



eranos

an alternative
intellectual history
of the
twentieth century

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Translated by Christopher McIntosh

and Radin always remained in friendly contact, although Radin was very critical of Jung's literary "excursions" into anthropology.

Already in the 1920s Paul Radin had earned high praise from recognized experts such as Marcel Mauss and John Dewey. In the context of Eranos, what made Radin stand out from his more "esoteric" Eranos colleagues was his skepticism and his thorough rationalism.⁵⁴ This must naturally have brought him into conflict with Olga Fröbe, whose hyper-energetic "mystic-obsessive" character was not at all to his taste.⁵⁵ But all of this was outweighed by his jovial personality. Eliade described Radin as always laughing and endowed with an enormous belly. He reported that the previous year his wife had one night seen a "likeable" dragon in the garden of the Casa Gabriella, but that he had not returned.⁵⁶ Stanley Diamond, editor of the *Festschrift* for Radin's seventieth birthday, even wrote: "[Radin] has a sorcerer's charm, undimmed by age; he bewitches."⁵⁷ It was not without reason that he contributed to the volume entitled *Der Göttliche Schelm* (The divine rascal).⁵⁸ His life's journey also took him to the universities of Michigan, Berkeley, and Brandeis. Always his goal was to remain independent. In addition to his other activities he acted as an adviser to Mary Mellon and later to the Bollingen Foundation. From 1952 to 1956 he lived in Lugano.

Henry Corbin and Sufism

I must now speak in greater detail about Henry Corbin,⁵⁹ who attended Eranos every year between 1949 and 1978.⁶⁰ His influence on Eranos can hardly be overestimated and involved many of the participants, including Mircea Eliade, whom he first brought to Eranos as a speaker, Gilbert Durand, Antoine Faivre, David Miller, and the archetypal psychologist and Jung pupil James Hillman. His unusual personal aura has been vividly described by Marie-Madeleine Davy, an expert on medieval theology and a long-standing friend and neighbour of Corbin.⁶¹ He was, she wrote, "someone who had re-awakened before reaching the far shore. In his face and eyes something shone forth that reflected the world to which he belonged. In his written works and lectures he knew how to reveal the sphere of the angels. Reading him one could almost hear the sound of their wings as they passed by."

Corbin was born in Paris, where he later studied philosophy, especially the works of the scholastics. Early on he developed an interest in the German mystics Meister Eckhart, Valentin Weigel, and Jakob Boehme. While researching in the Bibliothèque Nationale he had a "fateful" encounter with Louis Massignon, leading immediately to a collaboration. When Massignon gave him a text of the Iranian mystic and philosopher Suhrawardi, Corbin saw this symbolically as a transmission from master to pupil, as Charles J. Adams has emphasized.⁶²

In 1930 came Corbin's first journey to Germany, which was to prove no less fateful. His destination was the University of Marburg on the Lahn, a place of great importance in the study of religion and intellectual history, and the first visit he paid to Rudolf Otto. In his *Post-Scriptum biographique à un Entretien philosophique* he mentions two "coincidences" that occurred during this visit.⁶³ The first was that the Indian poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore was in Marburg for a meeting with Rudolf Otto. The second was that Olga Fröbe was also there at the time to discuss her plans with Otto. Another person who taught at Marburg was Friedrich Heiler, who was much preoccupied with contesting

the (at that time) provocative ideas of Rudolf Bultmann about the de-mythologizing of Christianity. As Bultmann saw it, there was something in the modern view of the world and humanity that could not longer accept miracles in the ecclesiastical sense and could not tolerate the idea of divine or demonic interventions. Bultmann thus started a massive attack on the notion of the “numinous” experience, which Rudolf Otto saw as being central to religion.⁶⁴

It was in Marburg that Corbin began his lifelong preoccupation with the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. Between 1931 and 1936 Corbin made frequent visits to Germany, where he met Karl Barth, Karl Löwith (later to be an Eranos speaker), Ernst Cassirer, and, most notably, Martin Heidegger. He also visited the Warburg Institute in Hamburg with its wonderful library (now in London).⁶⁵ Corbin’s excellent knowledge of German led to his translating Heidegger’s work *Was ist Metaphysik?* (What is metaphysics?) into French.⁶⁶ From October 1935 to July 1936 he worked at the French Institute in Berlin. Corbin is a further example of someone who was influenced by the German phenomenological school, which sought to revitalize the sacred Hermetic texts and thereby strengthen their inner “esoteric” meaning.⁶⁷ Another current of thought, emanating from Germany, was to have a decisive influence on his life and work, namely the Romantic thinkers such as Johann Georg Hamann, Friedrich von Schelling, and Franz von Baader.⁶⁸ Steven Wasserstrom even quotes a remark to the effect that “Corbin was in many ways the last of the German Romantics.”⁶⁹

In 1937 Corbin obtained his first academic post at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris. The breadth of his interests is shown by his friendship with figures as diverse as the specialist on Indo-European mythology Georges Dumézil, the literary scholar Georges Bataille, the mythologist Roger Caillois, the playwright Eugène Ionesco, the painter René Magritte, and the philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev. In his short biography of Corbin, the Islamicist and prominent representative of the so-called Traditionalist school (Perennialism), S.H. Nasr, describes how at that time the writings of René Guénón and soon after of Frithjof Schuon, who were both his own teachers, were widely discussed in French intellectual circles.⁷⁰ Their doctrine, based on the idea of a primal tradition that manifests itself in varying forms in all religions, was especially critical of the modern world and its philosophical and religious conceptions. Thus they had certain points in common with the phenomenological school with its stance against a purely positivistic approach to scholarship, although the latter was of course much less radical. Corbin, however, did not feel attracted by traditionalism in the narrow sense propounded by Guénon.⁷¹

In 1940 Corbin went to the French Archaeological Institute in Istanbul in order to study some unpublished texts of the Islamic tradition. Because of the German occupation of France during the war he was obliged to stay in Turkey until 1945. Before moving fully back to France he paid his first visit to Teheran, a city to which he would return for three months every year between 1955 and 1973 under the auspices of the Franco-Iranian Institute.⁷² There he founded the Bibliothèque Iranienne, a book series in which numerous important writings on Iranian spirituality appeared. The Islamic specialist Seyyed Hossein Nasr, himself an Iranian, has even said the Corbin’s work is altogether the most impressive achievement of orientalist scholarship in the domain of Islamic philosophy.

In 1974 Corbin, together with his colleagues Gilbert Durand, Antoine Faivre, and others, founded the University of Saint John of Jerusalem, to which we shall return later. There he attempted to move away from strictly legalistic forms of monotheism by emphasizing the living world of the soul and direct personal religious experience in all its

variety. As Pastor Richard Stauffer emphasized in his speech at Corbin's funeral, Corbin was not only a scholar but also "a believer, an unconditional believer ... that is, a man who is calmly attuned to the word of God."⁷³ In the same speech Corbin was described as a "master," who was "not content just to transmit knowledge. In the true sense of the word, he 'prophesied.'"

Corbin characterized his own philosophical position as "phenomenological" and aiming at "understanding"⁷⁴ But he went even further and described his method as "a drawing away of the veil," which in Sufi terminology signifies the way to the ultimate truth and to a truly spiritual world. Thus his conception of philosophy includes what one might call "traditional wisdom" or "sophia" in the classical sense. Consequently his interest in Islam is primarily focused on the esoteric side. At the same time his philosophical works are not merely descriptive; they call for a spiritual rebirth. This is clear from the following passage in the foreword to his translation of a collection of writings by Sohrawardi under the title *L'Archange Empourpré*:⁷⁵ "Any philosophy that does not lead to spiritual experience is an empty waste of time. And, in reverse, any mystical experience that is not preceded by serious philosophical training is a prey to illusions, aberrations and other maladies of the soul."

Under the rubric of the University of Saint John of Jerusalem, Corbin championed the idea of a spiritual "knighthood" which would have the task of preserving the spiritual and religious heritage of humanity and defending it against modernism,⁷⁶ secularization, and historicist worldview. For Corbin, modernity, which found its ultimate expression in Descartes' separation of matter and spirit, had already begun in the West in the twelfth century, when Avicenna's worldview, linked with the Orphic and Platonic traditions, had been displaced by the Aristotelian and purely rational philosophy of Averroes. The former was concerned with self-recognition and the path to transcendence.⁷⁷ Corbin saw this as being linked with the concepts of "active intelligence" or "imagination" which will be discussed later on.

Corbin's central concept is the so-called *mundus imaginalis*, the "imaginal" world, a concept whose importance for an understanding of the spiritual realm in general cannot, in my opinion, be overestimated.⁷⁸ This realm, according to Corbin, mediates between the absolutely unknowable God and the earthly world in which we live. It therefore forms the "intermediate realm" which, in classical antiquity and in other highly developed cultures, is given central importance because it is the medium through which the divine powers operate on earth.⁷⁹ The imaginal world is also the abode of our "soul," the sphere of the "angels" as mediators, and the place where sacred events happen. In its own way it is as real as the world of sensory perception "below" and that of universal divinity "above."⁸⁰ At the same time the *mundus imaginalis* can be seen as the *mundus archetypalis*, that is to say the world of "souls,"⁸¹ in which the archetypes as "imaginal" beings have their domain. These archetypes appear as images accessible by means of a particular method of perception that has been termed "active" or "true imagination,"⁸² in order to distinguish it from pure fantasy. For Corbin this true imagination possesses a noetic value on account of the comprehensive (in the highest sense) insights that it yields. The content involved is of a spiritual nature, which in no way should be confused with the merely pictorial.⁸³

In order to set this active imagination going we need "images." These can be mandalas, symbols, Tarot cards, and so on. They can also be mental images that are called forth within us through appropriate poetic or meditative texts. Only through this mediating function of the "active imagination," which is in fact a function of the "heart,"⁸⁴ is it possible

for us to come into contact with the pure but essentially unknowable world of the supreme spirit, or indeed to have any true religious experience. Thus Corbin was convinced that “with the loss of the *imaginatio vera* and the *mundus imaginalis* came the beginning of nihilism and agnosticism.”⁸⁵

The *mundus imaginalis* is the world of symbols in the deepest sense, where “the spirits take on a body and the body takes on a spirit.” Hence it is the connecting link between the realm of the here and now and the world of transcendence. In no way can it be compared with a world of allegories or arbitrary mathematical symbols. According to this view, it is only through this “true” imaginal world that we can find the “way back to God.” Thus it is also a world of the “eternally present.” Access to it, as we have said, is through the so-called *imaginatio vera*, the “true imagination,” a spiritual faculty that is basically inherent, but must nevertheless be developed and cultivated.⁸⁶ This faculty is based on the old law of analogy, which says that only like can recognize like. This is most clearly expressed by Plotinus.⁸⁷

But if your eye is yet infected with any sordid concern, and not thoroughly refined, while it is on the stretch to behold this most shining spectacle, it will be immediately darkened and incapable of intuition, though some one should declare the spectacle present, which it might be otherwise able to discern. For, it is here necessary, that the perceiver and the thing perceived, should be similar to each other, before true vision can exist. Thus the sensitive eye can never be able to survey the orb of the sun, unless strongly endued with solar fire, and participating largely of the vivid ray. Every one, therefore, must become divine, and of godlike beauty, before he can gaze upon a god, and the beautiful itself.

For this type of “hermeneutics” Corbin uses the Arabic term *ta’wil*, meaning “to lead something back to its origin, to its authentic reality.” *Ta’wil* is, freely translated, a symbolic form of understanding, the transformation of everything visible into symbols and the transformation of the intuitively perceived innermost essence of something into an image.⁸⁸ Or, in other words, *ta’wil* is concerned with the esoteric interpretation of sacred writings.

In Islam the imaginal world is the “eighth sphere,” which lies beyond the seven spheres perceptible to the senses. When one treads this path of understanding from the outer to the inner, from the macrocosmos to the microcosmos, one ultimately learns that the microcosmos is a reflection of the macrocosmos and *vice versa*. Thus physical things are reflected images of the imaginal realm belonging to the universal soul, in which there is even an “imaginal geography,” which is equally real, that is, common to all “souls,” albeit pictorial.⁸⁹ In this way one moves from a quantitative to a qualitative perception. In fact, when we look at the world around us and simultaneously contemplate the “soul,” we experience a hierophany, a manifestation of the “holy.” However, these “images” or archetypes should in no way be confused with Plato’s ideal forms, which are completely disconnected from anything material. The archetypal images, on the other hand, while distinct from matter itself, are not separate from all its material envelopments. Thus, although they are not perceptible to the senses, they can be perceived by the active imagination.⁹⁰

Naturally Corbin’s work also sometimes met with lack of understanding. Annemarie Schimmel, herself a highly renowned Islamicist and also an Eranos speaker, to whom we owe the only translation to date of a Corbin work into German,⁹¹ repeats the following anecdote of Corbin’s in her informative introduction to the book:

I remember an international colloquium held about twenty years ago, where a colleague from a distant country, hearing me speak about Shiism in the manner to which I am accustomed, whispered to his neighbour: how can someone talk in such language about a religion when it is not his own? Unfortunately there are certain people who can only think in terms of “conversion,” for this enables them to pin a collective label to one’s person. No. To speak of “conversion” means understanding nothing about what esotericism is ... The community, the *umma* of the esotericists of all places and times is that “Inner Church,” which requires no act of joining to make one belong to it.

This accords well with the rallying call “heretics of all religions, unite,” which Corbin is said to have let forth on the way to an Eranos meeting. The anecdote is related by his friend Denis de Rougemont, author of the brilliant study *L'amour en occident*, with whom the young Corbin had founded a journal, and who was later to receive a Bollingen scholarship.⁹² The same remark is quoted by Steven Wasserstrom,⁹³ who has a rather critical attitude to Corbin, as well as by Corbin’s friend Michael Walberg.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, however, neither mentions that Corbin himself later had no recollection of the incident. Rather, he assumed that he must have said “esotericists” instead of “heretics,” as Denis de Rougemont mentions in a postscript to his article. Corbin’s work is, of course, not easily comprehensible—if only because of its uniqueness and the often opaque words that he coined—and his lectures were renowned for being difficult to understand.⁹⁵ John Barrett called them “pure Mozart.” And even Annemarie Schimmel, a professor of Islamic studies at Islamic universities (as well as at Harvard and Bonn), said that she would not dare to translate all of Corbin’s works, as not even she could be sure to have understood everything properly.⁹⁶

Both Hossein Nasr and Charles J. Adams emphasize, in their essays on Corbin, that Eranos occupied an important place for him. In 1949 he attended Eranos for the first time; Olga Fröbe had been trying to invite him since 1946, but he had been unable to schedule a visit. In his previously mentioned “Post-Scriptum biographique à un Entretien philosophique”⁹⁷ Corbin himself describes this invitation as “a call” that was to have clearly discernible consequences “for the programme and rhythm of my researches.” He also emphasizes the “decisive role” that Eranos played, in that it led to a “holistic spiritual freedom” from every form of “ecclesiastical or academic orthodoxy,” which subsequently one would never lose. He also emphasized the inexplicable harmony that existed between the individual talks, although nothing had been agreed in advance apart from the common theme. Elsewhere⁹⁸ he calls this phenomenon a “homophonie” and describes how it completely surprised the speakers each time that it happened. In the same piece of writing he even expresses the conviction that Eranos contributed to the *traditio lampadis* (transmission of the spiritual light).

Fröbe recognized Henry Corbin as a special confidant. This is evident from a number of letters excerpted in Catherine Ritsema’s Eranos manuscript. At the request of Catherine Ritsema, it was Corbin’s wife, Stella, who passed on these numerous letters written by Fröbe to Corbin. In a letter dated 30 November 1951, only two years after their first acquaintance, she writes,

We are both possessed by an archetypal idea [she by Eranos, he by Iran], and it seems to me that you have expressed your vision for the first time. And thus we are no longer alone. Speaking personally, I was cast into a terrible loneliness during my

work for Eranos. However, nobody realized that I had no other choice. Even Jung, who actually did know, often worked against Eranos. And that was hard. You are the first person to whom I have spoken about this matter.⁹⁹

Or two years later: "It is good to know that you have such a deep understanding of Eranos in its mysterious aspects."¹⁰⁰

Fröbe was totally enthused when Corbin authored the foreword to the third volume of translated Eranos essays edited by Joseph Campbell.¹⁰¹ She wrote, "I am absolutely delighted about it. You have said things which nobody associated with Eranos realized, and I am very grateful for this profound article."¹⁰² On 26 February 1957 she broached the subject again:

There is nobody else who understands Eranos as fundamentally as you do. When I answer questions on the subject of Eranos, people always have the impression I am somewhat crazy. Even Jung, I believe ... Precisely because it is so seldom that I meet someone who brings to bear such an understanding as you do, however fragmentary, I say to you: Thank you. Your foreword was such a great affirmation for me.¹⁰³

The reason for her joy may well have been Corbin's statement that a historian with his critical methods alone would never be able to grasp the essence of Eranos, and without fail would completely misunderstand the "Eranos phenomenon," which did not concern schools, influences or themes, but rather the inner "meaning." As in the case of the other speakers—such as Jung, Kerényi, and, later on, Hillman—many of Corbin's most important essays were originally conceived as Eranos lectures. Eranos was also important to him on account of the friendships that he made or consolidated there, for example with Gershom Scholem and Ernst Benz, to name only two. In a letter of 5 April 1973 Scholem wrote to Corbin,

We have known each other now for almost 25 years, and I am glad that it was granted to me to know, in you, one of the few scholars whose scholarship is of a truly spiritual level and is illuminated by deep penetration into the nature of things. You are, dear Corbin, one of the few scholars of religion of whom one can say that you know what you know. Furthermore you have always impressed me with your great humanity and nobility of character, and you and Stella Corbin are among the people with whom I have the certainty of experiencing a truly human relationship beyond any purely outward form of contact.¹⁰⁴

And when Corbin died in 1978,¹⁰⁵ Scholem wrote the following in his letter of condolence to Corbin's widow Stella:

We [Scholem and his wife Fania] can tell you that he was loved and honoured by us from the first time we met him nearly thirty years ago at the first Eranos meeting of 1949. For me he was not only a friend and comrade but a man who had devoted his life to understanding and researching a world that was as close as I could imagine to the one to which I have devoted my own life. We were, in the truest sense, honest, and possibly we were the first academics to excavate the world of the esoteric imagination, as manifested in Islamic and Jewish Gnosticism. Of all the Eranos speakers, it was he to whom I felt the closest kinship. He alone had that sort of inner empathy which enabled him to illuminate the dark and difficult paths of the

mystical world, and which I consider to be absolutely necessary if one is to carry out genuinely significant and at the same time academically sound work in these areas. His death meant for me the loss of a spiritual brother.¹⁰⁶

Thus Scholem and Corbin appear to have been genuine soul-mates which is surprising in the light of Scholem's reluctance to esoteric thinking. Corbin, for his part, in a letter of thanks to Scholem, speaks with emotion about their "old friendship."¹⁰⁷ After mentioning Eranos, he then goes on, in the second part of the letter, to make the following surprising remark: "It is largely thanks to you that I have the feeling of our common base in the Abrahamic tradition as well as the conviction that the deep roots of this commonality lie in the esoteric sphere."

It seems appropriate to end this all too brief portrait of such an outstanding Eranos lecturer with a quotation from Gilbert Durand's article on Henry Corbin in the *Dictionnaire critique de l'ésoterisme*:

By virtue of his monumental opus (20 original works, 200 articles and introductions, many translations and the editorship of the 33 volumes of the Bibliothèque Iranienne) this famous Islamicist, together with the group of friends with whom he founded the University of Saint John of Jerusalem, acted as the "reawakener" of the western esoteric tradition in the light of the ever-present "oriental" esotericism, as preserved in the Islamic tradition ... [Corbin] had come to the conclusion that Christianity and its Reformation, over the past two or three centuries, had lost the heritage of the Johannite tradition, which still appeared here and there in the works of mystical Protestants (Böhme, Oetinger), in Swedenborg and in the Romanticism of Schleiermacher and Schlegel. The Word lost in the occident had been preserved intact only among Islamic thinkers and above all among the Shiites.¹⁰⁸

A more critical voice is that of Steven Wasserstrom, not that he throws doubt on Corbin's enormous achievements as a translator and commentator. However, he disputes, understandably from his viewpoint, that Corbin can be described as an Islamicist, since he is concerned only peripherally with the things that the great majority of Muslims consider central to their faith, namely the Koran, the Sharia, and the Prophet Mohammed. What was important for Corbin was rather his Gnostic belief, which he found reflected in the Shiite and Sufi writings. Hence Wasserstrom calls Corbin a "prophetic philosopher"¹⁰⁹ and moreover a dangerous one, since he uses his academic platform to recruit students for his form of esotericism, leaving out in the cold the "true" religious scholarship, based on historical facts and a rational approach.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Wasserstrom is alarmed when he sees in Corbin's teaching a further example of a spiritual version of an "all-too-familiar assault on democracy and science." According to Wasserstrom esotericism as a teaching for an exclusive elite is based on secret knowledge and leadership by a master. Elsewhere Wasserstrom says about Corbin: "It is my conviction that he may have been the most sophisticated and learned esotericist of the century."¹¹¹ Wasserstrom's view of Corbin is vehemently challenged by Pierre Lory, professor of Islamic studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes of the Sorbonne in Paris.¹¹² Lory accuses Wasserstrom of often confusing Corbin's own ideas with those of the Muslim authors whom he writes about and characterizes Wasserstrom's interpretation of Corbin as "superficial, full of prejudices and above all badly documented." He calls Wasserstrom's book a pamphlet which partly resembles a novel of the political fiction genre. Lory, who himself had

attended many of Corbin's lectures, emphasizes that Corbin always refused to be categorized as an Islamicist, but rather had always seen himself as a philosopher with a particular interest in Islamic authors. This would invalidate Wasserstrom's charge that Corbin had led Islamic studies into false directions. As for Wasserstrom's accusation that Corbin was a prophet and apostle of his own esoteric teaching and no scholar, Lory says that this would have been laughable to anyone who had heard Corbin lecture. His lectures were always strictly academic, the audience was always small, and the French Islamicists had deliberately ignored him.¹¹³ Corbin had most definitely never seen himself as a "guru," being of the conviction that every man and woman must pursue his or her own search for the "truth."

The conference of 1949, at which the well-known Austrian esoteric novelist Hans Sterneder was also present as a member of the audience, has been described in a detailed report by the analytical psychologist Violet de Laszlo. Particularly interesting is what she writes about the astonishingly contrasting lecturing styles of Kerényi and E.O. James, who spoke at that meeting on "Myth and Ritual," as her remarks clearly reflect the prevailing atmosphere of Eranos. Kerényi, who belonged to the preferred speakers, "seemed to penetrate his material in a manner analogous to the adept-hunter entering into the very skin of the animal quarry, expressing it through an intuitive-feeling process." James, however, "approached his material in the manner of an observer remaining wholly outside the observed phenomena, defining myth and ritual in the traditional positivist way as symbolic tale."¹¹⁴ James, by the way, spoke only once at Eranos.

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This is the most balanced and well-informed history of the Eranos Conferences where, once a year, some of the most provocative thinkers of the world gathered to discuss the most pressing issues of the times: religious symbolism, the nature of spirit, art and creativity, utopia, language, norms in a changing world, pluralism ... Eranos represents an important counterpart to the dominant spiritual and intellectual history of the 20th century precisely because it encouraged thinking and living at the radical edge.

DAVID L. MILLER, Syracuse University, USA

This is a book that no one interested in the history of the study of religion or in the religious history of the twentieth century can afford to miss.

GUSTAVO BENAVIDES, Villanova University, USA

Finely crafted, this first complete scholarly account of the Eranos phenomenon should remain the standard work for a long time. The author succeeds in showing how Eranos impacted on the intellectual history of the modern age.

ANTOINE FAIVRE, École pratique des hautes études, Sorbonne, France

Eranos has always been viewed with suspicion by outsiders because of its perceived "mystical" aspect. Such a view is unjustified yet, in order to put Eranos in perspective, its spirituality must be kept central. The author shows himself to be one of the most knowledgeable students, if not indeed the foremost scholar, of Western esoteric and spiritual currents ... This landmark volume has long been needed by the English-speaking world.

MAC LINSCOTT RICKETTS, Louisburg College, USA

The spirit of the 20th century, as experienced for better or worse, has often been identified with the genius loci that presided over the Eranos conferences. This brilliant book is the only competent guide through this convoluted labyrinth of the mind.

GIOVANNI CASADIO, University of Salerno, Italy

Eranos chronicles not only the golden years of Jung, Corbin, Eliade, and Scholem, but the roots of the Ascona movement in Theosophy, its later branches, and many lesser-known but no less fascinating figures. Thanks to his inside knowledge and decades-long research, the author illuminates the dialogue of religion, esoterism, and scholarship that began with Eranos and continues to the present day.

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COVER IMAGE: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, detail from *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c.1500, Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450–1516)/Prado, Madrid, Spain/The Bridgeman Art Library.

ISBN 978-1-78179-016-8



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