebook on Golden Dawn Research, so it is important that potential contributors submit their material in advance. There is no great rush for this at present, but as it is expected that there will be a large number of people willing to participate in the Symposium, it would be helpful if anyone keen to contribute a paper could write and let me know as soon as possible. A final deadline for contributions will be announced later. It will be possible for some papers to be read at the Symposium on behalf of contributors, say from overseas, who may not be able to attend personally.

Precedence will be given to papers making an original contribution or research into Golden Dawn studies, and contributions merely reflecting the unsubstantiated opinions of their writers are unlikely to be included.

## HERMETIC MEDITATION WORKSHOPS

Beginning in the Autumn of this year it is planned to hold a series of hermetic meditation workshops at Canonbury Tower in Islington, London, as one of the first activities of the Hermetic Research Trust. The first sessions will be introductory to the particular meditative process we intend to follow, however, it is hoped that as a small group we will be able to explore the inner space of various alchemical processes and hermetic emblem sequences - such as the inner flask, the Rosarium sequence, the Mylius emblems, Lamspring, the keys of Basil Valentine, and eventually perhaps work through

processes such as the Chymical Wedding.

These one day workshops will be quite informal and inexpensive. Probably held on a Sunday (or perhaps a Saturday), they will be limited to about 15 people. Please write or phone and let me know if you are interested in attending, so I can send you in due course a leaflet giving full details of times and topics, as the first of these meetings may be held before the next issue of the Journal is published in November.

## PROGRESS ON THE HERMETIC RESEARCH TRUST

The proposal for the Hermetic Research Trust is currently going through the final stages of its approval by the Charity Commissioners. So within the next few months, the work that I have initiated through the Journal and related publications over the past 8 years should be reconstituted as a Charitable Trust. It is proposed that I be appointed as Director of this Trust and so continue the momentum of the work in that role. The Journal, Magnum Opus, Hermetic Research Series, will continue as before, with a new sense of security, insulated to some extent from the harsh realities of being entirely dependent on the volatility of book sales. The Trustees of the Hermetic Research Trust will be :

The Marquess of Northampton

R.A. Gilbert [Bookseller, writer and researcher into various aspects of the esoteric tradition]

Nick Rose [Proprietor of Greensleeves Books, and lecturer on esoteric subjects]

It is also proposed to form a Council of Advisors who can give advice to the Trustees and Director on the various ways in which the Trust can fulfil its object of promoting interest in the Hermetic tradition.

Eventually, in a year or so it is hoped to be able to relocate the work in London.

## A REFERENCE LIBRARY OF HERMETIC SYMBOLS

One of the projects I would dearly love to develop is that of establishing a collection of emblems and symbols from the hermetic tradition that can be used by scholars and researchers into this field. Such a library would not of course collect the originals, but could build up a collection of good quality photocopies, photographs, slides and microfilm. The foundation of this can be build upon my own personal collection, but rather than me undertaking all the work for this project, I would welcome assistance in the longer term from people willing to help catalogue and organise this material into a usable and consultable form. Even a few hours a month would be useful.

It would be best if this library could be built up of contributions from my colleagues, fellow researchers and subscribers. Occasionally, people send me copies of symbols and emblems, to share with me their discoveries of new material. I wish to encourage, through the Hermetic Research Trust, such an open sharing of research material - for how else can the tradition freely develop - so I believe such a library of Hermetic Symbols would be an extremely valuable project and in time produce an important reference source for researchers. So let us build this together. Do get in touch if there is any way you feel you can help with ideas, practical offers of assistance, donations of material or other resources.

Chris Pickering ◉

John Dee was known and respected for his great learning on the continent, and at home among courtiers, intellectuals and the self-educated. Yet the superstitious and uneducated masses in England suspected and perhaps feared him as a student of dark and devilish knowledge for much the same reasons. Dee may have been prone to some exaggeration of the adverse conditions of his career in search of godly wisdom, yet his writings do indicate he was the subject of a substantial number of personal attacks by slanderers. In the late sixteenth century even mathematics - for which Dee was most widely known - was still seen as a form of black magic. However, a bulk of the source of popular misinterpretation of Dee's scientifically biased philosophy can be seen to have stemmed from an incident in 1555 when he was tarred with the conjurer's brush for political expediency.

With the opposition to the catholic policy of Queen Mary Tudor, her captive sister Elizabeth was often adopted as the heroine in petty plots against the Queen. This was especially so during the period Elizabeth was at Woodstock, May 1554 to April 1555, and England once again became a satellite of Rome with a papal legate and burnings of Protestants. John Dee became acquainted with the Princess at this time, possibly through his cousin Blanche Parry - the life long maid of Elizabeth.

BEFORE her Majesties coming to the crowne, I did shew my dutifull good will in some travailes for her Majesties behalfe, to the comfort of her Majesties favourers then, and some of her principall servantes, at Woodstock, and at Milton by Oxford, with Sir Thomas Bendger (then Auditor unto her Majestie), and at London; as Mr Richard Strange and Mr John Asheley, now Master of her Majesties Jewell house, might have testified. [1]

It is difficult to be certain that Dee had thrown in his lot with those who sought a return to Protestantism, but he certainly mixed with the supporters of such an idea and of the Protestant Princess Elizabeth. His task for the Princess' supporters may only have been carrying messages, for he is known to have drawn up her nativity which was probably then smuggled to Elizabeth via her servants. Whether or not Dee's activities were treasonous, his secretive association with the Princess was enough to warrant suspicion. On 28th May 1555, the Privy Council directed Sir Francis Englefield, Master of the Rolls, "to make searche for oone John Dye, dwelling in London, and tapprehend him and send him hither, and make searche for suche papers and bookes as he maye thinke may towche the same Dye or Benger" [2]. By the 8th of June, Dee and a Mr Carey and Mr Butler had been arrested "for that they did calculate the King's, the Queen's and My Lady Elizabeth's horoscopes <and> are accused that they should have a familiar spirit, which is the more suspected, for that Ferrys, one of their accusers, had immediately on the accusation, both of his children stricken, the one with death, the other with blindness" [3].

In addition to George Ferrys, Dee [4] gives the names of other false witnesses such as Prideaux, who was later pensioned by King Philip II of Spain, and John Clerk the Catholic writer who hung himself in the Tower of London back in May 1552. The early date of Clerk's accusation suggests that it did not directly relate to the episode of 1555 and thus may have related to the earlier case against John's father, Rowland Dee, who was imprisoned in the

Tower in 1553 [5]. Dee, Carey and Butler were acquitted but Dee was sent to Edmund Bonner, the Bishop of London, to be tested upon his faith.

Though there was always the possibility of Dee being charged with treason for his surreptitious consorting with Elizabeth and her supporters, the original suspicion and charge against Dee appears to have derived from the misinterpretation of his casting of nativities, and Ferrys' subsequent tale of conjuring up a demon. Despite this, Dee gave the impression that Ferrys' children were not the cause for concern, but "that I endeavored by enchantmentes to destroy Queene Mary" [6]. The cynic might add that a charge of conjuring was only ever pursued in an attempt to ensure a conviction or as a threat to force Dee to give information about his accomplices. It seems unlikely that the charge could have come from Mary herself, for it was she who had originally commissioned two of the nativities for which Dee was suspected. He believed his eventual release was due to "the King and Queenes clemency and justice" [7]: a belief which is supported by a letter from the Privy Council to Bonner [8]. The arrest and charge of Dee may have been the initiative of the Privy Councillor Sir John Bourne under whose custody Dee was first placed, and whom Dee lists as a false witness along with Prideaux and Clerk.

It was during the later period of his custody under Bonner that further accusations were made against Dee. One unnamed doctor, whom Dee had met five years previously in Paris

did, very earnestly sollicite with the Lord Chauncelor, (with whom he could do very much) and with the Bishop of London, (whom also he could half perswade) that it were requisite and justice, that the sayd Brytan Captive were not set at liberty at all, but should be forth with committed to PERPETUAL PRISON[9].

A second doctor, who later asked for and received forgiveness, also made an accusation of Dee: "that to no man of this realm, he did at any tyme, or yet doth, or will communicate any part of his learned talent, by word or writing; but is wholly addicted to his private commodity, only avancing by his own studies and practices very secret" [10]. This second charge may have been due to the fact that Dee had declined an Oxford lectureship in mathematics in 1554, being already committed to patronage as a tutor [11]. We see that even at this early date, not only was Dee idly accused of being a conjurer, but also his studies were attacked.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, John Dee was no longer a member of the oppressed party and "her most excellent Majestie promised unto me great security against any of her kingdome, that would, by reason of any my rare studies and philosophicall exercises, unduly seeke my overthrow" [12]. Unfortunately the memory of the accusations against him persisted amongst Dee's common and unwitting enemies, and came to pass "to such, as have gathered records, of those mens acts, who dyed in the cause of veritie" [13].

This record of Anglican Martyrs which Dee talks of was John Foxes 'Actes and Monuments' (London 1563) in which Dee appears in an unfavourable light. At one point Dee appears to argue in favour of Papal authority being ordained by Jesus, and at another, recounts that Bartlet Green is punished by having the Bible taken away from him and thrown into a cell occupied by "Doctour Dee the great Coniurer" [14]. Foxe did not go out of his way to discredit Dee and only happened to quote contemporary documents which mention Dee. However, 'Actes and Monuments' was highly recommended by the Anglican Church, placed in most major churches, and one of the most read books of the period. And so the unfounded 'conjurer Dee' myth could now reach all Englishmen, as Dee wrote in 1577:

this very iniurious report, (for these XX yeres last past, and somewhat longer,) spred and credited, all this realm over: is to wete, that the

forsaid Ientleman, is, or was, not onely, a 'Coniurer', or caller of diuels: but... 'the arche coniurer', of this whole kingdom... I wish to God, this foresaid sklander, and other disgracing reports, to[o] rashly, and even then recorded, when this courteous Ientleman was also a prisoner himself: (and bedfellow, with one maister Barthelet Greene) had bin, in due tyme espied: and utterly cancelled, or razed out of all records, wherein they were unduly, and unadvisedly (first) admitted [15].

Once the conjurer myth had reached as popular audience it only remained for the public to look at Dee's career to misintrepret for themselves his work. The mystical text the 'Monas Hieroglyphica' (Antwerp 1564) was published the year after Foxes' 'Actes and Monuments' and was discredited within a matter of weeks, possibly when Queen Elizabeth visited Cambridge University in 1564 and was outraged at a scandalous satire on Bishop Bonner and Catholicism [16].

I must highly esteeme her Majesties most gracious defending of my credit in my absence beyond the seas, as concerning my booke, titled 'Monas Hieroglyphica', against such Universitie-Graduates of high degree, and other gentlemen, who therefore dispraised it, because they understood it not [17]

Dee was also famed in England for his attempt in 1547 to recreate Athenian stage effects at Trinity Hall. By some unknown mechanical means he managed to levitate an actor from the stage "whereat was great wondring, and many vaine reportes spread abroad of the meanes how that was effected" [18]. In an age when England was, on the whole, scientifically ignorant, and when stage effects were unheard of, most of the speculation must have centred upon magic.

In "Iohn Dee his Mathematical Praeface" (London 1570) he defined such "marveilous Actes and Feates, Naturally, Mathematically, and Mechanically, wrought and contrived" as "Thaumaturgike" [19]. Of all the mathematical arts and sciences expounded in this preface it is significant that it is following thaumaturgy that Dee included "A Digression Apologeticall" [20] lamenting how he had been "robbed and spoiled of his honest name and fame...(in hugger mugger) condemned, as a Companion of the Helhoundes, and a Caller, and Coniurer of wicked and damned Spirites". He even compared himself to such famous figures as Socrates, Apuleius of Medaura, Giovanni Pico and Trithemius who had also suffered at the sharp tongue of the slanderer. [21].

This apologetic should be valued as Dee's explanatory defense of his studies which were known, then as now, for being not exclusively orthodox. Dee saw his work as a necessary part of Christianity to make manifest and therefore effective the divinity present in the material world, to seek "(by S. Paules advertisement) in the Creatures Properties, and wonderfull vertues, to find iuste cause, to glorifie the Aeternall, and Almighty Creator by" [22]. Three decades later, Dee again cited St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans I: 19-20, that in even the most mundane parts of God's creation "his infinite goodnesse, unsearchable wisdome, and Almighty power, yea, his everlasting power, and divinity, may (by innumerable meanes) be manifested, and demonstrated" [23]. It is such a line of thought that supports the belief in symbolism, such as is found in 'Monas Hieroglyphica', for the purposes of Divine gnosis. Dee asks whether all the travel, time and money spent and the discomfort, danger and suffering incurred in the search of godly wisdom had only yielded dealings with Satan, as slanderers had claimed. He answered his own rhetorical question: "I have not learned to make so brutish, and so wicked a Bargaine" [24].

In the 'Digression Apologeticall' Dee also attempted to classify slanderers and libellers into four categories [25], beginning with "Vaine prattling busie bodies" who idle away their time gossiping on matters beyond their

comprehension. The second type are the "Fonde Frenedes" who claim to know John Dee in an attempt to attract reflected glory, yet argue that since Dee knows more than others he must be a pupil of the devil. Thirdly, are the "Imperfectly zealous" who have good intentions but miss the truth and sacrifice Dee's character as an offering for the well being of other Christians. Finally, are the "Malicious Ignorant" against whom Dee quotes Psalm 140, how the slanderer speaks only against himself whilst the righteous shall not be overthrown. Assuming that such an analysis was based on Dee's personal experiences, the "Imperfectly zealous" must have been modelled upon the libel against Dee in the zealous 'Actes and Monuments'.

Though the damage had already been done, Dee was able to have all references to him by name removed from the 1576 edition of 'Actes and Monuments', and followed this up with 'A Necessary Advertisement' published as a preface to his 'General and Rare Memorials' (London 1577) [26]. Through this apologetical Dee attempted to halt the rumours voiced by Foxe that he was not only a conjurer but the arch-conjurer of England [27]. By this point Dee had become "discouraged to labor, or pen any more treatises or bookes" [28]. As we have seen, the 'Monas Hieroglyphica' was attacked, as was the authorship of Dee's 'Propaedeumata Aphoristica' (London 1558). It had been claimed variously that it was the work Mercator, Urso and Alkabitius [29]. Dee also claimed that his colleague Joannes Franciscus van Offhuysen (better known as Joannes Francus Offusius) had plagiarised it to produce 'De divina astrorum facultate in larvatum astrologiam meditatio' (Paris 1570, though the first draft was completed in January 1556). Though Offhuysens work follows Dee's in that it expounds upon the influence of the stars through the elemental qualities rather than some occult influence, it is more practical in attempting to apply measurements to the theories [30]. The plagiarism on Offhuysens part was probably an uncredited presentation of one or two of Dee's ideas.

John Dee's 'Private Diary' begins in the late 1570's and records some of the occasions on which he discovered attacks against him. The slander of a Roger Edwards and "of Emery his most dishonest hypocriticall, and devilish dealings and devises against me and others, and likewise of that errant stromptet her abominable wordes" [31]. Dee appears to have begun to resort to legal proceedings against slanderers: a letter of attorney was sent against a Mr White of Colchester, and one Francis Baily was sent to be examined by Sir Rowland Haywood [32].

The increased incidence of attacks upon Dee in the late 1570's, which caused him to retaliate in this way he would not have five years earlier, may have been partially due to his involvement in a case of witchcraft. In 1578 three witches' dolls were found at Lincoln's Inn Fields, one of which had a pin through its heart and was believed to represent the Queen. The case was well known at the time because it involved the Queen's safety, and accounts of it can be found in Scot's 'Discoverie of Witchcraft' (London 1584), Bodin's 'De la demonamie des sorciers' (Paris 1580) and in a report sent to King Philip of Spain by his ambassador Bernadino de Mendoza. In a state of panic the Privy Council asked Dee to investigate, perhaps because he was known for his occult knowledge not only by the Council but by all those who feared for the Queen's safety - the public in general. Requesting Secretary Dr Thomas Wilson as his witness, Dee had arrived and dealt with it "in godly and artificiall manner" in a matter of hours [33].

The survival of earlier rumours can be seen as a continual source for slanderers. The passages in 'Actes and Monuments' caused one Vincent Murphin to counterfeit a letter, allegedly from Dee, implying that Dee was a fraud who practiced "ungodly and unlawfull affayrès", and quoted Foxe's words in an attempt to prove the authenticity of the letter [34]. Dee deprecated Foxe's

words that "by reason of the dignity of the place; wherein they were enstall- ed, have seemed, to the foresayd divelish cosener...to have bin a certain kynde of warrant...to counterfet letters, or discourses...and to the credulous...to credit any such matter, reported" [35]. Murphin's case follows Dee's 1570 definition of a slanderous "Fonde Frende" and would have appeared to be the model if it were not known that Dee only learnt of Murphin on 2nd May 1577 [36]. However, the case may have encouraged Dee to write his 'Necessary Advertisement' on 4th July 1577. At length Dee took Vincent Murphin to court at Guildhall and was awarded £100 damages on 20th October 1580. The verdict alone must have satisfied him for he agreed not to press for payment [37].

Whatever the cause of the upsurge of the Conjurer Dee myth at the end of the 1570's, the situation could only have been made worse by Dee's entry into angel magic in 1581. John Dee was not leaving St Paul's advertisement behind, merely employing a divinely prescribed (if unorthodox) method of attaining to a higher and more universal knowledge of the creation. He did not see it as a short cut omitting gnosis through symbolism such as hieroglyphics, rather as seeking holy guidance in such hieroglyphic gnosis. Yet the invocation of otherworldly beings could only have been proof of the Conjurer Dee myth as far as the ignorant were concerned, for ignorance always kept the public from an appreciation of Dee's work. "How great is the blindnes & boldnes, of the Multitude, in things above their Capacitie" [38].

Though Dee swore "never to disclose these Mysteries" revealed by the angels [39], he would never have been able to keep secret the fact that he was attempting to bring spirits down into his Mortlake house. In order to set up a practice of angel magic, Dee involved outsiders such as Mr Clerkson, various scryers, and craftsmen such as Mr Lyne (widower of his late maid Helen Lyne) who constructed his highly suspicious mensafederis [49]. The demonic conjuring of Dee's scryer Barnabus Saul was witnessed by others [41] who owed Dee no loyalty [42], and may have been publicly discussed at Westminster Hall [43]. It must also be remembered that Edward Kelley was not recommended to Dee, but was sent to try and trick Dee into confessing being a conjurer [44].

Kelley's own independent angelic invocation in March 1583 involved the outsider John Husey of Blockley in the search for treasure trove [45]. Later it appears to have been discussed by the assizes at nearby Brentford when "Husey told of it, openly, at the bord at braynford in the hearing of diverse" [46]. John Aubrey the antiquarian recounted a similar story, perhaps connected, told to him by Meredith Lloyd. "He told me of John Dee, etc, conjuring at a poole in Brecknockshire, and that they found a wedge of Gold; and that they were troubled and indicated as Conjurers at the Assizes" [47]. Some of the later stories about Kelley's necromancy may have evolved from contemporary rumours of his conjuring, which would have included his famous employer John Dee.

The change in public feeling at Dee's entry into angelic magic is usually noted by the attack on his house at the end of 1583 after his departure to the continent. Some riotous looting does appear to have taken place: for example a quadrant which had belonged to the famous navigator Richard Chancellor was "most barbarously spoyled and with hammers smitt in peeces" [48]. Yet the majority of the losses were caused by simple theft rather than riotous destruction. Three chests containing historical documents dating as far back as the Norman Conquest were described as being "imbeziled away", a lodestone "was sold out of the library", and Dee's chemistry laboratories were "made away from me by sundry meanes" [49].

Some of my other losses may thus be specified; firstly the loss of all my household stuff here left, and committed to Nicholas Fromonds his safe custody for me...But he unduely sold it presently upon my

departure, or caused it to be carried away [50].

Though Nicholas Fromond "most abhominably revyled me" [51], Dee had to be lenient for this man was the brother of his wife, Jane. However Dee could pursue his brother-in-law's accomplice Mr Web (or Webbes). It appears that the Privy Council appointed a four man commission which ordered Web to pay a thousand marks compensation [52]. Web could not pay and was committed to Marshalsea debtors prison, and after escaping and being recaptured feared he would be executed - thus incurring Dee's sympathy [53].

There was some appreciation of Dee's angelic theurgy among his compatriots notably as displayed by Edmund Spenser in 'The Faerie Queene' (1590). In this epic Dee is depicted as the great Arthurian Magus Merlin whose magic can expose treason and plots against Britain and Empress Britomart (Queen Elizabeth).

The great magicien Merlin had deviz'd  
By his deepe science and hell-dreaded might  
A looking-glass, right wondrously aguz'd  
Whose vertues through the wyde worlde soone were solemniz'd

It vertue had to show in perfect sight  
Whatever thing was in the world contain'd,  
Betwixt the lowest earth and hevens hight,  
So that it to the looker appertayned:  
Whatever foe had wrought, or frend had faynd,  
Therein discovered was, ne ought mote pas,  
Ne ought in secret from the same remayned;  
Frothy it round and hollow shaped was,  
Like to a world itselfe, and seemed a world of glas.

Such was the glassy globe that Merlin made,  
And gave unto the King Ryence for his gard,  
That never foes his kingdome might invade,  
But he it knew at home before he hard  
Tydings thereof, and so them still debar'd. [54]

Britomart, daughter of King Ryence, borrows the glass sphere - then described as "a playne mirrhour" - and in it sees a vision of Knight Arthegall with whom she falls in love [55]. The use of a mirror to reveal the identities of enemies, friends and lovers may have been borrowed from any one of the many traditional sources concerning the superstition surrounding mirrors. Yet Dee employed scrying in his general imperial theurgy for the advancement of Britain, and the vision of Arthegall has been directly compared to an event in March 1575 when Elizabeth, accompanied by prospective suitor Robert Dudley the Earl of Leicester, visited Dee and was shown his "glass so famous" [56]. The inconsistencies of Merlins magic speculum, described as a hollow glass globe, then as a plain mirror, could be attributed to the fact that in the latter case Spenser was drawing directly from John Dee.

Though Edmund Spenser may not have met John Dee he could have learnt a great deal about Dee and Dee's philosophy from the Areopagus. Spenser appears to have been admitted into this group which centred upon Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Edward Dyer - two of Dee's pupils - as appears by the famous letters of 1579/80 between Spenser and Gabriel Harvey. 'The Faerie Queene', which was commenced at this time, can be seen as the "poetic form of the Dee outlook and the Dee patriotic occultism" in its use of the British mythos and of Renaissance platonism [57].

Unfortunately, Spenser was voicing a minority opinion of the English and Christopher Marlowes play 'Doctor Faustus' (1593) reflected, if not

contributed to the more usual opinion that Dee was a conjurer. The original Faustus, who flourished circa 1507-1540, was an ordinary magician who claimed to be a master of Renaissance magia, and came to be quoted in attacks on magi such as Trithemius and Agrippa. Like Dr John Dee, Marlowe's Doctor Johannes Faustus was renowned as a disciple of Agrippan magic, an alchemist, and an invocator of spirits. Even if Marlowe had not used Dee as one of his models, a percentage of the audience of this popular play would have been able to make the link, for Dee's exploits on the continent 1583-88 had attracted a great deal of attention, even in England.

Such was the extent of Dee's popular infamy after his return to England in 1589 that he could not escape from it even when he moved to Manchester in 1595 - far north of his normal circuit. In 1596 the children of Nicholas Starkie of Cleworth had become possessed by demons whilst under the influence of faith healer Edmund Hartlay, and in November 1592 the father consulted John Dee, obviously having heard of his occult ability. Dee was wise not to provide fuel for further rumours, "utterly refused to meddle with the affair, and advised the father to consult with godlye preachers and appoint a private fast". After Dee's curate Matthew Palmer intervened, the case was brought to court and Hartlay was hanged in March 1597.

The case was one of the most well known of the period for Starkie also brought in the famous exorcist John Darrell. This puritan preacher had the skill of ventriloquism and would produce demonic voices in people which he would then pretend to exorcise. In 1598 Darrell was investigated by the church and notably Samuel Harsnett, then chaplain to the Bishop of London and later becoming Archbishop of York, and after being found an imposter was deposed from the ministry and imprisoned for a year. A pamphlet war broke out over the question of exorcism in religion and led to the 72nd Canon of the Canons of London in 1604, which proscribed any Anglican minister from performing exorcism without license from a bishop.

As a precursor, Harsnett published 'A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures' in 1603 after discovering that Darrell's tricks had been employed by Jesuit priests in England who were trying to prove the Anglican Church was at fault in not protecting souls from the possession of demons [58].

Shakespeare borrowed key words and phrases from Harsnett's pamphlet to describe Tom o' Bedlam, the only friend of the exiled 'King Lear' [59]. The purpose of this was not to strike terror into the audiences, as Marlowe had done, but hint that Tom o' Bedlam's possession by demons may not be all that it seems, for in fact Tom o' Bedlam was Edgar in disguise. 'King Lear' was written circa 1604-5 when Harsnett's 'declaration' was still fresh in theatre goers minds, and it has even been suggested that Shakespeare was hinting at John Dee "in this figure of an ancient British monarch, treated with base ingratitude, haunted by false accusations of demonic possession" [60].

The troubles at Manchester appear to have caused Dee more worries than he ever encountered at Mortlake. In a letter to a friend, dated 8th September 1597, Dee complained of the problems and meagre revenue that had deprived him of the time and freedom to pursue his highly individual work [61]. He took the opportunity to return home March 1598 to June 1600, during which time he published the quarto broadside 'A Discourse Apologeticall...of the Philosophicall studies and exercises, of a certaine studious Gentleman' [62]. It had originally been a letter sent to John Whitgift Archbishop of Canterbury in January 1595 and was brought to public view "to stop the mouthes, and, at length to stay the impudent attemptes, of the rash, and malicious devisers, and contrivers of most untrue, foolish, and wicked reports, and fables, of, and concerning my foresaid studious exercises" [63]. The frontispiece illustration is Dee's allegorical emblem of the adverse conditions of his career.

As the complement of the 1570 'Digression Apologeticall' the 'Discourse Apologeticall' is valuable as Dee's defense of his work which had recently culminated in angelic theurgy. Meric Casaubon recognised it as such and printed it in his 'Relation' of Dee's angel magic [64]. Dee only hints at his employment of angels for it was only one aspect of his wider philosophy "to attain to the knowledge of those truthes, which are meet, and necessary for me to know; and wherewith to do his divine Majestie such service, as hee hath, doth, and will call me unto, during this my life" [65].

However there was no reason why the public should listen, and with the decline of Elizabeth and advent of King James, Dee's possible allies in court had either died or were entangled in petty power struggles. By the 1590's Dee could find "no one as yet of her Majesties most honourable Privy Counsaile, who willingly and comfortably will listen unto my pitifull complainte" [66].

In reading Dee's own accounts of the slanderous accounts upon him and his work, one gets the impression that he felt quite alone and unsupported by his friends "Whereby it might seem that he hath many freends. But for all that betwene a cold freend and a faint harted enemy, is small diversity. And undawtedly a fayned hollow harted or hypocrytical freend is worse, ten tymes, than an open enemy" [67]. To give his apologeticals more credibility he even wrote them in the third person, as if by "an unknowne freend". As the attacks gained more ground towards the turn of the century, so Dee came to need more hope that

charatable Christians (English or other), lovers of justice, truth, and good learning, may, hereby, receive certaine comfort in themselves (to perceive, that Veritas tandem praevalebit) and sufficiently be weaponed and armed with sound truth, to defende me against such kinde of my adversaries: if hereafter they will begin afresh, or hould on, obstinately, in their former errors, vaine imaginations, false reportes, and most ungodly sclanders of me and my studies [68].

As we have seen, the authorship of 'Propaedeumata Aphoristica' had been doubted, causing Dee to have it "proved and testified to some, who were (before) fowly infected with the sklanderous opinion, that one Urso was the author of it" [69]. This appears to refer to a letter, Mortlake 7 August 1574, on matters including "de Ursonis aphorismi" which Dee sent to William Camden [70]. It is believed Camden was a close friend for many years and so it becomes easy to see how Dee felt unsupported by hollow hearted friends.

Concerning how Dee might preach his theurgy to the people of all Europe, the angels informed him that there were three types of men [71]. The first were slanderers, witches and the enemies of God's work, who are all destined for damnation. Dee believed those who slandered him were better suited to the accusation of witch. "Are they become Devils themselves: by false witness bearing against their Neighbour" [72]. Dee even called a witch one woman who had slandered his neighbour [73]. At the other end of the scale were philosophers who are destined for salvation, and it is indicative of Dee's own experiences that even some of these are seen as misguided. "Who, so hardly, can digest or like any extraordinary course of Philosophicall Studies: not falling within the Cumpasse of their Capacitie: or where they are not made privie of the true and secret cause, of such wonderfull Philosophicall feates" [74]. Between these two groups are the earthly government of royalty and nobility who work for their own ends and so may or may not be in God's cause. Dee's theurgy would help establish the good and confound the bad. "For in Princes mowthes, is there poyson, as well as proverbs" [75]. It is significant to note that at this time Dee was embittered at his government's apparent failure to support his wider theurgy in the reformation of the Christian calendar, conversion of the New World to Christianity, and the establishment

# A LETTER

Containing a most briefe Discourse Apologetically, with a plaine Demonstration, and feruent Protestation, for the lawfull, sincere, very faithfull and Christian course, of the Philosophicall studies and exercises, of a certaine studious Gentleman: An ancient Seruant to her most excellent Maiesty Royall.



of a British Christian Empire.

In 1604 Dee had his 'Discourse Apologeticall' reprinted and had two further broadsides published from petitions. One, in verse and dated 8th June, was 'To the Honourable Assemblie of the Commons in the present Parliament' requesting "an Act general against Sclaunder, and a speciall penal order for John Dee his case". The other was Dee's 'Petition to the Kings Most Excellent Majestie, Exhibited, Anno 1604, Junii 5, at Greenwich', "to cause your Highnesse said servant to be tryed and cleared of that horrible and damnable, and to him most grievous and dammageable sclaunder...that he is or hath bin a conjurer or caller or invocator of divels". Dee was even willing to submit to the death penalty

if by any due, true, and just meanes, the name of conjurer or caller, or invocator of Divels or damned Spirites, can be proved to have beene or to be duely or justly reported of him; if any one of all the great number of the very strange and frivolous fables or histories reported and told of him (as to have been of his doing) were true".

He appears to have been hoping for an acquittal of conjuring charges as had been obtained in 1555, and obviously saw his angels as nothing but divine.

The idea adopted by biographers that King James was hostile to Dee had no real basis other than James was a well known witch-hater, as can be seen by his 'Daemonologie' (Edinburgh 1597). That Dee's petitions to the King and House of Commons came only days before James passed his first English statute - the 1604 Witchcraft Act - is a tenuous link and no real evidence on its own. With the increasing pressure of public opinion Dee is more likely to have stepped up his campaign in 1604 because he saw the advent of a new monarch as a fresh chance to clear his good name in England. Meric Casaubon believed Dee's relationship with the English government continued into James' reign and Dee is known to have called himself "servant and Mathematician to his most royall Majestie" [76].

It was probably for the better that Dee was ignored, for the trial he requested would have attracted countless false testimonies and been a sham of justice. However this meant that the accusations were never cleared and in 1605 the pressure forced Dee to retire to Mortlake in poverty, ill health and misery. He never seemed to be able to understand why his fellow countrymen should fabricate stories and incite slander against him, and believed their consciences would have told them it was wrong. Yet he could not bring himself to counterattack or prove their falsity in print: he still had compassion for his neighbours when it was under the tongues of such people that he continued to suffer. "Goodwife Faldo (a Natif of Mortlak in Surrey) did know Dr Dee...That the children dreaded him because he was accounted a Conjurer...He was a great Peace-maker; if any of the neighbours fell out, he would never lett them alone till he had made them friends" [77].

Dee's death may not have halted the slander and libel against him though it did bring relief from his suffering. Yet even this solemn act was marred, for years before 1608 the brass inscription plate had been removed from the grave he had chosen [78].

#### NOTES

1 'The Compendious Rehearsal...' in 'Autobiographical Tracts of Dr John Dee' (Manchester 1851), p20.

2 'Acts of the Privy Council', 1554-6,V, p 137.

3 'Calendar of State Papers, Domestic', 1547-80, No.34, p 67.

4 'A Necessary Advertisement...' in 'Autobiographical Tracts', p 51n.

5 Richard Deacon 'John Dee...' (London 1968), p 27.

- 6 'Compendious Rehearsal', p 20. 7 *ibid*.
- 8 'Calendar of State Papers, Domestic', 1554-6, V, p 176. Dee had the acumen to publish it in his 'Necessary Advertisement', p 57.
- 9 'Necessary Advertisement', pp 57-8. 10 *ibid*, p 57.
- 11 'Compendious Rehearsal', p 10. 12 *ibid*, p 21.
- 13 'Necessary Advertisement', p 52. 14 *op.cit.*, pp 1414, 1445.
- 15 'Necessary Advertisement', p 53.
- 16 J.E. Neale 'Queen Elizabeth' (London 1938), p 209.
- 17 'Compendious Rehearsal', p 10. 18 *ibid*, pp 5-6.
- 19 *op.cit.*, sigs Air-v. 20 *ibid*, sigs Aiv-Aiiir.
- 21 *ibid*, sigs Aiir-v. 22 *ibid*.
- 23 'Discourse Apologeticall' in 'Autobiographical Tracts', p 72.
- 24 'Mathematical Praeface', sig Aiir. 25 *ibid*, sig Aiiv.
- 26 The advertisement covers sigs Dii-E\*iiii.
- 27 *op.cit.*, p 53. 28 *ibid*, p 55. 29 *ibid*, p 56.
- 30 Lynn Thorndike, 'A History of Magic and Experimental Science' (New York 1923-41), VI, pp 109ff.
- 31 'The Private Diary of Dr John Dee' (London 1842), pp 4,6-7.
- 32 *ibid*, pp 4,8. 33 'Compendious Rehearsal', pp 21-2.
- 34 'Necessary Advertisement', p 51. 35 *ibid*, p 52.
- 36 'Private Diary', p 3. 37 *ibid*, pp 9,10.
- 38 'Mathematical Praeface', sig Aiir.
- 39 'The Five Books of Mystical Exercises of John Dee' edited by Joseph Peterson (Silian 1985), p 27.
- 40 Hermetic Journal, issue 32, pp 9-14; 'Mystical Exercises', p 207.
- 41 'Mystical Exercises', p 14.
- 42 Such as "George, my man, who...used me very dishonestly, and sayd he owed me no servyce" and was sacked: 'Private Diary', pp 18,21.
- 43 Hermetic Journal, issue 32, p 11. 44 'Mystical Exercises', p 11.
- 45 *ibid*, p 125. 46 *ibid*, p 198.
- 47 John Aubrey 'Brief Lives' edited by Oliver Lawson Dick (London 1949),p181
- 48 'Compendious Rehearsal', p 28. 49 *ibid*, pp 28-31.
- 50 *ibid*, p 31. 51 'Private Diary', p 39.
- 52 'Compendious Rehearsal', p 32. 53 'Private Diary', pp 47-8.
- 54 *op.cit.*, III, ii, 18-21. 55 *ibid*, III, ii-iii.
- 56 'Compendious Rehearsal', p 17.
- 57 F.A. Yates 'The Occult Philosophy' (London 1979), p 77.
- 58 The whole question of exorcism and the Anglican church is covered in Keith Thomas 'Religion and the Decline of Magic' (London 1971), pp 477-92.
- 59 *op.cit.*, II, iii; III, iv; IV, i. 60 Yates 'Occult Philosophy', p 156.
- 61 Harley MS 249, art 13, fols 104-5.
- 62 Reprinted in 'Autobiographical Tracts', pp 69-84.
- 63 *ibid*, p 71. 64 *op.cit.*, sigs Jiv-Kiiiv.
- 65 *ibid*, p 79. 66 Harley MS 249, art 13, fol 105.
- 67 'Necessary Advertisement', p 64. 68 'Discourse Apologeticall', p 81.
- 69 'Necessary Advertisement', pp 56-7. A footnote adds "Anno 1574 in Aug. at Mortlach".
- 70 Ashmole Ms 1788, art 4. 71 'Mystical Exercises', p 87.
- 72 'Mathematical Praeface', sig Aiir. 73 Aubrey 'Brief Lives', p 181.
- 74 'Mathematical Praeface', sig Aiiv. Quoting Trithemius.
- 75 'Mystical Exercises', p 140.
- 76 As quoted C.F. Smith 'John Dee' (London 1909), p 296.
- 77 Aubrey 'Brief Lives', p 181.
- 78 Elias Ashmole 'His Autobiographical and History Notes', edited by C.H. Josten (Oxford 1966), IV, p 1334.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE ROSICRUCIANS

Ron Heisler ◉

The work of Shakespeare's which cries out the most for discussion of its Rosicrucian implications is one of his least known pieces, The Two Noble Kinsmen, which has recently received a rare revival by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Most probably premiered in October or November 1613 at the Blackfriars Theatre, and put on by the King's Men, it was strangely omitted from the great Shakespeare Folio of 1623, although it was popular enough in its own time to receive occasional revival; it was actually considered for Court production circa 1619 [1]. The text, in fact, was not printed until 1634. This edition informed readers that the play was written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher; and recent opinion has strongly tended towards accepting this claim on the basis of extremely careful analysis of the text - of line endings, of the varying quality of the poetry, of the very stark impression given of two scripts by different hands somewhat roughly cobbled together. A third hand is actually involved to some extent, for the morris dance section is borrowed from The Masque of the Inner Temple and Grayes Inn, presented at Whitehall in celebration of the Palatinate marriage on February 20th 1613 and written by Fletcher's house-mate Francis Beaumont.

Even to a layman, the contrasting styles are pretty evident within the play, the lively hack verse of Fletcher appearing rather incongruous in the company of the magnificent periods of Shakespeare - and there are some marvellous Shakespearian stretches indeed, perhaps undramatic in impact, but no more so than a number of famous passages from The Tempest. Estimates of the extent of the Bard's involvement in the whole, range from one-third of the lines up to the complete script. But the general consensus today is that almost all the memorable poetic passages are attributable to Shakespeare. And that means in effect that almost all the main Rosicrucian allusions are his creation. [2]

It is shocking in a way to realize that Rosicrucians have not previously recognized the relevance of this play to their concerns, for the title-page of the first, 1634 edition contains an engraving of great interest. Various flowers and plants are stylized into a pattern, and among them is a rose - but not any rose: instead a rose with a cross - albeit a small one - at its centre [3]. Thus a subtle hint is given to the sophisticated reader before he has even read a line of the play. Within the drama the rose assumes considerable symbolic importance, which no doubt reflects the fact that the play was most probably a rush job intended to capitalise on the Palatinate marriage - and intended to exploit that popularly endorsed mood of



Palatinist triumphalism in 1613. Emilia, the heroine of breathtaking purity, unmistakably symbolizes the Princess Elizabeth. She tells that "Of all flowers,/Methinks a rose is best." A woman asks, "Why, gentle madam?", to which Emilia/Elizabeth replies:

"It is the very emblem of a maid:  
For when the west wind courts her gently  
How modestly she blows and paints the sun  
With her chaste blushes! When the north comes near her,  
Rude and impatient, then, like chastity,  
She locks her beauties in her bud again  
And leaves him to base briars.

(II.ii)

The above speech, which is attributable to the pen of John Fletcher, has an extrinsic resonance for Rosicrucians, because it reflects a sentiment found in a "greetings card" that Michael Maier sent to James I for Christmas 1611. In that "card" Maier includes a poem with the line "May the ROSE not be gnawed by the Canker of the North Wind...." This is a rather startling coincidence, if sheer coincidence it be.

There are rivals for Emilia's hand - Palamon and Arcite - and this rivalry of actual friends is the central theme of the play. The image of the rose springs to Palamon's lips when he prays to his guardian Goddess for victory - to Venus: he pleads,

"..... Take to thy grace  
Me, thy vow'd soldier, who do bear thy yoke  
As 'twere a wreath of roses, yet is heavier  
Than lead itself, stings more than nettles."

(V.i)

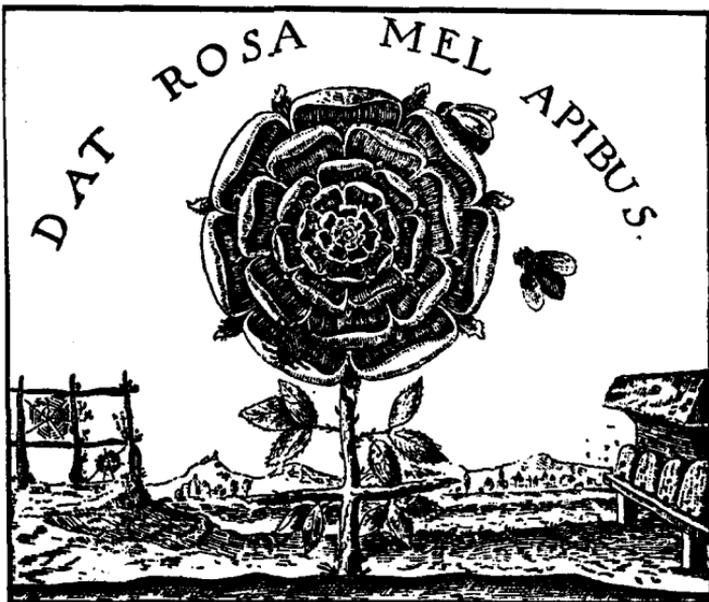
But of far greater impact on an audience is Emilia's role as a priestess engaged in ceremonial in honour of Diana the hunter. She enters dressed in white, thus signifying her chastity, her hair falling about her shoulders. She carries a wheaten sheaf - a clear reference to countryside ritual at the conclusion of the harvest - and is preceded by a maid carrying a silver hind, which gives off the scent of incense and "sweet odors". Set upon the altar, the hind is set alight. The hind disappears and in its place a rose-tree ascends with a single rose. When a sudden twang of instruments is heard, the rose falls from the tree. The meaning of this sign is that Diana has permitted Emilia to wed, for Emilia exclaims:

"..... O mistress,  
Thou have discharged me! I shall be gather'd."

(V.i)

The rose erect upon a stalk is an image that haunted Robert Fludd all his life and magnificently dominates the title-page of his Summum Bonum of 1629. Maybe he saw The Two Noble Kinsmen and maybe this vision of the rose stuck imperishably in his imagination; but we cannot be sure that Shakespeare was not privy to esoteric ceremonials of the Rosicrucians featuring the rose prominently.

Whatever the case, the play is Shakespeare's most truly pagan effort, with the residual Christianity of The Tempest completely evaporated. It is about ritual - pagan ritual explicitly structure it from beginning to end. The classical Gods feature - Mars, Venus and Diana are invoked. Emilia herself is a vestal virgin, a priestess we assume in the service of Diana. One cannot



avoid at times reaching the conclusion that Shakespeare was quite consciously making parallels for a sophisticated audience with hermeticist tendencies - making parallels with what was known of the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece. Isaac Casaubon, who knew much about such matters, was stationed in London in the years 1610 to 1614. Did Shakespeare perhaps meet him? There are numerous details in the play in any case which suggest that Shakespeare and Fletcher were acutely attuned to those pagan ceremonies which still survived in the English countryside at harvest time right down into the nineteenth century.

The play, amongst a mountain-full of criticisms, has been taken to task for not sufficiently differentiating the characters of the rivals in love, Arcite and Palamon - they are both good men, driven to violence by jealousy. This peculiarity of sameness may reflect to some extent the relationship of John Fletcher in his most successful partnership - that with Francis Beaumont. It may be partially autobiographical. John Aubry the gossip leaves us in no doubt as to their bisexuality: "They lived together on Banke side," he tells us, "...both batchelors; lay together; had one Wench in the house between them, which they did so admire; the same cloathes and cloake, &c., between them." But the play does successfully make the parallel of the ghastly consequence of their violent rivalry - the triumph of Palamon being at the price of the death of Arcite - with the cycle of nature, with the ritual of renewal - that essential rejuvenation of spirit required during the sowing season in the fields. Arcite's death is the necessary sacrifice, against which is set the fruitful, hopeful gain of the marriage of Emilia to Palamon. As Theseus tells Palamon, mourning Arcite's fate.

"His part is play'd and, though it were too short,  
He did it well; your day is lengthen'd, and  
The blissful dew of heaven does arrouse you."

(V.iv)

The "blissful dew of heaven" constitutes a classic alchemical phrase indeed! The sense of regeneration, of transfusion and renewal, has already been anticipated in fact earlier in the final act. There Palamon tells us that "Our stars must glisten with new fire, or be/Today extinct.....", whilst Arcite, not knowing that he was to be the sacrifice, prays to Mars,

"..... that heal'st with blood  
The earth when it is sick ....."

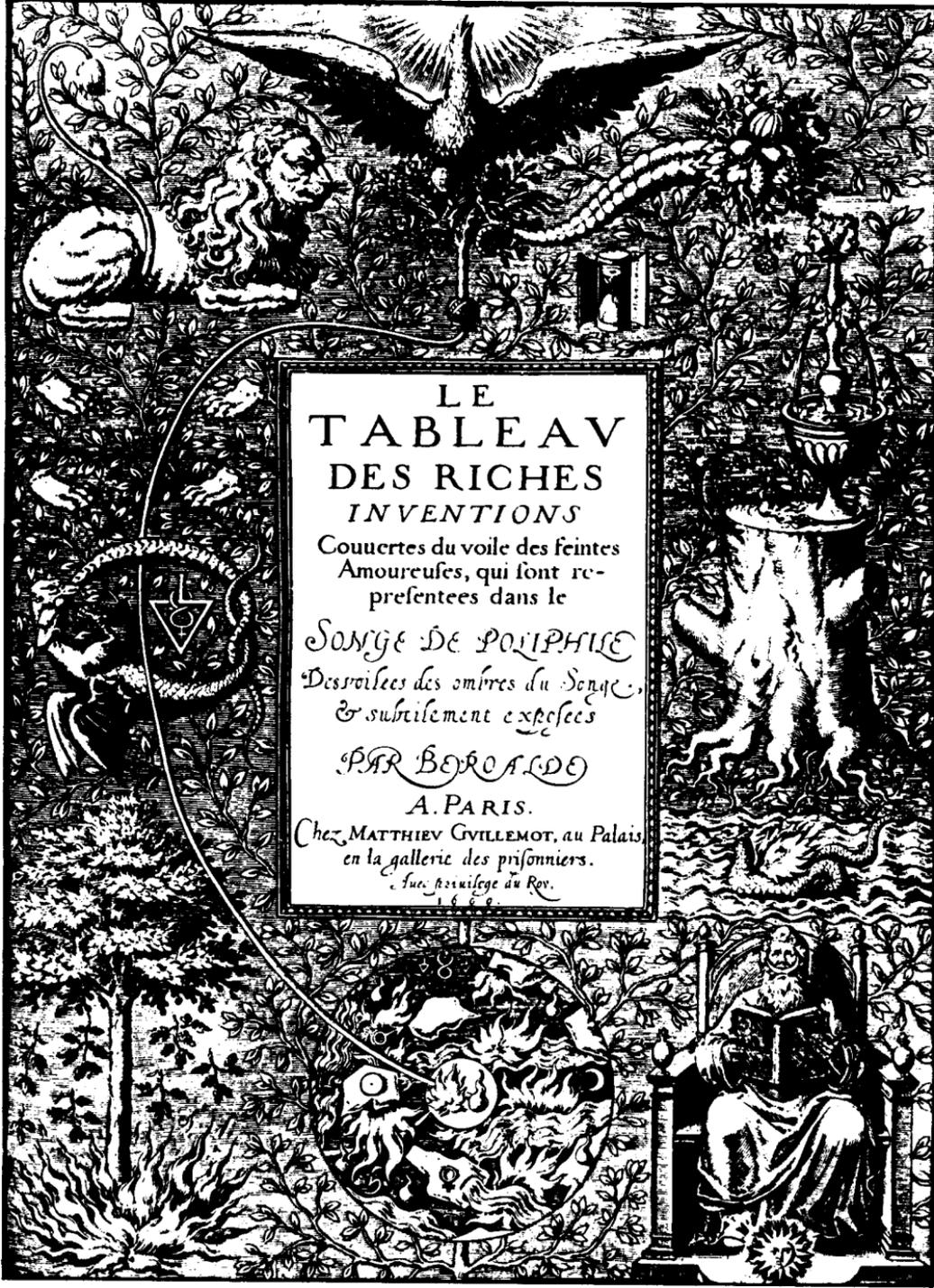
(V.i)

In The Two Noble Kinsmen we have therefore a remarkable fusion of three latent themes: a celebration of the Palatinate marriage; the process of alchemical transformation taken as the model of the human condition; and the vitality of the Rosicrucian movement. Why was the play left out of the great Shakespeare Folio edition of 1623? John Heminges and Henry Condell, the last survivors of the original Chamberlain's Company, which became better known as the King's Men, were the principal editors. Heminges, who had been business manager of the King's men by about 1600, was the dean of the London acting profession - was regarded as a man of the greatest integrity. We cannot imagine for one moment that either of these men were not aware of the existence of The Two Noble Kinsmen. It had some revivals and we cannot suppose that prompt copies were not floating about; they were the property, in any case, of Heminges and Condell's very own Company, the King's Men.

Despite the likelihood that Fletcher's contribution to the text was displeasing in some respects - and the editor's aim in compiling the Shakespeare canon was to be "absolute in their number as he conceived them", I believe the answer to my question lies basically in one word: suppression. This play - so obviously a Rosicrucian rallying call - had fallen into grave disfavour with the disastrous slump in the fortunes of the Winter King and Queen in Bohemia in 1619. Possibly done at Court - it was considered for Court performance at about the same time as Frederick V of the Palatinate ascended to his Bohemian throne - its exclusion from the Folio must have been an act of high policy, or a response to what was considered to be high policy. Rosicrucianism was now anathema to the State - or rather to the King. Publication of the play - particularly as the King was vigorously pursuing the idea of a Spanish marriage for his son Charles - would have been seen as an outrageous political provocation directed against the Catholic-Hapsburg interest. The dedicatees of the Folio - the Lords Pembroke and Montgomery - would certainly not have lent their names to the Folio if it had included such a dangerous text.

## References

1. Beaumont's Masque of the Inner Temple and Graves Inn predates The Two Noble Kinsmen, and was premiered on February 20th 1613. Ben Jonson refers to the play in Bartholomew Fair, which was premiered on the 31st October 1614, and on which he was working by 13th November 1613. In the British Library, in Cotton MS Tiberius E.X., are play lists from the Revels Office. Bound in are scraps of paper, including one with the words "The 2 Noble Kinsmen". This scrap has been dated at about 1619, and indicates the play was at least considered for Court performance.
2. Shakespeare is usually attributed with most of Act I, part of Act III, and most of Act V, following Littledale's metrical analysis.
3. The engraving is conveniently reproduced on the title page of Shakespeare and The Two Noble Kinsmen by Paul Bertram (1965).



LE  
TABLEAU  
DES RICHES  
INVENTIONS

Couvertes du voile des feintes  
Amoureuses, qui sont re-  
presentees dans le

*SONGE DE POLIPHISE*  
*Desvoilees des ombres du Songe,*  
*& subtilement exposees*

*PAR BEROLDO*  
A. PARIS.

Chez MATTHIEU GVILLEMOT, au Palais  
en la gallerie des prisonniers.

*Avec Privilege du Roy.*

This is a beautiful though rather enigmatic mandala which appeared in 1600 as the titlepage to Béroalde de Verville's commentary to and French translation of the important Renaissance allegory the *Hypnerotomachia* (or *Dream of Poliphilus*).

The mandala is structured with eight main symbols at the corners and centres of the edges of a rectangular space, however, it is to be read from the bottom centre, where the narrow branch or trunk of a tree is seen, which rises up and sends its branches to all the symbols of the mandala.

The symbol group at the bottom centre is a circle representing the Chaos of the Four Elements and the symbols of the planetary forces. At the centre of this sphere are symbols for Fire (flames) and Water (the drop). The whole mandala explores the path to the spirit experienced through the dynamics of the relationship of these two elements. We see a path leading from the flame/drop at the bottom centre to the phoenix or soul bird rising towards the light, at the top centre.

On the left of the Chaos sphere, we see the paradox of a tree with a fire at its roots, fuelling the flames by dropping its leaves. The path on the left leads on from this paradoxical tree that consumes itself, though the Ouroboros in which a serpent and a winged dragon simultaneously consume each other. Beside them are the symbols for Mercury ♃ and Aqua Fortis ♁. If one places metallic Mercury in Aqua Fortis ("Strong Water" or concentrated Nitric acid) each consumes the other, the Mercury going into solution as Mercuric Nitrate and the strength of the acid being correspondingly reduced. Aqua Fortis or Nitric Acid was a paradox to the alchemists - being a water that fumed and burned. Mercury was also an enigma - a metal that is a liquid. Above this is a lion with its four paws removed. As a symbol it has been spiritualised by the removal of its direct contact with the earth, and also becomes a paradoxical symbol - the fierce lion without the means of manifesting its ferocity. In Alchemy the Lion is sometimes associated with fire, and the blood (or watery part) of the Lion is often seen as a primal substance of the alchemical work. Also the Green Lion which sometimes represents in alchemy the energies of Nature found in the sap of plants, may here be related to the fruiting of the plant world symbolised in the cornucopia.

On the right hand side of this mandala there seems to be outlined the path of uniting the fire and the water. Below in the right corner, a wise man sits on a throne with the Sun at his feet and the Moon crescent symbol on his head. He holds a book, on the cover of which are seen alternating symbols of flames and water drops. Above him a dragon with wings of fire and breathing flames, paradoxically is able to swim on the open water. On the dead trunk of a tree is placed a fountain. Beside this a flame is seen warming the base, and keeping the water circulating eternally. Alongside this is a water drop, and further to the left the seeming dead trunk sends forth a new regenerating shoot. Above this is a cornucopia, representing the abundance of the fruits of nature that comes with the completion of the alchemical work. A single rose falls from the horn and drops five petals towards the flame and drop on the tree trunk with its fountain and new growth. Beside the cornucopia is an hourglass, pointing to the fact that out of all these cyclic processes, the self consuming tree, the ouroboros, the circulating fountain on the regenerating tree trunk, a time is reached when the process comes to fruition.

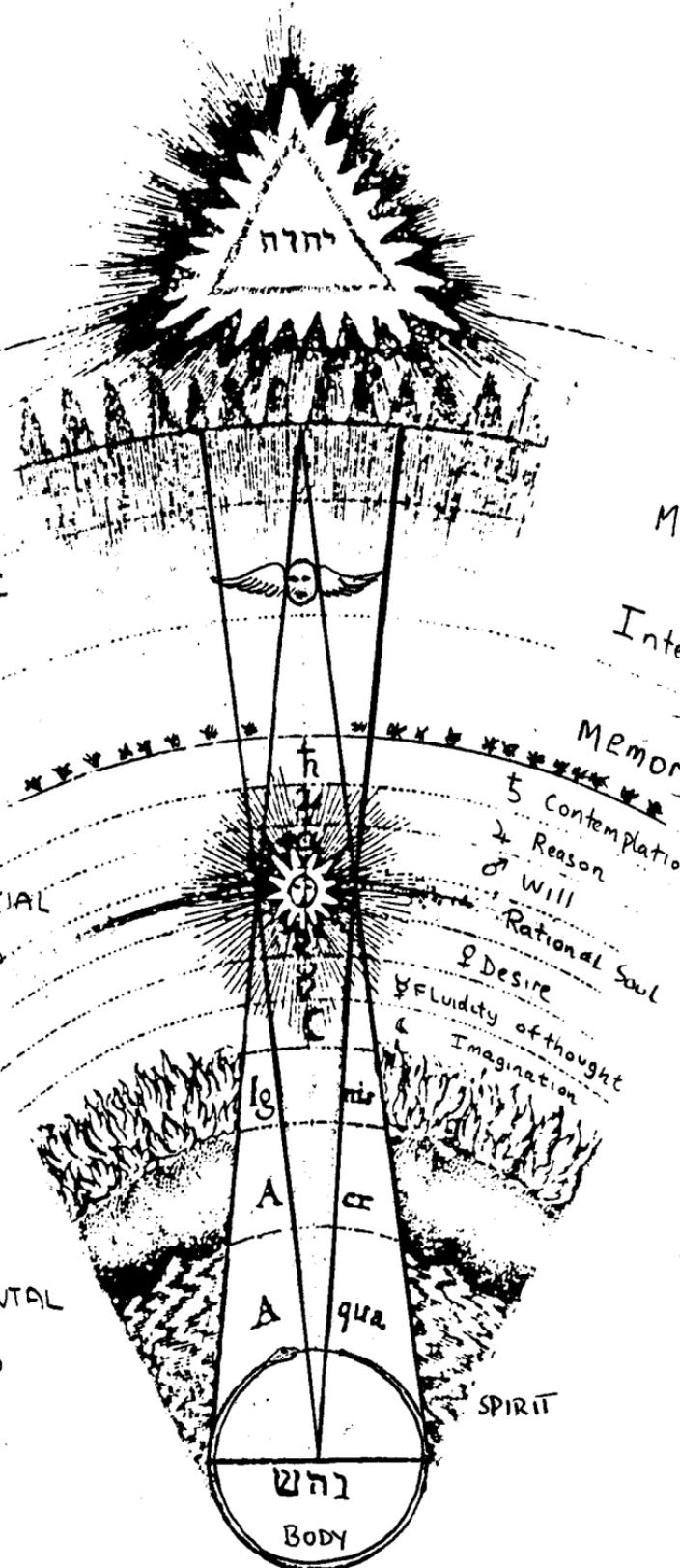
This mandala seems to put before us for our contemplation, the fact that the path to spiritual awareness through alchemy involves an encounter with the paradoxical. Those who are suited to the alchemical work must be able to incorporate paradox, and integrate this within their being.

DIVINE  
WORLD

ANGELIC  
WORLD

CELESTIAL  
WORLD

ELEMENTAL  
WORLD



Mens

Intellect

Memory

Contemplation  
Reason  
Will

Rational Soul  
Desire

Fluidity of thought  
Imagination

SPIRIT

DIAGRAM  
SHOWING  
THE WORLDS  
AND  
THE PARTS  
OF MAN

## THE PRACTICE OF THE ART OF THE PYRAMID

Thomas R. Hall III ◉

One of the primary questions that the Renaissance Magi posed and answered was the complex relationship between the Microcosm and Macrocosm. Robert Fludd, the English theosopher answered this question in a most interesting way using what he called the art of the pyramid. This system consisted of intersecting a triangle of light and a triangle of darkness and showing the geometrical and spiritual harmonies resulting. Joscelyn Godwin's Robert Fludd gives several illustrations that express the development of this train of thought. The present essay is a modern attempt to practically explore some of the ideas suggested by this system. It is thus a system of Microcosmic magic useful to modern practitioners wishing to meditatively understand the relationships that exist between the various aspects of soul and the metaphysical levels of the Cosmos.

The philosophy of this system is based on some of the ideas Fludd discusses in Book One of his Mosaical Philosophy. In this work he outlines a metaphysical myth in which God the primal unity emanates the archetypes of Light and Darkness in order to create the universe. God is thus according to Fludd a being that encompasses all of the elements of creation. Darkness and Light are not opposed to one another at all. Just the opposite in fact. They complement one another in harmony. Light symbolises the creative powers of God and Darkness signifies the elemental chaos that forms the prima materia of creation. Everything that exists in the created universe is due to the influence of light on darkness and darkness on light. In the Cabala one might express this as the vessels or Sephiroth being filled with Light shining from Ain Soph Aur. The Darkness could also be symbolised by the withdrawal of Ain Soph Aur. The resulting dark Space within Light is then filled with the Great Man of Light, Adam Kadmon. On the Tree of Life, the Darkness is the Severity of God and the Light the Mercy of God. This symbolism also finds its way to the pillars of the Masonic and magical temples. Meditation on this system and a study of Fludd's work will help make this cosmology clear.

Begin by performing an opening rite such as the Cabalistic Cross or my Ritual of the Hieroglyphic Monad (Hermetic Journal No. 30). The concepts pictured on the accompanying diagram are next visualised and meditated upon after the preliminary relaxations and rhythmic breathings are accomplished. It is probably best to do this exercise sitting down rather than standing as it is primarily a contemplative exercise.

First visualise the triangle with the Tetragrammaton emblazoned upon it above your head. If you are a Christian you can see this as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A Cabalist would see the Crown, Wisdom and Understanding; and

a Neoplatonist Unity, Intellect and Soul. Robert Fludd saw this trinity as the Unity, Formative Principle, and Primal Chaos. Visualise the triangle shining with white light while meditating on the highest conceptions of God one holds. A Shin might be placed in the midst of the Tetragrammaton to express the saving power of the Light.

Next visualise a pyramid of Light descending from the divine triangle ending in an area around the genitals. This creative Light contains the archetypal ideas that form the dark chaos into material objects. It is also the Light that leads the soul from a state of ignorance to one of wisdom.

Now, in the area around the genitals visualise a sphere of darkness growing from the tip of the pyramid of Light. The Hebrew word for serpent, Nechesh, is also visualised at its centre in white Hebrew letters. Around this globe a further visualization is required. A red serpent biting its tail is seen as circling it. Nechesh is the power contained in matter that must be released from bondage and restored to the perfection of God. Tales of dragon slaying such as St. George and the Dragon, Thor and the Midgard Serpent, and alchemical transformations of the Green Dragon are symbolic of this process. The alchemical sulphur or hidden power of nature must be tamed by art. Art is here our meditation technique. The Yoga system defines this same process as arousing the coiled Kundalini power at the base of the spine.

After the globe is carefully formed in the imagination visualise the pyramid of darkness rising from it reaching up to the triangle of God. This pyramid symbolises the dark chaos of matter that is formed into the various items of creation. Note that its influence is in the highest area of this miniature cosmos just as the pyramid of Light has influence in the lowest regions. However, the pyramids' influences diminish as they move further from their bases. The place of equal influence is the half way point or the place where the sun is placed. This balancing point is similar to the Tiphareth position of the Cabalistic Tree of Life.

The pyramids symbolise the three tier universe by their division into three areas. The upper third symbolises the Angelic or Intellectual World, the middle third the Astral or Celestial World, and the lower third the Elemental or Physical World. In the Cabalistic system these are respectively the worlds of Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah. Several images can be visualised in these three areas to further illustrate these concepts and their correspondences with the soul. The use of image upon place also relates this system to the art of memory. The places are of course the pyramids, and the images the visualisations that follow.

The first image to be visualised is a burst of flame or light at the base of the Light pyramid. In the Microcosm this flame symbolises the Mens or Mind. The Mens is that aspect of the soul which lies nearest to God. It receives and interprets God's will in the soul and in some magical systems symbolises the achievement of the Great Work. The Cabalists held this to be the Yechidah or the Divine Spark. It is here where we cease to be human and can almost be called God. Sufis and other Sages who held that they were God, were seeing the world from the perspective of the Mens or Yechidah. The Buddhist Prajna Paramita sutras seem to be written from this perspective also. The Tathagata or Buddha nature is an equivalent concept to Mens.

In the Macrocosm this initial burst of Light is the Anima Mundi or Soul of the World. The Soul of the World reflects God's Will in the universe. Hence we can say that the universe is a visible reflection of God. The Cabalists called this concept, Metatron. Metatron was the first created being and is often called the Archangel of the Presence. As the Archangel nearest to God, Metatron conveys God's Light to the rest of creation. Note his position on the Tree of Life as Kether of Briah in this respect. In Gnostic and Hermetic

systems this idea is often termed the Logos or the Son. The Logos is a principle of salvation that leads souls from states of ignorance and bondage to enlightened freedom. When the flame is visualised, meditation on these matters should be conducted. First meditate on the Microcosmic aspect then move on to the Macrocosmic.

In the centre of the Intellectual third of the pyramids, visualise an angelic being with wings at the ears. This image is often used to symbolise the Cherubim. At this point in the exercise visualise the eyes closed. On the Microcosmic level the angel symbolises the Intellect. The Intellect is the faculty of the soul that directly perceives and participates in the Intellectual Essences or Platonic Forms. These Forms or Ideas are the sources of each particular we encounter in life. A sage or philosopher by participating in the Intellect is able to go beyond the particular and directly see the universal Idea that informs each act or item. The angel can also symbolise the perfect image of humanity or the unfallen image of man in the mind of God. The goal of humanity is to recover this lost image and the knowledge that went with it in order to complete the plan of creation. Another interpretation of this symbol is that it signifies the overshadowing presence of the Holy Guardian angel. This is the hidden genius or daemon which presides over us from birth. One purpose of theurgy was to identify and invoke this being to consciousness or visible appearance. One is reminded here of Socrates' daemon, the discovery that Plotinus' daemon was a god, and of course, the Abra-Melin Magic.

In Cabalistic terminology the angelic image was often called the Neshemah. The Neshemah or intuition was extremely important in the teachings of the Golden Dawn. Some of its documents portrayed it as a woman clothed with the sun having angelic attributes such as wings. The development of intuition through study, meditation and magic is extremely important to the aspiring adept.

In the Macrocosm the angelic head signifies the angelic hierarchies. There are nine in the Dionysian tradition and ten in the Cabalistic system. Either one or the other system should be meditated on in order during the brief meditation period allocated to the angelic image. Remember that angels are the ideas of God that mirror His Light and Will into the world. Magical traditions in particular state that angels and daemons are needed by God in the government of the Cosmos. They also provide the essential power locuses for magical practice. Evocation and invocation of spiritual beings plus the theory that nature contains within herself occult virtues are the two pillars of magical theory and practice.

For the middle third visualise a sun in the area of the heart. In the Microcosm this symbolises that rational soul. Here is the conscious self or ego that is the centre of the life of the soul. The Cabalistic system calls the rational soul the Ruach or spirit of life. In the Macrocosm the solar image symbolises the celestial or astral world. The sun was considered by the Neoplatonists to be a point of entry into the intellectual world. Thus our conscious minds are always on the verge of the world of ideas, if we draw away from sensation. Along with the Sun also visualise the symbols for the celestial bodies starting with the fixed stars at the throat. Follow the diagram for the correct positions. They should also be visualised in certain colours. The fixed stars are white, Saturn is black, Jupiter is blue, Mars is red, the Sun is golden, Venus is green, Mercury is orange, and the Moon is purple. The colour vibrations will help attract spirit from the astral bodies to the soul.

Perhaps this would be a good place to discuss in some detail the nature of the soul as it relates to this systems. This system relies heavily on

Neoplatonism with some gleamings from Ficino and Agrippa. The soul has six main parts. They are the mind, the intellect, the rational soul, the imagination, the spirit, and the senses. Each part starting with the mind illuminates its inferior and receives influences from its superior. The mind directly participates with God and receives its influence from divine sources. It illuminates the intellect with supernal ideas and abstract thought. The intellect then illuminates the rational soul with more intelligible or more concrete thought. The rational soul generally gains this form of conscious illumination through the practice of philosophy. Minds untutored in this art have a veil of ignorance between their souls and their intellects.

The rational soul then directs the imagination according to the pattern of truth that it learns from the intellect. The imagination is a faculty which is central to magical practice. It directs and shapes the celestial spirit or astral light in order to work miracles in the natural world. Spirit or ether is the fifth element and according to ancient sources is the breath of the gods. This is a reference to the magical idea that the celestial bodies emit a power or spirit into the sublunary world. When embodied in material bodies as occult virtue it is then released and manipulated by action of the imagination. In our pyramid system, spirit is symbolised by the red serpent coiled around the dark globe. The last level to be affected is the sensory vehicle. The senses relate to the sublunary or the elemental world. Sensation is not a purely physical act, it requires the interpretation of the imagination in order to shape the outside world into an intelligible experience.

One major problem in formulating a modern metaphysical system is the proposal that the universe is a whole and every part is subtly related. The ancients did not seem to have this problem with their geocentric three tier universe. Unfortunately our heliocentric cosmos seems to offer some difficulties in this respect. Bruno is the only occultist besides maybe Crowley or William Gray who has tackled the problem with any depth. I do this by interpreting the old macrocosmic celestial world as being in actuality the Jungian collective unconscious. Like the celestial world it is filled with gods and daemons which seem to direct our lives. Complex and daemon may in fact be different terms for the same thing. I do however hold that the collective unconscious world, its gods and images somehow relate to intellectual patterns in the mind of God. Jungian Platonism may be a better way to interpret the occult mysteries. It certainly seems more likely that magical practices stir up and move archetypal powers in the collective unconscious, than that they call upon living being that live in the planets and stars or are in fact the stars themselves!

In the elemental third visualise three bands of elemental energy circling the dark earth sphere at the bottom of the pyramids. The first is a band of fire at the are just below the solar plexus. The fire band symbolises the choleric personality or the intuitive personality. Next, visualise the band of air. It can be seen as a band of clouds or winds. It symbolises the sanguine or intellectual personality. The water band is imagined next. The phlegmatic or feeling personality is represented here. The black or earth sphere symbolises the melancholic or sensation personality.

The Cabala recognises the Microcosmic elemental world as the Nephesh or sphere of sensation. The place of sensation is filled with spirit and interpreted by imagination.

In the Macrocosm the elemental zones are the areas of the planet inhabited by the elemental spirits. Much of the lower forms of magic are accomplished by controlling the sylphs, undines, salamanders and gnomes. There are also warnings about becoming too involved with them.

The entire system is now set into activity by a series of controlled breathings and visualisations. On the out-breath visualise a flame coming from the Divine triangle descending along the pyramid of Light and ending at the earth sphere. As it descends visualise the angel opening its eyes, the sun getting brighter, and the elemental bands spinning clockwise. On the in-breath visualise the earth sphere releasing a cloud of darkness that ascends to the triangle of God. This cloud that ascends the pyramid of darkness is the kundalini power or alchemical sulphur. Feel its energy pulsating through your soul as it brings in the vital spirit of the celestial world. Repeat this procedure for about a dozen breaths. This practice purifies the elemental body and awakens the astral light for the use of the magician. The exercise is closed with the Hieroglyphic Monad gesture or some other ritual.

This little system of Microcosmic magic is an excellent foundation practice for exploration into other areas of the Hermetic-Cabalistic Theosophy. The Great Work should start with man, develop through a systematic study of alchemy, natural magic, celestial magic, and angelic magic, and end with a true knowledge of God. This pyramidal system which deals primarily with the soul of man and its relation to the magical universe, is the first rung on the ladder that reaches the highest knowledge. It is hoped that this study will lead others to that height.

## THE EQUINOXES AND SOLSTICES : AN INTERPRETATION

With notes by Graham Knight ©

### Part 2 : The Autumn Equinox

(All face East - central Altar with the four Elements and Cup of wine)

1 Hekas Hekas este bibeloi!

[Spoken by the Magus as he performs the gesture of 'Opening the Veils']  
[The 4 Quarters, as the Elements, in turn purify and consecrate]  
[The 'Secret Inscription' from the Paris papyri is read out, divided between two celebrants. The sentences underlined are repeated by Air as Magus]

Greetings, entire edifice of the Spirit of the Air,  
greetings Spirit that penetrates from heaven to earth,  
and from earth, which abides in the midst of the universe,  
5 to the utmost bounds of the abyss,  
greetings, Spirit that penetrates into me, and shakes me,  
and departs from me in goodness according to God's will;  
greetings, beginning and end of irremovable Nature,  
greetings, you who revolves the elements which untiringly render service  
10 greetings, brightly shining sun, whose radiance ministers to the world,  
greetings, moon shining by night with disc of fickle brilliance,  
greetings, all you spirits of the demons of the air,  
greetings, you for whom the greeting is offered in praise  
brothers and sisters, devout men and women!  
15 O great, greatest, incomprehensible fabric of the world, formed in a circle!  
Heavenly One, dwelling in the heavens,  
aetherial spirit, dwelling in the aethyr, having the form of water, of earth,  
of fire, of wind, of darkness, star-glittering, damp-fiery-cold Spirit !  
I praise Thee, God of gods, who has fashioned the world,  
20 who has established the depths upon the invisible support of their firm  
who has separated heaven and earth, foundation,  
and has encompassed the heavens with golden, eternal wings,  
and founded the earth upon eternal bases,  
who has hung the aethyr high above the earth,  
25 who has scattered the air with the self-moving wind,  
who has laid the waters round about,  
who calls forth the tempests, the thunder, the lightning, the rain:

Destroyer, Begetter of living things, God of the Aeons,  
great art thou, Lord, God, ruler of all!

30 From scattered beginnings has wholeness been Formed within the Kingdom.  
Perfected and gathered, it is the dowry given unto the Daughter,  
that she may enter the Earth;  
devoured and darkened, her gown grown to shadow,  
the entrance sealed.

35 That the portals of the grave may be blessed  
by her passing.

Her fertile womb crowns with horns  
the cavern wherein dwells the encircled Dragon,  
and the fruits of life are devoured by death.

40 From light into darkness,  
from life into its hidden fullness,  
let us pursue the seed as it journeys from the sun.

[All now turn to the North. There follows a period of silence during which  
all hold a previously agreed image or visualisation - for example, the buried  
ear of corn.

Terminated by Magus in East, who says:]

So has the Earth received our spirit.

[All turn to the Centre]

[West and North jointly elevate the wine. All touch the Cup.  
West as Water speaks:]

As the moon in its fullness prepares for waning,  
45 As the tides ebb and flow,  
let us embrace change, passing without fear  
from light unto darkness,  
knowing each to be the others hidden nature.  
May the balanced power descend to dwell within this wine!

50 May we see the silver star appear within  
the black and leaden Earth.  
May the moist fire not cease to burn within our bodies.  
And may the Sun that never sets -  
throughout the night, throughout the winter -  
55 burn ever in its silent secret centre.

We that are born and die to live once more,  
we are thy children -  
in thy life, and in thy death  
and in that life transcending all our changing.

60 As the wine enters and transforms,  
so the earthen vessel nurtures with its clear milk -  
hidden, we are at balance between the seasons.

[Wine is now offered around the Circle by West]

May we return from death,  
and may our vision encompass the Forms of Life.

[All present now join hands around the Altar. At the sign from Air, all turn to the East, where the Temple is closed by reversing the gesture of 'opening the Veil', and by the Magus proclaiming the identity of the Temple across the sealed Pathway.]

## NOTES

The Autumn Equinox is a time for gathering in - both of the fruits of one's occult labours, and also in the more literal sense of entering into the depths and darkness of ones Self. In order to better prepare the mind for this paradoxical experience, immediately following on from the Opening and Consecration, there is read out a passage from the Paris papyri, one of the most important remnants from the period in which our tradition was being formulated. The purpose of this passage is in its creation of a middle ground from which all extremes and opposites are extended - hence the two sentences formulated by Air's repetition. Students of Jung and/or Alchemy will recognise the 'star-glittering, damp-fiery-cold Spirit' as the Psychopomp Mercurius, raised here to the level of highest god-head: 'Destroyer, Begetter of living things'. It is just this aspect of life in death and death leading to renewal that the rest of the ceremony enlarges upon.

Lines 30 to 34 refer both to the Shekinah imprisoned within Malkuth, and to the myth of Persephone/Kore, so important to the Orphic Mysteries. Both are banished from the light, yet also contain an element of self sacrifice whereby some portion of redemption enters into the most dense element. It is interesting here to note that the name Persephone may mean 'destroyer of light' or else 'dazzling brilliance' in the sense of a light too intense for human vision and which thus must manifest as darkness.

Thus it is that 'the portals of the grave may be blessed by her passing' - line 35.

This life giving death is further explored in lines 37-39, the crowned womb being the horned Astarte, who can give both fertility and the red lion of menstruation. These two poles are shown within the ouroboros who dwells in the cavern.

The seed (line 42) is the perfected Form or essence distilled from all experience up until this time. It is now sacrificed and buried within its grave, that it may be reborn on a higher level, to undergo new life and new experience. As an ear of corn it was the exoteric symbol of the Eleusinian Mysteries, born aloft in its casket or tomb during the procession. This death - of seed, sperm, knowledge and spirit - is now followed in meditation 'as it journeys from the sun'.

Lines 50-55 are specifically Alchemical in their derivation, referring to the stage of the Work termed the Star Regulus and which is ultimately related to the primary Nigredo or blackness of putrefaction. This also gives meaning to line 61, whose 'clear milk' is the philosophic vinegar that destroys the shell of matter but leaves the soul intact.

Thus it is that we may 'return from death' able to view the 'Forms of Life'.

## SAINT-YVES D'ALVEYDRE AND THE AGARTHIAN CONNECTION

Joscelyn Godwin ©

### Part II : The Agarthian Connection

We may appear to have wandered far from the 'Great Agarthian School' of Haji Sharif. The very name of Agartha, in fact, might have been forgotten, and Saint-Yves' *Mission de l'Inde* might have sunk out of sight like many an occultist's fantasy. But in 1922 the Polish scientist Ferdinand Ossendowski wrote in a sensational travel and adventure book, *Beasts, Men and Gods*, [44] that he had heard tell in Mongolia of a subterranean realm of 800,000,000 inhabitants called 'Agharti'; of its triple spiritual authority 'Brahyma -- the King of the World', 'Mahytma', and 'Mahynga', its sacred language 'Vattanan', and many other things that corroborate Saint-Yves. The book ended on a dramatic note of prophecy from one of Ossendowski's informants; that one day (the year 2029, to be exact) the people of Aghardi (sic) will issue forth from their caverns and appear on the surface of the earth. [45]

Any unprejudiced reader, finding in three chapters of Ossendowski's book a virtual outline of the 'Agartha' described in *Mission de l'Inde* -- not omitting the most improbable details -- would conclude that he had capped an already good story with a convenient piece of plagiarism, altering the spellings so as to make his version, if challenged, seem informed by an independent source. But Ossendowski denied this indignantly. When he was introduced to René Guénon, he told the latter that he would have seriously thought he had dreamed parts of his story if it were not for the evidence of the daily journal he had kept, and of certain objects he had brought back, adding (to Guénon's disgust) 'J'aimerais mieux cela!' (I'd much prefer that!) [46]

Guénon's interest was kindled, and in 1925 he wrote as follows about the striking parallels between Ossendowski's and Saint-Yves' Agharti/Agartha:

One can evidently debate the significance that should be attributed to all these similarities, but we do not think that they are sufficient to permit a conclusion unfavourable to M. Ossendowski. In any case, he has affirmed to us that he had never read Saint-Yves, whose name even was unknown to him before the French translation of his book; and for our part, we have no reason to doubt his sincerity. [47]

Two years later, Guénon himself published an important doctrinal book, *Le Roi du Monde* (translated as *The Lord of the World*), in which he began by stating that 'Independently of Ossendowski's testimony, we know from quite different sources that tales of this kind are current in Mongolia and all of Central Asia'. [48] Guénon does not tell us what these sources are, nor what degree of similitude is meant by 'tales of this kind'. We will see later what

sort of tales he may have meant. When, near the end of the book, he faces the ontological question of Agartha, he writes:

Now, should its placement in a definite region be regarded as literally true, or only as symbolic, or is it both at the same time? To this question we simply reply that, for us, the geographical facts themselves and also the historical facts have, like all others, a symbolic value; which moreover evidently does not remove any of their own reality insofar as they are facts, but which confers on them, beyond this immediate reality, a superior significance. [49]

So Guénon at the very least does not count out a geographical Agartha: if one were proved to exist, it would only corroborate the superior reality of the symbolic one. Jean-Pierre Laurant comments on this in his book on Guénon that 'the two interpretations have in fact nothing contradictory about them: they can even join with an appetite for the marvellous that Guénon did not repudiate, his life long.' [50]

Reading *Mission de l'Inde* and the last chapters of *Beasts, Men and Gods* side by side, one repeatedly finds passages which, occurring in vivid detail in Saint-Yves, recur in miniature in Ossendowski. These are often the most bizarre and absurd things, such as one might recall (unconsciously? we must give him the benefit of the doubt) from a book read years before: for example, the race of Agarthians with two tongues, with which they can speak different languages simultaneously (Saint-Yves was fond of this one: he repeats it to his visitor of 1896). One cannot help wondering how Guénon and other defenders of Ossendowski would have reacted to such stories if they had been told by some Theosophist or Spiritualist. The matter is settled, to my mind, by Ossendowski's words on Shakya-Muni (Gautama the Buddha), in a speech attributed to a Mongolian lama:

Blessed Sakhya-Mouni found on the summit of a mountain some stone tablets bearing words which he could not understand until he reached an advanced age, and then penetrated the kingdom of Agharti, whence he brought back some fragments of sacred knowledge that his memory had preserved. [51]

No Buddhist lama would have told such a tale. A Brahmin might have, and Saint-Yves definitely does, as follows:

It is thus that Shakya-Mouni, returning from an excursion, in the sixth century before our era, gave a terrible cry when he found his study-notebooks missing from his cell, where he had left them.

He felt momentarily lost, counting on this treasure to accomplish the revolutionary movement which he had prepared in silence.

In vain did he hasten to the central temple where the Brahatma dwells: its gate remained pitilessly shut.

In vain did he work a whole night long with all that the Science [of Agartha] had taught him of Magic: the Divination of the supreme Sanctuary had foreseen all, and knew all.

And, after his flight, the founder of Buddhism could only dictate to his first disciples, with all speed, what his memory had been capable of retaining. [52]

One might well ask how Guénon himself could have accepted, even repeated, such arrant nonsense. The implication is that where Buddha failed, Saint-Yves has succeeded in wresting its secrets from Agartha. Marco Pallis (the traveller, writer on Buddhism, and translator of Guénon) has explained how Guénon absorbed the anti-Buddhist attitude of his Taoist master Matgioi (=Albert de Pourvoirville), who confused the Buddhist doctrine of compassion with sentimentality. Only later, when Guénon's friend A.K. Coomaraswamy presented him with a dossier on Buddhism at Pallis' instigation, did Guénon

retract some of his remarks and deign to include Mahayana Buddhism as an authentic tradition. [53]

Marco Pallis himself investigated the whole question of Ossendowski's sources some years ago, with the advantage of his own contacts with highly-placed Indians, Tibetans and Mongolians. [54] One of these, by now very old, had been the head lama of a monastery at the time of Ossendowski's visit there. He testified that the latter's stories of the 'King of the World' and of Agartha bore no relation to any authentic legend or doctrine whatsoever, and that Ossendowski's command of Mongolian had not been nearly sufficient to understand what he claimed to have heard. Pallis' Hindu friends, similarly, disclaimed any Sanskrit source for Agartha. The inevitable conclusion was that Guénon had been misled by a fantasy, at best.

Certain believers in Guénonian infallibility, for whom Guénon himself had taken on the aspect of an emissary from the King of the World, were outraged by this. [55] In a more moderate vein, a 'close collaborator of Guénon', who insisted on anonymity (Reyor again?) answered Pallis' conclusions in a letter to Jean Saunier by explaining that in 1927, as the result of the publication of Guénon's *Le Raï du Monde*, there had resulted a rupture between Guénon and 'certain of his Hindu informants'. The writer points out that opinions differed in 1927 on the advisability of divulging information on the 'secret realm', and asks why it should be any different today. 'It would be normal -- without this showing any disrespect whatever towards Mr Pallis -- that the Orientals interviewed by the latter did not feel obliged to confirm a divulgence which had not been unanimously approved.' [56]. This resembles closely the situation Reyor suggested to explain the withdrawal of *Mission de l'Inde*.

Even if, as Pallis' findings suggest, one were to reduce Guénon's 'Agartha', Ossendowski's 'Agharti', and Saint-Yves' 'Agarttha' to a single literary transmission, one would still be left with two independent sources in Jacolliot and in the manuscripts of Haji Sharif. Louis Jacolliot (1837-90) was for many years a magistrate in Chandernagor, South India, and collected numerous sacred texts and tales. His particular obsession was to prove that everything in European civilization, especially the legal system and the pagan and Christian religions, has been borrowed from India. While he certainly embellished what he was given and was irresponsible about his sources, it seems very improbable that he altogether invented the account in *Le Fils de Dieu* (1873) of *Asgartha*, the 'City of the Sun', the seat of successive *Brahmatras* (spiritual and temporal sovereigns) for over 3000 years before its conquest by the Aryans about 10,000 years ago. (He gives as his source the *Vedamaga*.) As far as I can tell, this is the first appearance of our term in Europe. [57]

Haji Sharif's manuscripts corroborate the Indian sources of Jacolliot, because they show the idea of a 'Holy Land of Agartha' and its protector the 'Master of the Universe' (who so resembles the 'King of the World') brought to the West by an Oriental from Bombay to whom they evidently meant something. These manuscripts are in fact the sole piece of concrete evidence of an Eastern origin for the term 'Agartha'. Everything else known up to now has been mediated by a Western writer. [57a]

There is quite an extensive subsequent history of the term, beginning with a very curious episode that, to say the least, thickens the plot. [58] In the summer, of 1908 (the same year as the foundation of the 'Ordre du Temple Renové) a young Franco-Italian, Mario Fille, met a hermit who lived in the hills near Rome. Going by the name of Father Julian, this hermit confided to Fille a sheaf of old parchments, telling him that they contained an Oracle. Consultation of this oracle took place through word and number manipulation,

but the processes called for were painstaking and lengthy, and Fille did not bother with them until about twelve years later (i.e. about 1920), at a time of personal crisis. Thereupon he followed the instructions, which were to phrase one's question in Italian, adding one's name and the maiden name of one's mother, turn them into numbers, and make with them certain mathematical operations. At the end of several hours work, a final series of numbers emerges which, when retranslated into letters, gives a cogent and grammatically correct answer to one's question. Fille was amazed. Apparently the Oracle never failed to behave with perfect reliability, though its answers were sometimes in English or German!

One of the first questions to ask such an oracle is of course 'Who are you?' Fille, working with his friend Cesare Accomani, learned that this was called the 'Oracle of Astral Energy': that it was not a method of divination like some Kabbalistic oracles or the *I Ching*, but an actual channel of communication with the 'Three Supreme Sages' or the 'Little Lights of the Orient', who live in -- Agartha.

The Oracle's answers are elaborate, but not always conclusive, e.g.

Q. 'Do the Three Supreme Sages and Agartha exist?'

A. 'The Three Sages exist and are the Guardians of the Mysteries of Life and Death. After forty winters passed in penitence for sinful humanity and in sacrifices for suffering humanity, one may have special missions which permit one to enter into the Garden, in preparation for the final selection which opens the Gate of Agartha.' [59]

Fille and Accomani settled in Paris, where the Oracle was demonstrated to a group of respectable, even prominent journalists and writers, four of whom were favourably impressed enough to consent to write prefaces to Accomani's forthcoming book about it. One of these was René Guénon; but having failed to receive 'certain confirmations' of the Oracle's pronouncements, he withdrew, before publication, the commendation he had written. Accomani's book was published in 1929 as *Asia Mysteriosa: L'Oracle de Force Astrale comme Moyen de Communication avec 'les Petites Lumières d'Orient'*, by 'Zam Bhotiva', with prefatory studies by Fernand Divoire (editor of *L'Intransigent* and author of *Pourquoi je crois à l'Occultisme*, 1929), Maurice Magre (poet, novelist, author of *Pourquoi je suis Bouddhiste*, 1928), and Jean Marquès-Rivière (recent contributor of articles on Tibetan Buddhism to *La Revue Théosophique*).

In his Introduction (by far the best of the three) Marquès-Rivière quotes the opening of the *Emerald Table of Hermes* and writes that, in conformity with the principle of correspondence enunciated there,

the centre of transhuman power has a reflection on the earth; it is a constant tradition in Asia, and this Centre (a terrestrial one? I DO NOT KNOW TO WHAT DEGREE) [his emphasis], is called in central Asia *Agartha*. It has many other different names which there is no point in recalling here. This Centre has as its mission, or rather as its reason for existence, the direction of the spiritual activities of the Earth. [60]

The following year, 1930, Marquès-Rivière published his inspiring travelogue *A l'Ombre des Monastères Tibétains*, which culminates in an encounter with an unknown Adept who says that he is an envoy from the kingdom of life; 'Our monastery is the immense Universe with the seven gates of gold; our Nation is above and beneath the earth; our Kingdom is in the three worlds of this cycle.' [61] The Adept adds that :

In former times the centre of the Master of the three Worlds was not where it is now. There were times in this cycle when the Tradition of life was known and adored almost openly; the spiritual Centre of the world was in the valley of a great river; then It moved, before the

rising tides of the barbarians, towards the Orient, where It now resides, mysterious and hidden from the eyes of men. [62]

Marquès-Rivière's Adept does not name this Centre, but in the foreword to the book Maurice Magre refers to it not as Agartha but by the well-known Tibetan name of *Shambhala*. There is no doubt that this group, now called the 'Polaires', identified the one with the other. In fact, Marquès-Rivière's book seems to owe as much to the Agarthian 'Oracle of Astral Energy' as to actual experiences in Tibet; which is not surprising in an author who claims that he has used the Oracle for a dozen years, and who frequently credits his knowledge to unnamed 'Masters of Asia'. [63] It would be fascinating, though outside the scope of this article, to trace the sinister transformation of Marquès-Rivière himself from Tibetan specialist to Nazi collaborator, perhaps under the influence of some 'Polar' myth such as certain Nazis invoked as their 'spiritual' justification. [64]

Whole books have been written on Shambhala, and I cannot summarize them here. The period between the wars saw the appearance of several travel books in which readers could find, for example, this carefully considered definition of it (from Alexandra David-Neel's *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhasa*, 1927):

For the initiates of the mystic [Tibetan] sects, Shambhala is a symbolic fiction corresponding to facts of a psychological and spiritual order. Certain scholars consider Shambhala as an ideal State, a sort of Oriental equivalent to Utopia. Others speak of it as a paradisiacal abode of the same type as 'Zang dog pal ri' (the 'Noble Copper-coloured Mountain'), residence of Padmasambhava. I have known people who pretended to have been there, and others, more modest, who merely claimed to know the way. However it may be, leaving aside mythology and symbol, a great number of Tibetans nowadays place Shambhala in Russian territory, and identify it with Siberia. [65]

The work of three members of the Roerich family (one of them a Yale professor) did much to publicize, if not entirely to clarify the nature of Shambhala. George Roerich, the academic, first described it in his *Travels to Inmost Asia* as 'a region situated north of Tibet proper', [66] source of the hidden doctrine of Tibet and Mongolia. The chief exponent of this doctrine, called the Kalachakra, is the Tashi (or Panchen) Lama, who shared equal status in Tibet with the better-known Dalai Lama. When the Roerich expedition began in 1923, the country had just been shocked by the Tashi Lama's sudden abandonment of his hereditary centre, the Monastery of Tashilumpo, for China. George Roerich says that the Kalachakra doctrine had since received powerful new impulses, as the Tashi Lama founded many colleges in Inner Mongolia and Buddhist China. [67] He adds:

Shambhala is not only considered to be the abode of hidden Buddhist learning, it is the guiding principle of the coming kalpa or cosmic age. Learned abbots and mediating lama are said to be in constant communication with this mysterious fraternity, that guides the destinies of the Buddhist world. [68]

George's father was the painter Nicholas Roerich (1874-1947), who designed the sets for Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in 1913, emigrated to America, and has a whole museum dedicated to his work in New York City. His account of the expedition, *Altai-Himalaya — A Travel Diary*, is free, aphoristic and speculative. Nicholas Roerich was devoted to the doctrine of the coming Buddha Maitreya, whose presence in the mountains is the theme of some of his best paintings. He has no hesitation in praising H.P. Blavatsky or her Mahatmas, and he quotes as from 'one of the great Mahatmas of India', the notorious letter of Koot Hoomi's in which was said '...we deny God both as philosophers and Buddhists. We know there is in our System no such thing as God, either

personal or impersonal.' [69] Roerich mentions Agartha as the mysterious nation of underground dwellers of Central Asian legend, but he prefers the term Shambhala, of which he says he finds confirmation everywhere, and to which all the aspirations of the Mongols now face. [70] Roerich is, in short, a kind of Messianic Shambhalist, awaiting the imminent revelation of this centre which is to spell the end of a world-cycle and the beginning of a New Age.

Since that time there has been no lack of self-proclaimed representatives of Agartha, Shambhala, or other hidden spiritual centres. One would like, for instance, to know more about the man who was claiming in the late 1940s to be the current incarnation of Koot Hoomi, otherwise going by the name of Omar Cherenzi-Lind. But that would take us too far from our subject, as would a survey of the way in which Agartha/Shambhala, now inextricably confused in the popular mind, have joined the ranks of sensationalism along with the 'Bermuda Triangle', the 'Hole in the Pole', the 'Hollow Earth Theory', and other fodder for the credulous.

It is time to summarize, and to draw whatever conclusions are possible in this enigmatic business. We have, first, two independent witnesses to an Indian Agartha-tradition. Louis Jacolliot was led to place it in the past, as the ancient Brahmanic capital. For Haji Sharif it seems to have been a living initiatic school with its own secret script. Yet modern Brahmins deny ever having heard of it. My conclusion is that it is part of a secret mythology belonging to a restricted and doubtless quite unimportant school, which has only surfaced to Western notice on these two occasions. As I have pointed out earlier in the article, the mythologies of secret societies are not to be taken literally.

However, Saint-Yves wanted to know more than he was able to learn from Haji Sharif. He therefore decided to explore 'Agartha' further with the aid of his gift for astral travel, and was rewarded by visions of an exemplary underground civilization and of its Sovereign Pontiff, the spiritual Lord of the World. What is the source, and the ontological status, of such visions?

There are, one gathers, definite places or complexes in the Astral World (the 'Inner Planes' of Magic) which present to the clairvoyant visitor certain invariable features. I have heard reliable reports, for instance, of the libraries that are to be found there, in which the initiate is able to further his philosophical study while his body rests. But the incidental circumstances of such a place vary, according to the visitor's own cultural conditioning and expectations. Some find themselves, for example, in what they believe to be the Alexandrian Library, i.e. a place of the past. To others, it seems current and contemporary, though perhaps in an exotic location like the Himalayas. The 'décor' is a trivial matter, of course, in comparison to the philosophical truth to be discovered there, but unfortunately it sometimes overwhelms the traveller, who succumbs to its glamorous aspects. Attention may then be focussed on irrelevant details, and an inflated sense of self-importance may result. Thus Saint-Yves, convinced that he has penetrated to the realm of the world's spiritual ruler, writes about four-eyed tortoises, two-tongued men, levitating yogis, and ends up addressing pompous letters to Queen Victoria and the Pope. His is a classic case of misplaced concretism: no doubt he saw what he claims to have seen, but he was not able to situate it, nor himself, with the requisite metaphysical detachment.

During the 1920s the word 'Agartha' appeared twice more: as the source of the 'Oracle of Astral Energy', and in Ossendowski's book. I have no difficulty in accepting the Oracle as a means of communication with some 'astral' Agartha, for its recorded answers are no better and no worse than what Saint-Yves brought back from there. After a second book full of noble

sentiments about singing, dictated by a famous discarnate tenor, [71] it has fallen silent as far as the world is concerned. According to Pierre Geyraud [72] Accomani himself thought he had discovered by its aid the 'Wand of Pico della Mirandola' which would vibrate when near gold. He and his lady therefore left Paris to seek the lost treasure of the Cathars at Monségur, continuing their treasure hunt into Spain: but all they brought back in the end was -- a new Oracle! [73] How much this resembles the adventures of those whom the mirages of psychism lead by the nose, and how little it has to do with the work of those Sages of all nations who are the real spiritual leaders of the earth.

As for Ossendowski's account of what he himself heard in Mongolia, it seems to be a compound of Agarthian fantasies with the Shambhala traditions that he, in common with other travellers to the region, may have heard there. With him begins the regrettable confusion of Agartha with Shambhala. For if Shambhala is the centre for the spiritual direction of the whole earth, it is surely a great mistake to identify it with an Agartha that has been the source of little light and much confusion. Even René Guénon appears to have overlooked this distinction, though no one was more insistent than he on the difference between the psychic and the spiritual.

The teaching of the Tantras, of which the Kalachakra Doctrine is a part, is intended to assist one in overcoming the limitations of place and circumstance, and in using the energies of both the physical and the psychic worlds in order to dissolve the illusions of which both these worlds are full. Only then can one aspire to the only Shambhala worthy of consideration: the placeless and timeless community of those who have fought the inner battle and won, and who thenceforth devote themselves to the good of those still ensnared. [74] They are the Imams, Saints, Masters, Bodhisattvas, the 'Hierarchy' or the 'Great White Brotherhood' -- call them what you will, include whom you see fit. Nothing could be more grotesque than to situate them in some physical utopia on or beneath the earth, because by definition their kingdom is beyond form, unmanifest. But for the same reason, no being is outside the reach of Shambhala, nor beyond the possibility of contact by its emissaries, should conditions justify this. Those who think that the Road to Shambhala must lead over the Himalayas, through underground kingdoms, secret universities, utopian communities, or travel on the Inner or Astral Planes, run the risk of discovering, like Saint-Yves, only an 'Agartha' -- and of not knowing the difference.

#### Notes to Part II

44. New York, Dutton, 1922; French ed., Bêtes, Hommes et Dieux, Paris, Plon, 1924.
45. The prophecy was said to have been made when the King of the World appeared before the lamas in 1890. He predicted 50 years of strife and misery, 71 of happiness under three great kingdoms, and an 18-year war, before the appearance of the Agarthians (French ed., pp.261-2).
46. Paul Chacornac, La Vie Simple de René Guénon, Paris, Editions Traditionnelles, 1958, p.77n.
47. René Guénon, 'Le Roi du Monde', in Les Cahiers du Mois, 9/10: Les Appels de l'Orient, Paris, Emile Paul Frères, 1925, p.210. This statement was modified in Guénon's book; see next note.
48. René Guénon, Le Roi du Monde, Paris, Bosse, 1927, p.5.
49. *Ibid.*, p.134.
50. Jean-Pierre Laurant, Le Sens Caché dans l'Oeuvre de René Guénon, Paris,

L'Age d'Homme, 1975, p.136.

51. Ossendowski, French ed., p.253.

52. Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, Mission de l'Inde, pp.167-8.

53. See Marco Pallis, 'René Guénon et le Bouddhisme', in Etudes Traditionnelles, 1951 (special number devoted to Guénon), pp. 308-16.

54. See Note 5.

55. E.g. Jean Robin, René Guénon Témoin de la Tradition, Paris, Laffont, 1978, pp.316-7.

56. Jean Saunier, Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, pp.366-7.

57. Louis Jacolliot, Les Fils de Dieu, Paris, Lacroix, 1873, pp.263-5, 272, 310ff.

57a. Several recent authors have repeated a rumour that the word 'Agartha' appears in The Way to Shambhala, written in 1775 by the third Panchen Lama.

The word is nowhere to be found in the scholarly edition, with German translation, by Albert Grünwedel: Der Weg nach Šambhala, Munich, 1915.

Predictably enough, Agartha is assimilated to Shambhala in the Introduction to the French language edition, published Milan, Archè, 1983.

58. See Jean Robin, op.cit., pp.58ff.; Pierre Geyraud, Les Sociétés Secrètes de Paris, Paris, Emile Paul Frères, 1938, pp.57ff.; Zam Bhotiva (=Cesare Accomani), Asia Mysteriosa, Paris, Dorbon Ainé, 1929.

59. Asia Mysteriosa, p.86.

60. Ibid., p.26.

61. Jean Marquès-Rivière, A l'Ombre des Monastères Tibétains, Paris and Neuchâtel, Victor Attinger, 7th ed. 1930, p.198.

62. Ibid., pp.199-200. Could this have anything to do with the 'Agartus oppidum' near the Nile, mentioned by the third century writer Lucius Ampelius (cited by Guénon in Le Roi du Monde, Ch.I)?

63. See his essay, 'Le Mystère de la vie spirituelle', in Asia Mysteriosa, p.19.

64. He wrote the text of the brochure for the exhibition Le Juif et la France, organised by the German Occupation and their collaborators in September, 1941.

65. Alexandra David-Neel, Voyage d'Une Parisienne A Lhassa, Paris, Plon, 1927; repr. 1983, p.271n.

66. George N. Roerich, Travels in Inmost Asia, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press/Oxford Univ. Press, 1931, p.156.

67. Loc. cit.

68. Op. cit., pp.156f.

69. Nicholas Roerich, Altai-Himalaya -- A Travel Diary, New York, Frederick Stokes, 1929/London, Jarrolds, 1930, p.97.

70. Ibid., p.353.

71. Zam Bhotiva, La Magie dans l'Art de Chant, Paris, Dorbon Ainé, 1933.

72. Geyraud, op.cit., p.65. This author is not always accurate, but he tells many entertaining anecdotes.

73. This was (re-?)published under the names of M. Fille and R. Odin as Un Oracle Kabalistique, Paris, Romanes, 1967.

74. The Dalai Lama himself, in a recent interview, confirms this view of Shambhala in the following words: 'They do talk of Shambhala, but it is certainly not something one can find on geographical maps. For it is a matter of a "Pure Field" to which persons attain who possess the necessary purity.' Interview with G. Machoulain in l'Autre Monde, No.65 (Oct. 1982), pp.18-21. See also the Dalai Lama's edition, with Jeffrey Hopkins, of the Kalachakra Tantra, London, Wisdom Publications, 1985, especially pp.116-7, where his words are almost identical.

A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages,  
C. Sirat, Cambridge University Press 1985, 10 + 477 pages, £40.00

The need has long been felt for a modern survey of Jewish medieval philosophy to replace Isaac Husik's A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy which first appeared as far back as 1916. It has to be admitted that the field is a vast one to cover: an outline of the thought of over 120 philosophers is provided here, which is a daunting task when you consider that many of their works only exist in manuscript.

With so much information to include this could have been a very dry read indeed, but the author has chosen to give her text freshness and immediacy by extensively quoting from the works of many philosophers. These are made all the more valuable for many have not previously appeared in English. Extensive bibliographies and indexes, all tailored to the needs of the English reader, help make this a very useful volume.

Kabbalah is far too often studied in isolation from the thought-world in which it grew, and this is a work which could go a long way towards correcting that error in perspective. It is therefore regrettable that the interface between Kabbalah and its philosophical environment is one of the weakest areas in the book. In the course of a brief glance at this subject the author tells us "...the Kabbalists distanced themselves from neoplatonic philosophy, developing a sefirotic conception of the divine world" [p.248]. This extraordinary statement can only have arisen as the result of a fundamental misunderstanding. That it is precisely the reverse of the truth is shown by the historical investigations of G.C. Scholem.

In fact the book sometimes gives the impression of being a bit loose, almost slapdash in places. But this is the only full survey of the field. For all its faults, not to mention its high price, this is a book that no student of the origins of Kabbalah and its relation to medieval thought in general can afford to ignore.

Stephen Ronan

Manichaeism, S.N.C. Lieu. Manchester University Press 1985. 13 + 360  
pages, HB, £35.00

Manichaeism was the most important and influential of all the religious movements that go under the general heading of Gnosticism. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it was that it managed to spread as far as Christianity and Islam (even reaching China in the sixth century of this era), and yet this striking success was achieved with neither state support, military conquest nor enforced conversions; and without the advantages of an ethnic base or advanced technology.

The spiritual world of a Manichaean was pictured with a rare vitality and energy. In particular, the Realm of Darkness - standing in eternal opposition to that of Light - was inhabited by figures weird and grotesque enough to rival not only those of other religious systems, but even the most outlandish creations of fantasy writers.

Dr Lieu has written an excellent survey of this fascinating religion, the first, it seems, in any language. The style is clear and accessible and I have only a few quibbles. While generally making an attempt to be objective, the author sometimes exhibits a partisan attitude when dealing with the struggle

between Manichaeans and Christians, so one comes upon a passage like this: "The Manichaeans, as Augustine explains, had two tricks to catch the unwary. One was finding fault with the scriptures they misunderstood or wish to be misunderstood, and the other was making a show of chastity and of notable abstinence." [p.143]

One other note. A very high number of spelling mistakes have escaped the proofreader, but unfortunately this has not restrained the price!

Stephen Ronan

The Philosophy of Magic, Arthur Versluis, Arkana, 1986, PB, 168 pp, £4.95

The author outlines the thesis of his book very clearly in his Introduction: "It seems that what we need, more than another compendium or history, is an examination of the alchemical and Hermetic vision seen in its entirety, so that magic and alchemy are seen for what they are: not as ends in themselves, nor as means to any end, but rather as the natural effects and symbolism of traditional spiritual discipline. It is that which this study - by no means exhaustive - seeks to do. For the pursuit of magic and alchemy in themselves, as either means or end, needless to say belongs to the realm of the ego, of desire; hence it is ironic indeed that it is only when such pursuit is abandoned in favour of the traditional spiritual path that the true magic, the true alchemy is revealed in the transmutation of the self."

The Western Way : A Practical Guide to the Western Mystery Tradition  
- Volume II The Hermetic Tradition, Caitlin and John Matthews,  
Arkana 1986, pb, 271 pp, £6.95

In Volume One, issued in 1985, the authors wrote of the Native Tradition. This second volume begins in the temenos of the Mystery Schools, showing how the Native Tradition flows into Hermetic Tradition, and how these traditions have been preserved and fostered from ancient times up to the present day. In Chapter 2, they consider the spiritual traditions and their seeming divergence from the Mystery Schools, while in Chapter 3 they show how the role of the magician is a continuation of both shaman and mystery-priest. In chapter 4 they consider the cosmologies and symbol systems which have informed the divergent Hermetic traditions, and give a list of Inner guardians or contacts with whom the reader can work in a practical way. Chapter 5 presents the goal of the Great Work through the eyes of the alchemist, while in the afterword, Tomorrow's Tradition, the authors present their vision of the next step upon the Western Way. As in Volume One, the chapters have practical exercises and meditations appended so that the reader can experience for him or herself the realities presented here in a first-hand way. These exercises are based on Hermetic sources, though they are original to this book.