

1891 L'ORDRE DE LA ROSE+CROIX CATHOLIQUE ET ESTHETIQUE DU TEMPLE ET DU GRAAL



INTRODUCTION

One of the leading organizations within the F.U.D.O.S.I. was Emille Dantinne's 'Ordo Aureae & Rosae Crucis'. We know from the writings of **Emile Dantinne** that he was one of the [self-proclaimed ?] successors of the French Rosicrucian and self-styled reformer of the Catholic Church, Joséphin Péladan. Emile Dantinne -Sar Hieronymous- claimed that his Order was the continuation of Péladan's Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique, du Temple et du Graal. This essay is centred around the history of Péladan's Rose+Croix Catholique and its Belgian ties through, amongst others, Lodge KVMRIS. "What was the core of Péladan's rosicrucian philosophy?" "Was the OA & RC of Dantinne only a continuation of the 'Rose+Croix Catholique' in name?" "Who were the Belgian disciples of Péladan and where did they go after the demise of the R+C+C?" These are a few of the questions I'd asked myself before I started to write this essay. As we'll see, L' Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthetique du Temple et du Graal of Joséphin Péladan aimed at the restoration of the 'worship of an ideal' with the 'tradition' as its base and 'beauty' for its means, as Péladan used to formulate it. And art was a platform for this restoration. Péladan was also convinced that the Catholic Church was a repository of knowledge that it had itself forgotten. It is stated that he established the R+C+C after he'd repeatedly tried [in vain] to find a hearing within the Catholic Church and its leaders. The Rose+Croix Catholique manifested itself principally through its exhibitions of art, the famous and mythical "Les Salons de la Rose+Croix"...

"All is rotten, all is finished, Decadence is cracking and shaking the Latin foundations...Wretched Modernists, your journey into the void is fatal...You might close down the Church, but the Museum? The Louvre will rule is ever Notre-Dame be destroyed."

- **Joséphin Péladan** 1892 -

L'ORDRE DE LA ROSE-CROIX CATHOLIQUE ET ESTHETIQUE DU TEMPLE ET DU GRAAL

L'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthetique du Temple et du Graal was founded on August the 23rd, 1891 by **Joséphin Péladan** [1859-1918] with the assistance of **Comte Léonce de Larmandie**, **Gary de Lacroze**, **Elémir Bourges** [1852-1915] and **Antoine de la Rochefoucauld**. Although this organization was placed under the triple banner of the Rosicrucian fraternity, the Templars and the Grail Mysteries, the group founded by Péladan was not exactly an initiatic order in the conventional meaning of the term. It was more of an intellectual elite-order intended for Roman-Catholics and artists. Its main objective was the

realization of the 'Works of Charity', in order to prepare the advent - the coming - of the Holy Spirit. Its goal was to restore the 'worship of an ideal' with the 'tradition' as its base and 'beauty' for its means. In the eyes of Joséphin Péladan, the beauty expressed in the works of art can lead mankind towards 'God'. As Christian Rebisse states in his essay "Histoire du Rosicrucianisme des origines jusqu'à nos jours" [Revue Rose Croix A.M.O.R.C.-France 1998] : "Pour lui, l'art a donc une mission divine, et l'œuvre parfaite est celle qui est capable d'élever l'âme", translated [freely] in English: "For him [Péladan] art has thus a divine mission, it is a 'work of perfection' [art] which is able to raise the heart." According to Christian Rebisse the activities of the R+C+C [Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique] were in its entirety devoted to the organization of art-exposures [i.a. the famous "Les salons de la Rose-Croix"], plays and evenings dedicated to the fine arts. Other sources indicate at the existence of a certain doctrine within the R+C+C. More on this later. But where did Péladan come from and to whom did Péladan owe his knowledge? I've already answered most of these questions extensively in my second and third essay on the subject of the F.U.D.O.S.I. and its affiliated organizations, viz "1850-1900 FRANCE; les Rosicruciens de Toulouse" and "1888 Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix". Hopefully I'll not repeat myself too many times in this essay... [*supplementary information on the 'R+C de Toulouse' and the Kabbalistic R+C can be found in the above-mentioned essays]

JOSÉPHIN AIMÉ PÉLADAN [1858-1918]

Péladan was born in 1858 in Lyon. His family moved to Nîmes around 1873. It is stated that the young Péladan spent much of his time in the local library where he became acquainted with the works of i.a. Shakespeare, Corneille, Racine, Dumas, Hugo, and also of Byron, Sand, Schiller, Balzac and Nerval. "He devoted himself to philosophy and noticed that Kant and Hegel only copied the works of certain French authors while Schelling had derived his philosophy from Giordano Bruno. After the French were defeated by the Germans in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, many of the French looked down upon their neighbours and Péladan was no exception in this regard. He would develop a life-long aversion against Germany, with the exception of Richard Wagner."

[Teio Meedendorp -Sar Mérodack Joséphin Péladan en het ideaal van de kunst- translated from the original in Dutch]

His father, **Louis-Adrien Péladan**, was a legitimist [French Monarchists, followers of the House of Bourbon] and an ardent defender of Catholicism [see "Les Rosicruciens de Toulouse"]. His elder brother, **Adrien Péladan** [1844-1885], was of big influence on the development of Joséphin Péladan's ideas and personal philosophy. Péladan would call him later on in his life a sage in the tradition of Raimundus Lullius and Heinrich Kühnrath. It is said that Adrien was connected to the 'Rosicruciens de Toulouse', a loose group of hermeticists in the Toulouse area which were active around 1860. One of these hermeticists was the **Viscount de Lapasse**. De Lapasse was, amongst others, well acquainted with **Alexandre Dumège** [1780-1862], one of the instigators of Egyptian Freemasonry in the Toulouse area [around 1806] and founder of the 'Les Amis du Désert', an Egyptian Masonic Rite of 4 degrees which had its Mother Lodge at Toulouse [see: "Memphis-Misraim, Chapter III – The Rite of Misraim"].

Then, in 1881, Péladan decided to move to Paris where he would develop himself into 1] an art critic, and 2] a novelist. During the first years of his stay in Paris Péladan foremostly presents himself as an art-critic. In 1881 he starts to publish articles in amongst others the weekly catholic review "Le Foyer illustré". He openly attacked all forms of modern art, especially Impressionism [Manet, Courbet] and comes to the conclusion that 'real art' always includes 'religion'. "The works of art are always religious, even when they're painted by the profane and unbelievers" [Péladan, 'Le Matérialisme dans l'art', le Foyer illustré, August 21, 1881]. In the eyes of Péladan the true masters of art were the Italian painters of the renaissance, especially Leonardo da Vinci. With regard to the contemporary art of his days Péladan made a positive exception for such painters as Pierre Puvis de Chavannes [1824-1898], Gustave Moreau [1826-1898], and Félicien Rops [1833-1898]. Péladan referred to these three painters as the 'Kabbalistic Triangle of Great Art' at the apex, Rops [the intense artist], and at the base Puvis de Chavannes [the harmonious] and Moreau [the subtle artist]. It was Félicien Rops who had illustrated Barby d'Aureville's "Les Diaboliques" and would illustrate Péladan's "Le Vice suprême".

"Perversity covers the world with her dark wings and the modernity in art can only be the expression of this perversity"

J. Péladan, 'Les Maîtres contemporains: Félicien Rops', in: La Jeune Belgique, IV, 1884-1885

In 1884 Joséphin Péladan's novel "Le Vice suprême" is published. The key-character of the book is Mérodack, an initiate who wants to put his knowledge at the service of a supreme ideal, the conversion of his female opponent, Leonora d'Este. Leonora symbolized the morally decaying Latin civilization. The esoteric knowledge which was digested in this novel by Péladan allegedly descended from Pierre Christian's "L'Histoire de la Magie et du monde surnaturel". **Pierre Christian** was a friend and a neighbour of **Eliphas Lévi** who had benefitted from the talks he had with Lévi on the subject of occultism. Christian [**Jean Baptiste Pitois**] also was the assistant of **Charles Nodier**, Chief Librarian at the famous Arsenal Library. In 1860 Christian published "L'Histoire de la Magie", a comprehensive work devoted to the occult sciences. Péladan's novel, "Le Vice suprême", with an eulogistic foreword from **J.A. Barby d'Aureville** [1], was an instant success. In the epilogue of "Le Vice suprême", Mérodack, the priest Alta and their mutual friend the Kabbalist Sichem come to the conclusion that it appears that the world will perish through perversion and that it awaits a 'mental terror'. The three delegates of -respectively – the Hermetic Arts, the Catholic Church and the Zohar draw with a piece of chalk on a black board in flaming letters the following words : FINIS LATINORUM.

1] **Jules Amédée Barby d'Aureville** [1808-1889] : French writer, critic, aristocrat and monarchist. "He favored Balzac, early admired Baudelaire, and harshly criticized naturalism" [Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th Edit. 2001]. His most famous work is "Les Diaboliques", published for the first time in 1874 ["hallucinatory tales with a satanic motif"] "we write lascivious, we live in chastity" states Barby d'Aureville in his preface of "Les Diaboliques". Péladan was strongly influenced by the style of Barby d'Aureville. In showing corruption and perversion in all its intensity, as Barby d'Aureville does in "Les Diaboliques", the definition of 'Good' is emphasized – a recipe that inspired Péladan in his novels.



Frontispiece of " Le Vice suprême" by **Félicien Rops**, 1884

One of Péladan's admirers is 23 years-old **Stanislas de Guaita** [1861-1897]. De Guaita starts to correspond with Péladan after which they become friends. It is Péladan's novel, "Le Vice suprême", which provided the impulse for Stanislas de Guaita to undertake the study of the Hermetic sciences.

"Je n'oublierai pas ceci : que je dois à votre livre d'avoir entrepris l'étude de la science hermétique "

[Stanislas de Guaita, letter to Joséphin Péladan – November 15, 1884 C) 1952 - E. Bertholet & E. Dantinne]

In 1885 Adrien, Joséphin Péladan's brother, died. **Firmin Boissin**, editor and Managing Director of Le Messenger de Toulouse and a R+C, wrote an article announcing Adrien's death in which Boissin presented Adrien Péladan as a Rose-Croix. Joséphin Péladan introduced Stanislas de Guaita to Boissin after which de Guaita starts to correspond with Boissin. When de Guaita receives a particular letter or writing from Boissin, Stanislas de Guaita starts to sign his letters adding 'R+C' to his name. He also starts to refer to Péladan as 'my dear brother' ["mon cher Frère"]. French author Christian Rebisse states that it may have been possible that Boissin, had accepted Stanislas de Guaita into the [loose] Rosicrucian Brotherhood of Toulouse. It is stated that Péladan i.a. claimed that Boissin was the last Commander of "L'Ordre Sacré des Sophisiens", an Egyptian Rite of 3 degrees that was founded by **Jean Cuvelier de Trie** (1766-1824) in Paris in 1801. Whatever the truth was, fact is that from this moment on things are starting to happen ...

1888 L'ORDRE KABBALISTIQUE DE LA ROSE-CROIX

Many of the Parisian occultists were members of Blavatsky's Theosophical Society at the time. The society's emphasis on theory and its oriental orientation resulted in a general disappointment among those members who were attracted by the mysteries of the Occidental Tradition. In England for instance, (indirectly) these needs were fulfilled in 1888 when the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was founded, to carry out the work that was abandoned by the TS. In that same year **Papus** published his "Traité Elementaire de Science Occulte" in France. Just like his English contemporaries **Dr. William Wynn Westcott** and **S.L. MacGregor Mathers** – founders of the Golden Dawn together with **Dr. William Robert Woodman** – Papus wanted to restore the Western Mystery Tradition. Papus wanted to create an organization in which Occultism was approached as a science and which equalled the level of science as taught in the western Universities. Under Papus' direction various so-called 'research-centers for Occult Sciences' were developed [see: "History of the Martinist Order I"]. Under the auspices of this project the review "L'Initiation" was born in October 1888. This French collective, which is generally known as Les Compagnons de la Heirophonie, wanted to raise a new temple of which the corner-stone consisted of the Rosicrucian- and the Martinist Order [see: "History of the Martinist Order I"]. Joséphin Péladan and Stanislas de Guaita both belonged to this informative inner-circle of occultists [Les Compagnons de la Heirophonie] and which consisted of Spiritualists, Martinists, Theosophists etc. Christian Rebissee ["Histoire du Rosicrucianisme des origines jusqu'à nos jours"] states that Péladan and de Guaita decided to join Papus' movement, "and whereas the Rosicrucian fraternity falls asleep in Toulouse, they decided to renovate it."

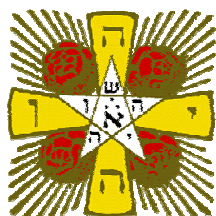
"Three years ago, the ancient Rocicrucian Order was about to die out (S. de Guaita in 1890), when two direct heirs of this majestic tradition decided to renovate it, by strengthening it on new bases."

Stanislas de Guaita, Essais de sciences maudites - I - Au seuil du Mystère, Paris, 1890, Georges Carré, p. 158.

The above-mentioned statement was made by Stanislas de Guaita in 1890 in which he referred to the foundation in 1888 of the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Croix, L'ORDRE KABBALISTIQUE DE LA ROSE-CROIX. The OKR+C is headed by the "Conseil des douze", the Supreme Council which consisted of 12 members of which six had to remain unknown in case the OKR+C dissolved. Among those who, at one time or another, were members of the Supreme Council were Stanislas de Guaita, Joséphin Péladan, Papus, A. Gabrol, Henry Thorion, F-CH Barlet, Julien Lejay, Oswald Wirth, Augustin Chaboseau, Victor-Emile Michelet, Sédir, Paul Adam and Marc Haven [see "FUDOSI Orders & Societies – 1888 OKR+C"]. The majority of the membership of the OKR+C were Martinists of Papus' 'Ordre Martiniste'. As a matter of fact, the OKR+C is said to have only accepted Martinists. The Christian-Kabbalistic Order referred to Heinrich Khunrath's "Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae" (1595), a classic of Alchemy, as one of the cornerstones of the R+C.

"The Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Cross honores Eliphaz Lévi, Fabre d' Olivet, Hoene Wronsky, Jakob Böhme, Swedenborg, Martinès de Pasqually, Louis-Claude de Saint Martin. A synthesis was formed between science and faith thanks to esotericism."

PAPUS – L'Initiation 1889



Stanislas de Guaita lived in retirement in his apartment on the avenue Trudaine and left the organization of the Order to Papus. Péladan soon came in conflict with Papus' ideas. According to Rebissee ["Histoire du Rosicrucianisme"] Péladan wanted the OKR+C only to be accessible for selected initiates and did not agree on the masonic aspect that Papus supposedly wanted to implement into the Order. Péladan also reproached Papus for confusing occultism with esoterism. He stood not alone in this conflict. There were

other dignitaries of the Order like **L'abbé Alta** [Calixte Mélinge, 1842-1933], a 'professeur' at Papus' 'L'école des Sciences Hermétiques' ['School of Hermetic Sciences', see: 'History of the Martinist Order I'], and **Maurice Barrés**, a strict Catholic, who were also among the critics of Papus' blend of occultism and Christian mysticism. It was Péladan's intension to rebuild and rectify the Roman-Catholic tradition, a tradition the OKR+C viewed as being on par with the other great religions. In an article he wrote for L'Initiation [June 1890] Péladan openly provoked the OKR+C. He allegedly announced the birth of a new order, 'Le Tiers-Ordre Intellectuel de la Rose-Croix'. Péladan stated that the order was not a complete schism because he would continue his participation in the OKR+C acting as the "Legat Catholique Romain", a title which he invented for himself. As I've written in my essay on the OKR+C, Péladan shortly hereafter founded 'the Second Temple of the Rose-Croix', 'L'Association de l'Ordre du Temple de la Rose-Croix' and finally, in 1891, the 'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthétique du Temple et du Graal' was established [August 23, 1891] ...

Note : According to Robert Ambelain ['Templiers et Rose-Croix' 1953] the lineage of the OKR+C descended from **Abbé Lacuria**, who'd passed it on to Adrien Péladan. Lacuria allegedly received this lineage from Éliphas Lévi, who - supposedly- had been initiated into a Rosicrucian Order in England by E.G. Bulwer-Lytton.

Art, this initiatory rite to which only the predestined should be admitted, is being turned into a commonplace to suit the crowd.'
- **Joséphin Aimé Péladan** -

1891 L'ORDRE DE LA ROSE-CROIX DU TEMPLE ET DU GRAAL

On February 17, 1891 Péladan announced the rupture in a letter addressed to Papus which was later published in the April-issue of L'Initiation. His first novel, "Le Vice suprême", already provided a [rough] draft of the Catholic Order of the Rose-Cross. In June 1891 Joséphin Aimé Péladan presented himself as Grand Master of the new Order under the name of **Sâr Mérodack Péladan**.

The foundation of the new Order was announced in the form of several articles placed in the newspaper Le Figaro which gave the Order a broad publicity. This publicity deeply irritated Papus and his associates who denounced the schism of Péladan. "On August 5, 1891 the Supreme Council of the Rose-Croix of the OKR+C officially announced the expulsion of Péladan from the Council." [see: 'FUDOSI Orders & Societies: 1888 – L'Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix']. Most of the [original] members of Papus' Martinist Order, including the OKR+C, were loyal to the organization. As I've already stated, Péladan's R+C+C [Rose-Croix Catholique] was not an initiatic order in the conventional meaning of the term and was not presented as such. Péladan defined the Catholic Rose-Cross Order as a

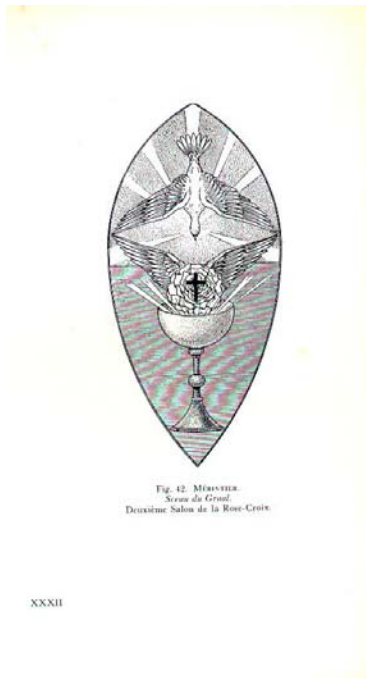
"Brotherhood of intellectual charity, devoted to the achievement of the Works of Mercy according to the Holy Spirit, to increase its Glory and to prepare its Reign."

Constitution de la Rose-Croix, le Temple et le Graal - Paris, 1893, article 1, p. 21.

As stated at the beginning of this essay, 'tradition' [doctrine] and 'beauty' [art] were key-principles for Péladan. 'Beauty' expressed through art can lead mankind towards Divinity [God], according to the new Rosicrucian Grand Master. For Péladan, art has a divine mission and the activities of 'L'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthétique du Temple et du Graal' were devoted to the organization of exhibitions and "evenings dedicated to the fine arts". In the mean time he'd already published seven parts of "La Décadence latine, éthopée" ('Moral Studies'), his novel cycle of 21 parts [three series of seven] of which "Le Vice suprême" was the first publication. Péladan would also publish a second, seven-part study, entitled "Amphithéâtre des sciences mortes" in which he emphasizes the importance of art. Through his excentric appearance Péladan became a well-known society figure in Paris of those days. He was a living advertisement for his own work, something which also worked against him. Péladan stated that his 'act' was part of a proces to which he refered to as 'automagnification' ['self-enhancement']. Despite the opposition he received, Péladan was convinced that he was a pioneer of a new religion. This new religion had to take shape through his efforts within the world of art. Joséphin Aimé Péladan headed a movement [instead of an order] which tried to merge Rosicrucianism with Catholicism.

“His movement was a literary- and aesthetic movement. He organized exhibitions of mystical art and theatre-productions of the Ancient Mysteries”

H.'Fiducius Orden Rosacruz del Templo Y del Santo Grial, 1999



Sceau du Graal - Deuxieme Salon de la Rose Croix

Sâr MÉRODACK

As mentioned before, Péladan presented himself as Grand Master of the R+C+C under the name of Sâr Mérodack Péladan. Péladan had used the name 'Mérodack' for the first time in 1884 as the name of the leading figure -an initiate- of his first novel, "Le Vice suprême". Mérodack (or 'Marduk') is the Chaldean God associated to Jupiter. He adopted the Assyrian king's title 'Sar' as the title for his Grandmastership. This title was later introduced within the F.U.D.O.S.I., where it was granted only to the highest initiates of the federation. The title 'Sar' is still granted today within certain Martinist groups, e.g. within L'Ordre Martiniste et Synarchique. Regarding the name 'Mérodack', it was the writer **Léon Bloy** [1846-1917] who pointed out to Péladan that there once existed a Babylonian king named 'Merodach Baladan', a king that is named in the Old testament [Isaiah 39, Kings II 20]. Bloy suspected that Péladan had adopted the name from the Bible, but Péladan claimed he even didn't know that the name appears in the Bible. Nevertheless, he took advantage of this information by stating that the name 'Péladan' was derived from the Chaldean 'Baladan', which allegedly means 'Bel-Adam', son of the God 'Bel'.

T.Meedendorp - Sar Mérodack Joséphin Péladan en het ideaal van de kunst -

Other sources indicate that the title 'Sar' is an amalgamation of -Sa- and -R'- which stands for 'Son of Ra' [Sa= 'son' - R'= Ra/Re]. "In the tradition of Mesopotamia the words 'UZU', 'SAR', and 'KI' can be translated as 'Matter', 'Connection', and 'Place' or 'Earth'. The expression 'DUR-AN-KI' means something like a "connection between Heaven & Earth" in which the word 'Sar' is a kind of mediator. He is - so to speak - the go-between, the High Priest, who becomes the center of the AXIS MUNDI, the axis of the world, where 'below' expresses 'Chaos' and 'above' the cosmic. 'Le mythe de l'éternel retour' - Mircea Eliade, 1969. According to Marcel Roggemans from Belgium there's a much more plausible explanation for the use of the title 'Sar' by Péladan. An explanation can be found in Péladan's personal letters and work. For instance, in "Le Vice suprême" Chapter 24 is entitled "S. A. R. monseigneur le prince de Courtenay". Roggemans states that the abbreviation 'S.A.R.' stands for "Son Altesse Royale" [Your Royal Highness].

Another explanation is given in the book "Toulouse capitale mystique" written by Jean-Claude Danis [published in 1985]. Danis, wittingly or unwittingly, applied a kabbalistic method called 'Notaricon' by forming a sentence from a word by making the letters of the word 'Mérodack'-in this case-the initial letters of the word. First he altered the actual order of the separate letters of the name Mérodack which for instance resulted in the following abbreviation : OAEMDCRK. The initial letters stand for "Ordre Ancien Et Mystique De Christian Rosen+Kreuz". Another example : AEMODRCK which results in "Ancien Et Mystique Ordre De (la) Rose+Croix Kabbalistique". In conclusion one final combination: OCAEMDRK – "Ordre Catholique Ancien Et Mystique De Rosen+Kreuz". Marcel Roggemans states that a combination of both theories [the 2nd and 3rd] could lead to the conclusion that Sar Mérodack stands for "Son Altesse Royale - Ancien Et Mystique Ordre De (la) Rose+Croix Kabbalistique".

L'ORDRE LAIQUE DE LA ROSE+CROIX DU TEMPLE ET DU GRAAL – THE RESTORATION OF THE CULT OF THE IDEAL

The foundation-document [l'acte de fondation de la Société : no. 9256] of the Order of the Rose+Croix the Temple and the Grail was signed in 1891 by Joséphin Péladan, Comte Léonce de Larmandie, Emile Gary de Lacroze, Elémir Bourges, and le Comte Antoine de la Rochefoucauld. This document was in fact a manifest of the Rose+Croix du Temple et du Graal with 28 guidelines for the artists that would take part in the first major event of the Order, the so-called Salon [& Theatre] de la Rose+Croix. The Salon de la Rose+Croix was in fact Péladan's own version of the Symbolist expositions that were already organized by the independent Belgian artsociety 'Les XX' [Société des Vingt]. Their first exhibition of Symbolist painters took place in 1884 at Brussels.

The driving forces behind these events were **Octave Maus** and **Edmond Picard**, who were also involved with the progressive art-magazine L'Art moderne. Péladan had published some articles in L'Art moderne and knew both Maus and Picard personally. Maus and Picard organized exhibitions for ten years [1884-1894] which were dedicated to the painters of the Symbolist movement. It was at one of their exhibitions that Péladan discovered the Belgian painter **Fernand Khnopff** [1858-1921] who would replace Félicien Rops as illustrator of his novels."Inspired by 'Les Vingtistes' (Les XX) Péladan decided to set up his own drawing-room, the 'Salon de la Rose+Croix', which was organized six times – between 1892 and 1897-"
T.Meedendorp - Sar Mérodack Joséphin Péladan en het ideaal van de kunst –

-The Symbolists –

"I believe only in what I do not see." [Gustave Moreau]

Based on dreams and the power of the imagination, the Symbolist Movement adopted the definition proposed by the poet **Jean Moréas**: "To clothe the idea in perceptible form." Symbolism was born in France and Belgium in the 1880s, fuelled by the Symbolist literary movement [Baudelaire/Mallarmé]. –ArtMagick.

The manifest of 1891 [Rules of de Salon de la Rose+Croix] stated that the purpose of the Order [Péladan] was the restoration of the cult of the ideal in all its splendour and grandeur."Realism ought to be destroyed" thus Péladan who envisioned the creation of a school of idealistic art. Regarding the exhibition, the manifest published a list of requirements for the subjects and topics to meet. For instance, no historical themes [Delaroche] nor patriotic- and military themes [Messonier] were accepted as topics of the works of art that were to be exhibited at the first Salon de la Rose+Croix. The list continued: No contemporary topics, portraits, rustic scenes and no landscapes [except in the fashion of Poussin], no seascapes, humoristic topics, picturesque orientalism, animals, sports and Still Lives. The manifest proclaimed the order's somewhat occultist ideals of art, accepting works dealing directly or indirectly with "Catholicism and Mysticism, Legend, Myth, Allegory, the Dream, the Paraphrase of great poetry, and finally all Lyricism...". The Order made an exception for the sublime classical/Renaissance nude-paintings of such artists as Leonardo and Primaticcio ['School of Fontainebleau']. These guidelines applied to the art of painting, drawing, as well as sculpture.

T.Meedendorp - Sar Mérodack Joséphin Péladan en het ideaal van de kunst –

Joséphin Péladan stated that it was his aim "to tear love out of the western soul and replace it with the love of Beauty, the love of the Idea, the love of mystery.". He also emphasized the international character of the forthcoming exhibition[s] by stating that the word 'international' had no actual meaning for the Order. Of course, the use of the word 'Catholique' in the name of the Order ['Ordre de la Rose+Croix Catholique' 1] already implied the universal character of the Order.

1 the actual meaning of the word 'catholic' is universal and comes from the Greek words 'Kata' (according to) and 'Holos' (the whole). It is stated that the Order used the word 'Catholique' in this manner [Universal]. According to various sources this is the reason that Emille Dantinne [see the essay on the "Ordo Aureum & Rosae Crucis"; Dantinne was one of the successors of Péladan] would change the name 'R+C Catholique' into the 'Rose+Croix Universelle' [one of Dantinne's R+C Orders] to avoid any misunderstanding. Nevertheless, both men [Péladan as well as Dantinne] were ardent followers of the 'true' Catholic faith, as practised by "the noble, esoteric and magical tradition of the church of the Middle Ages" [in the words of actress [Alexandra-David Neel](#), who started to work with Péladan in, or around, 1898]

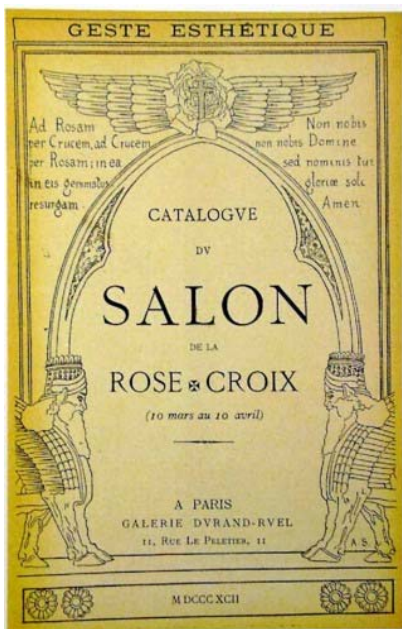
It was not demanded that the participating artists had to be loyal to the doctrines of the Order. The Postscript of Péladan's manifest mentioned that, "according to magical law", the Order prohibited to expose the work of female artists. It is generally known that Péladan showed an extraordinary distrust of women. This, of course, also reflected in the doctrines of Péladan [more on this later]

With regard to the participating artists in the first Salon de la Rose+Croix, Péladan experienced some disappointments. For instance, the three painters he'd referred to before as 'The Kabbalistic Triangle of Great Art', P. Puvis de Chavannes, G. Moreau, and Félicien Rops, were not present at the first exposition of the Salon de la Rose+Croix. Péladan allegedly fell out with Rops in 1888 and because of this quarrel Rops was not invited. Puvis de Chavannes and Moreau thanked for the honour and sent some of their apprentices. Some of the English Pre-Raphaelites Péladan admired so much did also not attend the exposition. Despite these disappointments Péladan achieved to gather an interesting group of artists who would exhibit their works of art at the first Salon de la Rose+Croix, held in 1892 at the famous 'Galerie Durand-Ruel' in Paris.

"Artist, you're a Priest... Artist, you're a King... Artist, you're a Magician..."
Geste Esthétique. [Catalogue du Salon de la Rose + Croix](#), 1892

LES SALONS DE LA ROSE+CROIX [1892-1897]

The first edition of the Salon de la Rose+Croix was held from March 10 until April 10 1892 at the Gallery 'Durand-Ruel' at the rue Lepelletier in Paris. The exhibition was centred around the works of the Symbolists. The Symbolist-movement, influenced by the ideas of Swedenborg, Milton etc., wanted to become the mystics of art. And it was Joséphin Péladan who'd proclaimed himself as the mentor of the movement. The Salons de la Rose+Croix would go down in history as the pinnacle of the movement's events; Péladan had created a stage for the Symbolists which gave them a high international profile. The artists were selected by a special committee of the Order, whose members carried the title 'Magnifiques' ['The magnificent'].



Catalogue du Salon de la Rose-Croix

The committee consisted, amongst others, of:

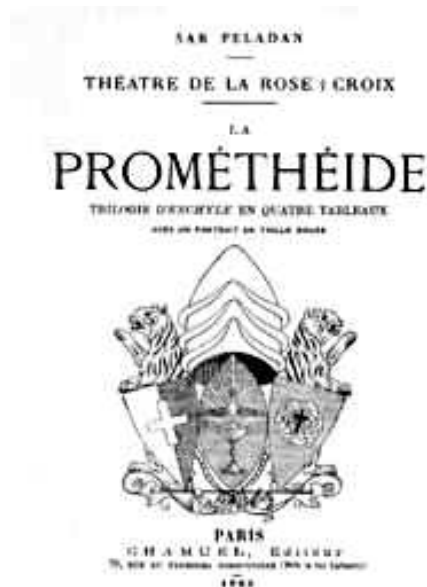
- le comte (count) **Antoine de la Rochefoucauld**, who was the financier of the exhibition. The count carried the title 'Archonte de la Rose + Croix' also: 'Grand Prieur'
- le comte **Léonce de Larmandie**, the 'Commandeur de Geburah', who was the historian of the movement
- **Élémir Bourges**, a writer and journalist. His book 'La Nef' is heavily influenced by the ideas and concepts of Joséphin Péladan.
- **Saint-Pol Roux**, known as 'Le Magnifique', Breton poet and one of the most extraordinary figures of the whole Symbolist-movement who was later intensely admired by the Surrealists. His collection of works entitled "Idéoréalisme" is, just like Bourges' "La Nef", larded with Péladan's rosicrucian philosophy.
- **Gary de Lacroze**, 'Commandeur de Tiphereth' C.McIntosh [*Eliphas Levi & the Occult Revival*] refers to Gary de Lacroze as Péladan's second in command in 1892, carrying the title of 'Arch Warden of the Province of Paris'. The original Constitutions of the Order states that the Prior (prieur) is the head of a province.

The above-mentioned register is derived from Christian Rebisse's article "Les Salons de la Rose+Croix" [with some extra information added]. I've encountered various titles with regard to this committee, and it seems as if the sources concerned often refer to this group as being the leaders [as in: 'Supreme Council'] of the Rose+Croix Catholique/R+C+C. For instance, often the title 'Septenant of the R+C+C' ('Septet') is used within this context. This seems the key-problem for Péladan's R+C group, many sources refer to the Rose+Croix Catholique as being a conventional initiatic organization which it wasn't. The Salon de la Rose+Croix was conceived and presented by Sâr Mérodack Péladan as 'geste esthétique', "a synthesis of the visual arts, literature and music in the spirit of Richard Wagner, whom Péladan venerated, and echoing the 'chansons de geste' of medieval literature". Sixtythree artists were represented and approx. twohundred-and-fifty works of art were exhibited [the catalogue contains 250 works]. Rémy de Gourmont, in his column of 'Le Mercure de France', qualified the 'Salon de la Rose+croix' as being the 'great artistic event of the year'. The exhibition allegedly attracted more than 22,000 [22,600] visitors in a month time and was therefore a huge success. The exhibiting artists included Baron de Rosenkrantz, Alexandre Séon, Carlos Schwabe [who designed the poster for the 1st exhibition], Marquest de Vasselot, Berengier, Luc-Olivier Merzon [who designed the French banknotes for 50 and 100 Francs] Marcellin Desboutins, Emile Fabry, Andre des Gachons, Moreau-Neret, Felix Oudart, Armand Point, Pierre Rambaud, Fernand Khnopff [Péladan's first Belgian disciple. He also regarded Khnopff as 'a Master'], Adolphe La Lyre, Jean Delville ['le Consul de la Rose-Croix' in Belgium], Alphonse Osbert, Jan Toorop, Ferdinand Hodler [whose "Les Las de vivre" was one of the highlights for the public], Emile Bernard [friend of Toulouse-Latrec and Gauguin], Charles Filiger, Félix Valloton, Henri Martin, Aman-Jean [designer of the poster of the 2nd exhibition of 1893], George de Feure, and Eugene Grasset [successful illustrator and propagator of the 'Art Nouveau'].

Among the artists were the devoted péladiens Khnopff and Jean Delville [1867-1953] from Belgium who contributed to almost all of the rosicrucian art-shows. Péladan's most important French disciples who contributed to the first Salon were Alexandre Séon [1855-1917], Alphonse Osbert [1857-1939] and Armand Point [1861-1932].

The event was inaugurated with a ceremony of which the music was especially composed by Érik Satie [1866-1925]. At night the attention was shifted to the other arts, music and theatre. These events were presented under the banner of 'Les Soirées de la Rose-Croix'. Sâr Péladan also held lectures on art and mysticism and the music of such composers as César Franck, Richard Wagner, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Vincent d'Indy and the earlier-mentioned Satie. Christian Rebisse ["Les Salons de la Rose-Croix" 1998] states that Péladan wanted to restore the original function of a play in the theatre; the manifestation of the Ritual Drama. The most remarkable example of a ritual drama in history, according to Péladan, were the Eleusian Mysteries of Ancient Greece. Péladan wrote a number of plays: "Le Prince de Byzance" [1896], "Babylone" [1895], "La Prométhéide", "Œdipe et le Sphinx et Sémiramis", "Sémiramis" [his most successful one] and "Le Fils des étoiles", accompanied by music that was composed by Satie. "Le Prince de Byzance" and "Babylone" were based on Wagner's 'esoteric philosophy'. Despite the huge success of the first Salon de la Rose+Croix, Péladan also experienced a set-back. Comte Antoine de La Rochefoucauld (1862-1960) was the co-organizer of the event. The count was an artist himself and he

was the financier of the first Salon de la Rose+Croix. De la Rochefoucauld had invited some of his friends to exhibit their works at the rosicrucian art-show. Emile Bernard [1868-1941], Charles Filiger [1863-1928] and Félix Vallotton [1865-1925], artists which descended from the schools from 'Pont-Aven' and the 'Nabis', a style which was apparently not favoured by Péladan. For instance, Bernard's contribution, entitled "Christus in Gethsemane", was not at all appreciated by the Sâr. He considered it to be a blasphemous work, which went totally against the Sâr's principles. The personal contributions of the Count de La Rochefoucauld to the composition of the exhibition were seen as "the worst pictorial idiocies" by Péladan [La Rose Croix, organe trimestrielle de l'Ordre, Parijs, 1893,] Péladan dismissed the count from his position as Archonte de la Rose + Croix within the Order, after which the Count de La Rochefoucauld left the Order, taking his money with him.



Péladan's trilogy of tragedies of the Greek Aeschylus : 'Prometheus, Bearer of Fire'-'Prometheus Delivered' and 'Prometheus Enchanted'. Péladan claimed to have discovered the first two plays, who were allegedly missing
 "Sous le Tau, la Croix Grecque, la Croix latine, devant le Graal, le Beauséant et
 la Rose Crucifère"

"Under the Tau, the Greek Cross, the Latin Cross, before the Grail, the Standard and the Crucified Rose;"; this is the opening line of the announcement of the second Salon de la Rose+Croix, which would take place in March and April 1893, or, as stated in Péladan's own words: "La deuxième geste esthétique aura lieu en mars et avril 1893 et aussi Salon de la Rose+Croix Théâtre de la Rose+Croix.."

The committee, who's members carried the title of 'Magnifiques', consisted this time [besides Péladan] of: Count Léonce de Larmandie, Élémir Bourges, Gary de Lacroze Benedictus, Bihn Grallon [1], Sin and Adar and les sept inconnus, the seven unknown ones.

1] Bihn Grallon is a character in Péladan's Le Panthée, a poor cabaret pianist. It is possible that this was Satie, [see appendix]

On page 42 of the document "Constitutions de l'Ordre La Rose + Croix le Temple et le Graal " [1893 Paris] Péladan gives a summary of the forthcoming events. Under the header of "Le Théâtre de la Rose+Croix" two plays are listed, i.a. 'Le Mystère du Graal' –"avec la musique de Notre Commandeur Benedictus". Furthermore, Péladan reveals the plan to found a Theatre School – école d'art théâtral- which he wanted to establish in order to revive the ancient art of Mystery-plays. He had also plans for a Choral Society devoted to choral-music and the foundation of an exclusive quartet devoted to the music of Beethoven. This information can be found under the header "Acta Rosae Crucis – Templi Spiritus Sancti" of the before mentioned document, page 41-43. The success of the first Salon de la Rose+Croix was never again achieved. The Salon de la Rose+Croix was organized six times until 1897. The final one

is organized in the prestigious gallery 'George-Petit'. Most of the 193 artists which participated came from France, Belgium, and Switzerland. Besides the artists already mentioned, others included Edgard Maxence, George Minne, Gaetano Previati, George Roualt, Antoine Bourdelle, Eugene Delacroix etc. Each of the 'Salon de la Rose+Croix' was placed under the auspices of a Chaldean God :

- 1892 - Salon de la Rose+Croix *under the auspices of:* **Samas** [Sun]
- 1893 - Salon de la Rose+Croix *under the auspices of:* **Nergal** [Mars]
- 1894 - Salon de la Rose+Croix *under the auspices of:* **Mérodack** [Jupiter] *held in Brussels (?)*
- 1895 - Salon de la Rose+Croix *under the auspices of:* **Nebo** [Mercury]
- 1896 - Salon de la Rose+Croix *under the auspices of:* **Ishtar** [Venus]
- 1897 - Salon de la Rose+Croix *under the auspices of:* **Sin** [Moon]



After the sixth 'Salon de la Rose+Croix', in December 1897, Sâr Mérodack -Josphin Péladan- disbanded L' Ordre de la Rose+Croix du Temple et du Graal, as it is stated by various French sources. The disbandment of the 'Rose+Croix Catholique' was put into words in Péladan's "Je rends les armes"; "The formula of art that I defended is now everywhere accepted, and why would one remember the guide that showed the ford, once the river has been crossed" Disappointment, mutual disputes, lack of recognition [and money], and a general opposition he'd received from the authorities seem to be a few of Péladan's motives to disband the Rose+Croix movement.. Regarding the authorities, Christian Rebisse states that they were not at all pleased with the success of Péladan's activities. It seems that Péladan and his organization received a lot of opposition from the authorities during the organization of the various Salons de la Rose+Croix. For instance, the managing director of public buildings of the city of Paris, a certain Mr. Jules Comte, saw to it personally that there was no option available for the housing of one of Péladan's activities. Curiously, the Symbolist artmovement started to loose a lot of its influence after the demise of the Salons de la Rose+Croix. Despite its demise, most of the artists would not deviate that much from the 'edicts of Péladan' in their further career. Péladan would continue his literary activities until his death in 1918. He wrote approx. ninety volumes: novels, plays, and studies on art, occultism and mysticism. He published numerous articles and three of his works would receive official recognition by the French Academy. He also gave numerous public lectures in France and abroad. Among the members of the R+C+C, Rose+Croix Catholique, were artists and occultists. Some of the most prominent members were : **Félicien Victor Joseph Rops [1833 – 1898], Jean Delville [1867-1953], Érik A. L. Satie* [1866-1925], Léonce de Larmandie, Gary de Lacroze, Elémir Bourges, Jan Toorop, Richard Roland Holst, Antoine de la Rochefoucauld, Saint-Pol Roux [1861 – 1940], Jules Bois [1868 – 1943], Emma Calvé, Georges "Count Israel" Monti, Maurice Barrès, Clement de Saint-Marcq, Francis Vurgey, Nicolas Brossel**

* It is claimed by some sources that, through Satie, another great French composer was a member of the R+C+C, namely Claude Debussy. Fact is, that Satie met Debussy (Satie held strong influence over Debussy) after he'd left the rosicrucians.



THE SUCCESSORS OF THE ROSE+CROIX CATHOLIQUE

In 1907 the review 'Entretiens Idéalistes', founded by Paul Vulliaud [an admirer of Péladan] in 1906, organized an exhibition entitled 'l'Exposition des peintres et sculpteurs idéalistes', designed after the 'Salons'. Out of this one-off event the 'Confrérie de la Rosace' [Brotherhood of the Rosary] was born. This group, headed by a certain 'Frère Angel' and founded in March 1908, hardly gathered more than four disciples with whom they organized three exhibitions; the first one in May 1908, the second in May 1911, and the final one in October 1912. The 'Confrérie de la Rosace' went dormant after the final exhibition of 1912. Péladan never showed any interest in this group. It is claimed that one of the original members of the Rose+Croix Catholique, namely Gary de Lacroze, continued the "L'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique" in France, as did the painter Jaques Brasilier. Brasilier was the publisher of a periodical, named 'Les Feuillettes de la Rosace', later rebaptized 'Feuillettes des Dunes, organe de la Rosace'. In 1920 the Martinist Victor-Emile Michelet founded the 'Association des amis de Péladan', a study-group devoted to the works of Joséphin Péladan. This circle consisted of Madame J. Péladan, Paul Marteau, Gabriel Boissy, Albert de Pouvourville, G. L. Tautain, Edouard Willermoz, Maurice Venoize and Maurice Gaillard [source: Marcel Roggemans]. In 1923 one of the [self-proclaimed] successors of Péladan, Emile Dantinne, founded the Ordo Aureæ & Rosæ Crucis which included i.a. the 'Ordre de la Rose+Croix Universelle' [see the essay "1923 –Ordo Aureae & Rosae Crucis"]. Today, the French branch of A.M.O.R.C. continues Péladan's tradition with their version of the Salons de la Rose+Croix. The exhibitions are held regularly in a gallery located in Paris, and is open to the public.

Although not a successor to Péladan and his Rose+Croix Catholique, Rudolf von Laban [Swiss high dignitary of the Ordo Templi Orientis, O.T.O.] was the secretary of "l'Alliance Internationale des Dames de la Rose-Croix", an auxiliary organization of the O.T.O. The Alliance taught a philosophy or form of economy, which is known as "une économie altruiste" [altruistic economy]. It also underlined the importance of Art for the well-being of human beings, for instance as a means of dealing with the traumas of war [1914-1918]. In 1910 Laban [1879-1958] had already founded the "Monte Verità Art School" at the Swiss Monte Verità commune, near Ascona. This was Laban's school for dance and movement {Eurythmy etc.}. The aforementioned Theodor Reuss, Grandmaster of the O.T.O., organized a congress at Monte Verità in August 1917. The main topics at the congress included modern education, cooperations, women's rights, Mystical Freemasonry, new social structures, dance as art-form, and ritual and religion. It seems as if the Utopian "l'Alliance Internationale des Dames de la Rose-Croix" was not much of a success. Not much was heard of the Alliance after 1918. From this year onwards, Ascona became more and more an artist's commune. During the first dencennia of the 20th century the

community was visited by many intellectuals and artists such as, for instance, Carl Gustav Jung, Erich Maria Remarque, Hermann Hesse, Paul Klee etc.



"As Above, So Below" **Gregg Simpson**
West Coast Hermetics Series 1970-71

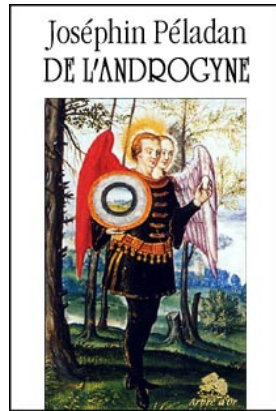
NOTE:

Another interesting project was started in 1971 in Vancouver, Canada. **Gregg Simpson** and **David W. Harris** founded the Divine Order of the Lodge. Ritual theatre, collage, painting, and poetry were the main pursuits, carried out as a modern version of the Salon de la Rose Croix.

"The Surrealists were the 20th century precursors they felt closest to, along with occult traditions, alchemy, mythology [especially Nordic] and neo-pagan philosophy." The D.O.L. was the basis of other projects, such as the exhibition Canadian West-Coast Hermetics and the Isle of Avalon Society.

The Doctrines & Degrees of 'L'Ordre de la Rose+Croix Catholique et Esthetique'

Although there has been much written about Péladan and his Catholic Rose-Cross Order, there's not much information to be found on the possible teachings of the Order. Of course, Péladan's books and the numerous publications on the subject of esoterism will give a quite proper and comprehensive picture of his views on occultism and mysticism. Nevertheless, I've found [almost] no references with regard to a possible Order curriculum of the Rose+Croix Catholique [R+C+C]. The following information are bits and pieces mainly tied up together from quotes, anecdotes and remarks, stemming i.a. from people who personally knew Péladan [Alexandra David-Neel, Érik Satie, Jean Delville, Jan Toorop, and Emile Dantinne] and, of course, from the Sâr himself. Another valuable source was the Dutch edition [1998] of "La spiritualité de la Rose-Croix : histoire, tradition et valeur" by Jean-Pierre Baynard, and "Éliphas Levi and the French occult revival" by Christopher McIntosh.



1891



1902

Péladan defined the Rose+Croix Catholique in the constitutions of the Order above all as a "Brotherhood of intellectual charity". Like so many other French occult groups and organizations at the time, The Rose+Croix Catholique anticipated at the 'coming of the Paraclete', the Holy Spirit. Péladan promoted the esoteric aspect within Catholicism and was especially interested in John's Gospel. He was convinced that the Catholic [medieval] Church was a repository of knowledge that it had itself forgotten. "He genuinely wished a return to the noble, esoteric and magical tradition of the church of the Middle Ages" B. and M.Foster "Forbidden Journey: The life of Alexandra David-Neel"-

"Occultism and religion supplement each other, the adept has to avoid the vulgar and mediocrity"

As stated earlier on in this text, Péladan's esoteric knowledge which was digested in his 1884 publication "Le Vice suprême", allegedly descended from "L'Histoire de la Magie et du monde surnaturel" [1860], written by a disciple of Éliphas Lévi, Pierre Christian. Of course, the writings of Éliphas Lévi himself were also a source of inspiration for Péladan. But his biggest influences were allegedly his father and his brother, respectively Louis-Adrien Péladan and Adrien Péladan [1844-1885], whom Joséphin considered to be "a sage in the tradition of Raimundus Lullius and Heinrich Kühnrath". When Stanislas de Guaita met Péladan, after he'd read "Le Vice suprême", he became Péladan's pupil 'in occult matters'. In the various publications of Péladan [books and articles] on this subject, Péladan wrote extensively on Kabbalah, High Magic, Astrology, Magnetism, Tarot [1] etc.

1] there exists a certain method of Tarot divination (5 -card Tarot spread) which is supposedly attributed to Péladan. According to various tarot sources Péladan orally transmitted his method to Stanislas de Guaita. Oswald Wirth received the material from Stanislas de Guaita and published it in his 1927 Tarot-classic Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen-age

Péladan was strongly opposed against spiritualism/ spiritism, which was very popular in those days. He also had a dislike towards Freemasonry. The following quote comes from Alexandra David-Neel [1868-1969], the actress, writer, feminist, traveler, Buddhist - and member of several secret societies [Theosophic Society, Co-Masonry], who'd met Péladan on several occasions at the end of the 1890's. She was an actress at the time and it is stated that she hoped for a part in one of his plays [1]. Anyway, Alexandra describes Péladan's Rosicrucian movement as follows: "The movement, profoundly reactionary, was antithetical to democracy and the French Revolution; it professed loathing for Masons, Protestants, and Jews."

B. and M.Foster "Forbidden Journey: The life of Alexandra David-Neel"

This [reactionary] attitude towards democracy, Freemasonry and Jews, was [allegedly] also the attitude of one of Péladan's successors, that of Emile Dantinne [see "1934-1951 F.U.D.O.S.I."].

1] Alexandra David-Neel was a member of a Belgian Theosophic circle which was frequented by such Symbolist painters as Jean Delville, Fernand Khnopff, Emile Fabry, and Albert Ciamberlani.

Péladan considered the modern society of his time as a corrupted and perverted society, a world that was deserted by God. Western [Latin] civilization was doomed to perish under the influence of the growing materialism and the progressing secularization. And, like most of the conservatives of his time, he blamed this on Freemasonry and the Jews. One has to remember that France had experienced several revolutions and revolts in a period of less than a century [French Revolution, White Terror, July Revolution, 1848 Revolution]. European Society underwent a social reconstruction, Liberalism and Socialism were on the rise, the industrial revolution had created new social classes which had started to rear their heads. The three main political currents dominating France in the 19th century were the Ultra-Royalist or Monarchists [Conservatives], the Revolutionaries, and the Bonapartists. We know that Péladan's father was a fervent Monarchist and Catholic and that his ideas were highly influential on Joséphin's personal growth and development as a young man.

It is clear that Joséphin was an idealist. He searched for an ideal that was not limited by nature. His interest in - and knowledge of - occultism [via his brother Adrien] combined with his love for art had made Péladan an overnight success in the artistic community of Paris. His articles were published by the leading art-journals and newspapers at the time; *La Plume*, *Le Mercure de France*, *La Gazette artistique*, *Studio*, and the most important, *L'Artiste*, which was the most prominent French art-journal of its time. The journal published the work of e.g. Blanc, Baudelaire, les Goncourt and J.K. Huysmans ["La Bas"]. These writers considered their work an attempt to save themselves from decay, madness and self-destruction [art as therapy?]. James Webb, in his book "The Occult Underground: The Dawn of the New Age and The Occult Establishment", divides these artists, particularly the authors, into two camps - aesthetes and poètes maudites ["accursed poets," after a book of the leading author of the Symbolists, Paul Verlaine]. "Both reacted against the naturalism of established art. Aesthetes searched for an ideal beauty beyond the limits of nature. Poètes maudites sought to plumb the depths of experience in their search for wisdom, and I do mean depths." [Webb]

According to Péladan, art is born from an act of faith and it dies from doubt and scepticism. "It was the artists' mission to combine art with 'ideal', art and 'God', by impressing the moral decadence of humanity to the public" [freely transl.]

T.Meedendorp - Sar Mérodack Joséphin Péladan en het ideaal van de kunst –

Péladan had taken this concept from *Barby d'Aureville*. In showing perversion and corruption in all its intensity, the definition of 'Good' is emphasized. Péladan's aim was "to tear love out of the western soul and replace it with the love of Beauty, the love of the Idea, the love of mystery." With regard to love for women, it is stated that Péladan had developed an ambiguous image over the years, more on this later. The following text, written by Joséphin Péladan, reflects his thoughts on art and the artist quite clearly. It is also an excellent example of his stilted usage of language for which he was often criticized and even ridiculed. It is taken from the "Geste Esthétique", the catalogue of *Le Salon de la Rose + Croix*, 1892.

- "Artist, you are a priest. Art is the great mystery, and if your endeavoring leads to a masterpiece, then a ray of the divine shines down as if on an altar. O true presence of the divinity, you who shine to us from the sublime names: Vinci, Michelangelo, Beethoven, Wagner.
- Artist, you are a king. Art is the true kingdom. If your hand has drawn a perfect line, the cherubim themselves come down from heaven and see themselves in it as if in a mirror. Spiritual drawing, soulful line, filled form, you give physical shape to our dreams: Samothrace and St. John, Sixtina and Cenacolo, Parsifal, Ninth Symphony, Notre-Dame.
- Artist, you are a magician. Art is the great miracle and offers proof of immortality. Who still doubts? Giotto touched the wounds of St. Francis, the Virgin appeared to Fra Angelico, and Rembrandt proved the raising of Lazarus. Absolute refutation of all pedantic sophistries: Moses is doubted, but then Michelangelo comes; Jesus is not recognized, but then Leonardo comes. Everything is profaned, but immutable holy art continues to pray. O ineffable, highly serene sublimity, always radiant holy grail, monstrance, and relic, invincible banner, almighty art, art-god, I revere you on my knees, you last ray from above shining down on our decay..."

According to Christopher McIntosh, in his book "Eliphas Levi & the French Occult Revival" (1972), Péladan envisaged his Order "as a nucleus from which would emerge a whole set of religious, moral and aesthetic values" [McIntosh]. Although Péladan activities in the field of art, drama and music were "carried out with with considerable effectiveness" [McIntosh], in the end he considered himself as a failure."In an archaic terminology, totally incompatible in a country of universal suffrage and laicism, I have literally preached in a dead language". These words were written by the Sâr to a certain **Gabriel Boissy** [1] towards the end of his public experiments in 'rosicrucianism', 'Les Salons de la Rose + Croix'.

1] Jean-Pierre Bayard, in his book "La spiritualité de la Rose-Croix histoire, tradition et valeur", states that Gabriel Boissy was an adept of the 'Rosicrucian Order'. Bayard also states that Péladan considered Boissy as a worthy successor of the Rosicrucian tradition [Péladan's R+C ?]. All that I know for certain about Gabriel Boissy is that he was one of the members of the Péladan study-circle "Association des amis de Péladan", founded in 1920.

THE DEGREES OF THE ROSE+CROIX CATHOLIQUE ET ESTHETIQUE

It is known that the 'Ordre de la Rose+Croix Catholique et Esthetique du Temple et du Graal' consisted of 3 Degrees:

- 1° ECUYER - 'Shield-Bearer', the degree of the 'Servants of Work'
- 2° CHEVALIER - 'Knight'
- 3° COMMANDEUR - 'Commander'

The degree of Commandeur (3°) was assigned to the Kabbalistic Sephiroth. For instance, comte Léonce de Larmandie carried the title 'Commandeur de Gebura' and Gary de Lacroze carried the title 'Commandeur de Tiphereth'. Each degree demanded a vow: 1° Ecuier- vow of 'Perfection'. 2° Chevalier- 'Loyalty'. 3° Commandeur- 'Obedience'. A candidate for initiation had to appear before the Grand Master, Sâr Mérodack Péladan, who put to him the following ten questions:[transl.: C.McIntosh "Eliphas Levi and the French occult revival"]

- 1) "Who are you"
- 2) "What is your void"
- 3) "To what is your will tend"
- 4) "How do you realize yourself"
- 5) "By what force"
- 6) "Declare your attractions and repulsions"
- 7) "Define your glory"
- 8) "State the hierarchy of Beings"
- 9) "Name happiness"
- 10) "Name sorrow"

[Constitutions Rosae Crucis Templi et Spiritus Sancti Ordinis p.28]

Allegedly, the candidates for initiation and membership swore by their "eternal life" to "seek, admire and love beauty through the means of art and mystery". The Catholic Rose-Cross Order adopted Leonardo da Vinci as patron of the Rose+Croix, Dante Alighieri as patron of the Templars, and finally, Joseph of Arimathea, patron of the Grail. In the book "Forbidden Journey: The Life of Alexandra David-Neel", written by Barbara and Michael Foster, Alexandra describes the Catholic Rose-Cross Order as follows: "Alexandra wrote that Péladan was no charlatan but learned in the Western occult tradition. He genuinely wished a return to the noble, esoteric and magical tradition of the church of the Middle Ages. Failing to impress the Pope, he founded his own order along mystical lines. He revived the ancient Syrian rite and proclaimed himself 'Sar'. His style was elegant, and he and his followers dressed in elaborate robes while performing endless ceremonies of which he was the Grand Master."



Portraits of the Sâr Joséphin Péladan

Alexandre SÉON 1891
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, France

Jean DELVILLE 1894
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes, France

"Péladan was more fascinated by the esthetic aspects of occultism, but i don't think he was deeply involved in it."

- posting on the Yahoo-alt.magick E-group -

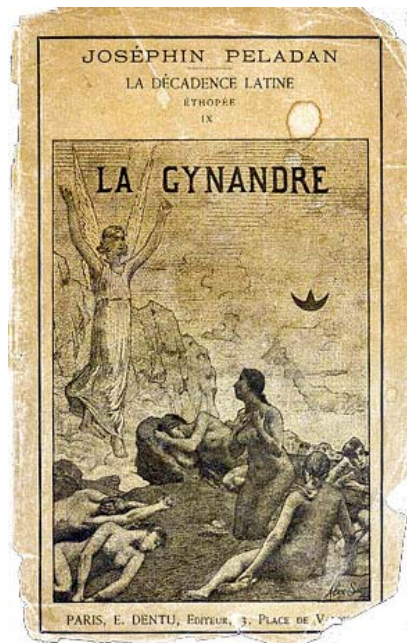
CATHOLIC OCCULTISM ?

To what extent did occultism influence Péladan's teachings? Did occultism form part of the Order's curriculum? The first answer is quite simple, because much of his philosophy and concepts were based on the 'Arts' (especially Astrology). The second one is not that easy to answer. The Catholic Rose-Cross Order was founded along mystical lines, as it is stated, and a 'Order-curriculum' (in the form of teachings and practises attached to each degree) was, allegedly, not present. Nevertheless, there are indications that Péladan left instructions to his pupils of 'a practical nature'. We'll take a closer look at some of the main concepts and theories that were developed by Péladan, in order to get a better understanding of his views and beliefs.

MAGIC ~ Péladan, in his book "Comment on devient mage" (Paris, 1892 p. 135), defines magic as "the art of sublimation of man". Péladan also stated that "happiness raised to the level of an ideal, freed from the negative aspects of oneself and of things...is the sole triumph of this world"? (J. Péladan, "Traité des antinomies", Paris, 1901, p.112). The sublimation of man, of human nature, freed from the negative aspects of oneself and of things, of matter (material things). Péladan speaks about happiness raised to the level of an ideal. His original and main goal was to restore 'the worship of an ideal'. And it was through 'beauty', as expressed in the works of art, that this 'ideal' was established. And through this 'beauty', this bliss, mankind could be led towards God. Art as the initiator. To put it simple, Péladan understood by magic the adoration of beauty by the heart. This included the total repudiation of "the ugliness of modern civilization". He referred to the art as 'la haute science magique de l'âme universelle'

"The work of art is a fugue: nature supplies its motif; the soul of the artist creates the rest".

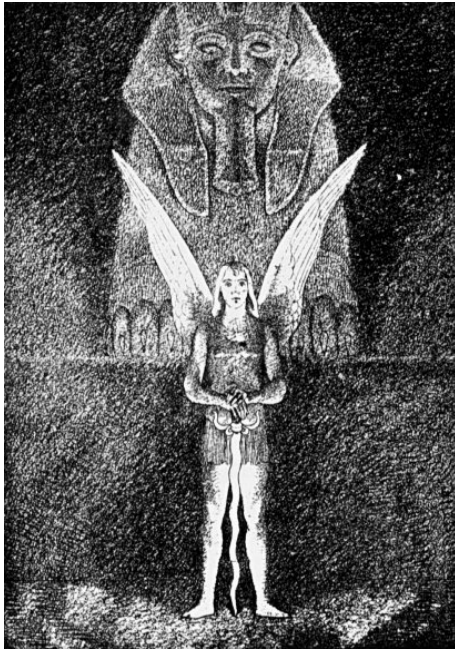
-Joséphin Péladan-



THE ANDROGYN ~ A mythical figure and archetype who reunites the two sexes - is the symbol of Primordial perfection, the two becoming ONE, king and queen, the alchemical (Mercury) union of heaven and earth etc. But it seems that Péladan's concept and theory of this archetype did not concern itself with a 'wholeness and fusion of both sexes' but, according to the sources, *"with a superabundance of erotic possibilities"* According to the historian (religious history) and man of letters Mircea Eliade the Androgyn as defined by Péladan is a fusion of the sexes which produces *"a self styled sensual perfection, resulting from the active presence of both sexes in one"*. Allegedly, this version of the Androgyn also existed in the writings of i.a. Oscar Wilde, Théophile Gautier, Swinburne etc. Apparently, in Péladan's view, the Androgyn is the incarnated Perfected Man, but not in the spiritual sense, but in the sensual. The sensual perfection is reached by the active presence of the two sexes in one. In one of his writings he describes the Androgyn as a 13 years-old feminine young man, named Samas, the name of the Chaldean God of the Sun (an indication, perhaps?). The Androgyn does not doubt about his gender, the Androgyn has the appearance of a man but with the characterization of a female spirit. It is "the perfect combination of the voluptuousness and intelligence, of the active and contemplative faculties." As a matter of fact, Péladan's Androgyn as a "idéal esthétique" placed the beauty of the figure above the beauty of a woman. This theory of the Androgyn of Péladan contributed to all kind of speculations on his practises and teachings. For instance, his system "has been described as 'erotic Catholicism-cum-magic'."- 'Antiquities of the Illuminati' But, as Péladan noted, over the ages sexuality had been degenerated, love had been corrupted and materialism had triumphed. Péladan stated that the presence of the Androgyn is divine, balanced, asexual, in other words: it appears that the Androgyn is "unfitted for this worldly theatre". Seen through our eyes Péladan's version of the Androgyn is a perverted character, but the Androgyn is asexual, divine, balanced so how can this being be perverted? The 'difficulty' in understanding Péladan's theory are his writings in which he maintains ambiguity in its relation towards the subject. For Péladan (and many other mystics) the Androgyn was of great importance for the study of the ancient doctrines and works of the past. Péladan wrote, at least, two books on the subject, namely "L'Androgyne/La Gynandre" (1891) and "de L'Androgyne" (1910). Péladan's theory of the Androgyn allegedly influenced many of the Symbolist-artists. For instance, in the work of such painters as Fernand Khnopff, Puvis de Chavannes and Odilon Redon, the Androgyn is a returning subject.

THE ANDROGYN & THE MYSTICAL SPHINX ~ In the course of the 19th century the Sphinx became identified in art with the 'transcendental', the 'ideal' or 'beauty', as the essence of mysticism and religion. Within the Catholic Rose-Cross Order the Sphinx became the symbol of the (exalted esoteric) ideal of

beauty, the Sphinx as the personification of art. The real artist is instinctively attracted towards 'Beauty'. This 'attraction' is the remainder of a lost harmony [primordial man], thus Péladan. Therefore the Androgyn is of such importance ! The 'mystical' Sphinx was depicted as Androgyn [male and female] or genderless [above the sexes], a figure that represents the harmonious, spiritual union of the masculine (spirit/active) and feminine [matter/passive] in ONE being. In Joséphin Péladan's book "De L'Androgyne", published in 1910, the author i.a gives a description of the importance and the meaning of the Androgyn in ancient civilizations [Egypt, Chaldea, and Greece]. Joséphin Péladan refers to the Egyptian Sphinx as the androgynosphinx. He furthermore states that the Sphinx represents "humanity which puts its faith in the resurrection, as expressed with each dawn" [freely transl.]



Alexandre SÉON

FAIRIES AND VIRGINS

As noted before, Joséphin Péladan stated that man and woman should complement each other harmoniously to constitute the perfect Androgyn. It seems that Péladan showed an extraordinary 'distrust' of women, as Alexandra David-Neel once remarked. It is also known that Péladan prohibited - according to occult laws - the work of female artists to be exhibited during the Salons de la Rose+Croix.[1] Péladan somehow considered women inferior to men, a belief that allegedly was grounded by Péladan on magical laws.

1] post-script Constitution de la Rose-Croix, le Temple et le Graal - Paris, 1893

The following excerpt is taken from "The Life of Alexandra David-Neel" , by Barbara and Michael Foster [Harper & Row publ., 1987] and illustrates Péladan's (magical) view of women: "Their place was as servants or virgins to be deflowered. Alternately, they might through instruction become fairies. They must learn to make their bodies light in order to float, to grasp objects almost without touching them. As she watched a fat Flemish woman go through these exercises, Alexandra wondered, 'How many porcelaine cups would be the price of this lesson?'"

The method Alexandra refers to is published in Péladan's "Comment on devient Fée", published in 1892 and which forms part of "Amphithéâtre des sciences mortes", a study in seven parts. On page 56 of the Constitutions de la Rose-Croix: Le Temple et le Graal the "Amphithéâtre des sciences mortes" is described as the "restitution of Chaldean magic, adapted for the contemporary world" [freely transl.]. The "Amphithéâtre.." is divided here in three sections: 1] Ethique - Comment on devient Mage 1891 2]

Érotique - Comment on devient Fée 1892 , and 3] Esthétique - Comment on devient Artiste - en preparation.

- Érotique : Comment on devient Fée - 'How to become a fairy', method of instruction in two modes. Péladan refers here to Beatrice (Dante's Beatrice) and Hypathia as a symbol of the perfect woman. Ascetism and transcendental sexuality are the key-words. Péladan refers to this method as a long lost female initiation-method.

As mentioned earlier, Alexandra David-Neel was well known to Péladan and his intimates. Alexandra, a struggling actress at the time who was hoping for a part in one of Péladan's plays, started to frequent the Sâr's innercircle and their Salons de la Rose+Croix. Alexandra states that women "might through instruction become fairies". In other words, in Péladan's reasoning women could spiritually not develop any further than Elementals? Whatever the exact theory was of Péladan, it is a fact that sexual abstinence is a central theme in Péladan's later novels. "Through abstinence and abstinence only, man is enabled to impregnate his own genius." Joséphin's brother, Adrien Péladan, already published in 1869 a curious treatise on homeopathy, "Traitement homéopatique de la spermatorrhée, de la prostatorrhée et de l'hypersécrétion des glandes vulvo-vaginales" , in which Adrien deals with the question of gender in connection with sexuality. It is a treatise on various forms of ejaculation, masturbation, deviant sexual behaviour and their effects on the human brain. Adrien Péladan states that there's an antagonism between brain-activity and sexuality which results in a magnetic attraction between men and women, seeing that the positive pool of a man is situated in his sexual organ and that of a woman in her brains. Adrien speaks about all sorts of negative consequences of the attraction between the genders and therefore propagates sexual abstinence. This theory in which women are superfluous for man's salvation can also be traced back [up to a certain point] in the work of other 19th and 20th century occultists, such as Chevalier de Saint-Marcq, Theodor Reuss, Arnoldo Krumm-Heller, Aleister Crowley etc. Of special interest here is the work of '**Chevalier** **Clement de Saint-Marcq**, who published a treatise in 1906 entitled "L 'Eucharistie" [its essence being "only sperm contains the Logos"] The complete text can be found on the following website-address: <http://www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/eucha.htm> .

In 1910 a sequel was published, entitled "Les Raisons de l'Eucharistie". His work is of special interest here because 'Chevalier de Saint-Marcq' was i.a. a member of the R+C+C. He was a member of the Belgian lodge KVMRIS, directed by **Francis Vurgey** and **Nicolas Brossel** [see "Ecclesia Gnostica" and "1923 -Ordo Auræ & Rosæ Crucis"], both followers of Péladan. In 1892 Péladan had received the regency of the French L' Ordre du Temple [which incorporated L' Église Johannites des Crétiens Primitif, a Johannite Church], founded by **Fabré-Palaprat** [1773-1838] in 1804 (see "Ecclesia Gnostica"). Allegedly, the regency was given to Péladan by surviving Belgian members of the Neo-Templar Order who'd allegedly continued its Johannite Church. L'Ordre du Temple had been disbanded by **Vernois**, the GM of L'Ordre du Temple, in the 1850's. But, as we know, Péladan was much more interested in his rosicrucian activities and in 1884 the Order of the Temple came under the direction of an International Secretariat, led by Brossel and Vurgey of Lodge KVMRIS at Brussels. When one analyzes the works of Joséphin Péladan, and also that of Chevalier de Saint-Marcq, one will probably come to the conclusion that their work is deeply steeped in Gnosticism. The embracing of immorality and sin to experience the decaying of the world, after which the initiate rises as the phoenix from the ashes, is a Gnostic doctrine and lies at the base of Joséphin Péladan's work and theories. It is stated that the Gnostic elements which influenced the works of Péladan, Clement de Saint-Marcq etc. were part of the doctrine of the Johannite Church. More investigation in this direction is needed....

ASTROLOGY

Alexandra's eye-account proves that Péladan indeed directed certain magical instructions to his followers. It's also known that Péladan also applied certain divination-methods with regard to i.a. Astrology, Tarot etc. He laid great stress on Astrology in his works in which he made frequent allusion to the doctrine of Signatures. In his "Comment on devient Mage" [1891] a section is included on the different planetary types of human beings, in which Joséphin Péladan gives advice to make use of one's planetary abilities. In accordance with the hermetic axiom 'As above, so below', Péladan states that all earthly things have their celestial counterparts. Astrology came into vogue in France after the publication in 1887 of a book entitled "Les Mystères de l'Horoscope", that was written by **Eugène Jacob**. Jacob, who's better known as **Ely Star**, was a famous French astrologer and member of the Ahathöör Temple of SL McGregor Mathers

in Paris [Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn]. Christopher McIntosh states that Ely's book "taught an onomastic, Cabalistic Astrology, similar to that of Paul Christian [Jean-Baptiste Pitois]". On page 57 of the Constitutions de la Rose-Croix [Amphithéâtre des sciences mortes] Péladan speaks about the 'Méthode Kaldéenne'. Under the header 'Astrology' the following description is given:

"The Seven Planetary Types - Chaldean method for divination, the knowledge of the variations [the earlier mentioned 'Signatures'] - prophecy on the fate of marriages according to the Chaldean planetary system."

The text continues with the announcement of a series of publications on Astrology:

I The Seven Planetary Types of the female

II The Seven Planetary Types for the male, malevolent and beneficial

The Question arises whether Péladan actually taught Chaldean Astrology [1] or adapted some aspects of Chaldean Magic into modern Astrology, thus creating a personal method of Astrology. Once again, the question is left unanswered.

1] Chaldean Astrology: It is in Chaldea, that the charting patterns of the planets began. It is stated that the first tables of planetary motion, the Ephemeridae, were constructed in Chaldea. It was apparent to them that although the planets had their own individual movement they behaved in coherent cycles (L.Laurence- "Early concepts of heavenly influences"). Chaldean Astrology recognized seven sacred planets and i.a. applied the use of the 'Science of Numbers'. The placement of the earth in the chart is of special significance, together with the superimposition of the Sun and the Moon in the order of the planets. The Chaldean Order of Planets corresponds the order of planets on the Kabalistic Tree of Life in relation to the descent of the Lightning Flash

As explained before, Joséphin Péladan had intensively studied the works of i.a. Éliphas Lévi and his disciple Pierre Christian, and these men, together with his brother Adrien, had a profound influence on Péladan. Nevertheless, it is not quite clear to me where his fascination with the Ancient Chaldean and Babylonian civilization came from. Much of his theories are a blend of hermeticism, Catholicism with an Chaldean overtone added to it. The graphical presentation of much of the publications of the Rose+Croix Catholique contained Chaldean figures and symbols. It is generally known that Péladan was well-read. His youth was spent in the local library where he became acquainted with the works of all kinds of novelists, playwrights, poets, philosophers, esoterists etc. I'll make a wild guess: I wonder if Joséphin was familiar with the work of **Francois Lenormant**. Lenormant wrote a standard-work on Chaldean Magic in 1877 which was, and still is, one of the few books really dealing with the topic of magic at the dawn of civilization: "La Magie chez les Chaldeens" [the English translation was entitled "Chaldean Magic: its origin and Development"]. Another possible influence, although it's a far shot once again, might have been the work of the Gnostic Basilides, who belonged to the Alexandrian school of Gnosticism. It is known that Basilides studied and practised i.a. Chaldean astrology, next to Egyptian Hermeticism, Persian philosophy and Oriental occultism. It is stated that his doctrines intertwined early Christianity and pagan mysteries. As stated earlier on, Péladan's theories and doctrines are steeped in Gnosticism. Once again, more investigation in this direction is needed...

"O Nature, indulgent Mother, forgive! Open your arms to the son, prodigal and weary. I have attempted to tear asunder the veil you have hung to conceal from us the pain of life, and I have been wounded by the mystery. . . . OEdipus, half way to finding the word of the enigma, young Faust, regretting already the simple life, the life of the heart, I come back to you repentant, reconciled, O gentle deceiver!"

- Invocation by Sâr Péladan -

(transl . Joseph Conrad)

Joséphin Péladan's doctrines are a curious mixture of occultism and Catholic dogmas. His philosophies were an attempt to tie up his own theories with the doctrines of the Catholic Church. As Christopher McIntosh states in "Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival", Péladan's rosicrucianism "sought to establish a nucleus from which emanated a whole set of religious, moral and aesthetic values." Reacting against the agnostic skepticism of the age, he devoted all his energy to the mission of returning the Divine Mystery to the world through the fine arts. His movement was "profoundly reactionary, antithetical to democracy and the French Revolution." [Forbidden Journey: The Life of Alexandra David-Neel] Péladan believed in astrology, in the spirits of the elements, in elves. He did not accept Spiritism nor reincarnation. "Each Soul develops itself at the time of passing over to other spheres or realms", thus Péladan. In an

article which was published in the Martinist journal 'L'Initiation' of June 1890 he stated : "I could not take occultism with me to Mass, and I refuse to rub shoulders with Spiritualism, Masonry or Buddhism." He wrote the article in connection with his departure from L'Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose+Croix. The article i.a. criticized the new developments within the OKR+C, such as the interest of its members in topics such as Freemasonry [Oswald Wirth], Buddhism etc. Péladan was an aesthete, with beauty as an ideal and [true] art as it means. The true artist was a spiritual teacher, a prophet, in Péladan's eyes. In his work "L'Art Idéaliste & Mystique" of 1894 he published the guidelines for the artist : "The work should be conceived in our own image, as man was created in the image of Elohim; that is to say, it should be conceived on three planes: plastic, organic, intellectual. The artist should begin with the abstraction of his subject, he will imagine the Soul most consistent with this abstract plane; finally he will choose the form most characteristic of this soul" transl. : C McIntosh

JOSÉPHIN PÉLADAN: HIS REPENT

When Péladan disappointedly disbanded L'Ordre de la Rose+Croix du Temple et du Graal in December 1897, he traveled through Egypt and the Holy land. In 1899 Péladan visited Jerusalem where he made an "astonishing discovery". According to contemporary eulogist René-Georges Aubrun, "he made a discovery so astonishing that at any other era it would have shaken the Catholic world to it's foundations; he rediscovered the authentic tomb of Jesus in THE MOSQUE OF OMAR." He also stated that, at the occasion, the Franciscans [he apparently stayed with the Franciscans while visiting Jerusalem] had tried to murder him. Meanwhile Péladan endured the 'trial of the Four Elements' at which he miraculously did not perish from dryness [Earth], thirst [Water], storm [Air] nor burning [Fire]. He claimed that the Great Sphinx at Gizeh had revealed to him that the process of Automagnification had come to an end. Péladan became more modest, he no longer made use of the title 'Sâr' and the former grandeur of presentation, with his eccentric habits and costumes, was over and done. His influence ultimately limited itself to a small circle of disciples. This circle had almost no contact with the former Sâr in his later years. His mission had failed Joséphin Péladan was considered an amateur by the artists, a fraud by the occultists, and a magician by the writers. Forgotten by the public, he nevertheless stayed loyal to his beliefs. He continued lecturing in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. His books were published from time to time. Joséphin Aimé Péladan died from food-poisoning in 1918 at the age of sixty.

"A transmitted Initiation secret is of no use"
-Joséphin Péladan (1858-1918) -



Appendix I

ÉRIK SATIE (1866-1925) & 'LA ROSE+CROIX CATHOLIQUE'

Satie was a member of the R+C+C at the time. Satie became interested in Péladan's work after he had read Péladan's "Le vice suprême". "A classic of decadent literature with its depictions of the ultimate depravation, in which princesses, holy men and magicians perform all manner of perversions in order to purify their sinful souls." Satie then met Péladan in the spring of 1890 and his teachings on the identity of art and religion apparently must have been most appealing to Satie. In 1891 Satie is mentioned as the Rosicrucian Order its composer and conductor. Satie left the R+C+C in 1895 [other sources state that he left the Order in 1893]. He was introduced i.a. to the mystical strains of Gregorian and plainsong. In 1892 Satie wrote the music for a ballet, 'Uspud', a mystical work which unfolds around the theme of the Crucifixion. The mystical number 3 - the symbol of perfection in the union of opposites [i.a. reflected in Péladan's Androgyn, the Alchemical Mercury] is prominently present through the use of triplets in Satie's third Rosicrucian piece from 1892, "Sonneriens de la Rose+Croix" . The triplets, or triads, are constantly circling around the tritone. In the Middle Ages this tritone - as used by Satie - was known as the 'diabolus in musica' and therefore forbidden by the church. The haunting atmosphere this triad-chord creates had to be an invention of the devil, naturally ! [this chord, the 'diabolus in musica', is also prominently used in rocksongs such as Jimi Hendrix' "Foxy Lady"] Of course, in the case of Satie the tritone also referred to the mystical number 3. The pieces that he wrote for the Order included :

- *Préludes from Le Fils des Étoiles* [1891]
1er Acte: *la Vocation* (La nuit de Kaldée) - *En blanc et immobile* - 2e Acte: *L'Initiation* [La salle basse du Grand Temple] - *Dans la tête* - 3e Acte: *L'Incanation*
- *Leitmotiv de Panthée* [1891] or:
- *Premier pensée Rose+Croix* - presumably also identical to the *Marche antique pour la Rose+Croix* that is said to have been performed at a Rosicrucian soirée, composed by one Bihn Grallon , a character in Péladan's *Le Panthée*, a poor cabaret pianist much like Satie. [Olof Höjer]
- *Sonneries de la Rose + Croix: Air de l'Ordre* 1892 - Satie's third and last real Rosicrucian piece, 3 fanfares for trumpets and harps : *Air de l'ordre* - *Air du Grand Maître* [Le Sar Joséphin Péladan] *Air du Grand Prieur* [Le Comte Antoine de la Rochefoucauld – Péladan's financial backer]
- *Préludes* [1892] *Fête donnée par des Chevaliers - Normands en l'Honneur d'une jeune - Demoiselle* [XI Siècle] - *Prélude d'Eginhard* - *1 er Prélude du Nazaréen* - *2e Prélude du Nazaréen*
- *Messe des Pauvres* [1895]
Satie also wrote some incidental music for Jules Bois' Rosicrucian drama :
Prelude pour la porte heroique du ciel (1894). Composed for a Drama "esoterique" by Jules Bois.

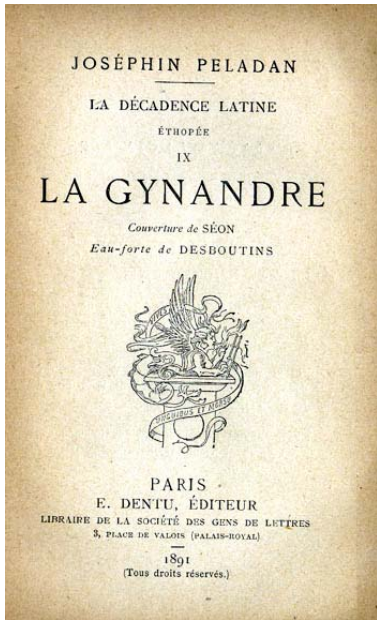
Some of these compositions were written for Péladan's plays, like "Le Prince de Byzance" [Hymne pour le 'Salut Drapeau'] and "Le Fils des étoiles". Satie left Péladan's Order because he felt that he was constantly pursued by the title of the musical forerunner of Péladan's Rose+Croix Catholique, which caused him "a lot of worry and many troubles. If I have to be somebody's pupil, then I think I can say that it would be from myself alone, especially since I believe that Monsieur Péladan, despite his wealth of knowledge, will not be able to gain any disciples at all, neither in music nor painting nor in other things." - Satie in a interview with the newspaper Gil Blas -

After his break with the Rosicrucians, Satie created his own church of which he was its only member; : 'Eglise Métropolitaine d'Art de Jésus Conducteur'. For this he published an official manifesto that functioned primarily as soapbox upon which to rant against music critics.

Appendix II

Joséphin Péladan's oeuvre consists of approx. ninety volumes of novels, plays and studies. He furthermore published numerous articles of which three would receive official recognition by the French Academy. Subjoined are a few titles of Péladan's most well-known books and studies, various of these titles are still available [in French]

- Le Vice suprême [publ. 1884]
- Dernière Leçon de Léonard de Vinci à son Académie de Milan, 1499/précédée d'une étude sur le maître
- La Queste du Graal : proses lyriques de l'éthopée La décadence latine
- Femmes honnêtes (2e série)
- L'Initiation sentimentale/ La décadence latine [III]
- Istar/ La décadence latine, éthopée V [1888]
- La clé de Rabelais
- Autour du péché/par Miss Sarah
- Le voeu de la Renaissance
- L'Art idéaliste et mystique : doctrine de l'Ordre et du salon annuel des Roses-croix
- l'Art ochlocratique : salons de 1882 et 1883./Joséphin Péladan ; avec une lettre de Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly
- Oedipe et le Sphinx
- Amphithéâtre des sciences mortes : Comment on devient Mage" [1892]
Comment on devient fée érotique [1893] Comment on devient artiste [1894]
- la science de l'amour
- les amants de pise [1912]
- les dévotes d'Avignon [1922]
- Un coeur en peine
- La Gynandre/ La décadence latine [1891]
- La doctrine de Dante [1908]
- A coeur perdu [1887]
- La Clé Perdu
- L'Androgyne [1891]
- De l'Androgyne [1910]
- De Parsival à Don Quichotte [1906]
- Introduction aux sciences occultes [1902]



frontispiece ISTAR by Fernand Khnopff

Péladan's movement in Belgium

The Rose-Croix of Péladan had especially created a significant, theoretical influence on Belgian painters. As we saw in Part One, already in the 1880's Péladan had embraced such painters as Gustave Moreau, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, and the Belgian Baudelairian artist Félicien Rops [1833-1898], painters to whom Joséphin Péladan referred as his Kabbalistic Triangle of Great Art. But it seems that Rops never really took Péladan that seriously. In the 1880's Rops was i.a. the illustrator of Péladan's novels but was later replaced by Fernand Khnopff [1858-1921], another Belgian painter. As stated in Part One, Péladan had created the idea of the Salons de la Rose+Croix when he had visited one of the Symbolist expositions of the independent Belgian artsociety "Les XX/ Société des Vingt".



Félicien Rops : Frontispiece for 'Les Diaboliques' by Barbey d'Aurevilly

The first exhibition of Les XX was held in 1884 at Brussels, eight years before the first Salon de la Rose-Croix was held. The driving forces behind these events were **Octave Maus** and **Edmond Picard**. It was at one of these exhibitions that Péladan discovered Fernand Khnopff. Many of the Symbolist artists and writers sought an alternative to the excesses of materialism and positivism. This alternative was mysticism and occultism. And it was Brussels that had become one of the leading centers of Symbolist art and literature at the time. And it looks as if Péladan and the Symbolist movement were made for each other: "Magic was to be the tool to make their dreams become reality; visual images were seen as magical talismans, and poems were compared to incantations. Occultism filled many needs, providing a sense of participation in a universal community as well as an elite circle of initiates, and a contact with eternal truths in an era of rapid change." [Jefferey Howe -on Symbolism-]

Art as an initiatory rite The philosophy of Joséphin Péladan. The Symbolists wanted to become the mystics of art and, as stated in Part One, "it was Joséphin Péladan who'd proclaimed himself as the mentor of the movement." And so it happened that Belgian artists such as Fernand Khnopff, Emile Fabry, and Jean Delville were among the artists that exhibited their works at the first 'Salon de la Rose-Croix' of 1892. Fernand Khnopff was Joséphin Péladan's first Belgian disciple and Péladan always referred to Khnopff as Master. Péladan referred to **Jean Delville** as "Le premier Consul de la Rose-Croix a Belgique", the head of Péladan's Rosicrucian branch in Belgium [more on this later]. In reality the Belgian Rosicrucian branch was not a coherent esoteric circle that was solely devoted to the teachings of Joséphin Péladan, on the contrary, the Belgian Rosicrucians of Péladan were a loose circle of like-minded artists and esoterists. Some of them were Theosophists and Martinists, others free-thinkers and Freemasons. For instance, Belgian writer Ray Nyst stated that the first theosophical circle of Belgium was created within his salon. This circle was allegedly frequented by the majority of Symbolist painters, such as Emile Fabry, Khnopff, Delville, and Albert Ciamberlani. "This circle likely began in the early 1890s since it counted among its members **Alexandra David-Neel**,¹⁰ spiritualist, writer, then great traveler, who had been initiated to theosophy on June 7, 1892." [Sébastien Clerbois - *A la recherche d'une forme-pensée*]

As we'll see later, many of the Belgian artists that were involved with Péladan, later turned towards the Theosophical Society. At the end of the 1890's theosophy became a major influence within Belgian esoteric circles. This was also felt within the Martinist lodges of Belgium. The first recorded witness to the influence of theosophy within the Belgian Martinist lodges is Marc Haven of the Supreme Council of the Martinist Order in Paris. In a letter written in 1899 Haven i.a. wrote that he deplored the leaning towards theosophy of the Martinist lodges of Belgium [André/ Beauvils: "Papus, biographie" 1995]

One of these lodges was the famous Belgian Martinist lodge of Brussels, lodge KVMRIS

[see also the essays "History of the Martinist Order - 1891 Supreme Conseil de l'Ordre Martiniste" and "History of the French Gnostic Church - Ecclesia Gnostica"].

DE LA SCIENCE OCCULTE 193
KVMRIS
Branche du Groupe indépendant d'études ésotériques
A BRUXELLES
25, Rue de Joncker, 25
Conférences, Cours, Publications sur les Sciences Occultes
Pour tous renseignements : S'adresser à M. YURGEY,
délégué général.

1892 LODGE KVMRIS [BRUSSELS, BELGIUM]

The first Martinist lodges in Belgium were established around 1892 [under the banner of the G.I.D.E.E.]. The Brussels lodge was named lodge KVMRIS. According to Sébastien Clerbois, in his article "A la recherche d'une forme-pensée...", lodge KVMRIS held a special position within 'L' Ordre Martiniste' [note:, Clerbois refers to lodge 'Kvmris' as the "Masonic lodge of the Brussels occultist Kumris"] L'Ordre Martiniste, headed by Papus at the time, also incorporated such Orders as i.a. L' Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose+Croix, founded in 1888 by Stanislas de Guaita and Péladan. As we already know, in 1891 Papus

and de Guaita openly declared war on Péladan's recently founded Catholic Rose-Cross Order and disbanded Péladan from the OKR+C. In Paris both orders fought each other in public for several years, a period which became known as "La Guerre des deux roses". What is of significance here is that this war did not have a direct impact -or so it seems - on the Belgian Martinists. For instance, **Francis Verguy**, who carried the leadership of lodge KVMRIS together with **Nicolas Brossel**, was a full member of Péladan's L'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthétique du Temple et du Graal. This was also the case with **Clément de Saint-Marcq**, who was, as noted before, a member of the Catholic Rose-Cross and a member of the Martinist Order as well as a member of Doinel's original Gnostic Church etc.. [Clément de Saint-Marcq headed the Martinist lodge at Antwerp, lodge VISCVM.]

According to Sébastien Clerbois, two symbolist exhibitions were held in 1892 and 1894 under the auspices of lodge KVMRIS. Unfortunately, in the article Clerbois fails to give his sources for this assumption. What is of interest here, is Clerbois' statement that, because of the lack of impact of the War of the two Roses on the Belgian Symbolists and occultists, the works of these Symbolists "were frequently inspired by the two doctrines in a united manner.", thus Clerbois. He continues by claiming that, in general, Joséphin Péladan is recognized for influencing artists through his theory of the Androgyne, while Papus' Martinist/OKR+C Order -to which Clerbois refers as The Rose-Croix Order - had a more pragmatic influence on the Symbolist painters. "**Jules de Jardin**, **Edgar Baes**, and art critic Francis Verguy formulated an aesthetic based on numerological theories put forward by the lodge of Kumris, of which they were members. The goal was, in creating a series of criteria linked by a subtle network, or connections, to inspire painters to make the corpus of art support the expression of the invisible that the cabalists thought could be defined by scholars of mathematic theory."

Clerbois concludes that the two doctrines, the doctrine of Péladan's Androgyne and a certain doctrine of numerology as taught by the leaders of lodge KVMRIS, were often

associated with Symbolist works. Clerbois gives the following example of the two doctrines united in one work. "The triptych *Isolation* [1891–94] by Fernand Khnopff is a good example, as iconographically it symbolizes Péladan's androgyne, and, from a formal point of view, its use of the triptych [the number 3 signifies perfection, the central scene signifies the unity of opposites] and of colors [a progression from white to blue, the color of spirituality] links the work with the numerological theories of Papus."

Clerbois states that Khnopff's work is based on the theories of art-critic Francis Verguy, director of the KVMRIS lodge and "affiliate of Papus's Rose-Croix order", thus Clerbois :

"Verguy wanted to create an encompassing work of art entitled "Pantaxe", based on a triple creation, the number 3 being, in numerology, the symbol of perfection in the union of opposites. Verguy entrusted the musical aspect of his work to Jules Massenet and the plastic construction to Fernand Khnopff, of whom he requested a tripartite composition, which explains the use of the triptych for "L'Isolement". Too constrained from a theoretical point of view, the work was never finished." Clerbois claims that these numerological theories were derived exclusively from the work of Papus by Verguy [it seems as if Clerbois is not aware of the fact that Verguy was also a disciple of the Catholic Rose+Cross]. Although I'm certain that Papus indeed endorsed these theories, this numerological doctrine was not reserved exclusively for the Martinist Order/ OKR+C. Especially the emphasis on the number 3, the symbol of perfection in the union of opposites, was of great importance to Péladan [or for any other occidental occultist and/or mystic for that matter], notably in connection with the Androgyne ! The use of the number 3 is also emphatically present in the compositions which Érik Satie wrote for Péladan's Rosicrucian Order [see Part Two of this essay]. And it is known that Satie wrote his Rosicrucian works with Péladan's theories in mind. For instance, in Satie's third and last real Rosicrucian piece, "Sonneries de la Rose + Croix: Air de l'Ordre - Air du Grand Maître - Air du Grand Prieur", the mystical number 3, in the form of triplets/triads, is prominently present throughout the composition. The use of themes and occult theories were also prominently present with another Belgian disciple of Joséphin Péladan, namely Jean Delville.



1896 Delville's 'Salons d'Art Idéaliste'

JEAN DELVILLE [1867-1953] : THE ARTIST AND THE ESOTERIC

Jean Delville - the Belgian painter, illustrator, writer and master of esoteric symbolism - was born in Louvain in 1867 and died in 1953. Delville is often referred to as the head of the Brussels branch of the Rosicrucian revival. He was a member of Péladan's Catholic Rose-Cross Order between 1892 and 1895. In his writings Péladan, who held Delville up in great respect, actually referred to Delville as "the premier Consul of the Rose-Cross in Belgium", a kind of honorary title. According to his granddaughter Miriam Delville, Jean Delville was primarily a seeker, someone who searched all his life for perfection. When he met the Sâr in his early twenties in Paris, around 1877 or 1888, Delville started to increase his interest in the occult. According to some sources, Barbey d'Aureville and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam* were two other great influences on the work of Jean Delville.

* Comte de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam [1838-1889]

poet, mystic, and dramatist, friend of Baudelaire and Richard Wagner. A strong defender of traditional Catholicism and descendent of the Grand Master of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem who, in 1464, obtained from Charles V. the concession of the isle of Malta for his Order, henceforth the Order of the Knights of Malta. Whether or not he was actually a Cabbalist, questions of magic began, at an early age, to preoccupy him, and, from the first wild experiment of Isis to the deliberate summing up of Axël, the "occult" world finds its way into most of his pages. Fundamentally, the belief of Villiers is the belief common to all Eastern mystics. "Know, once for all, that there is for thee no other universe than that conception thereof which is reflected at the bottom of thy thoughts." A.Symons

DELVILLE AND PÉLADAN

"In his late teens and early twenties, he painted landscapes and depictions of the poor. Then Delville turned from social problems to esotericism and spiritual philosophy."

[Lynda Harris "Painting, Spirituality.."]

Joséphin Péladan, the eccentric descendent of the priestly Magi, became the first teacher of the young artist and Delville decided to move to Paris where he continued his search for the ideal. He became a devoted "Péladien". Between 1892 and 1895 Delville exhibited paintings at the Salons de la Rose-Croix and arranged the performances of Péladan's tragedies in Brussels. In 1895 Delville painted the portrait of Péladan as a Rosicrucian Grand Master. In 1892 Delville became one of the founders of "Cercle Pour l'Art" [together with **Emile Fabry** and **Xavier Mellery**], a circle which regrouped the so-called Idealists. It is quite possible that this circle sprang from the earlier-mentioned so-called Theosophical circle that is mentioned by Ray Nyst. Allegedly, the "Cercle pour l'Art" held its first exposition in 1892 in Brussels.

"In his preface to the first catalogue (Brussels, 1892), Delville declared that no work could truly be called art if it did not combine three absolutes: spiritual beauty, plastic beauty and technical beauty." This

doctrine of the 'three absolutes' is clearly derived from Péladan's teachings. Péladan developed this theory as a guideline for the true artist . These guidelines were i.a. published in 1894 in "L 'Art Idéaliste & Mystique" [see Part II].

Emile Dantinne, one of the successors of Péladan, states in his book "L'Oeuvre et la Pensée de Péladan" [1948] that the Belgian Rosicrucian Salons [exhibitions] were held at an old hotel that belonged to one of Péladan's disciples in Brussels, Edmond Picard. Picard was, as mentioned earlier on in this chapter, one of the the driving forces behind "Les XX". Dantinne refers to Picard's hotel as "la Maison d'Art, l'ancien hôtel d'Edmond Picard" at the "Avenue de la Toison d'Or." According to Dantinne, a Belgian branch of the Catholic Rose-Cross was founded at the third Rosicrucian exhibition that was held in Brussels in 1894. The members allegedly gathered together under the leadership of Jean Delville at the Ravenstein hotel. According to Dantinne, Péladan's most famous Belgian disciples were Edmond Picard, Raymond Nyst, José Hennebicq, and Georges M. Baltus [1874-1967].

After 1895 Delville dissociated from Péladan, although he remained true to many of the Sâr's esoteric and occult concepts. Many of Péladan's theories and concepts were implemented in Delville's own philosophy, which he called - making use of a term of Péladan's – "Idealism".

In 1895 Delville published his occult and Idealist views in "Dialogue entre nous", a text which united Péladan's rosicrucian concepts with certain theosophical doctrines. In imitation of Joséphin Péladan's Parisian Salons de la Rose+Croix, Delville started to organize his own Idealist exhibitions in Belgium, the "Salons de l'Art Idéaliste" [see picture]. The Salons de l'Art Idéaliste [1896-1898] "continued the grand tradition of idealistic art", thus Delville. According to Delville, this tradition traced back to the ancient Egyptians and Greeks. It seems that Delville actually used the Constitution's rules of Péladan, the Manifest of 1891, that defined the conditions and regulations of the exhibited paintings. Delville showed at the Salons de l'Art Idéaliste some of his best works ; the "Treasures of Satan", painted in 1895 [see next page], and his most famous work -his masterpiece – "Plato's Academy", painted in 1898, "where, in an ideal landscape, languorous androgynes are grouped around Plato to form a very rhythmical composition. Its ambiguity aroused some reservations, but the overall impression was of serene beauty". [ArtMagick]

'Understood in its metaphysical sense,
Beauty is one of the manifestations of the Absolute Being.
Emanating from the harmonious rays of the Divine plan,
it crosses the intellectual plane to shine once again across
the natural plane, where it darkens into matter.'

- Jean Delville 1899 -

DELVILLE AND THEOSOPHY

In 1899, one year after the final Salon de l'Art Idéaliste, Delville met Édouard Schuré [1841-1929], the second major influence on Delville and his ideas. Schuré was a member of the Theosophical Society [which he quit in 1886, only to return to it in 1907] and developed his spiritual conceptions "in conjunction with the great love of his life, Marguerite Albana Mignaty."

His concepts were i.a. published in a highly influential book entitled Les Grands Initiés, ["The Great Initiates, a study of the Secret History of Religions"], written in 1844 and published in 1899. Les Grands Initiés recounts the lives of the great prophets and the various mystery traditions of ancient times. The volume includes the following prophets and mysteries:

Thoth-Hermes and the Mysteries of Isis and Osiris ; Krishna and the Doctrine of the Initiates ; Moses and the Patriarchs of the Desert (incl. Sépher Béréshit, Magie and Théurgie) ; Orpheus and the Mysteries of Dionysus ; Plato and the Mysteries of Eleusis ; Pythagoras - the Mystery of Delphi ; the hindu Rama and the origin of the Ram ; Jesus and the Mission of Christ.

"Les grands initiés" is still in print today, a work in which the influence of French occultists such as i.a. Fabre d'Olivet and Saint-Yves d'Alveydre is recognizable. Schuré demonstrates with 'The Great Initiates' that through all the traditions moved the impulse of the eternal tradition. Schuré was also a close friend of Rudolf Steiner. At the time Delville met Schuré, he just launched the publication of a Symbolist magazine entitled "La lumière" which appeared in 1899-1900. The magazine adopted a "theosophical editorial policy", in other words : this magazine became the Belgian journal of the Theosophists [led by Annie

Besant at the time]. The Theosophical Society became the most important esoteric organization in Belgium and its membership increased rapidly. It is reported that the TS had a branch in Charleroi in 1894. By 1897-1898 there were already branches in Auvers, Liège [Luik] and Brussels [this branch is also referred to as the 'White Order of Brussels'; its seal was a shining, white star]. "Theosophical publications multiplied; after "La lumière" came "Le petit messenger", published from 1901 to 1908; "En art", published from 1904 to 1906; and "Théosophie", issued from 1905 to 1909. The Belgian branches of the Theosophical Society organized themselves on the heels of this growth." [Sébastien Clerbois " A la recherche d'une forme-pensée"]

The Theosophical Society was very successful in Belgium around the turn of the century. A good example of this success has already been illustrated in the essay on the Martinist Order [the M*O* in Belgium]. The Belgian branch of the whole French Martinist-Rosicrucian movement had its headquarters at Brussels, the earlier-mentioned lodge KVMRIS. This Lodge was very active and successful until Francis Vurgey, who was also a member of Péladan's Order, resigned his leadership position. At the time of his resignation the movement had 3 lodges in Belgium, next to KVMRIS there was VISCVM at Antwerp and POLLUX at Liège. After the resignation of Verguy the Brussels Lodge was closed down and most of its former members joined the Theosophical Society. Around the turn of the century Jean Delville was initiated into Freemasonry. It is stated that he received his first degree in -or about- 1900 at the Masonic Lodge AMIS PHILANTHROPEs in Brussels, Belgium.

During his artistic career, Delville founded many groups of co-operating artists. One of the most interesting was a group of theosophical artists that Delville united in Brussels around 1905 and which consisted of several Symbolists, such as Russian musician **Alexandre Skryabin** [1872–1915], Swiss sculptor **Auguste de Niederhausern** [1863–1913] and some others. Skryabin and Delville had studied together a theosophic publication entitled "Thoughtforms" [1905]. Both artists dreamt of creating "an all-encompassing work of art that would combine colors, shapes, and sounds." [Sébastien Clerbois]

The goal of this collaboration was to produce an initiatic work of art that would resonate, from an esoteric point of view, with the arcane, " thanks to a network of correspondences between the elements of the oeuvre." Of course the idea was not new. "Throughout the nineteenth century—from Goethe to Richard Wagner, Charles Baudelaire, and Arthur Rimbaud—intellectuals had imagined a general system of correspondences between sounds, colors, and shapes." This concept of correspondences between colors, shapes and sounds has always formed part of the mystery tradition. Today, many Initiatic Orders practise some kind of system which involves Sound and Color [for instance, B.O.T.A. 's "Color & Sound meditations"].

Skryabin returned in 1909 to his homeland and the project of both Delville and Skryabin was never fully realized. Nevertheless, Skryabin's 1909 composition, "Prométhée, poème du feu op. 60" (for which Delville designed the poster), is in fact a 'light symphony'.

"Historical sources prove that the composer supposed the use of a colour keyboard, an instrument that had been constructed in 1895 by the British scientist Wallace Rimington. It is also known that Skryabin possessed the synaesthetic ability to associate the hearing of a certain sound with a certain colour. Thus he made his own scale of colours where each pitch in the circle of fifths is represented by its own, specific colour." [Luce – "A realisation of Alexander Skryabin's Poem of Fire"_ internet]



DELVILLE : Title page of the original edition of Prométhée

Between 1909 and 1913 Jean Delville was Secretary of the 'Central branch of the Theosophical Society in Belgium'. Its journal was entitled "Revue Théosophique Belge" which began publication in April 1909. In 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, Delville and his family went into voluntary exile in England. He i.a. founded a journal, entitled "Belgian Art in Exile", and created a Masonic lodge. He also became an ardent follower of Krishnamurti, the messias of the Theosophists. Back in Brussels, after the War, he created the "Groupe d'Art Monumental". Until 1937 Delville was the director of the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. Delville considered, just like Péladan, catholicism to be in harmony with magical laws : "The external forms of devotion concealed occult truths. Delville considered the true artist to be an initiate who would present images which would teach and transform human nature; Artists were to become priests and prophets." [J.Howe ~ "Jean Delville: Belgian Symbolist"]

Delville felt himself completely devoted to one mission ; the return of the Divine Mystery to the world through art and poetry. At the end of his life, despite all of his work and ability, Delville was almost completely forgotten by the art-world. He died in Brussels [Forest, Vorst] in 1955.

DELVILLE AND THE OCCULT

Delville wrote frequently about esoteric and spiritual subjects and his ideas and theories can be found in several of his books that were published during his life time :

"Dialogue entre nous" (Bruges, 1895)

"Dialogue among Ourselves, Cabbalistic, Occult, and Idealist Arguments"

"La Mission de l'art" (Brussels, 1900)

In this book Delville defends a messianic ideal and the redemptive quality of (idealist) art.

"Belgian Art in Exile" (London, 1916)

In general it is asserted that there were three movements that seem to have had a particularly strong effect on Delville's ideas. The first of these was the Rosicrucianism of Joséphin Péladan. The second major influence were the ideas and theories of Édouard Schuré and the third important influence on Delville was the Theosophical Society [including the ideas of Krishnamurti].

Delville's ideas were also expressed through his paintings and poetry. According to Lynda Harris ["Jean Delville : Painting, Spirituality, and the Esoteric"] one of the recurring themes in many of his works is the evolution of the human soul, "achieved through initiation and reincarnation", thus Linda. According to

Harris, Delville's ideas on initiation were influenced by Schuré and later by Theosophy although she adds to this assumption that Delville was probably introduced to the subject by Péladan. She continues by asking the question: "Did Delville participate in initiation ceremonies himself? " Well, it is beyond doubt that the members of Péladan's "Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthétique" received their initiations and performed ceremonies. We know, for instance, that Joséphin Péladan and his followers performed rosicrucian ceremonies in which Péladan acted as Master of the Lodge. The source for this is Alexandra David-Neel [see Chapters One and Two] Delville studied under Péladan while living in Paris, so it is more than likely that Delville indeed did participate. Besides, we know for certain that Delville at least received one official initiation during his lifetime; Delville was a member of the Masonic lodge AMIS PHILANTROPEs in Brussels. I do not know if he ever received more than one (craft-) degree, simply because the information is lacking. The sources also report that Delville founded a Masonic Lodge in England without mentioning the details. [if this is true, this indicates that Delville was, at least, a 3° Master-Mason]. For instance, from whom did Delville receive the authorization to establish a new lodge? Could it be that this was a lodge for the French-speaking community in exile during the War? Questions that are left unanswered, for the moment. All I can give you is a brief outline on the nature of the Brussels lodge. This description gives us a possible insight in Delville's motives to become a Freemason.

What attracted Delville to AMIS PHILANTROPEs ? It's one of the leading and one of the oldest lodges of Belgium, as it was founded under the impulse of French officers in 1797. In 1894 the lodge did split up, the liberal masons henceforth held their meetings at 'Amis Philanthropes sans numéro' while the conservative- and more spiritually inclined members gathered together at 'Amis Philanthropes numéro 2'. Both lodges [1] belonged to the same obedience, the Grand Orient of Belgium. In view of his background it is more than likely that Delville became a member in -or about- 1900 of AMIS PHILANTROPEs numéro 2. Eugène Félicien Albert [comte] Goblet d'Alviella [1845-1925] was a member of this lodge. **Count Goblet d'Alviella** was also the Grand Master of the Grand Orient and Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Belgium. Goblet d'Alviella published numerous works on religion and esoterism during his lifetime, among which "Eulisinia : De quelques problèmes relatifs aux Mystères d'Eulisis" [1903] and his most well-known book, "La migration des symboles" [1894].

note : At the present day lodge LES AMIS PHILANTROPEs consists of 'Les Amis Philanthropes numéro 2 Alpha', 'Les Amis Philanthropes numéro 2 Omega', 'Les Amis Philanthropes numéro 3' and 'Les Amis Philanthropes numéro 4'. Furthermore it is noteworthy that Edmond Picard, driving force behind 'Les XX' and organizer of the 3rd Rosicrucian exhibition in Brussels, was also a member of this lodge. Picard allegedly was a member of the liberal lodge. Félicien Rops, the Belgian painter and illustrator of some of Péladan's works, was also a Freemason
source : Andries Van den Abeele "**De kinderen van Hiram**"

Although only a speculation, it seems likely that Delville was a Scottish Mason. His interest in this masonic lodge would otherwise not make much sense. I mean, here we have a man -Jean Delville- who was profoundly influenced by Magic, Theosophy, Kabbalah, and Hermetic philosophy. And it is common knowledge that Freemasons who are interested in studies bearing Hermeticism, occultism, esoteric symbolism gather together in the so-called 'Higher Degrees'. Furthermore, the rules and ceremonies of the masonic tradition - the Rite - is considered to be an initiatic way. Whatelse could be the attraction for Delville ! [again, this is pure speculation from my side. I do not possess any form of documented proof for this statement.] What is a fact is that Delville, like his first teacher Péladan, considered a true artist to be an initiate who's mission it was "to send light, spirituality, and mysticism into the world." [Lynda Harris]. Initiation into the Divine Mystery of the universe

"It is necessary to speak clearly and precisely of the civilizing mission of art... It is also necessary to speak of the moral effect which a work of art produces on people, on the public, the moralizing strength of Art, [which is] more salutary, more pacifying than that of Politics."

J. Delville, "La Mission de l'Art ", Brussels, 1900

Another recurring theme in his work is the concept of the Astral Light. Delville considered the visible reality as a symbol - a human being exists in three planes:

1. The physical : realm of facts

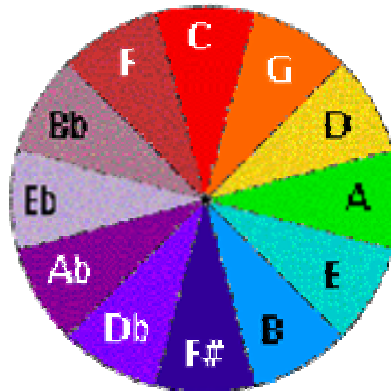
2. The astral : realm of laws, the spiritual world
3. The divine : realm of causes

In many of the scenes painted by Deville we often encounter radiant streams engulfing human souls, ethereal beings and/or other creatures. It is asserted by the sources that these streams are depictions of the astral light. "In his 'Dialogue entre nous', Delville described the astral light as an invisible, universal matrix that surrounds everything in the universe, including the stars and the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. It also saturates and surrounds the souls of human beings and engenders their rebirth in new bodies." [Harris]

Deville used different colors for the astral light, colors that corresponded to the level of this 'light'. [It was i.a. Eliphas Lévi who'd already divided the astral light into a lower and higher form]. In the material realm the colors vary from predominantly red to orange. For the higher levels of the astral light Delville used colors which vary from purple to white [or gold]. Regarding the symbolism of the colors as used by Delville, Jeffery Howe ["Jean Delville: Belgian Symbolist"] states that Delville's use of the color blue in the painting The God-Man [1895] symbolizes spirituality, "just as red was a symbol of materialism and sensualism in The Treasures of Satan.", thus Howe. These interpretations of color-symbolism, as depicted in Delville's paintings, are the interpretations of Howe and Harris, not Deville's [It seems that Delville almost never discussed his pictures]. The above discussed paintings date from the 1890's. As mentioned before, Delville, together with the composer Alexander Nikolayevich Skryabin, studied the then-existing theories of correspondences between colors, shapes, emotions, and sounds. Both men studied i.a. the writings of **Père Castel** and a book called "Thought-Forms" ["Les Formes-Pensées", Paris: Publications Théosophiques, 1905], written by **Annie Besant** and **C.W. Leadbeater**. Besant and Leadbeater belonged to the Theosophical Society of H.S. Olcott that was located at Adyar, India [Besant became Olcott's successor in 1907]. In Besant and Leadbeater's "Thought-Forms" the writers [both clairvoyants] presented the different shapes and colors of thoughts as they change. The book has numerous illustrations and color plates [see pic 1]. Several of the plates present examples of abstract and colored shades which correspond to musical themes [chapter : "Forms built by Music"]. These examples left Delville and Skryabin great liberty in their interpretations.



Notes pour la signification des couleurs
- Les Formes-Pensées - 1905
Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater



Skryabin's colour scale

Père Castel [Louis Bertrand Castel], an 18th century eminent mathematician, published a work in 1720 that was entitled "La Musique en Couleurs". "Castel's writings cover a wide range of thoughts and he appears to be as much interested in aesthetics and philosophy as he was in mathematics and geometry." -World Research Foundation-

In 1763 Castel published "Esprits Saillies et Singularites du Pere Castel", his best general theory of color-music. As far as we know, it was Castel who had proclaimed the very idea of "viewing" music for the first time in the world. One of his followers, British scientist **Wallace Rimington**, constructed the first color-keyboard in 1895. In 1911 Rimington published "Colour-Music: The Art of Mobile Colour". There are sources which claim that Skryabin used Castel's system, but, according to I. Vanechkina, "it is known that

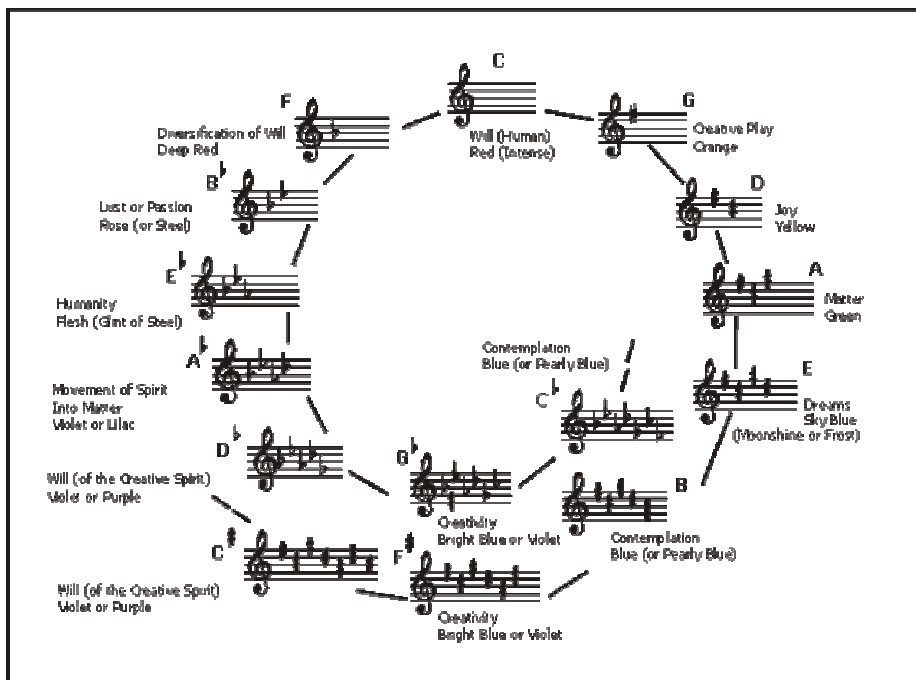
his friends brought him a book on light organ in English, written possibly, by his contemporary Remington, follower of Castel, but he [Skryabin] rejected it."

Vanechkina claims that Castel's theory was a mere system of analogies between color and sound. Skryabin's system was based on theosophical ideas and his own intuition. It is stated that the composer possessed the "synaesthetic ability to associate the hearing of a certain sound with a certain colour." - Luce "Skryabin's Poem of Fire"

The sources conclude that Skryabin eventually made his own scale of colors. I have found no further references to the possible involvement of Jean Delville. What we know is that both men studied the then-existing theories of color and tone and collaborated in developing ideas for future works of art that would encompass all our senses. For instance, Skryabin's "Prométhée, poème du feu" [op. 60 for piano solo, large orchestra and choir] was originally written as a score of a performance that i.a. involved Jean Delville's 1907 painting Prométhée [Prometheus]. To what extent Delville was involved in developing the color- and tone scales is not known to me. As mentioned before, both artists dreamed of creating an ultimate work of art which was, unfortunately, never [actually] realized [1]. "The correspondence between vision and audition fitted into Skryabin's [and Delville's] esoteric view of cosmos as a holistic, secretive entity, of which all different aspects are merely symbols of the unique reality behind." - World Reseach Foundation

1] In 1909 Skryabin returned to Russia. He continued working on his ultimate work of art, a Gesamtkunstwerk, which was entitled "MYSTERIUM". Because of his sudden death in 1915 this immense work was never actually finished. "This seven-day-long megawork would be performed at the foothills of the Himalayas in India, after which the world would dissolve in bliss. Bells suspended from clouds would summon spectators. Sunrises would be preludes and sunsets codas. Flames would erupt in shafts of light and sheets of fire. Perfumes appropriate to the music would change and pervade the air"

In the 1920s several other tone-color systems were developed. For instance, in 1924 EDWARD MARYON published his system MARCOTONE : "The Science of Tone-Color" . Around that same period HARVEY SPENCER LEWIS developed his color- music device (color-organ) LUXATONE. "It's primary use was to demonstrate the Cosmic Keyboard as taught by AMORC that there are octaves of manifestation and that each musical note has a harmonic correspondence to a specific color in a higher octave" M.Nowicki.



Skryabin's system of "Colored Hearing"
~ PROMETHEUS ~

The theme of Prometheus allegedly played an important role in the work of the before-mentioned Belgian art-group of Delville and Skryabin. In 1904 Delville started to work on a monumental canvas representing the Prometheus of Aeschylus [525-456 BC], the Greek playwright [the "Father of Tragedy"] and initiate of the Eleusin Mysteries [1]. The painting was completed in 1907. In that year Prometheus became suddenly a theme of great importance among the French-speaking 'Theosophical' artists.

1907 was the year that the fourth volume in French of the 'Theosophical Bible', "La Doctrine Secrète" ['Secret Doctrine'], was published. **Helena P. Blavatsky** [author and founder of the TS] had dedicated an entire chapter to Prometheus. In ancient mythology Prometheus was a Titan [and a God of Fire] who'd turned into a thief after he'd stole the fire from the heavens for which he was punished by the Olympian Gods. In general Prometheus stands for unyielding strength that resists oppression. But in the eye of Blavatsky, Prometheus was a light bearer, a prophet. "As of this moment, Prometheus became for Theosophical artists the object of intense aesthetic scrutiny." Sébastien Clerbois

In the view and works of Delville [Prométhée], Skryabin ["Prométhée, ou le poème du feu"], **Séraphin Soudbinine** ["Vers la lumière" sculptor, ceramist, and collaborator of Auguste Rodin] and other theosophical artists, Prometheus was a symbol of the prophet, the light-bearer, "revealing with his Theosophical flame the suffering of humanity." Kelkel, biography of Skryabin '99



1907 'Prométhée' Jean DELVILLE

Almost all of Delville's work deals, in some way or another, with the higher planes of existence. In the eyes of Delville the world (materialism) was a trap. The human body was a potential prison for the soul. The soul was constantly tempted by the 'perils of materialism' ("Satan's Treasures" 1895) which enabled its evolution. Delville considered humanity to represent the highest developed form of terrestrial life, at a midpoint between the animal world and the angelic spheres (animal-kingdom - human race - angelic world). Being a theosophist Delville obviously did not accept the Darwinist concept of evolution in which humans had come from animals. Unlike his first teacher, Péladan, Delville allegedly accepted the (theosophical-) doctrine of reincarnation. The perfection of ones will and spirit occurred through initiation and magic. Like Péladan, Delville reconciled his interest in occultism with Catholicism (Christianity) by considering the latter to be in harmony with occult laws. "The external forms of devotion concealed occult truths." - J.Howe

And in this world it was the artist, the true artist, who was the initiate. His task was to teach and transform human nature through his images, words, and sounds. The artist as a prophet. The artist as a priest. In this brief description of Delville as an artist and mystic we easily recognize the rosicrucian concepts of Péladan and the theories of Theosophy, as explained in Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine" (1888).

A question which immediately rises is how Delville reconciled his belief in reincarnation with, for instance, his Catholic faith. The obvious answer would be that Delville had implemented all these ideas and theories in a personal philosophy which he called 'Idéalisme'. But it is unknown to me how he explained this marriage between reincarnation and Catholicism. It is known that Delville saw the merciful figure of Christ as the Great Initiate, the divine unity. This concept of Jesus being a (great) initiate is generally accepted within Theosophy, modern Rosicrucianism etc.

"Delville believed in a divine fluid, reincarnation, dangerous telepathic forces, involution and ecstasy. These convictions guided his hand in Satan's Treasures, in which luxurious bodies lie sleeping among the seaweed and coral as Satan, with a dancer's agility, bestrides and takes possession of them."

- comment on the painting "Satan's Treasures" by ArtMagick -



~ closing word ~

This essay emphasizes the short-lived history of Péladan's self-styled rosicrucian order, 'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthétique du Temple et du Graal'

We have seen that Péladan's movement became publically known through its art-exhibitions, 'Le Salons de la Rose-Croix'. Like many French esoteric organizations (Gnostic Church, Hieron Val d'Or etc.) at the time, the Catholic Rose+Cross' main objective was the realization of the 'Works of Charity', in order to prepare the advent - the coming - of the Holy Spirit. Péladan considered art, 'real art' that is, to play a key-role in uplifting the masses from their blindness ; "visual images were seen as magical talismans, and poems were compared to incantations." The Catholic Rose-Cross emphasized it's role as an aesthetic movement, and most of the available sources refer to the R+C+C as 'an intellectual elite-order intended for Roman-Catholics and artists'. Nevertheless, I think there exists enough 'documental proof' that there existed a kind of 'inner order' within the R+C+C. It is a fact that Péladan and his disciples performed initiations and ceremonies, it is also a fact that Péladan instructed his disciples on a variety of mystical and magical topics (as is shown in Chapter Two). 'Officially', the 'Catholic and Aesthetic Order of the Rose-Cross, Temple, and Grail' existed from 1891 to 1897. The Belgian rosicrucian circle, that was allegedly led by Jean Delville, is said to have been officially dissolved in 1895 because in 1895 Delville disassociated himself from Péladan. In reality Péladan had a loose circle of disciples in Belgium, some of them were Martinists, others Spiritualists and Theosophists, etc. The most prominent of these Belgian disciples were :

Edmond Picard, Raymond Nyst, José Hennebicq, Georges M. Baltus, Jean Delville, Fernand Khnopff, Clement de Saint-Marcq, Francis Vurgey, and Nicolas Brossel.

When Joséphin Péladan visited Brussels in 1904 to deliver a lecture, he allegedly met a young man called Emile Dantinne. It was Dantinne who would found in 1923 the Belgian "Ordo Aureae & Rosae Crucis", which was the legal successor of Péladan's rosicrucian order. At least that was what Dantinne asserted. As already mentioned in Part One of this essay, it is stated by the sources that there were several attempts to reconstitute the original R+C+C. Of these attempts, Dantinne's Order was undoubtedly the most successful one. The "*Ordo Aureae & Rosae Crucis*" became a success in Belgium during the interbellum. The Belgian rosicrucians were at the fore front of the success of the F.U.D.O.S.I. in 1934 (see the essay on this federation of esoteric orders).

In reality Dantinne's continuation of the original Catholic Rose -Cross did not have that much in common with Péladan's rosicrucian order. To my knowledge Péladan never actually appointed a personal successor. Nevertheless, in his writings Dantinne proclaimed himself as one of the successors of Joséphin Péladan. I have to admit that I'm only speculating here, because, on the other hand for instance it is a fact that Dantinne belonged to a loose circle of Belgian followers of Péladan. He was also a close friend of Francis Vurgey, one of Péladan's most devoted disciples in the 1890's. Both Dantinne and Péladan were ardent followers of the Catholic faith. Both supported the idea of a universal renewal of Catholicism. Seen from this perspective, it is more than plausible that there's some truth in Dantinne's claims and assertions. On page 37- 38 of Dantinne's book on Péladan, "L'Oeuvre et la Pensée de Péladan", the writer states the following on the nature of the Belgian Rosicrucian Order: "The Catholic Rose+Cross survived Péladan and its surviving initiates restored the Order in an adequate form which was disposed of - without modifying the great directives of the Master - its aesthetic side which only distorted the purity of it." [L'Oeuvre et la Pensée de Péladan 1948]

In other words, Dantinne and the other disciples had reconstituted the order but disposed itself of the aesthetic side of the original Catholic Rose+Cross. In other words, no more art-exhibitions but a return to the practises of an initiatic order in the conventional meaning of the term.

Contents

L'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthetique du Temple et du Graal

Part One

- Joséphin Péladan (1858-1918)
- 1888 L'Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix
- 1891 L'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Catholique et Esthetique du Temple et du Graal
- Les Salons de la Rose+Croix (1892-1897)

Part Two

- The Doctrines & Degrees of 'L'Ordre de la Rose+Croix du Temple et du Graal'
- Joséphin Péladan: his repent

Part Three

- Péladan's movement in Belgium
- 1892 Lodge KVMRIS
- Jean Delville : the Artist and the Esoteric

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