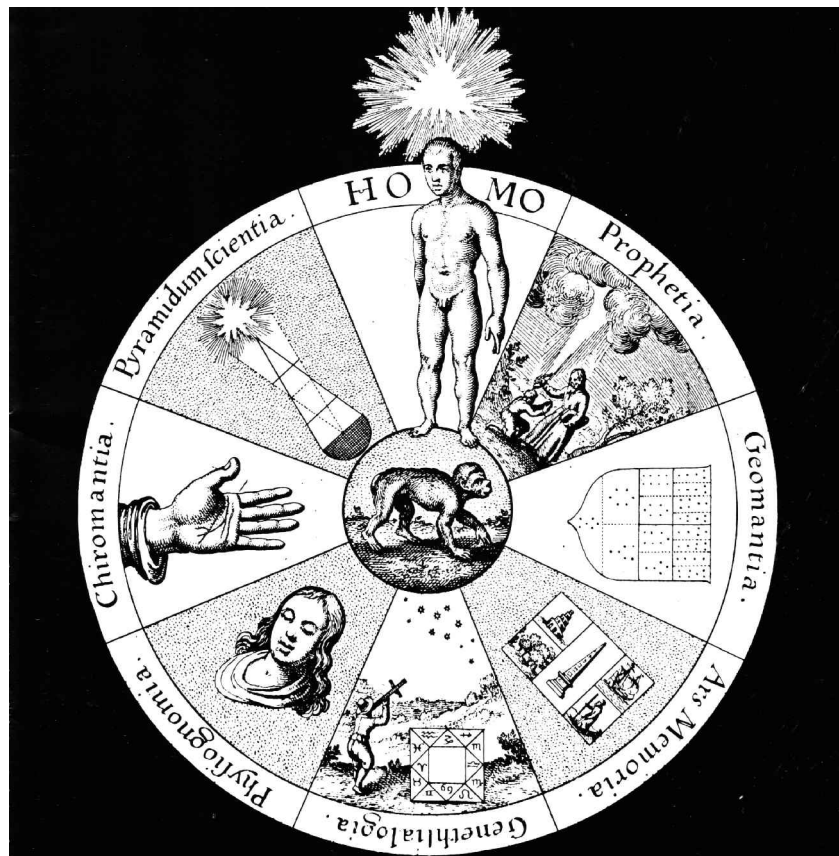


# Lux in Tenebris: THE VISUAL AND THE SYMBOLIC IN WESTERN ESOTERICISM

Third conference of the  
European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism  
(ESSWE)  
in cooperation with the  
Research Group for Cultural Iconology and Semiography,  
University of Szeged  
and the Szeged Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences



SZEGED, HUNGARY  
July 6-10, 2011

Conference logo design:  
GYÖRGY E. SZÖNYI

The conference logo consists of an emblem from  
Comenius's *Lux e tenebris* (1665) and  
Ivan Kudriashev's painting, *Luminescence* (1926)  
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# The Visual and the Symbolic in Western Esotericism (ESSWE3)

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**July 6, Wednesday** Venue: Rector's Palace, Dugonics tér 12. Atrium and Aula

Arrival. Registration from 15:30–18:00 and every morning of later days

16:00–18:00 Sightseeing in Szeged (optional)

Meeting point: in front of the Rector's Palace

18:00–19:00 Welcome reception

19:05–19:30 Official opening

by **Professor Gábor Szabó**, Rector of the University;

ESSWE Presidential address by **Professor Wouter Hanegraaff** (University of Amsterdam)

19:30–20:30 Plenary talk 1: **Professor Michael J. B. Allen**

**July 7, Thursday** Venue: Faculty of Arts, Egyetem u. 2.

Plenaries and Members' Meeting: Auditorium Maximum, Second Floor

Sessions, coffee breaks and book display: Groundfloor, left from main entrance

Session A: Faculty Conference Room; Session B: Classroom 3; Session C: Classroom X.

09:00–10:30 Session 1

10.30–11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00–11:50 Plenary 2 **Professor Lina Bolzoni**

12:00–13:30 Session 2

13:30–14:30 *Lunch Break*

14:30–16:00 Session 3

16:00–16:30 *Coffee Break*

16:30–18:30 Session 4

18:45 Presentation of the ESSWE Thesis Prize by **Professor Andreas Kilcher** of the selection committee. (Auditorium Maximum)

19:15 ESSWE Members' Meeting. (Auditorium maximum)

20:30 Reception

Venue: Szeged Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Somogyi u. 7. (Dom Square) Opened by **Professor Sándor Csernus**, Dean of Faculty of Arts

**July 8, Friday** Venue: Faculty of Arts, Egyetem u. 2.

09:00–10:30 Session 5

10.30–11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00–11:50 Plenary 3 **Professor Moshe Idel**

12:00–13:30 *Lunch Break*

13:30–15:30 Session 6

16:00–17:30 Guided tour by **Erzsébet Székfalvi-Nagy**, curator of the rare book collection of the Somogyi Library's holdings of esoterica. (Venue: Dom Square)

18:00 Optional conference dinner:

*Fish-souping and Grill Party 8 kms from Szeged, transfer by hired coaches which leave from in front of the Szeged Centre of the Academy (Somogyi u. 7.)*

Venue: Borostyán Birtok, a picturesque country inn, hunting lodge and riding park with a bed and breakfast, 8 km from the city center of Szeged.

**July 9, Saturday** Venue: Faculty of Arts, Egyetem u. 2.

09:00–10:30 Session 7

10.30–11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00–11:50 Plenary 4 **Professor Pia Brinzeu**

12:00–13:30 *Lunch Break*

13:30–15:00 Session 8



15:00–15:30 *Coffee Break*

15:30–17:00 Session 9 (Conference closes)

### July 10, Sunday

EXCURSION TO BUDA CASTLE LABYRINTH AND THE BUDAPEST HISTORY MUSEUM (the presently underground medieval palace of the Hungarian kings)

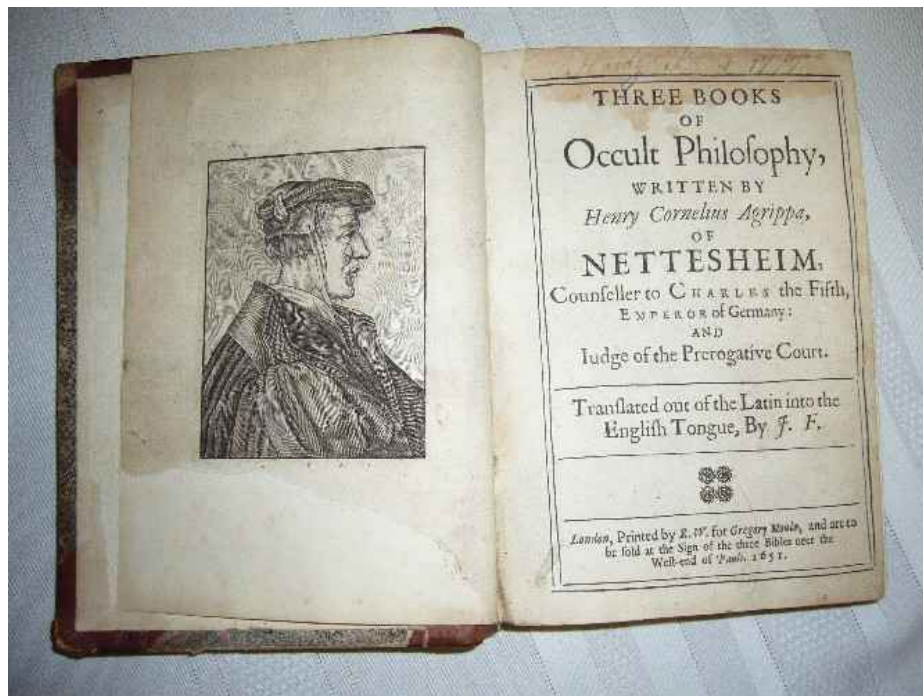
#### Program

Coach leaving Szeged at 8:30 a.m. Travel time about 2.2 hours.

Visit to Buda Castle Labyrinth. Luggage may be left on the coach.

Lunch in a small restaurant next to the Labyrinth. Menu includes Hungarian goulash soup, a pair of sausages with mustard, and a glass of beer or a soft drink.

At about 2 p.m., participants may either take the coach to Budapest city center and proceed to their own destinations, or continue with György Szőnyi to the Budapest History Museum for about one hour.



# ESSWE3

## COMPREHENSIVE TABLE OF SESSIONS

### VENUES

#### Wednesday

The Rector's Palace, Szeged, Dugonics tér 12.

#### Thursday – Saturday

Faculty of Arts, Egyetem u. 2.

Plenaries, Thesis Prize and Members' Meeting: Auditorium Maximum, Second Floor

Sessions, coffee breaks and book display: Groundfloor, left from main entrance

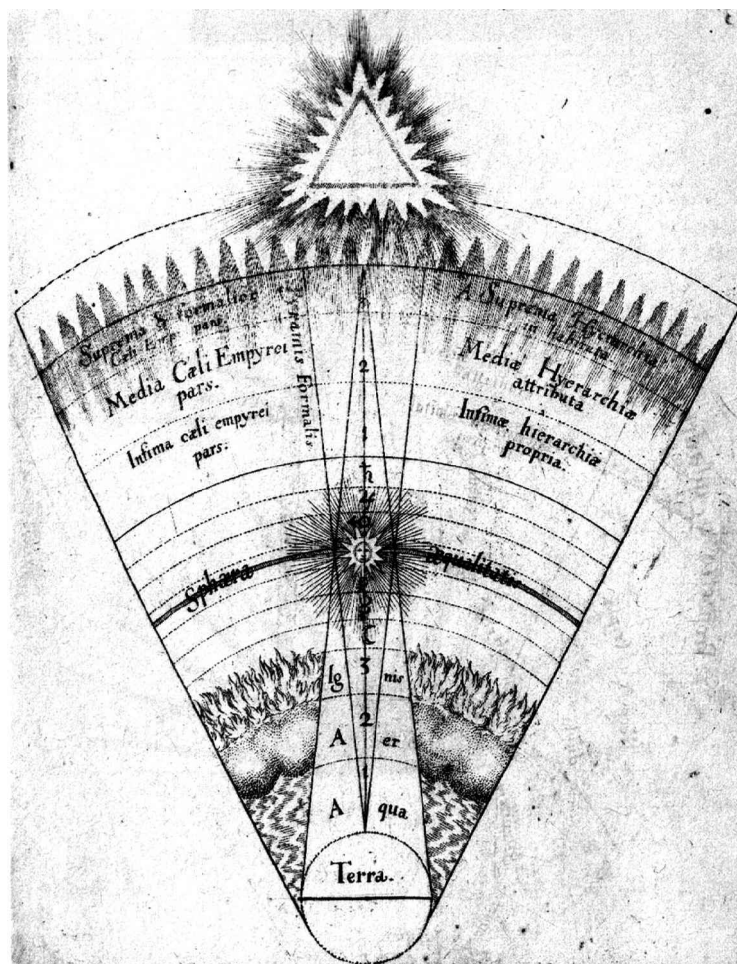
Session A: Faculty Conference Room; Session B: Classroom 3; Session C: Classroom X.

<b>JULY 6, WEDNESDAY,</b> <b>19:30–20:30 Plenary talk 1: ALLEN</b> Moderator: Szönyi		
<b>July 7, THURSDAY, 09:00–10:30 Session 1</b>		
<i>A: Alchemy</i> Willard	<i>B: Sacred Aesthetics</i> Cleave	<i>C: Modern Literature</i> Ofengenden
FORSHAW	CORA	DROBOT
HEDESAN	JOHNSTON	CSETÉNYI
ZUBER		PARLOG
<b>11:00–11:50 Plenary 2: BOLZONI</b> Moderator: Hanegraaff		
<b>12:00–13:30 Session 2</b>		
<i>A: Bible, Angels and Witches</i> Parlog	<i>B: Zoharic Kabbalah</i> Idel	<i>C: Hidden/Revealed Symbols</i> Láng
LEONE	LACHTER	FANGER
CLEAVE	MORLOK	EPSTEIN
PERCEC	MEROZ	GENTZKE
<b>14:30–16:00 Session 3</b>		
<i>A: Ren Angels and Witches</i> Leone	<i>B: Renaissance Kabbalah</i> Kilcher	<i>C: Theosophy</i> Hakt
KOCIC	KADARY	LUBELSKY
SCHORSCH	TAMARI	FAXNELD
OFENGENDEN	HARARI	CHAJES (JULIE)

<b>16:30–18:30 Session 4</b>		
<i>A: Ren/Baroque Magic</i> Bolzoni	<i>B: Esoteric Art in Modernism</i> Winter	<i>C: Romantic/Victorian</i> Binet
PUTNIK	PASI	PÉTER
PIJNENBURG	FERENTINOU	PRINKE
STOCKINGER SHORE	COLE CORA	SEDGWICK
	BAUDUIN	SZÖNYI
<b>JULY 8, FRIDAY, 09:00–10:30 Session 5</b>		
<i>A: Rosicrucian Literature</i> Allen	<i>B: Visions of Jewish Mysticism</i> Schorsch	<i>C: The Occult Revival</i> Brinzeu
GREGOV	BURNS	CHAITOW
WILLARD	CHAJES (YOSSI)	SANTOS SILVA
	HUSS	GIUDICE
<b>11:00–11:50 Plenary 3: IDEL</b> Moderator: Peter Forshaw		
<b>13:30–15:30 Session 6</b>		
<i>A: Stars, Symbols, Characters</i> Fanger	<i>B: Early Modernism</i> Santos Silva	<i>C: Theoretical/Semiotic Approaches</i> Riedl
BURMISTROV	KOKKINEN	THEJLS
BÉKÉS	DUGGAN	MEYER
HARMSSEN	HEINZEL	NOSACHEV
	BINET	

<b>JULY 9, SATURDAY, 09:00–10:30 Session 7</b>		
<i>A: Swedenborg</i> Godwin	<i>B: New Age Variations 1</i> Menzel	<i>C: Early Modern Artistic Visions</i> Huss
AKERMAN	CROCKFORD	BARON
FOLLESA / CRASTA	WINTER	WILKE
ARCHIP / SAVA	SZILÁGYI	WILSON
<b>11:00–11:50 Plenary 4: BRINZEU</b> Moderator: Mark Sedgwick		

13:30–15:00 Session 8		
<i>A: The Occult in Russia</i> Akerman	<i>B: New Age Variations 2</i> Pasi	<i>C: Neo-Traditionalism</i> Semetsky
KHALTURIN	GOSA / SERBAN	HAKLPAKHOMOV
MENZEL	DASCAL	WEBSTER
	BOGDAN	
15:30–17:00 Session 9		
<i>A: From Tradition to Science</i> Meyer	<i>B: Esoteric Symbol Systems</i> Bogdan	<i>C:</i>
GODWIN	GRANHOLM	
BAIER	SEMETSKY	
ASPREM	LÁNG	





## DETAILED PROGRAM OF SESSIONS

**06, WEDNESDAY** Venue: Rector's Palace, Dugonics tér 12. Atrium and Aula

Arrival. Registration from 15:30–18:00 and every morning of later days

16:00–18:00 Sightseeing in Szeged (optional). Meeting point: in front of the Rector's Palace.

18:00–19:00 Welcome reception

19:05–19:30 Official opening

by **Professor Gábor Szabó**, Rector of the University; ESSWE Presidential address

by **Professor Wouter Hanegraaff** (University of Amsterdam)

19:30–20:30 Plenary 1. Moderator: Szönyi, György E.

**Allen, Michael J. B.** (UCLA / English), USA

*Glory, Transfiguration, and the Fire Within: Ficino on the Metaphysics and Psychology of Light*

**07, THURSDAY** Venues: Faculty of Arts (Egyetem u. 2.) Plenaries and Members' Meeting: Auditorium Maximum, Second Floor. Sessions, coffee breaks and book display: Groundfloor, left from main entrance. Session A: Faculty Conference Room; Session B: Classroom 3; Session C: Classroom X.

09:30–10:30 Session 1A "Alchemy". Moderator: Willard, Thomas

**Forshaw, Peter** (University of Amsterdam / History of hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents)

*Artist & Athlete of Fire: Heinrich Khunrath on the Symbolic Harmony of Christ and the Philosophers' Stone*

**Hedesan, Jo (Georgina)** (University of Exeter / EXESCO, PhD candidate), ROMANIA / UK

*The Verbal and Visual Symbolism of Distillation Alchemy in the 17th Century: Interpreting the "Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz" and the "Mutus Liber"*

**Zuber, Mike A.** (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich / Literature and Culture Studies), SWITZERLAND

*Depicting Alchemical Substances: Johann Joachim Becher's Mineralogia (1662)*

09:30–10:30 Session 1B "Sacred Aesthetics". Moderator: Cleave, Julia

**Cora, Zoltán** (University of Szeged / English), HUNGARY

*The Uncanny, the Numerical and the Unknown: Sublime as Esoteric?*

~~**Johnston, Jay** (University of Sidney / Department of Studies in Religion; University of New South Wales / Art History), AUSTRALIA~~

~~*Esoteric Aesthetics: Subtle Materiality and Subject-Object Relations*~~

09:00–10:30 Session 1C "Modern Literature". Moderator: Ofengenden, Ari

**Drobot, Irina-Ana** (Technical University of Civil Engineering / Foreign Languages and Communication, Bucharest), ROMANIA

*Esoteric Aspects and Lyricism in Virginia Woolf and Graham Swift*

**Csetényi, Korinna** (University of Szeged / English, PhD candidate), HUNGARY

*Symbols of Difference and Haunting in the Works of Stephen King*

**Parlog, Aba-Carina** (University of the West / English, Timisoara), ROMANIA

*What Lies Behind the Magic? Peter Ackroyd vs. John Fowles*

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–11:50 Plenary 2. Moderator: Hanegraaff, Wouter

**Bolzoni, Lina** (Scuola Normale Superiore / Italian, Pisa), ITALY

*The Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo: Alchemy, Rhetoric, and Deification in the Renaissance*

- 12:00–13:30 Session 2A "Bible, Angels, and Witches". Moderator: Parlog, Aba-Carina  
**Leone, Massimo** (University of Torino / Philosophy), ITALY  
*God's Graffiti*  
**Cleave, Julia** (Temenos Academy / London), UK  
*Tobias and the Angel. The Showing of a Heavenly Effect in an Earthly Actor*  
**Percec, Dana** (University of the West / English, Timisoara), ROMANIA  
*Weird Sisters and Overthrown Charms: Representations of Witchcraft and Magic in Tudor and Stuart England*
- 12:00–13:30 Session 2B "Zoharic Kabbalah". Moderator: Idel, Moshe  
**Lachter, Hartley** (Muhlenberg College / Religious Studies, Allentown, PA), USA  
*Mapping Divine Territory: Kabbalistic Commentaries on the Ten Sefirot in Late 13th Century Castile*  
**Morlok, Elke** (University of Heidelberg / Hochschule für Jüdische Studien), GERMANY  
*Visual and Acoustic Symbols in Gikatilla and Neoplatonic Thought*  
**Meroz, Ronit** (Tel-Aviv University / Hebrew Culture Studies), ISRAEL  
*Visual Aspects of Zoharic Symbols*
- 12:00–13:30 Session 2C "Hidden/Revealed Symbols". Moderator: Láng, Benedek  
**Fanger, Claire** (Rice University / Religious Studies, Houston, Texas), USA  
*Use of Figures and Letter Meditations in John of Morigny's /Liber Florum//Old Compilation, Oxford, Bodleian liturg. 160*  
**Epstein, Marc Michael** (Vassar College / Religion, New York), USA  
*Hidden and Revealed in Medieval Jewish Manuscript Illumination*  
**Gentzke, Joshua L. I.** (Stanford University / Religious Studies, PhD candidate), USA  
*Imagining the Image of God: Iconic Discourse in Medieval and Early Modern Christian Esotericism*
- 13:30–14:30 Lunch Break
- 14:30–16:00 Session 3A "Renaissance Angels and Witches". Moderator: Leone, Massimo  
**Kocic, Larisa** (University of Szeged / English, PhD candidate), HUNGARY  
*Milton and the Cherubim in Embrace*  
**Schorsch, Jonathan** (Columbia University / Religion, New York), USA  
*Angels, Avant Gardes, and the Esoteric Archive*  
**Ofengenden, Ari** (Oberlin College, Ohio), USA  
*Representing Transmigration of Souls: Kabbalistic Metempsychosis or Repressed Wishes*
- 14:30–16:00 Session 3B "Renaissance Kabbalah". Moderator: Kilcher, Andreas  
**Kadary, Yoed** (Ben-Gurion University / Department of Jewish Thought), ISRAEL  
*Sons of God or Human Sons – How to Create an Angel? Between the Old Era and Renaissance Kabbalah*  
**Tamari, Assaf** (Ben Gurion University of the Negev / Department of Jewish Thought), ISRAEL  
*"And I Asked Him to Tell Me Who My Soul was": Fragmentation and Destabilization of the Kabbalist's self in Lurianic Anthropology*  
**Harari, Yuval** (Ben-Gurion University / Department of Folklore, Beer Sheva), ISRAEL  
*The Tree of Knowledge (Etz Ha-da'at): an Ornamented Hebrew Manuscript of "Practical Kabbala" from the 16th Century, Safed*
- 14:30–16:00 Session 3C "Theosophy". Moderator: ~~Haki, Hans Thomas~~  
**Lubelsky, Isaac** (Tel-Aviv University / Comparative Religion Program), ISRAEL  
*The Theosophical Seal: Blavatsky's Symbolic Synthesis between East and West*  
**Faxneld, Per** (Stockholm University / History of Religions), SWEDEN  
*Blavatsky the Satanist: Luciferianism in Theosophy*  
**Chajes, Julie** (University of Exeter / EXESCO, PhD candidate), UK / ISRAEL  
*Annie Besant's Saree: Syncretism, Orientalism and "Going Native"*
- 16:00–16:30 Coffee Break

16:30–18:30 Session 4A "Renaissance/Baroque Magic". Moderator: Bolzoni, Lina  
**Putnik, Noel** (Central European University / Medieval Studies, Budapest, PhD candidate), SERBIA / HUNGARY  
*Agrippa's Cosmic Ladder: Building a World with Words in the "De Occulta Philosophia"*  
**Pijnenburg, Joyce** (University of Amsterdam / Center for the History of Hermetic Philosophy, PhD candidate), THE NETHERLANDS  
~~"No Query Escapes These Ideis": Images in Bruno's Lampas Triginta Statuarum~~  
~~**Stockinger, Hermann E.** (Independent scholar, Vienna), AUSTRIA~~  
~~*Explaining John Dee with the Knowledge of an 17th Century Esotericist: Friedrich Geissler's Translation and Commentary of the "Monas Hieroglyphica"*~~  
**Shore, Paul** (Brandon University, Brandon, Manitoba), CANADA  
*"Even just in this manner death doth play with us": Moral Lessons, Metaphors and Esoteric Knowledge in the "Zodiacus Christianus" of Jeremias Drexel*

16:30–18:30 Session 4B "Esoteric Art in Modernism". Moderator: Winter, Franz  
**Pasi, Marco** (University of Amsterdam / History of Hermeticism and Related Currents), THE NETHERLANDS  
*Early Forms of Abstract Art and Spiritualism: Georgiana Houghton's Spirit Drawings*  
**Ferentinou, Victoria** (University of Ioannina), GREECE  
*The Iconography of "Coniunctio Oppositorum": Visual and Verbal Dialogues in Ithell Colquhoun's Oeuvre*  
~~**Cole, Brendan** (Eton College, Windsor), UK~~  
~~*Art in Search of the 'Grand Agent Magique': the Initiatory Quest in the Work of Jean Delville*~~  
**Bauduin, Tessel M.** (University of Amsterdam / History of Hermetic Philosophy, PhD candidate), THE NETHERLANDS  
*The "Occulture" of Modern Art in Surrealism*

16:30–18:30 Session 4C "Romantic/Victorian". Moderator: Binet, Anna Maria  
**Péter, Róbert** (University of Szeged / English), HUNGARY  
*Hidden Numbers: the Concept of Esoteric(ism) in the Nineteenth-century British Press*  
**Prinke, Rafał T.** (Eugeniusz Piasecki University of Poznan / ), POLAND  
*"Un gentilhomme polonais qui est un esprit élevé": Polish Travellers and Exiles in the 19th Century Esoteric Revival*  
**Sedgwick, Mark** (Aarhus University / Center for Arabic Studies), DENMARK  
*Sufism in the Romantic Imagination*  
**Sznyi, György E.** (University of Szeged / English; Central European University / History, Budapest), HUNGARY  
*Myth and Magic in Victorian Enoch*

18:45 Presentation of the ESSWE Thesis Prize by **Professor Andreas Kilcher** of the selection committee. (Auditorium Maximum)

19:15 ESSWE Members' Meeting. (Auditorium maximum)

20:30 Reception – Venue: Szeged Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Somogyi u. 7. (Dom Square) – Opened by **Professor Sándor Csernus**, Dean of Faculty.

## 08, FRIDAY

09:00–10:30 Session 5A "Rosicrucian Literature". Moderator: Allen, Michael J.B.

**Gregov, Sebastien** (University of Rennes / Political Science), FRANCE

*The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*

**Willard, Thomas** (University of Arizona / English, Tucson), USA

*Illustrations and Symbols in Andreae's "Chymische Hochzeit"*

09:00–10:30 Session 5B "Visions of Jewish Mysticism". Moderator: Schorsch, Jonathan

**Burns, Dylan** (Yale University / Religious Studies, New Haven), USA

*To Enter the Heavenly Treasures: Sigils, Seals, and Visualization in Gnosticism and Early Jewish Mysticism*

**Chajes, Yossi** (University of Haifa / Jewish History), ISRAEL

*It's Good to See the King: The Nature & Function of Kabbalistic Divinity Maps*

**Huss, Boaz** (Ben Gurion University of the Negev / Department of Jewish Thought, Beer Sheva), ISRAEL

*The Kabbalah Medal (2009): Representations of Kabbalah in an Official Government Medal of the State of Israel*

09:00–10:30 Session 5C "The Occult Revival". Moderator: Brinzeu, Pia

**Chaitow, Sasha** (University of Exeter / EXESCO, PhD candidate), UK

*Symbolist Art and the French Occult Revival: the Esoteric-aesthetic Vision of Sâr Péladan*

**Santos Silva, Francisco** (Universidade Nova de Lisboa), PORTUGAL

*What is the Right Sigil?: Mather's Use of Sigils in the Clavicula Salomonis*

**Guidice, Christian** (University of Exeter / EXESCO, PhD candidate), UK

*The Angered Beast: Aleister Crowley, Thelema and the Cinema of Kenneth Anger*

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–11:50 Plenary 3. Moderator: Forshaw, Peter

**Idel, Moshe** (Hebrew University / Jewish Thought, Jerusalem), ISRAEL

*The Shield of David: An History of a Symbol from Jewish Kabbalah to Western Esotericism*

12:00–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–15:30 Session 6A "Stars, Symbols, Characters". Moderator: Fanger, Claire

**Burmistrov, Konstantin** (Russian Academy of Sciences / Institute of Philosophy, Moscow), RUSSIA

*Pictorial Representations of the Structure of Creation (Ilanot) in Jewish and Christian Kabbalah*

**Békés, Enik** (Hungarian Academy of Sciences / Institute for Literary Studies, Budapest), HUNGARY

*"A Principio Enim Omnia Pendent". Descriptions of Outward Appearance Determined by the Stars in Some Physiognomical Works*

**Harmsen, Theodor** (Ritman Institute / Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam), THE NETHERLANDS

*The Symbols of Valentin Weigel and Pseudo-weigelian Artistry*

13:30–15:30 Session 6B "Early Modernism". Moderator: Santos Silva, Francisco

**Kokkinen, Nina** (University of Turku / Comparative Religion), FINLAND

*Occult Interpretations in the Finnish Fin-de-Siecle Art Field*

**Duggan, Colin** (University College / Religious Studies, Cork, Phd candidate), IRELAND

*Locating Yeats: Western Esotericism, Symbols of the 'New Ireland'*

**Heinzel, Thomas** (University of Erfurt / Religious Studies), GERMANY

*Prometheus Unbound. Esotericism in the Works of Angelos Sikelianos*

**Binet, Anna Maria** (Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux3 / Portugal Studies), FRANCE

*Light and Darkness, Two Main Symbols in Fernando Pessoa's Esoteric Writings*

13:30–15:30 Session 6C "Theoretical/Semiotic Approaches". Moderator: Riedl, Matthias

**Thejls, Sara M.** (University of Copenhagen / History of Religions), DENMARK

*Visuality and Audibility in Kabbalistic Theories of Language*

**Meyer, Jürgen** (University of Halle / English), GERMANY

*Sense and Sensibility: Reading the Esoteric*

**Nosachev, Pavel** (State University Higher School of Economics / Department of Cultural Studies, Moscow), RUSSIA

*Semiotical Analysis of the Hermetical Text*

16:00–17:30 Guided tour by **Erzsébet Sz kefalvi-Nagy**, curator of the rare book collection of the Somogyi Library's holdings of esoterica. (Venue: Dom Square)

18:00 Optional conference dinner. Coaches start from the Szeged Centre of the Hungarian Academy (Dom Sq.).



## 09, SATURDAY

09:00–10:30 Session 7A "Swedenborg". Moderator: Godwin, Joscelyn

**Åkerman-Hjern, Susanna** (Stockholm), SWEDEN

*De sapientia Salomonis: Emanuel Swedenborg and the Kabbalah*

**Laura Follesa and Francesca Maria Crasta**, (University of Cagliari / Philosophy), ITALY

*The Arcanes of the World: Symbols and Mystical-allegorical Exegesis in Emanuel Swedenborg's "De Cultu et Amore Dei"*

**Archip, Bianca Bogdana and Sever Lauren iu Sava** (Spiru Haret University, Bucharest / Sociology-Psychology), ROMANIA

*Symbolic and Visual in Present-day Testimonies of Nde (Near-death Experiences) Contrasted with Swedenborg's Discourse*

09:00–10:30 Session 7B "New Age Variations I". Moderator: Menzel, Birgit

**Crockford, Susannah** (graduate of Western Esotericism / Amsterdam), UK

*Symbolism in Modern Western Shamanism*

**Winter, Franz** (University of Vienna / Religious Studies), AUSTRIA

*Western Esotericism and Japanese Manga Literature*

**Szilágyi, Tamás** (University of Szeged / Religious Studies), HUNGARY

*Emerging of New Myths and Myth-makers in Hungarian Neopaganism*

09:00–10:30 Session 7C "Early Modern Artistic Visions". Moderator: Huss, Boaz

**Baron, Frank** (University of Kansas / German, Lawrence), USA

*Sichem's Engraving of Faust (1608) in Its Historical Context*

**Wilke, Carsten** (Central European University, Budapest / History), HUNGARY

*Where Geometry Meets Kabbalah: Paul Yvon's Esoteric Engravings*

**Wilson, Cecile** (Carleton University / German, Ottawa), CANADA

*Concealment and Revelation in Rembrandt's "Scholar in His Study, Watching a Magic Disk"*

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–11:50 Plenary 4. Moderator: Sedgwick, Mark

**Brinzeu, Pia** (University of the West / English, Timisoara), ROMANIA

*Romania and India: Spaces of Initiation for Eliade and Brancusi*

12:00–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–15:00 Session 8A "The Occult in Russia". Moderator: Åkerman-Hjern, Susanna

**Khalturin, Juriy** (Moscow Medical-Stomatological University / Philosophy), RUSSIA

*Kabbalah, Symbolism and Metaphysics in Theories of Russian Freemasonry of the 18th and 19th Centuries*

**Menzel, Birgit** (University of Mainz / Slavic Literatures and Culture, Gernersheim), GERMANY

*The Occult Underground of Late Soviet Russia*

13:30–15:00 Session 8B "New Age Variations II". Moderator: Pasi, Marco

**Gosa, Codruta and Andrea Serban** (University of the West / English, Timisoara), ROMANIA

*The Vampire of the 3rd Millennium: from Demon to Angel*

**Dascal, Reghina** (University of the West / English, Timisoara), ROMANIA

*Tantrism and Mithila Art from a Western Perspective*

**Bogdan, Henrik** (University of Gothenburg / History of Ideas, Literature, and Religion), SWEDEN

*Envisioning the Birth of a New Aeon: Dispensationalism and Millenarianism in the Thelemic Tradition*

13:30–15:00 Session 8C "Neo-Traditionalism". Moderator: Semetsky, Inna

**Hakl, Hans Thomas** (Independent scholar, Graz), AUSTRIA

*The Hermetic Symbolism of Julius Evola*

**Pakhomov, Sergey** (Saint-Petersburg State University / Oriental Philosophy and Culture), RUSSIA

*Interpretations of the Symbolical by Rene Guénon*

**Webster van Tonder, Christopher** (Aberystwyth University / School of Art), UK  
*Picturing the Volk: Icons of Ideology and the Myth of the Master Race*

15:00–15:30 Coffee Break

15:30–17:00 Session 9A "From Tradition to Science". Moderator: Meyer, Jürgen

**Godwin, Joscelyn** (Colgate University / Music), USA

*Color Symbolism: from Tradition to Science*

**Baier, Karl** (University of Vienna / Religious Studies), AUSTRIA

*Meditating Visual Symbols. Carl Happichs Method as Meeting Point Between Esotericism, Protestantism and Psychotherapy*

**Asprem, Egil** (University of Amsterdam / History of Hermeticism and Related Currents, PhD candidate), THE NETHERLANDS

*Visions Beyond Sight: Representational Practices in Science and Esotericism Ca. 1900*

15:30–17:00 Session 9B "Esoteric Symbol Systems". Moderator: Bogdan, Henrik

**Granholm, Kenneth** (University of Stockholm / History of Religions), SWEDEN

*Visual Popular Culture and the Esoteric*

**Semetsky, Inna** (University of Newcastle, Australia), AUSTRALIA

*The Visual Symbolism of Tarot Images: Implications for Contemporary Geopolitics*

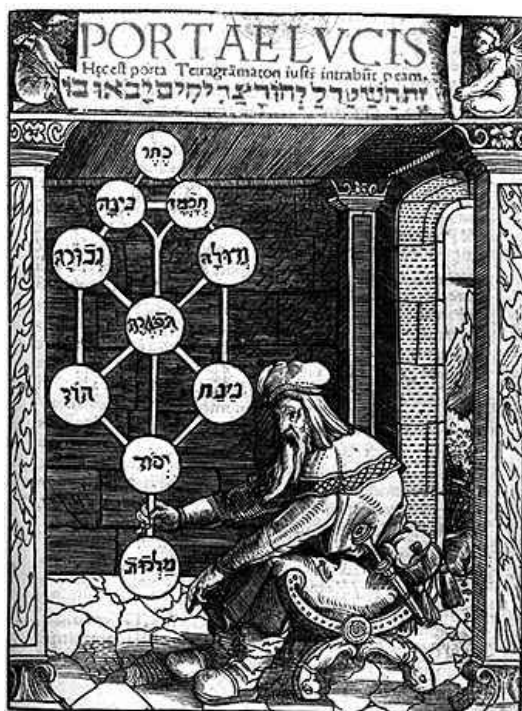
**Láng, Benedek** (University of Technology and Economics / History and Philosophy of Science, Budapest), HUNGARY

*Magic, Esotericism, and Cryptic Symbols*

## 10, SUNDAY

Optional EXCURSION TO BUDA CASTLE LABYRINTH AND THE BUDAPEST HISTORY MUSEUM  
(the presently underground medieval palace of the Hungarian kings)

Coach leaves Szeged at 8:30 a.m. Travel time about 2.2 hours.



## INVITED PLENARY SPEAKERS

### MICHAEL J. B. ALLEN

Distinguished Professor of English at UCLA, USA.

Michael Allen is the former Director of UCLA's Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies; past Editor of *Renaissance Quarterly*, and Past President of the Renaissance Society of America. Born in England, his doctorates are from Oxford and from Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is one of the world's leading authorities on Florentine Platonism.



Besides visiting professorships in Munich, Toronto and Arizona, his honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship (1977); an Eby Award for Distinguished Teaching at UCLA (1977); UCLA's Research Lectureship (1999); and a year as a national Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar (2007-8). In 2007 he was awarded the Commendatore decoration by the Italian Republic and in 2008 one of Italy's highest academic honors, the Premio Internazionale Galileo Galilei.

#### *Publications*

His books include: □ *Marsilio Ficino: The "Philebus" Commentary* (1975); □ *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer* (1981); □ *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino* (1984); □ *Icastes: Marsilio Ficino's Interpretation of Plato's Sophist* (1989); □ *Nuptial Arithmetic* (1994); □ *Plato's Third Eye* (1995); □ *Synoptic Art* (1998); □ *Marsilio Ficino: Platonic Theology*, 6 vols. with James Hankins (2001-2006); and □ *Marsilio Ficino: Commentaries on the Phaedrus and Ion* (2008). He has also co-edited a 2002 Brill volume on Ficino as well as books on Shakespeare's Quartos, the Latin Sources of Old English Poetry, and Sir Philip Sidney.

#### *Talk offered for ESSWE3*

### GLORY, TRANSFIGURATION, AND THE FIRE WITHIN: FICINO ON THE METAPHYSICS AND PSYCHOLOGY OF LIGHT

The divine command in the third verse of Genesis "Let there be light" – a light before the creation of the lights of the firmament in the fourteenth verse – was especially significant for the Renaissance Platonists, as it had earlier been for Augustine and for other Genesis commentators. It prompted them to look beyond the blinding sunlight (the splendor) of the great myth of the cave in the Republic to contemplate the trans-solar lux, the light that was inextricably linked to the mysterious notion of the divine "glory" that appears in the Bible and that invested Christ at his Transfiguration as it had invested Moses on Sinai. This paper will explore some of the salient, often heretical implications of Platonic theories of illumination.

### LINA BOLZONI

Professor of Italian Literature, Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, Italy.

Lina Bolzoni has also served as Dean of the Classe di Lettere e Filosofia. Since 2000. Dr. Bolzoni has been the director of the Centro per l'Elaborazione Informatica di Testi e Immagini nella tradizione letteraria and a Visiting Professor at many European and American universities, including Harvard University, UCLA, New York University, and the College de France. She has also been a Visiting Scholar at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and a Whitney J. Oates Short-Term Fellow of the Humanities Council at Princeton University.



Dr. Bolzoni curated the opening section of the exhibition La Fabbrica del pensiero. Dall'arte della

memoria alle neuroscienze (1989 Florence; 1990 Paris). She is the author of many articles and books on Italian Renaissance literature, the relationship between literature and philosophy, the utopian tradition, medieval vernacular preaching, chivalric poetry, treatises on women and love, the art of memory, and the relationship between literature and the figurative arts. She is elected member of *The American Philosophical Society*, the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* in Rome and the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* of Paris.

#### *Publications*

Her recent publications include □ *Il cuore di cristallo. Ragionamenti d'amore, poesia e ritratto nel Rinascimento* (Torino: Einaudi, 2010); □ *Poesia e ritratto nel Rinascimento* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2008); □ *La stanza della memoria* (Torino: Einaudi, 1995) and □ *La rete delle immagini* (Torino: Einaudi, 2002). *La stanza della memoria* was translated into English and French, and Spanish and Japanese translations are currently under preparation. An English edition of *La rete delle immagini* has been published and the book is being translated into Japanese. *La rete delle immagini* was awarded three prizes: Premio Viareggio per la saggistica (2002), Premio Brancati Zafferana Etnea per la saggistica (2002), and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for an Outstanding Scholarly Work in the Field of Italian Studies awarded by the Modern Language Association of America (2003).

#### *Talk offered for ESSWE3*

### THE MEMORY THEATRE OF GIULIO CAMILLO: ALCHEMY, RHETORIC, AND DEIFICATION IN THE RENAISSANCE

Giulio Camillo (ca. 1480 - 1544) was one of the most famous men of his time, glorified as divine by many, viewed with suspicion as a mere charlatan by others. He traveled the length and breadth of Italy and France in search of patrons who might be willing to finance the Faustian dream of his life – the realization of a universal memory theatre in which one might store, and re-activate at will, all the knowledge contained in a universal mind. In my talk I will demonstrate how:

1. Camillo's theatre incarnated the dreams that characterized the literary and artistic explorations of his period, and for this precise reason attracted the attention of poets such as Ariosto, painters such as Titian, and architects such as Serlio.
2. His theatre represented the realization of a complex synthesis of different philosophical and religious traditions (Hermeticism, the Kabbala, etc.) conceived in such a way as to guarantee its mystical powers and effective functioning. The theatre was invested with a secret, semi-divine dimension that permitted the actuation of the three arts of metamorphosis: eloquence (which acts on words), alchemy (which acts on things), and deification (which acts on the soul of man).

In this way, Camillo's theatre reinterpreted in a Renaissance key even more antique practices in which the techniques of memory were intertwined with the arts of meditation and preaching. Camillo's project is of particular interest to us because it focuses on the power of images, on their capacity to summon up knowledge and at the same time to re-activate the divine power of the mind.

#### **PIA BRINZEU**

Professor of English, University of the West, Timisoara, Romania.

Since 1996 Professor of English Literature, University of the West, Timi oara, presently she also serves as vice-rector of that university. Member of ESSE (European Society for the Study of English), IASS/AIS (International Association of Semiotics), RSEAS / SRSAA (Romanian Society for English and American Studies), Chair of RSEAS – The Romanian Society for English and American Studies; Member of Romanian Writers' Union; Editor-in-chief of the journal of semiotics that appears in Timi oara ("Caiet de semiotica") and co-editor of B.A.S. (British and American Studies). Visiting Professor: University of Urbino, 1995; University of Georgia, Athens, USA, 1998; University





A Rovira i Virgili A, Tarragona, Spain; University of Natal, Durban, South Africa, 2000; University of Munich, 2002. Research Grant: CRC grant for the project Euromyths in Post-Wall British and Romanian Fiction, 2001–2002.

*Fields of interest:* British culture and civilization, comparative literature (British and Romanian); narratology; semiotics, feminism, mysticism, Buddhism, Indian philosophy.

#### *Publications*

Professor Brinzeu's books include: □ *Zile si semne* [Days and Signs] (1994); □ *Armura de sticla* [The Glass Armour] (1995); □ *The Protean Novelists* (1995); □ *Corridors of Mirrors* (1997, University Press of America, 2000). She has also published studies and articles in comparative literature, semiotics, narratology as well as short prose writings.

*Talk offered for ESSWE3*

### ROMANIA AND INDIA: SPACES OF INITIATION FOR ELIADE AND BRANCUSI

The fictional spaces described by Mircea Eliade in his novels and stories belong to an Oriental-Orthodox world of sacredness. Whether Eliade's characters live in Romania (as they do in *The Secret of Dr. Honigberger*, *With the Gypsy Girls*, *The Old Man and the Bureaucrats*) or in India (*Nights at Serampore*), they believe in the magic power of their territories, created by gods out of primordial chaos and marked by a sacred centre where both Westerners and Easterners can undergo secret forms of initiation. Obsessed with esoteric symbols, the heroes tell stories which integrate the profane world into a sacred cosmos through the painful effort of anamnesis. They perform magic rituals supposed to take them to Shambala, the paradise of supreme peace and happiness.

The same unusual combination of Romanian folklore and Indian beliefs can be noticed in Constantin Brancusi's opinions on art. Brancusi believed that, all over the world, the artists had the mission of deciphering great mysteries of existence. Moreover, as ascets, they could gain powers over natural forces in a way yet undiscovered by modern science.

Invited in 1937 to build a temple at Indore, a project which remained unfinished, he discovered the numerous similarities between Indian and Romanian cultures, a discovery similar to the one that marked Eliade's scientific and literary career. Understanding the common origins and primordial symbolism of cosmogonic representations, Brancusi could bring about the revolution that marked significantly the 20th century modernist art.

The Indian temple, which was planned to contain the ashes of Maharadja Holkar's wife together with a variant of the Magic Bird, was supposed to have the form of an ovoid so that its architectonic structure might combine Brancusi's archaic ideas, derived from Romanian folklore, and his modernist attitudes and Indian philosophical beliefs. Brancusi also wanted the sanctuary to have an orifice in its roof, so that every year, on a special day, the sunrays should fall on his sculpture in a special way to establish, through luminous reverberation, the right equilibrium between the beauty of the work of art and that of the surrounding world. This coincided with both the Romanian and the Indian beliefs that an architectural symbol could unfold its entire value only when establishing the right relationship with the environment. Moreover, the solar rays were supposed to prolong the bird into an axis mundi and thus transmute the Endless Column from Targu Jiu to Indore, in order to connect, with the help of an object of art, two totally disparate geographical places.

The numerous associations with Buddhism in the work of Brancusi, who declared himself a disciple of Milarepa, and with Hinduism, in that of Eliade, who studied Indian philosophy with Dasgupta and yoga with Shivananda, show that the most distanced spaces can turn into places of initiation and can help Westerners transcend their cultural limits in both science and art.

## MOSHE IDEL

Professor, Department of Jewish Thought, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel



One of the world's leading authorities on Jewish mysticism and the kabbalah, professor Idel is also a Senior Researcher at the Shalom Hartman Institute. Born in Romania, he arrived in 1963 to Israel and has lectured since 1975 at the Hebrew University. He received the Israel Prize for Jewish Thought in 1999, the Emmet Prize in 2002, and is a member of the Israeli Academy since 2006. He has served as visiting Professor at the JTS of America, UCLA, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, and College de France.

### Publications

Professor Idel's numerous books include: □ *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (1988); □ *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (1988); □ *Messianic Mystics* (1998); *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (2002); *Ascension on High in Jewish Mysticism* (2005); □ *Kabbalah and Eros* (2005); □ *Ben: Sonship and Jewish Mysticism* (2007); □ *Old Worlds, New Mirror, On Jewish Mysticism and Twentieth-Century Thought* (2010).

### Talk offered for ESSWE3

## THE SHIELD OF DAVID: AN HISTORY OF A SYMBOL FROM JEWISH KABBALAH TO WESTERN ESOTERICISM

The lecture will describe the first instances of the shield of David in early 13th century Germany, their infiltration in Spanish Kabbalah, and the interpretation of the two triangles as two divine configurations, Arikh anppin and zeir anppin and their impact on Christian esotericism in early 20th century. I shall also deal with the question how the shield of David overcame the classical ancient symbol of the Menorah.



## ABSTRACTS AND SPEAKER INFO

**Åkerman-Hjern, Susanna**

(Stockholm)

SWEDEN

*De sapientia Salomonis: Emanuel Swedenborg and the Kabbalah*

There is a perception that Swedenborg was influenced by the Kabbalah, and for sure one has often seen a phenomenological similarity in the two cosmologies: existence of upper (celestial and spiritual) and lower (natural) worlds; an influx from the celestial world into the lower worlds; the presence of spirits and angels; emphasis on the Old Testament text and its inner dimension; the Sephirotic tree taken as Adam Kadmon similar to Swedenborg's postulation of the Grand human forming the heavens in communities of souls – both are coordinated with the human organs. However, it has recently been argued by Friedemann Stengel that Swedenborg as a rationalist gained these specific ideas from his contemporaries, e.g. by reading the German cosmologist Andreas Rüdiger's *Physica divina, recta via...* (Frankfurt, 1716) – treating of the nexus between the spiritual and natural worlds and of physical influx. Stengel points out that no one has shown a direct literary influence from the Kabbalah on Swedenborg's works.

It is therefore of interest that in the Swedenborg Library in Gröndal, Stockholm, there is a small dissertation with the signature "Emanuel Svedberg" on its title plate. It is a work by the Hebraist at Uppsala University, David Lundius, treating of the wisdom of Solomon, *Dissertatio historico-philologico de sapientia Salomonis* (Uppsala, 1705). Here, Kabbalist ideas are discussed in broad terms. Apparently, Swedenborg acquired it as a young student in Uppsala.

In *De sapientia Salomonis*, Lundius shows that the Kabbalists through contemplating the ten sephirot wanted to restore the Divine light of wisdom that formerly had reigned with Adam and King Salomon. The tract contains a few, but important, observations on the *Sefer Yetzira* and on how "the ancient Jewish philosophers called this light sepho Elohim – Divine influx (*influxum Divinum*)."  
Lundius further says that the Jews maintain that the Divine channels from the upper worlds were broken with the fall of Adam so that full illumination can no longer reach the lower regions – only with the coming of the Messiah will these channels (*canales*) be restored.

In this paper I spell out similarities between Swedenborg's writings and the Kabbalah and cite passages from The Philosopher's Notebook, *Principia rerum naturalium* Ch. I, *The Worship and Love of God* 55, *Conjugal Love* 8 [5] and those on the heavenly chariot and the heavenly journey of Elijah in *Conjugal Love* 42, *Earths in the Universe* 82 and *Arcana Coelestia* 2762. I conclude that there is a soft, but definite, influence from the Kabbalah on Swedenborg's works.

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**Archip, Bianca Bogdana and Sever Lauren iu Sava**

(Spiru Haret University, Bucharest / Sociology-Psychology)

ROMANIA

*Symbolic and Visual in Present-day Testimonies of Nde (Near-death Experiences) Contrasted with Swedenborg's Discourse*

Our study concerns a few major incongruences in the discourse of European researchers of the NDE phenomenon, by contrasting this discourse with the intentions of those who experienced such episodes. Our purpose is not only to point out the differences between meaning and intention which far too often arise when the "translation" into scientific-academic language is attempted, but also to explicitly show why the majority of the new nuances of meaning – that show up in the indirect reports of researchers – diminish or even violate the richness and novelty of the initial significance: it is because they originate in the transformation of the symbolic in mere visual, sometimes even concrete elements.

In order to sketch as clear a contrast as possible between these subtly, but relevantly different meanings, we shall make use of the abundance of significations offered by Emanuel Swedenborg, himself a scientist in multiple fields, in the work he dedicated to the description of the supra-mundane realm which he so often visited. Even if the majority of those who experienced NDE and speak about them wish to transmit as much as possible from their experience and, were it possible, even from their “incontestable spiritual radiation”, as dr. Kenneth Ring (psychology professor at the University of Connecticut) calls it, the truth is that such testimonies remain esoteric from the point of view of the actual European scientific disciplines, no matter how open to unusual fields and innovative approaches they claim to be. This will continue to be the case until a thorough reinvention takes place – both on an attitudinal and a conceptual level.

The concepts which the European researchers of such a phenomenon have at their disposal are too closed and unwieldy, and carry with them a long history of technical-statistical-quantitative uses which inevitably, from the very beginning, limit the access to the highly qualitative level of such experiences. Moreover this conceptual framework might, by its artificial hermetism, not only hamper the expression of esoteric meanings, but also hinder in those who use it – that is, the researchers themselves – an elementary understanding of these phenomena in the first place. The true hermetism in this case most likely belongs not to the object of discourse, but to the discourse itself which, as it is being built, appears more like an obstruction in the attempt to conceptually seize the object. And such an intellectual hermetism of formal description is not only unnatural in its relation to the intended field of study, but also very detrimental for those it keeps from partaking of the unquestionable spiritual value of this field.

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### **Asprem, Egil**

(University of Amsterdam / History of Hermeticism and Related Currents, PhD candidate)

THE NETHERLANDS

*Visions Beyond Sight: Representational Practices in Science and Esotericism Ca. 1900*

Practices of representation form a central part of knowledge-building activities, performing a number of different functions, from illustration, communication pedagogy and popularization, to conceptualization and model building. Representations can be visual, verbal, numeric, or even tactile or auditory. Focus on representation in scientific discourse has typically been connected with scientific realism: representations refer to independently existing external things.

It has been argued that physics in the early 20th century suffered a loss of visualizability (*Anschaulichkeit*), increasingly depending on the mediation of advanced instruments and advanced mathematics in its representational practices. Against the context of increasingly more complex practices of representation in science and science popularization at the turn of the century, we observe a reorientation in the strategies through which esoteric spokespersons align with current science. The Theosophical research programme of “occult chemistry”, launched in 1895 by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, shows a close interaction with the representational practices of chemistry and micro-physics, combined with an epistemological challenge: Where scientific representations relied on instrumentalized and indirect vision, the theosophists claimed “direct perception” of subatomic events, employing a putative vision beyond physical sight for creating accurate representations of the invisible, but very “real”, world.

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### **Baier, Karl**

(University of Vienna / Religious Studies)

AUSTRIA

*Meditating Visual Symbols. Carl Happichs Method as Meeting Point Between Esotericism, Protestantism and Psychotherapy*

Germany's cultic milieu in the period between the world wars was a multi-faceted and creative



scene. The internist and psychotherapist Carl Happich (1878-1947) from Darmstadt participated actively in several of its overlapping sectors. He was a friend of Count Hermann Keyserling, the founder of the "Schule der Weisheit" ("School of Wisdom"), with whom he published a book on occult phenomena. Between 1921 and 1930 Happich was master of a Christian masonic lodge. Moreover, he functioned as a kind of spiritual guide within the fraternity "evangelische Michaelsbruderschaft". This brotherhood was and still is a branch of the "Berneuchener Bewegung", a Protestant reform movement with roots in the German Youth movement.

During the 1920ies Happich studied European and Asian forms of meditation and developed his own method, which focused on activating the "Bildbewusstsein", an image-based consciousness which differs from rational thinking and functions as a source of dreams and myths, poetry and sudden inspirations. Like Jung, by whom he was influenced, Happich thought that modern mind is in danger to loose contact with this archaic level of consciousness. In this situation meditation should function as a medium of reconnection with the realm of inner images. This paper analyses Happich's method of meditation and his understanding of visual symbols in relation to psychotherapy, masonic work and the religious practice of the Michaelsbruderschaft. It thereby shows how Christian Reform Circles, the influence of Ignatian-style spiritual exercises, occultism, masonry and psychotherapy interacted within an alternative milieu which turned out to be the hotbed for important elements of the counterculture of 1960ies, the New Age and current popular Spirituality.

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### **Baron, Frank**

(University of Kansas / German, Lawrence)  
USA

#### *Sichem's Engraving of Faust (1608) in Its Historical Context*

Christoffel van Sichem I (1546-1624) produced the first important illustration for the original Faust Book of 1587. It is significant because it is unique in adhering to the content of that book in a number of ways. The Faust Book of Johann Spies does not describe the physical features of the two characters precisely; and Sichem was forced to employ his imagination. On the other hand, he makes a serious effort to use events and assertions of the Faust Book to create a narrative through the illustration. The Faust image appeared in the context of a book devoted to heretics. The initial and primary intention of the artist was evidently to portray a sinful academic magician, just as the Faust Book. Surprisingly, the devil does not appear very threatening. He seems to be a weak figure in contrast to Faust. One might suspect that the artist was somewhat sympathetic to the Faust character. If we look at Rembrandt's depiction of the magician, that tendency has been taken further in a very positive direction. The devil has disappeared. The magician (as in Goethe's Faust) is now in search of spiritual enlightenment and cannot be condemned to hell, unlike his doomed predecessor in Sichem's engraving. The transition from Sichem and Rembrandt may reflect the possibility that Faust should be saved, not condemned.

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### **Bauduin, Tessel M.**

(University of Amsterdam / History of Hermetic Philosophy, PhD candidate)  
THE NETHERLANDS

#### *The "Occulture" of Modern Art in Surrealism*

The relationship of modern art to modern occultism has been the subject of a number of (relatively recent) monumental studies and exhibitions. As has been shown, the engagement on the part of modern artists ranges from a casual interest to propagation of occult worldviews through one's art – and many possibilities in between. Taking the wide-ranging nature of the interest of modern artists for contemporary occultism into account, and the fact that it continued across a succession of art movements (all with their own specific take on occultism), it is evident that modern art in general participated in contemporary "occulture", and that particular artists "occultized" their work and life.

Surrealism, the last of the avant-garde movements which so epitomized modern art, inherited the "artist's occulture" of modern art. Accordingly, in its early years, the movement dutifully referred to artistic-occult tropes, such as, for example, "alchemy of the word" in the context of poetry. Individual artists such as Max Ernst and Victor Brauner did push their engagement with the occult further, but in general Surrealism's occult agenda remained restrained, conservative, and passive. After the Second World War, however, as I will argue, one finds a notable change in attitude. Surrealism, now concerned with a pressing agenda to restore myth, turned to contemporary occultism as both a means and a possible solution. Accordingly, it engaged occultism more in depth as well as broader, actively "occultizing" Surrealism. As will be shown, the movement of Surrealism in its entirety thus embodied the range of modern art's interest in the occult, from the casual to the deeply involved.

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### **Békés, Enik**

(Hungarian Academy of Sciences / Institute for Literary Studies, Budapest)

HUNGARY

*"A Principio Enim Omnia Pendent". Descriptions of Outward Appearance Determined by the Stars in Some Physiognomical Works*

My paper is concerned with astrological theories regarding the origin of human outward appearance. In some medieval Arabic sources we can find the idea that not only our fate and inner characteristics but also bodily and facial features are determined by the stars and therefore can be categorized according to the signs of the zodiac. The systematic elaboration of this conviction was relatively rare both in the astrological and in the physiognomical texts, but it can be traced in the *De doctrina promiscua* of Galeotto Marzio written around 1489 for Lorenzo de' Medici. The aim of my paper is to present the descriptions of Galeotto and to examine his possible sources. I also intend to present the visual manifestations of this idea.

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### **Binet, Anna Maria**

(Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux3 / Portugal Studies)

FRANCE

*Light and Darkness, Two Main Symbols in Fernando Pessoa's Esoteric Writings*

One of the most important poets in the XX<sup>o</sup> century literary landscape, Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) led a whole life search for a hidden meaning behind that our senses allow us to perceive. Thus, he went across several fields of esoteric quest, as Alchemy, Gnosticism, Occultism, and many others. His prose writings testify to this quest, as well as his poetry, which was definitively enriched by the metaphorical work inspired by it.

In Pessoa's works, divinity often appears as a bottomless abyss (Ungrund), a source of anguish for a man who felt himself as being an empty shape, which he filled with his "heteronyms", literary personae having specific biographies and works. This darkness surrounding Pessoa can be identified with a nigredo experience, that of the modern man.

In his poetry, even light itself seems to become dark, as man attempts to penetrate it. We are here very near from the "noche oscura" of the mystic experiences of San Juan de la Cruz, or from the notion of Ungrund developed in the works of Master Eckhart or Jacob Böhme. Between ecstasy and death there seems to be almost no frontier, but then it may be possible to catch that materia prima that light hides in its core. A spiritual rebirth may be the outcome of this immersion in the soul abyss, light being hidden in the heart of darkness. Pessoa's poetry shows that one does not exist without the other, reflecting as a mirror divine creation as it appears in Genesis, that is to say, as Light coming out of Darkness to create Life.

We can equally feel in Pessoa's works the influence of XIX<sup>o</sup> century romantic *Naturphilosophie* and the light topic, especially in Franz von Baader. God's love, "Everlasting Light", is hidden behind apparent darkness, Christ being the sole way to reach It. Light is Life, chasing the poet's melancholy,

as it was the case for Marsilio Ficino in his time.

Thus, we would like to show how Fernando Pessoa, taking his inspiration from his esoteric quest, built in his work a metaphorical system that tries to catch the light hidden in the core of darkness, in order to find the path that leads to Knowledge, above all the one about himself, first mystery for him to solve, reflection of the Great Mystery unattainable even by Poets.

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### **Bogdan, Henrik**

(University of Gothenburg / History of Ideas, Literature, and Religion)

SWEDEN

*Envisioning the Birth of a New Aeon: Dispensationalism and Millenarianism in the Thelemic Tradition*

According to Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) the vernal equinox of 1904, and the 'reception' of *Liber AL vel Legis*, or *The Book of the Law*, two weeks later, marked a fundamental shift, or dispensation, in the history of mankind: the Age or Aeon of Osiris with its formula of the dying God, was to be superseded by the Aeon of Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child. Crowley was identified as the prophet, The Beast 666, of a new religion, Thelema, with its central doctrines codified in the mottos 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law', 'Love is the law, love under will', 'Everyman and every woman is a star' and 'There is No God But Man'. The transition from the Aeon of Osiris to the Aeon of Horus was, however, not smooth and gentle, but was on the contrary envisioned in Biblical terms as an apocalyptic and millenarian process, marked by war, destruction and chaos. This paper sets out to describe and analyse the visions and symbolism of the apocalyptic and millenarian understanding of history in the thelemic tradition, as described in the writings of Aleister Crowley and Kenneth Grant (1924-2011). It will be argued that despite the fierce anti-Christian nature of Thelema, the thelemic millenarian view of history is in fact deeply rooted in a western esoteric understanding of Biblical apocalypticism.

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### **Burmistrov, Konstantin**

(Russian Academy of Sciences / Institute of Philosophy, Moscow)

RUSSIA

*Pictorial Representations of the Structure of Creation (Ilanot) in Jewish and Christian Kabbalah*

Since the 13th century downwards, Jewish kabbalists have been trying to find a visual representation of emanation of the God's light taking the form of ten sefirot. This trend especially strengthened in the 15th-16th centuries and reached its acme in Lurian Kabbalah of the late 16th and 17th centuries. At that time, quite a few sophisticated charts and diagrams (the so-called ilanot) were elaborated where one can find detailed expositions of the dynamic structure of the Godhead unfolding itself through various levels of being. It is not entirely clear for what purpose these diagrams were created and how they were supposed to be used according to the kabbalistic tradition. One could supposedly use them as visual aids for the study or as mnemonic means; it is quite probable that they could also serve as practical means sui generis representing 'maps' or 'itineraries' for ecstatic ascension of the mystic's soul. It stands to reason that the charts could not but capture the attention of the Christian kabbalists and Hermeticists of the Renaissance, especially considering the fact that their own Hermetic and occult iconography was highly developed and manifold.

In my paper I am going to analyze the main features being distinctive characteristics of borrowing, adoption and transformation of the kabbalistic ilanot ('trees') in Hermetic and Christian kabbalistic sources of the 16th-17th centuries as well as in some Masonic documents of the 18th century. Special emphasis will be put on the publication of a collection of Lurianic ilanot by Ch. Knorr von Rosenroth in his "Kabbala Denudata" (1677) and their correlation to the Jewish Kabbalah. I am also going to touch the issue of the possible impact that some kabbalistic diagrams might exert on the

Neo-Rosicrucian iconography of the late 18th century.

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### **Burns, Dylan**

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USA

*We Have Seen!: Vision and Experience in Sethian Gnosticism and Early Jewish Mysticism*

In his classic and controversial study *Jewish Gnosticism and Merkavah Mysticism*, Gershom Scholem noted that the Coptic Gnostic treatises the *Books of Jeu* (ca. fourth century C.E.) feature various drawings and illustrations of heavenly chambers and "treasuries." Scholem speculated that they are tools in the box of specialists in rituals of ecstasy, who used the drawings to help them visualize stages of their heavenly journey. In doing so, Scholem presumed that the texts are evidence of the lived experiences of seers who were capable of obtaining visions of heaven through these and other techniques, a presumption challenged and all but abandoned by scholarship into apocalyptic literature during the '70s and '80s.

Oddly enough, no one has ever followed up on Scholem's hunch and carried out a full-scale investigation of the problem of experience and vision in the Coptic Gnostic treatises with respect to later Jewish mysticism. This paper will adduce important data from Gnostic texts discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945 and mostly unavailable to Scholem at the time of his study, the "Sethian" Gnostic apocalypses. These visionary treatises describe the ascents of antediluvian seers into heaven, where they navigate a complex realm replete with angels and other divine beings, obtain transformation into a supra-angelic being, and discuss aspects of Neoplatonic metaphysics. Like *Jeu*, the manuscripts are occasionally illustrated. A brief look at vision and transformation in the Sethian Gnostic texts will show 1. that Gnostic studies remains a central, if neglected, touchstone for students of early Jewish mysticism and esotericism and 2. that the ancient literary evidence can indeed be read as evidence of the visionary experience(s) of ancient seer(s) and their communities.

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### **Chaitow, Sasha**

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UK

*Symbolist Art and the French Occult Revival: the Esoteric-aesthetic Vision of Sâr Péladan*

Joséphin Péladan (Sâr Merodack, 1858-1918) was a key figure in the inception and development of fin-de-siècle French Symbolism. His Salon de la Rose et Croix, though short-lived, was perhaps one of the most ambitious artistic undertakings the 19th century French art world had seen, featuring unique exhibitions and productions seeking to unite the arts into a revival of initiatory drama, with a philosophical underpinning rooted in the Western esoteric traditions, and with the ultimate goal of the spiritual regeneration of society. Central to Péladan's vision was his conception of the artist as initiate; select individuals who could bring a small part of the divine into the mundane sphere.

The majority of accounts of Péladan's life and work commonly focus on his eccentricity, on isolated elements of his life and work, or on his interrelationship with other figures in a literary or social context. Yet, wherever 19th century art and esotericism overlap, Péladan's influence appears as a parallel, though more practical current, to the Theosophical Society. Where Blavatsky sought to intellectualize and integrate aspects of esoteric thought with evolutionism and science, Péladan sought revolution against realism and the re-enchantment of what he saw as a disintegrating and decadent society. He sought to "establish a nucleus from which would emanate a whole set of religious, moral, and aesthetic values" in an attempt to "return the soul to beauty and the innocence of Eden." His mission and life's work was the reinstatement of the philosophia perennis of the Renaissance philosophers through the ritualization of art, which according to him, would function as the manifestation of the divine in matter.

In this paper I propose to present the core of Péladan's vision of the artist as initiate, illustrated



through the key concepts of Symbolist art that he inspired. Following an overview of the context of the French occult revival, the paper will outline the role, influences, and impact of his philosophy, demonstrating the key role that it played in the overt marriage of art and occult symbolism during the French occult revival.

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### **Chajes, Julie**

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UK / ISRAEL

*Annie Besant's Saree: Syncretism, Orientalism and "Going Native"*

Following her election as president of the Theosophical Society in 1907, Annie Besant took to wearing a white saree and encouraged Indian people to choose traditional Indian clothes over Western fashions. As a leading light in the Indian National Congress, Besant's saree-wearing had political, as well as religio-cultural implications. Besant's wearing of the saree was a meaningful, visual statement that, I argue, can be seen as symbolic of the Theosophical Society's relationship with India at the turn of the century.

Recent historiography has construed the Theosophical Society as a quintessentially Western esoteric movement and argued that its appropriation of Indian religious elements was motivated by a modern agenda which included a Romantic and idealised image of India. This is as if to say that Besant was only Indian "saree deep." Such analyses have sometimes led to a denigration of the Society as "Orientalist", superficial, and inauthentic, such as Mircea Eliade's condemnation of Theosophy as "detestable spiritual hybridism".

Although non-judgemental analyses of the appropriation of Indian ideas by the Theosophical Society within its modern, Western, historical and cultural context are cogent and perceptive, I will argue that it is time to reconsider some of their possible implications and go beyond evaluations that focus solely on issues of power and misrepresentation. This paper will present Besant's saree as a prism through which to view the wider issues associated with the Theosophical Society's engagement with India, arguing that the saree was emblematic of a "going native" that was atypical in the colonial environment and that the Theosophical engagement with India was more than "saree deep."

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### **Chajes, Yossi**

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ISRAEL

*It's Good to See the King: The Nature & Function of Kabbalistic Divinity Maps*

The Jewish mystical tradition has tended to present its gnosis in objective terms. The ecstasy of the mystic and the grace of God have taken a back-seat to the transmission of theosophical truths regarding the nature of the divine. As Kabbalah developed increasingly sophisticated imaginings of the workings of divinity, Jewish mystics turned increasingly to mapping out the complex systems, creating a kind of cosmological cartography. With the emergence of the Lurianic Kabbalah in the sixteenth century, such maps became all but essential tools for the mystic student and practitioner. In this lecture, we'll look at a number of examples of these manuscripts and explore their forms & functions. We'll also see how a Jewish mysticism that pictured God so graphically intersected with Christian concerns in the early modern period.

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### **Cleave, Julia**

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UK

*Tobias and the Angel. The Showing of a Heavenly Effect in an Earthly Actor*

A Florentine Renaissance painting of Tobias and the Angel portrays a transformative encounter

between human and divine. The story, taken from the Apocrypha, may be read as an initiatic adventure involving trials by water and fire. By a miracle of imaginative composition, the artist has condensed this narrative into a single captivating image. While its richness of detail and beauty of form make an immediate appeal to the senses, its talismanic power derives more subtly from an interplay of hermetic symbolism, drawing on alchemy and astrology, and a remarkable matrix of Platonic geometries.

It has recently been established that Leonardo, as an apprentice in Verrocchio's workshop, also had a hand in the painting. More unexpectedly, details in the picture (which has been on display in the National Gallery since the 1860s), together with stories of angels and demons taken from the Apocryphal Books of Tobit and Enoch, seem to have provided inspiration for Conan Doyle's first-ever Sherlock Holmes story.

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### **Cole, Brendan**

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UK

*Art in Search of the 'Grand Agent Magique'; the Initiatory Quest in the Work of Jean Delville*

Jean Delville was one of the great exponents of an Idealist-Occult art during the late nineteenth century. He was a practicing Theosophist throughout his life and was closely connected to many of the influential writers who contributed to the occult revival during that time – including Eliphas Lévi, Stanislas de Guaita, Joséph Péladan and Edouard Schuré – and he wrote extensively on the topic. He was a highly skilled and articulate painter and many of his works during the fin de siècle reflect ideas that are central to the esoteric tradition. This paper will examine Delville's art and occult writings, focussing specifically on the theme of initiation in his paintings and their relation to his poetry and theoretical texts.

Delville wrote that: "Les œuvres de l'Initiation consistent ... à révéler tous les mystères auxquels l'Homme Régénéré seul est accessible. Il existe une Science, Science de toutes les sciences, qui ferme le cercle des connaissances humaines. Elle seule connaît et explique les problèmes éternels et les secrets de la Vie universelle. C'est la Haute-Magie, ce sont les Sciences Occultes. Pour en posséder les arcanes et les puissances, il faut être Mage, c'est-à-dire être devenu plus qu'un homme, ce qui équivaut à savoir dominer et diriger toutes les attractions de la Nature." This paper will examine the extent of Delville's interest in this initiatory tradition and will reveal how his paintings encode key ideas relating to the spiritual evolution of man as taught in the esoteric schools of thought during his day. I will focus mainly on his works of the mid- to late 1890s with particular reference to his *Trésors de Sathan*, and his *Ecole de Platon* which reflect key ideas of the initiatory path. This paper will refer to contemporary occult texts, as well as to the writings of Delville and other contemporary sources, in order to reveal the nature of Delville's occult aesthetic which sought to bridge the gap between nature and spirit as well as the theme of transcendence that lies at the heart of the initiatory tradition.

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### **Cora, Zoltán**

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HUNGARY

*The Uncanny, the Numerical and the Unknown: Sublime as Esoteric?*

Within the huge literary and artistic tradition of the sublime in Western culture, mapping, analysing and interpreting the aesthetic relations of literary and visual sublime is a complex issue. Therefore, the aim of the presentation is to explore and examine some aspects of how the affective, mystical and intuitive qualities of the sublime are connected to the aesthetic categories of *greatness* and *infinite* as well as to concepts of *numerical phenomena* throughout the theories of Polykleitos, Pythagoras, Plato, Longinos, Burke and Kant. The question is how the classical Greek artistic theories, partly based on numerical mysticism, partly on proper mathematical interpretation (e.g. Golden Section), and the imaginative, enthusiastic and psychagogic aesthetic elements are intertwined in the

literary and visual tradition of the sublime. Or, to put it differently, in what ways was the original qualitative interpretation of sublime (from Polykleitos to Plato) extended to quantitative aspects by 18th century philosophers? The basis for this assumption was that both qualities were considered to be affective to human nature, and that they could lead to an esoteric, however, valid knowledge of the world, which was still beyond human understanding and cognition. In relation to this latter problem, my talk will also seek for those modes and media through which this aesthetic aspect found its expressions from Longinos' *Peri hypsous* to the mathematical sublime of Kant.

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### **Crockford, Susannah**

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UK

#### *Symbolism in Modern Western Shamanism*

This paper will look at the use of symbols in modern western shamanism in the UK. First there will be a brief and broad definition of modern western shamanism and the theoretical problems with using the term. The use of symbolism will then be analysed through three main categories. The first category of symbols will be the use of darkness/light metaphors as signifying transformation. This will be linked to the history of darkness/light symbolism in western esotericism. Then the idea of soul loss will be examined as symbolic for mental trauma/illness, where the journeys of shamans to restore souls are analogous with psychotherapeutic practice. Finally, symbolic appropriation will be tackled by analysing the use (and abuse) of Native American symbols such as medicine wheels, sweat lodges, and 'peace pipes' in modern western shamanism, which will raise issues of cultural copyright and authenticity.

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### **Csetényi, Korinna**

(University of Szeged / English, PhD candidate)

HUNGARY

#### *Symbols of Difference and Haunting in the Works of Stephen King*

Stephen King is a prolific writer of supernatural horror fiction, and in his works we often encounter paranormal phenomena, such as telekinesis, pyrokinesis or telepathy. Those afflicted with such "wild talents" are often considered pariahs by society, so King seems to be using these psychic abilities as *symbols of difference*: paranormal people come dangerously close to being categorized as nonhumans, or even monsters. They are looked upon as aberrations, as violations of "the norm": for example, Carrie, King's telekinetic teenager, is thought to be a witch, and is accordingly ostracized.

The haunted house is another recurring motif, also connected to paranormal activities, in King's oeuvre. Shaped and molded by such influential authors as Poe and Hawthorne, the haunted house formula is a frequent setting in the field of supernatural fiction. According to literature on esotericism, hauntings belong to the category of "environment-to-mind" activities and the house becomes the visual symbol for this. King uses this motif most notably in *The Shining*, but a "bad place" figures prominently also in his vampire novel, *Salem's Lot*. Different interpreters assign different meanings to it, but the continued success of the formula warrants an examination of how it is used as a vehicle for commentary.

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### **Dascal, Reghina**

(University of the West / English, Timisoara)

ROMANIA

#### *Tantrism and Mithila Art from a Western Perspective*

It is the purpose of this presentation to explore some of the aspects of tantrism, an esoteric system of spiritual advancement by the cultivation of physical and psychic resources rooted in the

ancient Hindu philosophical concept of shakti; between 900 and the 15th century it not only contributed immensely to feminizing and galvanizing Hinduism, but it also gave rise to a scriptural corpus, it rewrote goddess theology, her relation to male deity, cosmic functions etc. For the first time, these texts speak in favour of women's dignity, their divine nature, actualizing it on the social level (a first effort of this kind in Hindu religion), aiming to introduce an ethos of equality and respect for them. All aspects of female anatomy and physiology are considered sacred and women can become priestesses, gurus, can hold positions of power, they can become saints and even impart initiation – diksa; it is at the same time subversive of dominant Brahmanical values, a rare instance of gender inclusive dharma in Indian religious history, speaking directly to women's experiences. Iconographic illustrations will be taken from Mithila art and particular attention will be given to Western reception and application of Tantra concepts and symbols in Western culture on the one hand and more specifically in Western feminism.

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### **Drobot, Irina-Ana**

(Technical University of Civil Engineering / Foreign Languages and Communication, Bucharest)  
ROMANIA

*Esoteric Aspects and Lyricism in Virginia Woolf and Graham Swift*

The purpose of this paper is to point out esoteric aspects especially in various instances of what Woolf called moments of being. In Swift as well characters experience moments of vision, of revelation. Connections with lyricism as a means of expressing esoteric aspects will also be looked at in this paper. Language is used by both authors to present a visual image of moments of insight, but also to offer a symbolic personal comprehension of the world by sensitive characters. According to Ralph Freedman, lyricism in Woolf comes from turning inner speech into imagery, which offers moments of insight a visual representation. In such moments, the world is projected as a symbolic image and as an entity with which the self should come to term with. It is said about Woolf that she used the esoteric symbolism of the French poet Stephane Mallarme, but she was also influenced by the Romantic poets (the poet as visionary).

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### **Duggan, Colin**

(University College / Religious Studies, Cork, PhD candidate)  
IRELAND

*Locating Yeats: Western Esotericism, Symbols of the 'New Ireland'*

William Butler Yeats is one of Ireland's most famous writers. His life, politics, poetry and drama have received a great deal of academic attention from the fields of English literature, history, Irish studies and theatre studies. However, Yeats' involvement with the Theosophical Society and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn also makes him an important and influential part of Ireland's religious history. These elements of his life, normally studied in the field of Western Esotericism, provided the symbolic and imaginative framework for Yeats' envisioning of the 'new Ireland'. Authors from the fields of study mentioned above have addressed some of the issues relating to Yeats as an esotericist but many have not given this large part of his life the emphasis it deserves. In cases where there has been a detailed approach to Yeats' esotericism, there is an absence of the theoretical and methodological reflections developed in the field of Western Esotericism. This paper will focus on some of these gaps in the approaches to Yeats' esotericism and illustrate how the field offers a different entry point to the established scholarly discourse on his symbolic expression in his visionary writings.

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### **Epstein, Marc Michael**

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USA

*Hidden and Revealed in Medieval Jewish Manuscript Illumination*

The traditional manner of viewing narrative sequence in medieval illuminated haggadot (manuscripts for the home service for the eve of Passover) has been to assume a linear reading of the episodes depicted in the illustrations. Building upon recent work in the wider field of the new manuscript studies, I will attempt to chart the trajectory of an esoteric reading (via midrashic exegesis and parshanut) of the narrative sequence of the Golden Haggadah (London, BM Additional MS 27210, [Spain, possibly Barcelona c. 1320) that is consistent with the exegetical context of that manuscript's date, place and authorial constellation.

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**Fanger, Claire**

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USA

*Use of Figures and Letter Meditations in John of Morigny's/Liber Florum//Old Compilation, Oxford, Bodleian liturg. 160*

This paper will examine the use of figures and letter meditations in the only known copy of John of Morigny's original draft, what he termed the "Old Compilation" text of the *Liber Florum Doctrinae Celestis*. This text is found in a possibly unique manuscript from around 1400, Oxford, Bodleian liturg. 160. In both Old and New Compilation versions of the *Liber Florum*, John describes his search for knowledge in books of magic and the *ars notoria*, his eventual extrication from the "exceptive arts" and his construction of a new book for obtaining knowledge in a licit way with the help of angels and the Virgin Mary. Both Compilations are essentially the same in form, containing an autobiographical first part, a long ritual comprised of seven and thirty prayers in the second part, and a third part called the "Book of Figures".

It is in the third part of the text where we find the most substantial differences between the two versions of this work. In the original Old Compilation draft, John describes composing a set of figures to go along with the prayers, and his visionary discourse with the Virgin as two drafts of these figures were completed. This draft may have contained as many as 92 figures; it is impossible to be certain of the exact number, as the quires containing the figures are absent. However John includes descriptions of some of them, and provides a fairly comprehensive list of "letters" that are to be inscribed on them. He points out that not all of these are in Latin; some are Greek, some are Hebrew, and some may not be recognizable at all.

The Old Compilation was later attacked by some unnamed parties at Sens for having figures that looked "too much like necromantic figures." In this presentation I will take a closer look at the "lettering" that was supplied by John for these figures, as well as his various comments on the figures, and his visionary discourses about them, to approach an understanding of the purpose of these letters, figures and symbolic forms worked in his text.

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SWEDEN

*Blavatsky the Satanist: Luciferianism in Theosophy*

The Theosophical Society, founded in 1875, exerted an astonishing influence in many parts of the world during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Its leader, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), produced numerous works, of which the massive tomes *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) are usually considered the most important. Surprisingly – for the central text of a mass movement that appealed to middle and upper class seekers, as well as famous artists and authors, in a wide variety of countries – the latter book contains two chapters with unabashed



celebrations of Lucifer as a Promethean cultural hero and bringer of gnosis.

Blavatsky's open and explicit Satanism would seem to be the first example of such notions being propagated in the context of Western esotericism. Earlier, Satanism had more or less been confined to the realm of literary movements like Romanticism, Symbolism and Decadence. However, Blavatsky did not construct a coherent and systematic esoteric Satanism. Her eulogies for the Devil exist more or less in isolation from her other, more essential esoteric concepts. Satan does not fit particularly well in her overall cosmology, and Satanism is not a major theme in her writings, nor is there any indication that it played a role worth mentioning in the Theosophical Society as a whole. Still, the two "Satanist" chapters are there, and in her magnum opus at that. What, then, are their origin and intended function? This paper explores how Blavatsky's study of scholarly works on Gnosticism and her misreading of French Occultist Eliphas Lévi shaped her perception of Lucifer as benevolent.

Further, it demonstrates how her Satanist ideas can be considered logical if seen in the context of an already established anti-clerical and politically radical discourse that flourished during the time period, and which was intertwined with the endeavors of the Theosophical Society. Theosophy considered itself a non-Christian scientific religion, or a religious science. As such, it was staunchly anti-clerical, and entered into alliances with other forces striving towards social and religious emancipation, finding support among everything from suffragettes and fighters against colonialism to avant-garde modernists in art and literature. Blavatsky's motives for praising Satan may not only be of a mystical nature, but can also have been grounded in political concerns, as I hope to show here.

My paper will investigate the tension in the aforementioned Theosophical texts between the symbolic as a way to get certain not-so-esoteric points across in a figurative manner, and symbols as a manifestation of mystical truth. The visual aspects of Theosophical "Luciferianism", as they can be observed in illustrations for the society's journal *Lucifer: Theosophical Monthly* (published from 1887 to 1897, when it changed name to *The Theosophical Review*) will also be scrutinized and compared to how Satan was glorified as beautiful and noble in pictorial art from the time period. The obvious parallels between the depictions, I contend, give strong support to reading Blavatsky as firmly embedded in contemporary discourses where Satanism functioned as a mode of political resistance.

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**Ferentinou, Victoria**  
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GREECE

*The Iconography of "Coniunctio Oppositorum": Visual and Verbal Dialogues in Ithell Colquhoun's Oeuvre*

Art and spirituality have been inextricably bound from antiquity onwards. Their association re-emerged more forcefully at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries during the so-called occult revival, which had a considerable impact on modernist artists from the symbolists to the surrealists. These two preoccupations were often fruitfully combined within the avant-garde movement. This was the case with the British-born Ithell Colquhoun, who proved to be a surrealist painter, writer and poet but also a practising occultist. Colquhoun studied esoteric philosophy and joined occult sects that thrived in Great Britain in the twentieth century. Her probing of esotericism involved diverse currents, such as alchemy, astrology, the Kabbalah, Gnosticism, magic, the Tarot, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, Neoplatonism, Christian mysticism and Celtic lore.

This paper focuses on the influence that alchemical symbolism exerted upon Colquhoun's artistic production, identifying several of her sources from her private collection of esoteric books. It particularly explores the notion of the conjunction of opposites in the personal artistic language she formulated, laying emphasis on the various manifestations of the concept in paintings and writings from the 1940s and 1950s. Colquhoun experimented with the polyvalent and cryptic lexicon of alchemy but also invented her own iconography, relying upon the correlation between occultism and psychology in vogue at the time. This paper will consider her arcane and psychological researches alongside her work, providing an insight into her perspective on the alchemical quest primarily as a spiritual practice.

It will further discuss the relationship between her visual and verbal representations of the motif under enquiry and the collaboration and/or hostility between her images and texts.

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**Follesa, Laura and Francesca Maria Crasta**

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ITALY

*The Arcanes of the World: Symbols and Mystical-allegorical Exegesis in Emanuel Swedenborg's "De Cultu et Amore Dei"*

Emanuel Swedenborg's *De cultu et amore Dei* is a very complex work, from both a philosophical and a linguistic standpoints. Here metaphors and allegories, which draw on both the classical and modern literary traditions, are combined with symbolic structures which, by contrast, have a mystical or esoteric nature. From this point of view, Swedenborg's work represents an extraordinary occasion to assess the double functionality of symbols, metaphors and metonymies in a philosophical and theological context. As Inge Jonsson has pointed out (*Drama of Creation*, 2004), these images have a poetical and a literary dimension. However, within Swedenborg's text, they acquire a richer meaning, which recall Neoplatonic, hermetic and cabalistic sources. The primordial or cosmic egg, the "edenic state" or state of nature and the tree of life are all symbolic representations which characterize strongly Swedenborg's thought and which refer to the tradition of western esotericism. These symbols do not play only a heuristic role: they can also be used in a pedagogical sense to explain the farthest past of both the earth and man. This past cannot be scientifically proved, but only represented by means of *topoi* and of the mythical forms produced by the collective imaginary of mankind. Swedenborg's symbolic images are not only visual representations of the past: they have an esoteric and visionary dimension which goes far beyond the boundaries of traditional iconography. They are aimed to representing the passage from clarity to obscurity and from the unknown to the known dimension of being.

Anna Corrias will examine the image of the edenic state, Francesca Maria Crasta that of the cosmic egg and, finally, Laura Follesa the image of the tree of life and of the birth of the first man. Each of these three symbolic representations will be deeply analysed and illustrated by referring to both Swedenborg's text and the relevant iconography.

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(University of Amsterdam / History of Hermeticism and Related Currents )

THE NETHERLANDS

*Artist & Athlete of Fire: Heinrich Khunrath on the Symbolic Harmony of Christ and the Philosophers' Stone*

In *On Primordial Chaos* (1597), *On the Fire of the Mages and Philosophers* (1608), and *Light in Darkness* (1614), the German theosopher Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605) promoted his idiosyncratic blend of Christian Cabala, Divine Magic and Physico-Chymistry with the insistence on the inseparability of Oratory and Laboratory. This conviction attains its most dramatic expression in his baroquely illustrated *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* (1595/1609), which has been described as 'one of the most important books in the whole literature of theosophical alchemy and the occult sciences'. This paper provides some instances of the significance of Fire and Light in Khunrath's esoteric philosophy, with a focus on his belief in the symbolic or analogical harmony between Christ and the Philosophers' Stone.

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**Gentzke, Joshua L. I.**

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USA

*Imagining the Image of God: Iconic Discourse in Medieval and Early Modern Christian Esotericism*

New hermeneutical approaches are being developed within the field of art history that seek to move away from uncritically textualizing, "logocentric" methodologies in an attempt to let the materials speak in their own terms. Bound up with this turn is an acknowledgment of the agency of material artifacts and the performative, as opposed to merely representative, nature of images. It is my belief that scholarship dealing with the image-laden discourse of Western esotericism can benefit from entering into dialogue with these art historical approaches. In light of this, the present paper deals with the "image" or "eikon" within Christian esoteric discourse in medieval Byzantium and early modern Europe.

I take my cue from the understanding of eikon uncovered in work of Bissera Pentcheva through an innovative combination of *Begriffsgeschichte* and phenomenology. Pentcheva demonstrates the eikon's explicit and implicit connections with two other concepts rooted in Byzantine culture: (a) *empsychosis graphē*, i.e., the attempt to inspirit matter and (b) the Christian appropriation of the Platonic notion of *chora* ( ), i.e. sacred space wherein the Divine becomes manifest through circular movement). Drawing these concepts together, Pentcheva, along with Nicoletta Isar, has argued for the recognition of the conceptual, visual, and ritual significance of the magical image of the cross in the circle in Byzantine iconic discourse. While these terms, and the semantic fields associated with them, are virtually ubiquitous in Byzantine Christian culture, one does not easily find equivalents to them in the Latin Christianity of the medieval period, at least not within official discourse. However through a structural analysis, focusing on a selection of images connected to and illustrative of Bohemian theosophy that utilize the formula of the cross in the circle, I argue that this iconic discourse, with its attendant concern for spiritualizing matter, was indeed taken up and performed in the early modern period by circles outside of the theological and political mainstream(s). In particular, I focus on the images of Michael Andreae (ca. 1628-1720) and those from the manuscripts of Dionysius Andreas Freher (1649-1728). Employing a contextualist lens, I illustrate how the performance of the same structural formula was transformed by virtue of its comportment to historical circumstances, concerns, and epistemologies.

Therefore my aim is twofold, reflecting both sides of the phenomenological-hermeneutic polarity, i.e. it is structural and historical. I first attempt to address the structure of the images that "perform" *empsychosis* and *chora* through deploying the circle in the cross. Next, I discuss how these structures were performed within specific historical discourses. It is somewhere between these two approaches, I argue, that we can speak of the "meaning" of both the semantic fields of *empsychosis* and *chora*, and the images that perform or present them.

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UK

*The Angered Beast: Aleister Crowley, Thelema and the Cinema of Kenneth Anger*

Lux in tenebris: the dim ray of light cast on a projector screen has always possessed the almost magical quality of turning still images in a living flow. Since the invention of the cinematograph in 1895, directors have often included elements drawn from the world of the fantastic and of magic, of the secret and the irrational. As entertaining and technically laudable as the pioneering films of the 1920's and 1930's can be, early directors were not looking to delve deeply into specific aspects of esotericism, a linear plot being often preferred to more profound contents. A breakthrough was to be had in the 1940's, when portable cameras became more accessible to avantgarde directors whose desire it was to create works of art, and not pure entertainment.

Kenneth Anger, born in Santa Monica, California, in 1927 was one of the pioneers and most revered figures of independent cinema. His works range from the homoerotic *Fireworks* (1947) or *Scorpio Rising* (1964), which at the time defied conventions and the laws prohibiting homosexuality, to real masterpieces of esoteric cinema such as *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954), *Invocation of my Demon Brother* (1969) and Anger's most widely praised film to date, *Lucifer Rising* (1972). The three latter movies are imbued with esoteric symbolism and owe much to the teachings of Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) and to the philosophy elaborated by the magus, Thelema, in which Anger is a firm believer. Highly inspired by the Golden Dawn's brand of ceremonial magic, Crowley held the visual aspect of magic in high esteem, often garbing himself in elaborate robes and ostentatious jewellery: Some of the rituals penned by the English magus actually prescribe the colour and length of the garments, the correct disposition of the practitioner's tools upon the altar, and the colours and symbols to be used according to Kabbalistic correspondences. What the scholar can only read of in Crowley's writings wildly comes to life in an almost bewildering use of colours and symbols in Anger's work: Unicursal hexagrams, the hallmark symbol of Thelema, flash intermittently, while brightly painted magic circles are traced. Being there no verbal communication between the actors in Kenneth Anger's films, the symbols and gestures employed by the characters cover the important role of conveying the esoteric language to the spectator: the divinities of the thelemic pantheon, Nuit, Hadit and Horus, along with a plethora of other personas, come to life and relate to the viewer through the sole use of the visual element.

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### **Godwin, Joscelyn**

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USA

*Color Symbolism: from Tradition to Science*

The history of color symbolism is an example of the impact of science on esotericism. Before the Scientific Revolution, esoteric color schemes followed the doctrine of correspondences (e.g. the seven heraldic tinctures linked to the planets; schemes of Ficino, Paracelsus, Boehme, Fludd, Kircher) or drew on alchemical and biblical symbolism. After 1700 most esotericists, whether or not they accepted Newton's spectrum, tried to harmonize their theories with scientific data and empirical methods (e.g. Goethe, Runge, Wronski, French neo-Pythagoreans, Hermeticists, Theosophists). The early twentieth century saw a proliferation of color theories on the borderline between esotericism and artistic practice, together with psychological and therapeutic applications (e.g. neo-Theosophy, Golden Dawn, Kandinsky, Kupka, Steiner, Itten, Trautmann, Birren). In contrast, Portal's *Des couleurs symboliques* (1857) influenced Guénon and other Traditionalists to reassert the simpler and more symbolic medieval and Islamic categories.

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### **Gosa, Codruta and Andrea Serban**

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ROMANIA

*The Vampire of the 3rd Millennium: from Demon to Angel*

Starting from the idea that the vampire has become an immensely popular figure in the popular culture at the dawn of the new millennium, our paper will explore the transformations undergone by the vampire figure when it comes to character construction, setting and plot. The corpus of our analysis includes three of the most popular fictions to date: the 'Twilight' series, 'Vampire Diaries' and 'True Blood'. The aim of our study is to attempt an understanding of how these transformations could account for the soaring interest in vampire-related products in general and among teenagers in particular.

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SWEDEN

*Visual Popular Culture and the Esoteric*

While it would be wrong to claim that the esoteric has had a marginalized existence in European/Western culture as a whole, the claim can certainly be made for large parts of Europe's post-Enlightenment history – the period sociologists commonly term modernity. However, in the latter part of the twentieth century, and increasingly so in the last couple of decades, the esoteric could be said to have entered the mainstream. Popular culture has played an important role in this process. Christopher Partridge has introduced the term "occulture" to describe the popularization of the esoteric in the contemporary West, even proposing a shift from a Christian cultural hegemony to an "occult" one (see Christopher Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West*, 2 vols., 2004/2005). Studying the esoteric and popular culture is, however, problematic with the scholarly tools provided within the historiographic study of Western esotericism. Even the most nuanced of these contain several biases: preferences for textual material and elite culture, as well as the search for "properly esoteric sentiments or forms of thought". While the two first are self-evidently problematic in any study focusing on popular culture, the latter bias is equally problematic as the ultimately responsible producer of entertainment media-products is often difficult to determine. Thus, when approaching the prospect of introducing a field of study concerning the esoteric and popular culture, old scholarly tools need to be adapted or new ones created.

This paper will deal with methodological, theoretical, and conceptual issues in studying the esoteric in the field of popular culture. The focus is on visual entertainment media, such as comic books, TV-series, movies, and popular music album covers and artwork. Taking cue from recent developments in the sociological study of religion where the focus lies on everyday religiosity (e.g. Nancy Ammerman [ed.], *Everyday Religion*, 2007) and the role of media in the constitution of religion (e.g. Gordon Lynch [ed.], *Between Sacred and Profane*, 2007), an attempt will be made to frame the study of both contemporary esotericism and the esoteric and popular culture in non-elite terms.

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**Gregov, Sebastien**

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FRANCE

*The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*

*The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*, anno 1459, was edited in 1616. The journey of CRC (Christian Rosy Cross) is divided in 7 days and the book opens with an invitation to the royal wedding which represents the hieroglyphic monad of John Dee. From the beginning, the reader is brought into a world of magic and visual effects. The heraldic tradition will overshadow the whole story, and the book is plenty of ensigns or mythic animals (like unicorn, griffin, phoenix, lion, mermaid, angel, even Golden Fleece ...). The visual aspect is of course determined by the baroque style of the narration: the art how to show without really showing, just by suggesting and playing with optical illusion: Lady Venus seems unveiled as she is surprised in her sleep, but did CRC just dream or deed he see her sleeping? Anamorphic images are sometimes used to depict uncertain reality, or esoteric contents. Moreover all the geography is symbolic, from the royal castle with its House of Sun (a glasshouse), its giant globe, its cabinet of curiosities or its geometric gardens, to the isle of Olympus, on which a tower with seven stages leads to a sevenfold alchemical transmutation... The paper will attend to explain how the theatric dimension of the story shows the double nature of reality and therefore gives an additional deepness to the purely iconographic world described in this early 17thcentury text, considered as the most wonderful and amazing of the three Rosicrucian manifestos.

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**Hakl, Hans Thomas**

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AUSTRIA

*The Hermetic Symbolism of Julius Evola*

The aim of this paper is to show that for Evola symbols are genuine “windows” into the transcendent reality in the Platonic sense. As such they constitute a link to this reality. When using them one can be transformed and thus they can constitute a path of spiritual development. For Evola these symbols are not man-made but part of an ancient and forgotten traditional wisdom. The aim of this spiritual path is to become god in the sense of Master Eckhart: “If I am to recognize God in an immediate way, then I must become he and he must become I ... so completely at one, that this he and this I are one, and will become and be one, and exist and act eternally in this way and form of being.”[1] A parallel notion is evident in the Corpus Hermeticum (X, 25): “Therefore we must dare to say that the human on earth is a mortal god but that god in heaven is an immortal human.”[2]

Evola learnt these ideas among others from the Italian Renaissance hermeticist Cesare della Riviera, who belonged to the *theologi veteres* as described by Marsilio Ficino, and whose main work *Il mondo magico degli Heroi* (1605) Evola edited and commented. These hermetic ideas of Evola greatly influenced Mircea Eliade and found the approval of C.G. Jung. Evola used the powers of these symbols in the magical Group of UR (1927-1929), which he presided.

[1] Meister Eckhart, *Deutsche Predigten und Trakate*, 354. Italics from Evola.

[2] Brian P. Copenhaver, trans., *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English Translation, with Notes and Introduction*, 36.

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**Harari, Yuval**

(Ben-Gurion University / Department of Folklore, Beer Sheva)

ISRAEL

*The Tree of Knowledge (Etz Ha-da'at): an Ornamented Hebrew Manuscript of "Practical Kabbala" from the 16th Century, Safed*

My talk will focus on a unique, ornamented Hebrew manuscript of magical recipes, copied in Safed in 1528 (British Library OR 12362). I will deal with both the magical content of the book and the illustrations and will highlight the issue of magic and "practical Kabbala", i.e. the continuity and changes in Jewish magical practices and writings after the rise of Kabbala.

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**Harmsen, Theodor**

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THE NETHERLANDS

*The Symbols of Valentin Weigel and Pseudo-weigelian Artistry*

Imagery in Weigelian, Rosicrucian and Böhmist mystical theologies and theosophies played an important part in the reception history of Valentin Weigel's mystical thought within 17th-18th-century Christian theosophy. Visualization of theosophical ideas developed especially in the context of book production though symbolic images were also devised as visual explications of complex ideas and not just as illustrations for frontispieces: Weigel, and Jacob Böhme after him, conceived of their own symbols, which were picked up, cited and developed by their followers and sympathizers. The symbols were copied and distributed not only in printed books but also in manuscript copies, often collected in manuscript workbooks or commonplace books. Astrological, magical-kabbalist and alchemical elements (also from medieval and early modern sources) were adapted and/or combined in order to create more complex images that were related to textual bases in texts composed by or attributed to Paracelsus, Weigel, Khunrath, Böhme and Franckenberg. At the same time, the visual symbol appeared more and more independent of the text or texts it had originally accompanied. This theosophical iconography worked its influence from the late 16th century through to the 18th-century Enlightenment. They can be traced e.g. to the *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer*



(Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians), a compendium of theosophical imagery, was published in Altona in 1785-1788. (Currently I am preparing a study of this work.)

Here I would propose to concentrate on the imagery in (or related to) the works of Weigel and Pseudo-Weigel (or Weigelians). I will show and analyze a number of the images, and follow their reception in Weigelian, Böhmist and Radical Pietist settings. I will also indicate how the artists or engravers cited elements in previous images in their own newly devised symbols. Finally I will show how these images were given a new context in the manuscript and printed versions of the *Geheime Figuren*.

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### **Hedesan, Jo (Georgina)**

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ROMANIA / UK

*The Verbal and Visual Symbolism of Distillation Alchemy in the 17th Century: Interpreting the "Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz" and the "Mutus Liber"*

In the early 17th century, the so-called 'wet path' of alchemy – the art of distillation – became highly popular amongst chymical adepts. Influenced by the Lullian corpus, but also by the more recent 16th century improvement of distillation techniques by Hieronymus Braunschweig, Conrad Gesner or Giambattista della Porta, alchemists sought to find the treasured philosopher's stone by means of labour-intensive distillation.

The popularity of distillation alchemy was reflected not only in the many technical treatises of the period, but made its way into literature and the visual arts. In this sense, my presentation will focus on two important 17th century representations of the 'wet path', namely the mystical Rosicrucian narrative of Johann Valentin Andreae, *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1616) and the equally fascinating alchemical picture-book *Mutus Liber* (1667).

In the first instance, the presentation will attempt to show that *The Chymical Wedding* sought to present in veiled allegory the main processes and transformations of alchemical distillation. This is suggested from the beginning, where the protagonist, Rosenkreutz, chose the second path to the Wedding, one which is 'longer, and will lead you not downwards but round and round'. This was a common description of the wet path, which was considered not as perilous as the dry path, but more time-consuming, consisting of many repeating sublimations and condensations. The presentation will particularly focus on the 7-step alchemical process taking place in 6th and 7th Day of the Wedding, which takes place in the Olympus Tower. The symbolism of the events and transformations in the Tower will be analysed in view of the alchemical processes contained therein. Secondly, the presentation will take a look at the *Mutus Liber*, a sequence of plates first published in 1667 at La Rochelle, in France. Here, a male and a female artist work with different condensers and other distillation apparatus in an attempt to capture the philosopher's stone. The alchemical imagery presented therein provides an interesting parallel to the allegorical language of *The Chymical Wedding*, reflecting similar distillation processes.

In its conclusions, the presentation will attempt to draw out the main characteristics of distillation alchemy as suggested by its verbal and visual symbolism. In doing so, it will take into account existing distillation techniques and representations of the process as well as other associated alchemical works of the era.

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### **Heinzel, Thomas**

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GERMANY

*Prometheus Unbound. Esotericism in the Works of Angelos Sikelianos*

The works of Angelos Sikelianos (1884-1951), one of the most important modern Greek poets, are pervaded by a deep mystical spirituality and indicate the author's familiarity with Western

Esotericism. Sikelianos believed that real poets are able – due to their gift of imagination and divine inspiration – to decipher the eternal cosmic principles and to gain knowledge of the true source of life. In accordance with this self-image as a poet he felt the messianic calling to revive consciousness of the aforementioned principles among his people as well as among humanity in general. It was for this purpose that Sikelianos pursued his "Delphic Idea" in the interwar period: Together with his American wife Eva Palmer (1874-1952) he planned to establish the ancient sanctuary of Delphi as the spiritual centre of the world from which the harmonization and unification of mankind should emanate.

In my paper I want to highlight verbal and visual representations of Western esotericism in Sikelianos's interwar works, most of which are connected to the "Delphic Idea": Poems, tragedies and the two "Delphic Festivals" he staged as a preliminary to the real purpose of his project. My goal is 1/ to demonstrate how Sikelianos expressed his Weltanschauung in a synthesis of pre-Christian and Christian symbols, both verbally and visually; 2/ to show how the Greek poet interpreted his country's history, cultural identity and "mission" along esoteric discourses.

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### **Huss, Boaz**

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#### **ISRAEL**

*The Kabbalah Medal (2009): Representations of Kabbalah in an Official Government Medal of the State of Israel*

In December 2009, the Israel Coin & Medal Corporation issued an official medal of the State of Israel, entitled the Kabbalah Medal. The medal is described in the website of the Israel Coins and Medal Corporation as "the first government medal which can also be seen as an amulet".

The medal includes an image of the ten Sefirot (in colors) and of ten pomegranates, verses from Psalm 67 written in form of a Candelabrum (as common in traditional Jewish Amulets), other biblical verses with Kabbalistic connotations, the words Kabbalah in Hebrew and English, and the emblem of the State of Israel. The Medal (sold in gold, for 2045\$, in silver for 129\$ and in bronze for 53\$), was designed by artists Aharon Shevo and Ruben Nutles. Its contents were decided by a public committee, which included academic scholars of Kabbalah (Prof. Moshe Idel, Prof. Havivah Pedayah, and Dr. Avraham Elqayam), and chaired by Rabbi Benayahu Shmueli, the head of the Kabbalist Yeshiva, Nahar Shalom. The medal is a fascinating postmodern Kabbalistic artifact produced through a collaboration of a commercial company, government officials, Jewelry designers, academic scholars and contemporary Kabbalah practitioners. Its production brings to the fore the current formation, perception and cultural location of Kabbalah in Israel.

The paper will examine the visual representations of Kabbalah in the medal, and analyze the social context and cultural significance of the design and production of the Kabbalah medal.

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### **Johnston, Jay**

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#### **AUSTRALIA**

*Esoteric Aesthetics: Subtle Materiality and Subject–Object Relations*

In conventional art history the dominance of Kantian "disinterested" vision has overshadowed other forms of aesthetic engagement invoked by the visual elements of magical texts and images (more broadly conceived). Drawing on the concept of mundus imaginalis this paper will explore an esoteric aesthetics that proposes a particular type of subject–object relation in the study/ experience of the visual. This engagement is bound up with the physiological role of esoteric anatomy (the subtle body) and its accompanying forms of perception.

To exemplify this experience of esoteric relations two diverse practices will be examined. Firstly, the role of images in Coptic magical papyri of Late Antiquity and secondly, the relation of

viewer and artwork in the contemporary installation work of Olafur Eliasson. These disparate examples will evidence esoteric aesthetics as a style of sight that seeks to bridge I-Other relations. It is simultaneously a vision of the intermediary and the intermediary itself. This is not a passive 'watching' but an active, innovative process.

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### **Kadary, Yoed**

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ISRAEL

*Sons of God or Human Sons – How to Create an Angel? Between the Old Era and Renaissance Kabbalah*

Various myths of the angels' liturgical role are found in Jewish Esotericism. Angels are represented as having their own liturgical hymns (which inspired Jewish poets and mystics) as well as having the role of opening the heavenly gates to the ascending human prayers, and weaving from them God's crown.

In my lecture, I want to explore the different representations of the liturgical practices of the angels in the Kabbalistic doctrines of R. Moses Cordovero (RaMaC). RaMaC (1522-1570), designated by Scholem as "the greatest theoretician of the kabbalah," was a central figure in the history of Jewish Kabbalah, and exercised a considerable influence on Christian Kabbalah and Western Esotericism, through the translation of part of his main work, *Pardes Rimonim* (Orchard of Pomegranates) into Latin, by Knorr Von Rosenroth. I plan to focus on RaMaC's representations of these topics:

- The spiritual "path" of the words after pronounced by worshippers and the role of the angels in their ascent.
- The depiction of the opening of the gates for the prayers by the angels, and the question of the angel's autonomy to decide which prayers deserve to ascend.
- The theurgical role of the angels' liturgy and their affect on God and human beings.
- The relations between angelic prayers and human prayers, and the debate on prayers to angels.
- The relations between practical kabbalah, Jewish magic and liturgical prayers according to the perspective of RaMaC.

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### **Khalturin, Juriy**

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RUSSIA

*Kabbalah, Symbolism and Metaphysics in Theories of Russian Freemasonry of the 18th and 19th Centuries*

My paper is based on the archives of Moscow Freemasons of Theoretical Degree of the Rosicrucian System (funds 14 and 147 of DMS RSL). In these texts one can find out different definitions of Kabbalah, of which the most interesting one is *Kabbalah as Symbolic Philosophy*. As such, Kabbalah for Russian Freemasons was nearly a synonym of Metaphysics and Freemasonry as different modifications of so-called "hieroglyphic language". The basic question of my report is: *what were the hieroglyphs/symbols, which connected Kabbalah, Metaphysics and Freemasonry in speculations of Russian Freemasons?* I consider just two symbols of great initiatic value – the columns of Jachin and Boaz; and the Flaming Star. Symbolism of the Columns is determined by three meanings: 1) *masonic one* (Strength and Power of the Order; two first degrees of the Order); 2) *metaphysical* (Fire and Water, Light and Darkness, Masculine and Feminine, Active and Passive principles); 3) *kabbalistic* (sephiroth Hesed and Gebura or Nezah and Hod). Just the same with Flaming Six-pointed Star: 1) The sign of Scottish Master; 2) symbol of the unity of microcosm and macrocosm; 3) symbol of the unity of Fire and Water in mundane realm as reflection of divine unity of Logos and Sophia or God and Shekhina. By applying such interpretations to different symbols Russian Freemasons enriched the spiritual content of their rituals and connected different esoteric and metaphysical teachings with masonic tradition in

manner of such ideas as *Prisca Theologia* and *Philosophia Perennis*.

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**Kocic, Larisa**

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HUNGARY

*Milton and the Cherubim in Embrace*

The two waves of iconoclasm that washed over England during the 16th and 17th century in the wake of Reformation had left the visual landscape barren of angels. But curiously enough, this was balanced by a prolific output of angelic literature. From theological treatises, sermons, scriptural commentaries, to fictional accounts, poems and epics, the British mind was contemplating the actions and movements of angels. Hence, John Milton's interest in angels and his account of their artistic and intellectual potential is typical of his age (see Dee, Donne, Heywood, Pordage, Hutchinson, Locke etc.), but the confidence and daring with which he tackles even the most unorthodox notions about them in *Paradise Lost* is anything but typical. This paper will focus on the sex of Milton angels, both in sense of their corporeality and gender (the neoplatonic influence) and in terms of coital embrace. The later will be discussed in the light of Raphael Patai's study on the Cherubims in his controversial book, *The Hebrew Goddess*.

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**Kokkinen, Nina**

(University of Turku / Comparative Religion)

FINLAND

*Occult Interpretations in the Finnish Fin-de-Siecle Art Field*

During the late 19th century the powers of occultism were unleashed among Finnish artists. The results of this encounter were far-reaching and ambiguous: crises and awakenings, artistic transformations and interpretations combining occultism and nationalism were to alter the scenery of the Finnish art field. In many cases this fruitful dialog got started in Paris, where artists went there to educate themselves during the 1880's and 1890's. They got familiar with popular occultism as they took part in spiritualist séances, read theosophical books and were inspired by the visions of the Swedenborgian heaven and astrological scenery of the sky. At the time various ideas and beliefs were connected also to the figure originally cherished in Christianity – the Jesus-Christ. In the contemporary occultism, his personality was utilized and given many alternative meanings not only by more active members of the occult milieu, but also by artists seeking for inspiration amidst of it. Some elements in the Christian story were re-interpreted and expressed in the alternative form in many artworks – among such themes were for example the death and resurrection of Christ and his meeting with the three wise men from the east.

My main argument in this paper is that such alternative ideas concerning the Christ were in fact highly influential, when the dialog between Finnish artists and contemporary occultism is considered. I will compare and combine some of the most popular occult ideas on the Christian saviour and ponder how and why these were expressed in the Finnish art field at the turn of the century. The paintings I utilize here include some of the most well-known and appreciated paintings created in Finland at the turn of the century – for example Akseli Gallen-Kallela's *Lemminkäinen's Mother* (1897). The main focus will be on the theosophical and other occult conceptions on Jesus or/and Christ, but I will also illustrate how these conceptions intertwine with nationalist ideologies and Tolstoyism flourishing at the time in Finland.

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**Lachter, Hartley**

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USA

*Mapping Divine Territory: Kabbalistic Commentaries on the Ten Sefirot in Late 13th Century Castile*

The composition of kabbalistic texts underwent a remarkable moment of proliferation in the last three decades of the 13th century in the region of Castile. It is more accurate to regard Kabbalah from this period as a grouping of esoteric Jewish discourses, rather than as a discrete literary genre, since kabbalists wrote in the mode of most of the best known genres of Jewish writing, ranging from moralistic and poetic works, to exegetical commentaries on scriptural and rabbinic texts. A typical feature of kabbalistic texts from this period, including the historically influential corpus of texts that came to be known as the *Sefer ha-Zohar*, is the construction of a complex interweaving of symbolic associations between words, letters, the human body and aspects of traditional Jewish law and ritual, with a dynamic and multifaceted conception of the Godhead represented by the ten Sefirot, or the ten divine luminous emanations. Texts such as the Zohar presume familiarity with the sefirotic system and the many lexical and anatomic associations with each individual sefirah, which in turn gave rise to a new sub-genre of kabbalistic writing, that of the "peirush" or commentary on the ten sefirot. Over a hundred such commentaries, most of which are anonymous, were composed in the late 13th century. These texts are designed to map out for the reader the symbolic structure of the at that time newly emerging kabbalistic conception of the divine territory, and to provide a guide to the common associations between individual sefirot and biblical terms. In the process of constructing such guides to kabbalistic discourse, these commentaries on the ten sefirot reveal much about the way kabbalists from this period sought to re-imagine Judaism by re-mapping divine territory.

While the existence of these commentaries as an important and distinct body of kabbalistic literature has been known since at least the 1930's, when Gershom Scholem documented 134 such manuscripts, virtually no scholarly work has focused on these texts. In this paper I will propose a preliminary consideration of the content and function of these commentaries based on a reading of over 20 manuscripts held in the British Library and the Oxford Bodlian Hebrew manuscript collection. It will be argued that by constructing a symbolic map of the inner life of God, in many cases including visual representations of the sefirotic system, kabbalists produced these commentaries in order to provide their readers with a powerful tool for decoding Jewish esoteric discourse in a manner designed to empower them to incorporate kabbalistic theurgy and theosophy into their practice of Jewish ritual law and interpretation of traditional texts. Moreover, it will be demonstrated that the "re-imagining" of Judaism occasioned by these texts evinces a nuanced awareness of both the tenuous political position occupied by Jews in late 13th century Castile, as well as the increasing prestige associated with ancient secrets of a Neoplatonic, Neohermetic and Neopythagorean bent.

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HUNGARY

*Magic, Esotericism, and Cryptic Symbols*

The field of magic and that of cryptology in the 15th-16th centuries seem to overlap considerably. This impression is confirmed by several magic manuscripts containing cipher texts, the angelic alphabets of Cornelius Agrippa and John Dee, and by a number of authors, who became classics both in the history of magic and that of ciphers, namely: Johannes Trithemius, Athanasius Kircher, Gerolamo Cardano, and a few others. But is the connection between the two fields really so close? My argument is that while ciphers in the late middle ages and in the early modern times underwent a serious evolution, monoalphabetic systems were replaced by more sophisticated homophonic methods, secret alphabets in magic texts remained on a fairly primitive level, and followed the outdated and highly vulnerable monoalphabetic system both in the late Middle Ages and in the Renaissance.

Alphabets of secret letters occur fairly often in magic texts, they are often applied to designate

spirits, and as texts of talismanic content. As it is not their cryptographic sophistication that is to be appreciated, it seems logical that one should interpret them rather in the context of magic than as cryptic methods. They are easy to break, and thus they do not protect the content of the text, just the opposite, they call the readers' attention, and make the text more appealing for him. The special characters help the communication instead of disguising it. It seems as if the authors of such texts took Augustine's famous argument seriously. In Augustine's model, magic appears in the context of the theory of signs as an act of communication with the demonic powers. All superstitious practices, including divinatory and astrological procedures, presuppose an implicit or explicit agreement with demons. The use of secret characters in late medieval magic texts, consciously or not (rather not) turns this semiotic argument upside down. Authors and scribes use secret characters exactly with the purpose of magic communication. Augustine warned that we might easily start talking in the language of demons simply by following some seemingly innocent magic methods, and thus, we might easily get involved in demonic magic. But what was for him a major reason for rejection, seems to become here a program to be followed. Codes and ciphers in magic texts often serve to name planetary spirits, or as celestial alphabets to communicate with planetary spirits (of course not necessarily with demons), and it is exactly through the use of such signs that the user of magic might get closer to the spiritual realms.

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ITALY

#### *God's Graffiti*

The paper proposes a semiotic reflection on the 'conditions of enunciation' of graffiti in order to understand the essential features of the relation between this expressive form and the concept of power. *Daniel 5*, the Biblical passage that narrates the episode of Belshazzar's feast, is adopted as a point of departure for the construction of a textual series, which explores a philological tradition as well. Jewish interpretations, Christian exegeses, Christian iconography, and intertextual transpositions, all related to this biblical passage, are analyzed so as to determine the ways in which different socio-cultural contexts, in different periods, interpret and express the relation between political power, its injustice, and the esoteric role of "God's writing on the wall" in redressing it.

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ISRAEL

#### *The Theosophical Seal: Blavatsky's Symbolic Synthesis between East and West*

The Theosophical Society, founded in New York in September 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) and Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), officially adopted its unique seal in January 1876. The founding members agreed on a design that was probably adapted from Blavatsky's own personal seal. The seal, which evolved during the 20th century to its current form, is comprised of several ancient symbols, taken from several cultures, eras and geographical locales: an Egyptian ankh and a Star of David, both surrounded by an ouroboros serpent, with a swastika and a Sanskrit (Devanagari) Aum on top (the latter was added to the seal after Blavatsky's death). In many Theosophical publications, the seal is accompanied by the Theosophical motto: "There is no religion higher than truth".

The history of the evolution of the Theosophical seal during the Society's first fifty years is an interesting phenomenon, which will be briefly discussed in this short lecture. However, my main discussion will follow the intentions and thought that are clearly reflected in regard to the specific choice of symbols that was made in the design of the seal.

I will try to show how Blavatsky's plan to synthesize Eastern and Western esotericism led her



to choose these unique symbols; reflect on her motives, remarkable efforts and actual knowledge; and finally discuss the true nature of the synthesis she claimed to have created between the wisdom of the Orient and the wisdom of the West: was it a successful attempt, or rather, largely, a synthesis of the existing, diverse Western literature on occult lore?

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### **Menzel, Birgit**

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GERMANY

*The Occult Underground of Late Soviet Russia*

While Soviet political dissidents and artistic non-conformism have received considerable scholarly attention, very little is known about the occult underground of the Soviet 1960-80s. A network of highly conspiratorial esoteric circles of intellectuals in both capitals, Moscow, Leningrad, and elsewhere, was pursuing esoteric quests and occult practices in a highly repressive 'closed society', informed in part by the teachings of Gurdjieff, Blavatsky and Nikolai Roerich, a rich pre-revolutionary tradition of occultism, mystical teachings from and personal contacts with the (Soviet!) Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern countries (Buryatia, Tibet, India, Mongolia), and in part by remigrating ideas from Western New Age. My brief overview of the 'occultic milieu' in Russia will focus on some specifics of the Russian occult underground in comparison with Western New Age: namely the strong focus on science in a system more susceptible to irrationalism than sciences in Western countries and an inclusion of Orthodox Christian mysticism rather than the rejection of traditional religions. A third specific element is a much stronger emphasis on the cerebral and spiritual self-transformation than on the realms of the corporeal, especially Eros and sexuality, in an occult underground which was predominantly ruled by males.

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ISRAEL

*Visual Aspects of Zoharic Symbols*

The *Book of Zohar*, a voluminous book, about 2500 pages long, is the most important book in the Jewish mystical lore. Ever since it was published (at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries) and up to this day it has been exercising immense influence on Jewish life and literature in general and Jewish mysticism in particular. It is impossible, for example, to describe the history of 16th century Safed (the most important Jewish settlement of its time) without emphasizing the role this book played.

Yet, in spite of this we still cannot answer with certainty some very basic questions concerning this book. For example when, how, and by whom it was written. In the printed editions it is attributed to R. Shimeon Bar Yohay who lived in the 2nd century CE, but researchers have convincingly proved that most of it was written in 13th century Spain. G. Scholem, the founder of this field of research, hesitated for a while, but in the end emphatically wrote that R. Moshe de Leon, a Castillian Kabbalist, was its author, and that he was the only one. In the last two decades many researchers contend that the book must have been written over quite a long time and by several people of whom R. Moshe de Leon was just one.

Accepting this assumption I was endeavoring in the last years to develop different literary and philological methodologies which enable us to distinguish between the different textual strata of the *Zohar*. In this lecture I will suggest yet another tool – the analysis of the different visual aspects of Zoharic symbols; be it figurative or abstract, static or dynamic, responding to other known visual symbols or creating something new.

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GERMANY

*Sense and Sensibility: Reading the Esoteric*

Recent approaches to the "esoteric" have indicated the historicity of, and the constructivism in, these notions. Kocku von Stuckrad, e.g., has pointed at this important fact, claiming in his critique of Antoine Faivre's paradigmatic description with its six essentializing categories that they provide "rather an instrument for clarifying what should, according to this definition, be understood by esotericism" (2006: 5, note 7, italics in the original). However, even Faivre himself in an early publication has suggested a similar perspective: "By whatever name it appears, however, esotericism has had a long history" (cf. Faivre, in Eliade 1987: V:156) – pointing at the non-essentialist nature of both concept and phenomenon. Faivre's fundamental concept rests on the "active imagination" which he considers as the *conditio sine qua non* for developing (or understanding) any esoteric idea, correlating (on an etymological basis) image, magic and imagination. It is this condition of Faivre's notion of "active imagination" which will be the subject of my considerations and, accordingly, I will approach the topic from a theoretical stance of reception.

My paper will enter an inquiry into the question, whether or not we may consider the "esoteric" as a particular mode of representation: Can we juxtapose the "esoteric" and the "rational" as a foundational opposition? Is the rationalist alienation with the esoteric, at least in degree, a particularly narrow mode of perception, and are "esoteric" constructions of meaning less, or equally, or more inadequate compared to rationalist ones? Where do we locate such go-betweens as syncretists in the spectrum between the rational and the esoteric? The paper attempts to point at describing the two sides of the "active imagination" and its effect it takes on writers as well as readers.

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GERMANY

*Visual and Acoustic Symbols in Gikatilla and Neoplatonic Thought*

In this paper I intend to compare the approach to symbol in the writings of one the most important kabbalists in the Middle Ages, R. Josef Gikatilla, and its Neoplatonic parallels as found in the thought of Proclus, Iamblichus and others. Gikatilla's combination of both Neoplatonic and Pythagorean ideas on symbols created a unique synthesis in medieval kabbalah with a decisive influence on Western esotericism up to modern theories on language and philosophy. The function of the symbol in the hermeneutic triangle will be analysed in both in its visual and its acoustic aspects. We will also have a look at important developments in the Christian tradition as presented in the works of Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius.

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RUSSIA

*Semiotical Analysis of the Hermetical Text*

In the paper I want, using the methodology offered by known Italian semiotician, Umberto Eco (*Limits of Interpretation, Kant e l'ornitorinco, Interpretation and Overinterpretation, Serendipities, Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*), to analyse some classical texts of western esotericism (Guénon's *L'Ésotérisme de Dante*, Fulcanelli's *Le Mystère des Cathédrales*, Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*). In the beginning I shall briefly describe Eco's methodology, and then I shall stop on the analysis of texts in more detail.

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*Representing Transmigration of Souls: Kabbalistic Metempsychosis or Repressed Wishes*

With the rise of Jewish mystical thought in the 16th and 17th centuries—a part of which focused on the human soul's ability transmigrate, a new entity came into being the Dybbuk. The Dybbuk is the sinful soul of a (predominantly male) who is forced to wander the world in an in-between state. The spirit "possesses" a body, usually a woman, who then begins to speak in the dead person's voice. The Dybbuk usually does not want to leave the body and therefore it must be exorcised by in an elaborate and powerfully theatrical ceremony. The Dybbuk story was traditionally narrated within the framework of a Kabbalistic world view. The rise of psychological discourse has made alternative narrative of Dybbuks available in which Dybbuks represent a disowned and outwardly projected parts of the repressed self. The presentation will interpret the creative tension in modern literary representation of Dybbuks between adhering to the Kabbalistic worldview of metempsychosis or employing an hermeneutic of suspension in order to explain possession as a projection of the possessed own unacceptable wishes.

When narrating the event of being possessed, how do modern narrators maneuver between the traditional discourse and narrative with its Kabbalistic ontological commitments to a modern psychological discourse. Do the psychological underpinnings of possession weaken the 'negative sublime'? In what way do modern understandings and controversies imbue fictional worlds? I will examine these questions in the work of Ansky and Singer as well as in the comprehensive anthology of Dybbuk cases compiled by Gedalya Nigal.

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RUSSIA

*Interpretations of the Symbolical by Rene Guénon*

The system of Traditionalism created by R. Guénon combines Esotericism as such with an interpretative discipline that investigates it. Guénon raises all human "traditions" (in his specific sense of the word) to the Absolute fountain, and the symbolic should indicate at this highest source. To his mind, any symbol can't be greater than the thing signifying it. A lower sphere is a symbol of a higher sphere. Owing to symbols men have a perceptive base for knowledge of the reality. In truth, each expression is a symbol of the thought that they pass beyond. Language itself is a symbol. But language is analytical and discursive, and symbolism as such is synthetic and "intuitive". That's why symbols are more suitable for the intellectual intuition which is higher than human reason. Symbols must be considered from divine or from human opinions. Nature in total is a symbol of the "super-nature". The natural order is a symbol of the divine order, and a man himself is a symbol also because he is created under the image and similarity of God. Symbolism corresponds to the divine plan strictly. To my mind, Guénon uses the "interference" of symbols in a sense: one symbol passes to the second one which passes to the third one and so on. In his investigation of symbols Guénon uses the comparative method very often. This method appears in the majority of his works including those ones devoted to interpretations of the symbols. For example, he investigates symbols of the Holy Grail. Guénon unfolds here the long and complicated chain of the correspondences. The Grail can be a bowl and a book. The author differentiates between a "substitution" (Grail as a substitute of the Heart of Jesus), and a "symbolization" (Grail as a symbol of the Centre of the World). Different objects are associated with the Grail, interfering with each other, i.e. spear, table, lotus, rose, "the third eye", half-moon, Soma, triangle, etc.

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ROMANIA

*What Lies Behind the Magic? Peter Ackroyd vs. John Fowles*

In my paper the topic of esotericism is approached from the perspective offered by Ackroyd, in his novel *The House of Dr. Dee*, and by Fowles, in his novel *The Magus*. The visual or the apparent stratum is analysed in relation with its symbolic twin layer in order to expose the art of puppeteering mastered by the magi. The issue of identity reconstruction blends with the magi's obscure plans to turn the characters into wished-for beings. The symbolic stratum will be analysed in relation to the representations of elements belonging to white magic, alchemy, but also to the experimental psychology scenes. The process of use / abuse and manipulation that takes place will be shown to unveil disturbed or unstable identities.

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THE NETHERLANDS

*Early Forms of Abstract Art and Spiritualism: Georgiana Houghton's Spirit Drawings*

This paper will focus on a British spirit artist who has enjoyed very little recognition until now: Georgiana Houghton (1814-1884). In the early 1860s she became interested in spiritualism and became herself a medium. Having been trained as an artist, she then began to produce a series of drawings under the direct influence of spiritual entities. She first exhibited her works at her home, during private receptions, and then held a large exhibition in a gallery in London in 1871. Contrary to her expectations, the exhibition failed to attract the attention of both fellow spiritualists and art critics. The reason appear simple to us today: her works were much ahead of their time as they were almost exclusively abstract. Houghton's story presents some similarities with the case of the Swedish painter Hilma af Klint (1862-1944), who also had mediumistic skills and began to develop an abstract style of painting under the guidance of spiritual entities, slightly before Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Piet Mondrian (1872-1944). It is even more significant then to note that Houghton was already doing abstract painting forty years before Klint. Furthermore, whereas Klint's art has been rediscovered by critics and historians since the 1980s and has been, even recently, the object of important exhibitions, Houghton's work remains largely forgotten. In this paper I will argue that reconsidering Houghton's work poses some important questions for the study of modern art in relation to western esotericism.

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ROMANIA

*Weird Sisters and Overthrown Charms: Representations of Witchcraft and Magic in Tudor and Stuart England*

Early modernity is a period in which, with the development of print, a powerful discourse on witchcraft and magic is shaped, covering areas as diverse as theology, law, and science. Little attention has been paid until recently to visual representations of witchcraft and magic, while legal and scientific texts (trial reports, treatises) and literature have been regarded as major, reliable sources. The paper discusses early modern literary and non-literary texts on magic and witchcraft (such as Shakespeare's major references in *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*, as well as minor plays by Robert Greene, Thomas Heywood or Thomas Dekker, on the one hand, and King James' *Daemonology*, on the other) in terms of their interference with the visual discourses on the same phenomena (book illustrations, anonymous engravings, etc.) The paper discusses similarities and differences of focus between the written, verbal and visual codes (focus on practices and practitioners, on testimony, trial and punishment, or on ampler notions, such as violence, sexuality, abuse, ethics, etc.) and their symbolic impact.

Key words: witchcraft, magic, imagery, visual language, cultural discourse

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HUNGARY

*Hidden Numbers: the Concept of Esoteric(ism) in the Nineteenth-century British Press*

A key element of many Western esoteric currents is a search for an esoteric knowledge, which signifies the private acquisition of a secret, spiritual gnosis that is only accessible to a selected few. Of course the "non-initiated" have always found it difficult to accept such heretical views as well as their excluded status. Thus they often tried to expose these esoteric secrets to the general public. This kind of revelation is just one example for the public perception of esotericism, which has received less scholarly attention than the inner dimensions of esoteric thoughts and practices. It was only the nineteenth century that the concepts of esoteric(ism) and theosophy became widespread in the British press. This paper investigates the rise and fall of these concepts in nineteenth-century British newspaper and periodical articles available in two digital archives, namely the British Periodicals Online and the Nineteenth-century British Library Newspapers. First, a new quantitative method will be introduced, which enables researchers to analyse the history of a given concept in electronic press collections. Then the method will be illustrated with the examination of the concepts of esoteric(ism), theosophy/cal and freemasonry. For instance, by exploring the distribution of ca. 11 000 related articles, the paper demonstrates which years and decades saw the greatest public interests in esotericism and which newspapers / editors are responsible for these climaxes. Such preliminary findings will point to a number of new research questions, which could not have been raised with the application of traditional research methods.

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THE NETHERLANDS

*"No Query Escapes These Ideis": Imaginary Statues in Bruno's "Lampas Triginta Statuarum"*

Giordano Bruno's *Lampas Triginta Statuarum* (1587-1591) was never published in his lifetime. It was first brought to light in 1891 by Felice Tocco and Girolamo Vitelli. Even if it could therefore not exert any influence in the early modern period, it is still important as a late version of Bruno's multi-faceted *ars inveniendi* (closely related to the art of memory), revealing much of the character of the philosopher's final metaphysics, epistemology, and aspects of his ethics. Over the past two decades, scholars have indicated ways in which *Lampas* constitutes a reaction to Aristotelian philosophy, showed how it should be considered a rhetorical system in the Lullist tradition, and discussed elements of the work's quite specific metaphysics. Nevertheless, much of this long and complex work in Bruno's oeuvre still remains to be explored. In this paper I will briefly introduce the thirty imaginary statues around which *Lampas* revolves and then proceed to analyze Bruno's description of several of them. It will be shown that not only Raymond Lull's rhetorical system is central to the work, but also his metaphysics.

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POLAND

*"Un gentilhomme polonais qui est un esprit élevé": Polish Travellers and Exiles in the 19th Century Esoteric Revival*

Symbolic genealogies of secret wisdom passed down in apostolic succession and their visual representations form an important aspect of esoteric movements. From the 18th c. they were formalized

with charters and diplomas, often exchanged by leaders without proper study and ritual or even traded for financial gain. Many such genealogies are thus "purely symbolic" in the derogative sense, along with the charters documenting them. Historians of esoteric organizations attempt to reconstruct both the symbolic and the actual descents of formal successions and informal influences within and among such groups. A useful visual tool for representing them is the quasi-genealogical diagram which may be tailored to illustrate or summarize a particular proposed reconstruction of those links. An example of applying such visual approach in this paper will be the involvement of some 19th c. Polish exiles in esoteric movements of Western Europe. Initially they promoted their own specific versions of Swedenborgian and Boehmist beliefs, which evolved into Polish messianism. One of its founders, Józef Maria Hoene-Wroński, became an inspiration for Eliphas Lévi, whose later patrons, disciples and eventually heirs were Polish magnates. The occult revival in France and in England, building on Lévi's teachings, also attracted Poles into such important developments as the Golden Dawn and the Martinist Order. Although some of them are briefly mentioned in standard historical studies, the details of their lives and relationships are often missing or misunderstood, not to mention misspelt names. An overview of the most important Polish connections in Western esotericism of the century will be presented and contextualized with the aid of not only genealogies of wisdom but also the more familiar diagrams of family relationships.

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SERBIA / HUNGARY

*Agrippa's Cosmic Ladder: Building a World with Words in the "De Occulta Philosophia"*

The idea of ascension forms the very core of Cornelius Agrippa's main goal proclaimed in his *De occulta philosophia* – the restoration of magic as a peculiar religious system. This idea, taken either with its magical or spiritual connotations, implies a personal transformation, an ontological shift of one's position in the so-called Great Chain of Being during one's lifetime and by one's own efforts. The conceptual framework of such an idea is based on a complex set of Neoplatonic, Hermetic, and Kabbalistic notions of the universe as a hierarchically structured living being. This macrocosmic structure is organized according to different levels of emanation and governed by the laws of correspondences. It is reflected in the microcosmic structure of man. Looking downwards in this vertically arranged scheme, the cosmic levels are characterized by an increasing degree of materiality, a concept that has a significant bearing on the Nettesheimer's tripartite typology of magic (intellectual, celestial, and natural). In other words, the way Agrippa construes the universe of his magician implies a great deal of what is often termed *geometria sacra*.

Thus it may come as a surprise that the editions of the *De occulta philosophia* published both during Agrippa's lifetime and in the decades after his death contain practically no visual representations of such a pivotal concept. Images in these editions are by and large limited to the representations of magical seals and astrological symbols. Diagrams and emblematic figures representing Agrippa's vision of the hierarchically structured universe, in which the idea of ascension acquires its logical justification, appear only in the later editions and translations of the *De occulta philosophia* and are taken over from the works of other authors such as Robert Fludd and Heinrich Khunrath.

In this paper I examine various ways in which Cornelius Agrippa constructs and represents this common Renaissance image of the universe in his *De occulta philosophia* by using verbal devices only. The author's approach to this topic is remarkably non-visual. Thus I argue that the Nettesheimer's cosmology can be interpreted as strongly logocentric and that, as a consequence, this logocentrism determines the very nature of his magical theory. I also explore the possibility that this could be one of the links of Agrippa's magic to his theological thought, decisively marked by the Johannine notion of the Logos or *Verbum Dei*.

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PORTUGAL

*What is the Right Sigil?: Mather's Use of Sigils in the Clavicula Salomonis*

When creating a new edition of a grimoire, how does one go about selecting the correct sigil to include in the new version? Taking as an example Mathers' edition of the *Clavicula*, we can see that often the sigil that he includes does not correspond exactly to any of the sigils in the seven manuscripts that he used as the basis for his version. For Mathers, as an emic translator and editor, this decision is based on what he thought would be the correct image to be included. In a way, he was "correcting" the manuscripts which he believed were corrupted by medieval interpolations. However, for the etic researcher there are other problems present. In the absence of an Ur-text no sigil is more "authentic" than any other unless we are aware of the developing line from one edition to another. We can tell, for example, that Mathers' sigils are not "authentic" because he left us information on the manuscripts he used and we can see that the images are not direct correspondences, but neither are they between those seven manuscripts. Other than giving examples of several iterations of the same sigil in different sources, it is often impossible, therefore, for the etic editor to ever reach a conclusion in terms of "authenticity" or originality, a problem which Mathers, due to the emic nature of his work, and his attempt at "purifying" the text, seems not to have faced, but that scholars in the field should not take lightly.

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*Angels, Avant Gardes, and the Esoteric Archive*

My proposed paper is taken from a current book project, tentatively called *The Persistence of Angels, or, On Seeing Things: An Unexpected History of Modernity*. In my paper, I will present a few case studies of the way in which esoteric themes appear and become revised in the work of modern visual artists who make use of angels. Starting with William Blake, I will show how his depictions of angels challenge traditional Christian approaches, often in the context of his gnostic rebellion against Christian dualism. Next I will discuss various avant-garde symbolists and surrealists from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Their work, often explicitly aligned with the Rosicrucian revival and/or theosophy, makes plentiful use of angels, though these are once again hardly Christian in any traditional stylistic sense. Finally, I will treat a few examples from the late 20th and early 21st centuries, where artists, often outsiders to the world of "high art," wield angels in the course of popularizing formerly esoteric stances (knowingly or not).

To summarize my book's arguments extremely briefly: Looking primarily from the late 18th century into the 21st, I argue that as art replaced and/or complemented religion as the site of "the spiritual," the representation of metaphysical possibilities such as angels became an increasingly attractive and important response to modernity and post-modernity – industrialism, war-turned-genocide, class oppression, personal alienation; a means of working through anxieties regarding the rapidly destabilized boundaries between human and divine, human and animal, human and machine. Modern angels, as I call them, have left official religious tradition behind, have become gnostic (even neo-kabbalistic) ciphers for and of a humanity attempting to transcend its limitations while yet reveling in them, not so much fallen divinity as much as the aspirations of the "human, all too human"; neo-pagan creatures of our hybrid techno-virtual worlds; totems and mentors in varying pantheons of (post-)modern (imaginary) beings such as celebrities, superheroes, creatures from fantasy novels and gaming worlds. With incredible persistence, they stand as allusions to in-betweenness and uncertainty regarding the anti-metaphysical progressivism of scientific modernity. Modern angels resurrect the never totally repressed angelic possibilities of past populist theologies. Tentatively, I plan to divide up the numerous images of angels into distinct but often overlapping categories for discussion: humanized

angels, erotic angels, technological angels (often eroticized), political angels, numinous angels.

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DENMARK

*Sufism in the Romantic Imagination*

The *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, first published in 1859, was one of the greatest literary successes of the nineteenth century, and exemplifies one aspect of that century's Romanticism. Its author-translator, Edward FitzGerald, claimed that it was the work of an agnostic, but among those who disagreed and insisted that it was a Sufi work were not just the contemporary French scholar Jean Baptiste Nicolas, but also the Sufi "expert" of the Theosophical Society, Carl Bjerregaard, and one of the most widely read Western Sufis of the mid-twentieth century, Idries Shah, and his brother Omar. Taking the *Rubáiyát* as its starting point, the paper examines the Romantic understanding of Sufism, and the relationship between this and the Western esoteric Sufism that emerged during the twentieth century.

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AUSTRALIA

*The Visual Symbolism of Tarot Images: Implications for Contemporary Geopolitics*

This paper will introduce my new book *Re-symbolization of the Self: Human Development and Tarot Hermeneutic* (Semetsky, 2011, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands). The focus of the paper will be socio-cultural and geo-political implications of Tarot symbolism, especially as pertaining to two images in the deck, The Tower and The Star. The paper will argue that the hermeneutics of the images as related to contemporary real-life events will bring forth the revitalization of modern culture by means of re-articulating the esoteric tradition in a new context. Etymologically, the Greek words *hermeneuein* and *hermeneia* for interpreting and interpretation are related to the mythic god Hermes, a messenger and mediator between gods and mortals, who crosses the thresholds and traverses the boundaries because he can "speak" and understand both "languages", the divine and the human, even if they appear totally alien to each other. Tarot hermeneutic allows for establishing a relation between "Self" and "Other" as the ethical imperative at the present time of the uncertain multiculturalism and globalization when different values appear incommensurable and continuously compete, conflict, and clash! Yet, the Tarot symbolic language is an index of recovered – and ultimately shared – spiritual values.

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CANADA

*"Even just in this manner death doth play with us": Moral Lessons, Metaphors and Esoteric Knowledge in the "Zodiacus Christianus" of Jeremias Drexel*

Jeremias Drexel (1581-1638), a Flemish Jesuit, produced one of the most widely read works of Christian esoteric knowledge of the early modern period: the *Zodiacus Christianus* (1618). This volume was intended both to be a theologically orthodox alternative to the popular astrological works that Jesuits frequently confiscated and burned, and to set forth a series of literary set pieces that reflected the visualizations of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius as well as the preoccupation with predestination in an age of assertive Calvinism and emergent Jansenist thought. The *Zodiacus* presents the reader with symbolic "devices" presented in words rather than pictures that may be understood on several levels, while appealing to the quest for hidden knowledge that also sustained the popularity of

Jesuit emblematics. This paper will locate the *Zodiacus* within the Jesuit culture of the day and examine its use among Jesuit sponsored sodalities, including those with female members.

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AUSTRIA

*Explaining John Dee with the Knowledge of an 17th Century Esotericist. Friedrich Geissler's Translation and Commentary of the "Monas Hieroglyphica".*

The library of the monastery of Schlierbach (Upper Austria) possesses a manuscript which is exceedingly interesting for the reception of John Dee and his "Monas hieroglyphica" (Antwerpen 15649; Frankfurt 1591) in the German speaking world. It is written by the not well-known Friedrich Geissler of Freiburg in Silesia about 1680. This manuscript is a translation of the *Monas hieroglyphica*: "Monas Hieroglyphica Joannis a Dee Londinensis: dass ist: Nachdenckliches Zeichen des Mercurii ...". The translation of each theorem of Dee's small and enigmatic book is accompanied by marginalias which direct the attention of the reader to other books which deal with the same topics, and are followed by exuberant commentaries which show that Geissler is a scholar which knows a quite big amount of the esoteric (alchemical, astrological and magical) literature of the 17th century (– of course, he is well acquainted with the esoteric literature of the earlier periods, too).

First I will introduce the person of Geissler and his few (published) writings and outline his thinking; in a second step I will give a sketch of the structure of the manuscript and discuss the quality of the translation. In a third step I will scrutinize the way in which Dee is interpreted by Geissler. I will show that he interprets Geissler in a way which is dependent on the esoteric literature of the 17th century.

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HUNGARY

*Emerging of New Myths and Myth-makers in Hungarian Neopaganism*

Organised neopagan groups first appeared in Hungary in the first half of the 20th century. The theories founded on nationalism, which can be considered pagan, blossomed between the two world wars and reappeared with the regime change following the decades of communism. In the case of contemporary neopagan movements, which allude to ancient Hungarian roots, we cannot talk about unified belief or worldview, we find believers with eclectic views among the followers of the ancient "táltos"-faith (ancient, shamanistic religion of Hungarians). Beside the unique elements of the syncretistic religious universe, and in many cases the theory, which is on the verge of irrationality (like Hungarian is the ancient language of the world, Jesus Christ is of Hungarian origin), from the aspect of the study of religions, one of the most interesting questions is the appearance of new myths and myth-makers. This presentation introduces the characteristics and ground gaining of these new myths, placing this phenomenon in a wider, international context, beyond the framework of Hungarian neopaganism.

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HUNGARY

*Myth and Magic in Victorian Enoch*

The discovery of the Ethiopic *Book of Enoch* in the late 18th century by the Scottish traveller, James Bruce, and its publication in English by Richard Laurence in 1821 rekindled the interest in Enoch. In Victorian England one can find a whole range of interesting reflections from theological

tracts, philological speculations, through literary works, to esoteric visions and occult references. Notable examples are Madame Blavatsky's and John Mason Neale's Enochian references, Edward Vaughan Kenealy's *Enoch, the Messenger of God*, or LeRoy Hooker's 1898 esoteric novel, *Enoch the Philistine*. My paper surveys these various cultural representations in view of Aleister Crowley's upcoming Enochian magic which was meant to revolutionize occult practices in the early twentieth century.

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### **Tamari, Assaf**

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ISRAEL

*"And I Asked Him to Tell Me Who My Soul was": Fragmentation and Destabilization of the Kabbalist's self in Lurianic Anthropology*

Recent scholarship has suggested that at the center of 16th century Lurianic Kabbalah lays a deep messianic interest focused on the personal messianic role of R. Isaac Luria and his fellowship. Moreover, this interest entailed a keen preoccupation with the myths regarding the souls and their reincarnations. The theory of transmigration is thus regarded as located at the heart of the esoteric project of the Lurianic School.

The proposed paper will explore some aspects of the underlying assumptions regarding the individual and its constitution, arising from this theory. Lurianic Kabbalah draws a highly complex and intricate picture of the different and multiple psychic elements (referred to as "Soul Sparks") taking part in the human construction, and of their inter-relations. I will focus on the complexities that this doctrine introduces to the soul structure, to its unity and to its boundaries, e.g. the splitting of sparks attributed to one man into several different bodies, or the "swapping" of the main soul spark (the lower soul - Nefesh), its replacement by another soul, in a living human being. Using several examples, I will try to assert that the Lurianic construction of the concept of the individual poses interesting challenges to any attempt to project modernistic or enlightenment views of the Subject on it.

Following these challenges I will focus on the role of esoteric knowledge in this scheme, through an analysis of the two gaps created by the Lurianic anthropology: First, the gap between the – at least seemingly – integrative every-day experience of consciousness and its split, fragmented and multiple mode in the context of this doctrine; Second, given the concept of interrelations between soul sparks, and the highly intersubjective aspect of the Lurianic transmigration doctrine, the hidden relations between the sparks form a network parallel to and separated from the social network. I claim that in both cases esoteric knowledge, i.e. Luria's pneumatic abilities to diagnose the exact status of his disciples' and others' soul sparks, acts as a transformative agent, bridging the gaps. I suggest that rather than having an undermining effect, the destabilization of the integrative experience, through Luria's knowledge, and the capacity to see the self as multiple, dynamic and complex, were conceived as it were as preconditions for the ability to perform and complete one's religious goals.

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DENMARK

*Visuality and Audibility in Kabbalistic Theories of Language*

It is well known that in kabbalah the Hebrew language held a central position as the divine language. Language was the mediator between man and the divine by being the texture of the world and the means of God's manifestation in the world. The ontology of the individual letters went far beyond the mere written word, as they were perceived to provide the basic structure of cosmos. In this way, besides forming a communicative language, the Hebrew letters came to be aligned with an almost physical substance from which the Torah and ultimately the world came into being. The paper will explore this double role of the Hebrew letters and how the visual and audible aspects of the letters were

used by the kabbalist in order to investigate and reveal divine knowledge.

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UK

*Picturing the Volk: Icons of Ideology and the Myth of the Master Race*

During the early Twentieth Century in Germany, esoteric paradigms such as physiognomy, affected and often merged into "rational" science and contributed to the manner in which photography was understood to reveal "truth" and which was particularly evident in the contemporaneous products of "cutting edge" technologies such as "Agfacolor-neu" – innovative colour photography of the 1930s.

Photography, like other modern inventions and ideas, was readily utilised in the promulgation of political and ideological concepts in Germany between the two world wars. It was a time when, according to George Baker, photography "came to occupy a privileged place among the aesthetic activities of the historical moment." Approaches to portrait and scientific photography in Germany were continually influenced by a continuing engagement with materialist and non-materialist physiognomy. Under the Nazis, such photography became part of a cultural wave that was situated as a counterpoint to the perceived dangerous effects of cosmopolitanism and urban living where, according to Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg:

*...we see the steady stream from the countryside to the city, deadly for the Volk. The cities swell ever larger, unnerving the Volk and destroying the threads which bind humanity to nature...*

Select German photographers began to use the revolutionary "Agfacolor-Neu" colour film introduced in October 1936. Colour was perceived to introduce a resonance with the physicality of the subjects that black and white could not render. They were still grizzled, hardworking, labouring, youthful, elderly, peasant faces – eyed and distinctly of the Nordic ideal. Bathed in the ever-present sunshine of the "Heimat," colour seemed to underscore the "Volksgemeinschaft." Now the landscape, the womb from which the German people might be reborn, was a core ideological theme, colour photography became a standard bearer of this paradigm.

My paper would explore the assimilation of esoteric currents into this visualization of Romantic and mystical notions such as "Volksgemeinschaft," "Blut und Boden" and "Volkstum;" and how these concepts became central to the visual (photographic) language of those leading practitioners exploring the new colour medium in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s.

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HUNGARY

*Where Geometry Meets Kabbalah: Paul Yvon's Esoteric Engravings*

In a humorous chapter of his *Historiettes*, Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux has saved from oblivion an excentric relative, the mathematician and religious visionary Paul Yvon, lord of Laleu (c.1570-1646). A Calvinist merchant and magistrate of La Rochelle, Yvon claimed to have discovered, by a divine revelation he experienced in 1614, the squaring of the circle and a new Judeo-Christian religion based on scientific intuition. He dedicated a large number of printed pamphlets to his mathematical theorems and, having moved to Paris after his conversion to Catholicism in 1628, insistently tried to convince Mersenne, Descartes and other contemporaries of their veracity. A coherence between geometrical proof and Kabbalistic myth in his publications is suggested mainly by way of copper engravings that illustrate some of them. Complex geometric diagrams are here explained by short formula in Hebrew and a few figurative symbols, among which the snake, the sun, and the vagina are particularly recurrent, alluding to cosmological and Christological mysteries of which Yvon

believed himself to be the prophet. Yvon's main historic interest resides in his pushing to the extreme the fascination with Jewish esotericism that characterized the early stages of the scientific revolution and that earned him among his contemporaries the reputation of being not only a madman, but also a Judaizer.

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USA

#### *Illustrations and Symbols in Andreae's "Chymische Hochzeit"*

The simple illustrations in Johann Valentin Andreae's *Chymische Hochzeit* added verisimilitude when the anonymously submitted manuscript was published in 1616. Rather than give a skilled artisan's images of scenes in the allegorical story, some showed spatial relations in rough diagrams made up of lines, circles, and letters. Others showed messages written in a secret alphabet and decoded in the text itself—presumably the "magic writing" mentioned in the *Confessio Fraternitatis* of 1615. The printed book purported to reproduce the bulk of a manuscript that the editor and annotator had seen in its entirety. In addition to fostering the story of Christian Rosencreutz, the illustrations force readers to think of related images in the text—the fountain of Mercury, the crypt of Venus, and the tower of Olympus among others. They indeed suggest that the whole story of a chemical wedding in the year 1459 is a puzzle itself, in which C. R. is both the narrator and the model puzzle-solver. Not the least of his puzzles is the *Hieroglyphic Monad* of John Dee, affixed to the wedding invitation. It serves as a reminder that the wedding is an astrological as well as alchemical event and has political as well as personal implications.

The talk will be supplemented with projected images from Andreae's text and related publications.

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### **Wilson, Cecile**

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CANADA

#### *Concealment and Revelation in Rembrandt's "Scholar in His Study, Watching a Magic Disk"*

Symbols and icons have the ability to transmit esoteric information in the full light of public view, while still shrouding that information in the shadow of secrecy. One has to know how to 'read' the images in order to understand the messages they convey. The complex and fantastical pictures found in alchemical emblem books typify this type of communication.

Rembrandt's print commonly known as *A Scholar in His Study, Watching a Magic Disk* (c. 1651), has remained an enigma for centuries, puzzling scholars as to the meaning contained in the letters inscribed on a luminous disk. This etching, however, has an earlier, lesser known title: *The Practising Alchemist*. Using this title as a starting point, I will pose the following questions: Is the scholar in the image truly an alchemist? Is there an historical figure that could have served as a prototype for Rembrandt? How can the writings of this figure help us to uncover the meaning hidden in the letters of the magic disk?

I will propose that the alchemist is modeled on Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, the author of two works that appear to be diametrically opposed: *De occulta philosophia* and *De incertudine et vanitate scientiarum et artium*.

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AUSTRIA

#### *Western Esotericism and Japanese Manga Literature*



When reading Japanese Comic-literature, commonly known as "Manga", one is often surprised by the presence of references to topics whose origin may be traced back to the vast stream of Western Esotericism. In my paper I want to deal with this subject by referring to some examples of this important medium which becomes more and more popular in the West as well (e.g. the Manga series *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, *Fullmetal Alchemist* and others). The first question is, of course, the search for the way of transfer as it took place with regard to the several topics. There is a long tradition of reception of Western esoteric content in Japan, mainly in the form of the so called *seishin sekai* ("spiritual world")-movement which is roughly equivalent to the "esoteric" scene and connected with the New Age from a religio-historical point of view. The second question is referred to the modes of visualisation, whether they can be put in a certain tradition (meaning whether we can find typical "Western" examples of the ways, these references are put in pictures, and to what extent they are "Japanized"). In addition there is the question arising, whether there is a kind of coherence between Manga culture and the esoteric tradition. The way diverse traditions are used as mere "quarry" without taking notice of their respective foundation is a common feature of both. This should be expanded theoretically to provide the basis for further research. In addition the bigger framework of references to specific "esoteric" topics as visualized in popular Comic culture is also taken into consideration.

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SWITZERLAND

*Depicting Alchemical Substances: Johann Joachim Becher's Mineralogia (1662)*

Johann Joachim Becher's *Mineralogia* (1662), the third part of his *Parnassus Illustratus* (1662–63), features a number of carefully executed engravings depicting the seven metals and other alchemical substances. It follows on the first and second part dealing with animals and plants, respectively, and is succeeded by *Schola Salernitana*. Yet the alchemical illustrations constitute a striking departure from the naturalistic depictions used for the two other realms of nature. Moreover, they do not conform to the normal procedure of alchemists veiling their laboratory processes in complex and dynamic imagery. While Becher's alchemical engravings are no doubt related to the latter, they claim to provide readers with information about these substances in general. And for this purpose, the German alchemist and projector obviously valued them over naturalistic depictions of rocks, ores or powder. For Becher these emblematic visualizations were more than symbols that took the place of words: they represented and transmitted genuine knowledge pertaining to the substances and their properties. Hence, I suggest that these images do not serve as ciphers that merely have to be decoded for pragmatic use. Instead, they become independent sources of information and should be analyzed as such.

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