



# Ritual, Secrecy, and Civil Society

Vol. 9, No. 1 • Spring 2022







*Ritual, Secrecy, and Civil Society*  
Vol. 9, No. 1 • Spring 2022  
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## Foreword

This new issue of *Ritual, Secrecy and Civil Society* opens with a major study by Antoine Faivre on J. Touzay Du Chenteau. Du Chenteau is best known as the author of an extraordinary “Philosophical Map,” which is an amazing compilation of esoteric and “Kabbalistic” drawings. He was also a very active occultist mason in the years 1770-1780 with relationships all over Europe.

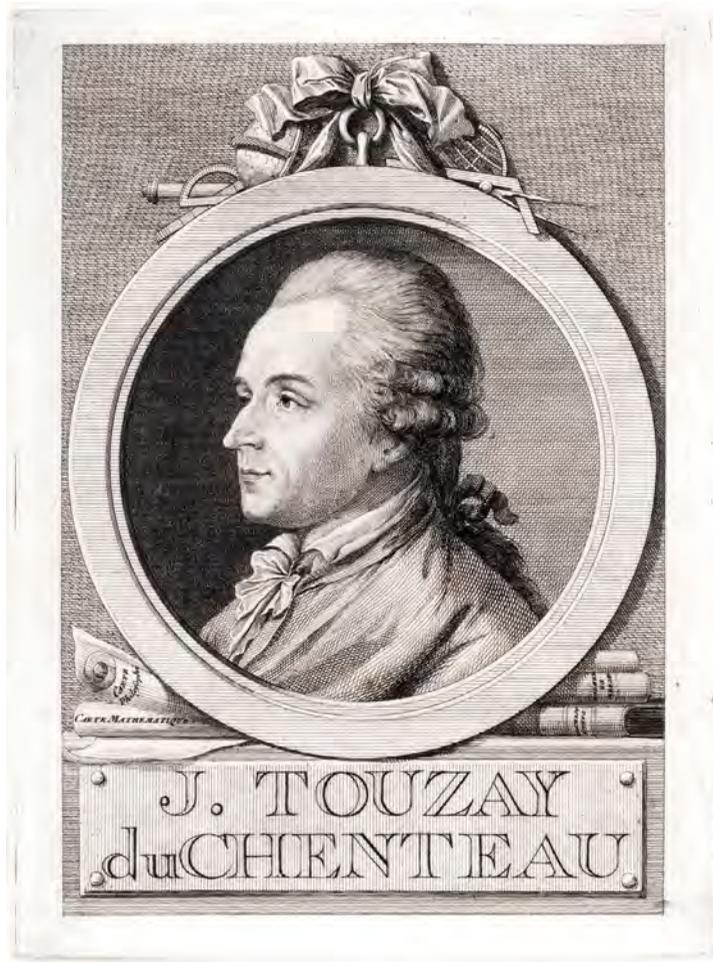
It is also a way for us to pay tribute to the great scholar Antoine Faivre (1934-2021) who passed away recently. Originally a Germanist, it was he who first established the history of Western Esotericism as an academic field. In 1979, he was appointed “directeur d’études” at the prestigious “Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes” at the Sorbonne. He entitled his chair *History of esoteric and mystical currents in modern and contemporary Europe* and convinced his academic colleagues that there was a real subject for academic research. A polyglot with a great inclination for exchanges, he also played a major role in the recognition of Esotericism as a field of research in several countries, including the United States. Antoine Faivre has thus created an academic space for research on Freemasonry, which is a component of Western esotericism.

The reader will then discover a hypothesis that I put forward about the true identity of Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor. He is the author of one of the best-selling Masonic exposures of the 18th century, the *Recueil précieux de la Maçonnerie adhonramite*. There is no Guillemain de Saint-Victor in the archives, so it is a pseudonym. We will see that behind this pseudonym hides an astonishing character, although the 18<sup>th</sup> century produced so many.

Finally, our magazine is also interested in the sources of Masonic symbolism. We know that a good part of it comes from the hermetic speculations of the Renaissance. This is why we found Zhenya Gershman’s nice study on the influence of esotericism on Dürer particularly stimulating.

Pierre Mollier  
*Editor*





This portrait, discovered in the Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim Collection (MSBT) *can be dated no later than 1775.*

## **A controversial and ambiguous figure of Parisian Illuminism: J. Touzay-Du Chenteau (1741–1788)**

by Antoine Faivre

### ABSTRACT

J. Touzay-Du Chenteau was an alchemist, theosophist, and Freemason. His writings, oral teachings, and “occult” practices, as well as his eccentric behaviour, attracted much curiosity between roughly 1775 and 1790. He is best known as the author of an extraordinary “Philosophical Map,” which is an amazing compilation of esoteric and “Kabbalistic” drawings. He also published an hermetic dissertation *Le Grand Livre de la Nature* (The great book of Nature). He

thus aroused the interest of Masonic circles versed in esotericism such as the Scottish Rectified Rite or the Philalethes. He will remain famous in the history of occultism because of his death caused by an odd experiment of “internal alchemy”.

**Keywords:** Touzay Du Chenteau, Duchanteau, Philosophical Map, Grand Livre de la Nature, Scottish Rectified Rite, Philalethes

## **Una figura controvertida y ambigua del iluminismo parisino: J. Touzay-Du Chenteau (1741–1788)**

### RESUMEN

J. Touzay-Du Chenteau fue un alquimista, teósofo y masón. Sus escritos, enseñanzas orales y prácticas “ocultas”, así como su comportamiento excéntrico, atrajeron mucha curiosidad entre 1775 y 1790 aproximadamente. Es mejor conocido como el autor de un extraordinario “Mapa filosófico”, que es una asombrosa compilación de conocimientos esotéricos. y dibujos “cabalísticos”. También publicó una disertación hermética *Le Grand Livre de la Nature* (El gran libro de la Naturaleza). Despertó así el interés de círculos masonicos versados en esoterismo como el Rito Escocés Rectificado o el Philalethes. Permanecerá famoso en la historia del ocultismo por su muerte provocada por un extraño experimento de “alquimia interna”.

**Palabras clave:** Touzay Du Chenteau, Duchanteau, Mapa Filosófico, Gran Libro de la Naturaleza, Rito Escocés Rectificado, Philalethes

## **一个富有争议且神秘的巴黎光明会人物：J. Touzay-Du Chenteau (1741 - 1788)**

### 摘要

J. Touzay-Du Chenteau 是一名炼金术士、通神论者（theosophist）和共济会成员。大约在1775年至1790年间，他的著作、口述教义、“神秘”实践以及他古怪的行为引起了很多人的好奇。他最出名的身份是作家，撰写了名为《哲学地图》（Philosophical Map）的出色作品，后者汇编了一系

列秘传的“卡巴拉”图纸。他还发表了一篇赫耳墨斯主义（hermetic）论文《自然的巨作》（*Le Grand Livre de la Nature*）。因此，他引起了精通秘传主义的共济会圈子的兴趣，例如苏格兰修正礼或真理会（*Philalethes*）。他的去世归因于一次奇特的“内部炼金术”实验，并因此将仍然在神秘主义史上享有盛名。

关键词：Touzay Du Chenteau, Duchanteau, 《哲学地图》，《自然的巨作》，苏格兰修正礼（*Scottish Rectified Rite*），真理会（*Philalethes*）

J Touzay-Du Chenteau was an alchemist, theosophist, and Freemason. His writings, oral teachings, and “occult” practices, as well as his eccentric behaviour, attracted much curiosity between roughly 1775 and 1790. To my knowledge, no comprehensive study has been done of this figure, despite the many sources that remain. The biographical information we have on him does contain some gaps.<sup>1</sup> A precise date of birth, 2 August 1741, is given in Lieutaud’s *Liste alphabétique de portraits français* (1846), with no following death date. Since this

list runs until 1775, we may surmise that the portrait that accompanies this article cannot be dated any later.<sup>2</sup> A record entry for 27 May 1788 at the *Les Amis Réunis Lodge* reports his death as having occurred on the twenty-first of that month,<sup>3</sup> following one of his experiments that he would conduct on his own body. *Le Grand Livre de la Nature*, published in 1790, must therefore be a posthumous work. Further genealogical research could possibly provide more information about his origins, starting with Jacques Touzay (1677–1742), who was a lawyer born in Blois.<sup>4</sup>

1 This article generally covers the same content as a talk with the same title that I gave during a seminar on 17 November 2017. Several passages on Lavater and Tieman also appear in my study, *De Londres à Saint-Petersbourg: Carl Friedrich Tieman (1743–1802) aux carrefours des courants illuministes et maçonniques* (Paris/Milan: Archè Edidit (“Lumina” 7), 2018).

Robert Amadou had spoken of writing a “precise study” of this figure (Amadou, “*Le ‘Philosophe Inconnu’ et les ‘Philosophes Inconnus’*”, p. 115, Note 1. See also: pp. 115–117). To my knowledge, it was never published. His actual name, which is spelled Touzay-Du Chenteau, is often written: Duchanteau. The initial of his first name is J (See the title of the portrait that accompanies this article and in the title of *Télètes*), but I do not know the full name.

2 Lieutaud, *Liste alphabétique*, p. 97. This date is followed by a brief description of the portrait that accompanies this article. Tardieu, *Dictionnaire iconographique*, p. 293, simply copies Lieutaud’s text. I would like to thank Dominique Clairembault for having drawn my attention to these two sources.

3 Record published by Porset in *Les Philalèthes*, p. 712. For more on this topic, see below.

4 At the *Archives Nationales*, in the Lobel-Mahy Collection (1621–1970, See Print Sources below),

After introducing the two texts he authored, this article will review his relationships with Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801) and some of his friends, as well as his masonic connections, some of whom followed the Rite of the Philalethes, and others the Rectified Scottish Rite. This is followed by a limited bibliography of the consulted sources and a series of eight “Documents.”

## Introduction to his works

### *Télètes*

*[Télètes], Philosophical and Mathematical Chart dedicated to His Royal Highness Charles Alexandre, Duke of Lorraine and Bar, by his Very Obedient Servant, T. du Chenteau, Along with a magic and perpetual Calendar, (In part) containing contemplations of things most profound and most secret, with the perfect knowledge of philosophy. All Illustrated and Engraved in a new Order, Rectified and Combined with Articles from the next Title. By Monsieur T.... du Chenteau, Mathematician. The Mirror of All Nature. Harmony of the Macrocosm with the Microcosm. Kabbalistic, Numerological, and Theosophic Science, twenty-two folio pages. (64 x 46.5 cm), with seven plates (35 x 48.5*

cm), Brussels, s. d. (1775). With editions in 1775 (Brussels), 1866 (Turin), and one in 1932, see Document VIII below. Reprint: Milan: Archè, 1976 (based on the Turin edition). English version: Adam McLean and Paul Ferguson, *Teletes, An 18th Century Emblematic Table* (Glasgow: Magnum Hermetic Sourceworks, 2014), no. 49. This English version, published in a run of one hundred, includes two parts: A) A reproduction of the seven plates in their original large format, and B) A seventy-eight-page octavo volume with detailed reproductions of the plates, a good study of their sources, as well as translations of the Introduction to the 1979 Archè edition and of Du Chenteau’s text itself (Also, see Ferguson below, under Print Sources).

Τελεται (*teletai*), plural form, comes from the name of a female figure in Greek mythology: Télète (Τελέτη, *Telētē*), the goddess of Bacchic initiation. The author drew and engraved all of the plates in 1775, while staying at a castle in Schaerbeek, near Brussels. The publisher Louvois then printed them. Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine (1712–1780), to whom the Chart is dedicated, was the uncle of Joseph II, later becoming a brother-in-law to Maria Theresa when he married Archduchess Maria Anna

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we can read: “Genealogy of the Monnel Family (a family from Martinique on the Mahy side, née Touzay du Cheneteau [*sic*]) s.d. // Celebration of the marriage of Jacques Touzay du Cheneteau [*sic*] and Marie Thérèse Monnel. Marriage contract signed in Martinique. 5 August 1709 // Joint will of spouses Jacques Touzay du Cheneteau [*sic*] and Marie Thérèse.” I would like to thank Dominique Clairembault for having drawn my attention to this collection.

of Austria in 1744. As one of the most popular governors general of the Austrian Netherlands, he beautified the city of Brussels, where *Télètes* was published.

The work draws on two main sources:

----- Johann Baptist Grosschedl von Aicha (1577–1630), ed., *Calendarium Naturale Magicum Perpetuum Profundissimam Rerum Secretissimarum Contemplationem Totiusque Philosophiae Cognitionem Complectens* (Frankfurt: Theodore de Bry, 1620). This text has been partially attributed, falsely or not, to Tycho Brahe (1546–1601). It was an attempt to bring together all kinds of hieroglyphs, figures, diagrams, and symbolic objects from Antiquity and the East. On the title page of *Télètes*, Du Chenteau writes; “The famous numerical Chart by Tycho Brahe (in fact, the *Calendarium Naturale*), is only one seventh of this work, which includes it.”

----- *Idealis Umbra Sapientiae Generalis* (Paris: Mlle. Sablier, 1679), with text by Sabbathier (R. P. Esprit). This text is part of the same movement as the *Calendarium Naturale*.

The French edition, entitled *L’Ombre idéale de la Sagesse universelle* (Paris: Jablier, 1679), was followed by others: Milan: Archè, 1998, and Brestot: Sesheta, 2014.

Du Chenteau also borrowed illustrations from other works,<sup>5</sup> mainly from:

----- Robert Fludd (1674–1737), *Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris metaphysica, physica atque technica* (Oppenheim: Theodore De Bry, 1617–1624).

----- Gregorius Angelus Sallwigt (pseudonym of Georg von Welling (1655–1727)), *Opus magico-cabalisticum et theologicum. Vom Ursprung und Erzeugung des Saltzes, dessen Natur und Eigenschaft, wie auch dessen Nutz und Gebrauch* (Frankfurt am Main: Anton Heinscheidt, 1719). Several reprints, with additions (Salzburg, 1729; Homburg, 1735; and Frankfurt/Leipzig, 1760 and 1784). Several editions in Russian. Starting with the second edition (1729), the word “theologicum” in the title is replaced with “theosophicum” or “theosophicus.”

The resulting synthesis of iconography is meant to represent the hierarchical structure of the Universe, based on a progression from an initial Unity to the number twelve, along with the relationships between its different planes, the correspondences and connections between the constellations of the zodiac, the hierarchies of angels, the divine attributes of the Kabbalah, the seven heavens of Antiquity, the seasons, parts of the human body, and so on. It

5 See the work done by Ferguson, mentioned above with regard to the 2014 edition, and below under Print Sources.



**LE GRAND ARCHETYPE DE LA MAISON ROYALE**

*Indice appartenant à la figure ci-dessus*

<p><b>OSOPHIQUE LISTIQUE.</b></p> <p>Dans les Planètes et Heures</p> <p>Heure</p> <p>Heure</p> <p>Heure</p> <p>Heure</p> <p>Heure</p>	<p>LA CONJONCTION ET TRAIEN METALLES METAUX.</p> <p>VISION DE DIEU</p> <p>LE SOLJEH</p> <p>LA TIARE</p> <p>LACALDITE</p> <p>DE LAIR</p> <p>EZECHIEL</p>	<p>LA GRACE</p> <p>VENUS</p> <p>LEBAUDRIER</p> <p>ETIUMDITE</p> <p>DE L'EAU</p> <p>DANIEL</p>	<p>LE REGNE</p> <p>MARS</p> <p>LES DEUX EPAULIERS</p> <p>LACICITE</p> <p>DU FEU</p> <p>SALOMON</p>	<p>LA JOYE</p> <p>LA LUNE</p> <p>LALAMEDOR</p> <p>FRIGIDITE</p> <p>DE LA TERRE</p> <p>JEREMIE</p>	<p>DANS L'ARCHETYPE</p> <p>DANS L'INTELLECT</p> <p>OU CELESTE.</p> <p>DANS LE PETIT</p> <p>MONDE.</p>	
<p>SACRES ET PENTACLES TOUITES CHOSES.</p>	<p>PUISSANCES</p> <p>CAMAEH</p> <p>CONYX</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♀</p> <p>CLO</p> <p>LOUYE</p> <p>VEGETABLE</p> <p>L'AMORTELLE</p> <p>NARINE</p>	<p>VERTUS</p> <p>RAPHAEL</p> <p>CHRYSOLITE</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♂</p> <p>MELPOMENE</p> <p>LA VELE</p> <p>L'ANIMAL</p> <p>LES OS</p> <p>ET L'AGACHE</p>	<p>PRINCIPALTE</p> <p>HANIEL</p> <p>LE JASPE</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♀</p> <p>EKATE: I</p> <p>EDORAT</p> <p>LEAU</p> <p>LACHAIR</p> <p>LABOUCHE</p>	<p>ARCHANGES</p> <p>MICHAEL</p> <p>LA TOPAZE</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♀</p> <p>ETIERPE</p> <p>LE GOUT</p> <p>LE FEU</p> <p>LES ONGLES</p> <p>L'ANUS</p>	<p>ANGES</p> <p>GABRIEL</p> <p>LA SAIDOINE</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♀</p> <p>THALIE</p> <p>LE TOUCHER</p> <p>LA TERRE</p> <p>LES CHEVEUX</p> <p>LAVIRGE</p>	<p>DANS L'ARCHETYPE</p> <p>INTELLIGIBLE</p> <p>DANS LE MONDE</p> <p>CELESTE.</p> <p>LE MICROCOSME.</p>
<p>ASTROLOGIE SEPTUAGINTAIRE</p> <p>ASTROLOGIE SEPTUAGINTAIRE</p> <p>ASTROLOGIE SEPTUAGINTAIRE</p> <p>ASTROLOGIE SEPTUAGINTAIRE</p> <p>ASTROLOGIE SEPTUAGINTAIRE</p>	<p>JERHOAH</p> <p>NETSAH</p> <p>MELACHM</p> <p>RAPHAEL</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♀</p> <p>LE COEUR</p> <p>ORGANES DU CORPS</p> <p>LES ARTERES</p> <p>BARUCHA</p>	<p>NETSAH</p> <p>LA VICTOIRE</p> <p>ELOHIM</p> <p>HANIEL</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♀</p> <p>LES REINS</p> <p>VEGETATIF</p> <p>LES VEINES</p> <p>HADEL</p>	<p>ELCHAI</p> <p>JESOD</p> <p>CHERUBS</p> <p>GABRIEL</p> <p>SPHERE DE ♀</p> <p>LES GENTOIRE</p> <p>LA RAISON</p> <p>LA CHAIR</p> <p>ASER</p>	<p>ADONAL</p> <p>MALCHUT</p> <p>ROYAUME</p> <p>ISCHIM</p> <p>AMETVELANTE</p> <p>SPHERE DES ELEMENTS</p> <p>LA MATRICE</p> <p>LENTENDEMENT</p> <p>LA PEAU</p> <p>HALLELUA</p>	<p>DANS L'ARCHETYPE</p> <p>INTELLIGIBLE.</p> <p>DANS LE MONDE</p> <p>CELESTE.</p> <p>DANS LE MONDE</p> <p>ELEMENTAIRE.</p>	
<p>CELESTE</p> <p>Indice appartenant à la figure ci-dessus</p> <p>WERFISSEMENT</p>	<p>FIGURE QUI SERT A ERIGER UN THESME SOIT POUR ROYALME OU REINEVILLE</p>				<p>UN THESME SOIT POUR REPUBLICQUE</p> <p>OU CONGREGATION</p>	
<p>LES QUI REPONDENT A UN</p> <p>SIGNES</p> <p>LA BALANCE</p> <p>ZURIEL</p> <p>SEPTEMBRE</p> <p>TSEH</p> <p>FASSE</p> <p>LOUYE</p> <p>LE BOU IS</p> <p>SCORPIONS</p> <p>L'YACINTHE</p> <p>EPHRAIM</p> <p>SUBIMATION</p>	<p>LE SCORPION</p> <p>ZARACHIEL</p> <p>OCTOBRE</p> <p>MARCHESEAN</p> <p>LE LOUYE</p> <p>LE PIVERT</p> <p>LE CORNOBIE</p> <p>L'ARMOSE</p> <p>L'AGATHE</p> <p>MENASCHIE</p> <p>SEPARATION</p>	<p>SAGITTAIRE</p> <p>ABNACHIEL</p> <p>NOVEMBRE</p> <p>CHASIEU</p> <p>L'ARCHE</p> <p>L'ACORNEILLE</p> <p>LE PALMIER</p> <p>LE MOPRON</p> <p>L'AMETHYSTE</p> <p>BENJAMIN</p> <p>INTEGRATION</p>	<p>CABRICORNE</p> <p>BAMAEH</p> <p>DECEMBRE</p> <p>TEBETH</p> <p>LE LIGON</p> <p>LE HERON</p> <p>LE PIN</p> <p>LE HATHUS</p> <p>CHRYSOLITE</p> <p>DAN</p> <p>FERMETATION</p>	<p>LE VARSIEU</p> <p>GAMBIEL</p> <p>JANVIER</p> <p>SCHEBATH</p> <p>LA BARBE</p> <p>LE PAON</p> <p>LE NOURUN</p> <p>SERPENTINE</p> <p>LOUX</p> <p>ASSER</p> <p>MULTIPLICATION</p>	<p>LES POISSONS</p> <p>BARACHIEL</p> <p>FEBVIER</p> <p>ADAR</p> <p>LE CHEVAL</p> <p>LE CYGNE</p> <p>L'ORME</p> <p>ARISTOLOCHE</p> <p>LE BERRI</p> <p>NAPHTHALI</p> <p>PROJECTION</p>	<p>DANS L'ARCHETYPE</p> <p>INTELLIGIBLE.</p> <p>DANS LE MONDE</p> <p>ELEMENTAIRE</p> <p>DANS LE MONDE</p> <p>CELESTE</p>

(Musée de la franc-maçonnerie, GODF Collection)

also covers many points that were important to Illuminist Freemasonry at the time.

There were many publications that printed descriptions of *Télètes* as early as 1779, soon after it appeared, including the *Journal des sçavans*<sup>6</sup> and the *Journal de Littérature, des Sciences et des Arts*.<sup>7</sup> In the latter, the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Gabriel Alexandre Grosier (1743–1823) gave the Chart the full title of *Carte Philosophique et Mathématique*, and described it as follows:

It is replete with hieroglyphic Figures and Emblems, containing all the curiosities that the human mind has discovered through the Occult Sciences based on numbers: Tycho Brahe's Numerical Chart is entirely included within it. We know how rare this Chart (that of Tycho Brahe) is, since it is not found in even the most famous of Libraries, save that of the King. The price [. . .] is thirty-nine livres and it is available from the author in the Rue des Martyrs, Paris.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Le Grand Livre de la Nature***

*Le Grand Livre de la Nature (The Great Book of Nature), or the philosophical and hermetic Apocalypse, a curious work on occult philosophy, the wisdom of*

*ancient hieroglyphs, that of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, the transmutation of metals, and on man's communication with higher and intermediate beings between him and the great architect. As observed by a Society of un . . . ph . . . and published by D[u Chenteau] . . . From the year 1 to the year 1790, [Paris?]: From Midi and the Imprimerie de la Vérité, s. d. (1790). New edition, "revised and corrected, with the addition of an Introduction (pp. 1–24) by Oswald Wirth," Paris: Librairie du Merveilleux (Bibliothèque des Hautes Sciences, P. Dujols & A. Thomas), 1910. Reprint of the original 1790 edition: Gènes: Phoenix, 1981.*

In the "Introduction" (pp. 3–6), the author states that he has had the privilege of seeing the "great book of Nature" open up before him. This book remains closed to most. "Oh mankind! [. . .] Why must the temple of truth stand so empty? There is an ancient and sacred institution (F.M. [i.e., Freemasonry]) that allows us to glimpse it, but the hieroglyphs it presents you with are of no use to you" (pp. 4–5).

Later, in the section entitled "Occult Sciences" (pp. 7–21), he alludes to the existence of "some unknown philosophers" who know how to engage with Nature, "but they have had no time

6 May 1779, vol. XXIV, 440–442 (See the Print Sources cited below).

7 Vol. I, 1779, 48 (See the Print Sources cited below). I would like to thank Dominique Clairembault for having drawn my attention to these two journals.

8 Translator's note. Our translation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of cited foreign language material in this article are our own.

to instruct the world in general” (p. 11). He cites “Paracelsus, Van Helmont, Raimond Lulle, Glauber, Trevisan, Swedenborg, etc.” all together, as well as his contemporary Antoine Court de Gébelin, who “has provided explanations of signs and hieroglyphs, showing that we must study the primeval world” (pp. 11–12). Court de Gébelin (1725–1784) published his famous *Monde Primitif* (Primeval World) in nine volumes between 1773 and 1782. The author then offers a long description of his experiments with palingenesis (pp. 14–19) involving plants and even some animals (on this topic, he cites, among other works, *Curiositez inouyes* (1629) by Jacques Gaffarel (1601–1681).

After presenting some generalities about numbers, he assures the reader that “this study is the work of the Un(known) Ph(ilosophers) . . . It is from them that I have learned all of the truths that I set down in this work. Since many may not know about this society, I must expose its institution and its work. Oh, my brothers! Do not fear any indiscretion! I suppose that all who read me are F.M. I say all, with no mention of the profane.” He also alludes to Christian Rosenkreuz without giving his name, calling him only “The founder of the Order of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross,” while also drawing on the *Fama Fraternitatis*, published in 1614, without giving its title. (p. 22). He adds: “This Society is under the protection of the Holy Spirit. The institution and the works are nearly the same as the F.M. ∴ except that they do not meet together, they merely write to the Chapter without visiting it [. . .] They work on

finding the panacea and on the transmutation of metals [. . .] Those who wish to know more about this topic should consult *Parcelse & Libavius*” (p. 23). This reference leads nowhere, since Paracelsus (1493–1541) died nearly a century before the Rosicrucians appeared, and since the chemist Andreas Libavius (1556–1616) was the author of a 1615 attack on Rosicrucianism (published in 1616 under the title *Exercitatio Paracelsica nova de notandis ex scripto Fraternitatis de Rosea Cruce*)!

The long passage on pages 24 to 55, entitled “Hermetic Apocalypse,” recounts a complicated and dreamlike narrative, full of symbols and initiatory references. This is followed by a kind of explanation, entitled “Commentary on the Preceding Revelation, or A Well-Reasoned Interpretation of the Hermetic Apocalypse” (pp. 56–65). Without offering any further details, the author claims that the “famous Swedenborg gave us grand instructions [. . .], there is no need to repeat them here, I refer you to his works: but I warn you that you must know how to read them” (p. 57). We learn and are meant to be intrigued to know that he who “hears the Hermetic Apocalypse” will find within the seven degrees of atonement known in F.M. ∴, and even among all Christians” (p. 59). Here, the author also takes the opportunity, as elsewhere, to criticize Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803): First, “The intelligence [of the] Hermetic Apocalypse [. . .] will reveal” to the reader “truths that the author of a book entitled *Des erreurs & de la vérité* (On Errors and Truth) could only guess at” (pp. 59–60; remember

that this work was published in 1775), and later, after citing the names of several chemists and alchemists, the author states that many people “do not understand their works at all, and find them as obscure as *St. Martin’s system*” (pp. 60–61). Curiously, although the word “Martinists” is not to be found in the text itself, it does appear in the passage (p. 114) from the table of contents referring to this section: “Interpretation of Swedenborg, of Moyse, and the Opinion of the Martinists.” The author then moves on to various considerations of alchemical work (pp. 61–65).

This is followed by “The Language of the Adepts, or an Abridged Dictionary of Philosophy. With Explanations of Words and Hieroglyphs” (pp. 66–99). This section contains a lexicon of chemical and alchemical terms, a few related recipes (pp. 66–87), as well as eleven other recipes that the author has taken from a manuscript lent to him by an “Arab chemist” (pp. 89–99), along with praise for Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801), whose *Fragments physiognomiques* was published between 1775 and 1778:

[This Arab chemist] performed surprising feats before my eyes. He had a deep knowledge of chemistry, astrology, and above all, the art of understanding men’s nature. He gave me a few lessons in this last science. He showed me the merits of the work done by the Doctor La Chambre and

by the famous Lavater, who is a citizen of Zürich in Switzerland. He has created a sublime work on interpreting a man’s exterior, his appearance, and the conclusions one may draw about his morals and character. Here, I must express my praise for Mr. Lavater, who may have his detractors, but who is a skilled observer. I myself have repeated his observations and have found them to be just (pp. 88–89).

It is curious that he does not cite his contemporary, Toux de Salverte, an alchemist and master of “occult sciences,” who was his first teacher.<sup>9</sup> This short work concludes with an Afterword (pp. 100–108, given the title “Preface”). After a few banalities, he refers back to his “Hermetic Apocalypse,” saying that “true philosophers will see in it the tools the Divine has left for us to find our way back to our primal state” (p. 103). Next, he describes a kind of numerico-geometric calculation, which he assures us is “one of the greatest discoveries of the R.:C.: brothers.” Finally, he attacks Freemasonry’s detractors, especially those who complain they have learned nothing from it, saying they “are truly born for the shadows,” that they have not made the effort to “study” the “allegories” they have been shown (pp. 106–107). Specifically:

The allegories used in F.M. may not only disgust some of those who are not meant for the sub-

9 See the work on Lucas de Toux de Salverte (or Salverte de Toux), edited by Savalette de Langes, found in Porset’s *Les Philalèthes*, p. 657, or Beaurepaire’s *L’espace des francs-maçons*, pp. 128–129, 164–165.

lime, they may even lead to certain errors that can be harmful to those contemplating the hieroglyphs, causing them to interpret them as follows their own pleasure. If they are looking for the panacea, they will see the key hidden in all that meets their eyes. If they wish to understand the transmutation of metals, they will see the answer written all around them. If they believe they can speak with angels, they will imagine themselves in heaven, having climbed up Jacob's ladder. In the end, each mounts the horse of his opinion, takes his reason up under his arm, and rides off into unknown lands (p. 197).

And yet, "the truth exists, it exists. Three demonstrates it. Seven leads to it. It is the product of Nine . . . Another source of confusion for those unfamiliar" (p. 108). The rest of the book (pp. 108–115) is a detailed table of contents (mentioned above, with regard to the term "Martinists").

Robert Amadou has written: "There is a great confusion of ideas in this volume, which the author presents

under the auspices of 'Unknown Philosophers.'" And on both books: "Duchanteau, much like Rostand's *Cyrano*, is 'mad, but he's a learned madman.'"<sup>10</sup>

## Du Chenteau and Johann Caspar Lavater

In March 1781, Freemason Carl Friedrich Tieman (1743–1802) told Lavater that he had known the Parisian<sup>11</sup> Du Chenteau since 1777:

On my first trip to Paris, nearly four years ago, I had heard of D[u] C[henteau], and I later found many ways to get to know his work. But the pure and simple truth that I learned gave me good reasons to keep my own council. [At that time] two of my compatriots, C[ount Karl Heinrich] von S[chönburg] and Dr. [Christian Gottfried] K[örner], whom I knew well, assured me that he was in possession of the truth. I followed him and found many friends of the Light [there], people that I knew already, but I also found many errors and dangerous principles. I learned that K[örner] had gone to Zürich.<sup>12</sup>

10 Amadou, "Le Philosophe Inconnu' et les 'Philosophes Inconnus,'" p. 115.

11 Marie-Daniel Bourrée de Corberon (1748–1810), who met Du Chenteau at this time, wrote: "This man, whom Delanges [= Savalette de Langes] knows well, is poor. He lives in the Rue des Martires in Montmartre (Journal kept by the Musée Calvet in Avignon, V, p. 368, September 1780). On 3 October 1781, Du Chenteau wrote (see Document V, below) to Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim: "My address is Du Chanteau, Montmartre, Ruelle du Vicaire, Maison de M. Julien. No. 10."

12 "Beÿ meiner ersten Reise nach Paris vor beynahe vier Jahren, hatte ich von D[u] C[henteau] gehöret, und fand nachdem verschiedene Wege, seine Lehre zu kennen, hatte aber überwiegende Gründe beÿ der reinen lautern Wahrheit die ich kannte, stehen zu bleiben. Zweÿ meiner Landsleute, der G[raf Christian Heinrich] von S[chönburg] und der Dr. [Christian Gottfried] K[örner] die ich genau kenne, versicherten mich, daß er die Wahrheit hatte. Ich folgte ihn, fand einige mit schon

Körner had already spoken with Lavater about the interest that he and Schönburg had in Du Chenteau, whom he had recently met. In the following months, much of the correspondence between these three men focused on Du Chenteau. On 28 December 1780, Körner wrote to Lavater in glowing terms about this theosophist, who he said had:

A System [. . .] that encompasses not only the Old and New Testaments, but also the principles common to ancient peoples' religious systems, systems hidden behind symbols and fables, that also offers simple and easy solutions for the most difficult psychological and physical problems, and that ultimately eliminates all remaining obscurity and

doubt, even with regard to your [i.e., Lavater's] doctrinal conception of the Christian religion.<sup>13</sup>

Körner added that Du Chenteau was ready to reveal to Lavater, under the seal of secrecy, all of his knowledge, orally, including "a certain operation, which could be dangerous."<sup>14</sup> Although Lavater did not know it yet, this operation involved consuming nothing but one's own urine for several weeks, a practice which was supposed to grant "philosophal" benefits, to use a term from the period. Du Chenteau believed in the efficacy of this practice and tried it himself, although he had to be stopped by force to prevent him from dying.<sup>15</sup> It seems that it was a return to this experiment that led to his death on 21 May 1788. As we saw above, the "Register of the Les Amis Réunis Lodge" contains an

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bekannte Freunde des Lichts, dabey aber viel Irrthum und gefährliche Grundsätze. Ich erfuhr daß K[örner] nach Zurich gereiset war" (Tieman to Lavater, 15 March 1781, Paris, ZBanLAV 529–544). Christian Gottlieb Körner (1756–1831), known for his later correspondence with Friedrich Schiller, and father of the famous poet Theodor Körner, was the friend and travel companion of Karl Heinrich von Schönburg-Glauchau (1757–1815). In 1776, Schönburg became a member of the Minerva zu den Drei Palmen Loge (Minerva of the Three Palms), in Leipzig. Körner became a member in 1777.

- 13 "[ein] System [. . .], das einen befriedigenden Aufschluß gäbe nicht allein über das Alte und Neue Testament, sondern über alles, was die unter Symbolen und Fabeln verkleideten Religionssysteme der alten Völker miteinander gemein haben, das ferner die schwersten psychologischen und physischen Fragen auf eine leichte und einfache Art auföste, das endlich über alle Dunkelheiten und Zweifel beruhigte, die selbst bey Ihrem Lehrbegriff von der christlichen Religion noch übrig bleiben" (Körner to Lavater, 28 December 1780, in Bauke, "Der Heiland aus Paris," p. 28).
- 14 "eine gewisse Handlung, die unter gewissen Umständen gefährlich seyn könnte" (Körner to Lavater, 28 December 1780, in Bauke, "Der Heiland aus Paris," p. 27).
- 15 A detailed account of this experiment can be found in Gleichen, *Souvenirs*, pp. 187–190 (Section XVII, "Alchemy," pp. 187–192). The text is provided below as Document IV. See also below, subsection "With the Philaethes," Bila, *La croyance à la magie au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 85–87, and Bord, *La Franc-Maçonnerie en France*, p. 355. Bord claimed that Du Chenteau died from an explosion in the Philaethes' laboratory, which is false (as Porset noted in *Les Philalèthes*, p. 552). The whole affair has been the subject of many inaccurate retellings, for example in Nettelbladt, *Geschichte Freimaurerischer Systeme*, p. 676, and in Boissin (in *Visionnaires et Illuminés*, pp. 14–17). Boissin attributes Gleichen's story to Dr. David Ferdinand Koreff (a real individual, 1783–1851), reinforcing the atmospheric elements, but we must remember that Boissin's work is not presented as a work of real history.

entry for 27 May: “(Savalette) De Langes reported on the last experiment of Br. Duchanteau, stating that he had succumbed on 21 May after having fasted for 12 whole days.”<sup>16</sup> He was not, however, the first to proclaim the restorative virtues of urine. Jean Le Pelletier had also done so in his 1704 book, *L’Alkaest*, and the subject was also discussed in November of that year in the *Journal de Trévoux*.<sup>17</sup> Lavater was invited to come from Zürich to Strasbourg, halfway to Paris, to meet Körner, Du Chenteau, and Schönburg, who recommended the meeting in a postscript. Lavater accepted, as he was already planning a trip to Strasbourg with his ailing wife to consult with Cagliostro. He did remain somewhat cautious,<sup>18</sup> but after meeting him in person, probably in early January 1781, he sent a flattering message:

A thousand, thousand thank  
you for all that you told me. I  
shall not forget a single word of  
it. I shall put it into action every  
day. You have taught me much,  
but not enough! We will meet  
again soon. I am not attached  
to any mortal, and no mortal  
should attach themselves to me.

But the eternal Truth, the Word  
itself will unite us for eternity. I  
am sure of it. May its grace be  
with you!<sup>19</sup>

As for Körner, two weeks after  
inviting his Swiss friend to Strasbourg,  
he tells him that he had been misled.  
Luckily, “a friend of limited skill, but  
with an honest heart, warned me, and  
I woke up as if from a deep sleep.” This  
friend might well be Charles-Pierre-  
Paul Savalette de Langes (1745–1797),  
who saw Körner as a friend and thought  
that Du Chenteau’s system was mad-  
ness.<sup>20</sup> Three weeks later, Schönburg  
made his own criticisms,<sup>21</sup> discussing  
Du Chenteau’s attempts to get into Ti-  
eman’s good graces:

I have nothing to do with DH  
[= Du Chenteau]. I believe that  
he is mostly a man of good faith,  
but enthusiastic and indescrib-  
ably reckless. Not satisfied with  
teaching his doctrine to those  
who wish to hear it, he goes about  
imposing it on various people.  
For instance, he wanted to force  
an introduction with a certain  
Tiemann, because he claimed

16 In Porset, *Les Philalèthes*, p. 712 (see Note 3 above). Porset follows the story with a footnote: The “Note of André Doré,” a note that includes a “report on Duchanteau,” with Doré having collected documents on the history of the Order, which Porset cites in the same work, p. 707.

17 See in the Print Sources cited below: Pelletier, *L’Alkaest* (cited by Porset in *Les Philalèthes*, p. 552).

18 Körner to Lavater, 28 December 1780, in Bauke, “Der Heiland aus Paris,” p. 2.

19 Quoted by Viatte (*Les sources occultes*, vol. I, p. 11, Note 3), who unfortunately does not cite a source. I did not find any correspondence between the two men in ZBanLAV or ZBvonLAV. In Note 3, Viatte describes the letter as “flattering, but not leaving room for further communication.” I think that Lavater simply wanted to be agreeable, masking his reservations behind friendly words.

20 Here I agree with Bauke (Bauke, “Der Heiland aus Paris,” p. 28, Note 54). In fact, Savalette had written to Diethelm Lavater, Johann Caspar’s brother in January 1781 to put him on his guard. See below: With the Philalèthes and With the Scottish Rectified Rite.

21 Bauke, “Der Heiland aus Paris,” pp. 37–41.

to know that he was a seeker of the Truth and he had to share it with him. He had no luck, since Tiemann already had a system he was satisfied with, and so only listened to him out of necessity.<sup>22</sup>

Lavater shared his feelings with Schönburg the following day (2 February 1781), feelings that do not align with the note he sent to Du Chenteau after their meeting: “My first impression [of him] was that he seemed a great pleasure-seeker, with a talent that was almost crook-like [. . .] You can imagine how cautious it made me!”<sup>23</sup> On 24 March, he wrote to Tieman that in his opinion, Du Chenteau had “many higher-level views,” but that underneath, “his entire system was based on the same old moth-eaten texts.”<sup>24</sup> In two letters written a short time later, on 24 April and 2 May of that year, Johann Friedrich Schwartz (ab Urna, 1733–1807), personal secretary of Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick (a Victoria, 1721–1792, Magnus Superior Ordinis of the Order of Strict Observance), wrote to Lavater about their masonic affairs, notably the discussions he had had with Schönburg before he left Brunswick

for Berlin. The Duke normally resided in Brunswick, but at that time he was in Schleswig as the guest of Charles of Hesse-Cassel (a Leone Resurgente, 1734–1836):

Since my last letter, I have met with Dr. Körner from Leipzig, whom Your Serene Highness spoke of, before he left [Brunswick], and we spoke of a letter from Br. [Frédéric-Rodolphe] Saltzmann of Strasbourg, who mentions a certain Duchanteau, a self-proclaimed Theosophist in Paris. Dr. Koerner was accompanied by Count Schönburg, Chamberlain of the Elector of Saxony, with whom he had been travelling for two years through England and France, with the single goal of expanding their knowledge of Freemasonry and of the Order. To this end, the two gentlemen visited any place where they might find people worthy of their attention and capable of furthering their search for instruction.

Schwartz added, however, “I dare say that in searching they became lost.

22 “Mit der Person des DH [= Du Chenteau] habe ich nichts zu tun. Ich glaube ihn in der Hauptsache de bonne foi, aber unbeschreiblich enthusiastisch und unvorsichtig, das er seine Lehre nicht nur jedem, der sie auch blos nur anhören will, mittheilet, sondern sie auch seine manchem aufdringt. Er ist unter anderem einem gewissen Tiemann auf die Stube gerückt, weil er behauptete, er wusste der Mensch suchte Wahrheit und er musste sie ihm verkündigen – hat sich aber sehr hintergangen gefunden, weil der erwähnte Mann ein ihn beruhigendes System schon hatte und ihn blos aus Nothwendigkeit angehört hat” (Schönburg to Lavater, 1 February 1781, in Bauke, “Der Heiland aus Paris,” pp. 38–39).

23 “Der erste Eindruck war der des feinsten Wollüstlings und eines beynahe spitzbübischen Talentes [. . .] Sie können denken, wie mich das behutsam gemacht habe?” (quoted in *Goethe und Lavater*, p. 414, Note 101).

24 “D. C. [= Touzay Du Chenteau] hat viele süperiöre Blicke; – aber das ganze seines Systems beruhet noch auf einigen morschen Stücken” (Lavater to Tieman, 24 March 1781, ZBvonLAV 584–67).

This is especially true of Dr. Körner, who was excessively enthusiastic.” And continued:

[Körner] told me nothing of Mr. Duchanteau, except that he had been initiated into all kinds of sublime knowledge, just as Körner had, but shortly before he left Strasbourg, the two had argued, Du Chanteau and he, and that since then they had had nothing to do with each other. Count Schönburg had also disputed with Du Chanteau, sometime before Körner, and he showed me a furious letter that Du Chanteau had written him, in which he threatened him with death in the next ten months.<sup>25</sup>

Less than a week later, Schwartz added a few precisions:

I said in my last letter to Your Serene Highness that Duchanteau had written a threatening letter to Count Schönburg, in which he predicted his death in the next ten months. I tried in many ways to get a copy of this very interesting letter, but he did not want

to allow it. He did tell me that [Frédéric-Rodolphe] Saltzmann had a copy, and perhaps he might send it to Your Serene Highness should you ask.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, Lavater, wrote of Du Chanteau twice to his friend Goethe. On 31 March 1781, he included a silhouette with his letter:

This silhouette is that of Duchanteau, an enormous mind who came to visit me. This man is clearly marked as a religious genius, with clever views on metaphysics, theosophy, and religion. Along with four truly divine ideas, he will also mix in three abominable ones, speaking in turns with divine and diabolic inspiration. He is a Pythagorean, an anchorite, a mystic, a great Christian and Antichrist all in one person. A Catholic by birth, he was also circumcised out of exalted passion. A Pythagorean by his love for the Truth, he is now an enlightened fool, as well as a man who is close with scoundrels.<sup>27</sup>

25 AODE, FXXVI 93 l 32. 27 April 1781, Brunswick. Received 4 May, responded 17 May. I would like to thank Reinhard Markner for having brought the two letters cited here to my attention, and for securing copies for me.

26 AODE, FXXVI 93 l 33. Schwartz to Ferdinand of Brunswick, 2 May 1781, Brunswick. Received 7 May, responded 17 May. For more on the relationship between Saltzmann and Du Cheteau, see below: “With the Rectified Scottish Rite.”

27 “Die Silhouette ist von *Duchanteau*, dem *Riesengeiste*, der bey mir war. Ein Mann von rasender metaphysisch theosophisch spitzbüßisch religiöser Genialität – der neben vier göttlich wahren Gedanken immer 3 abominable fallen ließ – bald die Sprache der Inspiration, bald die des Teufels spricht – Ein Pythagoräer, Anachoret, Mystiker, Hochchrist, Antichrist in Einer Person – Catholik von Geburt, durch Schwärmerey ein beschnittener – durch Wahrheitsliebe ein Pythagoräer – izt ein hocherleuchteter Narr und also – nahe verwandt mit einem Lump” (Lavater to Goethe, 31 March 1781, in *Goethe und Lavater*, pp. 167–168). Previously cited in French by Viatte (*Les Sources*

Goethe wrote to Lavater from Weimar around 9 April 1781, and the following lines on Saint-Martin's first book have been often quoted since: "In the book, *Des erreurs et de la vérité*, which I have started to read, what Truths and what Errors I am finding! The deepest mysteries of the most authentic humanity are mixed there, bound together with ropes made from the straw of madness and narrowness."<sup>28</sup> Three weeks later (on 22 April), Lavater responded to Goethe with the following lines, echoing the rumours that had been going around about Martinès de Pasqually, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, Cagliostro, and Du Chenteanu:

If you would, please tell me on which pages of the book [*Des erreurs et de la vérité*] you find the most profound mysteries of the truest humanity. Pasqually is the book's true author. He is a Melchisedekit (my word for those who seek revelations while being neither Jewish nor Christian) and

a Great Preacher of minds. A certain Mr. Martin [=Saint-Martin] in Paris, whom Duchanteau, not always a reliable source, says is full of ridiculous visions, published it from Pasqually's manuscripts, with some additions from his own workshop. / Duchanteau has as much of a deep interior as he has a sensual exterior, but with no love, no heart. Although they are as different as fire and water, both he and Calliostro would make good Antichrists. Both have tortured minds, both are so great, one for his genius, the other for his energy, that they might seduce the elect themselves. Both have an appearance of deep religiosity, both are without love, although they perform acts of love, both are infinitely pretentious and scornful, while full of adoration for themselves! If some prince makes them his favourite, they'll become the false prophets of the Apocalypse.<sup>29</sup>

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*occultes*, vol. I, p. 111). My translation differs slightly.

28 "In dem Buch *Des erreurs et de la vérité* das ich angefangen habe, welche Wahrheit ! und welcher Irrthum ! Die tiefsten Geheimnisse der wahrsten Menschheit mit Strohseil des Wahns und der Beschränktheit zusammen hängt" (in *Goethe und Lavater*, p. 170).

29 "Ich wünschte sehr, daß du mir einige Seitenzahlen aus dem Buche *Erreurs* etc. [= *Des erreurs et de la vérité*] anzeigtest, wo du die tiefsten Geheimnisse der wahrsten Menschheit siehest. *Pasqually* ist der wahre Urheber des Buches, ein beschnittener Melchisedekit [So heiß ich die Offenbarungsgenießer, die nicht Juden und Christen sind] und Geisterhoherpriester. Ein gewisser *Martin* von Paris, von dem der nicht immer glaubwürdige Duchanteau lächerliche Visionen und Grimaßen erzählt, soll es aus den Handschriften des verstorbenen *Pasqually* mit Zusätzen seiner 'Strohfeil' ? Fabrik herausgegeben haben. / *Duchanteau* ist in demselben Grad' innerlich tief, wie äusserlich sinnlich – aber, ohne *Liebe* ; ohne Herz – *Calliostro* und Er – obgleich beyde gegen einander, wie Feuer und Waßer, sind in meinen Augen zwey determinirte Ingredienzen zum Antichrist. Schief beyde, und beyde, der Eine an Genialität, der andere an Kraft so groß, daß es bey nahe möglich wäre, daß sie auch Auserwählte verführen könnten – Beyde mit dem Schein tiefer Religiosität umleuchtet – Beyde, ohne *Liebe* ; Handlungen der Liebe verrichtend ; Beyde voll unendlicher allverachtender Prätension – und *sich selber* vergötternd ! Kömmt zu diesen noch ein Fürst, der sie beyde in sich zu vergöttern weiß, so haben wir den falschen Prophet der Apokalypse" (Lavater to

## **Du Chenteau's Relationship with the Philalethes and the Rectified Scottish Rite**

### *With the Philalethes*

The relationships between our man Du Chenteau and the Philalethes and the Les Amis Réunis Lodge were fraught with contradictions. Of course, this kind of Masonic academy of the “occult sciences,” with Charles-Pierre-Paul Savalette de Langes at its head, was naturally inclined to welcome the author of *Télètes* among its ranks, even providing him with a laboratory for his alchemy.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, he was the target of sharp criticism within the institution, although its doors were never closed to him.

Towards the end of 1780 and the beginning of 1781, he came to be seen as a troublemaker. This was partially due to the fact that on his trip (mentioned above) with Christian Gottfried Körner, he tried to deter one of the leading representatives of Swiss Freemasonry under the Lyon Reform from contacting Savalette. This was Diethelm Lavater (1743–1826), the brother of Johann Caspar. After he learned that Johann Caspar, Körner, and Du Chenteau planned to meet in Strasbourg, Savalette wrote to Diethelm on 31 January 1781, to warn him about this magus, who:

for three years was one of my masters in the secret sciences, but I no longer follow him and I believe I can say with certainty that I will never again be his disciple, and although I have weighty reasons for keeping my silence when it comes to him [...] I am not afraid to formally denounce him and to declare that I believe his doctrine to be as false as it is pernicious, and I call on all good God-fearing truth-seekers to suspend their judgment and to examine his works and his doctrine with the most careful attention before placing the least trust in this man, who may be one of the most extraordinary men I have ever met in my life.<sup>31</sup>

In 1781, Savalette also wrote a report that he sent to François-Marie de Chefdebien (1753–1814) about the upcoming Freemason congress in Wilhelmsbad in 1782, including the following:

*Duchanteau.* You have been warned about this man, and I think your opinion has been decided. He is given to the lowest and most shameful vices. Personally, I can see him bringing a corpse back to life, I wouldn't

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Goethe, 22 April 1781, in *Goethe und Lavater*, pp. 173–174).

30 The Les Amis Réunis archives contain a very detailed account of daily medical observations and two “alchemical” distillation experiments carried out by Duchanteau, in all probability in the Lodge’s facilities, using his own urine (see above). See the reproduction of a page from a kind of daily medical journal that Du Chenteau kept during his so-called “12-Day Labour” experiment in late October and early November 1779, in Marchiset & Mollier, “Martinès dans la quête maçonnique du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle” (*Renaissance Traditionnelle*, 165–166 (January–April 2012), p. 21).

31 Savalette de Langes to Diethelm Lavater, 31 January 1781, Paris, letter reproduced in *Les Philalèthes et alentour*, pp. 71–76 (the editor did not identify the recipient of this letter).

want him to be my prophet. You should ask Salzmänn [Frédéric-Rodolphe Saltzmann] about him. If you see Gleiken [Karl Heinrich von Gleichen], tell him what I think, but reassure him that upon his return to Paris, he will hear his story in the greatest detail, I haven't forgotten him. In fact, he has become quite the Theosophist.<sup>32</sup>

The disdain that he expresses seems to have been nurtured by Savalette. In a report on Prince Louis of Darmstadt, he says that he is "afraid that Duchanteau, in his last journey to Germany may have caught him in his net [. . .] we do not know where in Germany Duchanteau travelled and [. . .] the Count of Schönburg [Karl Heinrich von Schönburg, see above], who was his protector, knows Prince Louis well. It might be interesting to know more."<sup>33</sup> Also, in his report on Christian Gottfried Körner (see above), Savalette wrote:

The Count [Karl Heinrich von Schönburg], having met Br. Duchanteau, introduced him to his friend Koerner who, despite what AXIIR [the twelfth class of Les Amis Réunis] had told him about this false prophet, was taken in so completely that he left everything behind for him and took him, on the back way to Zürich, to Illuminate Lawater

[Johann Caspar Lavater], and later left at least seeming to believe that this man had given him the truth. We have heard no more of him, but to judge him by his conduct in Paris, he's a madman.<sup>34</sup>

Savalette's attitude is ambiguous. Four years later, in May 1785, we find Du Chenteau so ensconced in the Les Amis Réunis Lodge that Savalette does not seem to hesitate to introduce him as a primary contact for Karl Armand Heinrich von Heyking (1752–1809), a Baron from Courland travelling through Paris. The latter's manuscript, written in French with the title *Mes réminiscences*, is an unpublished egodocument.<sup>35</sup> It is a rich resource for understanding European history in terms of politics, Freemasonry, and Illuminism (in some regards, it is similar to the *Journal* of his contemporary Marie-Daniel Bourrée de Corberon (1748–1810)).<sup>36</sup> After describing his visit with Franz Anton Mesmer and several magnetism séances that he attended, with many interesting things to say, he adds:

While I was taking classes from Mesmer, I did not forget to visit the leaders of French Freemasonry. I had a letter for a Mr. de la Savalette de Lange, from the Royal Treasury, who was to provide me with the latest information about the Philalèthes

32 Porset, *Les Philalèthes*, p. 637.

33 In Porset, *Les Philalèthes*, p. 641.

34 In Porset, *Les Philalèthes*, p. 645.

35 See Print Sources.

36 Based on this text by Heyking, Beaurepaire discusses and contextualizes Heyking's active and multifaceted role in Freemasonry (See the index of his *L'espace des francs-maçons*).

and put me in contact with the famous Martinist [*sic!*] Toussay du Chanteau, a man with the skill to fast for nine days (I saw the sworn report, signed by eighteen people who claim to have watched him for nine days and nine nights, during which time he drank only water and poured it on his entire body, especially during the last few days. However, I think there was some deception involved in this affair), who by his own word is above us simple and vile mortals. I hoped to amuse myself with these follies, which the French treat with such gravity, precisely because they are so extravagant, but to be admitted to these magic shows, I had to, at least, seem to believe in their possibility.<sup>37</sup>

Heyking therefore went to meet Savalette, who invited him to join the Les Amis Réunis Lodge, in fact the Philalethes Lodge.<sup>38</sup> This tempting invitation did not make him forget his initial intention to meet Du Chenteau, especially when he learned that he “had become a Jew to be initiated into the Kabbalah. I found this information in a

very interesting work entitled *St. Nicaise*.”<sup>39</sup> In fact, in this work, attributed to Johann August Starck, we read:

I have seen [Du] Ch[enteau]’s kabbalistic charts [*Télètes*]. They are what you might expect from a man who so loves the Kabbalah, or rather so hopes to find some greatness within it, that he would become a Jew. Of course, others have done similar things in the history of philosophy, but all that should be kept far from Freemasonry.<sup>40</sup>

The Baron from Courland continued:

Before leaving him [Savalette], I asked him to arrange a meeting for me with the famous Toussay Du Chanteau. Nothing could be easier [Savalette replied], he comes to my house every Thursday at ten o’clock in the morning, and should you wish to pass by the day after tomorrow, you will meet this man, who is astonishing in many ways. I was finally able to meet this bizarre man, and I will transcribe my conversation with him here.<sup>41</sup>

37 *Mes réminiscences*. Not paginated. Page number 592 in the digital version.

38 The passage (not paginated, page number 592 in the digital version) in *Mes réminiscences* that relates this conversation between Savalette and Heyking is quoted in full in Beaurepaire, *L’espace des francs-maçons*, p. 135.

39 Cited below, Document III, and in the Print Sources for Starck’s book.

40 “Die kabbalistischen Karten des [Du] Ch[enteau] habe ich gesehen. Sie sind so, wie man es von einem Manne erwarten kann, der aus Liebe zur Kabbala, oder vielmehr in der Hoffnung, ich weiß nicht was vor grosse Dinge darin anzutreffen, ein Jude werden konnte. In eine Geschichte der Philosophie gehören dergleichen Auftritte wohl; aber von der Maurerey sollte alles dieses weit entfernt bleiben.” *Saint-Nicaise*, pp. 333–334).

41 *Mes réminiscences*. Not paginated. Page number 594 in the digital version.

The conversation, recorded as questions and answers, is almost comical. It involves two interlocutors, with one (Heyking) pretending to play along for the other (Du Chenteau), who doesn't seem to realize he isn't being taken seriously. Never before published in the original French, this conversation is reproduced in full below, in Document III.

### ***With the Rectified Scottish Rite***

We have already mentioned Du Chenteau's attempts to divert Brother Diethelm Lavater, who followed the Rectified Scottish Rite, away from Savalette. He also approached other Brothers of this Rite, some of them quite eminent. For example, he contacted Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824), both at this time and in 1779. On 29 May of that year, he informs Willermoz (see Document I) that he has done what was necessary to repair his “portfolios” and to put locks on them. He is probably referring to the boxes in which Willermoz kept his archives. The workshop entrusted with this work included three women, who called on Willermoz “to enlighten them and initiate them into the higher ranks of adoption,” i.e., women's Freemasonry. Du Chenteau also claimed to have worked for another Brother, the “Duke of Chartres” (Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, 1747–1793), Grand Master of the Grand Orient of France, to help cancel an order targeting “the Provincial Lodge,” with help from the Marquis d'Arcambal (perhaps Antoine Joseph d'Esclacs du Bouquet, Marquis d'Arcambal, 1727–1789) and two Freemasons that were close to

Willermoz, “Bb(rothers) [Jean-Jacques Bacon] De La Chevalerie (1731–1821) and [Louis-Daniel] Tassin [de l'Étang.” Finally, his salutations to Claudine Thérèse Provensal (1729–1810), his correspondent's sister, seems to indicate that he has already visited him in Lyon.

In his correspondence mentioned above (see above, Du Chenteau and Johann Caspar Lavater), on 2 May 1781, Johann Friedrich Schwartz reported to Ferdinand of Brunswick that he had recently dined with Schönburg at the home of Ernst Traugott von Kortum (a Fonte Irriguo 1742–1811) and that Schönburg had spoken to them “about the Martinists”:

[Schönburg] told us of Don Martinez Pasquali, a Spanish Theosophist who had instructed Br. ab Eremo and founded the Doctrine that the latter now teaches. This man has been dead for six or seven years, but all of his active faculties have apparently been transferred to his son, who lives in Lyon. Among his students, there was one named St. Martin, the author of *Des erreurs et de la vérité*, and all his followers have come to be known as Martinists. The Count of Schoenebourg [Schönburg] also believes that all kinds of Theosophists will attend the next Congress, and he assures us that Theosophy was so in fashion in France, that just as it was once well seen to have an African among one's servants, today

there is a Theosophist in nearly every house.<sup>42</sup>

In this interesting passage, we see that Schwartz, and perhaps Duke Ferdinand as well, do not know to what degree both will ally themselves with the same “Theosophy” after the Congress of Wilhelmsbad. This passage also provides more context for Schwartz’s comments on Du Chenteau in two of his other letters to Ferdinand of Brunswick, for example on 27 April, when he links him with Willermoz:

These travellers [Körner and Schönburg] also met Br. ab Eremo [Willermoz] in Lyon and claim to know the source from which he draws his knowledge. They told me that Br. ab Eremo had met Duchanteau in Lyon, a man who had gone the length and breadth of France looking for followers.<sup>43</sup>

On 18 May of the following year, Sébastien Giraud (a Serpente 1735–1803), one of the leading representatives of the Strict Observance in Italy, wrote to Willermoz about Du Chenteau, also sending him a letter written

in Paris the week before by a “Comte de La Pérouse” (Gian Giacomo Marcello Della Perosa).<sup>44</sup> In this letter, the Count wrote that Du Chenteau “has here [in Paris] a system that is making a lot of noise. He says he conferred with him [with Willermoz] a year ago in the countryside, where he went to find him to talk with him, but he did not recognize much in his knowledge, and he gave up on their correspondence.” La Pérouse added that he had an appointment that day for “a conference with Du Chanteau, from nine o’clock until three in the afternoon, for I don’t have much time and I want to see everything.” On 29 May, Giraud thanked Willermoz for having responded to him<sup>45</sup> on the topic of Du Chenteau:

I wish to thank you, my good friend and Br., for the light you shed for me on Br. Du Ch[enteau]. Quite clearly I recall what you said to me without naming him or giving further details. Our worthy M. Pr. [Maître Provincial, Joseph Anne Maximilien de Croÿ, duc d’Havré (1744-1839)] is also grateful to you, and I hope that I will meet

42 AODF, FXXVI 93 l 33. Schwartz to Ferdinand of Brunswick, 2 May 1781, Brunswick. Received 7 May, responded 17 May.

43 AODF, FXXVI 93 l 32, 27 April 1781, Brunswick. Received 4 May, responded 17 May. The “source” here is clearly Martinès de Pasqually, as indicated in the previous citation.

44 This letter from Br. de La Pérouse was brought to Willermoz by Gabriel Asinari de Bernez, whom Giraud described as a “King’s gentleman,” “Majordomo of His Majesty the King of Sardinia.” This man was otherwise known as Gian Giacomo Marcello, Baron Gamba di Roatto e Maretto (1738–1817, adding Della Perosa after 1760). A friend of Giacomo Casanova in Turin and a member of that city’s La Mystérieuse Lodge, he was General Visitor of the Grand Priorat, and a Knight Jacob a Cruce argenteo under the Strict Observance. That same year, 1782, he too would attend the Congress of Wilhelmsbad. I would like to thank Reinhard Markner, who was able to identify the “Comte de la Pérouse.”

45 I have found no record of this response.

our dear Rupi capra [?] again in Chambery next Monday, before he leaves for Geneva, to give him your letter.<sup>46</sup>

In December of 1782, Willermoz wrote to Charles de Hesse-Cassel (1744–1836) that he did not have a good opinion of Du Chenteau and knew of his collusion with Count Franz Joseph Kolowrat-Liebsteinsky (1748–1825), one of their adversaries at the Congress of Wilhelmsbad: “Brother ab Aquila Fulgente [Kolowrat-Liebsteinsky] allied himself with Paris and with Duchanteau, who infected him with his system and his knowledge, leading him to denigrate me more and more.”<sup>47</sup>

Du Chenteau also managed an introduction with the two leading representatives and organizers of the Rectified Rite in Alsace: Frédéric Rodolphe Saltzmann (1749–1821) from Strasbourg and Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim (1752–1831). He went to Strasbourg to meet them and to visit their Lodge. Körner seems to have served as intermediary. This visit is referred to in several exchanges of letters between 1781 and 1782. In February 1781, Saltzmann, who had recently fallen under the charm of this character, declared to Willermoz that he saw in him:

an extraordinary man, with the simplest character and appear-

ance, the most modest, a stranger to vice and entirely given to good [. . .] It is the good, it is virtue that is the sole focus of his work. This man showed me the sorry state of Freemasonry today, which is no more than a husk, a rotten husk at that. He told me he desires to place knowledge once again at the centre, as it was originally. My Lodge happily did not displease him, and he recently promised me that he would make it the home of all his current and future knowledge, if I chose to separate from the Rite that we follow.<sup>48</sup>

But Saltzmann quickly changed his mind. As early as April he wrote: “His principles, I could not adopt them, because I see them as false and dangerous [But] he has assured me that he knows there are falsehoods in his system and that he will not teach it to anyone, except for the very basic elements, for which he has solid proof.”<sup>49</sup> This judgment seems to reflect what Johann Friedrich Schwartz had to say about Saltzmann himself (see above, Du Chenteau and Johann Caspar Lavater). In June, he was able to inform Willermoz that Ferdinand of Brunswick (1721–1792), the Magnus Superior Ordinis of the Strict Observance, “had no

46 BMLW 5.865 (30).

47 Willermoz to Charles de Hesse-Cassel, 30 December 1782. AODF, cote Cop. F II 10 f 28. Information graciously provided by Thierry Boudignon.

48 Saltzmann to Willermoz, 11 February 1781, “Correspondance de F. R. Saltzmann avec J. -B. Willermoz,” in *Renaissance Traditionnelle*, no. 141 (January 2005): pp. 70–71.

49 Saltzmann to Willermoz, 12 April 1781, “Correspondance de F. R. Saltzmann avec J. -B. Willermoz,” in *Renaissance Traditionnelle*, no. 145 (January 2006): pp. 22–23.

wish to see him.”<sup>50</sup> As for Bernard de Turckheim, on 3 October 1781, he received a letter in which the magus gave a description of himself that was both flattering and ambiguous:

[I am] quite convinced that I know all that one can know, and that my happiness depends entirely on myself, with no need for any other human knowledge, meaning that I limit myself to myself and to God, who is present to me everywhere. I remain on the Earth, with no knowledge or friends, except for Koerner, who is the only one I can trust with my feelings.<sup>51</sup>

In this letter, Du Chenteau is sure to allude to a trip to Strasbourg where he met Saltzmann and Jean de Turckheim (1749–1824), Bernard-Frédéric’s brother. Five months later, on 20 February 1782, he sent another similar note to Bernard-Frédéric, in which we can read: “[I would like] to hope that my intelligence is becoming more and more unified with the Being of Beings and

that I will find the strength to go on. It will be sweet, my Friend, when I hear that your vigils and your concerns are blessed and that you are one of humanity’s benefactors.”<sup>52</sup> Schönburg, who had gone to Strasbourg with Körner and Du Chenteau, referred to this journey in the message he sent to Bernard-Frédéric from Zürich on 12 February 1781.<sup>53</sup> On 28 February, as well as in three other letters from Schönburg to Bernard-Frédéric dated 1782, he writes of Körner’s opinions of the man.<sup>54</sup> The following is a passage from the letter dated 17 March 1782:

You say that D[u] C[henteau] is a remarkable man, and in this you are joined by nearly all who speak with him, and certainly by all who follow him. / You want to follow him in his future work, and in the pursuit of his knowledge, and in this you are like those who have found him remarkable and whom neither fantasy nor frivolity hinder from satisfying their curiosity.<sup>55</sup>

50 Saltzmann to Willermoz, 1 June 1781, “Correspondance de F. R. Saltzmann avec J. -B. Willermoz,” in *Renaissance Traditionnelle*, no. 145 (January 2006): p. 24.

51 Du Chenteau to Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim, 5 October 1781 (MSBT). Letter transcribed below, as Document V. On 28 February 1781, Bernard-Frédéric de Turkheim received a letter in German (author as yet unidentified (Körner?)), in which Du Chenteau, Schönfeld, and Lavater are discussed (MSBT).

52 “Billet” dated 20 February 1782 (MSBT), transcribed below as Document VI.

53 Document archived by MSBT.

54 Körner to Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim, 28 February 1781 (from Paris), 17 March 1782 (from Paris), and two letters dated 18 October (from Leipzig). MSBT. These letters are well suited for an annotated edition, although the text of the last two has become somewhat corrupted.

55 “Daß Sie D[u] Chenteau] für einen merkwürdigen Mann halten, haben Sie mit fast allen, die ihn gesprochen haben, auch seinen Verfolgern, gemein / Daß Sie ihn in seiner ferneren Op[eration] und in dem Fortgange seiner Kenntniße verfolgen wollen, haben Sie gleichfalls mit allen denen gemein, denen er merkwürdig vorgekommen ist und die sich nicht durch Fanatismus oder Sorglosigkeit abhalten lassen, ihre Wißbbegierde zu befriedigen” (Körner to Bernard-Frédéric de Turck-

Finally, there is a long anonymous letter dated 27 February 1781 (transcribed below as Document VII), which is in a bizarre style and visibly written by a Brother belonging to the Rectified Scottish Rite. It is addressed to Bernard-Frédéric and contains interesting accounts of Du Chenteau's personality. This severe yet nuanced critique points not only to the dangerous experiments he performed on himself, but also to his philosophical "system," which "contains many good things, as well as some that are diabolically false," and to his barefaced ambition: "I am sure that D[u Chenteau]'s goal is to convince some followers of our system [the Rectified Scottish Rite] so that he can try to become its head."

In October 1782, Tieman confided in Willermoz that Du Chenteau continued in his popularity and that, without "outright insulting" Willermoz, he had been criticizing him on points of Theosophy. Tieman wrote that he did not believe "a single word of his story about man or the extraordinary being who instructed him."<sup>56</sup> Two and a half years later, on 9 March 1785, the same Tieman informed his mentor in Lyon that he had gone with Saint-Martin and the Viscount Saulx de Tavannes (1751–1822) to an RSR masonic ceremony. He met an ambassador there, Baron Eric Magnus de Staël Holstein (1749–1802), who would marry Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, the daughter of Minister Jacques Necker, the following year. She

would go on to become the famous Madame de Staël.

This ambas[sador] is fully in Duchanteau's grip. He instructs him every day. The B[aron Charles Henri] of Gleichen took me one night to the amb[assador]'s house, where I had previously tried and failed to visit, to see one of Duchanteau's instructions. It was nothing but metaphysical twaddle. The same thing he was going on about four years ago. Duch[enteau] looked uneasy to see me there [. . .] Tavannes took the opportunity to warn the amb[assador] of the danger he was in if he let himself be led along by this man, whom he saw as a dangerous beggar. I fear for the duke, but I have no idea if he believes in it.<sup>57</sup>

The duke in question is Joseph-Anne-Auguste-Maximilien Havré de Croÿ (1744–1839), Prince of the Holy Roman Empire and Grand Provincial Master of the Province II (Auvergne), which included Lyon. Tieman's fears were well-founded insofar as the duke had previously been one of Du Chenteau's students.

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heim, 17 March 1782. Paris. MSBT).

56 Tieman to Willermoz, 15 October 1782, Paris. BMLW 5.865 (6).

57 Tieman to Willermoz, 9 March 1785, Paris. BMLW 5.868 (54).

The “Documents” appended below provide more context for the Illuminist and Masonic elements of the topic matter at hand.

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BMLW: Municipal Library of Lyon, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz Collection.

BUW: University of Warsaw Library.

MSBT: De Turckheim Family Collection (currently housed at the Strasbourg National and University Library).

ZBanLAV: Zürich Central Library, Johann Caspar Lavater Collection, Letters addressed to Lavater. ZBvonLAV: Zürich Central Library, Johann Caspar Lavater Collection, Letters from Lavater.

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## Documents

### Document I:

**Letter from Du Chenteau to Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, 29 May 1779.**

**Paris. BMLW 5.862 (6)**

Paris, 29 May 1779

Monsieur and my dear friend,

I had just changed the backs on your new portfolios when I received the letter you were so kind to send. They were ready and you would have already received them had I found a means to send them to you.

I have sent you the largest one, on which I have put a new lock, and the craftsman Mr. Durand very much wanted to make it.

Mesdames Nau, Durand, and Doucet were touched by the memory of a brother to whom they were sincerely attached. They have asked me to tell you a thousand pleasant and fraternal things on their behalf, and that they will be counting on you this Autumn to illuminate them and to initiate them into the higher ranks of adoption.

I believe I can inform you that I was able to have B[rother] L. G. M. the Duke of Chartres remove anything having to do with the Provincial l[odge] from the order in question. It is seen as null and void in that regard.

I cannot find flattering enough words to describe the kindness of B[rother] the Marquis d'Arcambal, Bb[rothers] [Jean-Jacques Bacon] De La Chevalerie and [Louis-Daniel] Tassin [de l'Étang], who put their hearts into this peaceful resolution. I hope that my efforts will please you, Sir. I can boast some small Wisdom, but I have not yet been recorded as a G[rand] M[aster] at the G[rand] O[rient]. I therefore ask you to only speak of it with Brothers De Petichet and Le Cammus.

Tomorrow, I will attend the final judgment of the Neuf Soeurs L[odge], which has caused trouble for the G[rand] O[rient] and scandalised all good Masons ---

I hope to leave within eight days, ten at the most, and I will do all I can to provide you with the two portfolios before then.

I embrace you with all my heart and without reservation, Monsieur, and my dear friend

Your servant and friend  
Du chenteau

Please pass on my respectful greetings to Madame Provencale [Claudine-Thérèse Provensal].

Willermoz has written on the back: Duchateau [*sic*] from Paris, 29 May 1779 --- -- he made my portfolios. He obtained a decree from the S[ere]ne Gr[and] M[aster] that voided its judgment against the Prov[incial] [symbol for a Lodge] of Lyon.

**Document II:**

**Excerpt from Sébastien Giraud's letter to Jean-Baptiste Willermoz,  
18 May 1782. Turin. BMLW 5.865 (28).**

[...]

If I did not know you so entirely, my Worthy M[ast]er and B[rothe]r, I would have hesitated to provide you here with a complete copy of a letter received yesterday by our worthy Chef de Ber . . . [Gabriel Asinari de Bernez]. It is from Br. De la Perouse [Gian Giacomo Marcello Della Perosa], whom you know through me, so there is no need to repeat what I have said to you of him. I assure you that from what he has told me, with no other motive, I do not think much of Duchanteau's knowledge, since one must be quite imprudent to share knowledge such as he does, good real knowledge, with people that have shown no disposition to make the most of it. What the letter has to say on your account comes, as you will see yourself, from Du Chanteau, whom I have never heard named, but you should know that if he truly has had secret conferences with you, he has not kept his discretion, and it is always good to know the men with whom one has or has had some connection. By this letter I also wish to respond to Br. De la Per[ouse], with all necessary care, but letting him know that we must not judge what we do not know, and that perhaps Du Chanteau himself does not understand your knowledge, fundamentally [. . .]. What do you think of Du Chanteau? Tell me something if you can in writing [. . .].

**Sébastien Giraud, as stated above, copied the letter in his own hand from Gian Giacomo Marcello della Perosa, dated from Paris, 11 May 1782, which included this excerpt concerning Du Chenteau:**

[...]

The immense number of systems they have here, the imprudence with which they are discussed openly, all of it ultimately strikes at the foundation and the principle of our great edifice. Our dear Willermoz is seen here as something of a brilliant man by credulous enthusiasts, although he knows no more than others. Du Chanteau, for example, whom I know well, has here a system that is making a lot of noise. He says he conferred with him a year ago in the countryside, where he went to find him to talk with him, but he did not recognize much in his knowledge, and he gave up on their correspondence. Today, he has initiated me, but I will certainly not give more weight to the light and the knowledge he has communicated to me than they deserve. I will not allow myself to be seduced by vain appearances, nor by whatever afflicts men who venerate what they do not understand. Here, I know [Jean-Jacques] Bacon de la Chevalerie, St. Martin [Saint-Martin], Deleutre [?],

De L'Ange [Savalette de Langes], all of whom are followers of Pasqualis [Martinès de Pasqually] with only a vague idea of his teachings. [. . .] if I can, I too will try to attend the Congress [of Wilhelmsbad]. I will write more in my next letter on these matters. Today, I have a conference with Du Chanteau, from nine o'clock until three in the afternoon, for I don't have much time and I want to see everything. Tell me please if [Sébastien] Giraud has decided to go to Willm [Wilhelmsbad].

[. . .]

**Document III:**

***The meeting between Du Chenteau and Karl Heinrich von Heyking at the Les Amis Réunis Lodge in May 1785.***

**Excerpt from Ms *Mes réminiscences ou Mémoires* [...]. Pages 594–598 in the digital version. (Inaccurate) German translation: *Aus Polens und Kurlands letzten Tagen* [...], pp. 267–271. See the complete references above, under **Manuscript Sources and Print Sources**.**

*This interview between Heyking and Du Chenteau is published here for the first time, from the original text. For more on the context and background, see the section *Du Chenteau's Relationship with the Philalethes* above. I have added the continuation of the text, although it does not refer to Du Chenteau directly, because it was part of the same visit Heyking made to Savalette de Langes, and because May 1785 fell during the Congress of Paris (15 February–26 May). Organised by the Philalethes, it was during this Congress that Cagliostro tried to make trouble for them.*

[. . .] After some vague preliminaries about Freemasonry, the spirituality of the soul, and the Kabbalah, I learned from B[rother?] M... that he had become a Jew to be initiated into the Kabbalah. I found this information in a very interesting work entitled *St. Nicaise* p. 392<sup>58</sup> he asked me pointedly:

D[u Chenteau]: Do you believe in the Holy Scripture?

H[eyking]: (to sound him out) With some restrictions and often hypothetically.

D[u Chenteau]: You must believe it literally [Heyking's note at the bottom of the page: "Those who have studied the Kabbalah will understand the sublime nature of the word in Hebrew"]. So perhaps I have nothing to tell you.

H[eyking]: I would lose too much from your silence. So, let us suppose that I admit the meaning of *the word*.

D[u Chenteau]: Do you know the vision that St. Paul had, when he was lifted up into the seventh heaven? Do you believe in it?

H[eyking]: I believe in the vision.

D[u Chenteau]: Well then! The Divine gave me the same grace after I had fasted for nine days. I was lifted up into the bosom of the Divine, and all nature was revealed to me.

H[eyking]: In that case Monsieur, you know everything, and I know nothing.

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58 *Sic* for p. 333? *Saint Nicaise* was published that same year, in 1785, and attributed to Johann August Starck, See above, "With the Philalethes" and Print Sources.

Please deign to teach me just one *new* truth, be it a *moral* truth or a physical truth, and I will become one of your most zealous disciples.

Du Chanteau began to rave incredibly, in the style of *Des erreurs et de la vérité*. I listened to him calmly, and then asked him to summarise, saying: I cannot understand that which is unintelligible. It's like if I speak to you in German—you will not understand me and that will not be your fault.

D[u Chenteau]: (with a bit of humour) I do not know how to be clear about abstract matters with those who do not hold the key.

H[eyking]: Please give me the key, or don't speak to me in ciphers. If that's all there is to it, I can talk to you for half an hour straight and you won't understand anything I've said either.

D[u Chenteau]: One needs a certain intelligence to understand me.

H[eyking]: hich I do not have, and which I have no ambition to have. Some logic, Monsieur, logic!

D[u Chenteau]: That sounds like school!

H[eyking]: es, the same school as Locke, as Bacon . . .

Here our conversation heated up to the point that De Lange came to interrupt us from the next room, saying: It seems there's been some dispute. I haven't disputed in a long time, replied D[u Chenteau], with a wry and bitter smile. Please excuse me, Sir, he said, and left.

I never saw the madman again. He probably died in an asylum. The fact that some people make much of him, despite his outrageous pride, simply proves that the minds of Societies are often empty but for a few brilliant phrases and can exist without a single grain of discernment.

This seemed a sensible truth in Paris, where everyone was running after Cagliostro, who had just established a [symbol for a Lodge] called *De la sagesse triomphante* (From Triumphant Wisdom), with an Egyptian rite, his own extravagant fantasies written in mystic books, full of people with lively imaginations whose pens are used to lie and seduce. [. . .] One rather unique experience was that I was able to meet all of the charlatans in Paris at once.

But what truly staggered all belief, was that Cagliostro had a despotic grip on the Cardinal de Rohan, Monsieur de St. James, the Duke of G., and others who were often called wits in society.

One of these gentlemen, the Marquis de L., told me at Savalette's house that Cagliostro was an *extraordinary* man. I assured him that he was a *very ordinary*

man, of a crass ignorance [At the request of this Marquis de L., Heyking puts it in writing, and then:] Savalette told me in a frightened tone: Beware the vengeance of Cagliostro and his followers! They are capable of assassinating you! [. . .] This act, which they were good enough to see as brave, was applauded by the Philalèthes, who had painfully watched that charlatan take several distinguished members from their lodges. [This gesture by Heyking also earned him] an introduction from Savalette to the *highest Swedish ranks*, as well as other important Masonic details [. . .].

**Document IV:**

*An account by Karl Heinrich von Gleichen.*

**Excerpt from his *Souvenirs*, pp. 187–190 (see all references above, under Print Sources, as well as the German edition *Denkwürdigkeiten des Barons Carl Heinrich von Gleichen*, where this passage is also found on pp. 165–167).**

In the course of my hyperscientific research, I met a man named Duchanteau, a rather extraordinary man that I still remember. He was a handsome, spiritual, kind, eloquent man with a passion for the occult sciences. After studying Hebrew and the kabbalists for a long time, he had himself circumcised in Amsterdam so that the Rabbis would initiate him into the mysteries of the Kabbalah. When that was not enough to satisfy his desire to go beyond the limits of our knowledge, he began studying Alchemy and created his own unique and ingenious process for producing the philosopher's stone, basing his method on all the essential passages from alchemical books whose central mysteries he was able to explain easily. Everyone says that we must constantly reunite the inferior with the superior, and the fire, the vessel, and the matter are all to be found in the same subject.

Duchanteau, however, said that the mysterious subject is myself, and that any healthy man has the ability, between the ages of twenty and fifty, to make a philosopher's stone, with no need for anything but himself. I should be made to go naked into a chamber. Lock me in and watch over me if you want, but don't give me anything to eat or drink, and I will emerge forty days (?) later with the philosopher's stone!

This is what he tried to prove at the Les Amis Réunis Lodge, an experiment that he was not allowed to pursue until its completion. But what he showed us was curious enough, and really rather marvellous. His procedure and his secret were that he would only drink his own urine. He drank it constantly, saying: "Here the superior unites with the inferior. My urine is the matter, my body is the vessel, and my heat is the fire. All three of the essential parts can be found in a single subject." Duchanteau was put into a room like one is put into a bath, he was given clothes, and brothers took turns watching over him and making sure that nothing entered his body, nothing entered the room that could alter the truth of his assertions. In the first few days, he suffered from hunger and from burning thirst, but his urine began to purify and thicken, and the martyrdom of his needs gradually grew gentler. All the faculties of his mind were heightened, every day he became more joyful, more spiritual, more eloquent, and the most unlikely thing was that his body grew prodigiously strong. All of this, however, was accompanied by a fever that grew and grew, finally becoming so strong that it seemed dangerous. They feared that this man would die of his experiment, and there were serious discussions about what could happen, until the lodge council decided to force Duchanteau to end his efforts. He lasted until the twenty-sixth day, consuming nothing but his

urine, which had been reduced down to a half spoonful. It was a deep red, thick, viscous, with an excellent odour of balsam. We collected it and preserved it in our [the Philalethes'] archives, but the Revolution destroyed that ennobled urine, which may have been a precious medicine, and I never learned what became of it. After Duchanteau completed his twenty-six-day fast, he ate and drank as much that night as the six others dining with him, and incredibly it did him no harm. Disappointed that he had not reached the goal he'd been so close to, he was set on trying the experiment again, but he only lasted until the sixteenth day, when he lost all of his strength at once, and, as he died shortly afterwards [in May 1788], it seems that this second attempt cost him his life.

*MSBT also has the following three documents (here numbered V, VI, and VII), gathered into a folder and labelled "Duchanteau 1781" by Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim. They were transcribed by Theirry Boudignon. I have completed any proper names in square brackets and inserted a few clarifications:*

**Document V:**

**Letter from Du Chenteau to Bernard de Turckheim. 3 October 1781.**

**Paris. MSBT.**

Monsieur and Most Dear Brother,

I have just now lost Monsieur de St. Julien. A poorly executed bleeding has deprived me of one of the worthiest Beings one may find in this world, and it occurred just as I was planning a journey to see our friend [Christian Gottfried] Koerner, which would have also allowed me the pleasure of seeing you. I have lost a loyal friend, a true man, whose interior was the envy of many truly pious souls. Such a Being is hard to replace in the century in which we find ourselves, but I submit myself utterly to the invariable Decrees of our Nature. My strength and my trust in the Being of Beings are all I need, setting limits on my natural sensitivity, especially since I can only imagine what has become of him.

Since my last journey, my thinking has changed. I have received teachings on the most Essential points and learned the most important things to know about our health, which have filled me with unshakable tranquillity. For me, the vagaries of life are merely phantoms that disappear as soon as I try to pin them down: I give thanks to God every day for filling even his lowliest creatures with goodness. I am continually trying to activate this precious treasure, quite convinced that I know all that one can know and that my happiness depends entirely on myself, with no need for any other human knowledge, meaning that I limit myself to myself and to God, who is present to me everywhere. I remain on the Earth, with no knowledge or friends, except for Koerner, who is the only one I can trust with my feelings. More than ever, I know how important it is to be careful with other men, and that in meeting ten thousand you will find only one who has the good faith and understanding needed to resolve to make the sacrifices that the truth demands. I hope that you are granted all that you desire in this regard. Once your heart is filled with the necessary faith, I know that the stones themselves will deliver a child of Abraham who will support you in your weakness and guide your stumbling steps towards happiness. My D[ear] B[rother], give all your strength and your being to God in all that you do in your life. Do not forget, trust in the promises of Jesus Christ your Saviour. I hope that one day you will be able to participate in his death.

Please send me the letter that you have had since my last journey. Because I travelled through Metz, I did not have the pleasure of seeing you or Monsieur Salzeman [Frédéric-Rodolphe Saltzmann], to whom I believe the letter was addressed. To conclude, I wish you a peaceful heart and I hope that the Word will unite us again one day.

My best to Monsieur Salzeman and your Brother [Jean de Turckheim], as well as to you,

I embrace you all with my heart and am respectfully yours.

Monsieur and Most Dear Brother:.

*Touzay du Chanteau*

Please respond when you receive this letter, it will bring me great joy if you include the letter I requested along with your message.

My address is Du Chanteau, Montmartre, Ruelle du Vicaire, Maison de M. Julien. No. 10.

3 October 1781.

**Document VI:**

**“Note from D[u Chenteau]” addressed to Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim, 20 February 1782. MSBT.**

Paris. Mr. Duchanteau, enclosed in a letter from [Christian Daniel von] Meyer, dated 20 February 1782.

I confide this letter to Monsieur and My D[ear] B[rother], which has for a long time remained lost, passing here and there for several months, before coming into my possession. I have often been prevented from writing to you by various concerns and issues. I prefer to be left alone, to meditate in secret, and to work effectively on myself to correct any previous impressions and to increase my power by withdrawing myself. As ever, I cherish you as a friend and I offer my purest praise for having awakened virtuous desires within my soul. Although I have never felt pure and complete conviction about all of the points discussed in our intimate conversations, I do not wish to dispute either of our opinions, and I would never pass judgment on your own. I ask the Divine to grant me the confident will to purify my heart. I ask this with humility, and I will only believe that I have progressed towards the good when I find myself filled with charity, love, and faith. I hope that my intelligence will become more and more unified with the Being of Beings and that I will find the strength to go on. It will be sweet, my Friend, when I hear that your vigils and your concerns are blessed and that you are one of humanity’s benefactors. Please be assured of my unshakable devotion.

**Document VII:**

**This anonymous letter, written in Paris in a bizarre style, is dated 27 February 1781. It is visibly addressed to Bernard-Frédéric de Turckheim. Thierry Boudignon, who transcribed it, also wrote the footnotes (as elsewhere above, insertions in square brackets are my own).**

Paris, 27 February 1781.

[Christian Gottfried] K[örner] and D[u Chenteau] returned last Saturday and told me that you had been initiated and that W. [Jean-Baptiste Willermoz?] And T. [Carl Friedrich Tieman] were as well. Although I am your junior in all matters but the one at hand, please allow me the liberty of speaking further on it. I have been following the doctor [Du Chenteau] in question ever since I have been in Paris, or nearly. He has caused me to lose much sleep, and he gave me an illness from which I have not yet fully recovered, not to mention the other effects he has had, depending on how hot-headed his followers were feeling.

What I most fear is not acting in good faith. My good faith now tells me that I must inform you of what I have said to all those who have been received in the same manner, and I will continue to do so as long as I live, as I have said to D[u Chenteau] as often as he will hear it.

What did you learn? Was it anything more than an extraordinary physical fact or a theosophic hypothesis? If it was the former, what does it prove? Who before D[u Chenteau] had tried to start from an upright heart and soul<sup>59</sup> – to try and see just how far human nature can be pushed, even humanely. And what was the purpose of our experiment?

You have heard the story of the ten and twelve days, but have you heard about the sixteen? [Allusion to the experiment of taking his own urine] The man would have died had he persisted, a very able doctor who was present assured me so. When you push too far, hours can be worth as much as days. The son of D[u Chenteau]'s *quasi-Master* did so, knowing less than you do now, and lasted eighteen days. In the end, he expired, as D[u Chenteau] should have told you, even if he did not in fact.

I hope that you are now persuaded that this theory is incredibly dangerous, because it diverts us from practising civil virtue and from studying the sciences. We are meant to use the prerogatives the Creator has given us to perfect our Minds, step by step, so that they can be enlightened sooner or later, so that we can face him in the end. This process drives those with the hottest heads to suicide and others to annihilation and inaction rather than using their talents, ultimately leading to the complete destruction of Christian Doctrine.

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<sup>59</sup> Transcription uncertain.

There is no more diabolically false assertion than to claim that some system explains the Book of books. You will recall all the clear passages that prove exactly the opposite. I know that you have remembered them a thousand times and a thousand times again, now that you are able to reflect reasonably, now that those who have tried to mislead you have left you.

In spite of all this, please begin once again to read the Bible from beginning to end and reflect with special care on

The Epistle to Timothy 4:1<sup>60</sup> et seq.

The Epistle to the Galatians 1: 6–9<sup>61</sup> Epistle to St. John 4: 1<sup>62</sup> Luke 17: 22<sup>63</sup> et seq.

Matthew 24: 23<sup>64</sup> et seq.

Luke 21: 8<sup>65</sup>

Do not skip lightly over the second to last passage, which says they “shall shew great signs and wonders, but<sup>66</sup> do not believe them.”

As for D[u Chenteau]’s character, I will tell you that I believe that he is guilty of teaching his system to anyone and everyone before it has been perfected and proven, because that is his way of seeing things. I advised him seriously to not bother anyone else’s head before he has more clarity in his own. Despite all this, I

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60 1st epistle: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron,” etc. 2nd epistle: “I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (King James Version).

61 “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (King James Version).

62 “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (King James Version).

63 “And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or see there: Go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day” etc. (King James Version).

64 “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, Or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before” (King James Version).

65 “Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them” (King James Version).

66 Illegible sign, perhaps a J?

was only angry that three [?] and both L's [Johann Caspar, and Diethelm Lavater] from Zürich have been admitted, so you must be capable enough of weighing and judging for yourself.

I also have nothing against [Christian Gottfried] K[örner], as long as he has not become a follower of the other. If so, he must be more careful than I can describe here, not replacing his own character, which one might prefer for the other, to devote himself entirely to Him.

I am not saying that D[u Chenteau] has not really<sup>67</sup> – that is as true as anything can be, but there is a difference between listening to a man you do not know any better than a book you find lying around, and devoting yourself to a person that someone else (whom you<sup>68</sup> trust utterly) tells you has the truth. This could even lead to making contacts with other similar people, perhaps giving them more influence within Freemasonry.

I am sure that D[u Chenteau]'s goal is to convince some followers of our system (probably the Rectified Scottish Rite) so that he can try to become its head.

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(In the margins:

“2(nd) page, Paris 27 February 1781” [:] To finish speaking about D[u Chenteau]'s personality, I must further add that he<sup>69</sup> has long made theosophy into a business. That was the purpose of selling his books, which he counterfeited. That is why he corrupts young men to enjoy their company, a taste often found among those who refuse marriage. That is why he is in no hurry to perfect his work, since his theosophic system has already caught on. Since the hottest heads rarely produce trustworthy reports or narratives, my traveller must now make the vicar L<sup>70</sup> speak of things which directly contradict what he has said in his letters to me.

These letters state that D[u Chenteau], despite his superior talents, is a man without real wisdom, tranquillity, or power, – <sup>71</sup> that his system contains many good things, as well as some that are diabolically false – that his doctrine for interpreting the Bible allegorically is insipid, and it is never a good idea to throw away your crutches when you're not sure if your legs will work. We must beware of false prophets, but L.<sup>72</sup> promises to obey once someone with perfected knowledge orders him to do so, given that even T<sup>73</sup> – had j – by a positive order from God.

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67 Illegible sign.

68 A word is crossed out: “have.”

69 Two words are crossed out: “has done.”

70 Transcription uncertain.

71 A line in German (This letter has become temporarily unavailable, so I have not yet been able to transcribe the line in question - A. Faivre).

72 Transcription uncertain.

73 Transcription uncertain, perhaps S?

Before supposing that L [Diethelm Lavater?] was made to talk in Strasbourg as he has been made to talk in Paris, I believe it is necessary to communicate the thrust of the letter from this worthy man, in order to not compromise him. I will show it to you when I pass through S[trasbourg]. Here is what I have to tell you. Despite my best efforts, I have not completely recovered from my illness, as I said at the beginning. While no one was able to teach me anything, they made me into an unhappy sceptic with regard to many things. So now I wish to warn all those who are on the same path. I will be where you live in around five weeks. We will have the time then to discuss the matter at length. Your letter will not arrive in time if you write back. All that I ask is that you pass on this letter to W[illermoz] when you have read it. Think carefully about how you wish to introduce D[u Chenteau] to Duke F. [Ferdinand of Brunswick?] Reflect on whether you can say more of him than I have here, i.e., that he is a man with a system of Theosophic hypotheses that he wishes to prove through the most astounding experiments.

I do not wish for the matter to be kept from P f<sup>d</sup> [?], I want to get to know it better, but I believe that attention should be paid to how it is done, to not lend too much credence to the individual. We must never forget that he has nothing but what his disciples give him. Many have left his side, and more will do so yet, because he has done nothing new this year as he had promised. To do so would win him new and powerful disciples and support him in a pursuit that, as you can see for yourself, seems to be pushing him to perfect his system, and in all human probability, pushing him to suicide. – From T. [Carl Friedrich Tieman?], a heartfelt friend to you [and to] W. [Jean-Baptiste Willermoz?], who does not know what D[u Chenteau] has already communicated to you about his doctrine, because outside of myself and S<sup>t</sup> J. [Saint-Martin, Saint-Julien?]<sup>74</sup> there is no one else who knows it. Your friend has followed D[u Chenteau] more than any other, that is why you should not open yourself up to him. *Oculi plus vident quam oculus.*

PostScr. [Postscript] from [Christian Gottfried] K[örner] [:]<sup>75</sup>

I only have a few words to add in order to not keep my silence totally. You know the system as well as I, it is up to you to judge for yourself, I have nothing further to tell you about it. As for his personality, I never looked into his past faults, since I do not consider the vessel when I believe I have found a treasure. You can learn more from all those who have followed him since he has been here [in Paris]. I know only that he has the trust and friendship of S<sup>t</sup> J. [Saint-Martin, Saint-Julien?]<sup>76</sup> and that in the time I have known him, the only weaknesses I have observed are not enough to make him unworthy in my eyes, or to undermine my attachment to him.

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74 Transcription uncertain.

75 These words are written in the margin.

76 Transcription uncertain.

**Document VIII:**

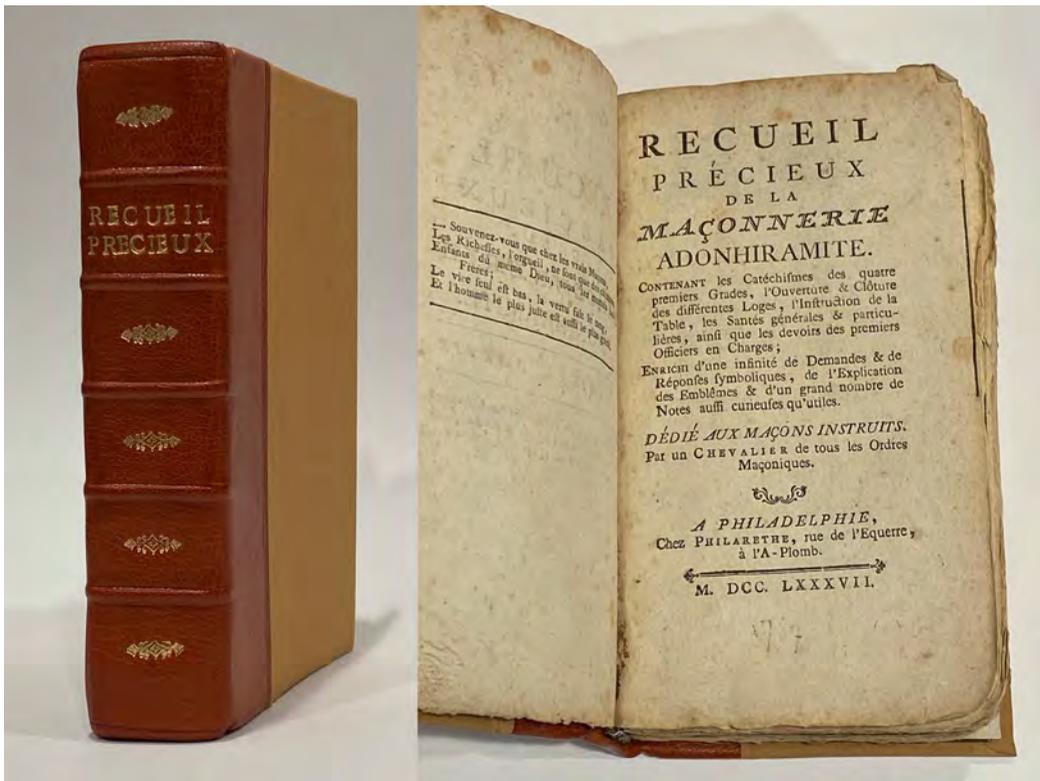
***Notice from the Kâ-Mondo auction house for a sale on 20 May 2015, Lot 172.***

(items acquired by the Musée de la franc-maçonnerie, currently in its collection)

Philosophical and Mathematical Chart (Dedicated to His Royal Highness Duke Ch.-Alex. of Lorraine). There is an overall hierarchical order that unites several hundred plates, small scenes, tableaux, and symbolic figures of all kinds. No date or time. (Paris, Emile Nourry). Three engraved copper plates (94 x 81 cm) framed (dark brown wood frames). An exceptional piece, on account of its rarity, its skilled execution and its impeccable condition. Truly a tour de force of the engraver's art. The history of these engravings includes three editions: first, four copper plates in plan with a separate title page-frontispiece, partially undertaken by the author (Brussels, 1775), rare. The second seems to have been an autographic reproduction in 1866 in Turin. The final reprint, which is probably the source of our copy, used the original copper plates to print thirty copies, of which only twenty-five were put up for sale. The prints were made by the E. Nourry bookshop in 1932, as listed in the Thiébaud catalogue from November 1935. This last reprint only included three plates. The printer could not find one of the original copper plates, also three in number, so this reprint remains incomplete. The current location of the three copper plates is unknown, and there is no information about how the Nourry shop was able to find them. Duchanteau (or Duchenteau), also known as Touzay, had access to a copy of the "Calendarium Naturale Magicum perpetuum," designed by the famous Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, the teacher of Johannes Kepler, and executed by Théodore de Bry in 1582. Duchanteau seems to have found this enormous print to be insufficient and erroneous, so he set about completing it in his own fashion. In a short text under the title that frames the first plates, he mentions the errors in the figures, in the Hebrew and other letters, and in the tables that he has worked to correct. He also includes a legend for distinguishing between images that are taken directly from the original, those where he has modified a figure or some detail, and finally those that he has invented and added himself.



During the 3rd WCHF organized in Paris at the National Library in 2019, PSO offered to the Library of the Grand Orient de France a copy of the famous 18th century exposure “Recueil précieux de la Maçonnerie Adonhiramite”. Exposure attributed to a certain Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor... of which nothing is known. On the occasion of the entry of this book into the collections of the Grand Orient Library, Pierre Mollier conducted an investigation to try to find out a little more about this mysterious Guillemain de Saint-Victor







Is “the intrepid Blanchard” hiding behind the mask of Guillemain de Saint-Victor?

## In search of Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor . . .

by Pierre Mollier

### ABSTRACT

In 1783, Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor was the author of the most widely diffused XVIIIth century French Masonic exposure: the *Recueil précieux de la maçonnerie adonhiramite*. But the author of the book remains rather mysterious. There is no name attached to the first editions, which are simply signed “by a Knight of all the Masonic Orders.” The 1789 edition has inscribed on its cover: “By Louis Guillemain, de Saint-Victor, Knight of all the

Masonic Orders.” All of the bibliographies therefore attribute it to a Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor. The problem is that it is impossible to identify any Guillemain de Saint-Victor in the usual eighteenth-century sources. So who might be this mysterious Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor? May be this pseudonym hides an amazing character called Jean-Pierre Blanchard, one of the first aeronaut aside the Montgolfier.

**Keywords:** Masonic exposures, Guillemain de Saint-Victor, Jean-Pierre Blanchard, maçonnerie adonhiramite.

## En busca de Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor . . .

### RESUMEN

En 1783, Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor fue el autor de la exposición masónica francesa del siglo XVIII más difundida: el *Recueil précieux de la maçonnerie adonhiramite*. Pero el autor del libro sigue siendo bastante misterioso. No hay ningún nombre adjunto a las primeras ediciones, que simplemente están firmadas “por un Caballero de todas las Órdenes Masónicas”. La edición de 1789 tiene inscrito en su portada: “Por Louis Guillemain, de Saint-Victor, Caballero de todas las Órdenes Masónicas”. Por tanto, todas las bibliografías lo atribuyen a un Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor. El problema es que es imposible identificar a ningún Guillemain de Saint-Victor en las fuentes habituales del siglo XVIII. Entonces, ¿quién podría ser este misterioso Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor? Puede que este seudónimo esconda un personaje sorprendente llamado Jean-Pierre Blanchard, uno de los primeros aeronautas aparte del Montgolfier.

**Palabras clave:** Exposiciones masónicas, Guillemain de Saint-Victor, Jean-Pierre Blanchard, maçonnerie adonhiramite

## 寻找 Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor

### 摘要

1783年，Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor撰写了*Recueil précieux de la maçonnerie adonhiramite*，这本书是曝光十八世纪法国共济会的最广泛传播的著作。但此书的作者仍然是一个谜。第一版发行时没有作者的姓名，只有一个简单

的签名：“一名共济会骑士团成员”。1789 年版的封面上刻有：“路易斯·吉列曼 (Louis Guillemain), 德·圣维克多 (de Saint-Victor), 共济会骑士团”。因此, 所有参考资料都将其作者身份指向 Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor。问题在于, 在通常的18世纪资料中都无法识别出任何 Guillemain de Saint-Victor。那么这个神秘的 Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor 可能是谁呢? 这个化名可能隐藏了一个叫让-皮埃尔·布兰查德 (Jean-Pierre Blanchard) 的重要人物, 他是除孟戈菲以外的第一批飞行员之一。

关键词: 共济会曝光, Guillemain de Saint-Victor, 让-皮埃尔·布兰查德, maçonnerie adonhirmite

British Freemasons coined the term “exposure” for publications meant to reveal Freemasons’ supposedly secret rituals to the general public. In Great Britain, the first such revelation was Samuel Pritchard’s famous 1730 work, *Masonry Dissected*. In France, *Le secret des francs-maçons* (1744) and later *Le catéchisme des francs-maçons* (1744), were merged in 1745 into *L’Ordre des francs-maçons trahi*, beginning a series of revelations about the first three degrees of Apprentice, Fellow, and Master. Anyone who is curious about Lodge habits and customs may learn more in publications such as: *Le Sceau rompu ou la Loge ouverte aux profanes par un franc-maçon* (1745), *Les francs-maçons écrasés* (1747), and *Le maçon démasqué* (1751). Starting in 1744, there was a golden age of “exposures” in France. These works met with remarkable success and were reprinted many times, dragging the mysteries of

the Order into the public square. For example, *Le secret des francs-maçons* was reprinted three times in 1745, then again, as the first part of *L’Ordre des francs-maçons trahi*, in 1752, 1758, 1763, 1766, 1768, 1771, 1778, 1781 and so on.<sup>1</sup> It wasn’t until 1766, however, that the rituals of the higher degrees were published, in a book attributed to Bérage: *Les plus secrets mystères des hauts grades de la maçonnerie dévoilés, ou le vrai Rose-Croix*. As for women’s Freemasonry, Guillemain de Saint-Victor was the first to reveal those ceremonies in *La vraie maçonnerie d’adoption* in 1779.

Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor was also, and perhaps most importantly, the author of the *Recueil précieux de la maçonnerie adonhiramite*. Although it was a fairly late exposure, first published in 1783, it circulated widely, with no fewer than a dozen reprints in the six

<sup>1</sup> See Paul Fesch, *Bibliographie de la franc-maçonnerie et des sociétés secrètes* (Brussels: Georges A. Deny, 1976), columns 1043 to 1046.

years before the Revolution.<sup>2</sup> Starting in 1787, *La vraie maçonnerie d'adoption* began to appear as a third section in the *Recueil précieux*. Guillemain de Saint-Victor is also the presumed author of *Origine de la maçonnerie adonhiramite* (1787), a book that does not discuss Freemasonry at all, since it is, in fact, a rather laborious and whimsical essay on the mystery cults of antiquity. This work was also published independently, under a completely different title: *Histoire critique des mystères de l'antiquité* (1788). This double edition gives us the opportunity to learn more about Guillemain de Saint-Victor.

In fact, the author of these books remains rather mysterious. There is no name attached to the first two editions, which are simply signed “by a Knight of all the Masonic Orders.” We can learn a little more from the 1789 edition of the *Recueil précieux*, which has inscribed on its cover: “By Louis Guillemain, de Saint-Victor, Knight of all the Masonic Orders.” All of the bibliographies therefore attribute all four works—namely, *La vraie maçonnerie d'adoption*, the *Recueil précieux* for the symbolic degrees and higher degrees, and *Origine de la maçonnerie adonhiramite*—to Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor. The problem is that it is impossible to identify any Guillemain de Saint-Victor in the usual eighteenth-century sources. There is nothing in the Masonic archives—for example, he is not listed in the “Fichier Bossu,” even under the simpler Louis Guillemain—nor in the

genealogical records, which include no family named Guillemain de Saint-Victor. There are no mentions in the press at the time, or in any publications other than the four books on Freemasonry.

In his 1847 classic *Supercheries littéraires dévoilées*, Joseph-Marie Quérard provides a few possibilities. He first associates Guillemain de Saint-Victor with Guillemain de Gaminville. Guillemain and Gaminville can be written as quasi-anagrams of each other, so there is no way to know which is the pseudonym. He also tells us an anecdote that may provide another way forward. He recalls a story that was already mentioned in 1787 in *Le Magasin pittoresque*, part of a biting critique of *Histoire critique des mystères de l'antiquité*, which had recently been published:

The bookseller who published this work in 1787 had it in his workshop for seven years beforehand, and we learn the reason why. In a poorly written notice, he complains bitterly about the author, Guillemain de Gaminville, accusing him of having sold his manuscript to two people. He writes: “This act of infamy made against me, who, for more than a year, showered him with kindnesses, either lending him money or printing announcements for a flying vessel he was exhibiting in the rue Dauphine, in the former *Musée de Paris*, before the Palais-Royal, etc.”<sup>3</sup> Whether Guillemain

2 Ibid., columns 720 to 723.

3 Joseph-Marie Quérard, *Supercheries littéraires dévoilées* (Paris: Paul Daffis Libraire-Éditeur, 1847),

or Gaminville, the question seems to remain unsolvable by traditional methods, but this story about a flying vessel did in fact leave a few traces in the archives. The exhibition was associated with the projects of Jean-Pierre Blanchard (1753–1809), an unlucky rival of the Montgolfier brothers, who designed and began to publicise this “flying vessel” in the early 1780s.<sup>4</sup> Later, he added the Montgolfiers’ balloon to his “flying vessel” and began performing demonstration flights, earning him a certain amount of fame. Jean-Pierre Blanchard also had a curious connection with Freemasonry. Charles Bernardin<sup>5</sup> tells us that the Saint-Jean de Jérusalem Lodge in Nancy hosted him as a visitor on 6 May and 18 June 1787. The record notes that he could not provide any documentation proving his Masonic status but, due to his fame (he had just done a flight in front of fifteen thousand locals who gathered to admire the sight), the Lodge received him enthusiastically and celebrated him as “the intrepid Blanchard.”

Could Blanchard be the mysterious Guillemain de Saint-Victor?

Certainly, he was often short of money, and one might well imagine that he tried to earn some as a commissioned writer. At any rate, we know that he was no stranger to Freemasonry. It should also be pointed out that the works attributed to Guillemain de Saint-Victor are quite carelessly written. For *La vraie maçonnerie d'adoption* and the *Recueil précieux*, all he would have needed was a manuscript copy of the rituals and a few bits of Masonic phrasing, neither of which was hard to find in 1780. He could then go about retranscribing his sources, more or less faithfully, adding the odd comment here and there. When it comes to the higher degrees exposed by Guillemain, most of the information is borrowed directly from Bérage’s *Les plus secrets mystères des hauts grades*. When the last section of the book was published, if all four works are truly by the same author, the reception was frosty. In *Le Magasin pittoresque*, the critic Sainte-Croix claimed that it was nothing but a hasty and muddled compilation, copying entire pages from works such as *Recherches sur les initiations anciennes et modernes*, by the abbé Robin (1781). Quérard ultimately concludes, without any real justification, that Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor could, in fact, be the author’s real name.

Whether or not the likely pseudonym Guillemain de Saint-Victor is

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vol. 2, 132. Translator’s note: Our translation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of cited foreign language material in this article are our own.

4 See Léon Couetil’s very complete study, “Jean-Pierre Blanchard (1753–1809), biographie, iconographie,” in *Recueil de la Société d’agriculture, sciences, arts et belles-lettres du département de l’Eure* (Evreux: Imprimerie Charles Hérissey, 1909), 194–274.

5 Charles Bernardin, *Notes pour servir à l’histoire de la franc-maçonnerie à Nancy jusqu’en 1805* (Nancy: Imprimerie Nancéienne, 1910), 288.

a stand-in for “aeronaut” Jean-Pierre Blanchard or some other scribbler, the works attributed to this author are above all meant to sell books. They were written quickly on a popular topic—a clever way to make some fast money. Paradox-

ically, this may have led to their commercial success, an idea that warrants further discussion. These books essentially offer us documents taken directly from life in Lodges. They are therefore precious resources for historians.

## Treasures from the Musée de la franc-maçonnerie The mysteries of the *Les Trois Frères* Lodge

by Pierre Mollier

### ABSTRACT

The Musée de la franc-maçonnerie in Paris has a copy of the very rare certificate from a Lodge *Les Trois Frères* (The three brethren) in Versailles. The iconography of the certificate is unambiguous in how it is to be understood. At the top of the print, we see the portraits of three brothers, under whose protection the Lodge is placed: Louis Auguste de France, the newly crowned Louis XVI; Louis Stanislas Xavier de France, Count of Provence and the future Louis XVIII; and Charles Philippe de France, Count of Artois, who will become Charles X a half-century later. The first question we must ask is: Were these three brothers “Brethren?”. In fact only the Count of Artois and future Charles X seems to have been a Mason for a time in his youth and to have had real links with *The Three Brethren* Lodge.

**Keywords:** Musée de la franc-maçonnerie, Lodge *Les Trois Frères*, Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, Charles X.

## Los misterios de la Logia Les Trois Frères

### RESUMEN

El Musée de la franc-maçonnerie de París tiene una copia del muy raro certificado de una Logia Les Trois Frères (Los tres hermanos) en Versalles. La iconografía del certificado es inequívoca en cuanto a cómo debe entenderse. En la parte superior del grabado, vemos los retratos de tres hermanos, bajo cuya protección se encuentra la Logia: Louis Auguste de France, el recién coronado Luis XVI; Louis Stanislas Xavier de France, conde de Provenza y futuro Luis XVIII; y Charles Philippe de France, conde de Artois, que se convertirá en Charles X medio siglo después. La primera pregunta que debemos hacernos es: ¿Eran estos tres hermanos “Hermanos”? De hecho, sólo el Conde de Artois y futuro Carlos X parece haber sido masón durante un tiempo en su juventud y haber tenido vínculos reales con la Logia de los Tres Hermanos.

**Palabras clave:** Museo de la Francmasonería, Logia Les Trois Frères, Luis XVI, Luis XVIII, Carlos X

## 三弟兄分会的奥秘

### 摘要

巴黎的共济会博物馆收藏了一份来自凡尔赛三弟兄分会（Lodge Les Trois Frères）的罕见证书副本。对该证书的图像学解读是清晰的。在图像的顶部，我们看到三弟兄的肖像，分会笼罩在其保护下，这三弟兄分别为：路易·奥古斯特，即新加冕的路易十六；路易·斯坦尼斯拉斯·泽维尔，即普罗旺斯伯爵和未来的路易十八；以及查尔斯·菲利普，即阿图瓦伯爵，半个世纪后成为查理十世。我们必须了解的首要问题是：这三兄弟是“分会成员”吗？事实上，只有阿图瓦伯爵和未来的查理十世似乎在其年轻时是共济会成员，并与三弟兄分会存在过真正的联系。

关键词：共济会博物馆，三弟兄分会（Lodge Les Trois Frères），路易十六，路易十八，查理十世

A few months after the coronation of Louis XVI, on 7 September 1775, the Grand Orient of France granted a warrant to found a Lodge in Versailles, under the name Les Trois Frères Unis (Three Brothers United). The Musée de la franc-maçonnerie in Paris has a copy of the very rare certificate, which was engraved for this exceptional Lodge. The iconography of the certificate is unambiguous in how it is to be understood: A distinctive title under the shadow of a palace. At the top of the print, we see the portraits of three brothers, under whose protection the Lodge is placed: Louis Auguste de France, the newly crowned Louis XVI; Louis Stanislas Xavier de France, Count of Provence and the future Louis XVIII; and Charles Philippe de France, Count of Artois, who will become Charles X a half-century later. The first question we

must ask is: Were these three brothers “Brothers?”

Versailles had been home to several Lodges since the end of the 1740s. As the seat of royal power, the city was home to a large population of military officers and civil servants, nobles and bourgeois, all of whom worked in the palace. This was the perfect audience for eighteenth-century Freemasonry, and there were many Masons at court and within its orbit. The Brothers of Versailles also launched discussions with the Grand Orient to not be called “the Orient of Versailles,” but rather the chicer “Orient of the Court.” After a lively and procedure-heavy debate, perhaps out of weariness, the Grand Orient gave in and *Les Trois Frères Unis* was founded under the Orient of the Court, which we can read on the charter. This



Certificate of the *Les Trois Frères Unis* Lodge, “Gautier de Vinfrains Invenit, Beaublé Scriptsit, Arrivet sculpsit” (designed by Gautier de Vinfrains, written by Beaublé, engraved by Arrivet), late 1770s, parchment, H: 29.4 cm, L: 46.4 cm, Bibliothèque du Grand Orient de France.



The three brothers . . .

name and the Lodge’s close association with the palace have led to various speculations ever since. Was *Les Trois Frères Unis* the princes’ lodge? The princes may well have been Freemasons. Their grandfather, Louis XV, had been a Mason for a time, along with his friend and “first valet” Bontemps. They belonged

to the *Des Petits Appartements* Lodge in the heart of the palace. Their father, Louis, Dauphin de France (1729–1765) had also “received the Light.”<sup>1</sup> Of the three brothers, however, it seems that only Charles Philippe was ever initiated. While his actual name is not found in any “Lodge Register,” there are sever-

1 Translator’s note: Our translation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of cited foreign language material in this article are our own.

al strong hints that he was a Freemason. As the Count of Artois, near the beginning of July in 1777, the Grand Master himself welcomed him to the seat of the Grand Orient in a former dormitory for Jesuit novices near Saint-Sulpice. In his memoirs, Jean-Nicolas Bouilly, at the time a young provincial looking to start a literary career in Paris, recalled coming “near to the Count of Artois in the beautiful *Les Trois Frères* Lodge” in the 1780s. However, there are no serious references in the Masonic archives mentioning either Louis XVI or the Count of Provence. The Count of Artois’ visit to *Les Trois Frères* Lodge was probably an exceptional event. In fact, despite their aspirations, the Lodges under the Orient of the Court were not able to penetrate the upper aristocracy. *Les Trois Frères* was a Lodge that brought together men of honourable but middling rank from the royal household of the King, the Count of Provence, and above all, the Count of Artois, hence his visit. The man who wrote the charter was chevalier Pierre Gautier de Vinfrais (1738–1794), an officer in the Count of Provence’s guard. His ancestor was a Versailles local who

looked after hunting dogs, named Gautier and called Vinfrais. The Bourbons were so enamoured with hunting that he rose to the very brink of minor nobility. Brothers in the upper aristocracy did not frequent Lodges under the Orient of the Court, because Versailles was not able to hold out against the allure of Paris, which had once again become the worldly cultural centre of France. The Dukes under the Acacia, as well as Mason counts and marquis went to *La Candeur*, the Grand Master’s Lodge, to *La Fidélité*, to *Olympique de la Parfaite Estime*, famous for its concert society, or to *Saint-Jean de Montmorency-Luxembourg*. That is where one might find the great names of the history of France: Montmorency (Luxembourg, Laval, and Boutteville), Rohan (Guéméné, Rochefort, Soubise, and Chabot), La Tour du Pin, Montesquiou, and d’Harcourt, the Dukes of Luynes and of Richelieu, etc. As for *Les Trois Frères Unis*, it survived the Revolution by abandoning any royal references or mentions of the Orient of the Court. The Lodge became *Les Frères Unis* under the Orient of Paris, and is still there today, under the name *Frères Unis Inséparables*.

# Albrecht Dürer's Kabbalistic Gesture of the Heart

By Zhenya Gershman

## ABSTRACT

In his *Imitatio Christi* Self-Portrait (1500) Albrecht Dürer not only shaped his image to fit the portrayal of Christ, but ingeniously fashioned a sign with the right hand to evoke his true devotion to Christ. This paper explores the Shin Gesture inspired by the Hebrew letter  $\text{ש}$  (Shin) and composed by binding the middle and the ring fingers together, while stretching the index and little finger away uncomfortably. Furthermore, it shows that this gesture can be linked to the numerous texts produced by the Christian Kabbalists during the period – specifically the writings of great philosophers Pico della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin. While drawing on the Jewish religious practices of the wrapping of the Tefillin and the circumcision, Christian Kabbalists developed a unique interpretation represented by a specific hand gesture which permeates numerous artworks beginning in the early Renaissance and particularly significant to Albrecht Dürer's oeuvre.

**Dedication:** Dedicated to my Wonder-Working Family: Irina, George, Evan, and Nikka. With all my heart I am grateful to Dr. Pinchas Giller for being the first listener of the Shin gesture idea, and for his erudite consultations throughout the project. In loving memory of an unforgettable friend and collaborator John Slifko.

**Keywords:** Dürer, Kabbalah, Christ, Heart, Art, Renaissance, Gesture, Shin, Reuchlin

## El gesto cabalístico del corazón de Alberto Duresro

### RESUMEN

En su *Autorretrato Imitatio Christi* (1500), Alberto Durero no solo moldeó su imagen para que encajara con la representación de Cristo, sino que ingeniosamente diseñó un signo con la mano derecha para evocar su verdadera devoción a Cristo. Este artículo explora el gesto Shin inspirado en la letra hebrea  $\text{ש}$  (Shin) y compuesto por la unión de los dedos medio y anular, mientras se estiran incómodamente los dedos índice y meñique. Además, muestra que este gesto puede vincularse a los numerosos textos producidos por los ca-

balistas cristianos durante el período, específicamente los escritos de los grandes filósofos Pico della Mirandola y Johannes Reuchlin. Mientras se basaban en las prácticas religiosas judías de envolver los tefilín y la circuncisión, los cabalistas cristianos desarrollaron una interpretación única representada por un gesto específico con la mano que impregna numerosas obras de arte desde principios del Renacimiento y es particularmente significativa para la obra de Alberto Durero.

**Dedicación:** Dedicado a mi familia maravillosa: Irina, George, Evan y Nikka. De todo corazón agradezco al Dr. Pinchas Giller por ser el primer oyente de la idea del gesto Shin, y por sus eruditas consultas a lo largo del proyecto. En memoria amorosa de un amigo y colaborador inolvidable, John Slifko.

**Palabras clave:** Durero, Dürer, Cábala, Cristo, Corazón, Arte, Renacimiento, Gesto, Espinilla, Reuchlin

## 阿尔布雷特·丢勒的卡巴拉心之手势

### 摘要

在他的自画像《模仿基督》（1500）中，阿尔布雷特·丢勒不仅将其塑造为适应基督的形象，而且巧妙地用右手塑造了一个标志，以唤起他对基督的真正忠诚。本文探究了受希伯来字母  $\psi$  (Shin) 启发的 Shin 手势，它将中指和无名指结合在一起，同时用力伸开食指和小指。此外，本文表明，该手势可以与这一时期基督教卡巴拉学者创作的众多文本联系起来——特别是伟大哲学家皮科·德拉·米兰多拉和约翰内斯·鲁赫林的著作。基督教卡巴拉学者在借鉴包裹“经文护符匣”（Tefillin）和割礼等犹太宗教习俗的同时，提出了一种由特定的手势为代表的独特诠释，该手势体现在文艺复兴早期开始的众多艺术品中，尤其在阿尔布雷特·丢勒的作品中具有重要性。

**致谢:** 献给我最棒的家庭: Irina、George、Evan 和 Nikka。我衷心感谢 Pinchas Giller 博士作为 Shin 手势理念的第一个倾听者，并感谢他在整个项目中提供的博学咨询。纪念一位令人难忘的朋友及合作者 John Slifko。

**关键词:** 丢勒、卡巴拉、基督、心、艺术、文艺复兴、手势、Shin、鲁赫林

*“The heart sees, the heart hears, the heart understands, and the heart knows. And in the heart of every wise-hearted I have placed wisdom. Thus, wisdom, intelligence and knowledge are in the heart, for in them the Heaven, the Earth and the deeps were made, and in them was the tabernacle made.” Zohar II 116b*



Figure 1. Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1500, 67.1 × 48.9cm, oil on canvas, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

## 1. Albrecht Dürer and the Wonder-Working Word

**A**lthough their reasoning may have differed, generations of both Jews and Christians have

anticipated the coming of a Messiah. This expectation peaked around the time of the millennium, and then again at the end of the fifteenth century with a persisting eschatological anxiety.<sup>1</sup> In the Old German Empire, both leaders

<sup>1</sup> Weber, *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, Millennial Beliefs through the Ages*, 59-60, 68.

of the reformation, Martin Luther and Philip Melancton, believed that the end of times was nearing.<sup>2</sup> As if in preparation, the great German Humanist artist Albrecht Dürer created a series of *Apocalypse* woodcuts appearing in 1498. This was followed by one of his most memorable self-portraits, dated precisely to the year 1500 (figure 1). His image confronts the viewer with a direct gaze, staring deeply into the future, suggestive of the keen expectancy of a possible holy encounter. Erwin Panofsky correctly described Dürer's *Self-Portrait* as *Imitatio Christi*.<sup>3</sup> In an ingenious way, the artist simultaneously presented the subject as himself as well as the image of Christ. He went so far as to adjust his golden hair, made famous by his other self-portraits, to match the darker hair of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, in the upper left corner we see Dürer's monogram AD which can hold a double meaning: literally the name of the artist

A(lbrecht) D(ürer) and metaphorically A(nno) D(omini), "In the year of our Lord 1500."<sup>5</sup> In the upper right corner we find a Latin inscription which was composed by the artist's friend Conrad Celtis's personal secretary<sup>6</sup>: "I, Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg portrayed myself in everlasting colours at age twenty-eight years, in year 1500."<sup>7</sup> Celtis even wrote an epigram for this painting.<sup>8</sup> Dürer was a member of a *Sodalitas Celtica*<sup>9</sup>, an organization founded by Celtis which convened in the home of Dürer's closest friend Willibald Pirckheimer.<sup>10</sup> It was in this society that Dürer would meet like-minded intellectuals.<sup>11</sup> Here he had access to the subjects of Hebraism and Christian Kabbalist thought. It is well-established that Pirckheimer was an advocate of studying Jewish texts, which was done in alliance with his friend, one of the biggest supporters of Hebraism, Johannes Reuchlin.<sup>12</sup>

2 Ibid., 66.

3 Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, 43.

4 Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, 72.

5 Wolf, *Albrecht Dürer*, 125.

6 Hutchison, Jane Campbell, *Albrecht Dürer: A Guide to Research*, New York: Garland Publishing, 2000, 1.

7 The Latin inscription in the painting reads: "Albertus Durerus Noricus ipsum me proprijs sic effingebam coloribus aetatis anno XXVIII"

8 Wuttke, Dieter, "Dürer und Celtis. Von der Bedeutung des Jahres 1500 für den deutschen Humanismus. Jahrhundertfeier als symbolische Form," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 10 (1980), 89-90, 83.

9 Price, *Albrecht Dürer's Renaissance*, 14-18.

10 Grimm, Harold J., "The Role of Nuremberg in the Spread of the Reformation," in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History: Essays Presented to George Huntston Williams*, eds. F. Forrester Church and Timothy George, Leiden: E. J. Brill, (1979), 182-197, 186.

11 Margaret Sullivan confirms that: "Wuttke is correct in his surmise that the painting was conceived as part of Conrad Celtis's program to make the year 1500 a great year for German Humanism." Sullivan, *Alter Apelles*, 1166. Vol. 68, No. 4 (Winter 2015), pp. 1161-1191

12 Price, David H., *Johannes Reuchlin and the Campaign to Destroy Jewish Books*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 178.

It is directly in Dürer's work that we find proof of his fascination and knowledge of Hebraism and Christian Kabbalah.<sup>13</sup> Dürer returned numerous times in his paintings, drawings, and his prints to the portrayal of Saint Jerome. Jerome was considered a "patron Saint of Hebraism"<sup>14</sup> by the group of Humanists who alongside Pirckheimer supported Reuchlin's position against the destruction and burning of important Hebrew texts including Torah, Talmud, and Kabbalistic writings.<sup>15</sup> An innovative comparison between the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin opening line of the Bible is found in Dürer's early 1492 depiction *Saint Jerome curing the Lion* (figure 2). The composition emphasizes the elevation of the Hebrew original text—literally above those of Latin and its Greek translations—stressing its significance. This is also in line with Reuchlin's view of the Hebrew language. Charles Zika emphasized that Reuchlin believed the Hebrew verses superior to Latin or Greek languages as: "simple, pure, incorrupt, holy, brief, and constant" and the means of God to communicate with men.<sup>16</sup> Reuchlin therefore believed along with other Hebraists, that the "power of the divine names resides only in their Hebrew form."<sup>17</sup> Dürer's wood-

cut surprisingly reveals his knowledge of the Hebrew language.<sup>18</sup> In his book on Reuchlin, David Price underlined that this is the first depiction of Saint Jerome which shows decipherable Hebrew characters.<sup>19</sup> This fact positions Dürer alongside both the father of Christian Kabbalah, Pico della Mirandola, and Reuchlin, as the first artist to display the desire to learn the Hebrew language.

It is also in Dürer's *Monogram of Christ* circa 1500 (figure 3) that we find proof of his familiarity with the kabbalistic texts of both Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico* (*The Wonder-Working Word*, 1494)<sup>20</sup> and Pico de Mirandola's *Conclusiones* (1486). We find the name of Jesus displayed on the far left in Greek and Latin, along with his Hebrew name on the far right. From this artwork we learn that Dürer was aware of the deep kabbalistic significance of the Hebrew letter שׁ (Shin). As Reuchlin describes, the letter שׁ (Shin) should be inserted in the middle or the heart of the Jewish Tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH) to transform it into the transliteration of Christ's name as Pentagrammaton יהושׁה (YHSh-VH). Through Reuchlin's insights, for Christian Kabbalists, the letter שׁ (Shin) became symbolically representative of Christ. As an artist, Dürer contributed a

13 Gershman, "Dürer's Enigma," 227-228.

14 Minty, 'Albrecht Dürer's "Saint Jerome in His Study,"' 32-29.

15 Price, 'Christian Humanism and the Representation of Judaism,' 81.

16 "...simplex, brevis, et constans Hebraeorum ets." Referenced in Zika, *Reuchlin's De Verbo Mirifico*, 122

17 Ibid.

18 David Price emphasized "even if only about the three-fourths of the individual characters for the first verse and a half of Genesis are correct, we should still be impressed that he troubled himself to learn to form Hebrew characters at this early date." Price, *Albrecht Dürer's Renaissance*, 202.

19 Ibid., 200-201.

20 Gershman, "Dürer's Enigma." 228.



Figure 2. Albrecht Dürer, *Saint Jerome in His Study* (Der heilige Hieronymus in der Studierstube), *Epistolae* Title page woodcut, Incunabulum print on paper, by Nikolaus Kessler, Basel, 8th August 1492, 19.2 × 13.5cm (left), and detail (right). By permission of Archives of Gurk Diocese in Klagenfurt, Episcopal Library. Photo: Peter G. Tropper.



Figure 3. Albrecht Dürer, *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1500, print, 17.7 × 14.1cm, and detail (right). By permission, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

visual interpretation to the *verbo mirifico* or the *wonder-working word* found in the philosophical and theological writings of Reuchlin. Returning to Dürer's print, we find that Christ's crucifixion is designed to fit alongside his Latin initials *IHS*, which Dürer ingeniously transforms to reveal the Hebrew letter שׁ (Shin). The crucifixion fits symmetrically inside the three-part form of Shin alongside its central access. In this way the initial "I" ("IHΣΟΥΣ" in Greek for Jesus) has become inseparable from the letter שׁ (Shin) embedded straight into its heart.

## 2. The Letter שׁ (Shin) and its Position in The Heart

For Christian Kabbalists, the position of letter שׁ (Shin) in the middle of God's name is of great significance. In the Jewish tradition, the word יהוה (YHWH) is ineffable. It is by virtue of the revelation of the letter שׁ (Shin) that it is made possible by the Christian Kabbalists for the name to be spoken aloud. Theologically, this stresses the revelation of God's heart to the people through Christ. In Judaism, the letter שׁ (Shin) is the first letter of another holy name of God: שׁדדאי (Shaddai). Among its many allusions, the name Shaddai evokes the word *breast* and therefore infers the heart.<sup>21</sup> As will be discussed below, in the Jewish daily prayer, it is the letter שׁ (Shin) that is revealed by the ritual wrapping of the

ceremonial phylacteries, or *tefillin*. The arm is subsequently placed on the heart, bringing the wrapped hand forming the letter שׁ (Shin) onto the chest. During the Renaissance, Shaddai was also used as a protective talisman evoking heavenly powers.<sup>22</sup> The word Shaddai is placed on the decorative encasement of the Mezuzah, which contains a parchment with blessings and placed on the doorposts of the Jewish homes. In this case the word Shaddai is represented by the first letter שׁ (Shin). It is this letter that we find in Dürer's most famous 1514 engraving *Melencolia SI* (figure 4).

Directly beneath Dürer's anagram signature, we discover four nails, three of which are arranged to form the letter שׁ (Shin) (figure 5). The serifs (the elegant projections on the top of the letter) are suggested in the form of the nail's heads. The Shin's dot, which ensures it is pronounced as a "sh" (instead of a similar sound "s") is also incorporated by Dürer's clever positioning of the ruler with the hole at its end. The nails undoubtedly evoke the reference to Christ and the subject of the Crucifixion. As with the *Monogram of Christ*, here Dürer transforms the objects to evoke the letter שׁ (Shin) and therefore Christ. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the deep theological significance found in *Melencolia SI*.<sup>23</sup> It is, however, important to recognize Dürer's knowledge of the significance of the letter שׁ (Shin) and its symbolic relationship to Christ.

21 Wiskind-Elper, *Wisdom of the Heart*, 151.

22 Copenhagen, "Number, Shape, And Meaning in Pico's Christian Cabala," 47.

23 For detailed analysis of *Melencolia SI* in kabbalistic context see Gershman, "Dürer's Enigma," 218-257.



Figure 4. Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*. 1514. Engraving, 18.6 cm×23.8 cm.  
By permission Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Figure 5. Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*. Detail of letter  $\psi$  (Shin) compared to the Hebrew letter  $\psi$  (Shin).

The similarity between the structure of the letter  $\psi$  (Shin) and an anatomic drawing of a cross-section of the heart (depicting its chambers) is striking and has not gone unnoticed (figure 6).<sup>24</sup> In his seventeenth century print Jakob Böhme unites the letter  $\psi$  (Shin), the name of Christ, and the word יהוהי (YHWH) contained within a shape of a blazing heart into one striking emblem (figure 7). He arranges the word יהוהי (YHWH) into a kabbalistic pattern of *tetraktys*. In its foundation, below the triangle, we find the letter  $\psi$  (Shin) inserted literally into the shape of the inverted heart to form the name of Christ הושהי (YHShVH). Directly from this letter, we see radiation of divine light. The rays of the heart contain two words: a holy name of God *Emmanuel* and Jesus, arranged so that they could be read continuously with the word *El*, meaning God, visually emphasized at the bottom of the emblem. Finally, the outer circle of the entire design is surrounded with the word CHRISTUS. Böhme describes the meaning of this symbol in his *Libri apologetici* (1621):

For we man have one book in common which points to God. Each has within himself, which is the priceless Name of God. Its letters are the flames of His love, which He out of His heart in the priceless name of Jesus revealed in us. Read these letters in your hearts and spirits and you have books enough. All the writings

of the children of God direct you unto that one book, and therein lie all the treasures of wisdom. This book is Christ in you.”<sup>25</sup>

In such a way Böhme emphasizes that Christ, and therefore, the letter  $\psi$  (Shin), can be revealed inside our hearts. This “reading

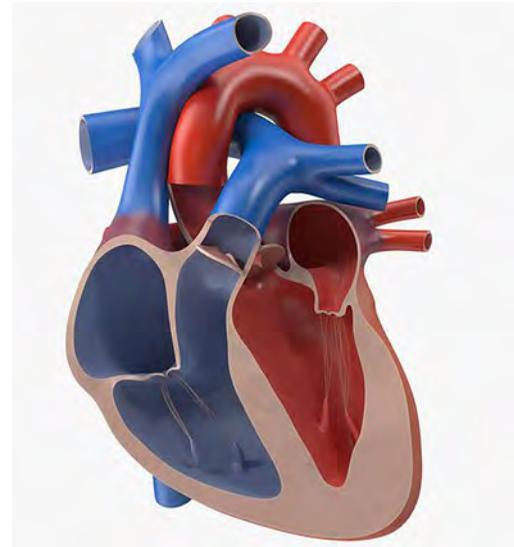


Figure 6. Comparison of Shin to chambers of the human heart.

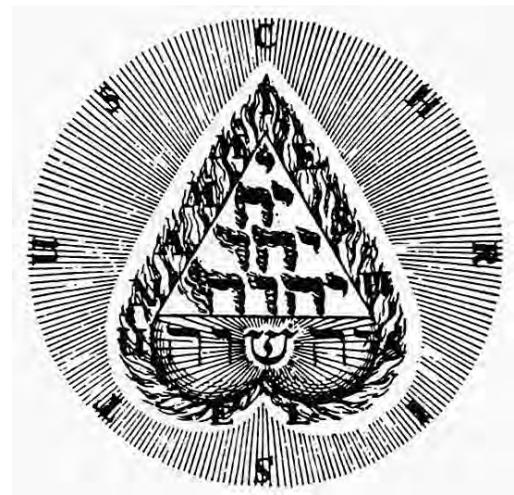


Figure 7. Jakob Böhme, *Libri apologetici*, 1621.

24 Garr, *Bless You!*, 39.

25 Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, 615.

of the letters in your heart” to fulfill the name of Jesus from

within can likewise be found in Dürer’s 1500 *Self-Portrait*.

### 3. Albrecht Dürer’s Shin Gesture



Figure 8. Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait (Detail)*, 1500, oil on canvas, Alte Pinakothek, München.

Returning to Dürer’s *Self-Portrait* as *Imitatio Christi*, we should take note of the placement of his hand and the particularity of this gesture (figure 8). He has deliberately chosen to paint only one hand, as if to focus the viewer on its unique significance. Its paleness is contrasted with the somber environment, further emphasizing its importance visually. As if an arrow, the index finger points towards the chest or the heart. The hand is placed strategically onto the fur of the jacket, increasing the sensation of tactility for the viewer. A closer examination reveals that the fingers are arranged in a particular way, with the middle and ring fingers bound together to allow the formation

of a “W.” Within the context of Dürer’s knowledge of Christian Kabbalah, his interest in the Hebrew language, and his inclusion of the letter  $\psi$  (Shin) in multiple artworks, it is possible to infer that this gesture is indeed an indicator of Christ and his association with the letter  $\psi$  (Shin). We will refer to this as the *Shin gesture*. Among numerous significations of  $\psi$  (Shin), Reuchlin explains that it “expresses the seventh age of the world in which Jesus becomes head of Church, and mediator between God and man.”<sup>26</sup> In his *Self-Portrait*, Dürer’s inclusion of the Shin gesture, more so than the pose and the hair, is perhaps the strongest allusion to Christ. Fifteen years later, Dürer created an etching

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 132.

*Man of Sorrows*, which shows the passion of Christ.<sup>27</sup> Here both of Christ's hands clearly show Shin gesture punctuated with the stigmata (figure 9).

In the *Verbo Mirifico*, Reuchlin clarifies that the holy names do not have power "unless joined with a power of a more notable operation."<sup>28</sup> An example of such an operation is the adding of the letter *shin* (Shin) to the Tetragrammaton, making the vowels pronounceable. However, for Reuchlin, the *wonder-working word* must be employed along with the help of the cross. The precise description of how to perform the gesture of this cross remains a secret as it is whispered into the ear of one of Reuchlin's protagonists, emphasizing its secrecy. For an artist like Dürer, a "notable operation" would then be to literally activate the *shin* (Shin) by way of the hand gesture physically painted in a work of art. The Shin gesture is therefore an extension of the *wonder-working word*.

This very specific hand and finger positioning can be found in numerous religious and secular paintings (alluding to Christ) of various painters such as Rogier van der Weyden, Raffaello Sanzio, Titian, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Jacopo Pontormo, Agnolo Bronzino, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Sofonisba Anguissola, Diego Velázquez, and many other artists. It has been dubbed as a *pseudo-zygodactylous* gesture, under the faulty assump-

tion that it refers to a medical condition and is also synonymous with the *El Greco gesture*, since this artist repeatedly inserted it into his artworks.<sup>29</sup> In El Greco's Toledo's *The Disrobing of Christ* this Shin gesture is found twice: notably Christ points with the *shin* (Shin) at his heart and Mary Magdalene places the *shin* (Shin) on the Virgin's shoulder (figure 10). Though restricted by a rope, which is brutally pulled upon by a soldier, Christ manages to form the Shin gesture. Another example can be found in Agnolo Bronzino's *The Panciatici Holy Family*. Here the baby Christ is sleeping while Saint John is laying the Shin gesture onto his chest as if in a blessing, while Mary places her Shin on top of the Bible (figure 11). Most noteworthy, Michelangelo Buonarroti included the Shin gesture in multiple locations of his famous Sistine Chapel frescoes, but specifically in *The Creation of Adam* where God exchanges the sign with Adam as if to say that the Shin gesture is gifted to men (figure 12). We discover that this hand sign was also used by female artists. It is present in two of Sofonisba Anguissola's self-portraits painted forty-four years apart. Her earlier portrayal from 1556 presents the artist in the act of painting (figure 13). Her right hand holds the maulstick with the middle and ring fingers bent as if concealing the Shin gesture. With her right hand she reaches out with the brush to

27 Though Dürer's earlier 1509 engraving of *Man of Sorrows by the Column* differs in composition, it also contains a clear Shin gesture. In 1522, Dürer returned to this subject in his drawing *Self-Portrait as the Man of Sorrows*. Here too his hands are emphasized through the Shin gesture is less overt.

28 Zika, *Reuchlin's De Verbo Mirifico*, 131.

29 Davide, Fabio, and Yi Xin, *Secret Hand Gestures in Paintings*, 526–532.



Figure 9. Albrecht Dürer, *Man of Sorrows*, 1515, etching on iron, 11.1 × 6.5 cm. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1919.

paint the arm of Christ appearing to be literally touching him. Anguissola's arms are arranged to form the shape of the cross with the aid of important tools of the painter's trade. Meanwhile, the Virgin Mary repeats the artist's Shin gesture, this time overtly, by placing her

left hand on her son's face. The mother and child exchange meaningful gazes, while Mary's ring finger gently touches his lips as if to warn Christ to secrecy.

In Dürer's own oeuvre, we find it in *Virgin in Prayer*, painted in 1518, where Mary has folded both hands in



Figure 10. El Greco, *The Disrobing of Christ* (left) and detail (right), c. 1577-79. 285 × 173cm, oil on canvas, Toledo Cathedral.

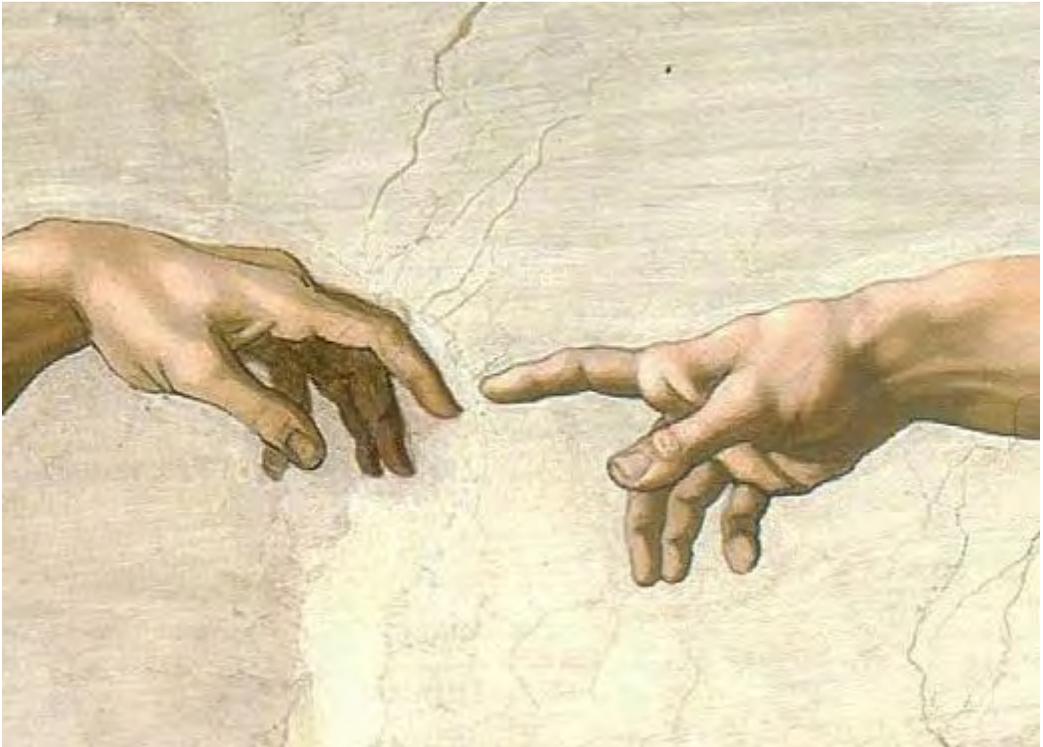
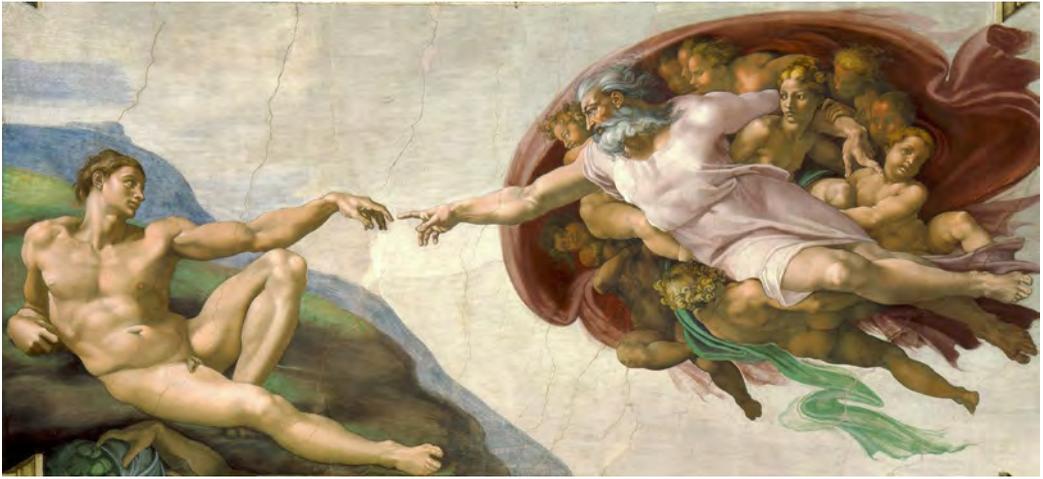
the Shin gesture (figure 14). She turns her eyes upward, transcending the constraint of the artwork, as if directing her gaze towards the divine source. In his 1519 work *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne*, Dürer shows the Shin blessing placed over Christ's sleeping body directly above his heart (figure 15). This depiction has been suggested to be painted by Dürer's follower,<sup>30</sup> which would only emphasize the passing on

of the tradition of the sign. Finally, we find the Shin gesture in a magnificent 1507 painting *Adam and Eve* (figure 16). This predates Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, revealing the first man using the Shin gesture, right after the consumption of the tree of knowledge. Adam holds his hand gesturing down, and outside of the painting, as if to send the message to the viewer.

30 Wolf, *Albrecht Dürer*, 282.



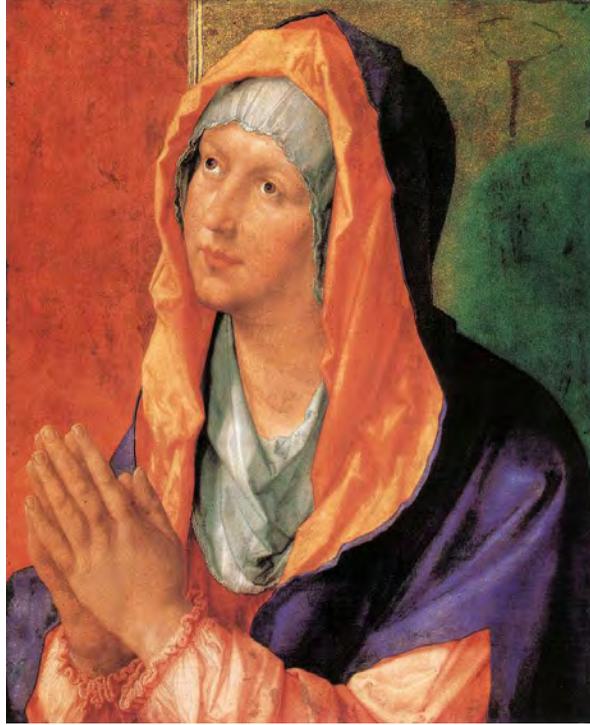
*Figure 11. Agnolo Bronzino, The Panciatichi Holy Family, c. 1540-1545, 116.5 x 89.5cm, oil on panel, Uffizi, Florence.*



**Figure 12.** Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Creation of Adam* (upper) and detail (lower), 1512, 280 × 570 cm, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican.



*Figure 13: Sofonisba Anguissola, The Virgin Mary in Prayer, 1532, oil on canvas, 66 × 57 cm, Łańcut Castle, Łańcut.*



*Figure 14:* Albrecht Dürer, *The Virgin Mary in Prayer*, 1518, oil on linden panel, 53 × 43 cm, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.



*Figure 15:* Albrecht Dürer, *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne*, c. 1519, oil on panel, 60 cm × 49.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 16: Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve* (left) and detail of Shin gesture (right), c. 1507, oil on panel, 209 cm × 81 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

The scholarship on this hand symbol is surprisingly small especially when taking into account how often it appears in art. One study identified it with the Saint Ignatius of Loyola and his spiritual exercises, published in 1548.<sup>31</sup> This poses a double problem. First, he only advises to place the hand upon the breast without any specification of the position of the fingers. Secondly, it creates an anachronistic challenge since it cannot be related to the earlier representations prior to 1548. Another study traces the connection to

a sixteenth-century Jewish ritual practiced by *Marranos* in Toledo. Ralph Oppenheim, in his 1955 book *Spain in the Looking-Glass*, had an intriguing suggestion that this gesture of the “speaking hands” is derived from a Sephardic Jewish blessing recited while reading the Amidah.<sup>32</sup> Thomas Kunesh confirmed that Oppenheim was referring to the *priestly blessing*.<sup>33</sup> Though this sacred priestly gesture is meant to evoke the letter  $\psi$  (Shin), it is done so by a different finger configuration in which the thumb forms the left spoke, the index

31 Cassou, *El Greco*, 105.

32 Oppenheim, *Spain in the Looking-glass*, 54.

33 Kunesh, *The Pseudo-Zygodactylous Gesture of the Lactating Goddess*, 34.

and middle fingers are bound together to create the middle axis, and finally the ring and the little finger are separated to create the last spoke of Shin (figure 17). This configuration is also considered a strictly forbidden gesture, reserved only

for High Priests, and remaining invisible, as the faithful are required to avert their gaze during the raising of the hands. What is then the possible source for Dürer's Shin gesture?

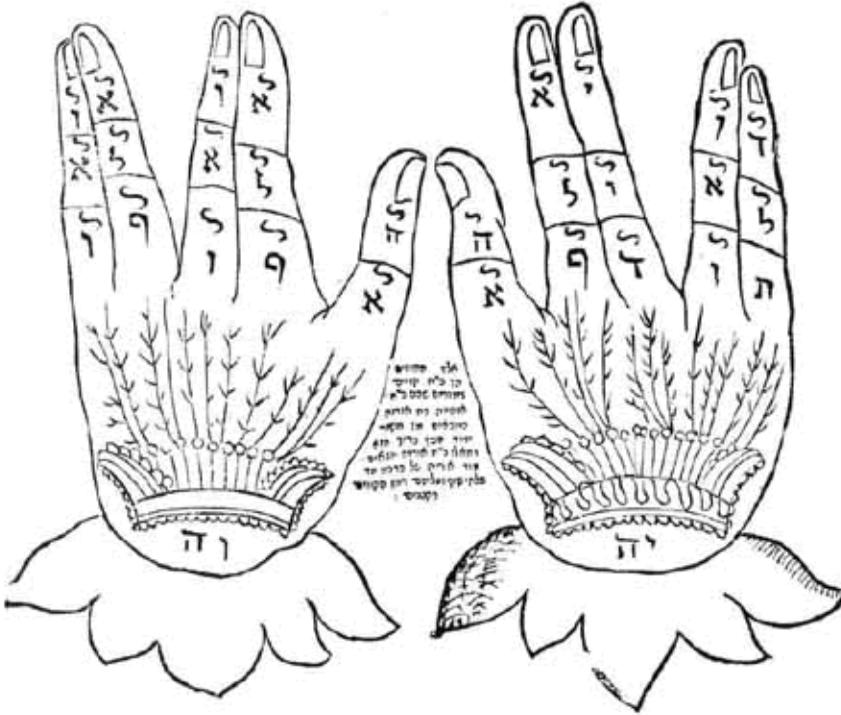


Figure 17. Priestly blessing, Shefa Tal, Hanau, 1612. Hebrew Section, Library of Congress.

#### 4. The Shin Gesture and the Wrapping of the Tefillin

To understand the influence of Jewish traditions on the Christian Kabbalists, and therefore the symbols that were formed and reflected in the artworks, we must examine the practice of the wrapping of the tefillin. Tefillin is related to a Greek term *phylactery* (*protectant*) and is a small leather container designed to hold leather scrolls inscribed with the

verses of the Torah. It has come to be the means to follow the Deuteronomic code, which instructs the faithful to literally tie God's commandments as signs on their hands. We find this instruction in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

It is noteworthy that this verse underlines the commandments to be literally placed on one's heart. Before it can be carried out, a special blessing must be made: "Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to put on tefillin."<sup>34</sup> Once the tefillin is secure the rest of the strap is wrapped around the arm:

So that the strap is wrapped in the configuration of the Hebrew letter *shin* (*shin*) on the back of his hand. As the back of his hand faces him, the strap is brought from the underside of his wrist so that it appears on the back of his hand just above and to the right of his wrist bone. He brings the strap down and across to where the thumb joins the hand, creating the left 'spoke' of the letter *shin*. Then the strap is wrapped three times around the middle finger, twice on the bone closest to the hand and once on the middle bone. Then the strap is brought around the ring finger, where it

joins the hand, and is lead over the back of the hand downwards to where the thumb joins the hand. This creates the right 'spoke' of the letter *shin*. Then the strap is wrapped around the middle palm, creating the middle 'spoke'.<sup>35</sup>

Though there are various regional customs regarding the actual wrapping of the tefillin, they all are a variation of forming letter *shin* (*shin*) as described above. The tefillin is comprised of two elements. The *shel yad* or the arm-tefillah is placed on the upper arm, and the *retzuah* strap is extended to be wrapped around the arm, hand, and fingers. The *retzuah* is first tightened around the muscle above the elbow so that it is close to a person's heart.<sup>36</sup> As a result the middle and the ring fingers are bound together, separating them from the rest of the hand and forming the letter *shin* (*Shin*) (figure 18). Comparing the diagram of the wrapping of tefillin to the artworks mentioned above, it is as if the *Shin* gesture in the paintings was created by the binding of the invisible tefillin. This seems to be the very subject of Dürer's 1506 painting *Christ Among the Doctors* (figure 19).

The narrative of this artwork is based on the Gospel of Luke. According to the gospel, Christ disappeared for three days at the age of twelve. He was finally found by his parents in the temple preaching to Doctors. Upon being questioned he responded: "Why were

34 Kitov, *The Jew and His Home*, 484. See also Erhman, *Tefillin: Making the Connection*, 32-33.

35 Kitov, *The Jew and His Home*, 484.

36 Ibid.



**Figure 18.** The  $\psi$  (Shin) letter achieved by wrapping the tefillin on the back of the hand causing the *Shin Gesture* finger position (Sefard tradition).

you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49). The fact that Christ was twelve years old, and the fact that he indeed was found in the Temple, as his family would suspect, supports the possibility that he was preparing for his coming of age, known in Judaism as *bar mitzvah*. The wearing of the tefillin is not required until the boy reaches maturity at age thirteen. As Mordechai Becher pointed out, it is traditional to practice wrapping of the tefillin as part of the preparation for the *bar mitzvah*.<sup>37</sup> Dürer presents Christ in the middle of the painting, engaged in a discussion that can be inferred to represent his being instructed as to how the tefillin should be wrapped. Not only are most of the characters hands in the painting emphasized and involved in gesturing,

the middle and ring fingers are bound together to some degree in all of them. Christ's gesture is the most overt, and a golden light radiates from his head as if in that very moment he came to realize that he *is* the Shin that he forms with his hand.

In the scholarship of this painting, focus remained largely on faces. Panofsky concentrated on the Doctor's faces as he saw them "surround the innocent beauty of the youthful Christ with the threatening nearness of a nightmare."<sup>38</sup> Jan Bialostocki went so far as to see the Doctors as *ugly* when juxtaposed with that of the adolescent Christ.<sup>39</sup> However, he did take note that Christ's hands are contrasted "by the ornamental pattern of the hands of one of the Doctors, which interferes with Christ's gesture of argument."<sup>40</sup> Indeed,

37 Becher, *Gateway to Judaism*, 52.

38 Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, 114.

39 Bialostocki, "Opus Quinque Dierum," 25.

40 *Ibid*, 18.



Figure 19. Albrecht Dürer, *Christ Among the Doctors*, c. 1506, 65 × 80cm, oil on canvas, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

the man to the right of Christ seems to be instructing him by gently touching Christ's hands. He is likely not menacing (as Panofsky might have seen him); rather he is old and withered, emphasising his learned status.

The direction of Christ's tilt of the head takes the viewer towards the elder man on the lower left. We find an inscription on his hat which has been identified as a quote from Matthew 23:5 that refers to the tefillin: "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments."<sup>41</sup> This quote

points to a Christian understanding and reinterpretation of the tefillin commandment. Instead of making it visible and "broad", Christ adopts the Shin gesture to remain invisibly bound. As if to underline his deep knowledge of the Hebrew subject, Dürer inserts his signature in a bookmark stuck between the pages of the Jewish text. It is held by the hands of the very same man who wears the reference on his hat to Matthew's words on phylacteries. There may be numerous reasons for transformation of the tefillin practice from overt to invisible wrapping of the hand. The main impe-

41 Boesten-Stengel, "Albrecht Dürers Zwölfjähriger Jesus unter den Schriftgelehrten der Sammlung Thyssen-Bornemisza. Bilderfindung und presiezza," 46-66.

tus in transforming this Jewish tradition would support the internal devotion of placing Christ or Shin on the heart. Pico specifically discussed how phylacteries facilitate the flow of *Ilan*, the Divine energy of the Sefirot, from the Tree of Life entering the body directly from God.<sup>42</sup> Following this, Pico mentions Matthew's words quoted in Dürer's painting: "They broaden their phylacteries."<sup>43</sup> He explains that Christ intended to minimize the excessive display of tefillin and not its use. Pico even points out a similarity to specific crosses practiced by select priests in memory of Christ.<sup>44</sup> Is it possible that the priests Pico mentions were practicing the Shin gesture?

There is a long tradition of linking the symbol of the heart to Christ. Another commandment of circumcision adopted from Judaism illuminates this symbolic relationship.<sup>45</sup> Following Genesis 17: 10-14, this commandment is returned to in Deuteronomy 10:16 where God asks his people to "circumcise the foreskin of their hearts." For Saint Paul this becomes an indication that with Christ this practice is transformed into the "circumcision of the heart" in spirit and not in body (Romans 2:28-29). Leo Steinberg observed that this is further

emphasized by Christ's sacrifice and the wound left by the lance in Christ's chest.<sup>46</sup> A reminder of Christ's selfless act of redemption, or a circumcision of the heart, is served by the Shin gesture in Dürer's *Self-Portrait*. If we recall how in Deuteronomy the instructing of the faithful through the use of tefillin to love God with all their heart, we see the same strength of devotion to Christ exemplified in Dürer's painting, carried out by placing the invisibly bound hand forming Shin on his heart.

The primary intent of this paper is to demonstrate the correlation between the Christian Kabbalists in Dürer's Humanist circles and Jewish practices, which helps illuminate the deep symbolism imbedded in Dürer's artwork. The Shin gesture is likewise to be found in works of other artists and places outside of Dürer's Nuremberg. This presents an iconography based on the shared desire to activate the letter *shin* (Shin) from within not only one's heart, but emanating from the heart of the artwork itself. For Reuchlin, the revelation of the *verbo mirifico* by God to Moses holds a promise of human potential for divine nature and a return to divine source.<sup>47</sup> It is this divine nature that we

42 Della Mirandola, *Cabalistarum selectiora, obscurioraque dogmata*, 107 recto: "Inter quae praecepta unum extabat, videlicet, quod illi qui orare volebant, habere tenebantur appensa in brachio philateria, ut similes redderentur archetypo: in quo sunt haec philateria: in quo sunt haec philateria, sephirot nominata, sicut pater in arbore."

43 Ibid., 107 verso: "De hisce locutus est Christus, quando dixit: dilatant philateria."

44 Ibid., 107 verso: "Sicut igitur sacerdotes Christiani, sacra celebraturi, induunt se planetas, crucem habentes, ad significandum, quod passionis, & crucis Christi memorium facimus."

45 Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, 166.

46 Ibid., 374.

47 "Hic humanae naturae partem in seipso despicit alterius partis divinate confisus. O hominis quam esta natura temperate foelicus. Hic diis cognata divinitate coniunctus partem sui qua terrenus est despicit." Referenced in Zika, *Reuchlin's De Verbo Merifico*, 130.

see reflected in Dürer's *Self-Portrait*. A powerfully relevant quote from one of the most important kabbalistic texts Zohar (II 116b) resonates within this context: "The heart sees, the heart hears, the heart understands, and the heart knows. And in the heart of every wise-hearted I have placed wisdom. Thus, wisdom, intelligence and knowledge are in the heart, or in them the Heaven, the Earth and the deeps were made, and in them was the tabernacle made."

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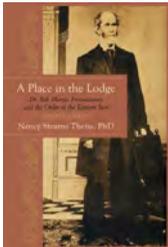




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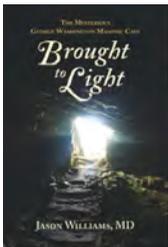
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**A Place in the Lodge: Dr. Rob Morris, Freemasonry and the Order of the Eastern Star**  
by Nancy Stearns Theiss, PhD

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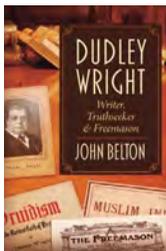
Ridiculed as “petticoat masonry,” critics of the Order of the Eastern Star did not deter Rob Morris’ goal to establish a Masonic organization that included women as members. Morris carried the ideals of Freemasonry through a despairing time of American history.



**Brought to Light: The Mysterious George Washington Masonic Cave**  
by Jason Williams MD

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The George Washington Masonic Cave near Charles Town, West Virginia, contains a signature carving of George Washington dated 1748. This book painstakingly pieces together the chronicled events and real estate archives related to the cavern in order to sort out fact from fiction.



**Dudley Wright: Writer, Truthseeker & Freemason**  
by John Belton

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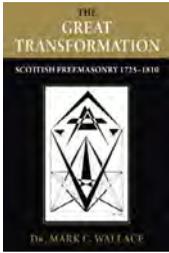
Dudley Wright (1868-1950) was an Englishman and professional journalist who took a universalist approach to the various great Truths of Life. He travelled though many religions in his life and wrote about them all, but was probably most at home with Islam.



**History of the Grand Orient of Italy**  
Emanuela Locci, Editor

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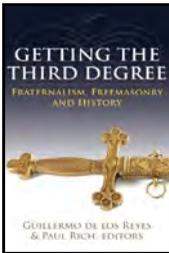
No book in Masonic literature upon the history of Italian Freemasonry has been edited in English up to now. This work consists of eight studies, covering a span from the Eighteenth Century to the end of the WWII, tracing through the story, the events and pursuits related to the Grand Orient of Italy.



## The Great Transformation: Scottish Freemasonry 1725-1810 by Dr. Mark C. Wallace

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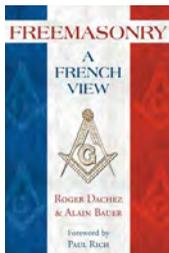
This book examines Scottish Freemasonry in its wider British and European contexts between the years 1725 and 1810. The Enlightenment effectively crafted the modern mason and propelled Freemasonry into a new era marked by growing membership and the creation of the Grand Lodge of Scotland.



## Getting the Third Degree: Fraternalism, Freemasonry and History Edited by Guillermo De Los Reyes and Paul Rich

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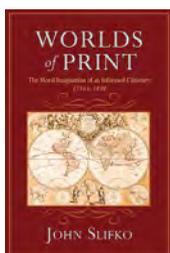
As this engaging collection demonstrates, the doors being opened on the subject range from art history to political science to anthropology, as well as gender studies, sociology and more. The organizations discussed may insist on secrecy, but the research into them belies that.



## Freemasonry: A French View by Roger Dachez and Alain Bauer

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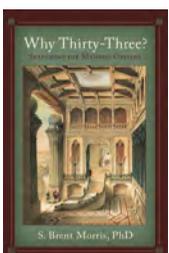
Perhaps one should speak not of Freemasonry but of Freemasonries in the plural. In each country Masonic historiography has developed uniqueness. Two of the best known French Masonic scholars present their own view of the worldwide evolution and challenging mysteries of the fraternity over the centuries.



## Worlds of Print: The Moral Imagination of an Informed Citizenry, 1734 to 1839 by John Slifko

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