

The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

Asapé



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Volume XIX, No. 3/4, 2020 EV



M.:M.:M.:



Mystica Mystica Maxima

Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S.A.



E.G.C.

FROM THE EDITOR

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Welcome to our double-issue of *Agapé*. We decided to play a little bit of catch-up with this issue, so we can get ourselves back on track and on time.

The recent pandemic has affected all of us here, as we're sure it has you as well. For the time being, we will be publishing issues of *Agapé* in digital-format only. We're also working on building a new website for *Agapé*, and we hope we can show that off to you soon.

In the meantime, we hope you're staying safe and sane in these weird times. Please check in on your Siblings, attend the myriad of virtual events local bodies continue to put together, and be well!

Love is the law, love under will.

Andrew
Editor, *Agapé*

Agapé

The official organ of the U.S. Grand Lodge of O.T.O.

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FROM THE GRAND MASTER

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Bylaws Amendments

The Bylaws of O.T.O. U.S.A. have been amended to conform to a change made last year to the Bylaws of O.T.O. International. Until these amendments, the U.S. Grand Tribunal only held jurisdiction over U.S. members from 0° through VII°. The amendments extend the jurisdiction of the U.S. Grand Tribunal through the IX°.

Deacon-Sacerdote

With the approval of the O.H.O., I have instituted a new clerical office within E.G.C. for the U.S.A., that of Deacon-Sacerdote.

If you are an ordained Deacon in E.G.C., when you take the K.E.W. initiation in M.:M.:M.:, you may, as always, choose to pursue service within E.G.C. as a Priest or Priestess. However, henceforth, should you decide—for whatever reason—not to pursue either of those two paths, a third path will be open to you: that of Deacon-Sacerdote, with the same clerical status and sacerdotal powers of an E.G.C. Priest or Priestess. This includes the ability to perform baptisms, confirmations, and weddings under the supervision of an E.G.C. Bishop.

Ritual roles in the Gnostic Mass will not be affected by this change. A few other procedures and customs have changed, however: the rank of Deacon is no longer a prerequisite for ordination to the Priesthood; ordinations to the Diaconate must now be performed by a Bishop; the Novitiate is no longer considered “clergy,” *per se*, and the Novitiate is now officially subdivided into three distinct programs with some potential overlap: Novice Priestess (training for ordination as Priestess), Novice Priest (training for ordination as Priest), and Novice Deacon (training for ordination as Deacon and/or Deacon-Sacerdote). A revised version of the E.G.C. Manual, reflecting these changes, will be issued soon. Note that these changes are applicable only within the U.S. at this time.

Ordained deacons will not be required to take an additional ordination ceremony to become a Deacon-Sacerdote, just the K.E.W. However, a ceremonial community acknowledgement of sacerdotal empowerment is available. In any case, attainment of this clerical status should be reported to the Ecclesiastical Secretary. If you have attained both Deacon-Sacerdote and ordination to the Priesthood as either a Priestess or Priest, the Ecclesiastical Secretary’s records will reflect only one clerical status (Priest, Priestess, Deacon-Sacerdote) at a time, so you must specify to the Ecclesiastical Secretary which of your status you prefer for your official listing.

Love is the law, love under will.

Sabazius



UPDATES FROM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The Electoral College took the following actions pertaining to local bodies at the 139th regular meeting held at Blazing Star Oasis in the Valley of Oakland.

- Confirmed the removal of Sr. Stephanie O. as Master of William Blake Lodge effective August 4, 2019 EV.
- Appointed Sr. Stephanie O. Acting Master of William Blake Lodge effective October 19, 2019 EV.
- Confirmed Br. Christopher F. as Master of Swirling Star Lodge effective October 19, 2019 EV.
- Transferred mastership of Black Sun Lodge from Br. Andrew L. to Sr. Lori L. effective October 19, 2019 EV.
- Rechartered Sekhet-Maat Lodge as an Oasis and transferred mastership from Sib. Leslie M. to Br. Stephen K. effective October 19, 2019 EV.
- Chartered Company of Stars Camp in Houston, TX and appointed Br. Alex A. as Master effective October 19, 2019 EV.

The Electoral College thanks the outgoing Masters and Acting Master for their service to the Order.

Between Meetings

- The president took a three-month period of solitude in accordance with Liber 194, with all regular business being handled by the incoming and outgoing secretaries (October 21, 2019 - January 25, 2020 EV).
- The president used emergency powers to remove the acting master of William Blake Lodge and appointed a new interim acting master on December 22, 2019 EV.
- The College ratified the creation of the Confidentiality Committee (Br. Mike E., chair) on January 11, 2020 EV.
- The secretary position passed from Sr. Kayla B. to Br. Mike E. effective January 25, 2020 EV.

New address to reach the Electoral College:

Secretary
U.S. Electoral College O.T.O.
1295 Beacon St.
PO Box 632
Brookline, MA 02446

Winter Meeting, January 25, 2020 EV

Review of Acting Masters

- Confirmed the interim removal of Sr. Stephanie O. and the appointment of Br. Chris S. as acting master of William Blake Lodge (Baltimore, MD) effective December 22, 2019 EV.

Local Body Status Changes

- Chartered Star of Babalon Oasis (Raleigh, NC) with Fr. Temujin as master, changing body status from a Camp.

Local Body Master Requests

- Transitioned mastership of 418 Lodge (Sacramento, CA) from Br. David S. to Br. Andrew F.
- Transitioned mastership of Leaping Laughter Lodge (Minneapolis, MN) from Sr. Harper F. to Br. Scott S.
- Transitioned mastership of Sword and Serpent Oasis (Dayton, OH) from Br. David C. to Br. Keith T.

Tenure Limit Extension Requests

- Extended the tenure limit of the masters of Anabasis Camp (Indianapolis, IN), Azul Nox Oasis (Harrisburg, PA), Golden Thread Camp (Pittsburgh, PA), Hidden Spring Oasis (Orlando, FL), Khephra Rising Camp (Boise, ID), NOXULUXON Camp (Anchorage, AK), Roar of Rapture Camp (Omaha, NE), and Star Sapphire Lodge (Los Angeles, CA) for a period of one year.

Other Business:

- Ratified the creation of the Electoral College officer position of Vice President and the appointment of Sr. Kayla B. as Vice President.
- Ratified the creation of the Electoral College Strategic Planning Committee (Sr. Hattie Q., chair).

About the Electoral College

Appeals – Those wishing to appeal decisions of the Electoral College may do so in writing to the Supreme Grand Council through the Grand Secretary General (gsg@oto-usa.org).

Those wishing to appeal verdicts of the Grand Tribunal to the Areopagus may do so with the sponsorship of a seated Elector. See our website for contact details of individual electors (<http://ec.oto-usa.org/electors.html>).

Those wishing to appeal Notice of Pending Bad Report at a Local Body may do so by writing to the Secretary of the College outlining the manner in which the Notice was deficient or false.

Attending Meetings – Dues Current Members in Good Standing of V° are invited to attend regular meetings of the Electoral College. We request that those planning to attend first contact the Master of the hosting body to R.S.V.P. Online regular meetings may be observed by being physically present with a willing Elector.

Communications – In addition to hosting email lists for masters, mentors, and communication with Grand Lodge, we also maintain a blog of Updates, News, and Transmissions on our website (<http://ec.oto-usa.org/wp>) and are experimenting with a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ECUSGLOTO>).

Initiates with specific concerns or questions regarding the operation of the Electoral College are invited to write to either the President or Secretary. See the included U.S.G.L. Officers Directory for contact details.

Revolutionary – Members in Good Standing of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the IX° living within the United States but not currently serving as Officer or Voting Member of any Governing Body of U.S.G.L. are heartily encouraged to volunteer to the post of Revolutionary by contacting the President or Secretary of the Electoral College. Thus may progress be effected.

Website – The official website of the Electoral College can be found at <http://ec.oto-usa.org>. In

addition to the aforementioned resources, one may find information on volunteering to host a meeting or organize a study group in new areas, and other services provided by the College or expected of local bodies within U.S. Grand Lodge.

Love is the law, love under will.

THAT WHICH TOOK MY HAND 23.12.2016 EV

Let love consume me eternally
'til no more "I" exists
May it breathe venom through my very being
So that my soul shall rot in this sweet hell
That men call "Planet Earth"

Still my divided focus
Into that paradoxical typhoon
Where movement makes being
And the two collide in love's daring manifest

Mortal intervention took place
Where fear, ignorance and death were born
Divine guidance endured in necessity

I am of that which is worth living and dying for
It has no name
It is that which took my hand
And so I went out and never returned again

DJ'ING THE Gnostic MASS

The Reverend Derek A. Bales, Pr. Gn.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Over the course of the last few years I've had the pleasure of attending and providing music for celebrations of the *Liber XV*—otherwise known as the Gnostic Mass—at Crux Ansata Oasis in the valley of Denver, Colorado as well as a (relatively) recent E.G.C. Conference in Minnesota. During this time I have continuously strived to improve the effectiveness of the music to enhance the magic and beauty of this very important ritual. Recently I missed a scheduled Mass or two due to work-related travel; these Masses ended up being performed with no music, and at a subsequent quarterly business meeting I was asked to train other members in running music in case I am absent...lest our celebration be flavored by blaring country music from our location's neighbors!

I could just write a very dry essay on how the P.A. system works, and create a playlist on a defunct phone or other electronic device which would satisfy the request; still, I feel that explaining my thought process would prove more beneficial to local members while also providing ideas to other local bodies. I thus want to go over some various approaches I've encountered and experimented with, my preferred style, and even include some suggestions for particular pieces of music that I tend to use.

The Rubric

I can think of no better place to start than to go over what cues actually exist in the rubric of *Liber XV*. The word "music" appears only eight times within the text. The first appearance is directly after the entrance of the Priestess and the Children, which occurs after recital of our Creed.

"Music is now played. The child enters with the ewer and the salt. The VIRGIN enters with the Sword and the Paten. The child enters with the censor and the perfume. They face the DEACON, deploying into line, from the space between the two altars."

The next two cues come with the entrance of the Priest, after he gives the three regular steps and three signs, and then kneels to worship the lance. The first of these has the adjective "penitential" which has several definitions, some based on a Catholic idea. For our purposes I feel the more useful definition is simply sorrowful. The second comes moments later with the lifting of the lance and the words "By the power of the lifted Lance!" This cue has the adjective "triumphant"; this is the one I've probably had the most trouble finding a good bit of music to fit. I imagine trumpets in the most cheesy way, and don't want to do that...though I do have that option if people want!

The next two cues are connected. They occur during the consecration of the elements, a little while later in the ceremony. These specifically occur when the Priest shows to the congregation first the Host and then the Cup. As these cues happen so close to each other and have no contrasting adjectives, I feel that these should be relative short bursts of music relating specifically to the movements of the Priest, and I will return to this idea later.

There is a suggestion for music for the anthem. Here is the exact wording:

"These words are to form the substance of the anthem; but the whole or any part thereof shall be set to music, which may be as elaborate as art can devise. But even should other anthems be authorized by the Father of the Church, this shall hold its place as the first of its kind, the father of all others."

There is a cue for music in the following section—*Of the Mystic Marriage and Consummation of the Elements*—after the Priest uncovers the cup and genuflects, and before he breaks the Host over the Cup. This cue may be the most maddeningly vague to me, as there is no indication as to the flavor of the music nor how long this music should last, *per se*.

Before the final cue, there twice appears a word that must also be considered. When the Priest eats the Host and drains the Cup we find the word "Silence." What I anticipate may be my most controversial idea is directly connected and justifiable by this word.

Lastly, the final music cue comes at the very end after the Priest, Deacon, and Children have returned to the tomb. This cue does have the word “Voluntary” attached to it.

It is so important for anyone participating in providing music—or at minimum for a music director and conductor if one exists—to have memorized these cues. Music is a powerful thing, and a missed cue or a blast of discordant noise in the wrong place could derail the concentration of some or all of the participants.

Level One—The Student DJ

Thinking back to some of the earliest Masses that I attended over the last twenty years, one of the most common approaches is to have a soundtrack or playlist cued up and started at the beginning, and then simply letting this play throughout the length of the Mass. Some Priests and Priestesses I’ve worked with still prefer this method. I’ve tended to do this when I am serving as Priest as well, not because I necessarily prefer it but rather due to convenience.

There are a couple issues with this approach that should be addressed, the biggest of which is that it doesn’t automatically allow for the silence during the communication of the Priest. One should thus have an individual assigned to mute the music at these moments. I have preferred to rapidly turn down and then slowly turn up the music rather than pausing the playback—this seems less jarring or distracting. More recently I’ve experimented with silencing the music at the HRILIU and only bringing it back after the Cup is drained; this feels even less jarring, reinforces the importance of this particular section including the statement “O Lion and O Serpent...”, and is also easier to pull off besides.

The other issue with this overall approach of letting a soundtrack play throughout is that it either ignores the descriptive qualifiers of the second and third cue, or it is too rigid to exactly line up. I’ve tried to create playlists for when I’m to serve as a Priest, and it never seems to end up working—some sections go much faster than expected, or much slower. With enough rehearsal and refinement this could be worked out, but I’d rather just have someone triggering music changes to account for the unpredictable.

That said, here are some albums that we have used based on the preferences of the individuals involved.

Consumed (1998), Plastikman
The Fountain (2006), Soundtrack
The Mysteries (2013), John Zorn
Passion (1989), Peter Gabriel

The important thing to remember is that the album should have no lyrics or words; it must be an instrumental album.

Level Two—The Adept DJ

The next approach is that which naturally follows from a study of the cues in the rubric and has a dedicated individual acting as a DJ. Mind you, all of these ideas could also be accomplished with a conductor and a group of musicians, but then I’d need to change the title of this essay.

In the long run, I feel it is important that the music used for the cues thematically match and are consistent. Using New Age for the first two cues, then jazz, then metal will come off as jarring and incongruent. Thus picking tracks from one or two albums from a single artist—or a couple artists that are very similar—works much better.

For the first cue at the entrance of the Priestess, I try to pick something lighter that’s not too slow. I also don’t want it too fast, because I don’t want to rush the serpentine circumambulations. I let this play until the Priestess approaches the tomb, at which point I fade the music out and prep for the next cue. There isn’t much time, as I want the next piece to start as the Priest takes his knee to worship the lance. It is very effective to pick a track that is in a minor key for this second cue, especially if the former track was in a major key; this helps with that feeling of sorrow. It should likely have a much slower tempo as well. As with the first cue, I let this piece of music play throughout the lustration and consecration of the Priest by the Priestess, slowly bringing the volume down at first. My goal is to have the music faded out completely by the time she’s stroking the lance, so that I have time to bring up the next cue as well as to lend importance to this act, helping build the tension in the room.

Now let's talk about the most maddening cue, the call for a phrase of triumphant music. I say maddening because there is a fine line between triumphant and cheesy. If we have found a track in a major key for the first cue, and a minor key for the second cue, then returning to a major key helps communicate triumph. Either way the track shouldn't fade in; I prefer tracks that start off strong, but at the same time allow for the next Priest lines to still be heard. As before, I let this track play throughout their approach to the altar, and even into the Priest's circumambulations. I may reduce the volume after the initial notes to stay well under the Priest's lines, then bring it back up slightly when no lines are being spoken.

For the two cues during the consecration of the elements I generally used two choices. My preferred was "Lux Aeternal" from the *2001: A Space Odyssey* soundtrack, composed by Ligeti; my main alternatives have been "Treefingers" from the Radiohead album *Kid A* and "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima" by Penderecki. For both of these cues I fade in as the Priest turns toward the Congregation, and fade out again as he turns back toward the Priestess. It's very subtle and effective! If something ambient and also intense is selected, it doesn't have to match the other music cues to feel right.

If the Mass team wants music during the anthem—assuming it's not being sung a capella to an agreed-upon melody—I generally used something light and airy, perhaps even the same track as was used during the entrance of the Priestess. Just make sure to keep the volume under control so that all the words can be clearly heard.

For the Mystic Marriage cue my preference is to use something with a great beat that's ideally also sensuous. If the artist I'm using has anything with tribal drumming then I will almost certainly use that! Originally I would fade out for the two calls for silence, but I eventually began fading the music out at the HRILIU as I mentioned previously.

Finally, my preference for the exit music is something filled with joy and happiness. If it fits what else I've been doing, I love using an instrumental version of "Lebanese Blonde" by Thievery Corporation. It's a

sitar-dominated downtempo dance track that flows nicely from the final lines of the Priest, and ideally sets the mood for any post-Mass toasts or fellowship. What I don't like about this Adept DJ approach is that the silence between the music cues is so... jarring. This is especially true while the Priest is circumambulating the temple after seating the Priestess in the East (if the "triumphant" song is too short), during the Collects, during the Consecration of the Elements outside of those two short music cues, and finally during the congregation's communication. Experimenting with this, I came to my current preferred approach.

Level Three—The Master DJ

Instead of interpreting the music cues within the rubric as calls for music only at those moments, I interpret the cues as moments where the music should tonally or emotionally change. I rationalize this largely on that inclusion of the calls for silence during the Priest communication. With that in mind, I actually prefer to run two channels simultaneously—the first is generally an ambient track that remains running throughout the ceremony up to the point where silence is explicitly required, while the second channel has specific shorter songs that can be brought in and then faded out.

How complex this becomes is dependent on the gear one has at their disposal. At a minimum it requires a couple of devices—laptop, mobile device, or CD players—and a mixing board or P.A. system with multiple inputs. The more advanced version would see a laptop with a professional DJ program such as Traktor, a controller for the program, and a P.A. system. To this could be added all sorts of other peripheral devices as one is inspired to use.

For the ambient tracks, I've tried several things. Originally I picked nature noises, such as wind through trees, rain storms, nighttime noises such as hooting owls or daytime birds; other times I played a dark ambient mix from the YouTube channel Cryo Chamber. These mixes tend to be between one and twelve hours long, and thus easily last up to the anthem which is when I would change gears anyway.

Now that I'm using a more advanced set-up, I don't need one super-long ambient track. Instead I can use shorter tracks—lasting five to ten minutes—from groups like Tribes of Neurot or specialty albums that I've found. What I tend to do now is sort all ambient tracks by beats per minute (bpm) so that I can match the first track right to the upcoming first cue. I start the ambient track when the Congregation enters the temple. If the ambient track is about to end before the first music cue at the entrance of the Priestess, I can cross-fade to another ambient track with the same bpm or loop a portion that won't feel jarring. At the first music cue, I then either cross fade to the piece of non-ambient music I've selected or blend it in if the key of both tracks allow. This allows me to choose ambient tracks that have a tonal presence without creating unintentional dissonance with two tracks playing at the same time. I can also then slowly crossfade back at a much earlier time, based on how that individual performance of the ritual feels in the moment.

Having a more advanced set-up has opened the door to creating saved start points and fade-out cues in tracks, which means I can have more freedom with that pesky "triumphant" music cue. This allows me to choose a moment from any point in a song, not just songs that starts off with a bang.

Even with the increased flexibility that comes with multiple tracks, I still prefer Ligeti or Penderecki for the two cues during the consecration of the elements. I then keep ambient tracks playing throughout the rest of this section and the anthem—for the anthem specifically I prefer to stay as ambient as possible, to allow the Priest and chorus as much freedom as possible.

For the Mystic Marriage having multiple tracks again increases my flexibility. I can now add drums like bongos or other tribal-style instruments to music. This might mean replacing the ambient track with the drums, but it will sound great and add energy to the ritual. Alternatively, live drums are always an option as well, if there exists the local talent to pull it off. After the Priest proclaims "There is no part of me that is not of the Gods," I bring the music back—with drumming—for the congregation. I always have recorded drumming ready whether or not

there are live drummers; having both seems to work best.

I now find myself seeking out more and more choices to match the mood of the musical cues to the personalities of the Priest, Priestess, and Deacon. I'm constantly coming across a song that strikes my fancy, leading me to find entire albums from that artist. I'm then listening to see if there are different instrumental tracks that fit the mood of the various cues. I've recently employed Bach compositions played on lute, downtempo summer beach tracks, electronic dance music, and even some Crash Worship!

Moving through these levels of complexity—from the simplicity of selecting an album, hitting play, and letting it go throughout; to elaborate custom soundtracks pleasing to the participants—opens near infinite possibilities for creativity and ritual enhancement. All of these principles could again be applied to a set of musicians led by a conductor. I sincerely hope that other groups celebrating the Gnostic Mass are inspired to experiment with some of these ideas, and to share the results with myself and others who enjoy providing music to this central rite of our order.

Love is the law, love under will.

THE THEOLOGY OF THELEMA: A RESPONSE TO T POLYPHILUS

By Frater Entelecheia

In "Theology is the Enemy of Ecstasy" (Vol XVIII, No 3 of *Agapé*), T Polyphilus identifies "two general forms of theology that will be rightly spurned and discarded by individual Thelemites, and more importantly by our Church: these forms are superstitious faith on the one hand and systematic theology on the other."¹ He then defines the latter as "the general project of creating a coherent body of religious teaching derived by rational intellectual enterprise on the basis of a specified set of scripts and religious traditions."² However, Crowley practiced systematic theology in the sense intended here, and that theology is an essential component of our tradition, deeply informing Thelemic spiritual praxis in both A.:A.: and O.T.O. Furthermore, such systematic theological thinking is an essential and inevitable aspect of abstracting Thelema itself from Crowley's shifting and sometimes arbitrary personal opinions on subjects. For these reasons we should engage in the project of systematic Thelemic theology.

The theology of Thelema is expressed in two interconnected theories: the 0=2 theorem and the theory of divine emanation embodied in the Tree of Life. Crowley deals most thoroughly with the 0=2 idea in his early essay, "Berashith".³ In this essay Crowley declares, "I assert the absoluteness of the Qabalistic Zero." He then goes on to show how this "0," "nothingness," or "absence of extension in any of the categories" necessarily gives rise to existence.

While it may be averred that "nothingness" hardly counts as a conception of deity, Crowley's assertion suggests a close alignment between his conception of nothingness and the Kabbalists' idea of Ain. In Kabbalah, Ain (or "nothing") is the most transcendent aspect of deity, and it is often used interchangeably with Ain Sof ("without limit" or "infinity"). In other words, nothingness and the fullness of being (a more familiar description of God) are identical with one another.

As Frater Superior Hymenaeus Beta has pointed out, "[in 'Berashith' Crowley] then goes on to describe creation in terms that anticipate the Thelemic cosmology of Chapter 0 of Part III of [Magick], where the infinitely great (Nuit) and the infinitely small (Hadit) conjoin as Ra-Hoor-Khuit, who 'includes and heads all things'".⁴

Crowley identifies this head of all things with Kether ("Crown") on the Tree of Life, and here we encounter the second essential component of Thelemic theology, the emanationist model of the Tree of Life. As Crowley puts it in his commentary to *Liber 418*, 21st Aethyr, "In the ontology of the New Aeon, whose prime theorem is 0=2, Kether exists only as the Child of any Marriage of one particular Hadit with one particular aspect of Nuit. There are thus as many Kethers as there are positive possibilities."⁵ Now we see the connection between the 0=2 theorem, the Tree of Life, as well as the Thelemic notion of a Star. This Star (0) then undergoes division into Chokmah (+1) and Binah (-1) and follows the path of development down the Tree of Life that most every Thelemite is familiar with.⁶

Crowley further articulates this notion of the head of all things in *Liber Samekh*, where he identifies Ain Sof and Kether with the Holy Guardian Angel.⁷ This Angel undergoes division down the Tree of Life (i.e., it incarnates) in order to "obtain articulate apprehension of the Soul by measuring its reactions to its relations with other incarnated Beings, and to observe theirs with each other."⁸ The sephiroth of the Tree of Life therefore could be seen to represent chapters in the biography of the Angel or the Kabbalistic deity (Crowley uses the concepts interchangeably).⁹

To know God means traversing this path in reverse, back to Kether, as described in "*One Star in Sight*," which is subtitled "the structure and system of the Great White Brotherhood A.:A.:"¹⁰ One of those A.:A.: grades, Practicus, requires the student "to complete his intellectual training, and in particular to study the Qabalah," in other words to study the emanationist theology described above.¹¹ The Adeptus Exemptus in that system "must prepare and publish a thesis setting forth His knowledge of the Universe," which will likely include theology.¹²

In order to become a Magister Templi, the Adeptus Exemptus must, among other things, “[put] each idea against its opposite”.¹³ This represents an attempt to model, in practice, the identity of opposites assumed by the 0=2 theorem, thereby transcending duality. The dialectical relationship between speech (2) and silence (0) in the functions of the three grades also assumes this identity.¹⁴ The Ipsissimus is described as “the Master of the Law of Unsubstantiality (anatta).”¹⁵ This represents a return to the “Qabalistic zero,” which as we saw above is the theological presupposition of the entire system.

The only system Crowley ever created in his lifetime to lead individuals to spiritual attainment relies upon 0=2 to articulate its goal and practices and the Tree of Life for its grade structure, and it requires students to write extensively on theological subjects. A:A: is incoherent without systematic theology.

This same systematic theology is also essential to understanding the system of O.T.O. The Man of Earth degrees (0°-P:I:I:) describe the process of incarnation of “a God,” i.e., the candidate undergoing those initiations.¹⁶ This “Path in Eternity” describes a circle or cycle, with the soul or ego coming into existence from non-existence (0°), undergoing birth, aging, death, and the world beyond death (I°-IV°), and finally passing back into non-existence through annihilation (P:I:I:).¹⁷ In other words the process we find dramatized in the Man of Earth series is none other than that which was given above in more austere, mathematical form in the 0=2 theorem.¹⁸

Previously we saw that that process of incarnation of the soul or Angel is really a process of the self-division of the Star into +1 and -1. The fuller description of this process is given by the formula of יהוה or Tetragrammaton. As Crowley continues in the aforementioned passage from *Liber 418*, “Kether is not in any case a sole unity, for each Marriage [of Nuit and Hadit] produces a Twin, ה + י = ה + ו. There is a positive ‘Third Being’, a Kether; and there is an Ecstasy, or dissolution into Nothing, by the same Event. One is the Magical, the other the Mystical, Result of an Act of Love under Will.”¹⁹

As our Church’s Primate Frater Sabazius has pointed out, there are many applications of this formula to the Mass.²⁰ For instance the Priest takes up the function

of Yod or CHAOS in this formula, while the Priestess takes up the function of Heh or BABALON. The host—“the essence of the life of the Sun”—takes up the function of Vau, which is attributed to Tiphareth, while the wine—“the essence of the joy of the Earth”—takes up the function of Heh-final, which is attributed to Malkuth. These latter “elements” are “married” in Part VIII of the Mass, which is titled, “The Mystic Marriage and Consummation of the Elements.” This hieros gamos gives rise to BAPHOMET by the formula of VIAOV.²¹ As Crowley himself has pointed out in his commentary on *AL II:8* and *AL III:63*, the Lion-Serpent is a symbol of the Secret Self and of Harpocrates, and thus of the Holy Guardian Angel.²² So our central rite makes God present in the Eucharist, just like the Roman Rite, but in Thelema, the only “God” that matters is the Holy Guardian Angel of each, of which Baphomet serves as a type.²³ Thus, by consuming the Eucharist, we are “filled with God, fed upon God, intoxicated with God”; thus “the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel becomes an inevitable task”.²⁴

It may be objected that I am attempting to establish a dogma regarding the Gnostic Mass, i.e., a doctrine which is somehow incontrovertibly true, and that should Church authorities follow suit, it will alienate some and lead to splintering. According to Polyphilus, this is the danger posed by systematic theology “[in] its more advanced forms” where it “claims to discriminate those elements of ‘true’ religious belief that are axiomatic and indispensable, from those which are peripheral and derivative.”²⁵

Let me start by saying that I do not think there are many statements about anything that are incontrovertibly true, and that includes the statements I have made here regarding Thelemic theology. But that does not mean that all claims about Thelemic theology are equally well grounded. If I said that the Pillsbury Doughboy’s spirit is embodied in the Eucharist, and I know this because he appeared to me in a dream and told me so, I don’t think it would be incumbent upon anyone (including myself) to adopt that opinion. On the other hand, the claim that 0=2 and the Tree of Life are “axiomatic and indispensable” and are not “peripheral and derivative” seems highly likely based upon the evidence. Unless you have a good counter argument, yes, you probably should

believe that claim. But that's very different from saying you have to believe it—on pain of exclusion from the Church, pain of death, etc.

The sheer amount of opinion Crowley expressed on so many subjects makes this kind of discrimination essential and inevitable. Crowley wrote about virtually every subject available to him from literature to art to politics to physics and chemistry to food and to films. If I said every Thelemite should smoke perique tobacco because Crowley himself enjoyed it, I would be rightly pilloried. But things are substantially less obvious when you look at an issue like politics. Few would argue that individual freedom is not at an essential component to Thelema, and yet individual freedom has always been a political issue. Crowley described *Liber OZ*—a list of rights—as the “O.T.O. Plan in words of one syllable”.²⁶ There's no escaping the fact that Thelema has political implications, but what precisely are those implications? Without the ability to discriminate axiomatic or indispensable beliefs from peripheral or derivative ones, all we can really do is point to things Crowley said. But Crowley expressed support at one time or another for Carlism, Stalinism, anti-fascism, and Irish independence—to say nothing of his support of the Kaiser during WWI. If we're to avoid the absurdities inherent in being a “nominal Crowleian,” then we need to go beyond Crowley's (at times contradictory) preferences and systematically work out what follows from Thelemic first principles. In this way mere arguments about politics (or any issue) can become discussions about how to move from what is clear and essential to what is less clear and less obviously essential. But this only works if people are aware of what was clear and essential to Crowley's thinking about Thelema itself.

I agree with Polyphilus that our contributions should remain “unsettled and diverse”.²⁷ In fact this is inevitable. But there is no contradiction between these traits and being systematic. Theology and dogma are not the same thing. Theology is the logos or reasoned discourse about theos or God. Reasoned discourse—the human activity of giving and expecting good reasons in order to persuade—is historically speaking not a great friend to dogma and authoritarianism. The opposite of persuasion is not personal freedom but coercion or isolation.

Inferences from foundational doctrines such as 0=2 to the symbolism of the Mass or the meaning of the Holy Guardian Angel are bound to be controversial. But the presence of controversy is not in and of itself a bad thing. It's an opportunity to come out of self-imposed isolation, to listen to one another's views, and either to be persuaded by those views or to come up with counter arguments to them. People should feel confident that our Church does have actual teachings on things, that those teachings are not “reserved [and] quarantined” among IX^{os}²⁸, and that disagreements about the implications of those teachings are a sign of the health and strength of our community and its members. To that end I suggest every member of O.T.O. familiarize themselves with these core doctrines and become conversant in them.

Frater Entelecheia is a USGL member. His blog can be found at <http://lapis-mercurii.org/lvx>.

NOTES

1. *Agapé*, p. 9.
2. *Ibid.*, p.10.
3. Crowley, *Berashith: An Essay in Ontology with some Remarks on Ceremonial Magic* (1902).
4. Crowley, Desti, and Waddell, *Magick, Liber ABA, Book Four, Parts I-IV, Second Revised Edition* (2002), Edited, Annotated, and Introduced by Hymenaeus Beta, p.xxvii.
5. As quoted in *Magick*, p.xxviii.
6. “To know itself, each such Star, or Soul, must eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, by accepting labour and pain as its portion, and death as its doom. That is, it must reveal its nature to itself by formulating that nature as duality.” New Comment on AL I.29. <http://lapis-mercurii.org/motb/first-principles.html>.
7. “He identifies his Angel with the Ain Soph, and the Kether thereof; one formulation of Hadit in the boundless Body of Nuith.” *Liber Samekh*, Point II, Sec A, in *Magick*, p.523.
8. *Ibid*, p.524.
9. In the same essay, he also describes the Angel “as having ‘eaten of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’; otherwise, having become wise (in the Dyad, Chokmah)”. *Ibid*. From the use of metaphor, it is likely Crowley saw *Star*, *Kether*, *Ra-Hoor-Khuit* and *Angel* as interchangeable concepts in his theology.
10. *Ibid*, p.488.
11. *Ibid*, p.489.
12. *Ibid.*, p.493.
13. *Ibid*.
14. *Liber Tav vel Kabbabale Trivm Literarum svb Figvra CD*.
15. *Ibid*, p.491.
16. “Let us begin at the beginning. What is a Dramatic Ritual? It is a celebration of the Adventures of the God whom it is intended to invoke. (The Bacchae of Euripides is a perfect example of this.) Now, in the O.T.O., the object of the ceremonies being the Initiation of the Candidate, it is he whose Path in Eternity is displayed in dramatic form.” *Magick Without Tears*, Chapter XIII: System of the O.T.O.
17. “The life of man is but one segment of a serpentine curve which

- reaches out to infinity, and its zeros but mark the changes from the plus to minus, and minus to plus, coefficients of its equation." *Liber CL* 𐌌𐌚𐌗𐌚 *A Sandal De Lege Libellum L— L— L— L— L.* <http://lib.oto-usa.org/libri/liber0150.html>.
18. An interesting possibility is that the candidate in the Man of Earth degrees is actually the Holy Guardian Angel, "measuring its reactions to its relations with other incarnated Beings, and to observe theirs with each other" as described above.
19. As quoted in *Magick*, p.xxviii.
20. See T Apiryon, "The Formula of Tetragrammaton in the Gnostic Mass." <https://sabazius.oto-usa.org/the-formula-of-tetragrammaton-in-the-gnostic-mass/>
21. "This Yod in the 'Virgin' expands to the Babe in the Egg by formulating the Secret Wisdom of Truth of Hermes in the Silence of the Fool. He acquires the Eye-Wand, beholding the acting and being adored. The Inverted Pentagram—Baphomet—the Hermaphrodite fully grown—begets himself on himself as V again." (*Magick*, p. 165).
22. Crowley, *The Law is for All*, Edited with an Introduction by Israel Regardie (1991), p.166 and p.326.
23. For more on the function of the Holy Guardian Angel in our central rite, see "The Holy Guardian Angel in the Gnostic Catholic Church of the OTO," by T Polyphilus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-xb0SbHxGw>.
24. *Magick*, p.269.
25. *Agapé*, p.10.
26. From a letter to G.J. Yorke of August 30, 1941, quoted in Sabazius, "Observations on *Liber OZ*." <https://sabazius.oto-usa.org/observations-on-liber-oz/>.
27. *Agapé*, p.12.
28. *Ibid*, p.13.

THE HYMN FOR THE CHILD'S INNOCENCE

I am a Red Rose incarnate
About to bloom in Eternal Spring
I am the Love's melting essence
(The vapour that vanished
Hath no power on me)
I am the Force 'n' the Fire
So be it that the Aeons come and go
Yet one and none remained

I am love beyond thought
Love beyond form
I am Child's innocence
Sealed in Scarlet wrappers
I am the movement
And Being
Of all things equal

I am an ongoing process
(about not to end)

Of days destined
To be fulfilled

I am a singer
For some...
In the song of Silence
I am a Joke
Yet a serious
Warning-sign

Yet even I am
Mesmerized
That I very exist...

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL: A SEGMENT 26.7.2016 EV

For storms to come
For rains to last
For clouds to move
I will seal these lips of fury
In divine presence

You are worth the wait
In no time
You were worth every tear
That you now banish
By the acknowledgement of you

You are...
The Guardian Angel
My faithful saviour
The unseen image
Of the love's abstraction



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— Liber III

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