

**Academia Ordo Templi Orientis**

**New Orleans**

**2024 e.v.**

**Conference Program**

8:30–9:00 a.m. Registration

9:00–9:15 a.m. Opening Remarks

9:15–9:45 a.m. Fr. ΦΑΝΗΣ, “From Χάρις to Θέλημα: The Gift of Man”

9:45–10:15 a.m. Colin D. Campbell, “No More *Vanity Fair*! Crowley’s Re-Dedication in Bristol, New Hampshire”

10:15–10:45 a.m. Keith Edward Cantú, “‘Flakes of Astral Light’: Aleister Crowley, Yoga and Magick in Mexico”

10:45–11:00 a.m. Break

11:00–11:30 a.m. Cynthia Crosse, “Fiddler in the Land of the Free: Leila Waddell 1915–1924”

11:30–12:00 p.m. Patrick Everitt, “Perdurabo and Peyote: An Examination of Aleister Crowley’s Relationship with the Psychedelic Cactus of North America”

12:00–12:30 p.m. Stephen J. King, “New World, New Thought, New Aeon: America’s ‘Religion of Healthy-Mindedness,’ Thelema, and the Way of the Tao in Soror Hilarion’s ‘Living in the Sunlight’”

12:30–2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00–2:30 p.m. Gordan Djurdjevic, “Star Sponges and Indra’s Nets: Interrogating the Thelemic and Mahayana Buddhist Visions of the Interconnectedness of Phenomena”

2:30–3:00 p.m. Richard Kaczynski, “Erotogenesis: Sexual Religion in the Writings and Correspondence of Aleister Crowley and Theodore Schroeder”

3:00–3:15 p.m. Break

3:15–3:45 p.m. M. Dionysius Rogers, “Israel Regardie, American Thelemite”

3:45-4:15 p.m. Matthew Andrews, “Knights of the East and West Coasts: The Karl Germer and Wilfred T. Smith Correspondence, 1950-1956”

4:15-4:30 p.m. Break

4:30-5:30 p.m. Special Panel

5:30-5:45 p.m. Break

5:45-6:30 p.m. Keynote Lecture: John Patrick Deveney, “The Twilight Mages, Continnence + and the O.T.O.”

6:30-6:40 p.m. Closing Remarks

## **Knights of the East and West Coasts: The Karl Germer and Wilfred T. Smith Correspondence, 1950–1956**

Matthew Andrews

After Aleister Crowley died in 1947, Karl Germer in the United States assumed leadership of the religious movement of Thelema. Shortly thereafter, he reconnected with Crowley's most enduring student in the USA, Wilfred T. Smith. Their correspondence between 1950 and 1956 gives rare insight into an otherwise poorly documented period, covering a vital moment of transition in which Thelema pivoted from a religion led by a living Prophet to a religion that needed to find its footing in the wake of the Prophet's passing. With Germer on the East Coast and Smith on the West, these two tenacious pillars sought to uphold Thelema in America (and the world) after Crowley's death. This talk will sketch the evolving relationship between these two major players during the 1950s by means of their correspondence. It will trace their movements and plans, their arguments, and shared ideals. We will see their different perspectives on leadership, their visions for the future, and how they dealt with their new world without Crowley.

Germer's letters show him to be a confident teacher of Thelemic doctrine and a staunch believer in the spiritual Chiefs who had guided Crowley. He often acknowledged his lack of interest or ability to teach others the techniques of initiation. However, he maintained a spiritual certainty in his authority and in the central role that O.T.O. and A.:A.: would play in promulgating Thelema. Smith alternated between supporting Germer and questioning his claim to leadership, and in the end was unable to hide his desire to lead the O.T.O. himself. Despite their bickering, they continued to correspond and aid one another in their devoted commitment to Thelema. Each saw great potential in the other, and we find many high points of brotherly devotion in their letters. The correspondence also sheds light on other significant figures of the era and their activities: Jane Wolfe and Helen Parsons Smith are frequently referenced, as well as Crowley's son Aleister Ataturk, who we find living with Germer in New Jersey. In all, we get a vivid snapshot of Thelema in 1950s America, not as the final gasps of a religion in tatters following the death of its founder, but rather in the very early days of a world religion just beginning to bud.

**Matthew Andrews** is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Classics at Princeton University, where his current work focuses on the Graeco-Egyptian Magical Papyri. He earned his master's degree at the University of Cambridge and undertook his undergraduate studies in Montreal. He is the Treasurer of O.T.O. Canada, a chartered Initiator, and a Priest of EGC. He helped organize the first O.T.O. Canada national conference in 2018, and curated a small

exhibit of Crowleyana at the Grolier Club in New York in 2022. His first publication is the brief foreword to J. Daniel Gunther's *I Am the Heart* (2024).

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## **“Flakes of Astral Light”: Aleister Crowley, Yoga and Magick in Mexico**

Keith Edward Cantú

This paper revisits the trip of Aleister Crowley to Mexico in the latter half of 1900. Crowley went mountain climbing with Oscar Eckenstein in December of 1900, but a few months earlier he had also met with one Jesús Medina (Jesus de Medina-Sidonia), a Mexican freemason with whom he claimed to help found a new order, the Lamp of the Invisible Light (LIL). The social and geographical history of Crowley's journey to Mexico, meeting with Jesús Medina, and climbing expeditions have already been well documented (Kaczynski, *Perdurabo*). As a result, this paper instead focuses, from a ritual studies perspective, on how Crowley's practices reflect his view of Yoga as equilibrating practices that assist Magick and “The Rising on the Planes,” the name for his technique of astral travel, and how this synthesis of Yoga and Magick continued to inform Thelema more broadly in the history of both the O.T.O. and A.:A.:.

Key source material in this paper are some of the first records of Crowley's practices in Mexico, found in J.F.C. Fuller's “The Temple of Solomon the King” in *The Equinox* I, no. 3. In this work there are two rituals by Crowley given from a work he composed called “Book of the Spirit of the Living God.” While many of the techniques in these rituals were undoubtedly inspired by Crowley's participation in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the word “astral” appears no less than seven times, especially in phrases such as “Astral Plane,” “astral things,” and “astral form,” and also “Flakes of Astral Light.” This paper will show how this reflects inspiration from the Theosophical Society as also informed by Crowley's trip to Ceylon and India, only a few months prior to Mexico, during which he encountered the methods of Sri Sabhapati Swami. Finally, the paper integrates new scholarship that has noted the importance of Jesús Medina in the reform movements both before and after the Mexican Revolution, as well as the importance of Crowley in documenting some of the earliest attested teachings of Yoga as practiced in Mexico as well as North America more widely (Villalba 2023, Muñoz 2021).

**Keith Edward Cantú** is a historian of religions whose interdisciplinary research especially focuses on South Asian yoga, tantra, and the interface between Sanskrit and Indic vernacular languages like Bengali, Tamil, and Hindi, and on modern occult movements in Europe and North America such as

Thelema and the Theosophical Society. He was previously a research fellow at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg in the [Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences](#) and Assistant Professor (postdoc) at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland on the project “Cultures of Patronage: India 1674–1890.” He received his doctoral degree in religious studies in 2021 from the University of California, Santa Barbara, under the supervision of David Gordon White, and two master's degrees from the University of Washington. His first monograph, *Like a Tree Universally Spread: Sri Sabhapati Swami and Śivarājyoga*, was published in 2023 by Oxford University Press (Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism series). He is currently preparing a second monograph that analyzes the history and contexts of magical and yogic practices in the Thelemic *libri* or instructional books in *The Equinox* using a variety of critical and theoretical lenses. He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in Religious Studies at St. Lawrence University in New York and a postdoctoral fellow in Asian Religious Traditions at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School. He also teaches on the platform [Yogic Studies](#).

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## No More *Vanity Fair*! Crowley's Re-Dedication in Bristol, New Hampshire

Colin D. Campbell

Aleister Crowley escaped New York City — or rather “was escaped,” at the insistence of Evangeline Adams — in order to complete ghostwriting the work on astrology that would later become *Astrology: Your Place among the Stars* and *Astrology: Your Place in the Sun*, both published by Adams from the results of this work, but without credit to their true author. His magical retirement took place in Bristol, New Hampshire, at the southwestern end of Lake Pasquaney (Newfound Lake), in a small seasonal cottage across the road from the lakeside during the latter part of the summer, with the idea that the fresh air and limited options for distraction would prompt a quick completion of the work Adams had in mind.

While the work Adams had in mind never came to a happy end, Adams was right in one sense: this period marks not only an exceptionally productive period for Crowley as a writer, but also within the context of his spiritual journey, ensconced as he was in one of his “Chokmah Days,” a 73-day period in which he was to focus on integrating the Word of the Aeon into his own psychic constitution.

This talk will focus on Crowley's brief time in Bristol, how the environs influenced his writing, the physical work accomplished there, and most importantly the spiritual experiences that led him to

a re-dedication of himself as the Logos of the Aeon, leading himself to declare, "In short, no more *Vanity Fair...*!"

**Colin D. Campbell** has been a student of Western ceremonial magick for over thirty years and is the author of several books, including *A Concordance to the Holy Books of Thelema*, *The Magic Seal of Dr. John Dee: The Sigillum Dei Aemeth*, *The Offices of Spirits*, *Of the Arte Goetia*, and most recently *Thelema: The Life, Work, and Philosophy of Aleister Crowley*. He has given numerous presentations at the local, regional, and national level on various subjects within the scope of ceremonial magick, its practice, and its history.

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### **Fiddler in the Land of the Free: Leila Waddell 1915–1924**

Cynthia Crosse

Out from under Crowley's wing, Leila soared as a successful violinist.

**Cynthia Crosse** has been a member of the O.T.O. since 1987 and is FSR of the Order in New Zealand. She is a counsellor, a kriya yoga practitioner, and a boxer, living with her two dogs and husband in the beautiful city of Auckland.

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### **KEYNOTE LECTURE**

#### **The Twilight Mages, Continnence + and the O.T.O.**

John Patrick Deveney

In the decades between the 1890s and the end of World War I, the United States originally and then Germany and Europe generally were overrun with a tidal wave of minor New Thought mages who offered, usually for a fee, to make known to the defenseless Europeans the open secret of Sex as the means of focusing man's (or woman's, as the case may be) vital energy in order to develop his innate spiritual and psychical powers. For most of these mages the sexual secret was a form of "continnence +," which—added to the common spiritual practices of abstinence and avoidance of sex altogether—was a technique (almost never spelled out) of heightening the sexual energy to make one's sexual partner feel (as the founder of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light remarked) "as if she were seated on a stick of dynamite, and he will feel as if he had got hold of something that would require help to

let go of. Indeed, he would feel as if such help were not forthcoming, and that at once, he would almost die.” The power thus generated was to be “drawn up,” controlled, and used to elevate man to his full potential. Most of these mages and their work are justifiably forgotten but several—Hiram Erastus Butler, Kenneth Sylvan Launfal Guthrie, Parzival Braun, E.C.H. Peithmann, and Jonathan S. McDonald, among others—deserve mention here because of their role in developing the continence + practices of the early Ordo Templi Orientis before Theodor Reuss encountered Aleister Crowley.

**John Patrick Deveney** is a lawyer who practiced in New York City for many years and now lives in Memphis, Tennessee. Early in his career he was a federal prosecutor here in New Orleans. He was a student of History of Religions under Mircea Eliade at the University of Chicago and has a longtime interest in Western occultism, especially its practice and techniques. He is the author of books on Paschal Beverly Randolph and (with Joscelyn Godwin and Christian Chanel) the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (H.B. of L.), and has contributed regularly to *Theosophical History* and its Occasional Papers, notably “Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double and the Work of the Early Theosophical Society,” and to *The Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*. Articles by him on “The New Thought Amalgam,” “Man is a Spirit Now,” “Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie,” “The Cosmic Tradition and Alberto de Sarak,” “The Open Secret of Sex in New Thought,” and other aspects of the later Western Esoteric Tradition, especially its practical side, have appeared in various themed volumes. At present he is actively involved in the efforts of The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals (IAPSOP) and the related Standard Spiritualist and Occult Corpus (SSOC), available at [iapsop.com](http://iapsop.com), to gather, preserve and make available online without charge the international literature of the spiritualist / occult / Theosophical / New Thought movements in the century between the 1840s and the 1940s. At present the repository has about 4.4 million pages of data, consisting of more than 10,000 books and 1,200 periodicals (about 55,000 issues, 2.3 million pages, for which he writes the introductory descriptions), all of which are word-searchable and able to be downloaded. IAPSOP also collects and makes available the ephemera, lessons and artifacts of these movements and invites contributions of all this material for inclusion in its online libraries. He can be reached at [john.patrick.deveney@gmail.com](mailto:john.patrick.deveney@gmail.com).

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**Star Sponges and Indra’s Net: Interrogating the Thelemic and Mahayana Buddhist Visions of the Interconnectedness of Phenomena**

Gordan Djurdjevic

During his Great Magical Retirement by Lake Pasquaney in New Hampshire in the summer of 1916, Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) underwent a significant spiritual experience, which he came to call the “Star-Sponge” vision or trance. He described it as the “apprehension of the Universe” seen “as an astral Vision,” which he initially defined as “Nothingness with twinkles,” adding later, “but what twinkles!” The vision developed gradually and involved several important metaphysical ideas related to the nature and structure of the universe, understood as the body of the Thelemic goddess Nuit. Within that body, innumerable smaller units, described as stars or blazing points of light, represent human souls, ideas, and other phenomena. This structure consists of monads, which are simultaneously connected with each other and yet remain completely distinct. Crowley continued to explore the ramifications of this vision and considered it “of cardinal importance in [his] spiritual life.” Interestingly enough, whether he knew it or not, the Star-Sponge vision bears a great deal of meaningful similarity with the Mahayana Buddhist concept of Indra’s Net (*indrajāla*). As described in the third century *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, Indra’s net consists of numberless jewels found at each of the countless vertices of the net, where each jewel simultaneously reflects every other jewel of the net and is also reflected in every other jewel. The point of the metaphor is to suggest the mutual interconnectedness of all phenomena, where nothing can exist isolated from the rest of the universe. My paper describes, compares, and contrasts these two visions and the Thelemic and Buddhist metaphysical assumptions drawn from them.

**Gordan Djurdjevic** is a contributor to the anthology *Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism* (Oxford University Press, 2012); co-editor, with Henrik Bogdan, of the collection of essays *Occultism in a Global Perspective* (Acumen, 2013; Routledge, 2015); and the author of *Masters of Magical Powers: The Nath Yogis in the Light of Esoteric Notions* (VDM, 2008); *India and the Occult: The Influence of South Asian Spirituality on Modern Western Occultism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and, with Shukdev Singh, *Sayings of Gorakhnath: Selected Translations from the Gorakh Bānī* (Oxford University Press, 2019). He currently serves as the President of Academia Ordo Templi Orientis.

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## **Perdurabo and Peyote: An Examination of Aleister Crowley’s Relationship with the Psychedelic Cactus of North America**

Patrick Everitt

In March 1907, Aleister Crowley visited the London pharmacy of his friend Edward Whineray and purchased a bottle of the fluid extract of an obscure Mexican cactus. At the time, this cactus was known as *Anhalonium Lewinii*, although it was later renamed *Lophophora williamsii*, and it is now more commonly known as “peyote.” The peyote cactus contains a powerfully psychoactive alkaloid called mescaline and has been used in the Americas for at least 5,000 years as a tribal medicine and religious sacrament. The intentional ceremonial use of peyote has been shown to reliably produce intense visionary states and ecstatic experiences, so it is no surprise that Crowley began enthusiastically experimenting with the extract later that night.

His initial experiments proved underwhelming, but he eventually discovered a psychedelic dose of the extract, and this particular preparation of peyote produced by the Parke-Davis pharmaceutical company became a consistent presence in Crowley’s magical arsenal for the next decade. In fact, Crowley personally visited the Parke-Davis factory in 1915 during a visit to Detroit to discuss his use of the extract. Interestingly, Crowley’s published writings contain relatively few explicit details about his use of peyote and its effects, although there are some thinly-veiled references to peyote scattered throughout his published work. However, his diaries, particularly those from his residence in America, reveal some of the fascinating magical uses to which Crowley put peyote; for example, to attain visions during the workings of 1915 and 1916 recorded in *The Urn*, and to facilitate communication with the praeterhuman entity Amalantrah in 1918.

This presentation will examine Crowley’s history with peyote and his ceremonial use of the Parke-Davis fluid extract, particularly during his wartime residence in the United States. It will also investigate the likelihood that Crowley initially encountered peyote on his first American trip of 1900, and explore the parallels between Crowley’s system of Magick and the indigenous peyote traditions of the Americas. It will conclude by considering the implications for modern Thelemites of embracing ancient entheogenic sacramental practices as genuine antecedents of Thelema.

**Patrick Everitt** is an independent researcher of Western esotericism and esoteric philosophy from Ireland. He completed the Master of Arts in Religious Studies (Western Esotericism) at the Center for the History of Hermetic Philosophy in the University of Amsterdam, where his thesis investigated the role of the psychedelic peyote cactus in the life and work of Aleister Crowley. Since then he has conducted further research on Thelema and Crowley’s occultism, which he is preparing for publication, in addition to several studies on the intersection of esoteric philosophy and entheogenic practice in the works of Terence McKenna, Robert Anton Wilson, and Timothy Leary. He is currently working on an extensive philosophical analysis of Aleister Crowley’s magical and religious thought. He has presented his academic research on esotericism and psychedelics at a range of international conferences and events, including the European Society for the Study of Western

Esotericism conference (ESSWE), the Interdisciplinary Conference on Psychedelic Research (ICPR), the Irish Network for the Study of Esotericism and Paganism (INSEP), the Occulture Conference, Breaking Convention, Beyond Psychedelics, the Altered Conference, and the O.Z.O.R.A. Festival.

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## **Erotogenesis: Sexual Religion in the Writings and Correspondence of Aleister Crowley and Theodore Schroeder**

Richard Kaczynski

Aleister Crowley's U.S. period from 1914–1919 was a time of profound development of his magical theories and practice. He advanced his understanding of Thelema, underwent his initiation as a Magus in the A·A·∴, and systematically explored and refined O.T.O.'s system of sex magick. During these years, he befriended lawyer and freethinker Theodore Schroeder (1864–1953), a proponent of freedom of expression, opponent of obscenity laws, and co-founder of the Free Speech League (a precursor to the American Civil Liberties Union). Schroeder was also a self-professed evolutionary psychologist who promoted his psychosexual theory of “the erotogenesis of religion,” writing prolifically on topics such as “Phallic Worship to a Secularized Sex,” “Sex and Censorship,” and “‘Divinity’ in Semen.” His free speech advocacy and opposition to obscenity laws led him to the historical case of sex educator Ida Craddock, whose persecution by Anthony Comstock drove her to suicide in 1902. Schroeder's research uncovered Craddock's unpublished work *Heavenly Bridegrooms*, which detailed her marriage and marital relations with an angel. Schroeder would serialize this text in the neurology and psychology journal *Alienist and Neurologist* as “an unintentional contribution to the erotogenetic interpretation of religion,” reissuing it as an offprint in 1918. The present paper will examine Schroeder's writings on erotogenesis of religion in the context of the larger literature of phallicism in general, and Crowley's theories of sex magick in particular; explore their revealing correspondence on these subjects, from Crowley's *The Scented Garden* to Schroeder's “One Religio-Sexual Maniac”; and reveal how Schroeder's publication of *Heavenly Bridegrooms* made Ida Craddock a *cause célèbre* among Crowley's inner circle, including an effusive review in the blue *Equinox*.

**Richard Kaczynski** is a lifelong student, writer and lecturer on Western esotericism, focusing on Aleister Crowley and the New Religious Movement of Thelema. He is the author of *Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley*, *The Weiser Concise Guide to Aleister Crowley*, and *Friendship in Doubt: Aleister Crowley, J. F. C. Fuller, Victor B. Neuburg, and British Agnosticism*. He also edited,

annotated and introduced a critical edition of Crowley's *The Sword of Song*, and co-edited with Hymenaeus Beta *The Revival of Magic and Other Essays*. He has spoken internationally, from the Nightmare Paintings exhibit in Sydney to being one of the keynote speakers at the first Trans-States conference at the University of Manchester. He also maintains the Thoth Sightings webpage, which documents appearances of the Thoth Tarot in popular culture (such movies, television, comics, music videos and records). He has been a member of O.T.O. since 1987, is the founding secretary of Academia Ordo Templi Orientis, and oversees production of the proceedings books for USGL's National O.T.O. Conference (NOTOCON).

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### **New World, New Thought, New Aeon: America's "Religion of Healthy-Mindedness," Thelema, and the Way of the Tao in Soror Hilarion's "Living in the Sunlight"**

Stephen J. King

This paper examines the "positive thinking" practice, Living in the Sunlight, created by Soror Hilarion (American poet, fashion model, teacher, social reformer and journalist, Jeanne Robert Foster [Julia Elizabeth Oliver] 1879–1970) within the broader cultural context of the New Thought movement, "the popular current of esoteric American Protestantism" (Singleton 2007) that American philosopher and psychologist William James described as "the religion of healthy-mindedness...which has recently poured over America and seems to be gathering force every day" (James 1902). Jeanne Foster had a brief adulterous affair with British occultist and poet, Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) during 1915–1916 in North America. He described Living in the Sunlight as "our beloved Sister Hilarion's way of saying 'the way of the Tao,'" (Crowley 1915), and for a time at least, adopted the practice. Crowley's disciple, the "magical child" of Therion (Crowley) and Hilarion, Charles Stansfeld Jones (aka Frater Achad 1886–1950) also took it up, describing Living in the Sunlight in a 1922 lecture as "a method all her [Foster's] own which every one of us may adopt." Achad actively embraced New Thought ideas, forming his Psychomagian Society in 1922. Analyzing the New Thought milieu will provide insight into Achad's Living in the Sunlight lecture and "Psychomagia." Distinguishing itself from New Thought and Psychomagia, Crowley consistently described Living in the Sunlight as the way of the Tao. His ideas about the practice indicate the unique approach to the Tao that he developed in North America in the World War One years. Living in the Sunlight had its part to play in Crowley's initiatic progress, in the Order of A·A· and the development of his religious movement Thelema in this period, as well as his approach to the mysticism of Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), the fraternal Order he was reconstituting in accord with Thelema during his North

American stay, whose origins had its own associations with New Thought. Crowley's syncretic Taoist-Thelemic approach contributes to a certain distinguishing of the "yoga of all forms" and "the Pure and Holy Magick of Light" of Crowley's nascent, Thelemic, reconstituted Oriental Templar Order, and the Continental "Ordo Tantra Occidentis"-styled O.T.O. of the Order's founders that had borrowed from New Thought. This paper looks at the intersection of New Thought, Thelema and Taoism coalescing in *Living in the Sunlight* as variously practiced by Foster, Crowley and Jones.

**Stephen J. King** is a founding member of Academia Ordo Templi Orientis and National Grand Master General of the Australian O.T.O. He has edited and introduced Arnoldo Krumm-Heller's *Logos Mantram Magic* (2005), P. R. Stephensen's *The Legend of Aleister Crowley* (2007) and a new O.T.O. edition of Aleister Crowley's *Magick Without Tears* (in press), as well as having advised on a number of works by J. Daniel Gunther, writing the Preface to Gunther's *The Angel and the Abyss*. The pair also lectured together globally. Steve has authored the introductory primer, *Living in the Sunlight* (2022) and has a larger study, *Living in the Sunlight: The Lecture*, in press. In Australia, Steve has contributed numerous essays and articles to internal and external facing O.T.O. publications over several decades, and works in learning, product and experience design.

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## **From Χάρις to θέλημα: The Gift of Man**

Fr. ΦΑΝΗΣ

During his American period (1914-1919), Aleister Crowley became deeply inspired by his own spiritual regimen, and by working with his associates. He eventually came to envision the Law of Thelema also as a message to the world beyond the boundaries of the Schools of Initiation he belonged to. To establish Thelema as a universal and scientific philosophy, Crowley undertook the effort to study new and old sources related to the Western tradition. The year of 1916 would prove particularly pivotal in that respect. Inspired by James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, George Bernard Shaw's preface to *Androcles and the Lion*, and Carl Gustav Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Crowley came to reevaluate the model of the "dying god" as a redeeming figure. Both his fictional and magical writings of the time show a renewed interest in the Gospels, despite considering the figure of Jesus as the syncretic result of various legends. While he maintained a deeply critical consideration of Christianity, his knowledge of the Bible provided him with the necessary background to examine some of his spiritual experiences and explore his prophetic aim. This led, perhaps inevitably, to a reappraisal of Christianity, and its ties to the New Aeon in terms of spiritual continuity.

Every fundamental tenet of the Old Aeon, whether theological, philosophical or ethical underwent a fresh examination. In this light, Crowley's years in America show the thread linking both his initial exposure to dispensationalism and his early writings such as "Eleusis" to his later evolutionary theory about "Aeon" cycles, as expounded in various publications such as *Liber Aleph* or *The Equinox* III:10. After over a century, modern research and publications offer the relevant material for a reassessment of the doctrine of Thelema in light of its antecedents, and Crowley's work toward the spreading of a new religious perspective.

**Fr. ΦΑΝΗΣ** is National Grand Master General of the Italian section of O.T.O. and an Aspirant to the A.:A.:. He has edited and introduced the official Italian translations of Aleister Crowley's works like *Brevi Saggi verso la Verità* (*Little Essays Toward Truth*, 2022), *Otto Lezioni sullo Yoga* (*Eight Lectures on Yoga*, 2022), *Il Cuore del Maestro* (*The Heart of the Master*, 2023), *I Libri Santi di Thelema* (*The Holy Books of Thelema*, 2024), as well as a new edition of J. Daniel Gunther's *Iniziazione nell'Eone del Bambino* (*Initiation in the Aeon of the Child*, 2024).

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## **Israel Regardie, American Thelemite**

M. Dionysius Rogers

Francis Israel Regardie (1907–1985) was born in London, and emigrated with his family to the United States during his early teens. Starting with an interest in Blavatsky's Theosophy, he expressed lifelong aspirations as an occultist. For a period in his twenties, he worked for Aleister Crowley as a personal secretary, which began a period in Europe and England. In 1937, he returned to the U.S., which was his home for the rest of his life. Although his employment by Crowley had ended amicably in 1932, there was a severe personal rift between the two men shortly after Regardie's return to America. Other notable points of focus in Regardie's life, such as his initiation in the Stella Matutina (whose teachings he later published as those of "The Golden Dawn") and his professional subscription to the Reichian school of psychotherapy, had a clear relationship to the motivations formed during his association with Crowley. Regardie's adherence to Thelema has been deliberately downplayed by various Golden Dawn revivalist groups who have owed much to his work; his status as "a Golden Dawn man" has sometimes been touted to efface his Thelemic orientation by groups who would posthumously enlist him as a figurehead. Nevertheless, Regardie in his later life openly proclaimed not only Crowley's strong personal influence in his intellectual and magical development, but his own dedication to the Law of Thelema. The intent of this paper is

specifically to explore Regardie's contributions to the Thelemic movement in America. There will be an account and evaluation of his work as a biographer of Crowley, as well as his notable efforts in the editing and publication of Crowley's writings in the second half of the century. It will trace his friendly connections with organized Thelemites and undertake to characterize his individual understanding of the Law of Thelema. The result will be a better-integrated appreciation of a man who was, in his own right, a luminary of occultism in the first century of the New Aeon.

**M. Dionysius Rogers** is an independent scholar and a charter member of AOTO. He has an M.A. from the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the Universiteit van Amsterdam as well as an M.A. in Religion from Northwestern University. He is the author of various books, including most recently *Poliphilo's Breakfast*. As a performing liturgist, he has written extensively on Thelemic worship and the rite of the Gnostic Catholic Church.