

Gnostic Astrology – Introduction and Context

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“We know that we are composed of Cells; that they in their turn are composed of molecules, these are composed of atoms, and these atoms are a conjunction of Matter, Energy and Consciousness.

The result, therefore, is that these three conditions are in a constant struggle, then, Matter wants to be Energy and Energy would like to become Consciousness.

The objective of our life is to make all Matter Conscious and the Mystery of Redemption consists entirely of this objective. ...In this resides the whole secret, by acting on the atoms in order to awaken the Body-Temple where God resides.”

- from ‘PISCES’ in *Zodical Course* (1931) by Arnoldo Krumm-Heller

The plan of this course is to cover 3 books:

- *Zodical Course* (1931) by Arnoldo Krumm-Heller
- *Zodical Course* (1951) by Samael Aun Weor
- *Esoteric Treatise of Hermetic Astrology* (1967) by Samael Aun Weor

Before we start this Course, we should understand the context in which these documents were written, so that we can understand how they express their information. As we have discussed, Esoteric knowledge has been hidden from the public for quite some time, but is now becoming more and more accessible due to the Kali Yuga or “dark age” in which we find ourselves.

The Ancient Mystery Schools passed through various phases in accordance with the different stages of Religious Forms (Birth, Growth, Multiplication & Division, and Death). Each time that a Religion or Mystery School ‘died’, its Religious Principles or Eternal Values did not die, but dressed up again in a new Religious Form or Mystery School. The most well known phases of these Mystery Schools in the Western World were the Templars, Rosicrucians, Alchemists, and Freemasons. The purpose of these modern Mystery Schools was to transmit the secret teachings or doctrine (the Esoteric Knowledge, Religious Principles or Eternal Values) to those who were qualified to receive them.

During the 1700s, Freemasonry was growing and performing its function in Europe. But towards the end of the 1700s, it was beginning to be abused. In France, for example, it has been claimed that Masonry (or at least members of Masonic Lodges) played a part in the violence that preceded the French Revolution. Napoleon took over as the new Emperor of France (in May, 1804) and very soon thereafter his brother Joseph Bonaparte was named “Grand Master” of the ‘Grand Orient de France’ (in November 1804), the largest organization of French Masonic Lodges (about 300 at the time).

By the mid 1800s, there were over 50 different Masonic Rites in France alone (Masonry was certainly going through its ‘multiplication & division’ stage). Around this same time, a particular type of Masonry was gaining popularity in Europe: the so-called “Egyptian Rite”. Two of these Rites stand out because of their association with Krumm-Heller. The 1st was the “Rite of Misraïm” and was associated with the famous Count Cagliostro (often confused with Giuseppe Balsamo). The 2nd was the “Rite of Memphis” and seems to have been founded by J.E. Marçonis de Nègre.

In the late 1800s, these two “Egyptian Rites” were fused into a single organization called the “Rite of Memphis-Misraïm” (M.:. -M.:.) by the “International Grand Master” Giuseppe Garibaldi. The “Rite of M.:. -M.:. ” was classified as “High-Grade” or “High-Degree” Masonry since it had over 90 degrees. In 1905, after Garibaldi’s death, John Yarker took over as the “International Grand Master”. Yarker had been working (in the years prior) to promote the M.:. -M.:. throughout the world.

In 1902 (a few years before he takes over leadership of the M.:.-M.:), Yarker is contacted by a German Esotericist and Freemason named Theodor Reuss. This was made possible with the help of William Wynn Westcott who was also a Freemason, as well as the "Supreme Magus" of the "*Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*" (or *the Rosicrucian Society of England*), and one of the founders of the "Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn".

Reuss had previously been working with Westcott and the French Occultist & Freemason Gérard Encausse (aka Papus) to promote various esoteric groups in Germany. From them he had received:

- A charter designating him "Special Inspector" for the "Martinist Order" in Germany, dated June 24, 1901 from Encausse/Papus
- A charter for the "Swedenborgian Rite of Masonry", dated July 26, 1901 from Westcott
- A letter of authorization to found a "High Council in Germania" of the "*Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*", dated February 24, 1902 from Westcott

Now, in 1902, Reuss begins to work with Yarker in order to promote the Memphis-Misraïm (M.:.-M.:) in Germany and receives:

- A patent as a "Sovereign Grand Inspector General 33°" of the "Cernau Scottish Rite", dated September 24, 1902 from Yarker
- A warrant to operate a "Sovereign Sanctuary 33°-95°" of the "Scottish, Memphis and Mizraim Rites", also dated September 24, 1902 from Yarker

Just a few months later, Yarker gives another German, Karl Kellner, leadership status in the Memphis-Misraïm (M.:.-M.:). In December 1902, Kellner is appointed to the 96° of the M.:.-M.:, and "Sovereign Honorary General Grandmaster... of our Order". Then, on 27 December 1903, Kellner was made 33°, 90° and 96° for both England and Germany. The following year, a charter confirming Reuss' authority to operate the "Scottish, Memphis and Mizraim Rites" was issued by Yarker on July 1, 1904.

Reuss and Kellner seem to have established an esoteric group together called the "Academia Masonica" or "Ancient Order of Oriental Templars" (A.O.T.O.). The purpose of which was to educate Masons about esoteric knowledge. According to a 1904 edition of Reuss' journal *Oriflamme*:

"One of the secrets which our Order possesses to its highest degree consists in the fact that it supplies the properly prepared brother with the PRACTICAL means to erect the true Temple of Solomon in Man and to find again the "lost Word": namely, that our Order supplies to the initiated and chosen brother the practical means to obtain proof of his immortality even during his earthly existence. . . .

This secret is one of the true secrets of Masonry and exclusively the secret of the Occult High Degree of Our Order. It has come down to our Order by word of mouth from the fathers of all true Freemasonry, the "Wise Men of the East".

In 1904 Kellner became "Special Representative" of the Memphis-Misraïm (M.:.-M.:) for America, but by this time he was already seriously ill. After Kellner's death (on June 7, 1905), Reuss took over and soon converts the group he had with Kellner from the AOTO into the "Order of Oriental Templars" (O.T.O.).

On June 24, 1905, Yarker gives Reuss the 33°-96° which grants him the right to work and give the degrees from the 1° through 33°, 90°, 95° as well as to establish Lodges. Reuss continues integrating various parts of different Masonic Rites into the O.T.O. which he finalized with his "Constitution of the O.T.O" on January 22nd, 1906.

Soon after this, Reuss begins meeting and incorporating many prominent Occultists and Esotericists of the Era into his various groups, including:

- Rudolph Steiner and Marie von Sivers in November of 1905 with the Rite of Memphis-Misraïm (but not the OTO, since it was not yet finalized at this time)
- Gérard Encausse (aka Papus) in 1908 with the OTO and the Rite of Memphis-Misraïm
- Arnolfo Krumm-Heller in 1908 with the OTO and the Rite of Memphis-Misraïm
- Aleister Crowley in 1910 with the OTO, and in 1912 with the Rite of Memphis-Misraïm

Then, in the 1912 edition of the *Oriflamme*, we learn more about the ‘secret’ referred to in the 1904 article (previously mentioned) is "Sexual Magic":

“Our Order possesses the KEY which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely, the teaching of *sexual magic*, and this teaching explains, without exception, all the secrets of Nature, all the symbolism of FREEMASONRY and all systems of religion.”

In the same edition of the *Oriflamme*, another article (attributed to Kellner) states the following:

“...sexual magic is concerned with the Vayus Napa (in the reproductive organ)... This exercise is called "Transmutation of the Reproductive Energy". This exercise of the transmutation of the Reproductive energy is not done for the purpose of sexual excess, but in order to strengthen the eternal God Power on the earthly plane requiring sexually strong, perfect persons.... The reproductive energy is a process of creation. It is a Godly act! In the reproductive organ (male and female) there is concentrated in the smallest space the greatest vital force ...the performer of the exercise must concentrate all his thoughts on withdrawing and lifting the reproductive energy from the organ into the solar plexus, where he "wills" that it be stored for transmutation purposes ...finally the great "merging" or reunion occurs and the performer becomes the seer while remaining fully conscious and experiences what he sees. This is white sexual magic!”

After John Yarker’s death in 1913, Reuss takes over as the International Grand Master of the M.:.-M.:. Around that same time, Reuss begins working with Crowley in England to promote their esoteric groups and to integrate lots of the teachings from Freemasonry into the OTO. Then, in 1917 Reuss wrote a summary of his OTO ‘degrees’:

Reuss’ OTO Degree(s)	Description
I & II	Outer Circle (Preliminary preparation)
III-VI	Freemasonry (Synthesis of Masonic Degrees 1-33)
VII-IX	Mystic Masonry, Esoteric Rosicrucianism, Illuminism
X	Administrative

Reuss’ synopsis included this statement “*Remark: Only after a Member has passed through Ordinary Freemasonry may he become an O.T.O. proper.*” From 1917 on, Reuss openly equated his O.T.O. with the ‘Hermetic Brotherhood of Light’ [see the January 22nd 1917 Manifesto].

Between 1917 and 1919, Crowley drafts his own OTO rituals (which generally circulated among the English-speaking world) integrating his own philosophy, but without Reuss’ agreement. Here is Crowley’s synopsis of the modified OTO ‘degrees’:

OTO Degree	Scottish Rite	Memphis	Misraïm
I - III	1 st – 3 rd Degree	1 st – 3 rd Degree	1 st – 3 rd Degree
IV	4 th – 17 th Degrees	4 th - 10 th Degrees	4 th - 38 th + 45 th Degrees
V	18 th - 29 th Degrees	8 th - 9 th Degrees	44 th + 46 th - 64 th Degrees
VI	30 th – 32 nd Degrees	18 th - 19 th Degrees	65 th - 66 th Degrees

OTO Degree	Scottish Rite	Memphis	Misraim
VII	33 rd Degree	20 th Degree	77 th Degree
VIII			
IX		33 rd - 95 th Degrees	90 th Degree
X		96 th Degree	
XI			
XII		97 th Degree	

Reuss never used Crowley's rituals and wanted the OTO (as well as Crowley's concept of Thelema) to be kept strictly separated. Then, on November 9th 1921, Reuss expels Crowley from the OTO. In response, Crowley proclaims himself the new leader of the OTO (on November 23rd 1921). And now contact between the two effectively ends. This basically splits the OTO into separate German language and English language branches (although this distinction had been going on for some time prior, now it was formalized).

Reuss continues his own original OTO and removes all references to Crowley's doctrines from the rituals and from his Order magazines. Just a few months prior to this (in July 1921) Spencer Lewis (33°, 90°, 95°, VII°), the founder of "A.M.O.R.C." ('Antiquus Mysticus Ordo Rosae Crucis') was made "Honorary Member ... for Switzerland, Germany and Austria" of the OTO. Around this same time, Krumm-Heller was endowed with considerable honors and responsibilities in the OTO as well. From this time (the fall of 1921) until Reuss' death (on October 28th, 1923), he turns to Krumm-Heller and others (including Spencer Lewis and Heinrich Traenker) in order to promote his various esoteric groups and to build a new order. After Reuss' death, there is a rumor that Krumm-Heller determined AMORC was not a reputable group and turned to Swinburne Clymer's *Rosicrucian Fraternity*.

A few more years after Reuss' death, Krumm-Heller publishes two books while in Spain: "*Rosa Cruz, novela de ocultismo iniciático*" or '[The] Rose Cross, [a] novel of initiatic occultism' in 1926 (which was a Spanish translation of his "*Der Rosenkreuzer aus Mexiko*" or "The Rosicrucians of Mexico" that was originally published in Germany in 1919, but with the addition of a few more chapters). This same year (1926) he also publishes "*El Tattwametro o las Vibraciones del Éter*" or "The Tattwa-meter or the Vibrations of Ether".

In 1927 he publishes another book "*Tratado de Quirologia Medica*" or "Treatise of Medical Quirology" and begins publishing and distributing his "*Rosa Cruz revista*" or 'Rose Cross magazine' which was available throughout Latin America. In one of the issues of his Magazine, Krumm-Heller said:

"To Therion [ie Crowley] I am bound by way of the brother Yarker, from whom I received the 96th degree of occult masonry and this is why I should not criticize him." [undated]

It would later become very clear that the 'Sexual Magic' that Krumm-Heller taught was White Tantra, whereas the 'Sex Magick' of Crowley was Black Tantra. Nowadays the OTO is almost exclusively associated with Crowley (who corrupted many of the Esoteric teachings of the Ancient Mysteries) and teaches the empowerment of what Gnosis refers to as the 'Ego'.

But the OTO was something else under the direction of Reuss (when Krumm-Heller joined it in 1908) and seems to have been an attempt to synthesize the Esoteric teachings of Masonry (including the Egyptian Rites). In another issue of his Magazine, Krumm-Heller said:

"There is a Path in order to learn the secrets of the light and that path is known and lived in the rituals of occult masonry, of the Rite of Memphis, which contains in itself every excursion around that sublime mystery of the Light." [March 1933]

The same year that Krumm-Heller first began publishing his magazine "*Rosa Cruz revista*" (1927), he also founded the "*Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antiqua*" or F.R.A. in Mexico. The FRA was closer to the Rite of Memphis-Misraïm than any OTO, because Krumm-Heller furnished the FRA Lodges with the Memphis-Misraïm rituals. Over the next few years FRA groups were established in Columbia, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru. In Peru Krumm-Heller received the symbolic name of 'Huiracocha', by which he was often referred to in esoteric circles.

With the publication of his Spanish language books and now his magazine, Krumm-Heller began receiving lots of letters from people wanting to know more. So in 1929 he began the distribution of his esoteric Correspondence Courses:

1. "*Curso Zodiaca*" or 'Zodical Course' (1929-1931) – 13 parts
2. "*Curso de Magia Rúnica*" or 'Course of Runic Magic' (1931-1935) – 19 parts
3. "*Curso de Cábala*" or 'Course of Kabbalah' (1936) – 11 parts
4. "*Curso de Taumaturgia*" or 'Course of Thaumaturgy' (1948) – 10 parts
5. "*Curso de Magia Superior*" or 'Course of Superior Magic' (1951)

The final Course was completed after Krumm-Heller's death (on April 19th, 1949) by his son, Parsival, based on his father's notes and the writings of Pascal Beverly Randolph on Black Tantra (or black Sexual Magic) and so is probably inconsistent with the rest of Krumm-Heller's writings.

In Krumm-Heller's 'Zodical Course', he says the following:

“Married Disciples who have achieved the exercising of the sexual functions as a sacred act or as a religious operation in their matrimony, have obtained a great advantage, since, both beings, in this way, can mutually help each other. In general, each one of our Disciples must have a spouse in order to perform the duties of a marriage, but up to now they have done nothing but squander their values, and even life itself, when they could have gained eternal youth. ...Instead of coitus which reaches orgasm, one should reflexively lavish one's partner with sweet caresses, amorous phrases and delicate touchings, maintaining the mind constantly separated from animal sexuality, sustaining the most pure spirituality, as if the act were a true religious ceremony. Nevertheless the man can and must introduce the penis and maintain it in the feminine sexual organ, so that for both of them a divine sensation, full of joy, ensues (which can last for hours) withdrawing at the moment in which the orgasm approaches in order to avoid the ejaculation of the semen. In this way, each time they will have a greater yearning to caress each other.” (from the section 'SCORPIO')¹

In addition to his correspondence courses, Krumm-Heller also published more books:

- "*Logos Mantram Magia*" or 'Logos Mantram Magic' (1930)
- "*Biorritmo*" or 'Biorhythm' (1930)
- "*Rosa Esoterica*" or 'Esoteric Rose' (1930)
- "*La Iglesia Gnostica*" or 'The Gnostic Church' (1931)
- "*Plantas Sagradas*" or 'Sacred Plants' (1934)
- "*Del Incienso a la Osmoterapia*" or 'On the Incense for Osmotherapy' (1934)

About 1 year after Krumm-Heller's death, in May of 1950, a book was published in Columbia called "*El Matrimonio Perfecto o la Puerta de entrada a la Iniciación*" or 'The Perfect Matrimony or the Door to enter into Initiation' by "Aun Weor" (who would later be known as Samael Aun Weor) which explained the key of white "Sexual Magic".

¹ Krumm-Heller's 'Zodical Course' has been published in English as "*Gnostic Rosicrucian Astrology*"

This brings us to our second person of interest, born March 6, 1917 as Victor Manuel Gómez Rodríguez, in Bogota, Columbia. While still young, he studied with various esoteric groups including the Theosophical Society and the FRA. As a student in the FRA, he methodically studied the entire Rosicrucian library where he learned the secret of the "Great Arcanum", or White Tantra.

Sometime during the 1930s and/or 1940s he lived with a tribe of indigenous people in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in northern Colombia, learning their healing secrets. It was also during these years that he claimed to have had his first experience of the Illuminating Void, meeting his "Inner Being" or Atman whose name is "Aun Weor", meaning in Hebrew "Light and Strength".

In October of 1950, Aun Weor published another book, called "*La Revolución de Bel*" or 'The Revolution of Belzebub' describing (among other things) his experiences with a repentant demon. In this book we have the following passage:

“When our book "The Perfect Matrimony" entered into circulation thousands of angry black magicians launched themselves against us with stones in their hands in spite of the fact that this book teaches good and teaches man to be chaste and pure.

Israel Rojas R. My traitorous disciple, could not resist the collapse of anger when he found that the secret teachings which Master Huiracocha [ie Krumm-Heller] brought to Colombia were published in our work in order to better ourselves and this gave good reason for Mr. Rojas to burn the book, because he wanted poor suffering humanity to never know the mysteries of sex: He only taught this secret science to his more addicted disciples, while in his many works he gave no specifically useful teaching to his readers.

Mr. Rojas was entrusted with a mission by the Masters of the Venerable White Lodge which he failed to fulfill, instead he filled himself up with pride and vanity, betraying his former teacher... The fact that some elements misuse these teachings can not justify depriving humanity of this knowledge because humanity is mature in order to receive it, Mr. Rojas.

Simply because of the fact that some of Mr. Rojas disciples have misused sexual magic, for this reason alone humanity will not be deprived of this knowledge because more harm is done to humanity through its fornicating and passionate life, since while humanity is fornicating it will not have the light. Neither entering into heaven nor allowing others to enter...”

After “The Perfect Matrimony” and “The Revolution of Belzebub” other books followed:

- "*Curso Zodiacal*" or 'Zodical Course' (1951)
- "*Apuntes Secretos de un Gurú*" or 'Secret Notes of a Guru' (1952)
- "*Tratado de Medicina Oculta y Magia Práctica*" or 'Treatise of Occult Medicine and Practical Magic' (1952)
- "*Catecismo Gnóstico, Conciencia Cristo y El Poder está en la Cruz*" or 'Gnostic Catechism, Christ Consciousness and The Power is in the Cross' (1952)
- "*El Libro de La Virgen del Carmen*" or 'The Book of the Virgin of Carmel' (1952)
- "*Las Siete Palabras*" or 'The Seven Words' (1953)
- "*Manual de Magia Práctica*" or 'Manual of Practical Magic' (1953)
- "*Tratado de Alquimia Sexual*" or 'Treatise of Sexual Alchemy' (June of 1954)
- "*Rosa Ígnea*" or 'Igneous Rose' (1954)

Then on October 27, 1954, Aun Weor received what is called the "Initiation of Tiphereth", which (according to Gnostic Kabalah) is the beginning of the incarnation of the Logos or "Glorian" within the soul. He stated that in his case the name of his Glorian has always been called "Samael" and from then on, he would sign his name 'Samael Aun Weor'.

Samael Aun Weor went on to publish many more books and gave hundreds of lectures (some of which were recorded and transcribed) as well as establish the Universal Gnostic Christian Movement for the diffusion of his system of Gnosis.

About a year after he disincarnated (on Dec. 24th, 1977), his organization divided into 3 different factions and today we have many different Gnostic groups throughout the world that claim to follow the tradition of Samael Aun Weor. So it seems that, once again, the teachings are entering into the 'multiplication & division' stage...

The reason for all this explanation is so that we can understand the time period in which the documents (that we are reading for the class) were written was generally not as 'politically correct' or 'liberated' as we are now. So some terms or phrases may 'old fashioned' to us, but we can still extract what is vital from them for our studies.

January 22nd 1917 Manifesto

Ordo Templi Orientis

HERMETIC BROTHERHOOD OF LIGHT.

Anational Grandlodge & Mystic Temple:

„VERITÁ MISTICA“, Ordo Ascona.

MANIFESTO.

MOTTO: My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled
Wordsworth.

To All whom it may concern:

THE HERMETIC BROTHERHOOD OF LIGHT, known as the: O.T.O., (whose headquarters have been transferred to Switzerland since the commencement of this world-war) sends the following Message to all its members, and to all men and women who have peace and the advancement of humanity at heart. --

More powerful than anything that ever has happened within the memory of mankind this war has revealed the underlying deeply rooted antagonisms which divide mankind in its aims and aspirations.

Vainly has the gospel of universal brotherhood been preached by an aristocracy of spiritually advanced men and women.

Millions of brotherly ties have been rudely and cruelly severed.

Half the world has become the enemy of the other half.

Finally only force and Money did count in the world.

Blood has been shed in streams. Prosperous countries have been turned into wastes. Human beings into demons. For what? For filthy lucre!

The world has been shaken to its foundations in order to satisfy the greed of a small class of irresponsible, demoniacal capitalists!

It is high time that people of clear sound views, and firm will, hailing from all parts of this globe, should combine, concert measures and take steps to prevent this fratricidal feud from becoming a normal state of affairs. In order to prevent the nations being divided into permanently hostile camps these measures and steps must be taken without delay.

The peoples must be reminded, and brought to realize that mankind as a whole, has, and can have but One aim which is the advancement of Humanity itself.

To achieve this end, true brotherly cooperation is required.

Not only theoretically but in practical cooperation of necessity must be to gather up the broken threads of international friendship and retie them.

The next step must be to commence rebuilding what has been destroyed.

This may best be achieved by establishing Brotherhood Colonies on cooperative bases all over the world, aside from all capitalists societies and enterprises.

New ethics, a new religion, a new social order, based on the principle of cooperation of All, on the common possession of the soil and the means of production by All, and on true freedom (under strictest self) control in all, must become the guiding lights and landmarks of these new colonies and settlements.

There should be no more waiting until the mass of the peoples might be ready to accept this new form of society.

The leading organisation in this movement is determined to set the peoples an example, which they may follow.

THE HERMETIC BROTHERHOOD OF LIGHT, known as the O.T.O., stands for a practical brotherly cooperation between All, men and women alike, without distinction of creed, race or nation, for the advancement of humanity.

The O.T.O. advocates new ethics, a new social order, and a new religion.

The O.T.O. possesses the Secrets of Mystic attainment.

The O.T.O. members are all: Phree-Masons.

Therefore it takes the initiative in this new world movement and calls an:

O.T.O.

Anational Congress

for organising the reconstruction of Society on practical cooperative lines.

to be held from August 15. to 25. A.D.

on Monte Verità at Ascona (Switzerland).

All those organisations in every country of this globe who stand for the advancement of the race on cooperative lines, and for the healing of the wounds which this fiendish war has inflicted on mankind are invited to send delegates to this congress.

Full details of the programme of this congress will be sent to all regularly elected and accredited delegates on receipt of their credentials.

Members of the O.T.O. need only send in their names and the name of their lodge or habitation.

There are two centres of the O.T.O., both in neutral countries, where enquiries can be lodged by those interested in the aim of this congress. One is at New-York (U.S. of American), the other at Ascona (Italian Switzerland).

Arrangements for the journey in company for all American and Australian delegates will be made through the American Headquarters of the O.T.O., while all arrangements for delegates from Europe, Asia and Africa will be made through the European Headquarters.

In the first instance all enquires should be addressed to:

SECRETARY: J. ADDERLEY, MONTE VERITA, ASCONA (Switzerland)

enclosing stamped and addressed envelopes for reply, and 1 Dollar or 5 Shillings for postage of congress publication.

Masons of all denominations will find opportunity to attend Lodge Meetings while at Ascona.

Theosophists will be able to attend lectures on Theosophy and kindred subjects.

Mystics will be invited to witness a representation of Aleister Crowley's Mystic Poem "The Ship".

Members of the O.T.O. will receive instructions through their local secretaries.

Issued by Order of the O.H.O.

January, 22. 1917, at Ascona (Switzerland).

X J. Adderley, Secretary: H.B.L.

Love is the Law

Love under Will!