

FRANÇOIS DE LA GENESTÉ AND THE ROSICRUCIANS, TRUTH OR MYTH?

Granny Simone was a Chazal.¹ Though she had read little by her cousin Malcolm, she was very fond of him; after all, who could be more eccentric than her own mother-in-law? One afternoon, having made enquiries into his probable whereabouts, she bundled my brother and myself into a taxi and off we set to Le Morne Brabant to meet him. I was fourteen years old at the time, and as an avid reader the prospect of meeting Malcom in person was almost more than I could bear. As he approached us, I noted his way of observing and taking us in and was immediately won over. Here I was, in the presence of someone truly out of the ordinary. Time stood proverbially still, until locking eyes with me he suddenly pronounced: - 'Young man, write for yourself alone.'

Could this be Destiny? Would I become an author? Though less than ten minutes, this exchange shattered my world and my horizons expanded.

Some time later, having shared this with my father, he in turn recounted the following anecdote. It was in June 1918, when still a young boy, that he attended the wedding of his aunt Madeleine to Harold Mayer (the one and only in the whole of Curepipe to own a pushbike). My father, Robert, had a penchant for collecting champagne corks, and was happily absorbed in the task of adding to his already significant collection when, cork in hand, he was apprehended by Dr Lucien. Eyes flashing, the elder then noticed my father's large forehead and instead of remonstrances, proceeded to foretell him an exceptional destiny. Simone was wont to remind him of these words, so that he often had cause to ponder what the Hippocratic prophet could have meant: was he to become a doctor too? Incidentally, by attending this catholic wedding, Dr Lucien was proffering an olive branch to 'the other side', thereby healing the twenty-five years old open wound of a family divided along religious lines.

Every Chazal generation has yielded one whose gifts, successes or way of life has proved a source of wonder. To others we have even at times attributed a hint of immortality. My father, for example, was much in awe of his uncle Raymond, a bright young thing who died in WWII. However, his true fascination lay with François de la Genesté and his glorious hundred-year old legend. My father was drawn to unconventional, if not downright bizarre people, particularly those not immediately apparently so. So, interested did he become in the Rosicrucian legend associated with François that his connection with the famous initiate was at one point discovered by enthusiasts, who approached him and asked him, as Malcolm once had been, whether he might be the keeper of secret knowledge. Having a facetious streak, he was much tempted to mystify them, but restraining himself instead he reluctantly disabused them of the notion. Nevertheless, he would often ponder what shape his life could have taken, had he fallen in with the Rosicrucians. Who knows, he might have become a remarkable person, perhaps even someone supernaturally gifted...

And yet, I would not say my father's destiny proved unremarkable. What of his miraculous escape with wife and three children from the massacres of a colonial war from which no other Europeans survived, about which he kept silent. As for immortality, here was a shrewd businessman who nevertheless chose to leave this earth as a poet. There is always a Chazal to surprise, charm and fascinate us.

¹ Edmond>Auguste>Édouard>Simone (1894-1980)>Robert Jamet (1915-1994)>Robert Jamet

When seeking the true faces of our ancestors, Le Juge de Segrais'² and Tristan's Magnum Opus³ are most valuable, presenting a wide range of reliable documents and a thorough extrapolation of facts from the veneer of legend. For years the mysteries surrounding François tantalised my father: was it fabricated legend or true history? Was he not a famous alchemist and Rosicrucian Master? Had whispers of his immortality not reached us? Who was he?

Let us therefore enquire into whether François ever truly was a Rosicrucian.

FRANÇOIS DE CHAZAL AND HIS ERA

François de La Genesté⁴ (1731-1795) was born of Aimé de Chazal (†1771) and Marie Marguerite Baillard du Pinet (†1764). Aged twenty-five, he enrolled in the French East India Company and following a preliminary voyage to Isle de France, permanently settled there in 1763. He held several posts working first for the French East India Company, and then in the King's service. He appears to have been a gifted administrator, taking a keen interest in the establishment of the new colony and with a gift for establishing good rapport. At the height of the French Revolution, when the British navy was seeking to rule the Indian Ocean, being an aristocrat, he was elected by the island's inhabitants to join the recently appointed Colonial Assembly. He was later offered the position of mayor of the Pamplemousses district (15th August 1790). His merit was evidently much held in esteem and widely recognized.

On the 6th March 1764, in Port-Louis, François married Jeanne Thérèse Félicité Jocet de La Porte. Jeanne had already been twice widowed, having first married Jean Corday, then Charles Damain de Kerubec. She bore François no children, however, in 1788 they adopted his brother Chamarel's two sons, who later both inherited the greater part of his wealth. As an interesting side note, Chamarel had married Jeanne Thérèse's daughter Jeanne Jacqueline Corday.

François died on the 13th October 1795 at Montagne Longue in the Pamplemousses district, and was followed two years later by his wife, on 7th October 1797. At his death, François had nearly 800 hectares of land in Mauritius to his name, and likely had owned far more over the course of his lifetime. Evidence suggests he was a savvy, long-term investor focused on providing his family with a secure position in life.

FRANÇOIS DE CHAZAL AND POSTERITY

At some point in time in the next century, Adrien d'Épinay would say that François was not corrupt but that he was remembered 'in the colonial archives [with] the purest name.'⁵ His selfless service to his generation brought great credit to the Chazal family name.

François was also a child of the Age of Enlightenment, a man of great intellectual curiosity

²René Le Juge de Segrais, *Histoire généalogique de la famille de Chazal*, Paris, 1927. Christophe Chabbert, *Correspondance de la famille de Chazal, 1767-1879*, 2014, l'Harmattan. Chabbert uses the letters published by Le Juge de Segrais in 1927 and comments them.

³*A genealogy of the Chazal* (in French) by Tristan de Chazal on: <http://www.chazfest.com/genealogy/>

⁴Genesté means 'where the broom grows.'

⁵This is an exceptionally commendable appraisal of François' entire career and is based on historical documents. Adrien d'Épinay (son), *Renseignements Pour Servir À L'Histoire de L'Ile de France Jusqu'à L'Année 1810 : Inclusivement ; Précédés de Notes Sur La Découverte de L'Ile, [...]*, 1890, page 217 (November 1774). Ile Maurice, Imprimerie Dupuy, 626 pages. The book can be downloaded for free from: <https://ia800300.us.archive.org/32/items/renseignementsp01epingoog/renseignementsp01epingoog.pdf>

with a keen interest in the sciences and a habit of reading widely. He owned a Cabinet of Curiosities,⁶ and as with many of his contemporaries, introduced several useful plants to the island.⁷ Accordingly, his name is etched on the Liénard Column in the Pamplemousses Garden. Furthermore, the *Chassalia*⁸ species is named after him. Belonging to the family Rubiaceae and the subfamily Rubioideae, the genus *Chassalia* holds around 112 species with a paleotropical distribution. Introduced by Father Jean-Louis Marie Poiret,⁹ the name of the genus was published¹⁰ in 1812 based on a manuscript by P. Commerson.¹¹ The spelling ‘*Chassalia*’ was a clerical error in transcribing ‘*Chasalia*’, which is how it appeared in Philibert Commerson’s manuscript. Nine endemic species of the genus *Chassalia* *Comm. ex Poir.* can be found in Mauritius, Réunion Island, and Rodrigues.



***Chassalia* Comm. ex Poir¹².**

⁶ Cabinet must be understood as a room in a house. It is usually one or more rooms in a house used to store collections of all things that can be described and studied in nature. Most of these private cabinets are now in museums.

⁷ A contemporary of François and a fellow botanist, François-Etienne Le Juge de Segrais (1709-1766), also owned a large botanical garden in Pamplemousses called Mangoust. In 1763 he wrote up a thorough catalog of the trees he had planted and which he carefully described. More than 800 trees, representing 50 different species, from all parts of the world were grown there. To him we owe the introduction of several species of mango trees imported from Mozambique, Bengal and Pondicherry, different varieties of oranges from China, the cocoa tree, the avocado tree, the Kola nut tree (*Cola acuminata*), bamboo trees, trees of horticultural interest, etc. René Le Juge de Segrais, *Souvenirs de Segrais et de Mangoust, Paris 1936*.

⁸ *Chassalia corallioides* (Cordem.) Verdc., the Coral Wood, is an endemic shrub of Réunion found in humid forests and gullies at altitudes between 700 and 1400 m.

⁹ A botanist and an explorer, Poiret was born on 11th June 1755 in Saint-Quentin, and died on 7th April 1834 in Paris. Poiret was a priest who left the ministry during the French Revolution, married and became a professor of botany. He left his name to a species of Algerian newt, the *Pleurodeles poireti*.

¹⁰ *Encycl. (Lamarck) Suppl. 2.* : 450. 1812.

¹¹ An indefatigable explorer and a strict naturalist, Commerson was born on 18th November 1727 in Châtillon-les-Dombes and died on 13th March 1773 in Mauritius. He was in charge of the world's very first Botanical Garden, the Pamplemousses Garden, and was the first to describe and popularize the sea coconut' (*Lodoicea maldivica*) of Seychelles, amongst many others.

¹² *The Herbarium Catalogue*, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. <http://www.kew.org/herbcat> [accessed on 09/05/2019]

L E T T R E X V I.

Voyage dans l'Isle.

DEUX curieux d'histoire naturelle , M. de Chazal Conseiller , & M. le Marquis d'Albergaty Capitaine de la Légion , me proposerent , il y a quelque temps , d'aller voir à une lieue & demie d'ici une caverne considérable , j'y consentis. Nous nous rendimes d'abord à la grande riviere. Cette grande riviere , comme toutes celles de cette Isle , n'est qu'un large ruisseau qu'une chaloupe ne remonteroit pas à une portée de fusil de son embouchure. Il y a là un petit établissement formé d'un hôpital & de quelques magasins , & c'est là aussi où commence l'aqueduc qui conduit les eaux à la ville. On voit sur une petite hauteur en pain de sucre, une espee de Fort qui défend la Baye.

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Chazal, 'curieux d'Histoire naturelle'¹³. Henri Bernardin de Saint Pierre, *Voyage à l'Île de France, à l'île Bourbon et au cap de Bonne-Espérance, par un officier du roi*, p.249.

¹³ While staying in Mauritius (1768-1771), Bernardin de Saint Pierre the celebrated playwright, described François as a man 'curious about Natural History' and even accompanied him on excursions throughout the island. Henri Bernardin de Saint Pierre, *Voyage à l'Île de France, à l'île Bourbon et au cap de Bonne-Espérance, par un officier du roi*, Merlin, Amsterdam et Paris, 1773, 2 vol. in-8°, pp.249, 270. Read on Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5815186m?rk=21459;2>

A MAN OF HIS TIME

As previously mentioned, François was insatiably curious.¹⁴ *‘Curious’: careful or nice in observation or investigation, accurate; taking the interest of a connoisseur in any branch of art; skilled as a connoisseur or virtuoso; ‘curious: desirous of seeing or knowing; eager to learn; inquisitive; ‘curious: who is looking for things, hidden facts; devoting attention to occult art’.* His curiosity lent itself to all things botanical and took the shape of countless collections and the establishment of a library of scientific books. He also owned a Cabinet of Natural History. A Cabinet of Natural History is a variation on the early century Cabinets of Curiosities. However, François was a man of his time, an era we now refer to as the Age of Enlightenment, when the trend was not so much the acquisition of objects as the drawing up of their inventory, the systematic classification of the world and its life forms. From a collection of job lots, the Cabinet came to reflect dedicated rigorous endeavour. In his task, if not his mission, the amateur might draw from the work of artists and scientists such as Linnaeus, Buffon or Cuvier.

A Cabinet of Natural History might be understood as a scientific expression of human curiosity directed towards the natural world. As European naval expeditions set about exploring the wider world, flora and fauna rapidly established themselves as fields worthy of reasoned study. As empires reached, conquered and encountered realms beyond what had previously been known, discoveries and new information filtered down through society, expanding and whetting the imaginations of all classes.

A Cabinet of Natural History might hold:

- Objects relating to Culture: antiques, works of art, weapons, coins, musical instruments, etc.
- Objects relating to Nature: naturalized animals, dried insects, skeletons, shells, shells, seagrasses, fossils, minerals, etc.

¹⁴ **Curious:** †3.I.3 a.I.3.a Careful or nice in observation or investigation, accurate. Obs. 5. a.I.5.a Desirous of seeing or knowing; eager to learn; inquisitive. Often with condemnatory connotation: Desirous of knowing what one has no right to know, or what does not concern one, prying. (The current subjective sense.) a 1340 Hampole Psalter cxxxvi. 3 Þei are curiouse & wold witt þat þei are nouȝt worthi till. 1375 Barbour Bruce iv. 687 Bot feill folk ar sa curiouss, And to wit thingis covatouss. c 1384 Chaucer H. Fame i. 29 That somme man is to curiouse In studye. 1526 Pilgr. Perf. (W. de W. 1531) 18 b, How no persone sholde be curyous in askyng questyons concernynge the secretes of god. 1653 H. Cogan tr. Pinto's Trav. xlv. 172 He was a man very curious, and much inclined to hear of novelties, and rare things. 1754 Richardson Grandison (1781) I. xiii. 72 Those branches of science which . . . serve for amusement to inquisitive and curious minds. 1833 H. Martineau Brooke Farm x. 116 Two or three neighbours . . . were curious to know what he had seen abroad. 1873 Hale In His Name vi. 64 Crowded with curious idlers. †c.I.5.c Devoting attention to occult art. Obs. 1549 Udall, etc. Erasm. Par. Eph. Argt., That Citie was full of Curieuse menne, and suche as were geuen to magicall artes. 1578 Timme Caluine on Gen. 35 Certaine courious persons abuse this place to colour their vaine prognostications. 1614 Bp. Hall Recoll. Treat. 137 Curious men, that consulte with starres, and spirits, for their destinies. †6.I.6 a.I.6.a Taking the interest of a connoisseur in any branch of art; skilled as a connoisseur or virtuoso. Const. of, in and inf. Obs. 1644 Evelyn Mem. (1857) I. 69 Monsieur Morine . . . one of the most skilful and curious persons in France for his rare collection of shells, flowers, and insects. 1693 — De la Quint. Compl. Gard. I. 24 Gentlemen that are Curious in Gard'ning. 1734 tr. Rollin's Anc. Hist. (1827) VII. xvii. §8. 238 He was exceedingly curious in pictures and designs by great masters. 1751 Johnson Rambler No. 177 ¶5 A select company of curious men, who met once a week to exhilarate their studies, and compare their acquisitions. Every one of these virtuosos, etc. 1792 Copper-Plate Mag. No. 6 The bishop's family being curious botanists. [Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition on CD-ROM (v. 4.0.0.3) © Oxford University Press 2009 All rights reserved.]

- Exotic plants and animals
- Scientific instruments.

Once personal archives, Cabinets were little by little bought up or donated to Museums and shared with the wider public. In 1849, the Mauritius Museum of Natural History inaugurated its first collections, which included the well-known Cabinets of Lucien Desjardins and Louis Bouton. We cannot now be sure what was in François' Cabinet, however it is understood to have been on a par with those of his richer or more famous contemporaries.

CURIOSITY DID NOT KILL THE CAT

Some five years on from François' death, Pierre wrote to Toussaint asking:

- "What has become of my brother's superb Natural History Cabinet?"¹⁵

Two months later, he wrote again but this time using a slightly different wording:

- "What has become of my brother's beautiful Cabinet of Curiosities?"¹⁶

Pierre's tone suggests restrained indignation, perhaps too a degree of resignation, acknowledging the Cabinet is Toussaint's to dispose of as he wills. Rather than implying it has vanished, Pierre is more probably asking after its present owner, assuming Toussaint would not hold on to it. As Pierre's is the only mention we have of this cabinet, it has – for some – gained a shroud of mystery.

Was this cabinet of any value to Toussaint? As a matter of fact, it is not once mentioned by Matthew Flinders, who was his neighbour from 1805 to 1810. Flinders was a scientist, who had introduced several hundreds of plant specimens from his journeys to the Antipodes. His best friend was Thomas Pitot, a member of the Emulation Society, a circle of scientists and artists interested in Natural History brought together by Nicolas Baudin,¹⁷ who was a noted explorer in Australia and died in Mauritius in 1803. Surely, these men would have been eager to see this cabinet, and yet they express no such interest. It is in fact mentioned nowhere. Did Toussaint keep or sell it, and if so to whom? What was his answer to Pierre? From what we know, it would appear Toussaint held no real interest in Natural History. In November 1863, his daughter Malcy¹⁸ recounted to Alfred Newton, the famous

¹⁵ Letter from Pierre de Chazal dated 1st April 1802.

¹⁶ Letter from Pierre de Chazal dated 1st June 1802.

¹⁷ In 1788, Baudin brought the naturalist Franz Boos back to Austria, an Austrian who had worked with Nicholas Ceré in the Jardin des Pamplemousses and in Palma with Cossigny. Baudin learned from Boos how to keep live animals alive on a boat and to dry plants. Baudin had enjoyed Flinders' company in Australia. Madeleine Ly-Tio-Fane, *A recognition of tropical resources during Revolutionary years: the role of the Paris Museum of Natural History*, Archives of Natural History 18: 333-362. (1991).

¹⁸ 'When she was a girl and used to go into the forest with her father de Chazal, she has seen quantities of Pigeon Hollandais and Merles (*Hypsipetes olivaceus*), both species were so tame they might be knocked down with sticks, & her father used to kill more that way than by shooting them, as she was a nervous child. Her father always warned her before he fired, but she would entreat him to knock the bird down with his stick & not to shoot it – she said the last Pigeon Hollandais she saw was about 27 years ago just after she married poor old Moon, it was brought out of the forest by a marron. She said it was larger than a tame pigeon & was all the colours of the rainbow, particularly about the head, red, green & blue.' Hume, J. P. (2011). *"Systematics, morphology, and ecology of pigeons and doves (Aves: Columbidae) of the Mascarene Islands, with three new species"*. Zootaxa. 3124: 1–62. ISBN 978-1-86977-825-5. Also in: Anthony Cheke, Julian P. Hume, *Lost Land of the Dodo: The Ecological History of Mauritius, Reunion and Rodrigues* (T & AD Poyser), 2007, Yale. Page 126.

ornithologist, that round about 1815 she would accompany her father on game shooting parties, where he was wont to kill Dutch Pigeons,¹⁹ even though this species had already become very rare. One with the calibre of François de la Genesté would surely have shown more consideration for a species on the brink of extinction.

At around the same time Pierre was writing, Sigismund Bacstrom does provide a vague description of this cabinet, though he does not use the wording 'Natural History Cabinet' or its equivalent in English.²⁰ This account is nevertheless deemed unreliable, as he was probably recounting hearsay; he also seems to regroup the cabinet of objects and books under the blanket term 'library,' which is rather odd as these would normally be located in separate rooms. Bacstrom describes a library 'of more than a thousand books in all languages,' medals and scientific instruments, but does not mention any plant or animal collection. However, as we will see, it is quite possible that Bacstrom never actually set foot on François' estate. Nevertheless, what do we know about these books?

FRANÇOIS' LIBRARY OR THE LIGHTER SIDE OF CURIOSITY



Madeleine Louise Basseporte, Seashells²¹, 1747.

In 1791, François mentions²² reading a work by Jean-Antoine Rigoley de Juvigny (1709-1788), an enemy of Voltaire, a strong critic of the Philosophers and someone very close to the Church. Cautiously, François reviews the book as 'excellent, full of truth and of

¹⁹ It is the Mauritius Blue pigeon (*Alectroenas nitidissima*) that disappeared around 1830 and of which there are only three stuffed specimens in the world.

²⁰ Also known as 'Cabinet of Curiosities' or 'Wonder Room'.

²¹ Madeleine Françoise Basseporte (1701-1780), *Pectinidae, Patella*, 1747, *Sanguines on paper*, Central Library of the National Museum of Natural History, Paris. Her biography can be read in: *Nécrologe, Revue universelle des arts* 13 (1861), pp. 139-47. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is quoted as having said, 'Nature gives existence to plants, but Mademoiselle Basseporte kept them'. P.142.

²² Letter of 28th September 1791 addressed to his uncle, Canon Baillard du Pinet

common sense.' He mentions Jean-François Levallant's recent account of his African expeditions.²³ François then places an order for two newly published books on explorations of the most remote parts of the planet, to Siberia²⁴ and Ethiopia²⁵. His curiosity is palpable. We also read him quote a rare book containing reproductions of shell drawings by Madeleine Louise Basseporte, which François describes as 'a collection drawn with all the naturalness, taste, elegance that I notice with renewed pleasure.' These words convey great aesthetic sensitivity alongside a genuine scientific interest. Indeed, gifted with a prodigious working memory, François diligently kept up to date with the output of contemporary artists and authors of note.

In mentioning Madeleine Basseporte, we come back full circle to Natural History and what insights this may yield into the complexities of François' personality. Madeleine Basseporte, whose mentor was Claude Aubriet (1651-1742), was famous in her day for depictions of plants, shells, etc. Arguably her more mature, and near perfect works are the crayon, charcoal and red chalk on vellum drawings kept at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. Basseporte and Aubriet were masters in their own right in the field of Natural History, a field where scientists and artists vied with each other while rigorously depicting the beautiful, the ephemeral or what was on the cusp of disappearing.

FRANÇOIS AND ANTON MESMER

In a letter dated 15th March 1787, Jeanne-Jacquette Corday, daughter of Jeanne Thérèse Félicité, wrote to her sons Toussaint and Charles-Antoine asking them to send François: 'all that is curious and extraordinary pertaining to the new discoveries in sciences, chemistry and Magnetism.'

How interesting that Jean-Jeanette should mention Magnetism in the same breath as sciences; and would her use of the word 'extraordinary' here refer to François' interest in the new fields of scientific discovery? Certainly, François' interest in Magnetism was not widely shared in the family circle, in fact far from it. Writing from Paris on the 1st August 1788, Pierre makes clear his scathing opinion on Mesmer's Magnetism theory, though not before conceding the effectiveness of a remedy given to him by François: "...You're right, this cure for gout is the one I use. I have not had an attack these past eighteen months. I do not believe in your Magnetism, all this quackery has now been so well dismantled by our scholars and academics that Mesmer was forced to flee²⁶ in shame and labelled a rascal. It has been a long time since the grave of the Abbé Paris witnessed the effects of convulsions and the methods of eliciting them, the secret to which effectively is to irritate the nerves with the help of the imagination.'

As we know from his letters, Pierre was a rationalist and a bon-vivant who lashed out against credulity and sentiment. His language reflects that of his contemporaries towards

²³ Jean-François Levallant, *Voyage de Monsieur Le Vaillant dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique : par le Cap de Bonne-Espérance, dans les années 1780, 81, 82, 83, 84 & 85*. A Paris : Chez Leroy, libraire ... ;1790. <https://ia802708.us.archive.org/16/items/voyagedemonsieur11790leva/voyagedemonsieur11790leva.pdf>

²⁴ Peter Simon Pallas, *Voyages en Sibérie, extraits des journaux de divers savants voyageurs*. (Pallas, Lepechin, Falk.) (Pl. et † Berne, Société typographique, 1791 ; 2 vol. in-8° rel.

²⁵ M. James Bruce, *Voyage aux sources du Nil, en Nubie et en Abyssinie, pendant les années 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771 et 1772*, traduit de l'anglais par J.-H. Castera. T. I (-IV). The whole work can be downloaded on: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k62024881/f11.image>

²⁶ In fact, Mesmer left Paris of his own accord preferring not to be dragged into what had already become a heated if not a political debate. He was to come back a few years later.

Mesmer.

Bacstrom²⁷ would later write that François had 'kept records of his magical experiments and the cures he had effected by means of animal Magnetism²⁸, electricity, galvanism, etc., which were attested by the most respectable people on the Island²⁹.' It has to be said that there is no hard evidence that Bacstrom ever visited François estate. However, should he have merely been relaying what he learned from Petit-Radel, what is interesting here is his mention of 'cures', which denotes an interest in man's health and the treatment of diseases. François's fascination for Magnetism, Peter's aggressive reaction to it, and mentions by Sigismund Bacstrom beg a revisiting of Anton Mesmer's controversial role. We will also wonder if François was not so much interested in his esoteric side as in his therapeutic aspect. Indeed, whilst it is true that the notion of animal Magnetism had conceptual roots in esoteric studies such as theories of metals, etc., its use as a cure for diseases and as a therapeutic remedy quickly reached the forefront of contemporary debate, for Mesmer was a practicing doctor.

In 1968, Robert Darnton,³⁰ an American historian, published an exhaustive study of Mesmer the man and his work, casting him in a more positive light. According to Darnton, Mesmer's theories and practices were the predominant viral 'buzz' of late 18th century France: on the eve of the Revolution, these therapies were discussed and debated by everyone, partly because these were made accessible to all rather than remaining the sole domain of doctors. Darnton sets Mesmer's popularity in a 'fin de siècle' passionate about science, but also tired of the Rationalism that so characterized the century. However, the historian also describes the new craze as a new therapy based on a pseudo-science, a precursor of the half-baked sciences we now find ten a penny.

In unpacking the conceptual matrix of Mesmerism, Kieran Murphy³¹ has this to say: 'inspired by Newton's physics, Descartes' theory of 'emanations' and the occult understanding of attraction and repulsion of magnets, Mesmer deduces that a kind of 'animal Magnetism' must also exist among the bodies [and not only between planets or metals]. Mesmer theorized an invasive fluid to explain the invisible influence he had on his patients. He then concluded that his patients' ailments had to be attributed to an obstacle blocking the circulation of this 'magnetic' fluid in their body. Mesmer thought he could project his own fluid to help restore a patient's health. In Mesmer's opinion, Animal Magnetism is a universal but invisible magnetic fluid, just as invisible as the universal weight of bodies. So much for the pseudo-science aspect.

THE PUYSÉGUR BROTHERS

Mesmer counted amongst his disciples three brothers from the Puysegur family, who soon adopted a different stance from their master. In 1784, whilst Armand Marie Jacque de Chastenet, Marquis de Puysegur, was carrying out the magnetization of some sick servants

²⁷ Letter from Bacstrom to Alexander Tilloch of 16th March 1804, *The Astrologer, and Oracle of Destiny*, op. cit. p.118 - Arthur Edward Waite in *The True Story of the Rosicrucians*, 1887 and *The Brotherhood of the Rose-Cross*, 1924.

²⁸ The concept of Animal magnetism will be discussed further below.

²⁹ *Bacstrom's Alchemical Anthology*, page 6.

³⁰ Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*, 1968, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

³¹ Kieran Murphy, *Magic and Mesmerism in Santo Domingo*, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2008, *Frozen Lyrics Journal*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7b14d5wn> p.39.

in his castle, the session took a bizarre turn.³² Whilst magnetizing Victor Race, a young farmer suffering from respiratory problems, something occurred that had never ever before occurred in any of Mesmer's healing sessions.³³ Puységur had been expecting a 'crisis' of convulsions and disorientated movements. Instead, Race is recorded to have started to sleepwalk, whilst remaining conscious and staying connected with the magnetizer. Whereas Race had had a speech impediment, his speech began to improve, and moreover, in answering questions posed to him, appears to have diagnosed his problem, made a prognosis and devised its cure! Puységur is recorded as having been baffled that his servant experienced no crisis and puzzled by what came out of Race's conscious sleep. Indeed, in this state Race revealed being in conflict with his sister. Deducing that his problem might not entirely be physical, Puységur suggested to him that he seek the solution to this conflict within himself, which he did. Even more fascinating, it seems that once he came round, Race had no memory of anything. However, towards the end of his life he was magnetized once again by Puységur, and lo and behold, in this state had perfect recall of his first experience, remembering everything in vivid detail. Never short of inspiration, Puységur coined the phrase 'magnetic sleep', which would later be re-named 'artificial somnambulism' and finally 'hypnosis'.

Though Mesmer had decreed that a crisis had to be the key moment in any therapy session, Puységur would subsequently reject the idea that a crisis was required for the parasitic disease to be revealed. In the case of Race, he discovered that, under the guidance of the therapist, the patient would reveal his 'illness' himself: the patient is his own doctor because he holds the key to his recovery, though the key may be buried deep in his consciousness and thus inaccessible to reason. This demonstrates how the discovery of the 'unconscious' in a therapeutic practice might eventually lead to hypnotism and to some modern forms of psychotherapy.

In 1784, Anne Chastenet Comte de Puységur, one of the three brothers, arrived in Saint Domingue (modern day Haiti) to conduct a hydrographic mission/assignment. In under just one year, he succeeded in spreading his brothers' discovery throughout the island,³⁴ establishing a group of practitioners affiliated to that his brother founded in Strasburg. Kieran Murphy describes how, in Haiti, this new therapy was quickly adopted by plantation owners who tried it on their sick slaves, who recognised in certain of its manifestations similarities to inherited African ones. Murphy³⁵ also recounts that there were excesses and that charlatans abounded.

Pierre de Chazal saw in trances (“convulsions”) a revolting expression of the irrational, whilst others perceived it as charlatanry or, worse, witchcraft. It is worth noting that François did not suggest his uncle be healed of gout through magnetism sessions, but instead offered him a cure. The limitation of Pierre's opinion is arguably that it does not account for the evolution of the practice. By 1787, mesmerism had grown within the framework of a therapeutic practice, as uncovered and developed by Puységur. By 1784, the latter had already trained up nearly two hundred therapists, who interestingly had

³² Sarah Y. Krakauer, *Treating Dissociative Identity Disorder: The Power of the Collective Heart*, 2001, Edwards Brothers, Ann Arbor, MI.

³³ 'Be mesmerized', in English, has come to mean 'be fascinated'.

³⁴ Nine months later, on 25th December 1784, a ministerial dispatch ordered him to stop practicing magnetism and to no longer take his wife on his voyages.

³⁵ Kieran Murphy, *op. cit.* p.40

pledged to practice free of charge. In 1785, Puységur brought Victor Race before Mesmer himself to demonstrate his therapeutic practice. There was a hiatus during the Revolution years.

It's worth noting that Jeanne-Jacquette did not tell her sons which books to buy, instead she asked for 'new' books. We know, from previous letters, that François was always on the lookout for the latest publications. At the time of her writing, these would have included ones by Puységur published in 1784, 1785 and re-issued in 1786.³⁶

Mesmer believed that his own magnetism was a source of healing, whilst Puységur held that the patient carried the source of healing within himself, the magnetizer playing only a facilitator's role. I would suggest that this second version of magnetism is what François was investigating. At a time when France was politically and socially convulsed, how much was François's interest a search for a personal cure and how much a search for a wider truth.

FRANÇOIS' LIBRARY OR THE DARK SIDE OF CURIOSITY

In a letter to Toussaint dated 17th April 1792, François places an order for some newly published books with a list³⁷ including titles on Esoteric Tarot³⁸ and Alchemy³⁹. No one knows whether François received these books, or whether these books were for him or someone else. Yet, this list reveals great personal curiosity, or at the very least, a certain tolerance for that of others. Can we go on to posit, as Bacstrom does, that François was initiated in and practiced the esoteric or occult sciences?⁴⁰ That 18th century scientists, namely Isaac Newton, were known to own books on the occult and associated topics is well documented. Indeed, one of Newton's lesser known ventures is as a prolific alchemist. It is estimated that ten percent of all the words he wrote relate to Alchemy. Though Bacstrom resided at Pamplémousses for eight days in the company of François, Félicité

³⁶Puységur, Amand Marc Jacques de Chastenet, marquis de ; *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire et à l'établissement du magnétisme animal. Sans lieu, 1784. Suivi de : Suite des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire et à l'établissement du magnétisme animal. À Londres, 1785. 2 tomes en un volume in-8 de 232 - 256 pp.*

³⁷ He obviously seemed to be well informed.

³⁸ Christophe Chabbert, *Correspondance de la famille de Chazal, 1767-1879, 2014, l'Harmattan, pp 30-31.*

³⁹ Etteilla [an anagram for Jean-Baptiste Alette], *Les sept nuances de l'œuvre philosophique-hermétique, suivies d'un traité sur la perfection des métaux mis sous l'avant-titre L.D.D.P. [= Le Denier Du Pauvre...], s.l. Paris, s.d. 1786. It can be read online at: <https://archive.org/details/b24923370/page/48>*

⁴⁰ **Occult:** 2.A.2 Not disclosed or divulged, privy, secret; kept secret; communicated only to the initiated. 1533 Bellenden Livy i. (1822) 62 Began to rise ilk day occult slauchteris and cruelteis in his ciete. 1654 H. L'Estrange Chas. I (1655) 60 By occult interests of State. 1673 Ray Journ. Low C., Milan 255 These suffrages are all occult, that is, given by putting of balls into balloting-boxes. 1741 Middleton Cicero I. vi. 457 Ancient and occult sacrifices were polluted. 1841 D'Israeli Amen. Lit. (1867) 203 Printing remained..a secret and occult art. 1885-94 R. Bridges Eros & Psyche July iii, Of their plots occult [they] Sat whispering on their beds. 4.A.4 Of the nature of or pertaining to those ancient and mediæval reputed sciences (or their modern representatives) held to involve the knowledge or use of agencies of a secret and mysterious nature (as magic, alchemy, astrology, theosophy, and the like); also transf. treating of or versed in these; magical, mystical. a 1633 Austin Medit. (1635) 249 Much virtue and power is attributed to these..by the Occult Philosophers. 1651 J. F[reake] (title) Three books of Occult Philosophy, written by Henry Cornelius Agrippa..Translated out of the Latin into the English Tongue. 1711 Shaftesbury Charac. (1737) III. ii. i. 53 From this Parent-Country of occult Sciences..he was presum'd..to have learnt..judicial Astrology. 1832 W. Irving Alhambra I. 216 A beetle of baked clay, covered with Arabic inscriptions, which was pronounced a prodigious amulet of occult virtues. 1851 D. Wilson Preh. Ann. (1863) II. iv. iii. 257 A charm, or occult sign. 1884 H. Jennings Phallicism xiii. 133 An assertion of the occult philosophers. [Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition on CD-ROM (v. 4.0.0.3) © Oxford University Press 2009 All rights reserved.]

and Petit-Radel, he does not mention any esoteric tarot reading sessions with François. There is in truth very little to go by if we are seeking to understand why François was sailing so close in his interests to shores strictly forbidden by the Church. Whether he practiced the esoteric or occult sciences is neither here nor there. It is not something we can know for sure. Therefore, let us return to François' library and instead ponder over what may have become of the 'thousands of books' Sigismund Bacstrom had allegedly noticed,⁴¹ thus lending weight to the notion François held an extraordinary collection.

TOUSSAINT'S ELUSIVE LIBRARY

Matthew Flinders⁴² is claimed to have recorded in his diary that Toussaint inherited François' library, from which Flinders himself borrowed books. Let us first start with Flinders' Journal and look at his interactions with Toussaint:⁴³

[On Wednesday 3rd September 1806] Mr. Chazal, who was visiting for a couple of days, came here with his wife for the day. I borrowed a pocket compass from him, hoping to take down a few measurements in order to check this island's Grants chart, particularly the areas within my remit.

[5th November 1806] Paid a visit this morning to Mr. and Mrs. Chazal who had arrived home from town. Chazal invited me to pay him a visit at home and join in his landscape painting project. Borrowed the plans of his house so as to include it in sketches of my land.

[18th November 1807] Set off with the intention of spending two days with Mr. Froberville at Mocha. Went the long way round, passing near the State House (Le Réduit) and the lower lands of Moka. Arrived at noon. During the two days I spent there, read the first volume of the *Tableau de Paris* by Mr. le Mercier, and a section of the *History of Ratsimalao* chief of the north-eastern region of Madagascar. He entrusted me with three quires of the history, four quires covering three of M. Mayeur's journeys to the north, the south, and the interior of Madagascar and three quires of historical &c. studies of Madagascar, giving me with full freedom to do with them as I thought best, whether this be to carry them to his brother in France in the event of being sent there; to carry out a translation of the whole, or of the history only, and to have it published in England; or to return them should I choose not to take the work on.

[12th January 1808] Recd. from Mr. Morin 5 volumes of *Memoirs of Frederic, his family and court*, by Thiébault, which followed on from the *Tableau de Paris* in my reading programme [16th January 1808] Sent to Mr. Chazal and received 5 volumes of Vaillant's travels in Africa belonging to my friend Pitot. [19th February 1808] Having read five volumes of Le Vaillant's travels in southern Africa, began *Le Traité élémentaire de physique* by M. Haüy, which my friend Charles Desbassyns introduced me to before his

⁴¹ This will be discussed further below.

⁴² For the record, Joseph Bank, the famous botanist, had instructed Captain Matthew Flinders to map the coastline of Australia. Detained several years in Mauritius as a political prisoner, Flinders met his neighbour, Toussaint Antoine de Chazal, who, on 26th December 1806, asked him if he could paint his portrait ["copy my face, of a natural size"]. Toussaint was so skilled that it took only five sittings to complete the portrait on 10th January 1807. Flinders also states that Toussaint's wife was an accomplished harpsichordist. The painting ranks among some of the most expensive paintings in the world. The Portrait of Captain Matthew Flinders, RN, 1774-1814, is now at the Art Gallery of South Australia. In Matthew Flinders, *Private Journal from 17 December 1803 at Isle of France to 10 July 1814* at London, 2005, Friends of the State Library of South Australia, 566 pages.

⁴³ Matthew Flinders, *ibid*.

departure. (...) Mr. and Mrs. Chazal spent the evening with us [10th February 1809] Recd. 5 volumes of the *Monthly Repertory* up until October 1808, which I gather my friend Pitot received through the *Gazelle*. [Wednesday, 1st March 1809] We learned this morning that Mrs Chazal, who dined with us yesterday, delivered a baby boy⁴⁴ into this world, a cause of great rejoicing in the family. The two Chazal brothers have an uncle in France who has £4,000 a year, which they are to inherit. This uncle ardently wished for a great-nephew who might inherit his fortune after his two nephews, who up until now have only sired daughters. [30th December 1809] Since the arrival of the La Henriette cartel, I have mostly been busy reading newspapers sent me by Mr. Pitot, a volume of the 1808 *Edinburgh Review*, and Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV*, and that by his successor. [15th February 1810] My friend Pitot, who hoped to have the voyage of Baudin amongst other books on board Le Fantome in Bourbon, says that his correspondent writes that only one of its volumes has been published last September. [28th February 1811] Dull mild weather. Went out early to Mr. Toulmin about my pursery accounts, which do not do well; not finding him, bought *Quarterly Reviews* and *Monthly magazines* to send out to Mr. Pitot, I. of France.

So, what do we learn?

Flinders mentions Toussaint over two hundred times in his Journal. And yet, when they met it was for outdoor activities, such as excursions, visiting their properties, hunting or society and social activities such as spending a few days at Toussaint and Laurence's estate,⁴⁵ picnicking,⁴⁶ playing chess or tric-trac (a type of backgammon), discussing the news, encouraging Toussaint's painting endeavours,⁴⁷ making social calls, etc. Flinders also played the flute and would accompany Laurence, Toussaint's wife, a skilled harpsichord player.

Flinders never borrowed any of Toussaint's books. What he does borrow though is usually of a practical nature: a compass, plans. There is no mention of Toussaint and Flinders discussing books. On the contrary, Flinders borrows books from Thomas Pitot, Morin, Froberville and others upon their very first meeting. Later, having returned to Blighty, Flinders would send Pitot books. From Flinders' diary, we are given to understand Pitot as

⁴⁴ Edmond.

⁴⁵ September 3, 1805: 'After breakfast, I went for a walk with Mr. Chazal to visit part of his vast plantation (about 400 hectares). Towards the western limit, we arrived at a steep descent from where we see the sea; and on the other hand, you could see the end of a deep valley which formed an amphitheater and in part of which falls a waterfall but which we have not visited for the moment. " Flinders will always describe Toussaint's hospitality as generous and down-to-earth. September 2, 1805: 'I was a little tired, but Mr. Boistel offering me his horse, I accepted the invitation and, after drinking tea with Mrs. Cove and this family, I went out supper: M Chazal welcomed me with his usual kindness. I stayed there all night.'

⁴⁶ On 17th January 1808, he notes: 'This afternoon we passed agreeably with our neighbors Chazal to eat a carrie dans les bois.' [In French and underlined by Flinders]

⁴⁷ In a December 1806 letter to his brother Samuel, Flinders presents Toussaint as an accomplished and pragmatic artist and Laurence as an exceptional harpsichordist. There is also, interesting detail, the mention that Toussaint had already been to England before. 'Our close neighbors, MM. Chazal and Chevreau, married to two sisters; they are both respectable inhabitants or planters and the first was in England, is an excellent painter and a man of good sense: his lady is the first interpreter of harpsichord at the Isle of France, and I am often accompanied with my flute. On 21st January 1807, he noted: 'We went after dinner to visit Mr and Mrs Chazal, accompanied by Mr Labauve. After examining his paintings and drawings with chalk, I spent the evening accompanying Madame to the Stilbelt Sonatas while M. Labauve organized a tric-trac party with Monsieur: we found them both with head and steam, but we left them in better health and good mood.'

a book-lover⁴⁸ and a writer in his own right. When Toussaint does later on give Flinders books, these originally came from Pitot. One wonders whether Toussaint shared François' love of reading.

A detail worth noting: on 19th February 1808, Flinders writes he has completed five volumes of Le Vaillant's *Voyage to South Africa*.⁴⁹ However, seventeen years previously, in a letter dated 28th September 1791, François de la Genesté also mentions having read a recent book on Jean-François Levaillant's explorations of Africa. Flinders was expecting these books from Pitot, and Toussaint knew their titles, but he does not respond and gives instead the impression of not being aware of them. These were Pitot's, not Toussaint's books. One could go so far as to suggest Toussaint never asked Flinders to select books on travels and explorations, though we know that François de la Genesté owned several.

And what of the foreign language books Bacstrom mentions? Once more, it is Pitot and visitors passing through Mauritius who were responsible for lending him English copies. Would François though have had such books in his collection?

From Flinders diary, one cannot help but conclude Toussaint was no longer in possession of François' library, or at least not of any books Flinders might have been interested in – which is to say a fair few! Perhaps Thomas Pitot now owns these books; they were after all friends and neighbours.

If Toussaint did not read as much nor enjoy the same topics as François, it certainly seems plausible that the Natural History Cabinet, as most of his books, were no longer in his possession. Knowing that his uncle Pierre admired this Cabinet, it is understandable he might be in no hurry to reveal this. What is nevertheless intriguing is that Pierre never mentions this magnificent library. Beyond speculations, what is certain is that nothing of this features in Flinders' diary.

FRANÇOIS AND SIGISMUND OR THE BEGINNING OF A MYTH

For almost 150 years François was remembered in Mauritius as a civil servant of great virtue. However, during all these years and beginning shortly after his death he was cast in a different light in British circles. Some people recalled him as a man with a mysterious private life devoted to alchemy. Then, in the late 1940's an astonishing account of him emerged from France, casting him as an occultist and heir to an esoteric millennial tradition. According to this, François not only knew how to transmute gold, but had also uncovered the secret to immortality. Let us evaluate these trans-generational opinions by retracing the course of events by timescale, considering the lives of the most notable of those involved.

Towards the end of the 18th century, a naval surgeon named Sigismund Bacstrom⁵⁰, who

⁴⁸ I was tempted to use the word 'bibliophile'. However, this word does not appear until 1824 as recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary.

⁴⁹ Jean-François Levaillant, *Voyage de Monsieur Le Vaillant dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique : par le Cap de Bonne-Espérance, dans les années 1780, 81, 82, 83, 84 & 85*. À Paris : Chez Leroy, libraire ... ;1790. <https://ia802708.us.archive.org/16/items/voyagedemonsieur11790leva/voyagedemonsieur11790leva.pdf>

⁵⁰ He claimed to have studied medicine, surgery and chemistry at the University of Strasbourg. However, this university could not find any document proving its registration. He was successively thought to be Swedish, German or Dutch. However, the preference of some authors leans towards a birth in Germany of a Swedish father and the years 1763 to 1770 spent as a surgeon on Dutch ships, Bacstrom writing some English diphthongs using a digraph proper to Dutch. In Marylebone, London, he had a chemistry laboratory funded by a

lived in England, fetched up in Mauritius. He had been Joseph Banks' secretary⁵¹ from 1772 to 1775 and had worked with patrons connected to Banks. He had previously been a member of scientific expeditions and his task was to collect plants. He also described and made drawings of the people groups he met during his travels. Bacstrom was well acquainted with some of London's Freemasons, Banks himself being one of them.

Around November 1793⁵², at Canton, where his Mauritian (i.e. French) ship had been seized by the British, he signed up as a surgeon aboard the *Warren Hastings*⁵³, a 600-ton former Indiaman⁵⁴ under Genoese colours. The ship had a British captain, a crew of thirteen different nations and was bound for the Cape of Good Hope and Oostende. However, led by the second captain, a Frenchman, the French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian members of the crew mutinied and took possession of the ship, imprisoning Bacstrom and other passengers under the deck. They sailed on to Mauritius where the ship and its cargo were seized as war prizes⁵⁵.

After six months in Mauritius, Bacstrom bought a passage on an American ship bound for New York and paid \$300. However, his ship was captured by a British warship, this time in the Virgin Islands, and again, the ship and the cargo were seized as a war prize. Thanks to the help of the governor of the British Virgin Islands, George Leonard, Bacstrom finally arrived home in London on 23rd July 1795, four years and eight months after his departure. Once in England, he found himself penniless and could not make a living of either his travel stories or the illustrations⁵⁶ he had brought back with him. Worse still, he was not able to live off his scientific knowledge either. In a letter to Joseph Banks written on his arrival, Bacstrom writes that on board the ship *Amelia* ['The *Emilie*', who had brought him to Canton in 1793], he had engaged in esoteric studies of the Old Testament and Hebrew. In this way, he had designed⁵⁷ 'a sort of system to help to understand the curious scientific allegories of the Old Testament'. He put his thoughts into writing with a view to publish⁵⁸ and, to that end, he started looking for subscribers. However, he could not find any. He then turned his attention to writing esoteric books on alchemy and developed an important

stranger and engaged in scientific experiments. He had been married in 1782 to Jane Billin. [In Susan Mitchell Sommers, *The Siblings of London a Family on the Esoteric Fringes of Georgian England*, 2018, Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism. ISBN: 9780190687328.] After a few years he finds himself penniless and then agrees to be a member of a commercial expedition to which he will strive to give a scientific colour. It is this trip that we are retracing here.

⁵¹ Bacstrom had a clear and legible handwriting and was a polyglot.

⁵² Douglas Cole, *Sigismund Bacstrom's Northwest Coast Drawings and an Account of His Curious Career*, British Columbia Studies 46 (Summer 1980), p. 61-86. Read online <https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/bcstudies/article/view/1057/1095>

⁵³ No boat with the matching name and circumstances as described by Bacstrom has been found so far. Oddly enough, all through the following year he did not make any illustration.

⁵⁴ Vessel of variable type (galleon, frigate, brig, etc.), chartered or armed by the English East India Company (a.k.a HEIC for 'The Honorable East India Company') or the Dutch East India Company (a.k.a VOC for Vereenigde Oostindische Company).

⁵⁵ Back then England and France were at war.

⁵⁶ Read: *Drawings and sketches made during a voyage around the world, 1791-1795*. Published/Created: 1792-1800, bulk 1792-1794. Physical Description: 63 drawings: pencil, pen-and-ink, and watercolor; 42.8 x 31.1 cm. and smaller. Purchased by Paul Mellon from C.A. Stonehill, 1967. Bequest of Paul Mellon (Yale 1929), 2000. Beinecke Digital Library- <https://orbexpress.library.yale.edu/vwebv/holding-sInfo?bibId=4758435>

⁵⁷ In Kew Gardens, *Banks Papers*, 2.153. Bacstrom to Banks, 18 November 1796.

⁵⁸ It looks as if this 'true and rational' system has been lost.

esoteric and occult movement that accepted women⁵⁹. Bacstrom gathered around him a small circle of occult students, among whom he circulated his own English translations⁶⁰ of Latin, German, and French alchemical texts⁶¹. Ebenezer Sibly⁶² and Charles Rainsford⁶³ were among this group. From these gatherings, a revival of alchemy⁶⁴ was born which, later, under the impulse of Frederick Hockley⁶⁵ (1809-85), developed in the West.

In London, Bacstrom lived openly as an occultist and very quickly began to tell his friends about his initiation into the Rosicrucian order, a hitherto secret order, very mysterious and somewhat clouded in a legend. The Rose-Croix (Rosa Crucis) claimed to be descended from the Essenes and alleged it counted among its ranks the most famous game changers of history including Jesus. Oddly enough for an initiate who claimed to have been himself initiated in absolute secrecy, Bacstrom revealed that his initiation into the Rose-Croix had happened during his forced stay in Mauritius and he mentioned the document attesting to this initiation. He never made any mystery about this event, even giving the impression of seeking a little publicity. The oath of allegiance of Bacstrom, the apprentice, to the Rose-Croix was signed by the Master initiator himself and dated 12th September 1794.

This Master was none other than François de Chazal de la Genesté. In September 1794, Sigismund Bacstrom was 44 years old, whilst François de Chazal was 63 years old and had little less than a year left to live.

For a long time, this document's existence was known only to select circles in England.

⁵⁹ Here we can see a clear difference between the Rose-Croix that was open to women and Freemasonry that was not. It looks as if he never composed any treatise himself.

⁶⁰ A collection of Bacstrom's manuscripts is now in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu. The famous Mrs. Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, financed the publication of one of his esoteric translations. Bacstrom's books were read by other influential British occultists and served as references to the beliefs of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The Grand Master of the Golden Dawn was the Irish poet William Butler Yeats, a Nobel Prize winner in 1923, then followed by Arthur Edward Waite.

⁶¹ One wonders where he found these texts which, for many, were very little known e.g. *The Golden Chain of Homer* by Anton Joseph Kirchweyer († 1746).

⁶² Ebenezer Sibly (1751 - ca.1799) was a surgeon (he had bought his degree) and an astrologer. However, Susan Mitchell Sommers seems to think that Sigismund and Ebenezer barely knew each other. He had a Swedenborgian brother. The two brothers, passionate alchemists, left books dealing with occultism. In Susan Mitchell Sommers, *The Siblings of London a Family on the Esoteric Fringes of Georgian England*, 2018, Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism. ISBN: 9780190687328.


⁶³ Charles Rainsford (1728-1809), a cousin of Joseph Banks, Freemason and Swedenborgian, was an army general and a governor of Gibraltar. An expert in Maritime History writes: 'Charles Rainsford, intellectual and Freemason and cousin of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society frequented the area [Wellclose Square, London], probably to use the services of Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom, the Alchemist, a ships-surgeon. A translator of alchemic texts and an influential figure in London's secret and shadowy world of occult learning, Bacstrom was well known in East London and was most probably an intimate of Dr. Samuel Falk, the *Baal Shem* of London, a resident of Wellclose Square close to the Swedish Church. 'In Ken Cozens, *Swedes, Merchants, Freemasons and East India Company Agents in 18th Century East London*, January 5, 2016. <http://porttowns.port.ac.uk/swedes-merchants/>

⁶⁴ Adam McLean claimed that Bacstrom was 'one of the most learned alchemists of the last centuries'. In McLean, Adam. *Bacstrom's Rosicrucian Society*. Hermetic Journal No.6 1979

⁶⁵ Frederick Hockley (1808 / 1809-1885) was an English Freemason and Rosicrucian. A well-known occultist, he had built up a huge collection of texts, books and publications on occultism. He was thus led to own a copy of the Bacstrom document. By mentioning the content of Bacstrom's experience, Hockley was going to trigger a huge fad with the British elites for occultism. Read: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Hockley. Frederick Hockley had in his personal library copies of Bacstrom's manuscripts and original documents which he had made of his own hand.

Frederick Hockley made a copy, which was later found in his library by Arthur Edward Waite. Hockley and Waite were famous occultists in England, and Waite made this document widely known in his *Real History of the Rosicrucians* published in 1887.

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En-tête, cul-de-lampe et lettre ornée d'ÉMILIE ROCHER et FRANÇOIS MARECHAL.

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Special issue of the Voile d'Isis of August / September 1927 with references to Chazal and Guénon.

Waite would play a very important role in the Anglo-Saxon world because he would present the occultism of the West not so much as a so-called science or a diabolical medieval practice, but rather as an authentic spiritual tradition. It is the Chazal/Bacstrom document, which in his opinion, was the main evidence of that tradition because it finally offered the

proof that there had always been a chain of transmission of knowledge and practices between masters and initiates. This chain had never been lost, as many had wrongly believed; instead, it had all along been an ancient, permanent and secret reality. What Chazal, then, passed down to Bacstrom was a message springing from the dawn of time, across the centuries, over to an Occident thirsty for spirituality. That is why, according to Waite, this event was a defining moment and marked a paradigm shift in the occult traditions.

On discovering Malcolm 150 years later, some French literati would connect the dots between these two Chazal. Then, a parallel with a mysterious character of the past would cast François as an even more enigmatic character.

It is therefore legitimate to ask ourselves now, whether François was a Rosicrucian or not.

CHRONIQUES

Le message philosophique et poétique

de MALCOLM DE CHAZAL

par Aimé PATRI

J'ai devancé accidentellement Jean Paulhan dans l'entreprise de faire connaître l'œuvre étonnante de Malcolm de Chazal intitulée : *Sens plastique* qui n'a été tirée qu'à trois cents exemplaires par un éditeur de l'île Maurice et dont, seul, le tome II m'est parvenu. A la suite d'un article paru dans la page littéraire de *Combat*, l'auteur des *Fleurs de Tarbes* a bien voulu m'écrire qu'il considérait Malcolm de Chazal, hier encore parfaitement inconnu, comme étant vraiment « un homme de génie », contribuer encore dans une autre lettre à lever mes dernières réserves en précisant qu'il estimait comme moi le message de ce philosophe poète mauricien d'une importance égale à celle des *Chants de Maldoror*. Cependant, dans l'intervalle, mon ami Armand Guibert, se prévalant d'un séjour personnel à l'île Maurice, avait adressé, à propos de mon article, une lettre indignée à la rédaction de *Combat*. Selon ce grand voyageur, l'œuvre de Malcolm de Chazal, « forcée, antinaturelle, voire monstrueuse », est indigne de retenir l'attention d'un homme normal. Dans une correspondance ultérieure, il me donnait à son tour d'intéressantes précisions sur les réactions des

RENÉ GUÉNON AND MALCOLM

Aimé Patri⁶⁶ and Jean Paulhan, both authors, were among the very first in France to mention Malcolm in relation to his work. Malcolm, an unknown quantity until then, is hailed as 'a genius'. Malcolm was obviously over the moon and, for some, quickly became a national treasure. In his writings, Patri would also mention the existence of the Chazal/Bacstrom document.

It is then that René Guénon (1886-1951) appeared on stage. Guénon was a Sufi mystic

⁶⁶ *Combat*, August 23, 1947. Patri makes it clear in another article (see scan above) that, well before Jean Paulhan, he had 'discovered' Malcom. In PATRI, Aimé. "Le Message Philosophique Et Poétique De MALCOLM DE CHAZAL." *Présence Africaine*, no. 1, 1947, pp. 137-142. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/24346689.

whose curiosity and culture about all things esoteric was phenomenal. Immensely famous in his field, he rebuilt the esoteric intellectual elites of his time and anchored them to the traditions of the East, which he believed had remained stainless. He wanted, among other things, to show the perfect harmony of Christianity with all the other forms of the universal tradition of occultism. According to him, esotericism and occultism were authentic spiritual quests on a par with Christianity.

Guénon remembered having read a text by François. Indeed, in 1927, Guénon had himself published an article entitled *The Gift of Tongues* in the special issue of *Voile d'Isis* of August /September 1927. In this same magazine, there was a text ascribed to François (translated in French by Auriger) which was none other than the Chazal/Bacstrom document.

Guénon wrote to Malcolm to draw his attention to this little-known aspect of the personality and activities of his ancestor. François, it appeared, was keen on occultism and alchemy and maintained a friendly but secret relationship with the mysterious Count of Saint-Germain. In his letter, Guénon tried, diplomatically, to probe this secret and deftly suggested that there might be a kind of spiritual affinity or a shared vision of the world between François and Malcolm. What is remarkable here is that Guénon seemed to think it would be quite natural for the family to remember, 150 years later, that François was an initiate alchemist. Guénon was so convinced of the validity of the alchemic quest that he did not see why he should surround himself with secrets.

Malcolm would quote Guénon's request in a letter of 15th October 1947 to Jean Paulhan. Guénon had written:

I will allow myself, since the opportunity arises, to ask you a question: I have often heard of your family, and among other things, I have heard before that the Marquis of Chazal, who moved to Mauritius in the late eighteenth century, would have been a disciple of the Count of Saint Germain and even depository of his secret. Did his current descendants retain any memory of it? If it is not too indiscreet, I would be very interested to know what it is.'

Malcolm, who at the time was already struggling to prove to the Paris intelligentsia that his genius owed nothing to Swedenborg⁶⁷, was upset. He was even more so when he found nothing of relevance in the family archives or in those of Mauritius⁶⁸. Later though, he would say that he had found a mention of François de la Genesté:

François de Chazal de la Genesté, my ancestor (1731-1796), whom René Guénon declares to have been the friend of the Count of Saint-Germain and the repository of his secrets, came with his brother François-Régis de Chazal de Chamarel, to settle in Mauritius in 1763. La Genesté lived near Pieter-Both, which I describe in this tale, and had a home at Creve-Coeur. The man was Rosicrucian and an initiate. Everyone here ignores his spiritual affiliation - including my own family. The annals⁶⁹ of the English Freemasonry that I have just dug out (testimony of Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom, who met Chazal on the Mauritius Island and saw him perform his miracles and was initiated by him to the Rose-Croix) declare that Chazal got

⁶⁷ Jean Paulhan was the first to make the connection between Malcolm and Swedenborg through another Chazal, Edmond. Malcolm was not amused, preferring to think that he owed nothing to anyone for his poetic vision of the world.

⁶⁸ He had consulted Auguste Toussaint, Mauritius chief archivist. However, we already know what these archives had already revealed to d'Épinay.

⁶⁹ These annals are clouded with mystery. It seems as if Malcolm is summarizing here different statements about François. According to Christophe Chabbert, the first English wife of Malcolm's brother would have put him up to that. Read: Christophe Chabbert, *Malcolm de Chazal, l'homme des genèses. De la recherche des origines à la découverte de l'avenir perdu ?* 2001, Éditions de l'Harmattan.

the Lapis Animalis and made alchemical gold at will. Through the Chazalian initiation, we retrace the last stalks of the Rosicrucian in Europe and some details of its genesis, (see *Paracelsus, the cursed doctor*, Dr. René Allendy⁷⁰, a Mauritian, Gallimard, ed.). Chazal de la Genesté was a visionary. His double vision⁷¹ allowed him to describe all the vicissitudes of the French Revolution, while Mauritius was totally cut off from Europe. Like every real initiate, nothing 'visible' has remained of this man - except these few details. Chazal de la Genesté is buried in the cemetery of Pamplemousses, in the very neighbourhood where he lived near the places where Bernardin de Saint Pierre placed his mythical characters Paul and Virginie. Because of his spiritual affiliation with the legendary Count of St. Germain, because of his alchemical miracles, because of his metaphysical stature, his Rosicrucian initiation, and the high position assigned to him in Freemasonry, a mystery bathes the life of Chazal de la Genesté. I am now pushing my research towards this past, to explain it to myself, and to exhume the magical ashes of my island⁷².

This begs the question: did Bacstrom and Chazal ever meet?

THE CHAZAL-BACSTROM MEETING

Bacstrom wrote of his meeting with Chazal in a manuscript entitled *Anecdotes on the Count of Chazal FRC*⁷³ and again in a letter dated 16th March 1804⁷⁴ to Alexandre Tilloch. Frederick Hockley had a copy of it because in a letter dated 12th August 1874 to his friend Irwin, he says he owns, among other documents, the manuscript *Anecdotes*⁷⁵ of the Count de Chazal, F.R.C. These original documents though were destroyed at the end of the 19th century in a fire at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society. Some occultist writers, however, are suspicious of the intentions of the Theosophical society and still doubt that these documents have really disappeared.

Some historical clues in what Bacstrom himself told his friends seem to indicate that he may have met Chazal. Let's examine the evidence. Here is how John W. Hamilton Jones summed up the circumstances of this meeting in his introduction to *Bacstrom's Alchemical Anthology*⁷⁶:

'Interest in Bacstrom derives from his account of an extraordinary happening which occurred to him when he was in the Island of Mauritius, he being, at that time, the doctor

⁷⁰ René Allendy, *Paracelse, le médecin maudit*, 1937, Collection Leurs Figures, Gallimard. The French René Félix Eugène Allendy (1889-1942) was a famous homeopathic doctor, psychoanalyst and occultist. He analyzed Antonin Artaud and, in 1932, had a passionate relationship with Anais Nin, a relationship she recounts in her memoirs. Guénon strongly influenced Allendy and enthused Artaud. Allendy sought to build bridges between psychoanalysis and oriental thought. He did not seem to have any connection with Mauritius.

⁷¹ This topic will be discussed later.

⁷² Malcolm de Chazal, *Petrusmok*, Port Louis, The oval table, 1979, pp. 22 and 23

⁷³ FRC = Frater Rosae Crucis i.e. Brother of the Rose-Cross is a title that a man, who was initiated into the tenth degree of the Rosicrucians, can put after his name.

⁷⁴ Letter of 16th March 1804 to Alexandre Tilloch. Bacstrom has only one year to live. There is a very surprising description of the life of François and a conversation in excellent French between them. In *The Astrologer, and Oracle of Destiny*, 1845, Vol. 1: *A Repository of the Wonderful in Nature and the Curious in Art*, 2018, Forgotten books, ISBN-10: 0243594615. Page 118. It can also be downloaded as an eBook on Google Play.

⁷⁵ The whole text can be read in *Letters to the Irwin*, The Rosicrucian Seer, p. 64-65- <https://epdf.tips/the-rosicrucian-seer-magical-writings-of-frederick-hockley-roots-of-the-golden-d.html>

⁷⁶ *Bacstrom's Alchemical Anthology*. Edited with an introduction by J.W. Hamilton-Jones. [With plates.], London, John M. Watkins, 1960. This text will later be quoted in: *Thot's letter*. FGR © Unpublished article for the LdT 55 - July 2008 - http://thot.arcadia.free.fr/arcadia/webzine/webzine_no55.html#dernier-article

on the ship Harriet under Captain Daddy, bound for New York. According to his own account, whilst in Port Louis, he met with a French doctor by the name of Petit Radel who had fled from France during the Revolution. Dr Radel introduced Bacstrom to Comte Louis de Chazal, and de Chazal very promptly initiated Bacstrom into a Societas Rosae Crucis, administering the appropriate oath of allegiance, issuing a certificate of Membership and certifying as follows: “I have initiated and received Mr Sigismund Bacstrom, Doctor of Physic, as a practical member and Brother, above an Apprentice, in consequence of his solid learning, which I certify by my name and seal: Mauritius, 12 Sept. 1794, De Chazal, F.R.C.”

Bacstrom⁷⁷ then speaks of the trigger into his initiation and writes:

'As he [the count] perceived by frequent conversations while we were alone ... walking in his vast gardens or alone in the library, that I knew the theory of Lapis Philosophorum [i.e. the Philosopher's Stone] and knew the classical authors⁷⁸ well, he initiated me⁷⁹ and communicated to me his practical work and I wrote from his mouth all the procedure of the Lapis Animalis as it had worked.'

John W. Hamilton Jones continues:

'The Comte de Chazal died in 1795, at the age of 97 years, the year following Bacstrom's Initiation. Perhaps, it was due to a foreknowledge of his approaching end that prompted the Comte's desire to work the process again from the beginning, for the instruction and benefit of his new disciple, but such was not to be, for we learn from Bacstrom: 'He offered me 30,000 Spanish dollars⁸⁰ if I would stay with him one year to work the process once more from the beginning, but having already received orders from the President of the Colonial Assembly (i.e., the sanculotte Government of the Island) to go on board the Harriet bound for New York, I durst not stay, and when the worthy old man heard that of me, he wept like a child'.

What can we learn from these sources?

- The mention of Petit-Radel⁸¹ is interesting. Philippe Petit-Radel (1749-1815) was a French surgeon who had already spent two or three years in Surat, state of Gujarat, India, where he had interned as a surgeon-major with a regiment. Returning to the country, he fled France for the East Indies in June 1793 i.e. at the beginning of the Terror in the country. During the crossing, he saved a young girl from a serious illness and fell madly in love with her. However, his feelings were unrequited, and he was rejected in favour of another suitor. He would always remain faithful to the memory of this love though and would never marry. He lived for two years in Réunion Island, went to America and then returned to France around 1797-1798.

⁷⁷ *Bacstrom's Alchemical Anthology*, page 6.

⁷⁸ Ancient authors of books on esoteric or occult practices.

⁷⁹ In a letter, Bacstrom will say that he was alone with Chazal, Petit-Radel being conversing with François's wife.

⁸⁰ Piastre or Spanish dollar. The Spanish dollar is the American name for the Spanish peso or peso also called '8' coin. The number 8 will give the dollar symbol \$. In the 17th century a slave was worth 200 dollars. Bacstrom will also say somewhere else that Chazal gave him \$ 300, which he used to pay for his trip back home.

⁸¹ Constant Saucerotte, *Les médecins pendant la Révolution*, Éd. Louis Pariente, 1989 ISBN 978-2-902474-55-4 - Mireille Habert, *Philippe Petit-Radel, Un voyageur dans l'océan Indien*. Journée de l'Antiquité, Apr. 2009, Saint Denis, France.

Le général d'Herville meurt à Paris, le 19 juin 1830, à l'âge de plus de 81 ans.

Le plan de défense que d'Herville présente est daté du 1er janvier 1797. Il se trouve aux archives du ministère de la marine et des colonies. D'Herville, dans les dernières années de sa vie, a détruit une collection de notes sur l'Inde et l'île France qui eussent été précieuses à consulter.

— Arrivée à l'île de France de Petit-Radel. Je ne peux mieux faire que de transcrire ici le préambule d'un intéressant travail qui a été publié dans le journal *The Merchants and Planters Gazette* de l'île Maurice, le 29 et le 30 septembre 1885. Petit-Radel eut pour frère aîné Louis François, architecte, et pour frère cadet Louis Charles François, archéologue. Ce fut à Surate qu'il séjourna pendant près de cinq années.

Voici la note dont il est question, et qui est due à M. Théodore Sauzier.

“ Philippe Petit Radel, chirurgien et littérateur français, est né le 7 février 1740, à Paris, où il est mort le 3 novembre 1815, après une vie tourmentée. Maître-ès-arts à dix-sept ans, il entra, par concours, à l'hôpital de la Charité. Après avoir obtenu une médaille, il fut nommé aide-major aux Invalides ; et ne continua pas moins ses études médicales et chirurgicales sous la direction de Sabatier, qui lui fut un maître toujours cher.

“ Nommé, en 1774, chirurgien-major du roi pour les possessions françaises de l'Inde, il occupa ce poste pendant cinq ans, et en profita pour se fortifier dans la langue anglaise. ce qui, plus tard, en 1787, lui permit de donner et de publier plusieurs traductions d'ouvrages de médecine écrits en anglais.

“ A son retour en France, il se fit recevoir docteur en médecine de l'Université de Rennes (1779), et ensuite à Paris. Il ouvrit, dans cette capitale, une école particulière, et, pendant deux ans, il y enseigna l'anatomie et la chirurgie. En 1788, il fut pourvu de la chaire de chirurgie. Il s'occupait à collaborer à l'*Encyclopédie méthodique*, lorsque éclata la Révolution.

“ Le 10 août 1792, après avoir prononcé un discours latin d'apparat, il quitta brusquement la capitale et s'enfuit à Bordeaux. Il y faisait des cours publics, quand il fut enrôlé, malgré lui, comme soldat. On voulut l'obliger à marcher contre les insurgés de la Vendée. Mais il réussit à s'échapper de nouveau ; et, en juin 1793, il prit passage sur le *Pigou*, vaisseau américain qui avait été frété pour l'île de France. Après un assez long séjour dans cette colonie, qu'il mit

“ trois mois à parcourir dans tous les sens, il se rendit à l'île Bourbon, et y demeura environ deux ans, jusqu'au jour où il apprit que le capitaine Lewis, qui l'avait amené de Bordeaux quelques années auparavant, était à l'île de France. Il alla l'y rejoindre, et partit avec lui pour les grandes Indes, en avril 1796.

“ De là, il se rendit aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique, en relâchant à l'île de France

“ De retour pour la seconde fois dans sa patrie, en 1797, il reprit ses études médicales et ses travaux littéraires. Appelé, en 1798, par le suffrage de l'école de médecine de Paris, à la chaire de clinique chirurgicale, Petit-Radel s'y distingua par sa sévérité et par son zèle à rétablir l'ancien usage de parler latin. Il avait pour la langue latine un goût dominant...”

Petit-Radel, tout puritain qu'il était, publia, en cette même langue latine, des poèmes érotiques de très-mauvais goût.

27 Novembre.—Ile de France. Demande, par la société des Amis de la Liberté et de l'Égalité, de la destitution du vice-amiral de Saint-Félix, et de quelques uns de ses officiers.

28 Novembre.—Ile de France. Nouvelles attributions du pouvoir judiciaire, déjà promulguées à l'île de la Réunion le 19 août précédent

29 Novembre.—Un service solennel est chanté à l'église paroissiale du Port-Nord-Ouest en l'honneur de la mort de Marat.

Ile de France. L'assemblée coloniale arrête la destitution de M. de Saint-Félix.

1er Décembre.—Le commissaire civil approuve la destitution de M. de Saint-Félix.

2 Décembre.—Le gouverneur Malartic consent à la destitution de M. de Saint-Félix pour assurer la tranquillité publique.

14 Décembre.—Ile de France. Il est enjoint par l'autorité supérieure à tout possesseur de goudron d'en faire la déclaration.

28 Décembre.—L'assemblée coloniale prend un arrêté qui délègue un commissaire exerçant les fonctions de juge du tribunal de première instance.

— L'abbé Hoffman, ancien militaire, curé de l'église paroissiale du Port-Nord-Ouest de l'île de France, est le seul prêtre de tout le territoire français qui, sous la Terreur, ait su faire respecter la religion par les Sans-culottes eux-mêmes. Il les faisait accompagner le Saint-Sacrement, en armes, pendant les processions, dans le plus profond recueillement.

Arrival of Petit Radel in Mauritius⁸², October 1793

- Petit-Radel was a somewhat odd character. He was not into esotericism, but he liked Latin, played the flute very well and spoke fluent English. He wrote erotic poems and books on as varied and unusual topics such as: *Essay on Milk*, *Treatise on Absorbing Vessels, translated from Cruikshank*; *On diseases and accidents that*

⁸² Adrien d'Épinay (son), *op. cit.*, p. 342/3

require prompt relief; Handbook of Medicine and the Unusual Tips for women from forty-five to fifty-five, etc. He was a Freemason⁸³. There is evidence⁸⁴ that Petit-Radel was in Mauritius in 1793 with a Dr. Macé who had been there since 1791 and together they explored the island. Adrien d'Épinay wrote he arrived in Mauritius around October 1793. The initiation, according to Bacstrom, was made in September 1794 after six months of forced residence in Mauritius, so he would have had to meet Petit-Radel after March 1794. It is very possible, therefore, that they did meet for there is ample evidence that Petit-Radel arrived in Bourbon in 1794⁸⁵.

- It is mentioned that on meeting Chazal Bacstrom had already signed up as a surgeon aboard a boat bound for America. This seems to indicate that the meeting with Chazal was a rushed one and happened towards the end of his stay in Mauritius. Moreover, he himself wrote that he left the island hurriedly under the pressure of the revolutionary government, which he described with historical precision as 'sans-culotte'. Indeed, after reading Bacstrom's writings, one has a strong impression that both the meetings with Petit-Radel and François took place towards the end of his stay just before leaving.
- Petit-Radel and Bacstrom were surgeons, spoke English and were Freemasons: this could add to the likelihood of them meeting. Was Chazal a member of a Masonic Lodge⁸⁶ too? We do not know for sure.
- Petit-Radel introduced Bacstrom to Chazal. Why and on what basis? How did Petit-Radel get to know Chazal? We do not know. However, the man must have been important enough for Adrien Lépinay to mention him. Petit-Radel was a medical doctor, a surgeon and a Medical School professor. Did François meet him in this professional capacity?
- Chazal may have had very broad views, but it is quite surprising that he would have invited Bacstrom on his estate for Bacstrom was 'persona non grata' in the colony.

⁸³ Alain Le Bihan, *LA FRANC-MAÇONNERIE DANS LES COLONIES FRANÇAISES DU XVIII^e SIÈCLE*, Annales historiques de la Révolution française, 46e Année, No. 215 (Janvier-Mars 1974), pp. 39-62, Armand Colin.

⁸⁴ Anthony Cheke, Julian P. Hume, *"Lost land of the dodo": an ecological history of Mauritius, Réunion, Rodrigues*, 2008, Yale University Press, p.316 - Adrien d'Épinay also mentions his presence in Mauritius.

⁸⁵ We know that Petit-Radel made a trip to Bourbon in 1794 which he related in a book first written in Latin but published in French: *Un voyage à l'île Bourbon en 1794*, dans *Album Roussin*, Saint Denis 1865, t.4 – There is also a mention of Petit-Radel staying in Bourbon in 1794. In Nathalie Valentine Legros & Geoffroy Gérard Legros, *L'étrange château du Gol et les dromadaires*, La Réunion, pays oublié, jeudi, 4 septembre 2014, Chroniques réunionnaises à quatre mains, avec Geoffroy Gérard et Valentine Legros - http://7lameslamer.net/spip.php?page=imprimer_articulo&id_article=1100

⁸⁶ The Twenty-One Lodge (Loge des Vingt-Un) was founded in Mauritius between 1779 and 1781 under the leadership of Ricard de Bignicourt. It disappeared before 1807. However, it is difficult to imagine François being a member of this lodge because it was made up of masons of a lower social class and, besides, there were very few of them. In 1789 there were only 16 members. In Sandra Danielle Brinda Venkaya-Reichert. *La franc-maçonnerie à l'île Maurice de 1778 à 1915 : entre influences françaises et britanniques, la construction d'une identité mauricienne*. 2017. Histoire. Université Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux.

In his letter of 16th March 1804 to Alexander Tilloch, Bacstrom is said to have stayed 8 days with Chazal and Petit-Radel on François' estate.

- Finally, the date of 12th September 1794 invites extensive research. The month of September 1794 was a very boisterous time in Mauritius, during which the Sans-culottes unnerved the population: 'First, there was the Harvest Festival, the 3rd day of the Grand Sans-Culottides (20th September 1794) and then the celebration of the 5th extra day of An II (21st September 1794) on the Champ de Mars at the Port of La Montagne celebrating both the establishment of the Republic and the triumph of the French at Toulon, to which ceremonies the Colonial Assembly requested the presence of all the constituent bodies of the Ile de France.' This was a festival which, if one is to believe Maure⁸⁷ who made a proud description of it, would, by the will of the sans-culottes, spread over five days.⁸⁸ So, can we reasonably imagine Bacstrom, Petit-Radel and Francois staying together for eight blissful days on Francois estate in September 1794?

FRANÇOIS AS SEEN BY BACSTROM

Arthur Edward Waite summarizes information⁸⁹ that Bacstrom had given about Chazal in his letter of 16th March 1804 to Alexander Tilloch⁹⁰:

'He was the most sensible, learned, and opulent man on the Island. He possessed the power of observing events at a distance and recorded in a journal everything that went on in Paris at the time of the French Revolution, although physical communication between France and Mauritius was completely cut off at that period. He kept records of his magical experiments and the cures he had effected by means of animal Magnetism, electricity, galvanism, etc., which were attested by the most respectable people on the Island. He had a rich collection of gold medals, precious stones, crude, ct, and set. His library contained more than one thousand volumes in all languages, and he possessed a laboratory and apparatus including astronomical and mathematical instruments. He had obtained the *Lapis Philosophorum* and the *Pierre Animale*. By the first he acquired what he possessed and by the second, which he always carried on his person when making magical experiments, he preserved his health to the age of 97. Permitting Bacstrom to handle the substances, he performed the transmutation of quicksilver into gold. He told Bacstrom that he had succeeded in making the Philosopher' Stone at his first attempt in the second year after his arrival at Port Louis, agreeable to the instructions he had received in Paris in the year 1740, and that he would find Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*⁹¹ a great

⁸⁷ André Maure, *Souvenirs d'un vieux colon de l'Île Maurice, renfermant tous les événements qui lui sont arrivés depuis 1790 jusqu'en 1837, époque du Bill d'émancipation, ce qui renferme une période de 46 ans* [...]. La Rochelle, Typographie de Frédéric Boutet, 1840

⁸⁸ Claude Wanquet, *Peut-on parler de déchristianisation des Mascareignes à l'époque révolutionnaire ?*, revue Ahioi Cresoi. Revue des Mascareignes n°3 - 2001 - Chrétientés australes du XVIIIème à nos jours.

⁸⁹ Bacstrom's Alchemical Anthology, page 7-8.

⁹⁰ Letter of 16th March 1804, The Astrologer, and Oracle of Destiny, op. cit., p.118 - Arthur Edward Waite in *The True Story of the Rosicrucians*, 1887 and *The Brotherhood of the Rose-Cross*, 1924.

⁹¹ *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*. Containing Severall Poetical Pieces of our Famous English Philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language. Faithfully Collected into one Volume, with Annotations thereon, by Elias Ashmole, Esq. Qui est Mercuriophilus Anglicus. The first part, London, Printed by J. Grismond for Nath: Brooke, at the Angel in Cornhill. MDCLII. A PDF can be found at: https://openlibrary.org/books/OL15198250M/Theatrum_chemicum_britannicum

assistance. Such are some of the particulars which Bacstrom gives of his Master in Alchemy.’

What can we learn from this?

- Bacstrom's description of François is, by its general vagueness and lack of detail, quite out of character for an otherwise quite precise writer. Bacstrom, who had spent so many years traveling and meeting people from different countries was unable to give a physical description of Chazal.
- François is said to be a '97 years old man'. We know that this was not his real age; he was only 63. How could a surgeon, who knew human anatomy and who had operated on hundreds of men of all ages, be out by thirty-five years? We know, it is true, that in 1792 François himself said that his health was 'altered'⁹². But here, Bacstrom presents us with a doddering old man in a weak physical state who bursts into tears before a stranger and is no longer in control of his nerves.
- The mention of an ageing old human wreck with fragile nerves does not fit very well with the image of a François who still had all his intellectual faculties, who walked in his large gardens and who was able to make trips to Port Louis, to Pamplemousses or to Moka-Ripailles. Moreover, Bacstrom, almost contradicting himself, would say that Chazal claimed to be in bad health to avoid being chosen by the Sans-culottes as their leader. This said, it is hard to imagine that political extremists bent on making a clean sweep of all things would put an old crust at their head. The Sans-culottes needed a new broom⁹³ to sweep everything clean, not an old tattered besom.
- ‘He was the most sensible, learned, and opulent man on the Island’ – this sounds like a refrain, as if he repeated a rumour or Petit-Radel’s impressions of François.
- Bacstrom also gives a portrait of François as that of a man endowed with supernatural powers. Did he really ‘possess[ed] the power of observing events at a distance’? Right here, it may seem, he is robbing Peter to pay Paul. In the 1780s, Etienne Bottineau⁹⁴, a Frenchman who had come to Mauritius almost at the same time as François, could discern the movement of hundreds of ships at very different distances on the ocean. Regularly informing the authorities of the island, Bottineau thus protected Mauritius. In this capacity, he was famous and very much talked about. Bottineau had always said that he never had a gift of clairvoyance or had discovered a magical practice but that, on the contrary, it was a science he called

⁹² Letter from François de Chazal to his brother Pierre, dated 16th April 1792, Pamplemousses: '[...] my health impaired by excessive work determined me to resign last January in the place of Mayor'.

⁹³ Genesté means 'where the broom grows.'

⁹⁴ When I was a teenager my father sometimes talked to me about this Bottineau. Bottineau expounded this science in Etienne Bottineau, *Extrait Du Mémoire de M. Bottineau Sur La Nauscopie Ou l'Art de Découvrir Les Vaisseaux*, 1786, réédité en 2016 par Hachette Livre-BNF-ISBN : 2019552396, 9782019552398. See also: Mike Dash, *Naval Gazing: The Enigma of Stephen Bottineau*, 13th October 2011, smithsonian.com <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/naval-gazing-the-enigma-of-technician-bottineau-104350154/>

nauscopy and which was based on observation. This faculty therefore was not limited to François, as it seems others in the Indian Ocean also possessed it.

- The description of scientific instruments and various experiments is not surprising here since they often had pride of place in a Cabinet of Curiosities. There is also nothing really revealing here because we may surmise that the polite society of Mauritius knew that François - and others as well - was engaged in scientific observations. However, one cannot help but be surprised that a surgeon like Bacstrom was not more interested than he was in the cures that François had found. Finally, we may also find it odd that nowhere is there any mention of François' Cabinet of Natural History by name.
- The texts relating the meeting between Chazal and Bacstrom are richer in historical and biographical clues about Petit-Radel than Chazal. One does have the impression that Bacstrom met Petit-Radel and that they had a conversation, however, did Bacstrom meet Chazal?

Thanks to Bacstrom's description of a dodder and nearly centenarian François, the Count of Saint-Germain can now appear on stage. If François were as old as Bacstrom claimed, then he and the Count of Saint-Germain would be contemporaries. Where and when, therefore, could François and the Comte have met up?

CHAZAL AND SAINT-GERMAIN

René Guénon made the Chazal/Saint Germain connection, writing:

'I have heard that the Marquis de Chazal [...] would have been a disciple of the Count of Saint-Germain and even the custodian of his secret'.

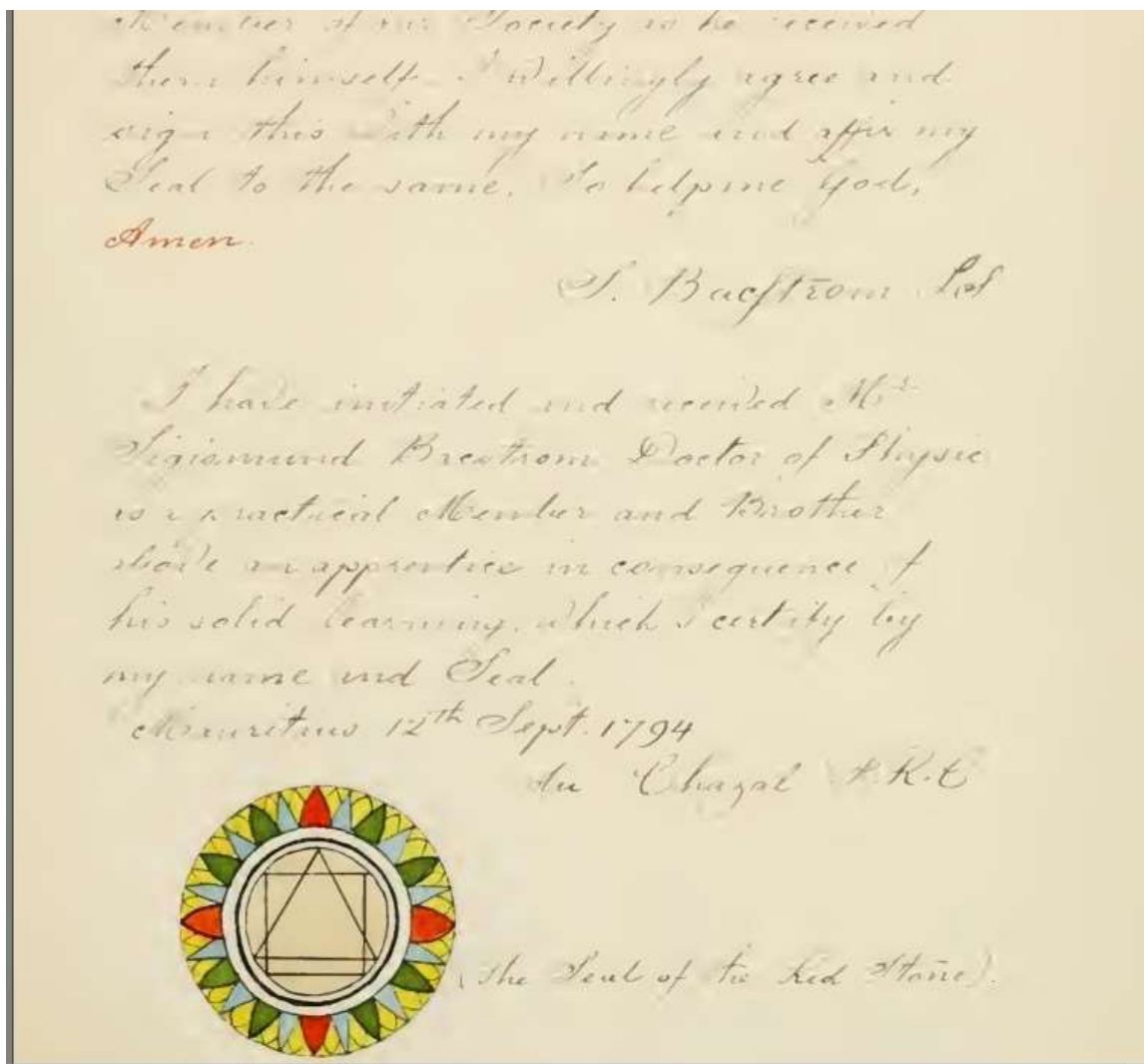
What secret? Was Guénon thinking of immortality or of the Philosopher's Stone, which transmutes substances of little value into gold? Or was he thinking of a whole body of secrets? Guénon lived the very simple life of a mystic Sufi in Egypt and rejected any 'base' materialistic consideration; he also had few years left to live. It is therefore fair to posit that he was probably thinking about immortality. He peddled rumours that had probably been milling around, and perhaps even before his time ('I heard it before'). Although there is no verifiable proof whatsoever, this is, I think, an example of comparative reasoning whereby the extraordinary powers lent to François had been equalled in the past only by Saint-Germain, a character already out of the ordinary according to legend. In addition, François being a French 18th century member of the aristocracy adorned with the title of Earl or Marquis, it would be most natural for people to link him with Saint-Germain and the aristocrats who attended the Court at Versailles.

Let us remind ourselves of what François allegedly said:

'[François] told Bacstrom that he had succeeded in making the Philosopher's Stone on his first attempt the second year after his arrival at Port Louis⁹⁵, agreeable to the instructions he had received in Paris in the year 1740, and that [Bacstrom] would find Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* a great assistance⁹⁶.'

⁹⁵ One wishes Bacstrom had given us a more verifiable date.

⁹⁶ Frédéric Garnier, *L'Héritage de Christian Rosencreutz*, Les Chroniques de Mars, numéro 22, novembre - décembre 2016 (excerpts). The information comes from Arthur Edward Waite in *The True Story of the Rosicrucians*, 1887 and *The Brotherhood of the Rose-Cross*, 1924.



The Chazal/Bacstrom document, 1794, signatures and seal, last page.
 Coll. Manly Palmer Hall

This quote mentions the book *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* and the word *La Pierre Animale*. These words are found in an argument by François Garnier purporting to reveal the nationality of Chazal's master/initiator. François Garnier linked the *Pierre Animale* process to its author, George Ripley (ca. 1415-1490) the great English alchemist, and concluded that Chazal's initiator must have been an Englishman⁹⁷. 'It is obvious to me that this *La Pierre Animale* method is specifically English, inspired by the interpretation of the books⁹⁸ of George Ripley⁹⁹ [...]'

⁹⁷ Garnier accepts Bacstrom's narrative at its face value. Nevertheless, it is surprising that no book written in French is mentioned by Chazal, a Frenchman, and it also strikes as odd that the 'classic authors' mentioned by him are all Englishmen.

⁹⁸ This is a reference to the XII gates of Alchemy which can be found in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* and the *Medulla Alchymiae*.

⁹⁹ *La Moelle d'Alchimie (Medulla Alchymiae)*, a work of alchemy written in Latin by George Ripley, an Englishman.

François Garnier adds that 'there is a good chance that the master/initiator of François de Chazal was of Anglo-Saxon culture or even English by birth.' Armed with these facts, the reader can only surmise that Saint-Germain is the candidate most likely to meet these conditions.

SAINT-GERMAIN

The Count of Saint-Germain was probably born between 1690 and 1710¹⁰⁰ and died on February 27, 1784 in Eckernförde (Schleswig). He was an eighteenth-century polymath, an adventurer¹⁰¹, a renowned alchemist, a musician, a painter and a polyglot. He was also deemed immortal and the alchemical tradition has it that he wrote the esoteric work *The Most Holy Trinosophy*. He mystified King Louis XV's court in Versailles with his huge diamonds¹⁰², his lifestyle and his anecdotes about ancient people e.g. Julius Caesar or Jesus who he pretended to be on first-name terms with.

While residing in London, where he shone for several years in salons as a musician, Saint-Germain was introduced to King Louis XV in 1744. He then left the British capital in 1746. After this, we lose track of the count for many years. For some, he retired to Germany where he devoted himself to his chemical and alchemical research; for others, he traveled to India or Persia. Whilst no evidence of these travels is known, the Count was later found to possess a deep knowledge of the East.

He came back to Paris around 1748/9 and the French King seemed to have employed him for diplomatic missions. In a letter, Saint-Germain claimed to have travelled to India in 1755 with Major-general Robert Clive, the famous Clive of India. He came back to Paris at the beginning of 1758, two years after François had taken up service in the East India Company. He had an alchemy laboratory at the Château de Chambord but spent most of his time at the court in Versailles. In 1760 he fled to London as the duke of Choiseul, a minister of Louis XV, wanted him arrested.

Therefore, when exactly was François initiated by the Count? In 1744, when the Count was introduced to King Louis XV, François was 13 years old. One could put forward an initiation around 1749 when François would have been 18 years old, however, Bacstrom was adamant: the initiation took place in 1740 and in Paris. If the Count passed on his secrets to Chazal in 1740, back then François was only 9 years old. We do not know where Saint-Germain was in 1740¹⁰³. Could he have travelled to France to pass on his secrets to François? But why choose such a young child with no verifiable apprenticeship? Yet, this is not the least baffling aspect of Bacstrom's narratives. Indeed, let's turn our attention now to the Chazal/Bacstrom document. What does it really say?

THE CHAZAL/BACSTROM DOCUMENT

As we already know, a copy¹⁰⁴ of the Chazal/Bacstrom document was in Frederick

¹⁰⁰ Legend has it that he was born in 1691.

¹⁰¹ Walpole believed his first language to be either Spanish or Portuguese. *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole correspondence (1712–1784)*, vol 26, pp20-21.

¹⁰² He claimed to have painted portraits with a mix of gems and paint.

¹⁰³ The earliest date though of Saint-Germain being in England is 1745.

¹⁰⁴ This copy is at Harvard and can be received immediately by email upon request. Harvard University - Andover-Harvard Theological Library / *Bacstrom, Sigismund. Copy of the Admission of Sigismund Bactrom into the Fraternity of Rosicrucians by Frederick Hockley, 1839.* Andover-Harvard Theological Library: <https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/12/resources/1052>. According to Samuel Scarborough, this

Hockley's library, where it was found by Arthur Edward Waite. Waite would later widely circulate the document by publishing it in his *Real History of the Rosicrucians*¹⁰⁵. It contained the commitment that Bacstrom, the Rosicrucian apprentice, took towards the brotherhood of the Rose-Croix during his initiation by Master Chazal. This was a fourteen-point promise to the brotherhood, promising what to do and what not to do. It is signed by Bacstrom and Chazal, F.R.C. and dated 12th September 1794.

The document¹⁰⁶ reproduced above is another copy, found in the Manly Palmer Hall collection. It is signed by Bacstrom and Chazal, the latter signing 'Chazal FRC' and affixing his seal, 'The Seal of the Red Stone'. We should remember that FRC i.e. Frater Rosae Crucis - for a man - is a title that only those who have been initiated to the tenth degree of the Rosicrucians can put after their name. The catalogue does not specify whether it is an original or a copy. This document raises several questions.

- The first question that comes to mind is this: is the document the original from 1794 or a later copy? Well, it cannot be the original. Indeed, as a university researcher¹⁰⁷ wrote, 'Hockley produced in the eyes of everyone the document of initiation and the private paper¹⁰⁸ of Sigismund Bacstrom, items which were later in the hands of the Theosophical Society. They were destroyed in a fire in the second half of the nineteenth century. The only remaining copies of these two documents are in the form of transcripts made by Hockley in 1833¹⁰⁹'. Moreover, the handwriting seems to have been that of an Englishman rather than that of a Frenchman i.e. François. Analysis of the letter 'r' indicates that it is the typical way most English people write this letter.
- One may wonder how François was able to sign 'du' Chazal. This error is incomprehensible. Could it be a one-off clerical error? Yet, it is repeated across both copies. In the document below, provided by Frédéric Garnier and which includes François's signature, we can clearly see 'de' Chazal; it is practically impossible to confuse the letter e for a u in that signature! Hockley was known to make his copies working late into the night burning the proverbial midnight candle - or gas light. We could therefore suppose that Hockley would repeat the same error (writing a u instead of an e) in other words all through the transcripts. However, this is not the case. It therefore seems as if 'du' Chazal was in the original document.

copy dates from 1833. Samuel Scarborough, *Frederick Hockley: A Hidden Force Behind the 19th Century English Occult Revival*, Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition, 2008, No. 14, Vol. 2. Vernal Equinox.

¹⁰⁵ Arthur Edward Waite, *The Real History of The Rosicrucians*, 1887

¹⁰⁶ The document described here can be found in The Manly Palmer Hall Manuscript Box Collection 18 Volume 19, J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu It can be downloaded at: <https://archive.org/details/ManlyPalmerHallBox18Ms102V20> [go all the way down> click number32 > choose PDF version.] Canadian Manly Palmer Hall (1901-1990) was a Rosicrucian, a famous speaker and an avid collector of esoteric texts.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel Scarborough, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸ The exact nature of this document is unclear.

¹⁰⁹ Hockley, F. 2007. *A Journal of a Rosicrucian Philosopher*, from April 30th to June 15th, 1797. Privately published facsimile manuscript issued by the Hell Fire Club of Bacstrom's Journal copied by Frederick Hockley in 1833.

- Strangely, Bacstrom always spoke of **Louis** and not of François, as would the occultist commentators who came after him. One cannot begin to imagine François being addressed as **Louis** for eight days on his estate and never trying to correct Bacstrom!
- The title of Count is incorrect. François did not adorn himself with this title and would not do so especially at a time when the Terror rumbled in Paris and many titled nobles would struggle to keep their heads on their shoulders. François indeed had the noble qualification of equerry but no title whatsoever. Moreover, aristocratic titles were abolished on the night of 4th August 1789. Finally, the nobles of France did not pay much attention to titles. What helped define precedence at the court was the seniority date of their nobility. Bacstrom, nevertheless, used all these terms of an Old Regime that did not exist anymore, and seemed completely ignorant of the new state of affairs. Their presence in these texts raises questions and makes for uncomfortable reading.
- The English text raises, of course, further questions. It is written in excellent 18th century English. Did François speak or write English so well? Is the text the translation of a French template into English? Since it was written in Pamplémousses in secrecy and in haste, who would have translated it? Bacstrom had previously made it clear they '[we] were alone'.
- Can we equally imagine the two conversing in English while the English blockaded Mauritius, only a few weeks before the first battle of Black River would take place on 22th October 1794? More disturbingly, Bacstrom wrote that they were conversing in French and the few sentences he gives us denotes faultless French! If that were the case, it would have been more logical for François to write everything in French. It is true that it was Bacstrom who took the oath, yet, why should we imagine the two esotericists quietly conversing in excellent French for a whole week, suddenly switching to equally excellent English when it came to draft the document?
- The seal on the document is the personal seal of a man initiated into a brotherhood. Why then reproduce the seal when it would have been sufficient to write in the copy 'the signatory has affixed his seal'? Why sail so close to the wind and do something akin to a forgery?
- Even more puzzling, it must be noted that the seal on the Manly Palmer Collection document is different from the one reproduced by Waite in his book. The geometric figures (triangle, circle and square) share the same positions and proportions but the other elements are different. In principle, we are presented with two copies of the same document, yet why are the seals different? An Italian esotericist claimed that the copy of the Manly Palmer collection must be the original, despite commentators saying that the originals were lost. However, the following considerations defeat this point of view.

- Anachronistically, the document begins with 'Isle of Mauritius' and ends with 'Mauritius'. Yet, the island took the name of Mauritius only after being taken over by the British in 1810, five years after Bacstrom's death¹¹⁰. In 1794, it still went by the name of Isle de France as seen above in François's signature. This cannot have been in the original document.
- Worse still, this anachronism can also be found in the other copy. One could argue that since they were mere copies, Hockley may have transformed Isle de France into Mauritius to make it more understandable to his contemporaries. Still, one cannot find any good reason for doing so, for Hockley made copies for himself only.
- Furthermore, the spelling of Pamplemousses as 'Pampelmouse' at the beginning of the document [Pampelavuso in Waite] is the spelling of an English pronunciation. This error may or may not come from the copyist. We copy, however, what we read and not what we hear. If the misspelling was, indeed, in the original document as written in Pamplemousses, François would have spotted it and corrected it in the document. It is difficult to understand how an educated man like François could have overlooked so blatant an error. Hockley was, admittedly, not a copyist so much concerned with accuracy. However, that kind of disdain for recording minute historical details can only make the non-esoteric reader question the reliability of the transcripts.

One could therefore argue that the copy in the Manly Palmer collection is not the original, and both transcripts are not faithful copies of the original document. The many inaccuracies in the text form a series of as many unfortunate events. One most naturally is led to think that the original document could have well been a fake i.e. a cynical fabrication of Bacstrom. However, if it is a forgery, what interest would Bacstrom have had to make up an initiation by an unknown master living in such a remote island?

Perhaps Bacstrom's intent was to impress upon the reader a possible connection between himself and Saint-Germain, using Chazal as the link.

When Bacstrom moved to London in 1795, one of his most important students was Alexander Tilloch, a Scot and the editor of the *Philosophical Magazine* where he focused on scientific research articles. In 1797 - a mere two and a half years after his own initiation by François - Bacstrom initiated Alexander Tilloch and admitted him into the Bacstrom's Rosicrucian Society. In 1960, a copy of Tilloch's¹¹¹ admission paper in the Bacstrom's Rosicrucian Society, signed by Bacstrom himself and produced in London on 5th April 1797, was found in the Ferguson Collection of the Glasgow University Library. In addition to his signature Bacstrom had affixed his seal on the document. In this way and by an extraordinary quantum leap, Bacstrom had reached the tenth degree of Rosicrucianism himself. In all but two details (the seal and the name in Hebrew) this document is identical

¹¹⁰ On 11th November 1815, Ann Flinders, Matthew Flinders' widow, wrote to John Barrow Esq, Admiralty, to send a package to Thomas Pitot, Isle of France. The new name will take time to supersede the old one. Old habits die hard.

¹¹¹ Oddly enough and around the same time, he invented a fool-proof process of engraving and printing banknotes so effective that it made it virtually impossible to counterfeit banknotes.

to that of Chazal's document. It contains the same fourteen promises or obligations. An important article is the fourth clause, which ends with a long paragraph on the equal rights of women regarding their possible membership in the Rose-Croix Society. In clause nine, there is an indication of a rather frosty attitude towards the church and the clergy of that time. Finally, in clause thirteen, the charitable brothers are invited to cure sick people and, oddly enough, this is limited to only one type of individual.

Let us now examine how some occultists have explained away these unfortunate discrepancies.

COPIES AND DOCUMENTS

Surprisingly, most modern occultists think these discrepancies are mere clerical errors, viewing 'Chazel', 'Louis', and the inconsistent dates in Bacstrom's stories as of no importance. Frederic Garnier tackles this issue with commendable candour if not with flippant casualness¹¹². Garnier writes:

'Despite some inaccurate dates, and the use of the name of Louis de Chazal or Chazel which seems to be the errors of the copyists or can be one of the means of diverting the attention away from the true Chazal, the copies of Bacstrom documents have their validity. Like the great Fulcanelli¹¹³, it seems that 'being an adept' takes precedence over whatever is historical or biographical '.

Garnier, as we can see, errs on the side of caution here: 'it seems that ..., etc.' His statements, however, attract the following remarks:

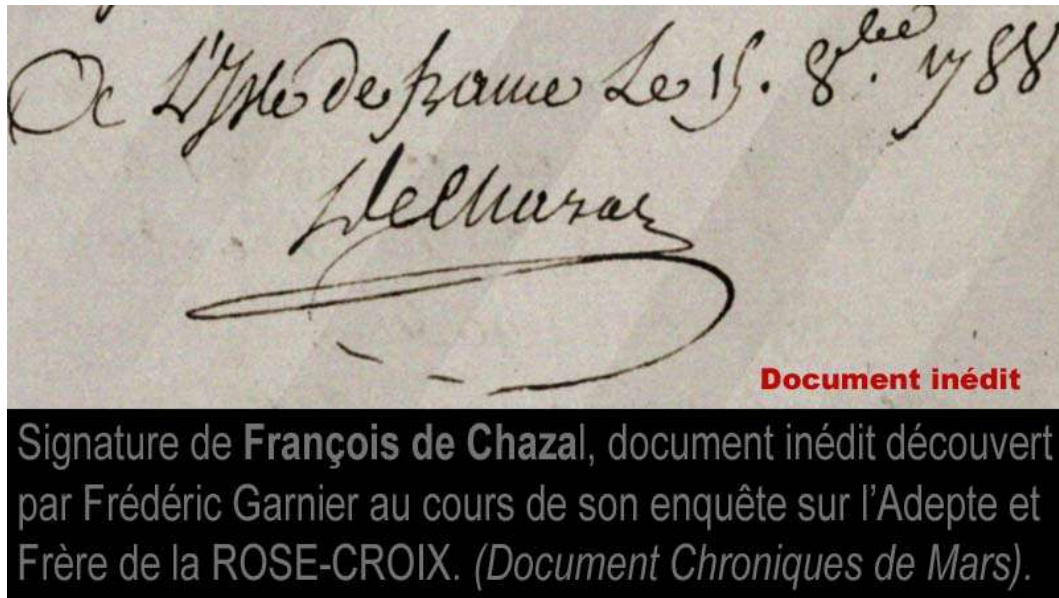
- Garnier writes, 'the use of the name of Louis de Chazal or Chazel [...] can also be one of the means of diverting the attention away from the true Chazal'. In 1794, François was the only Chazal in Mauritius, as his nephews - both under 97 years old - were in France and François was also well known. Supposing someone assumed his identity, this presents us with both a mystery and a legal conundrum. Would this person really risk being liable before a court for identify theft? Why drawing a parallel with Fulcanelli who, although anonymous, had nevertheless never stolen someone else's identity?
- If the signatory of the document was not Chazal, who was this person? This is a bit of a stretch, but if one is to stretch Garnier's logic, who then is hiding under the name of Bacstrom?
- Furthermore, if the need for the utmost secrecy justifies stealing people's identity, do we even need a historical document? Garnier does not seem to understand that if we are to believe that Chazal truly initiated Bacstrom in 1794, reliable and verifiable supporting documents need to be available. Instead, he posits esoteric truth as being of paramount importance regardless of whether documents are true or fake. The danger in taking this stance, however, is that if we believe without proof that the initiation truly happened, it is then tempting to justify our belief by

¹¹² <https://www.editions-arqa.com/spip.php?article3158>

¹¹³ Fulcanelli, an anonymous or, according to some, a collective name made up of unknown individuals, would have, as François did it before him, transmuted lead in gold and found immortality. Like Banksy, the mural artist, he hid his identity.

any trick of the book. Then, faced with such claims some enquiring minds might say ‘intellego ut credam¹¹⁴’ and ask for solid evidence.

- Garnier also offers us a further paradox. He believes there existed documents that unfortunately, but for good reasons, have gone missing. He alleges the original documents disappeared to better keep the secret about the initiate as nothing should ever be known about an initiate. Once someone becomes an initiate, they fade into a secret life inaccessible to the hoi polloi. In fact, they live in a world so arcane that the uninitiated are excluded from it. The original documents may well have burned as part of a higher and secret plan, however, in the grand scheme of things this is good news as nothing, we are led to believe, should link the 'adept' to anything 'historical' or 'biographical'.
- Finally, Garnier goes even further for our greatest enlightenment: he provides on his website a signature of François extracted from an 'unpublished' document. Unpublished it is indeed, and we will never be able to read or identify it. However, it is elusive enough to open the door to all kinds of speculations. This is the kind of document the uninitiated are spoon-fed with, or, shall we say, the kind of bone they are given.



What better way to describe such an attitude towards historical truth than the metaphor of the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*? The cat makes remarks defying reason then disappears leaving only a grin. Alice, pushing the cat to his own logic, says, - “Well! I’ve often seen a cat without a grin, but a grin without a cat? It’s the most curious thing I ever saw in my life!”

To follow Garnier’s logic, I could say:

- 'I have never seen a document without a signature, but I have never seen a signature

¹¹⁴ Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, 1. I want to believe but I need to understand first. Anselm of Canterbury sees faith as based on facts understood through a renewed mind.

without document'.

Therefore, give me a signature and I will accept blindly that there was a good reason to make the document disappear.

Finally, to use a gastronomic metaphor, we could also say that absolute mystery and total secrecy are to the initiate what holes are to Gruyère cheese: the more holes, the more Gruyère but, unfortunately, the more holes, the less cheese. In all logic, in front of huge holes one can only say: 'Wow! What a huge, secret and invisible Gruyère!'

Following Garnier's logic, even when faced with the enormous black hole of historically reliable documents, one can only fall to one's knees and believe that François was *really* a powerful and extraordinary Rosicrucian Master. One can only be grateful for this crystal-clear type of logic that says that a dearth of original documents is not critical to understanding what happened in 1794 since true initiates leave no visible trace.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Faced with the paucity of documents about François, Malcolm also echoes a similar type of reasoning:

- 'Like any real initiate, nothing 'visible' remained of this man - except these few details.' Malcolm takes up the kind of circular reasoning of which we have just seen a toxic example. It sounds pretty much like Andersen's tale *'The Emperor's New Clothes'* in which charlatans persuade the emperor that they know how to make clothes that only fools and incompetents cannot see. When checking up on the progress of the work he sees nothing but dares not admit it because no one wants a stupid king. And the ministers who, later, come to inspect the work do not dare say either that they do not see anything for fear of being found incompetent. The emperor is therefore persuaded to wear these extraordinary clothes visible to no one. Thus 'clothed', the Emperor walks out majestically, and it is only when a little boy cries out:

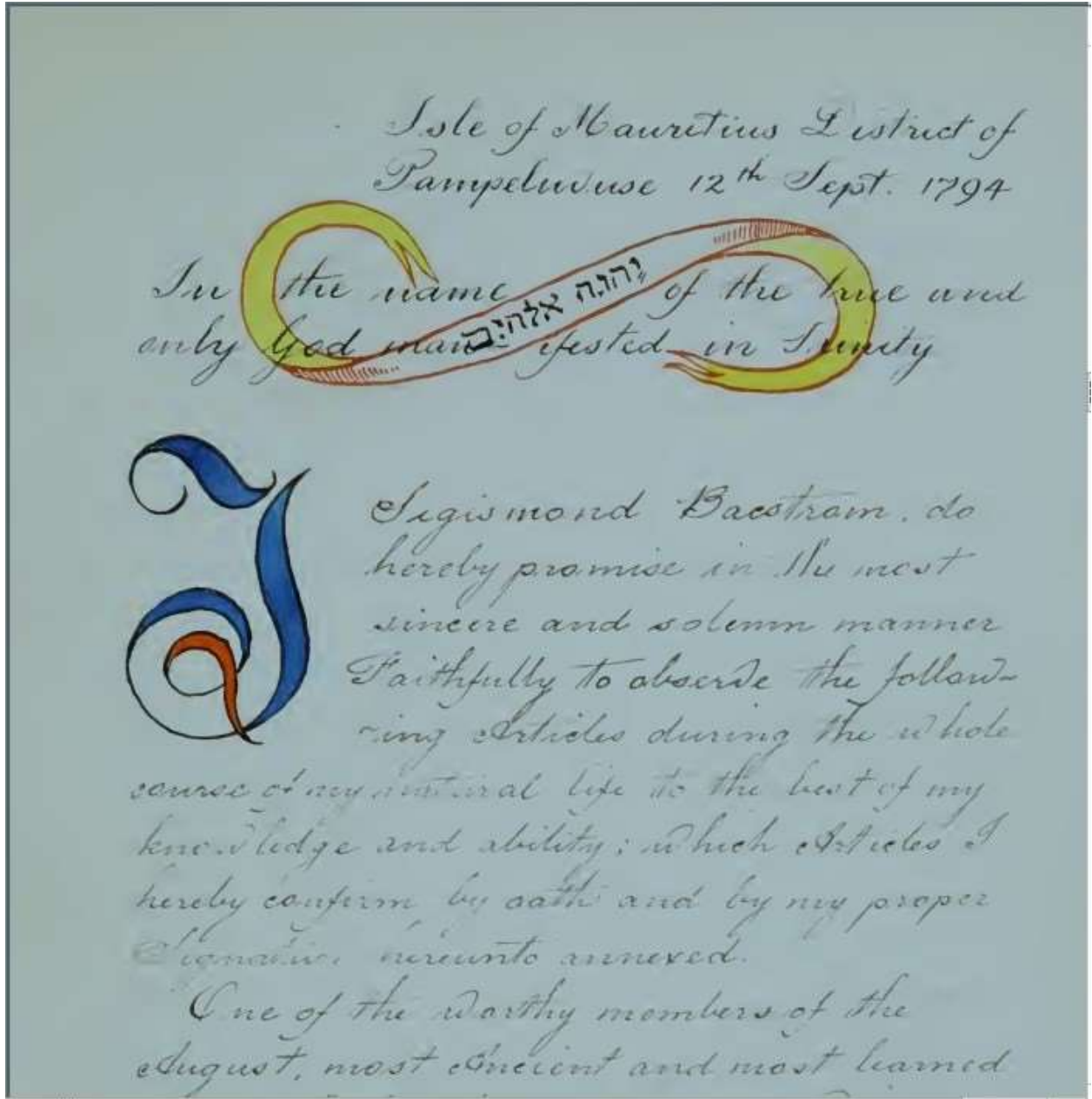
- 'Oh, my giddy aunt! He is naked!'

that everyone realizes that he is indeed naked. The Emperor, however, pretends to ignore it and walks on as if he did not mind.

We are told that the absence of visible, verifiable and analyzable historical documents is valid since the initiate lives in a secret world that is not accessible to the uninitiated. Thus, the esoteric/occult truth takes precedence over historical truth and cannot be objectively verified. Because an apprentice has been initiated into secret truths¹¹⁵ as in those ancient mystery cults, we are therefore invited to believe blindly in the authenticity of the Chazal/Bacstrom event. Yet, do we not see that there are no reliable documents to justify this narrative? Shall we continue to pass down this myth from generation to generation? It is a bit like opening the door wide to fantasy and golden legends and inviting credulity. And it is probably a door that some characters have walked through blithely, without

¹¹⁵ The same phenomenon when it comes to secret societies is also found in other circles. In the 1930s Louis Charbonneau Lassay 'discovered' two initiatory Catholic brotherhoods dating from the Middle Ages and still in existence even if very limited in number of followers: *l'Estoile Internelle* and *la Fraternité des Chevaliers et des Dames du Divin Paraclet*. Then, these orders would have dissolved around 1958. However, no document has ever been put forward in support. It seems as if these secret societies were born out of desperation to divert Catholics from the attraction of Eastern religions and more particularly from their hermetic traditions. Charbonneau Lassay and Guénon, although different in their belief systems, knew each other well and corresponded at length. In J.P Laurant, *Le sens caché dans l'œuvre de René Guénon*, 1975, éditions l'Age d'Homme. P. 216.

critical thinking, while maintaining it open for others.



Chazal/Bacstrom Document, 1794, Coll. Manly Palmer Hall, page 1

FRANÇOIS' GOLD

If François truly was an alchemist, where did all the gold he transmuted in his laboratory go? Summarizing what Bacstrom writes about François' skill at creating gold, John W. Hamilton Jones¹¹⁶ says:

'François de Chazal demonstrates before Bacstrom that he is an initiate by showing him

¹¹⁶ John W. Hamilton Jones in his introduction to the *Alchemical Anthology of Bacstrom*.

his skill at transmuting gold. He produces at first 30 carats of excessively brittle gold, twenty-four carats of even more resplendent and ductile gold, that is gold of an even more radiant colour and somewhat heavier than the latter.’

If, as we are led to believe, François could transmute metals into gold with such brilliance, it would have been because he knew the properties of metals and, by realizing the *Magnum Opus*, he had found the *Philosopher's Stone*. It is this stone that makes it possible to transmute metals, to cure diseases and to grant immortality to its owner. Bacstrom further adds that François had mastered this art and science in 1740 and had repeated the experiment in 1740.

If this was true, why then, two years before the initiation in 1792, did François order books about the *Magnum Opus*, metals and all that is needed to make the *Philosopher's Stone*? If that was what he was looking for, then, in this 1792 book order, we clearly see a François who is still looking for this secret and not a François who had been initiated into that secret way back in 1740.

And since we are talking about an order for French books, why does François suggest that Bacstrom might find Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* such a precious help? The *Theatrum* is a compilation of texts written between the 15th and 16th centuries in difficult and very old English. Could François read that kind of English? Why not suggest reading books in French since they were conversing in that language? What practical purpose would the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* serve, since Bacstrom himself says he took notes of what François had done under his eyes? He already had the recipe.

All the same, such a glut of gold is not so easily stashed, unless one supposes that François made gold very rarely. Perish the thought! Bacstrom tells us that François often did so and that his house was a palace worthy of Croesus.

Moreover, I cannot begin to imagine how François was able to flog so much gold too. The legend, however, under Bacstrom's quill, gets even more gilded. Bacstrom credits our modern Midas with a fortune estimated at 3 million Spanish piastres and says that François had provided 100 orphan girls with 1 million piastres each. Just imagine the frenzied ecstasy of male gold diggers fresh off the boat, setting foot in Mauritius and hearing about orphan girls being richly endowed by François! Another detail, but an uncomfortable one, is the sum of 300,000 piastres that François wants to give to the Sans-culottes to cool their heads down and ensure that Bacstrom arrives safe and sound to Port Louis. It is in fact a bribe but why would he do that since these people wanted him at their head? That does not fit in with the portrait that d'Épinay gave us of François. Finally, we should not ignore the 30,000 piastres that François wanted to give Bacstrom to stay at the Isle of France and complete his training? Why did François make this offer? Did Bacstrom not know now how to make gold?

FRANÇOIS' LIBRARY

Finally, we have no trace of these esoteric books that, by Bacstrom's account, François had in great quantities. The few titles mentioned above, relating to the Reading Tarot or to Alchemy, do not seem to indicate bookshelves crumbling under the mass of occult books. Bacstrom is the only one to mention a profusion of books, but Frédéric Garnier does not doubt for a moment their existence and, in claiming François' membership of a Masonic lodge, he sketches out their fate.

‘Many people still wonder what has become of François’s library after his death. This leading alchemist had initiated into the Societas Rosae Crucis several close friends, lovers of science, some of whom were members like him of the same reverend Lodge ‘Twenty-One’¹¹⁷ in the East of Port Louis. Some inhabitants of Mauritius are owners of books and objects; there has even been talk of a portrait¹¹⁸ belonging to the Comte¹¹⁹; which suggests that there was a sharing planned out by François de Chazal of Genesté between his Rose-Croix group of friends¹²⁰. [...].’

For some, such a desirable end would fulfill a desire to know that there was a planned transmission of rare and wonderful books to other initiates and fellow adepts. Once again, how do we know that this was the case since everything was done in absolute secrecy? Rather than trying to find out what happened to these books, one might perhaps try to establish whether they really existed. But would not the burden of proof be in the other camp? We are told about this wonderful library through Bacstrom’s stories. However, these stories give, above all, the unshakeable impression that they had all been added to enhance the credibility of the 1794 document.

IS THE JURY STILL OUT?

Bacstrom most certainly met Petit-Radel at a time when the Sans-culottes were very boisterous and threatening. However, the description Bacstrom gives of François looks second-hand to me and lacks in consistency. I am also under the impression that Bacstrom is only repeating other people’s points of views on Chazal. Moreover, an avalanche of inaccuracies and anachronisms do not warrant that the copies of the Chazal/Bacstrom document are the reproductions of a true document describing a real historical event.

However, the portrayal of the historical François and the circumstances around the initiation are based on these copies. If these documents are unreliable, then everything falls apart at the seams.

Of course, if historians could produce a document showing that François was part of a group of Rosicrucians in Mauritius, this would indicate that he *really* was a Rosicrucian. However, this is not my point.

- ‘But what are you getting at?’, the reader may well ask.

It’s all about the Chazal/Bacstrom document. Does this document show that François was *really* a Rosicrucian Master who initiated another into extraordinary secrets? Regrettably, it does not. There is enough convincing evidence though to pronounce a verdict.

My conviction is that this document was a fake made in England and not an authentic document written in the Isle de France.

The forgery was most likely made after Bacstrom learned that François died. Then, still dripping the full Monty with this self-administered anointing, Bacstrom quickly initiated Alexander Tilloch and affixed the seal of a fast-tracked initiate of the 10th degree, an

¹¹⁷ The Twenty-One Lodge (Loge des Vingt-Un) had a Rose-Croix chapter (18th degree), however, historians do not have any evidence whatsoever that François was a member of either.

¹¹⁸ It is easy to fantasy that this mysterious portrait could have been painted by the Comte de Saint Germain.

¹¹⁹ Apparently, Garnier does not know that François never had that title.

¹²⁰ Frédéric Garnier, *L’Héritage de Christian Rosencreutz*, (excerpts), *Les Chroniques de Mars*, issue 22, November-December 2016.

achievement that Bacstrom would have reached in 2 ½ years only. He certainly was no slow coach! As for his alleged initiation three years before, there was this time, once again, no need for eyewitnesses.

Bacstrom was now a Master initiate who was allowed to initiate others. This is the model of initiation that Bacstrom had inaugurated.¹²¹ The history of esoteric initiations has retained only these two on the spur of the moment initiations, both made hastily and without a long apprenticeship period or eyewitnesses.

It is not François de la Genesté who is at the centre of the Chazal/Bacstrom document and Bacstrom's narratives; it is Bacstrom himself. He is so intelligent and so brilliant, one readily understands that Chazal singles him out very quickly and initiates him. He deserves it after all.

The story is told in such a way that the reader cannot help having this mysterious but persistent impression that it was Saint-Germain's shadow and mantel that, like Mary's lamb of the nursery rhyme, doggedly followed Chazal everywhere he went. So, if we are to believe Bacstrom's account, old tottering François had imparted to Bacstrom the extraordinary powers that were Saint-Germain's. Bacstrom emerges from that anointing as a luminous being, quickly owning a seal. However, and all too sadly, he has no word of affection, gratitude or respect towards his alleged Master.

It is this document that has 'revealed' François to the world as a Rosicrucian master keeper of the eternal secrets of the Universe. This document and Bacstrom's stories have underpinned the belief that François had discovered the secret of the Transmutation of gold and, his curiosity driving him even further, he would also have eaten the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and become like gods, knowing good and evil. And, hope against hope, he might have well reached Immortality too.

One easily understands why Guénon believed so passionately there was a bond between François et Saint Germain. So, can we, in all good faith buy into this narrative, maintain the legend and carry on the myth? In my opinion, this would be tantamount to playing the sorcerer's apprentice, breathing new life into a document that should be left dead as a dodo. Sometimes, at dusk, when my heart longs after Mauritius, when I remember the breeze rustling in the Casuarina trees¹²² and the Weaver birds¹²³ gradually falling silent, then a still small voice whispers in my ear:

'Hey, look! Where has Bacstrom's gold gone? People never talk about it. Do we not all know that he died poor?'

¹²¹ Some commentators have noticed the anarchic aspect of these two initiations having no relation with a hierarchical structure. Joscelyn Godwin, an expert in esotericism and an adept himself, writes: 'As [Bacstrom] told Tilloch, the initiation took place verbally after a period of study. The two documents [that of Bacstrom and that of Tilloch] specify that the initiate/the Master had noticed an individual and recommends him to initiate also one or two'. Joscelyn Godwin, *Philosophical Enlightenment*, 1994, Suny Press, page. 120. Godwin also quotes only two cases. Then, he quotes Waite who argues that this kind of initiation made on the rush and almost on the fly between scattered individuals was practiced 'because there was still no organized Rosicrucian society'. However, this is very similar to an ex-post facto explanation i.e. after the supposed facts and because one is persuaded that the initiation really took place rather than on well-established evidence.

¹²² *Casuarina equisetifolia*.

¹²³ *Ploceus cucullatus*.

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

How do we view François after this piece of 'fake news'?

I keep of him the portrait that was left in the archives of the Isle of France and the family name both engraved on an obelisk in the Pamplémousses Garden and given to a plant species. I keep of him the image of a man of integrity who served his generation and family¹²⁴ wholeheartedly in difficult times. To quote Dickens' insights into the Revolutionary years in France, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times¹²⁵ [...].' He was beyond doubt a man possessed with deep intellectual curiosity. He was also a keen observer of the Natural world in an island that had so much to offer in terms of development and beauty.

He was, admittedly, also a man whose soul was deeply troubled, a man who did not find answers to certain metaphysical questions and who, seeking deep convictions or even the knowledge of the future, set about groping his way forward.

Last and not least, he was, perhaps too, a man who, at the eve of his life and feeling wounded in his flesh, would have liked to know how to prolong it by probing sciences other than those which could do nothing for him. If it were so, then his secret was that of an anguished conscience and of a sick body, and not that of an immortal endowed with great occult powers.

His was a secret road that he alone could tread.

Similarly, we all have, at some point in our lifetime, some solitary road to walk. However, I see François as a metaphoric witness, one of many in our extended family, standing by the gate to encourage us all along the road. He and others have finished their race whilst we are still running ours. 'Therefore, having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and throwing off that which hinders us', let's walk along the road that lies ahead of us. Truly, 'no man is an island'¹²⁶. François' life could perhaps also be read as an invitation not to feel secure in our past whatever its achievements, but to explore new fields and set new examples for future generations. And when all's said and done, perhaps we could honour him with the following words:

'After having imposed on himself and all his life the duty of being a man,
He used in dying the right to be a hero¹²⁷.'

There is always a Chazal who surprises us, fascinates us or ... who, somehow or other, *really* inspires us.

R.L. Jamet, May 2019. Proofreaders: Abigail Jamet [www.abbyjoydesigns.com] and Jessica Jamet. This text or/and its French version can be obtained from the Chazfest site webmaster on request.

¹²⁴ François had his shortcomings too. In a letter dated 23th December 1771 to him, his brother Jacques, the priest, wrote that Noble Aimé, their father († 27th July 1771), had long mourned the fact that François had never written during the last ten years of his life.

¹²⁵ Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859. Page 1. 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair [...].'

¹²⁶ John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, Meditation XVII, 1624.

¹²⁷ Victor Hugo, *Actes et Paroles* II, Ch. IX, 1883. The hero celebrated here was the captain Harvey of the *Normandy* who saved his crew but sank with his ship on 17th March 1870.

Isle of Mauritius District of
Pampelunse 12th Sept. 1794

In the name ^{אמת אמת} of the true and
only God manifested in Trinity

I Sigismund Bacstrom, do
hereby promise in the most
sincere and solemn manner
Faithfully to observe the follow-
ing Articles during the whole
course of my mortal life to the best of my
knowledge and ability; which Articles I
hereby confirm by oath and by my proper
handwritten instruments annexed.

One of the worthy members of the
August, most ancient and most learned
Society "i.e. Investigators of Divine,
Spiritual, and Natural Truths," (which
Society, more than two centuries and a
half ago i.e. in 1490) did separate them-
selves from the three Nations but were
again united in one Spirit among them-
selves under the denomination of
Frater Rosæ Crucis (Brethren of the
Rose Cross) i.e. the Brethren who believe

The Real History of the Rosicrucians, by Arthur Edward Waite, [1887]

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/sro/rhr/rhr31.htm>

CHAPTER XVI. MODERN ROSICRUCIAN SOCIETIES.

p. 408 IT is an opinion entertained by the elect in modern theosophical circles, that the true Rosicrucian Brotherhood migrated into India, and this notion is said to be countenanced by a Latin pamphlet of Henricus Neuhusius, published in 1618, under the title "Pia et

utilissima Admonitio de Fratibus Rosæ Crucis," and which was afterwards translated into French. They have developed into Thibetan Brothers, have exchanged Protestant Christianity for esoteric Buddhism, and are no longer interested in the number of the beast. Their violent antipathy to the pope still remains: they have not yet torn him in pieces with nails, but probably expect to accomplish this long-cherished project about the period of the next general cataclysm. This is an interesting theory which might be debated with profit. I have not personally discovered much trace of the Rosicrucians in India, but the absence of historical documents on this point affords a fine field for the imagination, which writers like Mr Hargrave Jennings should not allow to lie fallow. In my prosaic capacity as a historian, I have not been able to follow in the footsteps of the Fraternity further than the Island of Mauritius. Thanks to the late Mr Frederick Hockley, whose valuable library of books and manuscripts, treating of all branches of occultism, has been recently dispersed, I have discovered that a certain

p. 409 Comte de Chazal accomplished the *magnum opus* in that place at the close of the last century, and that he initiated another artist into the mysteries of the Rosicrucian Fraternity. The Comte de Chazal was possessed of vision at a distance, and witnessed the horrors of the French Revolution from a vast distance, with amazing perspicuity, by means of the mind's eye. The following curious document will be read with no ordinary interest:--

*Copy of the Admission of Dr Bacstrom into the Society of the Rosa Croix by **Le Comte de Ghazal** at the **Island of Mauritius**, with the Seal of the Society.*

ISLE OF MAURITIUS, DISTRICT OF PAMPELAVUSO,
12th Sept. 1794.

In the name of יהוה אלהינו the True and only God Manifested in Trinity.

I, Sigismund Bacstrom, do hereby promise, in the most sincere and solemn manner, faithfully to observe the following articles, during the whole course of my natural life, to the best of my knowledge and ability; which articles I hereby confirm by oath and by my proper signature hereunto annexed.

One of the worthy members of the august, most ancient, and most learned Society, the Investigators of Divine, Spiritual, and Natural Truth (which society more than two centuries and a half ago (*i.e.*, in 1490) did separate themselves from the Free-Masons, but were again united in one spirit among themselves under the denomination of *Fratres Rosæ Crucis*, Brethren of the Rosy Cross, *i.e.* the Brethren who believe in the Grand Atonement made by Jesus Christ on the Rosy Cross, stained and marked with His blood, for

p. 410 the redemption of Spiritual Natures), having thought me worthy to be admitted into their august society, in quality of a Member Apprentice and Brother, and to partake of their sublime knowledge, I do hereby engage in the most solemn manner--

1. That I will always, to the utmost of my power, conduct myself as becomes a worthy member, with sobriety and piety, and to endeavour to prove myself grateful to the Society for so distinguished a favour as I now receive, during the whole course of my natural life.

2. That derision, insult, and persecution of this august society may be guarded against, I will never openly publish that I am a member, nor reveal the name or person of such members as I know at present or may know hereafter.

3. I solemnly promise that I will never during my whole life publicly reveal the secret knowledge I receive at present, or may receive at a future period from the Society, or from one of its members, nor even privately, but will keep our Secrets sacred.

4. I do hereby promise that I will instruct for the benefit of good men, before I depart this life, one person, or two persons at most, in our secret knowledge, and initiate and, receive such person (or persons) as a member or apprentice into our Society, in the same manner as I have been initiated and received; but such person only as I believe to be truly worthy and of an upright, well-meaning mind, blameless conduct, sober life, and desirous of knowledge. And as there is no distinction of sexes in the Spiritual World, neither among the Blessed Angels, nor among the rational immortal Spirits of the human race; and as we have had a Semiramis, Queen of Egypt; a Myriam, the

p. 411 prophetess; a Peronella, the wife of Flammel; and, lastly, a Leona Constantia, Abbess of Clermont, who was actually received as a practical member and master into our Society in the year 1736; which women are believed to have been all possessors of the Great Work, consequently *Sorores Roseæ Crucis*, and members of our Society by possession, as the possession of this our Art is the key to the most hidden knowledge; and, moreover, as redemption was manifested to mankind by means of a woman (the Blessed Virgin), and as Salvation, which is of infinitely more value than our whole Art, is granted to the female sex as well as to the male, our Society does not exclude a worthy woman from being initiated, God himself not having excluded women from partaking of every felicity in the next life. We will not hesitate to receive a worthy woman into our Society as a member apprentice (and even as a practical member, or master, if she does possess our work practically, and has herself accomplished it), provided she is found, like Peronella, Flammel's wife, to be sober, pious, discreet, prudent, and reserved, of an upright and blameless conduct, and desirous of knowledge.

5. I do hereby declare that I intend, with the permission of God, to commence our great work with mine own hands as soon as circumstances, health, opportunity, and time will permit; 1st, that I may do good therewith as a faithful steward; 2nd, that I may merit the continued confidence which the Society has placed in me in quality of a member apprentice.

6. I do further most solemnly promise that (should I accomplish the Great Work) I will not abuse the great power entrusted to me by appearing great and exalted, or seeking to appear in a public character in the world by

p. 412 hunting after vain titles of nobility and vain glory, which are all fleeting and vain, but will endeavour to live a sober and orderly life, as becomes every Christian, though not possessed of so great a temporal blessing; I will devote a considerable part of my abundance and superfluity (multipliable infinitely to work of private charity), to aged and deeply-afflicted people, to poor children, and, above all, to such as love God and act uprightly, and I will avoid encouraging laziness and the profession of public beggars.

7. I will communicate every new or useful discovery relating to our work to the nearest member of our Society, and hide nothing from him, seeing he cannot, as a worthy member, possibly abuse it, or prejudice me thereby; on the other hand, I will hide these secret discoveries from the world.

8. I do, moreover, solemnly promise (should I become a master and possessor) that I will not, on the one hand, assist, aid, or support with gold or with silver any government, King, or Sovereign, whatever, except by paying taxes, nor, on the other hand, any populace, or particular set of men, to enable them to revolt against the government; I will leave public affairs and arrangements to the government of God, who will bring about the events foretold in the revelation of St John, which are fast accomplishing; I will not interfere with affairs of government.

9. I will neither build churches, chapels, nor hospitals, and such public charities, as there is already a sufficient number of such public buildings and institutions, if they were only properly applied and regulated. I will not give any salary to a priest or churchman as such, to make him more proud and insolent than he is already. If I relieve a distressed worthy clergyman, I will consider him in the light

p. 413 of a private distressed individual only. I will give no charity with the view of making my name known to the world, but will give my alms privately and secretly.

10. I hereby promise that I will never be ungrateful to the worthy friend and brother who initiated and received me, but will respect and oblige him as far as lies in my power, in the same manner as he has been obliged to promise to his friend who received him.

11. Should I travel either by sea or by land, and meet with any person who may call himself a Brother of the Rosy Cross, I will examine him whether he can give me a proper explanation of The Universal Fire of Nature, and of our magnet for attracting and magnifying the same under the form of a salt, whether he is well acquainted with our work, and whether he knows the universal dissolvent and its use. If I find him able to give satisfactory answers, I will acknowledge him as a member and brother of our Society. Should I find him superior in knowledge and experience to myself, I will honour and respect him as a master above me.

12. If it should please God to permit me to accomplish our Great Work with my own hands, I will give praise and thanks to God in humble prayer, and devote my time to the doing and promoting all the good that lies in my power, and to the pursuit of true and useful knowledge.

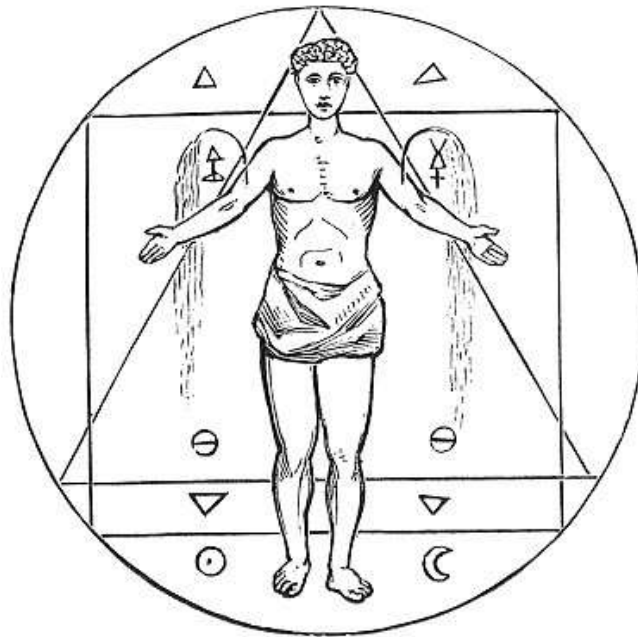
13. I do hereby solemnly promise that I will not encourage wickedness and debauchery, thereby offending God by administering the medicine for the human body, or the *aurum potabile*, to a patient, or patients, infected with the venereal disease.

14. I do promise that I will never give the Fermented Metallic Medecine for transmutation to any person living,

p. 414 no, not a single grain, unless the person is an initiated and received member and Brother of the Rosy Cross.

To keep faithfully the above articles as I now receive them from a worthy member of our Society, as he received them himself, I willingly agree, and sign this with my name, and affix my seal to the same. So help me God. Amen. S. BACSTROM, L.S.

I have initiated and received Mr Sigismund Bacstrom, Doctor of Physic, as a practical member and brother above an apprentice in consequence of his solid learning, which I certify by my name and seal.--**Mauritius**, 12 Sept. 1794. **DU CHAZEL**, F.R.C.



The Philosophic Seal of the Society of the Rosicrucians.