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Gioacchino da Fiore

Fabio Venzi

Joachim of Fiore is certainly considered as one of the more characteristic of thinkers, both for the depth of his theological subjects and the impression left in medieval philosophy; it is no coincidence that we talk about the Joachimist era.

His wide fame and the importance of his philosophy are above all due to his threefold conception of history and to his new and revolutionary eschatological vision, which form the basic nucleus of his philosophy.

By objecting to St. Augustin's pessimism, who saw man as being corrupt as a result of original sin and convinced that happiness does not belong to the body but to the soul and that peace is possible only after death (having reached 'Civitas Dei') and therefore in his vision, saw history as a rise and fall course inevitably ending with the second arrival of Christ and with the End of Time. Joachim on the other hand predicts the advent of a Third Age of peace, harmony, freedom and justice on this Earth (Civitas Terrena) and put the Trinity in the centre of his system.

The intention of this short essay is to demonstrate the similarities to that part of Rabbinical literature noted under the name of midrash which are present at a hermeneutical level in some writings of Joachim of Fiore, in particular in the *Expositio in Apocalypsim*.

Before analysing Joachim's works, a quick explanation of midrash will be useful. Midrash is a Rabbinical means of exegesis, a study and research undertaken on the

Old Testament and completed with the utmost caution. This is not limited to the immediate and literal sense but looks into any incidental meaning of the text. Midrash derives from the Jewish verb *darash* (to examine, to investigate). For the Rabbis, midrash is chiefly research, study, theory, in contrast to action. One does not talk about a scientific comment on the Bible, but an effort in 'penetrating' the inside of the Book of Revelations in the deepest possible way.

The purpose is the research of the presence of God in the text and through this to go into empathy with Him, and so improve one's own comprehension of the world.

It follows that the purpose pursuing the interpreter of the Bible is not that of proposing a literal original sense of the text, but its eternal significance, in the accomplishment of the text itself from the exegesis, which relates the meaning of the text to its historical-social context, by dealing with the text 'here and now', in its message for today.

Let us see now what hermeneutic is used by Joachim of Fiore and which points of contact can be compared with the Rabbinical manner.

There have been many interpretations of the Apocalypse in Latin Christianity, but the exegesis of Joachim is different from the others, from besides which he has borrowed the spiritual, moral and ecclesiastical dimension from the rich symbolism of John, for conceiving the Apocalypse as a clear and detailed message on the entire development of God's plan on history.

So basing himself on an original and new

'hermeneutic', Joachim began to think of an original approach to the meaning of the Apocalypse.

Like the Rabbis, Joachim began to use a symbolic way of thinking, giving up logical procedures of scholastic reasoning, and on the contrary developing a symbolic procedure of expression.

We can thus describe Joachim of Fiore as a symbolic thinker in an essentially biblical perspective in which he makes use of symbols as a 'means' that allows him to reveal the implicit mysteries of the Trinity and of the History, always referring however to the text that is in possession of the whole truth: the Bible.

For these reasons we must consider Joachim of Fiore as a genuine exegete of the Scriptures and not as a predestinarian that has received special enlightenment. A man, therefore, who has a unique privilege received from God; the capability of understanding, or rather, the "intelligentia".

For Joachim, there is an intellectual error represented by the persistence of the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, an interpretation that Joachim calls "Jewishly", referring to the Jewish-Hellenistic literature of Philo of Alexandria and Giuseppe Flavio, who widely used allegory.

In that period the frontiers of the Jewish world, the Jews of Greek culture and language and the Jews of Haramaic culture and language, were well defined and separate. In fact, Rabbinical Judaism has constantly ignored the literary production of Hellenistic Judaism which came to us through the Christian cultural world.

According to the Joachimite scholar Grundman not even the purpose of Joachim's research, nor the framework of his research consist in allegoric exegesis; but rather his authentic operation, to have

coined the total course of the world, is based on another treatment of the biblical material, that doesn't enter into the allegoric method.

Joachim does not believe that the literal interpretation should disappear completely, instead he was convinced that some texts existed that God Himself wanted to be interpreted to the letter, for example the learning literature of the Old Testament and the Letters of the New.

The concept is clarified by Joachim in Liber Introductorius of the Expositio in Apocalypsim, which differentiates the three ways in which God talks about the Scriptures:

1) Historialiter, as in the historical books of the Old Testament, in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles.

2) In Revelatione imaginum, in other words through the symbols such as the wheels of Ezekiel and the beasts in Daniel.

3) In Simplicitate veritas, namely the prophecies and the moral and doctrinal passages.

In short, according to Joachim, the purpose of the intelligentia spiritualis is not that of replacing the Old Ancient and the New Testament, but to transform the Scriptures and consequently he who reads them.

On the light of the above, the common point that we have revealed between the "Joachimite Hermeneutic" of Joachim and that of the Rabbis, is the 'drive' within the exegetic manner.

With his own manner Joachim grasps the meaning of the present by taking the past and the future into account.

History as seen by Joachim is a history that during its development achieves its own meaning. Even in the "midrash" the interpretations, whether sermon-like or even 'halakico' (judicial), were the result of an ideology which considered the

Scriptures like a revelation in a dynamic, continuous evolution, offering the Jew his own message of reality.

We can therefore affirm that the distinguishing mark is methodical and historical, whether from Joachim's comments or from the Rabbinical 'midrash' of the other comments and allegorical exegeses.

For Joachim, the Apocalypse becomes, in fact, the key to acceding to the double mystery of the two Testaments (*Concordia duorum testamentorum*) and their relationship with the history of the world (*Concordum trium statuum*).

Under the purely Hermeneutical aspect, if in the 'midrash' we have the seven rules of Hillel, the thirteen rules of Ishmael and the thirty-two rules of Eliezer, the techniques used by Joachim of Fiore in commenting on the Bible are those of 'recapitulation' and 'concord'.

The techniques for 'recapitulation' are evident in the first part of the comment to the Apocalypse, for example when referring to the letters to the seven churches, the initial period of the history of the church, during which the single Churches indicate even the general Orders signifying the chronological sequence of all the ecclesiastical periods of time.

Furthermore, the seven cups given to the angels in the fifth part recapitulate the history of the various persecutions of the church.

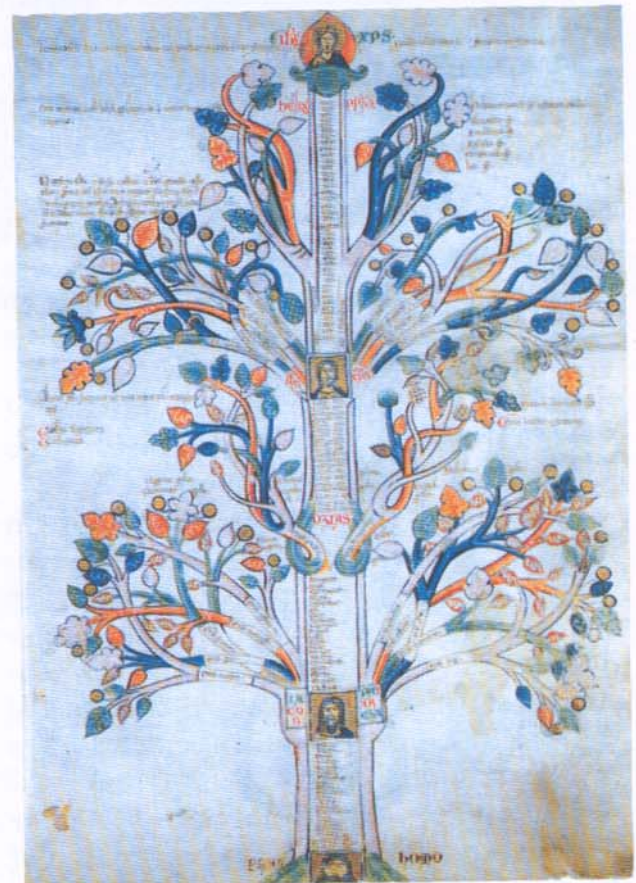
Regarding the technique of the Concord, for Joachim the Apocalypse was seen as a synthesis of the entire historical process of the 'Revelations', an explanation even within the meaning of the Old Testament, which, in this point of view, became the first of the five ages of history.

This observation is made at the beginning of the work, when the monk points out the concordance between the seven wars of the population of Israel in the Old Testament

and the seven persecutions of the Church in the New Testament.

But above all it is important to remember how in the 'Hermeneutic' of Joachim, both in the *Expositio in Apocalypsim* and in the Comment to an unknown prophecy it is possible to find the fundamental element of the midrashic rules, namely, the separation of the comments from the text.

In conclusion, it can be said that the midrashic rules find an equivalent in the factor of alliance by Joachim of Fiore, in a harmonious chain along which history passes by.



Tree of the two Advents
XIII th Century

Some Judaic Aspects of Freemasonry

Yasha Beresiner

AUGUST ORDER AND A CABALISTIC JEW

Prejudicial Discrimination

It is not easy to be of the Jewish faith. Humour has allowed us to survive with a smile on our faces, notwithstanding centuries of persecution and suppression. The apocryphal story of the religious Jew who faces God and says "We are the Chosen people; please, please just for a short while, can you not choose someone else?" may never be proven.

But my early school days as the only Jewish boy in an otherwise Christian school will never be erased from my memory. I distinctly remember the Sunday morning when we were being summoned from the garden, ready to go home.

"Johnny", said the teacher, "what have you been doing?"

"I was playing with Mary with the ball", replied 6-year-old Johnny.

"Well", said the teacher, "if you can spell 'ball' you can go home early".

"B A L L", spelt Johnny, without hesitation.

"How about you Mary?" asked the teacher.

"I was playing with Johnny in the sand".

"Alright", repeated the teacher, "if you can spell the word 'sand' you can go home early".

Mary had no problems at all: "S A N D".

"Well done, Mary."

My turn was next, and tears were rolling down my face.

"What is the matter?" asked the teacher sympathetically.

"I wanted to play with Johnny and Mary", I sobbed, "but they wouldn't play with me because I am Jewish".

"What?!", exclaimed the teacher. "That is

prejudicial discrimination" she said. "If you can spell 'prejudicial discrimination', Yasha, you too can go home early!"

Ancient Freemasonry consists of the three Craft degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. In England, almost exclusively, due to the historical accident of the creation of a second, competing Grand Lodge in 1751, the United Grand Lodge formed in 1813 resolved that the Royal Arch also comprised part of Ancient Freemasonry. Beyond these essential and basic degrees of Freemasonry there are a number of additional degrees and Orders or Rites, which require the three Craft degrees as a prerequisite. These further degrees beyond the Craft, all optional, have been wrongly referred to as *High* or *Higher* degrees. They are tolerated by Grand Lodge and enjoyed by many brethren of all ranks.

They include, among a total of some 16 such Orders in England: the Mark and Royal Ark Mariner degrees; the Ancient and Accepted (Scottish) Rite, popularly referred to as the Rose Croix; the Knights Templar, Knight of Malta and Prince of Rose Croix, commonly known as the Chivalric Orders; Royal and Select Masters, otherwise referred to as the Cryptic Degrees; and a host more. These have also erroneously been referred to as side degrees. That term, however, had quite a different and precise connotation. It referred to the various degrees beyond the Craft where the candidate in a lodge room was taken aside - thus the *side* degree - where the degree in question was conferred upon him. The best example in the past of such conferment was that of the *Knight of Constantinople*.

Of all these many Orders beyond the

Craft, one remains quite outstanding, both from the point of view of the ritual as well as its composition. *This is the August Order of Light.*

The *August Order of Light* - otherwise called the *Mysteries of Perfection of Sikha* (Apex) and of the *Ekata* (Unity) - was launched with a document comprising its rules, regulations and ritual working, on 11 November 1881. It is signed: 'Portman M.V. Grand Heirophant Presiding in the West of the August Order of Light and Prince of Kether'.

Vidal Portman does not appear to have been of the Jewish faith, although the evidence lies only in the fact that he had been active in solely Christian Orders in the late 1800s. The origins of this Order, however, have been attributed indirectly to a Jewish source.

In the Library of the United Grand Lodge of England are several files with vast correspondence between John Yarker (1833-1913), the Masonic author and propagator of degrees, and his considerable entourage of followers of fringe Freemasonry. Two of the letters in the correspondence, both by Yarker to his colleague George Irwin (1828-1893), are the source for much of the published views on the origins of the *August Order of Light*. The letters are lengthy in content, written in John Yarker's own inimitable style, on paper headed *Antient & Primitive Rite of Masonry*. (This was Yarker's best known 'baby', originally formed in 1758; Yarker was granted a patent from the USA in 1872). The first of the letters is dated 10 July 1890, and a relevant section states:

I am surprised that Westcott looks with any favour upon the ritual I have sent him. It was drawn by some Cabalistic Jew in London, and I know that M.V. Portman has no great opinion of it. With his permission

I amalgamated it with Sat Bhai Perfection (Which you have).

The second is dated a few months later, 16 October 1890, where Yarker writes:

I am duly in receipt of yours with Portman's Ritual returned. I regret I cannot tell you much about it; it was compiled for Portman 'by a Jew who had studied the Cabala & Theosophy in London'.

William Wescott (1848-1925), referred to by Yarker in the first letter, was also a member of the occult group of Masons involved in many aspects of fringe Masonry. It is the references to the *Cabalistic Jew in London* in the first letter and to a Jew who had studied the *Cabala & Theosophy in London* in the second, that have been associated with Portman's name. This association has led to the speculation that here lies a reference to the source material from which the ritual of the *August Order* originated.

The suggestion that the *Cabalistic Jew* referred to by Yarker was Chaim Falk is untenable because of the time gap. Rabbi Samuel Jacob Hayyim de Falk (c. 1710-1782) was a fascinating character whose involvement as a Jew with the Rosicrucian movement will forever remain a mystery, but he had no association whatsoever with the *August Order*. Falk was born in Galicia and made much of his reputation as a professional *Baal Shem* or *Master of the Name* - in other words, a magician. He was banished from Westphalia by the Archbishop of Cologne in 1742 and arrived in London, where he soon achieved notoriety in both Jewish and non-Jewish circles. He set up a laboratory on Old London Bridge, from whence he conducted alchemical experiments.

There is evidence of his interest in

Freemasonry and he is recorded to have had contacts with many prominent members of the aristocracy, not least with the duc de Chartres (1747-1793) who became the duc d'Orleans in 1785 and was Grand Master of the Grand Orient of France in 1771. Toward the end of his life, Falk was denounced as a heretic and a fraud, but he was eventually reconciled with the official Jewish community in London and died in relative affluence, which curiously was attributed by some of his contemporaries to his mysterious alchemical experiments - a colourful character by any standards.

There has been a close relation between the established Order of *Sat B'Hai* and that of the August Order, as evidenced in the first regulations of the latter Order dated 11 November 1881, headed Honorary Members, which states:

On the account of the connection of this Order of Perfection with the seven Grades of "Sat Bhai" these Sat Bhais may be admitted at the experimental meetings but they are not to witness our signs or words.

There are two implications of consequence in this statement. Firstly that Portman accepted the *Sat B'Hai* as the more senior Order, and secondly that his own ritual of the *August Order* relied on the *Sat B'Hai* as a source. The similarity of ritual between these, the only two oriental Orders in fringe Masonry, is obvious, and becomes more apparent when they are compared to each other.

Without getting immersed in comparative ritual, the influence of the *Sat B'Hai* on the *August Order* is quite apparent. It would not appear, however, that the August Order of Light was brought to England by Portman from India, and it certainly had nothing to do with the ritual referred to by John Yarker and which is

drawn by some Cabalistic Jew in London. The evidence points to Portman merely adopting the principles and 'shape' of the already existing *Sat B'Hai* ritual, flavouring it with Hindu and other oriental mysticism.

A comparison of the rituals shows that Portman's ritual for the *August Order* of Light, dated 11 November 1881, is divided into three *Sections* with a total of nine degrees. The Order is to be governed by a *Supreme Grand Chapter of Hierophants* and the Grand Council of Initiates. The Government of the Society of *Sat B'Hai*, on the other hand, is to be vested in two Presidents and seven administrative Officers. The ritual of the *Sat B'Hai* set out in a transcript, the original of which is dated May 1879 and signed Self & Ketu, consists of three Series also with a total of nine degrees. Here the similarity between the two ends.

Section 1 of the August Order ritual is named DIKSHITA or *Initiate*. It is governed by the Grand Master of the Sacred Crown: the three degrees (in the West) consist of the *Novice*, the 2nd degree is the *Aspirants*, under the guidance of a teacher and the 3rd, the *Viator* who become affiliated members under the supervision of senior occult members.

In the, the 1st Series is semi-Masonic, called the *Divisional Ghonsala* or *Khoh*. The 1st degree is the *Mute*, who is admitted dumb; the 2nd the *Auditor*, who has passed to speech, and the 3rd is the *Scribe*, who is advanced and is allowed his natural senses.

Clearly the similarities remain one of composition only. There is nothing that shows an amalgamation or any physical connection between the two Orders or their respective rituals. Incidentally, and as a

curiosity only, it may be noted that Portman in 1881 would have included women in the Order. His regulation headed 'PARVATT' states:

Female members of the side degree of 'Parvati' rank with and after initiates, but they have not the signs. They meet by themselves under the Presidency of the Abbess of Patti and can be inspected by the Members of the 'Order of Light' in their offices Also the President of any Hall has the power to send for them to assist in the magical experiments.

What Portman had in mind when he formulated the regulation that the Female members *can be inspected by the Members of the 'Order of Light'* must be left to the imagination. There are no records of any such inspections!

There is nothing in the vast correspondence and other writings of Yarker, other than the mention of Portman when referring to the *Cabalistic Jew* in the above quoted letters, that suggests that Yarker was talking of the *August Order of Light* in his communications with his colleagues. The letters quoted merely state that an outsider, of whom Yarker only remembers his being a *Cabalistic Jew in London*, composed a ritual for Portman, which Portman did not like and forwarded to Yarker for possible incorporation into the *Sat B'Hai Perfection* ritual. There is nowhere a hint that this may have been connected with the *August Order of Light*. My view is that Portman was here involved in ritual work totally unconnected to the *August Order*. John Yarker, in his *Arcane Schools* of 1909, makes the following further statement on pages 492/3:

The writer arranged with Bro. Portman to amalgamate it (the August Order of Light) with the Sat B'Hai Rite of Perfection, but it

seems to be continued separately at Bradford, Yorkshire as the Oriental Order of Light

. . . . the writer has a letter from Bro. Portman in which he says: "The Sat B'Hai rituals are without exception the finest and best suited to an Occult Order of anything I have ever read."

There are several implications in this quote. Firstly, the statement by Portman that the *Sat B'Hai* rituals are without exception the finest...would support my view that Portman could have been referring to other attempts at the creation of new ritual - nothing to do with the *August Order* - such as the unacceptable ritual material composed by the *Cabalistic Jew*. Secondly Yarker's words but it seems to be continued separately implies that in spite of the 'arrangements' made with Portman, Yarker did not carry out the revision of the ritual.

It has been suggested that John Yarker, having now obtained and amalgamated the *August Order* with the *Sat B'Hai*, passed the Order over to brothers T.M. Pattinson and B.E.J. Edwards at the turn of the century. But this is not a viable theory. John Yarker makes it clear, in the quoted statement above, that the *August Order* was already being worked successfully in Bradford as the *Oriental Order of Light*. Secondly, and far more importantly, housed at the Masonic Hall in Blackwell, Halifax, lies the original warrant for the renewed *August Order*, stating:

*I, Maurice Vidal Portman
Founder of the Order of Light
Authorise T.H. Pattinson and
J.B. Edwards to admit members
to the Order and to hold meetings
thereof and I confirm their past
actions in so doing.*

The document has an elaborate oval vignette along the right-hand side. It is undated and signed *M.V. Portman*. The fact that the document authorises and confirms past actions implies the Order was already being worked before its formal launch in 1902. One must consider Yarker's words *and he [Portman] leaves all arrangements in the writer's [Yarker's] hands*. Whilst I can appreciate the possible interpretation of these words as referring specifically to the *August Order of Light*, I feel equally confident that the reference was to the two Oriental Societies in general, including the *Sat B'Hai*. Portman, by 1890, was generally disappointed with all aspects of Freemasonry and eager to return to India. His letter to Yarker constituted a 'bail-out' rather than a 'hand-over' of an active and successful organised institution to a successor. This is further supported by Yarker's comments in his letter to Irwin dated 16 Oct. 1890, referred to above, in which Yarker says of Portman:

I have not heard from him for a long time, he was disappointed in Masonry & we seem to have nothing else to correspond about.

By this time Brothers Edwards and Pattinson in Bradford had been in direct contact with Portman who, at some time, handed them a signed warrant legitimising the reconstitution of the Order. It is my view that when Yarker found that the Order was already functional in Bradford, he took no further practical interest in it. He may have intended to incorporate and amalgamate the rituals of the *Sat B'Hai* with that of the *Order of Light* but never got round to it. There is no interpolation of the *Sat B'Hai* ritual in the *August Order* instituted by John Yarker or anyone else,

in spite of the statements made by Yarker himself. John Yarker, had he any interest, could have joined the *August Order*, as Westcott and many others did when the Order was launched in its present form in 1902.

It is gratifying today to participate in an Order, well respected, which successfully extricated itself from the confusion and neglect at the end of the last century and has now survived into a state of popularity and prosperity.

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Bioethics. A foundation of Philosophy

Prof. Giuliano Di Bernardo

The term "bioethics" was used, perhaps for the first time, in 1971, in the title of a book by the oncologist V. R. Potter: *Bioethics: Bridge for the Future*, to indicate a plan for using biological science in order to improve the quality of life. This term has been ambiguous right from the beginning, both semantically and philosophically. On the one hand it indicates some form of reflection on the values subordinate to life (bios), while on the other it denotes a meta-moral (ethos) that evaluates the findings of biology and medicine. This dual significance derives from the joint use of the two terms that make it up: "bios" and "ethos", which, while sometimes expressing a happy synthesis, at others signify a profound contradiction. Irrefutable proof of this comes from the whole set of definitions that have been given to the word "bioethics", which show that when specifying the field it covers, emphasis is placed either on the scientific viewpoint (based on "bios") or on the ethical viewpoint (based on ethos). In subsequent developments of bioethics, this ambiguity has tended to worsen, making its meaning more and more confused. Hence the need to find a philosophical basis for it.

Although the meanings that may be given to the term "bioethics" can differ, the object it refers to is perfectly clear and distinct: the *human body*, examined from a point of view that is new and, in some respects, different from all the preceding historical points of view. The human body, in fact, is no longer considered as an organism whole and indivisible into its consti-

tuent parts, but rather as a set of biological functions whose organs may be subjected to transformations and adaptations. Hence both the single organs and the body as a whole may undergo changes that will alter its nature. The result of this is that the study of the human body, from natural as it always was in the past, has become artificial: artificially, it is possible to modify human nature. From this new situation arise the problems concerning the interventions that man the scientist can make on the human body, problems that are very important from the ethical, social, legal, religious and economic viewpoints.

After Potter's book was published in 1971, bioethics presented itself as a borderline study between different disciplines. This characteristic was further confirmed in the *Encyclopaedia of Bioethics*, begun in 1972 with the contribution of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics and published in 1978. In more recent times, bioethics claims to be a wide-ranging and independent research project that brings together biology and medicine on the one hand and the human sciences such as sociology, law, theology and moral philosophy on the other. Epistemological interest in bioethics is more and more lively, tending to define the ethical responsibility of this science.

Disparate fields coexist in the research project that goes under the name of bioethics. These include birth control, heredity and genetics, the development of neuroscience, pharmacological experiments on man, the voluntary interruption of pregnancy, artificial insemination, organ

transplants, the treatment of patients with terminal illnesses, and cloning.

Ethical, social, legal and religious problems arise in each of these fields. Any solution put forward is usually confused and contradictory. One case is emblematic of the situation. At Stanford, California, in 1971, techniques were prepared for transferring genetic material into a receptor cell. When the news became public, the reactions were negative and very disturbed, because of the fear that a person's hereditary make-up could be modified in this way. These criticisms forced the researchers to organise a convention that was held in 1974 in Asilomar, in the United States, where it was decided to suspend research into biotechnologies. However, the following year, again at Asilomar, the suspension was suspended and biotechnologies were subjected to rigorous control. This did not calm the waters, though, and two parties were born: those in favour of and those against biotechnologies. To complicate matters still further, bans were imposed by the various religions. Bioethics thus became the battleground on which different conceptions of the world, of life and of humankind clashed

To shed some light on the situation, two fundamental questions must be faced: a) what are the relations between ethics and biomedical science? b) what does ethics mean for biomedical science?

We have already seen that the term "bioethics" takes on a dual meaning, depending on whether one stresses "ethos" or "bios". In the first case, science (biology and medicine) is subordinate to ethics, while in the second, ethics is subordinate to science. Consequently there can be two different ways of viewing bioethics, one based on "ethos", in which ethics is independent of science, and one based on "bios", in which

ethics is not independent but is a derivative of science. This second viewpoint is an expression of *scientism*, i.e. a conception that claims to be able to solve all human and ethical problems through science. Scientism is closely linked with *positivism*, from which it derives. Positivism is a philosophical concept that was born in France in the first half of the 19th century and then spread throughout the whole of Europe. It is characterised by the rejection of metaphysical speculation, attributing the role of producing scientific knowledge to the empirical sciences alone. The task of philosophy is simply to organise the findings made within the individual sciences. Ethics is understood as a set of propositions, devoid of meaning, that merely express irrational emotions. The result is an optimistic view of human history, which, thanks to the exclusive merits of science, is the artifice of continuous and constant civil and social progress.

There are well-founded motives for thinking that the meaning given by Potter to the term "bioethics" is precisely this scientific one, thus revealing an attitude of blind and absolute faith in biomedical science. If this is the interpretation given to Potter's "bioethics", then the meaning he wanted to give to the term immediately becomes perfectly clear. His "ethos" refers to ethics born from science and completely at the service of science.

Is this interpretation of bioethics valid and, therefore, acceptable? In fact, there are many reasons for rejecting it, all finding justification in the alternative view based on "ethos".

To clarify this viewpoint, it is first of all necessary to define the concepts of "morals" and "ethics", which generally tend to be regarded as synonyms. Although there is a common basis of mea-

ning in both of them, it is possible and advisable to make a distinction between them.

By "morals", one generally understands a set of customs and rules belonging to a given culture and that are recognised as rules of conduct by a person or by a group. "Ethics", on the other hand, is understood as a meta-moral, i.e. a doctrine that is placed beyond morals, which reflects on moral values and judgements, to which it claims to give a foundation, leading them to a set of ultimate principles. In the rest of this paper, when we speak of "ethics" we shall be referring solely to a theory that provides a basis and justification for morals.

It is a commonly held opinion that, in the contemporary world, ethical thought is in crisis. Understanding this crisis is essential if we are to clarify the relationship between "ethos" and "bios" within bioethics.

In the world in which we live, all reference to traditional values has disappeared, and we no longer know what the possible bases of a theory of ethics might be. Contemporary ethics navigates in a sea in which the foundations of metaphysics, ontology and religion have been repudiated. The old certainties on which an ethical theory could be based no longer exist.

We live immersed in a nihilism of which Nietzsche, in the nineteenth century, was the unheeded prophet. It is from nihilism, understood generally as a spiritual phenomenon linked with the death of God and its suprasensible ideals that the current crisis of ethics began.

Nihilism is also characterised by the death of the totalitarian ideologies and grand conceptions: the thought of the Enlightenment philosophers, who saw a rational teleology in history; Hegel's theory, regarding the formation of the Spirit of the world; Marxism and its kingdom of ends, in the sense of a classless

society.

Nihilism died in the ideologies that led to the delegitimisation of ethics, which now finds itself devoid of those traditional certainties on which its justification was based.

Is it possible to escape from nihilism? This question can be given a positive answer. Nietzsche himself, prophet and theorist of nihilism, glimpsed a possible solution in the "will to power". With regard to ethics, a new foundation is needed. But what are these new principles needed for, as each foundation requires a basis without which the building will not stand. What principles, then, can the new ethic be based on? It must be pointed out, to begin with, that the new ethics are not born from nothing - they explore new paths drawing on well-defined currents of thought, without which they could not be put into effect. The new, therefore, consists in adapting the old to changed historical conditions. The problem is, then, to decide which of the existing currents of ethics should go to make up the foundation of the new ethic.

Our argument is not, however, interested in founding a general ethic but, rather, an ethic capable of giving direction in particular to biomedical science. One might also wonder if the ethics of science may be valid for these specific sciences. I am convinced that a general ethic of science (like that, for example, proposed by Karl Otto Apel) can grasp only some but not all the aspects of biomedical science. Consequently, an ethic for science in general, valid both for logic and for the natural and social sciences, would be too weak for biomedical science. Hence this science requires an ethical basis capable of grasping its specific nature. In delineating this specific nature, we shall also find a reply to the second question posed above: what is ethics for biomedical science?

The foundation of any ethic cannot disregard the ideas of Socrates, who identifies the essence of man with his *soul*, defining this as *intelligence*, or the capacity to intend and desire good and, therefore, as the intellectual and moral personality of man. This new concept of "soul" and therefore of "man" were to become a reference point for western culture.

Socratic ethics are centred on three fundamental concepts: a) *autarchy*, or the self-sufficiency of reason; b) *self-control*, or the control of reason over sensible impulses; c) *liberty*, or the capacity of reason to impose itself over man's animal instincts.

These three concepts show an unlimited faith in reason and intelligence that qualifies Socratic ethics as rational. And it is to reason that Socrates reduces everything, even the gods, making them moral and thus subjecting them, like men, to respect for rules and moral values. Morality, therefore, is at the apex of man's conduct.

Western culture is still characterised by Socratic ethics, which have found further investigations and developments in the thought of philosophers who, from antiquity up to present times, have proposed ethical theories that have usually expressed particular cultural and social needs. In delineating ethics for biomedical science, I shall refer to the essential contribution of Socrates, in confirmation of the continuity between the old and the new in ethical thought.

What is "the new" on which an ethic for biomedical science can be based? To find an answer to this question, it is sensible to start from the widespread fear that derives from its technological applications. These, in fact, increase man's powers enormously, giving him the power to produce on himself changes that are so radical that they can compromise his very nature. His experiments and innovations are no longer

in a field extraneous to him, like the universe or the physical world, but his very self. When man feels threatened by science and believes that it can cause him irreparable damage, then a new ethic is needed, practical and enlightening, capable not only of guiding the results of technological applications but also of tranquillising man about his fate. How, then, can one conceive the new ethic?

A new ethical theory must be based on the following concepts:

a) *autonomy*, b) *rationality*, c) *responsibility*, d) *realism*.

a) Socrates had already declared that ethics, founded on reason, must be autonomous (autarchic). This means that reason is self-sufficient and, therefore, capable of regulating itself, without the intervention of external factors. What, though, are these external factors? Above all, religion. To avoid this form of interference, Socrates had already made the gods themselves subject to morals. In the course of the centuries, many people have repeated that ethics, by its very nature, is not religious, because it follows pure reason alone. This ethical rationalism was taken to its extreme consequences by Kant, who proposed that "practical reason", in the sense of the basis of ethics, is independent of all knowing, religious or speculative though this may be.

Ethics must be independent not only of religion but also of politics, law and science. If ethics depended on science, it would be scientism and positivism and, in the framework of the term "bioethics", the meaning to be given to "ethos" would be that of ethics not autonomous but dependent on biology and medicine. Why should ethics be autonomous? The answer will be given below.

b) The foundation of Socratic ethics

is rational. Reason, by its nature and in order to be itself, is self-sufficient. The development of ethical thought, however, has also been characterised by non-rational ethical theories, based on will, on passions, on sentiments. Thus there exists the possibility of founding a new form of ethics not on reason but on will. Which to choose? I believe the choice must be in favour of reason, for at least one important motive: through reason one can reach the universal. A universal ethic, capable of involving the whole of human society, is the only one capable of giving a sense of direction to the problems that are created by the technological applications of biomedical science, of giving humanity, disorientated and anguished, the necessary tranquillity to look to its future with trust.

c) Responsibility descends from autonomy and rationality. Implicit in Socrates but well defined from Plato onwards, responsibility means being completely accountable for one's actions. Plato writes in the tenth book of *The Republic*: "Everyone is responsible for his own choices! God is innocent and we are the sole artificers of our destiny, through the choice we make of how to live our lives ." The concept of "responsibility" that governs classical ethics is found again in contemporary ethical thought, though profoundly transformed. Whereas previously responsibility was based on eternity and transcendence, now it hangs on time - time that is not only present or immediate future, but also, and above all, distant future. Our responsibility must push out towards a distant future, in order to preserve the existence of humankind from the perils of the sciences that study the body of man: the survival of humankind in the future is the result of this responsibility - a new interpretation of responsibility that is the merit of H. Jonas.

A responsibility that, to be valid for all, now and forever, must be founded on reason and universality and, as we shall see in section d) below, must also start from a realistic view of matters.

d) Realism means the capacity to accept what can actually exist, to observe the very conditions of life and existence as they are, in their painful and tragic essence. Reality may express itself through joy, but that is nothing other than the obverse of pain.

In the history of ethical thought, realism is a theory that has been shared by few philosophers. It was fostered, in particular, by Schopenhauer and by Nietzsche. It has been reintroduced with some determination today precisely to define the anguish that is born out of the technological applications of biomedical science.

Let us now recapitulate the four concepts on which to base a new ethic.

Autonomy defends ethics from external interference, such as that of religion, politics, law and science.

Rationality allows it to reach the universal, a necessary condition for regulating the problems posed by biomedical science. Responsibility makes man the arbiter of his choices and obliges him to preserve future humankind.

Realism opens his eyes to the reality of things as they are, including pain and tragedy.

Returning to the question we have posed a number of times already: why must ethics be autonomous? The reflections already made have partially answered this question, but it still needs looking further into.

As I am convinced that Kant's ethical rationalism is a necessary condition for the foundation of any ethic in the age of science, I shall clarify one of the cornersto-

nes of his ethical theory. Kant believed that practical philosophy is not based on what "is" but on what "ought to be". This means that ethics, based on practical philosophy, is formed of a set of rules that are not deduced from historical, social or scientific data. To use a technical expression, we shall say that the "ought to be" (ethics) is not deduced from the "being" (reality). Vice-versa, any attempt to deduce the "ought to be" from the "being" is an error of logic that leads to scientism and positivism.

The greatest danger for bioethics comes, therefore, from scientism, which creates the illusion that science can solve every kind of human and ethical problem. Science can certainly solve scientific problems, but it cannot solve ethical ones, which belong, as Kant has shown, to another order: that of what ought to be.

Scientism, the offspring of positivism, came into a crisis with its progenitor in the second half of the last century. In the last few years, however, thanks precisely to the outstanding discoveries made by biology and medicine in manipulating the human body, scientism has come back into fashion more strongly than ever before. Scientists, authorities in their fields yet with little knowledge of ethics and philosophy, cannot resist the temptation to appear wise and as master of virtue and to assume the mantle of prerogatives which belong to God.

Bioethics, at this early stage of development, must avoid two opposing radical threats: *scientism* and *theologism*. Of scientism we have already spoken. With reference to theologism, we specify that this is a conception which attributes to God rather than to man the capacity to judge and decide on the results of biomedical science. The reason therefore lies in the fact that human nature, being created

by God, may not be artificially modified by man, not even in the name of scientific progress. The duty of scientists, vice versa, is to care for, protect and improve the human body. Thus, while in scientism it is man who decides, in theologism it is God. Kant would say, in this matter, that, in the presence of God, man has no more to add: if there is a dispute between man and God, then God, definitively, will always prevail.

Scientism and theologism are the principal causes determining the ambiguity and contradictions in bioethics. Each claims to represent the truth and considers the other to be wrong. These two interpretations cannot, unfortunately, be reconciled: either one or the other applies.

Correct development of bioethics would require overcoming both scientism and theologism. But how? It would be over simple and banal to thinking of excluding their representatives from bioethics. Even were this desirable, one would have to establish which authority would hold the power of exclusion and which authority that of attribution. It is evident that the problems arising are of such complexity that they would render the situation even more obscure and incomprehensible.

Then how to we deal with this difficult situation? The sole route I see available is to take note of the existing situation. It is a fact that certain researchers in biomedical science have a scientific and positivist view, which is proper to their subjectivity and to their culture. As it is difficult to change their view, what can and must be done is to separate their scientific activities from their manner of understanding these activities. While the results obtained with their scientific research into the human body are universally valid, their assessments of those results remain debatable. To some they are acceptable and to

others no. Thus, if one considers that their scientist attitude is an obstacle to the development of bioethics, it is necessary to move so that they cannot apply it to influence decisions regarding the use of scientific discoveries. As the privileged forum for the expression of scientism is that of ethics committees, it is necessary to move to exclude these scientists therefrom.

The same argument applies to theologism. We cannot stop theologians and the representatives of religion from seeing the human body as the result of divine creation and, thus, from expressing opposition to the manipulation of human nature. What we can, on the other hand, and, indeed, must do is exclude them from the Ethical Committees.

If, within these Committees, there is coexistence of "scientistic" researchers and theologians, then conflict and misunderstanding is inevitable with deleterious effect on bioethics.

The development of bioethics was accompanied by the formation of Ethical Committees.

These Committees are inspired principally by the *Nuremberg Code* of 1947, the *Helsinki Declaration* of 1964 and the *Manila Declaration* of 1981. These were born, initially, as spontaneous manifestations inside hospitals and universities. Subsequently, in the main western countries, *National Committees* were formed. At the same time, attempts were made to safeguard the rights of the person from the legal viewpoint too: it was, in fact, declared that the human body *could not be disposed of* (i.e. my body may not be touched without my consent), it could not be the object of *commerce* (there can be no trafficking with regard to the human body) and *it could not be considered as property*. Everyone agrees on the need to set up

these Ethical Committees. The differences and arguments, however, arise when people begin to talk about their composition. Who has the right to be a member? Scientists, philosophers, jurists, theologians? These arguments are the proof of the ambiguity that exists in regard to how bioethics should be understood, as I pointed out in the previous pages.

Some people maintain that scientists should be members of the Ethical Committees, because they alone know the best way to apply their discoveries and resolve the problems that arise from these applications. The scientistic attitude is evident in this.

Paradoxically, this attitude is the exact opposite of what happened with positivism. In positivism, in fact, scientists had the right to carry out research freely, but were not responsible for the use that others made of their research. Now, there is the wish to make the scientist responsible for this too, giving him the monopoly not only of scientific research but also of the ethics that should regulate it. This scientistic attitude would be a serious peril for understanding and developing bioethics.

This does not mean that scientists must not become members of the Ethical Committees, but that they must remain within their fields of competence. They have undoubted authority in science, but not in ethics. Ethics is the province of philosophers.

The Ethical Committees, in conclusion, must be made up of non "scientist" researchers (biologists and doctors), philosophers (of morals and of science), jurists and social scientists. Each of these, however, must exercise his authority solely within the field in which he is an expert, without intruding into the fields of the others, and must respect the others' opinions even if

he does not agree with them. Only in this way will the Ethical Committee be able to unravel the tangled web that derives from experiments on the human body. And give man tranquillity about his destiny.



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The Mystery of Castel del Monte

Alessandro Giorgi

Approximately 20 km from Andria, in the sunny and wild frame of the Murgia in Apulia, is perhaps the most mysterious of medieval constructions in Italy. Castel del Monte is a castle of octagonal structure situated on the immense plain of Andria in Southern Italy, and was built between 1238 and 1247 by Frederick II of Swabia. But it is too small to be a real castle and too large to be a palace, and then it has no defences. In fact it is without a moat, without a drawbridge, there are no battlements, no drainage holes or terraces, it does not even have a village near by which would have at the time looked after the provisions and the soldiers. In short, it is everything contrary to a castle. It seems more like a self sufficient fortified octagonal stronghold. Some sustain that it was a stop-over castle, a hunting castle or maybe an observatory, given the architectural correspondence with certain astronomical alignments. Maybe it is so, maybe not or not even this. It is a fact that Frederick II was one of those who moved about a lot because of his military campaigns. He loved hunting and astronomy too, but not only these. The Swabian Emperor was a man of great political acumen, of ample horizons and scientific, humanistic and esoteric culture, which made him an authentic bearer of the latest news. He loved Italy, and like his grandfather Frederick Barbarossa never managed to completely conquer it. So, in order to learn the secret of this castle one needs to understand the emperor who had it built. Frederick II was born in Italy in 1194 from a Norman mother and a German father.

He was without his father when he was 3 years old and was entrusted to a Sicilian nurse. Brought up by his overbearing mother and lead by a Christian Pope he was educated into the culture of the time by Arab, Italic, Jewish and Byzantine masters. So the great Emperor grew up in Palermo amongst Priests and Sufi, Rabbis and Scholars, Courtiers and Educated Eunuchs learning all that there was to learn whilst he practiced the art of Diplomacy, Government, Command and War under the guidance of the most noble Norman cavaliers, templars and Saracens as well as the more important Arab, German, Italic, French, Portuguese and Byzantine Councillors.

He was elected Emperor of Magonza and Acquisgrana, consecrated in Rome but resided at Palermo.

He became a friend of the Sultan of Egypt and allied with the Visir he received three excommunications. He remained a widower from three wives and was father to three children. In the meantime he managed to outlive five conspiracies and four attacks, suppress six revolutions and two coup d'états, fight eight wars and innumerable battles, finish a crusade, construct two hundred cathedrals and 40 fortresses. And not least, establish the University of Naples, reorganising the administration of the Apulia and Sicily, negotiate for the sacred places in Jerusalem, proclaim the famous Melfi Constitutions and proclaim his son the King of Sardinia. This is Frederick II, who spent his life between the Marches, Sicily, Germany, Calabria, Campania, France, Romagna, Apulia, Latium, Sardinia, Lombardy, Tunisia, Basilicata, Umbria and the Holy Land; wherever speaking, meditating, agreeing and in extreme cases fighting on

all sides against the Bavarians, Flemings, Papal troops, the French, the peoples from Parma, Bologna, Genoa, Ravenna and Lombardy.

He knew about art, astronomy and oriental esoteric science. He had a perfect knowledge of German, Italian, Arabic, French, Neapolitan, Latin, Greek, Portuguese and the Apulian and Calabrian dialects; but he spoke with broad Sicilian. He had projected in his mind a new type of empire; a peaceful empire established on agreements rather than on a military confrontation. A large federated empire with the Capital by the sea, at the centre of the mediterranean and a long way from any sort of religious interference and from any Byzantine allurements. In Frederick's mind, the fulcrum of this project of his was Italy. But to realise all this he first needed to unify Italy. The unity of Italy was the only condition to be able to unite his Realm from Prussia to Sicily and to propose himself as the Emperor-Leader of the biggest alliance of understanding and peaceful exchange of culture, production, art, science and market with all the other mediterranean federation powers. Unfortunately, he didn't manage it. He died at 56 taking with him his Euro-mediterranean dream and his regret that he wasn't able to unify Italy. But he left his testament: Castel del Monte.

This medieval Sphinx which was an integral part of his strategic plan, still keeps the secret essence of his esoteric message intact within its splendid architecture. Because the true message to the posterity of Frederick II of Swabia is exactly Castel del Monte: eight towers of octagonal form that scan the eight sides of the castle walls which house eight rooms on each floor, decorated in eight different styles which face the eight sides of the well illuminated inside courtyard but always shadowed

whatever the position of the sun. It is strange that this construction is founded on the number Eight which repeats itself. There are eight plus eight large rooms all equal in shape and size which lead to as many living rooms distinct but all intercommunicating. It is an architecturally perfect construction that seems to be destined to welcome distinguished guests in a very comfortable manner for relaxation or as a confidential meeting-place. It has been called a hunting castle, a holiday castle, a rendez-vous castle and even an astronomical Observatory. This is how the mystery of Castel del Monte has been interpreted. And it is like this that it appears to the eyes of the public and to the students of today.

But this is only the frame of the picture; the real essence of the matter is something else. It is in the symbol of this strange castle which is not a castle, and in the deep innermost of its perfect architecture hauntingly pivoting on the number Eight. Too many suppositions nearly always confirm the mystery. And this castle that seems to want to exalt only those aspects of outward architectural appearance, on the contrary preserves esoteric values of a completely different meaning. It is a brief reflection which takes the mind to the repeating number Eight. Because the key to the mystery of Castel del Monte is right here; the number Eight. The curiosity stimulated by the mystery springs to mind and it is thus natural to recall the old book of numbers, read in their esoteric valency which the great Frederick II knew only too well. An old book where the number Eight is the number which represents the physical world and the access to the mysteries of the obvious world; namely, writings, language, knowledge and fascination. Everything in this castle recalls the number Eight.

And therefore every reflection leads to a reconnection to the ancient Egyptian mythology of Toth who is the "Master of the City of Eight", bearer of news and in a short step expresses "... I am the One who becomes Two who becomes Four who becomes Eight. And therefore I am the One again" ... Eight is therefore One, meaning 'Primus' but also as ... "the many which return to One": namely Unity. The Eight, or rather One and therefore Unity are thus the Emperor Frederick II in that 'Primus' around which "the many" return to reconstruct Unity. And this strange "Castle/non-Castle" in an octagonal shape is the "City of Eight" of Frederick II, he like Toth, bearer of news through unity. Thus Castel del Monte is the symbol of "revival in unity" which is obtained under the aegis of the King. Frederick is the future in unitedness.

This is the message that the Swabian Emperor left to posterity and which he built in stone on the unique high ground of the large plains of Andria. From the documents of the Captaincy in 1240, this was already there. The Emperor held a great deal of esteem in this strange little castle of his. This universal message secretly held in the geometry of the castle and in the lines of an architecture without any esthetics whatsoever and without any

military value has practically saved the castle from its destruction. Because the enemies of Frederick II, not having his refined culture, valued this castle only from the profane side and considering it an innocuous hunting castle that didn't merit even the effort of destroying it. But after the breaching of Porta Pia, the castle was strangely recovered to the attention of the cultured and was straight away purchased by the young Italian State which immediately restored it. It is most probable that someone of our Risorgimento already knew the symbolic value of this castle from studying the book of numbers, Egyptian mythology of Toth and the esoteric significance of the number Eight. And so before anyone else they even managed to identify the mystery within the castle; the symbol of Unity. Thus without even revealing the mystery they got the emblem of Frederick II; his "Crown of Stones" of eight towers. This is Castel del Monte. The crown of unity. And this gigantic "Crown of Stones" left to posterity is the same many-towered crown that for 130 years has crowned the head of Italy symbolised in a woman wrapped in the Tricolour.

In this sense, before any other supposition, Castel del Monte is the oldest symbol of the Unity of Italy.



The Rosacrucian Reformis during Alexander I (1801- 1825)

Daisy Galliussi

During the first years of

Alexander I's reign an informal secret council was constituted, to study the State Ceremonials of the Russian Empire of that period and to elaborate the most suitable reforms for a better organisation and efficiency.

The members of this secret council had been defined as 'a group of Jacobins', in that they were distinguished by their progressive and constitutional ideas and all were formed in masonic lodges which represented a school of liberalism, ethics, participation and responsibility. Aleksandr Nikolaevic Golicyn and Michail Michajlovic Speranskij were among such people.

The Attorney General of the Holy Synod the former and Secretary of State and legislator the latter, Prince Golicyn and Michail Speranskij were different men for many aspects yet very similar for their ideas and in their work serving Alexander I during the first decade of his reign; distinguished by expectations, reforming ventures and grand ideals doomed to an unhappy conclusion.

Michail Speranskij was undoubtedly a great statesman whilst Prince Golicyn is remembered as the originator of the renowned Ministry of Education and Ecclesiastic Affairs which was created as an instrument to the service of those who wanted to study according to liberal principles. He became a powerful repressive figure within university circles at the start of the 1820's.

Both these people who were the most powerful men in Russia during the first part of Alexander I's reign, fell victim of arakceevscina. Paradoxically, they became slaves of that autocracy that they had tenaciously fought against in their search for a powerful fighting tool in the reform of the educational system.

Their ideals and plans found the roots in the rosicrucian culture of the masonic lodges, which flourished in Russia in the late 1700's. They both completely shared the liberal and reforming spirit which blended with theosophical and mystical interests. In those years a key ministry was constituted; the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The minister responsible was Kokubej, a mason at the end of the 1700's when the "Interior Order of the Golden Rosycross" was widespread in the Russian territories.

Speranskij was called to look after the administration under Kokubej, and his first official responsibility was thanks to Kukarin, one of the leading figures in Russian masonic history in the late 1700's.

We know that the old masters of the previous generation had placed their hopes in Speranskij, the spiritual scholar in the ideals of Freemasonry.

The volcanic activity of Speranskij made an impression on the monarch to such a degree, that in 1807 Alexander I nominated him his personal secretary. Among the objectives, one of his priorities and coherent with the principles of the rosicrucian enlightenment, was that concerning the reorganisation of the State school system

which was full of gaps. All his enthusiasm was aimed at reinforcing the idea that fundamental laws of the State already existed and they had to be observed even by the monarch himself.

Initially, Alexander I just watched but then in 1805 he established a cabinet for secretly watching over to see that the initiatives didn't become too liberal.

At this time, the control of clerical affairs was given to Golicyn, who was also nominated Secretary of State. He became friendly with the metropolitan Platon, a man with an open mind and patron of the rosicrucian circle of Novikov; thus he wholly embraced the masonic ideals and at the same time has road interlaced with Speranskij's, thereby giving life to a great friendly, working relationship based upon respect and friendship.

They both shared their worries about the metropolitan Platon involving the school system as for example the shortage of staff, funds and even students and so Speranskij found in Golicyn a valuable team member for extending the reform from education even to the clerical area. They asked the alchemist Evgenij Bolchovitinov, historian and archaeologist, to draw up a plan of reform that was immediately approved in 1808. The local scholastic institutes were taken away from the authority of the bishops and high priests and, Speranskij introduced the election system and new teaching methods to stimulate the individual initiatives of the students, thereby contributing to the setting up of a 'Commission for religious scholastic Institutes' which would have helped the Synod and which represented a step forward towards the renewal of the Church. It was at this point moment that the ideas of reforming education interla-

ced even more with those of freemasonry.

Thanks to Speranskij, in 1811 courses started at the Carskoe Selo High School and the St. Petersburg Academy of Theology was opened. It was an ambitious project but the means and the staff were scarce so Speranskij proposed asking the help of a well-known orientalist Ignaz August Fessler. No sooner had he arrived in St. Petersburg he set up a new Lodge, 'The Polar Star' in which discussions were held on the possibilities of transforming the Masonic Lodges in Russia into structures to the service of the people in general, for moral, civic and political re-education. Speranskij's main objective of re-educating the clergy derived principally from the teachings of the rosicrucian masters and from the reading of authors like Bohme, Arndht and the modern theosophists. According to some scholars of Russian freemasonry, not only Golicyn and Speranskij took part in the meetings of the Polar Star Lodge, but also various intellectuals and politicians from their group of workers, such as Aleksander Turgenev, a tie between the rosicrucian culture of the 1700's and the new ambitions of the emergent Romanticism. In fact, it was the same treasure house of experiences, readings and ideals to unite these men.

Ivan Lopuchin, one of the most active rosicrucians in the of publishing field, was an essential guide and master of Turgenev himself and of his companions during the first years of the 19th Century. Indeed, it was he who coordinated not only many of the masonic works in the two Russian capitals, but even the relationship between the lodges, in particular 'The Dying Sphinx' governed by A.F. Labzin. He was so esteemed that for his valuable work in

translating mystic and Hermetic texts he was allowed to take part in the meetings of one of the most important Lodges, the 'Phoenix' although he was not a member.

By exploiting the ambiguity of the statutes of the censure, Labzin was able to publish the 'Christian' review "The Messenger of Sion", but despite the great interest this initiative had aroused, he was forced to interrupt publication because of the numerous oppositions and hurdles encountered. In the meanwhile Lopuchin got closer to Sperankij and Golicyn and it was even thanks to him that their illuminated reformism had its roots in the Rosicrucian ideals.

Speranskij asserted that "He who asserts that the spirit of the reign of God is inconsistent with the principles of political society; is wrong" and in fact his works were based on the consideration that man is called to perfect the divine creation on earth and to adjust the State and Society to fundamental ethic principles. Therefore, politics improves with the presence of ethics. Fessler and the 'Polar Star' latched on to this idea as they believed that masonry would have succeeded in this project of 'improving man'. The masonic lodges transmits to the individual the sense of active participation and the respect of rights and duties, and these behaviours and regulations, if acquired, are easily conveyed to private and public life and at the same time lead to the revival of the inner being of man.

Amongst the masons of the 'Polar Star' who were connected to the work of legislative reform, we can find Razumovskij who was the Minister of Education from 1810 to 1816. Due to his position he managed to pave the road to numerous associations, including the 'Biblical Society' and he participated in numerous meetings of the

'Auburn' Lodge.

At that time, even Alexander I himself approached and became interested in the religious and mystic literature to which he discussed directly with Speranskij and Golicyn.

It was Fessler who explained how to interpret word 'mysticism'. Mysticism is a congenital characteristic of reason, akin to religiousness and philosophy; it is a superior sensation and not a weakening of one's strength [. . .]. Real mysticism, founded on pure reasoning and living by its own light, not only can be investigated but can have a scientific element. Mysticism is therefore the spiritual rebirth of the individual.

Nevertheless the Czar, subsequently worried about the 'new ideas' dissolved the commission. A new reform was later attempted by the Minister of Police, Balasov, the failure of which lead to the ruling of 1822 which suppressed all the Lodges, seeing that 'disorders and insurrections generated in the other States from the existence of secret societies to which Freemasons belonged'.

It was during this period that Fessler was under accusation for his ideas and activities and he thus explained his convictions: 'The purpose of Freemasonry consists in submitting the three great lights, Religion, Laws of the State, Everlasting Justice, to meditation and reasoning [. . .]

Masonry tries to raise man from only an external morality with respect to unchangeable rules, from a conventional propriety which stands up only by the coercive force of the law, to the illuminated consciousness of the principles on which society and its institutions are founded; to assert and spread the reign of God, revealed to the world by Jesus Christ.'

The uniting of religious mysticism and

political enlightenment which identified those men close to rosicrucianism was an essential element of cultural heredity which the Russian Enlightenment left in the successive century.

The presence of Fessler in the Academy of Theology was a real blow to the Conservatives as he wanted a complete renewal and Golicyyn always supported him in his plans. According to Filaret 'In this plan he is committed to reconcile all religions or rather lead them into a universal religion.'

Bombarded by critics, even those close to the Empire, Fessler was no longer able to hold his chair at the Academy, but notwithstanding his removal it remained a place in which various religious confessions could meet.

After this event, Speraskij stopped working with the Commission for religious scholastic Institutes, yet he continued to keep in touch with Golicyyn, who in 1810 was called to the Ministry for foreign religious affairs from which he was able to put all those religions operating in the Empire on the same level. It was also thanks to Speranskij that he was able to have a valid contributor such as Aleksandr Turgenev.

Speranskij's removal from the Court in 1812, despite the great sensation, still remains a mystery today. It can be interpreted on the basis of the reports that the Minister of Police, Balakov, delivered to Alexander I, in that Speranskij was considered to be the head of the enlightened Russians and thus of the revolutionary masons introduced by Fessler.

The political end to Speranskij signified even the end of the dream for the 'general reform of those things divine.'

The conclusion of the events of those years demonstrated how conservative the Church and civil society were.

Speranskij and Golicyyn continued to write to each other and remained united in their rosicrucian culture. The statesman in his exile was always interested in what Golicyyn was doing, especially with the Biblical Society in which he had found the right means for continuing his plans for the spiritual re-education of man.

However, as confirmation that the 'liberal' times had finished, just as the Biblical Society was having success, Prince Golicyyn was taken away from the scene.

This was the beginning of arakceevscina.

