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**THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN
MIRCEA ELIADE AND HENRY CORBIN
(1950-1981)**

Introduced by Matei Iagher

Edited by Matei Iagher and Florent Serina

Translated from the French by Matei Iagher

Mission Statement

Phanês: Journal for Jung History (ISSN 2631-6463, online; ISSN 2631-6455, printed) is an annual, peer-reviewed, open-access journal, dedicated to publishing high quality, scholarly articles related to the life and work of C.G. Jung and the wider history of analytical or complex psychology. *Phanês* publishes original articles that address these topics from a critical perspective. Contributions are accepted in English, French, German and Italian.

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ABSTRACT

This is the first critical edition of the correspondence between the scholars of religion Henry Corbin (1903-1978) and Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). The correspondence comprises items sent between 1950-1981, and includes as well letters signed by their wives, Stella Corbin (1910-2003) and Christinel Eliade (1912-1998). The introduction offers a brief contextualisation of the epistolary exchange, discussing some of the main themes that are found therein.

KEY WORDS

C.G. Jung, Eranos, religion, esotericism, hermeneutics.

INTRODUCTION

By Matei Iagher

‘I would like to give notice to my executors to destroy any letter that they might find, as many of them I have written hastily and with disgust’

(Mircea Eliade’s Diary, 5 September 1951)¹

On the 23 October 1949, the name of Henry Corbin appears for the first time in Mircea Eliade’s diary:

This evening, at Henry Corbin’s. He looked me up numerous times this past week. I saw him once², right on the day of the burglary. Today we had a more leisurely conversation (Cioran and Vuia were there too). He shows me his copies of *Traité* and *Le Mythe*, read and underlined. Seems enthusiastic. He thinks we ought to revive, in collaboration, the journal *Zalmoxis*. where, he says, I dealt with alchemy long before Jung did. He is much interested in angelology. He is deaf, mild-mannered, and extraordinarily learned.³

According to Eliade’s diary, the day of the burglary was 20 October 1949. On that morning, he had returned to his room from Christinel Cottescu’s (his future wife) address in Bois-Colombes, near Paris, to find that someone had stolen a number of his suits, his shirts and his pens during the night. It is not clear when and where he saw Corbin during the rest of that day.

From the beginning, the two men’s relationship was marked by their similar callings: erudition, and with it an enthusiasm for the things of the spirit, be they angelology, alchemy, or the study of religion. Both also had wide-ranging interests.

¹ University of Chicago, Mircea Eliade Papers, Box 15, Folder 4. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from Eliade’s diary come from the Chicago manuscript. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

² Box 15, Folder 4. The published journal has instead: ‘I have seen him for the first time on the day of the burglary, but we didn’t get to speak in earnest we had too much to say to each other’ (see Mircea Eliade 1993a:157).

³ The published journal has in addition: ‘He will soon return to Tehran, where he has lived for several years. Paris seems not to tempt him.’ (ibid).

Mircea Eliade was born in Bucharest in 1907.⁴ He studied philosophy in his native city and in 1928 he obtained a scholarship that allowed him to go to India, where he spent three years studying Sanskrit, Indian philosophy and working on a doctoral thesis about yoga, which he defended in 1932 and then re-worked into a French-language book published in 1936. By that time, Eliade had already attained notoriety in interwar Romania through his novels (such as *Bengal Nights*, which was a thinly disguised account of his own romantic involvement with his Indian teacher's daughter), his journalism and his university lectures. In 1940, Eliade left Romania to serve as a cultural attaché in London. In 1941, his diplomatic career took him to Portugal, where he stayed until emigrating to Paris in 1945. His first wife passed away from cancer in Portugal in November 1944, a painful ordeal which Eliade found difficult to bear during his first years in Paris. He married again (to Christinel Cottescu, also a Romanian émigré) in early 1950 and this second marriage lasted until the end of his life. With the exception of the yoga book and a few articles, the bulk of Eliade's production until 1945 had been in his native tongue. After his move to Paris, he tended to write more often in French, the exception being his fiction, which he always wrote in Romanian.

Henry Corbin was born in Paris in 1903.⁵ He studied philosophy with Étienne Gilson at École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), graduating in 1925 with a thesis on Avicennism in the Middle Ages. He then continued at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales, where he studied Arabic. In 1928, he had an encounter with Louis Massignon, one of the guiding lights of Islamic Studies in France, which changed the course of his life, as Massignon offered him a copy of Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi's *Oriental Philosophy*. In the 1920s and 30s, Corbin dedicated himself not only to Islamic philosophy, but also to the study of German theology and philosophy. In the 1930s he made a number of trips to Germany, where he met Martin Heidegger, and Ernst Cassirer. In 1931, Corbin translated Heidegger's *Was ist Metaphysik?* into French.⁶ In 1933 he married Stella Leenhardt, the daughter of a well-known ethnologist. In 1937, he obtained a teaching job at the EPHE. He and Stella spent the entirety of World War 2 in Istanbul, where Henry was originally supposed to go for only a six month research trip. It was in Istanbul, in 1942 that he first heard Eliade's name, from Romanian friends who urged him to go to Bucharest to meet

⁴ For a biography of Eliade, see Țurcanu (2007).

⁵ For biographical material in English see Cheetham (2021). See also Eliade's obituary of Corbin, and an article on *theosophia perennis* published that same year in which he also discusses his recently departed friend (Eliade 1979a; 1979b).

⁶ This translation was widely influential in the reception of Heidegger in France. See Kleinberg (2005).

him on his way back to France.⁷ Between 1955 and 1973, the Corbins spent three months of each year in Tehran, and they attended the Eranos conferences every year between 1949-1978. Eliade, on the contrary, began distancing himself from Eranos after Olga's death and effectively stopped giving lectures to the group in the late 1960s (see below). As the two men essentially came together because of their common intellectual interests, it may be useful for the reader of their correspondence to briefly survey some of these.

Clearly, the most important common interest for both of them was religion, and both had an approach to the topic that was hermeneutical.⁸ Both men were attracted to the esoteric, the mystical, and both sought to reformulate religious experiences from the past, whose knowledge, they argued, was valuable as well for modern man. Both of them brought an element of personal experience of their topic to their textual endeavours. As theirs was a lifelong preoccupation (and one which has been studied extensively before), we cannot hope to summarise it in this introduction. What we may draw out, however, are several themes that preoccupied both thinkers and which are also discussed in the letters themselves.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is of course the background of the correspondence itself, but it is also what is less easy to study, because we have very little information about how the relationship between Henry and Mircea developed—or rather, the information that we do have is one-sided, coming more from Eliade, since he also kept a diary. It is clear that from the get-go there is a kind of intellectual crush happening, at the very least on Corbin's side. Corbin is not only reading Eliade's works, but is experimenting with using Eliadean categories—the opposite does not seem to happen, perhaps also due to the fact that most of Corbin's oeuvre was not yet written when he first met Eliade.

The latter's diary preserves some telling vignettes from their relationship over the years. I have decided to offer them here because they provide more context for the correspondence, though as it must be evident, these cannot be taken to speak fully for their relationship. They are merely aspects that Eliade noticed, or that he was annoyed with. We never learn the other side of the equation. It should be noted that these (including the passage quoted at the beginning) are all of the more extensive notes about

⁷ Henry Corbin (1978:270).

⁸ For Corbin's understanding of hermeneutics, see Corbin (1998:97). For Eliade's hermeneutics see Marino (1980) and Rennie (1996).

Corbin in Eliade's diary.⁹

Henry Corbin, whom I have seen multiple times lately, tells me a terrifying dream. He learns that I have had an accident and died. He is dejected. A very great sadness. (He had met me that very night. I had spoken to him of 'l'expérience de l'immortalité'). Then someone comes and tells him that it's not certain that I am dead, that there is still hope. Waiting, emotions. Finally, the news arrive that I am saved...Somewhat later, in that same dream, he meets me. I am lying on a sofa—dead! This time, without a doubt. A throng of people around me. Someone comes and rattles some metals next to the ear. I resurrect...

I don't know why, but 'the symbolism' of this dream appears to me to predict an unending series of successes: wealth, freedom, fame... (11 October 1950)¹⁰

We were with the Corbins at the 'Pedroni' café, when I saw the people on the terrace standing up and pointing to the sky. We went to see. Among the stars, we saw one that was moving slowly. An extraordinary impression. After a few minutes, I could not longer look, so much was I troubled by that travelling star. As I hadn't read the papers, I didn't know it was the American 'Echo'. We were all a little disappointed to find why it was wandering across the sky. (20 August 1960)¹¹

Alice Godel. Extraordinarily changed. Aged, but with a

⁹ Mention should also be made here of a letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, in which Eliade mentions Corbin: 'As you know, I love Corbin very much; Christinel and I would be happy to sojourn there at the same time as Henry and Stella Corbin. My only doubt is of such a selfish nature that I don't dare speak of it (and yet I do!): the conversation with Henry Corbin is fascinating, but for me, tiresome—for I take great pains to speak very loudly, and after two hours I am exhausted...On the other hand, when we are in our rooms, I hear Stella, who also speaks loudly—for in fact our doors, on the balcony, stay open. I blush when I communicate to you such selfish details, but I want you to know the origin of my hesitations. After nine months of Iranian solitude, Henry Corbin feels an imperious need to communicate and dialogue—and I understand that very well. But, since he almost never wears his [hearing] aid, to the pleasure of the conversation is added the physical fatigue—and after a week this fatigue becomes terrible!...But, on the other hand, we love them a lot and I hope that we will find a system of avoiding these very long conversations without the [hearing] aid...' (Letter from Mircea Eliade to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, 2 February 1954, Fondazione Eranos).

¹⁰ ME Papers, Box 15, Folder 4.

¹¹ ME Papers, Box 15, Folder 8.

transfigured look. She recounts to us Roger's final days. His calm, the certitude that nothing will happen—he will only proceed 'next door', to the other side of reality. And other fascinating details, that I hope to write down one day, when my head is clearer.

Alice wants to publish Roger's final volume (a script=The Life of Socrates) at Julliard. She also wants to organise a Festschrift, to which several friends and colleagues would collaborate. She asked Corbin as well, and asks me to insist, for Corbin has declined. She adds this terrible detail: Stella wrote her a very beautiful letter of condolences. Alice replies and sets up an appointment at Andrée Chedid's. Henry doesn't show up. He is busy, Stella explains. But Henry recommends that Alice read his latest book, 'which will do her much good'. He provides the name of the publisher and specifies in which bookstores the book can be found (adds the street and number) (5 July 1961).

Last night we dined at Stella and Henry Corbin's, together with the Dehollains. At a certain moment, we ask ourselves who are the *really* great writers of the era, those that will be recognised and celebrated by future generations. Marie-Loise Dehollain says Céline's name. Henry Corbin says: *Moi!*, somehow furtively, looking at me quizzically and laughing. I knew he was certain of this; but it gave me an enormous pleasure to hear him proclaim it out loud. I have always had a great weakness for those who are vain, the ambitious, the megalomaniacs. (14 July 1961).¹²

Henry Corbin, unchanged. Maybe a bit more corpulent. Pleased with the success of the book published in the *Idées* collection.¹³ He asks me again why the American translation hasn't been yet arranged. Still as egocentric and convinced of his genius, of the greatness of the oeuvre he has done. (Of course, he is right. But I envy his certainty, his optimism, his self-confidence) (3 July 1965)

In the evening, we invite Stella and Henry Corbin to a restaurant close to Notre-Dame. We manage to walk a little, then the rain starts. We enter for half an hour in a coffeeshop, full of students, 'artists' and American tourists. Infernal noise—which

¹² ME Papers, Box 15, Folder 10.

¹³ Corbin (1964b).

was overcoming even Henry's almost total deafness. In a corner, three young American women, fascinated by the 'atmosphere', are drinking milk. They were probably afraid that a glass of beer would reduce their resistance, in case they had to confront 'immoral' individuals. (26 July 1965)¹⁴

In the evening, we dine at Corbin's. Henry is very pleased with how the conferences of Université de St. Jean de Jérusalem have been going. (I am one of the founding members, but I couldn't attend the colloquium). I am happy that he is fulfilling his most precious dream: a group of scholars, theologians and philosophers belonging to all three Biblical traditions and constituting in a certain way a Hermetic circle, addressing itself to an audience that is still small, but select.

Henry tries to convince me to take part with a conference to the future Eranos. I tell him what I told Ritsema: that I dare not accept another 'project' until I finish *Histoire*. Every *Eranos* conference used to take me two, three months to prepare and compose. (Henry's case is different, because he prepares his conferences during his classes at *Hautes Études*) (8 July 1975).¹⁵

Last night at Corbin's. And, as usual, the same scenario¹⁶, unchanged for about 12-15 years: Henry only talks to me about his works and his successes, about what he's working on or what he intends to do, etc. Where and by whom he has been invited to lecture, to publish, etc.etc. It's about 12-15 years since he has spoken to me, at least in passing, about one of my recent books. I wonder sometimes if he still reads them. His admirable *permanent* concentration upon himself exasperates me; but I cannot help but admire the unmatched force of this ego-centrism that is stealthily transforming into self-apotheosis. (21 July 1978)

At 3:00 Dominique Grisoni shows up for an interview (*Magazine Littéraire*). Immediately afterwards, phone call from Cioran: he announces the death of Henry Corbin. I feel suddenly very sad; another part of our lives—Christinel and mine—that is going; a *witness*, not just a friend...

¹⁴ ME Papers, Box 16, Folder 7.

¹⁵ ME Papers, Box 26, Folder 6.

¹⁶ English in the original.

At 5:00, fourth recording with Olender. Simply catastrophic. Impossible to continue the conversation for more than 15 minutes.

In the evening I go and see Stella. Henry did not know he had cancer, that he was condemned. (The doctor had warned Stella a few months ago, even). He did not suffer. He knew *his* angel was waiting for him, and that put him at peace... (7 October, 1978)

All day, memories of Henry. He had turned 75. He had managed to do a lot of what he had promised himself he would—but there were so many things which, had he lived a few more years, he would have completed...

In the evening, at Barbăneagra. Over 40 guests. Depressed, tired, sad. (8 October 1978)¹⁷

ERANOS

The importance of the Eranos circle for both Eliade and Corbin should not be underestimated, as their meetings with it represented an important connection for them, both personally and professionally. Eliade himself had no doubts about this. In a note in his diary from 1962, he wrote that Ascona had always been a charmed, lucky place for him. It was the place where he had first met Joachim Wach, who invited him to Chicago for the Haskell Lectures, and it was through Eranos (and Olga's ministrations) that he obtained the Bollingen fellowship. On Corbin's side, the Eranos lectures offered him, he thought, the notoriety that got him his position at the *Hautes Études* (Eliade, diary, 28 April 1962).

The Eranos meetings were started by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn in 1933.¹⁸ Fröbe-Kapteyn came from a relatively well-off Dutch family. She was born in London in 1881. In 1900, the family moved to Zurich, where she learned German, French and Italian, and where she took courses in the history of art at the University. In 1909, she married Iwan Fröbe, a Croatian orchestra conductor, and they lived in Munich and Berlin until his death in 1915. She returned to Zurich in 1915, and in 1920 she settled in Ascona, in an idyllic location on the steep bank of Lake Maggiore. The idea of holding conferences in Ascona seems to have occurred to her around 1927, but it doesn't appear that she had a very clear notion about the format, or about whom she would invite. Clearly, the lectures would

¹⁷ ME Papers, Box 26, Folder 1.

¹⁸ There is so far no book-length biography of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. For information about her life see Hakl (2014).

have had to be about topics that interested her: esotericism, spirituality, Eastern philosophy and religion. The lecture hall was built in 1928, and in 1930 Olga organised a summer school together with Alice Bailey. This first meeting was far less academic than what would become the norm and, at any rate, the relationship with Bailey broke down and she departed Ascona in 1932. That same year, Olga visited the scholar of religion Rudolf Otto in Marburg in order to discuss with him an academic kind of summer school. Otto chose the name 'Eranos' for the meetings.

Jung was also an important presence from the beginning. Olga apparently met him in 1930 at Count von Keyserling's School of Wisdom and invited him to the 1930 summer school, which he declined to attend. But he did come regularly from 1933 onwards, and his presence was definitely a draw for other participants. Corbin and Eliade were first invited in 1949 and 1950 respectively, and quickly became part of the central core of Eranos, who were invited back every year. Eliade's diary recorded the fluctuations of his attitude toward the Tessin circle. In 1950, after the first lecture and the first chat around the famous round table, he wrote in the diary and then crossed out: 'In general, bored and annoyed by the Eranos group's atmosphere of fashionable theosophical literary circle.' (Eliade, diary, 21 August 1950). In time, however, he warmed up to it. What's really important, perhaps, is the fact he seems to have developed quite a friendly relationship with Olga Fröbe. This is evidenced both by the correspondence, as well as by the fact (noted by Eliade himself) that, starting in 1952 and until Fröbe-Kapteyn's death, he and his wife spent part of almost every summer vacation at her house, Casa Gabriella. If we are to believe Eliade's letters, what attracted him to Eranos was more than just the company of like-minded scholars, the drinking sessions with Jung, or the reams of academic gossip (which was in no short supply). Rather, as some of the correspondence with Olga makes clear, he genuinely thought he was being initiated into something. Already after the first meeting, he wrote to Fröbe that 'the ten days I have spent in this atmosphere, so dense and so naturally spiritual at the same time, count among my best memories. I think you for having revealed to me this oasis of the mind that is Eranos'. (M. Eliade, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 1 September 1950). A year later, after his second Eranos meeting, he wrote to her that 'Never until now have I had so much spiritual profit (not to speak of the material profit!) from an encounter with a group of people'. To which he added: 'I hope to speak to you more at length about this inner process during our next meeting'. (M. Eliade, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 5 September 1951).

As for Corbin, he also did not doubt the importance of Eranos to his own life. In the 'Biographical post-scriptum to a philosophical interview', he refers to it as a 'call, whose consequences can be felt, in the rhythm and

program of my research, to this day'.¹⁹ Corbin continued:

the gradual discoveries each one of us thereby made ultimately allowed us to speak from the very depths of ourselves. All ecclesiastical and academic orthodoxies, of whatever confessional caste, were and are completely foreign to the Eranos circle. The 'training' that we acquired there, towards becoming frankly and integrally one's self, evolved into a habit that one never lost, even if this in itself could be somewhat of a perilous attribute due to the rarity of it. (Corbin, *Biographical Post-Scriptum*).

In another text, published in the Swiss magazine *Du* in 1955, Corbin claimed that in a time where all authentic truth was menaced by the forces of the impersonal, Eranos stood for the power of individuality, and that at the very least, its members carried the torch and did not succumb to the demoniacal forces that assaulted the broken contemporary world. In that same text, Corbin referred to the 'monde impérissable' as the secret of the particular *Ergriffenheit* (emotion and possession rolled into one) that Olga Fröbe thought gripped Eranos participants.²⁰ While this may seem at once vague and perhaps mysterious, it speaks perhaps to the difficulty of articulating the kind of experience that Eranos facilitated for its votaries.

Olga's relationship with Corbin was as close as that with Eliade, and it is quite notable that she thought Corbin understood her, and Eranos, as no one else did. As she wrote to him in 1957, '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.' (O. Fröbe, letter to H. Corbin, 26 February 1957, quoted in Hakl, p.166).

As few years earlier, Olga had written a long explanatory letter to Eliade:

It seems to be that there is a gradual change that is being prepared, which I have sensed for a year, and which will start to manifest soon. It is a process of 'Zentrierung', of concentration around a Centre. As these things are so subtle and almost intangible, I

¹⁹ <https://www.amiscorbin.com/en/biography/biographical-post-scriptum-to-a-philosophical-interview/>

²⁰ Corbin (1955:29). For *Ergriffenheit* see Hakl (2014:125).

wait for their concretization up to a certain degree before I act myself. It seems to me that the Round Table must serve still more intensively as the centre of reunion for our professors. The top of the Table and the space above it is like a 'Krafftfeld', in the energetical sense that we are there very close to the Centre—that is to say to the symbol of the 'Selbst'. Dangerously close! But in an enterprise like Eranos there is always danger. One needs only to be conscious of it. This is very important!

The Eranos hall is the theatre where the drama of Eranos is being played. But the Round Table is the more intimate, even 'secret' place, where the contacts and the unions of a chemical spirituality are achieved. Of course there are always persons at this Round Table who never understand what's happening, because they lack the organ of perception necessary. But it is important that the number of those who understand grows every year [...]

The meetings at the Round Table are not social events. They are of a rare severity and austerity as to what concerns the external, friendly aspect, light, without conventions. For it is here that our professors discover the contact with their individual 'Quest', where they are impregnated by the proximity of the Centre.

[...] It is obvious that the collaboration of Jung these past 20 years had as its goal precisely this secret fact of the individuation of scholars, of these researchers on so many different lines of research. This is not to say that Jung became my 'partner' with a precise intention. He has entered the mandala of Eranos without wanting to, even with resistance. He was instrumental to it according to the hidden intention of the Centre. By contact with him our professor touch, without suspecting it, the 'Middle Way' that turns around the Centre of the Eranos mandala. There are among them naturally many who find themselves on the Quest before they come to Eranos. For them, Eranos is a confirmation of all that they have experienced inside on their solitary way. Every one was alone on his individual route, very alone, but here, during the 9 days, they find their spiritual family.

It is a celebration, a real celebration, and more than that these are the Mysteries of Eranos; on the outside a congress, a scientific reunion, but in truth more than that. (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to M. Eliade, 21 October 1952)²¹

I have quoted this *in extenso* not only to show that Olga felt she

²¹ ME Papers, Box 91, Folder 1.

needed to explain things to Eliade, but also to give a flavour of the kind of ideas she had about Eranos, as well about how she envisaged Jung's role in it. Eliade was probably pleased by Olga's usage of the Centre in her interpretation, since he saw himself as a pioneer in the hermeneutics of that symbol.²² In his reply, he said that he agreed with her and that he himself had noticed people changing around the Round Table. His example was Pettazzoni, 'who is the true type of the scholar, great erudite and very honest in his researches, but who lacks, as one says, imagination. Well! Pettazzoni was also changed: he felt *the reality*, the *force* and the *efficiency* of all these symbols and myths that he has studied, as a scholar, for forty years!' (M. Eliade, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 31 October 1952, Fondazione Eranos). Despite these noted effects of Eranos, in the late 1950s, Eliade began to tire of it. Already in 1959, he wrote in his diary that 'for years "Eranos" hasn't been attracting me' (3 August 1959). By 1961, it was clear that to him that he did not want to attend anymore:

25 July 1961: 'Afternoon at the Musée de l'Homme. I spend a few hours in the library, but I do everything I can so as to not finish the documentation for the "Eranos" text. An undefined resistance in the depths of my being against these conferences that destroy my vacations and from which I don't get anything anymore now, after 10-15 years. I feel like I have milked the whole Eranos *experience* dry. It would be both useless and childish to try to prolong it'.²³

JUNG

As the correspondence does touch as well on Corbin and Eliade's relationship with Jung, it might be useful for the reader to outline their respective views regarding the Zurich psychiatrist. In general, it can be said that at a personal as well as an intellectual level, Jung made a deep impression on both men. In his interview with Gene Nameche in 1970, Eliade recounted his meeting with Jung in the following terms: 'I was very much fascinated by his human presence. I felt he was a wise man, a Chinese sage; an old wise man and I felt he was more than an erudite psychologist or a theoretician or a writer or a philosopher... he was just a splendid human being. That impressed me very much'. (Gene Nameche

²² On 9 July 1952, Eliade noted in his diary, apropos of how little his ideas received credit (even among his friends) in France, that on attending a conference by Gaston Bachelard, 'Roger Godel did not seem too pleased to have it known that I was the first to deal with the problem of "the Centre" in France' (ME Papers, Box 15, Folder 5).

²³ ME Papers, Box 15, Folder 10.

interview, University of Chicago Archives:2).²⁴ On his side, Corbin also stated that the meetings with Jung were ‘unforgettable. We had long conversations in Ascona and in Küsnacht, as well as in Jung’s castle stronghold in Bollingen, where I was led one day by my friend Carl-Alfred Meier’.²⁵ (*Biographical Post-Script*). However, none of the two men seems to have been eager to become disciples. Corbin puts it in no uncertain terms in the aforementioned Post-Script: ‘I was a metaphysician, not a psychologist. Jung was a psychologist and not a metaphysician (although one might say he often mixed with metaphysics). Our educations and our respective aims were altogether different’. For Eliade, as well, one of the primary issues was disciplinary affiliation. It was not by chance that Eliade entitled his first presentation at Eranos ‘Psychology and History of Religions—Around the Symbolism of the “Centre”’. Remembering this lecture to Nameche, Eliade said: ‘In the first hour I was just presenting the psychological interpretation of those experiences and I was not so excited; I was not negative, but just saying that personally, as a historian of religion, I was not completely happy with the purely psychological interpretation of the center and all these things. And Jung very nicely told me that, “Of course, you are right”’. (Eliade, Nameche Interview:6). As such, both Corbin and Eliade tried to keep a respectful distance, though both seemed quite eager to participate in the exegesis and dissemination of Jung’s ideas, at least at first.²⁶ As the correspondence makes clear, they both were planning a joint volume on Jung that would have contained the interview Eliade made with Jung for the journal *Combat* in 1952 as well as Corbin’s piece on the *Eternal Sophia*. The project eventually fell through, as did the book that Eliade claimed he was writing on the Zurich psychologist at one point (*C.G. Jung and the Mythology of the Soul*) (M. Eliade, letter to C.G. Jung, 22 January 1955).²⁷ At the same time, both thinkers made use of concepts that were either borrowed from Jung but given a non-Jungian spin (Corbin) or which were such a trademark of Jung’s theory that their usage was bound to confuse people. Such was the case with Eliade’s use of the term ‘archetype’.²⁸ On his side, Eliade himself admitted that it was a blunder to try to establish a non-Jungian sense of it, even though he felt at least in part entitled to do so because was using it in a sense already established by Eugenio d’Ors or Saint

²⁴ Box 52, Folder 2.

²⁵ On Corbin and Jung see also Bernadini (2013:93-108).

²⁶ See Serina (2021:293-304).

²⁷ Handoca 1992:26.

²⁸ On Eliade’s understanding of ‘archetype’, see for example Spineto (2008:366-74).

Augustine (Interview with Nameche:14).²⁹ In his later years, Eliade was at times annoyed by references to his ‘Jungianism’, but he was also willing to concede that he had, as he put it, picked up some ‘important nuances’ from the Zurich psychiatrist.³⁰ Corbin was less open to admitting any sort of influence and in later years, after Jung’s death, explicitly distanced himself from analytical psychology (Serina 2021:294-304). Even in the 1950s, however, both Eliade and Corbin, in fact, operated with a different psychology than Jung, as both subscribed to a ‘transconscious’, which they took to be a type of faculty of faith, and which had an affinity with other psychological or ‘para’-psychological discourses on higher consciousness (e.g. superconscious or hyperconscious) that circulated in the West (as well as in India) since the late 19th century.³¹ The ‘transconscious’ was opposed to the collective unconscious that Jung championed as a source of religious revelation. What’s more, Jung himself was quite critical of such higher forms of consciousness like the ‘transconscious’ or the ‘superconscious’, though such notions were embraced by Olga Fröbe and by some of the Eranos participants.³²

NOTE ABOUT THE EDITION

The letters from Corbin to Eliade are kept in the Eliade Papers at the University of Chicago, Illinois (Box 81, Folder 13); the letters from Eliade to Corbin are kept at the Grand Equipement Documentaire du Campus Condorcet in Aubervilliers, France, in the Fonds Henry et Stella Corbin, hereafter FHSC (EPHE BSR 5COR). Several of the letters have been published before, in *Cahier de l’Herne, Henry Corbin*, 1981, no.39 (letters 4, 5, 8), in Mircea Eliade *Europa, Asia, America... Corespondență, vol. 3 R-Z*, Humanitas, 2004 (letters 5, 6, 9), and in *Mircea Eliade și Corespondenții săi. Vol 1*, Bucharest: Minerva, 1993 (letters 11, 13, 17, 20). This present edition is, however, the first complete one, containing all of the letters that have so far come to light. A number of letters have only recently surfaced, as they lay hidden in one of the occasional

²⁹ In the interview with Nameche (p. 14), Eliade claims that the term appears in Saint Augustine. Jung also claimed at one point to have gotten it from Augustine, but in 1948 he said he was wrong, and that ‘archetype’ does not appear in Saint Augustine’s work (see Jung 2019:67).

³⁰ For the annoyance, see the entry for 25 January 1978 (Eliade 1993b:303).

³¹ For the genealogy of the ‘transconscious’ see Matei Iagher’s forthcoming paper, ‘The Origins of Mircea Eliade’s Transconscious and the Vicissitudes of the Religious Faculty’.

³² See the quote from Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn in Hakl (2014:104).

correspondence boxes in the Mircea Eliade Archive at the University of Chicago. These are: letter 7 (12 December 1952), 10 (31 October 1953), 22 (6 July 1954), 24 (2 November 1956), 27 (18 January 1957), 28 (28 March 1957), 48 (1 September 1980).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to a number of people who, in various ways, supported our work on this edition: Prof. Sorin Alexandrescu, Gisela Binda, Riccardo Bernardini, Daniel Gastambide, Monica Pongelli, Daniel Proulx and the Association des amis de Henry et Stella Corbin.

THE LETTERS

1. Henry Corbin, 19 June 1950

19 June 1950

My dear Colleague,

I had wanted to write to you much sooner. I spent a large part of the year with you, meditating on your great *Patterns*,³³ *Techniques of Yoga*,³⁴ *Alchemy*,³⁵ etc. In some of the little things I have prepared you will perceive an immediate echo. I cannot tell you to what extent I feel close to you, to your way of asking and handling questions. This is why I should have written you a large article, but well, lack of time... I'm perhaps doing better today by announcing an imminent meeting. We are flying back at the end of next week. I hope you are in Paris these days, and that we will be able to talk heart to heart (our address is still: 19 rue de l'Odéon, 6th arrondissement).

It's a real delight to think that we will be living together for ten days at Ascona.³⁶ For Eranos XVIII, The Jung *Festschrift*, I have submitted a long translation and a long commentary on 'The Book of the Glorious' by Jābir ibn Hayyān³⁷. I think you'll be interested. You also feature in it³⁸.

³³ Eliade 1958.

³⁴ Eliade 1948. This book has not been translated into English.

³⁵ Eliade 1938.

³⁶ The Eranos circle was to meet on the theme 'Mensch und Ritus.' Corbin's lecture was entitled 'Sabian Temple and Ismailism', and Eliade's lecture was entitled 'Psychology and History of Religions. About the symbolism of the "Centre".' (Corbin 1986:132-182; Eliade 1951a). Eliade's lecture became chapter 1 of his book *Images and Symbols* (1952).

³⁷ Corbin 1950. Corbin wrote to Louis Massignon about his text: 'It was an opportunity to pay tribute to the poor [Paul] Kraus, to link Jābir with the symbolism of Jung through my own interpretation, and even more so to contemplate and emphasise your Salmān Pāk. I always love more and more what the latter allows one to understand.' (H. Corbin, letter to L. Massignon, dated 19 June 1950, Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 273-45).

³⁸ In footnotes 9, 10, 11 and 37, Corbin quotes, in this order, 'Metallurgy, Magic and Alchemy', *Techniques du Yoga* and *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (The Myth of the Eternal Return).

I hope to see again your friends Cioran³⁹ and Vuia⁴⁰. See you soon, then.

Very sincerely and cordially yours,

2. Mircea Eliade, 17 July 1950

Hôtel de Suède
31 rue Vaneau, Paris 7th arrondissement

17 July 1950

Dear Colleague,

I am sorry! After my wife's illness, it is now my turn: for the past few days, I've been suffering from a bout of vagotonia that forbids any intellectual labour. On Wednesday the 19th July, I will be leaving for Briançon, where I will rest for two weeks at a friends' house. If you are free on Tuesday, around 6 PM, I'll pass by to see you for a moment. You can telephone my hotel.

My respects to Mrs Corbin.

Yours very truly,

Mircea Eliade

³⁹ Emil Cioran (1911–1995), Romanian philosopher and writer. Corbin and Cioran met in the 1930s, as shown by two letters of Cioran (6 July 1939 and 27 May 1940) sent to Corbin, which have been published in C. Jambet (ed.), *Henry Corbin* (Paris: L'Herne, 1981:24). Cioran and Corbin were also neighbours in Paris, as both lived on rue de l'Odéon.

⁴⁰ Octavian Vuia (1914–1989), Romanian philosopher. He was a disciple of Heidegger and later worked for Radio Free Europe. Vuia, Jean Beaufret and Corbin met in 1946 to discuss the translation of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. Again, on the same subject, Vuia contacted Corbin on 15 August 1950 (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 265.3-A). On Corbin and Heidegger, see Sylvain Cammileri and Daniel Proulx, 'Martin Heidegger et Henry Corbin: lettres et documents (1930-1941)', *Bulletin heideggérien* 4 (2014):57-58.

3. Mircea Eliade, 2 September 1950

Dear Friend,

I've read with an ever-growing interest more than eighty pages of your manuscript⁴¹. I find it 'fascinating!' You must publish it as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, I didn't have the time to finish it: too many things to do for this much talked about Amsterdam⁴².

I hope to see you again there!

My respects to Mrs. Corbin.

Sincerely,
Mircea Eliade

4. Mircea Eliade, 17 August 1951

11 rue Duhesme, Paris 18th arrondissement

17 August 1951

Dear Friend,

I hope this note will reach you. I just found your address in an old notebook—and it seems to be correct. I wrote from Guéthary to...11 rue

⁴¹ Corbin completed a 107-pages typewritten manuscript in April 1950 (Campus Concordet, FHSC 205.2). Entitled 'Combat pour l'Ange', the text is a revised and amplified version of a lecture given on 22 May 1947 in Tehran. In it, Corbin makes ample use of Eliadean categories for his interpretation. This book was only published posthumously in an Italian translation (see Corbin 2011). We are grateful to Daniel Proulx for this information.

⁴² Eliade is referring to the VIIIth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) held in Amsterdam from 4 to 9 September 1950 (Eliade 1951b).

de l'Odéon⁴³.

We returned on Saturday, but without finishing the Ascona lectures. I'm toiling on a mediocre text. (It is impossible for me to write a page that is actually worth it—for an 'audience'. I should have prepared my text in advance, and then improvised in front of the Ascona sages, or simply read some passages. Your method is the only fruitful one—that's why your Eranos articles are so wonderful. My oral texts do not deserve the honour of being published as they are. But I am too lazy to have them 'rewritten'.⁴⁴ I am free tomorrow, Saturday, all evening. Do you want us to meet in your neighborhood after 9 pm?⁴⁵

My respects to Mrs. Corbin.

In friendship,
Mircea Eliade

5. Mircea Eliade, 10 January 1952⁴⁶

Hotel Excelsior, Monte Carlo

10 January 1952

My dear friends,

Best wishes for the New Year—and a thousand apologies! Don't think that you have been forgotten on rue Duhesme. But what a life! What cursed profession ours is, what autumn—which is happily coming to an end! Immunised against the flu, I have caught I don't know what exactly: rheumatism, sciatica, 'bone neurasthenia'? A pain, nevertheless, not yet

⁴³ The address is incorrect, as the Corbins lived at 19 rue de l'Odéon.

⁴⁴ English in the original.

⁴⁵ In November, Corbin wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn: 'We've seen our friends again for a long time before leaving, especially dear Eliade'. H. Corbin, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, 22 November 1951, Fondazione Eranos. That same autumn, Eliade sent Corbin a copy of his book *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, with this inscription: 'To Henri [*sic*] Corbin, this descent into Hell, this ascent, waiting for the Angels. Very friendly, his attentive reader, his admirer. Mircea Eliade Paris October 1951.' (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, R ELI CHAM).

⁴⁶ This letter was published in Jambet (1981:325-326), without the final lines written by Christinel Eliade.

identified: the pain which is available, anonymous, fully exercising its creative freedom (and how!). Attracted by my immunity, this stranger chose me on the eve of our departure for Sweden.⁴⁷ We gave up on our northern voyage—and I really regretted the weeks I wasted preparing my lectures. Our whole schedule was upended. I had thought about combining a few texts, recasting them, amplifying them: almost two months of work, but no result; this little book made up of fragments is still unfinished. Impossible to work on rue Duhesme—impossible to work anywhere else. Even our patience as stateless people finally gave in. And for three weeks we have been on the Riviera, happily installed in a decent and quiet hotel. We decided to change the scenery, and not just the climate: I've left the useless science of fore-wisdom in Paris and found again the manuscript of my poor old unfinished novel.⁴⁸ I have before me almost two months of freedom: I shall dedicate them to the great dreams, those sad comforters. At the beginning of March we are returning to Paris and I will become serious again: articles, reviews, lectures.

At the moment, I feel really, really good. Abandoned by the stranger, I have returned to the pleasant human condition. My bones have given up all ambition for neurasthenia and therefore metaphysics (*cf.* Cioran) on their own existential level. I'm back to normal again—alas, I had almost identified the ill-known, the discreet, the available, but I did not have the luck to be recorded by the Annals of medicine.

There's our story! It is turbulent enough. Now we are happy: I write, and Christinel types the first chapters of my novel.

I wish you once more *many many happy returns*.⁴⁹

My sincerest wishes,
Mircea Eliade.

Mircea has told you everything. All I have to do is kiss you both (if Henry allows it) and tell you that we've been thinking a lot about you, especially since we got here.

Christinel

⁴⁷ Eliade was due to give two lectures at the University of Lund in November 1951, where he was invited by Stig Wikander (1908-1983). Due to several postponements, the visit finally took place in April 1952.

⁴⁸ Eliade 1978b.

⁴⁹ English in the original.

6. Mircea Eliade, 22 November 1952⁵⁰

62 bis rue de la Tour, Paris 16th arrondissement ~~H rue Duhesme, Paris 18th arrondissement~~

25 November 1952

~~22 November 1952~~

N.B.: Don't forget the article for the Rev[ue *de*] Cult[ure] Euro[opéenne]!

My Dear Friends,

Many thanks for your letter. I'm responding with a great delay, for we have been disturbed by countless troubles and burdens. Finally, we have some luck at least: starting next week, we will take up residence again at 62bis rue de la Tour, Paris, 16th arrondissement. Dr. Laforgue⁵¹ has very graciously agreed to allow us to use his apartment. I hope to be able to work over there. I have wasted two months on meaningless things.

I've seen Brice Parain.⁵² He has read the volume with interest, and another person is currently reading it is reading it now. (It's the rule of the house: two readers!...) He promised he will write to you soon. With Gallimard, one must have patience...For his part, Payot has asked me if he can count on your book for the end of 1953. I replied with assurances: he would have the manuscript before it's due.

As soon as I will receive the Teheran editions, I will show him the beautiful volumes of Persian texts. Payot has a soft spot for sciences that are inaccessible to him!...

⁵⁰ This letter was published in Jambet (1981:327).

⁵¹ René Laforgue (1894-1962), French psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, co-founder of the of the group *L'Évolution psychiatrique* and of the Société Psychanalytique de Paris, of which he was the first president. During World War II, Laforgue attempted to collaborate with the Germans. While the definitive proof of his collaborationism appeared only recently, he became a kind of persona non grata among French psychoanalysts after the war. This might have been one reason why he spent large portions of his later years in Morocco, where he also founded the Casablanca Institute of Psychoanalysis. Eliade met him at the Congress for Religious Psychology organised in Avon in September 1950 (see M. Eliade, letter to S. Wikander, 7 November 1950, in Timuş 2005:108).

⁵² Brice Parain (1897–1971), philosopher and reader for Gallimard.

As you can see, we have already moved into Laforgue's. Lots of space, but almost no light. Since our stay in 1950, several buildings have taken over the view. Alas! The sky has shrunk: we switch on the lamps immediately after lunch. I imagine I am in Lapland: three hours of day, the rest belongs to the fertile Night. We are returning to the Great Mythology: going back to the origins, as Cioran would say (and he is not a psychoanalyst...)

In any case, we are very happy to have a den. I hope to be able to work, even with artificial light. I will dedicate these four months to my poor novel, abandoned one sunny afternoon in Monte Carlo. I have a great need to rediscover the play, the imagination, the dream—for I am withering up with troubling speed. My only hope is tied up with my stateless condition: since I have no nationality, I do not risk any official honours—hence, no Sorbonne and no honorary appointments. But it's important not to compromise this last chance: that of a *desterrado*. Hence, I hasten to take advantage...

Also during these four months of freedom, I will work at redoing my 1936 *Yoga*. I started this labor during my stay in Oxford in 1940. As I live a stone's throw away from the Guimet Museum, this work of reassessing the text will be much easier.

I have sent you a small book, *Images and Symbols*, via Gallimard. There's nothing there new for you there, except in the foreword and the conclusions.

I have not yet seen either Puech⁵³ or Dumézil.⁵⁴ On rue Duhesme I was like an imprisoned man: rarely did I go down to the Left Bank, to make contact once more with myself.

Christinel is terribly agitated in 'her' apartment. She hugs you both and promises to write very soon. My respects to Stella, and my hugs to you dear Henry.

Sincerely,
Mircea Eliade

⁵³ Henri-Charles Puech (1902–1986), French historian of religions who held the chair of history of religions at the Collège de France from 1952 to 1972, and friend of Henry Corbin.

⁵⁴ Georges Dumézil (1898–1986), French philologist, historian of religions and anthropologist, who held the chair of Indo-European civilisations at the Collège de France. He was a close friend of Eliade.

7. Henry Corbin, 12 December 1952

Franco-Iranian Institute
178, Avenue Ordibehest
Department of Iranology

Tehran, ~~14th~~ 12th December 1952

Dearest Mircea,

The article is done! It's coming, it's getting there. This small, precursory note, for it still must be typed up, and I do not think it can catch a plane earlier than the one leaving next Saturday (20 December). You shall then have it by post on the 22, I think. I am thus very fearful that it will be too late for the January issue; will I at least be there in time for the following issue (March?). What else could I do? It was impossible for me to write it faster or sooner.

It only required a dozen days from me, and I have the weakness of not being displeased with it. I think I have managed to give all of the substance of the *Antwort auf Hiob*, and to grasp some of the theses that have been bouncing around in my head for a long time. Naturally, there's always the personal manner of projecting the illumination, but I think Jung will recognise himself in it. Ultimately, I realised that I was really 'sticking' to the guiding idea so much that it was a real storm in my microcosm! The only thing is that one must count on at least 20 good pages of the Rev. de Cult. Europ., and in the body of it I have made use of your Symbolism of the Centre⁵⁵ for the composition. And I do not want to shorten it, because everything fits in it coherently. But I hope your friends will not be displeased. Their revue deserves serious works, and if they will like this, we will 'do that again'. To tell you the truth, I would have never written this article, had you not challenged me to do it, for I have absolutely no idea where in France one can, currently, do an a-confessional theology. We would absolutely need a Zalmoxis. All of our revues are pure literature, or pure erudition, reinforced by an intolerable historicist orthodoxy. So, if the Rev. de Cult. Europ. can serve as an organ, that will be very good.⁵⁶ Finally, my article stages enough of us so as to be 'European'.

⁵⁵ Eliade 1952; reprinted Eliade 1961:27-56.

⁵⁶ *La Revue de culture européenne* had announced in its 9th and 10th issues of the 1st and second trimester 1954 a new contribution by Corbin entitled 'Christos Angelos', and one by Mircea Eliade entitled 'The Fall into History', texts which were not published.

Hold on to your idea of a brochure where we will gather your interview (my article takes it as its point of departure, this goes together admirably) with my article and an article by Roland Cahen.⁵⁷ This is worth it; it's even very important. I give you full powers to make this happen. I would like to see the proofs (in the case of the Revue as well). Send them thus by airplane, but don't return the manuscript, as I have a copy. If this is impossible, do your best.

Thank you with all my heart for your good letter of 22 November. Congratulations on the apartment, my dear Friends! Work well on your new edition of Yoga. Take advantage of the fertile night on the ground floor. I follow you in spirit as you walk to the Musée Guimet. Here I live, we live, in the microcosm. A few social events, enough so as not become savages. But never a profound conversation, a real exchange, less with the Iranians. But it's on a terrain that's bound to be limited. They don't conceive of our problems. The Indian embassy managed to send me the Post. Caitanya Sabajiya. Admirable, truly admirable.

If I read well between the lines, Parain was not really taken with my Eranos. Am I wrong? I wouldn't be surprised: he doesn't love Jung. And I am very hermetical. Tell me the truth. We will return thus to the project of making the volume here, at least if maybe Molly at Belles-Lettres isn't tempted. (My *Avicenna* for UNESCO will have its residence at Belles Lettres). There too, dear Mircea, I give you all the power. But if it's a no, go and get my Eranos from Parain: it's useless to let it lie around there. I have sent you these days through ordinary mail (but registered mail), a copy of Sohrawardi. Three months from now I think you will have *Nasir Khosraw*. And *Avicenna* in the summer. As for dear Payot, I am not surprised. He is a lovely fellow after all. But I truly cannot speak of a date right now. I work from evening until morning, and I don't even know when I could think about the book for Masui (don't tell him, but give him my friendly greetings).

I forgot: the exact title for my article for Rev.[ue de] Cult[ure]. Europ. [énne] *The Eternal Sophia (in the margins of a recent book by C.G. Jung)*.

Dear, dear Mircea, I have only spoken of my affairs. But my works are really in the same line as yours, that it's like thinking of you and thinking together with you. Ultimately, what I regret is my absence from

⁵⁷ Roland Cahen (1914–1998), Germanist and psychiatrist who was analysed in Zurich by C.A. Meier, Emma Jung and C.G. Jung. He was Jung's main translator, or rather adapter, into French from the 1940s to the late 1960s. See Serina (2021:201-223). Cahen proposed to Corbin that he undertake a French translation of *Antwort auf Hiob*, an offer that the Islamic scholar declined, writing only a preface for the book.

Paris, it's the inability of doing anything with you and of seeing you more often. If we could make up for it from here, everything would be okay, for I too have a little the feeling of being a *desterrado*, even if my temporal fate is better. But I am disgusted with so many things, with so many vanities, and treacheries. I've sent a copy of Sohrawardi to Tucci. Are you going to Rome this year? Work well, and soon other news. Friendly homage to Christinel. Friendly greetings from Stella. From all my heart, fraternally yours,

Henry Corbin.

8. Henry Corbin, 19 December 1952

Franco-Iranian Institute
178 Ordibehesht Ave
Iranology Department

Teheran, 19 December 1952

Dear Friend,

Here is the manuscript I told you about in the letter that you should have received this week.⁵⁸ Read it and give me some news quickly. I hope that our friends at the Rev.[ue de] Cult.[ure] Europ.[éenne] will be satisfied.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Corbin 1953a, reprinted in Cazenave (ed.) 1984:264-292, and in Corbin 2019:102-153. An abridged version was published earlier in English as 'The Eternal Sophia', in *Harvest*, 31 (1985):7-23, trans. and ed. by Molly Tuby.

⁵⁹ *La Revue de culture européenne* started appearing in the summer of 1951 in Paris. It was edited by Sten Melry, the pseudonym of Ștefan Racocceanu, a Romanian doctor and émigré who was known for his anti-communism. Thanks to Eliade, this quarterly periodical benefitted from contributions of such scholars as Giovanni Papini, Karl Jaspers, Ernst Jünger, Raffaele Pettazzoni, Salvador de Madariaga, Henry Corbin. Racocceanu later edited the monthly magazine *L'Indépendance roumaine: Tribune franco-roumaine pour la liberté*, which started appearing in 1954. He was also president of the Association of Free Romanians in France. In Paris, Racocceanu was also working on a PhD in Medicine. He later emigrated to the U.S., where he worked as an MD, doing internships in New York and Connecticut and becoming an Educational Fellow in Medicine, focusing on hypertension (1969-1971) at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in

There is not only Jung in there: to tell you the truth, he occupies *the whole* centre. I think he will recognise himself. In any case, this is the clearest benefit that I could extract from his admirable work and I don't spare him my sympathy. I think that in French he has not yet had enough of that.⁶⁰ But there is also, between the lines, a bit of my whole life in there. It is a great adventure into which you have pushed me, dear Mircea! Finally, tell me quickly when this may come out and, above all, do not forget the project of our common brochure.⁶¹

We received *Myths and Symbols* yesterday.⁶² Thank you very much. I only leafed through it: I find you on every page.

Write soon! Stella was my only reader. There's really no person here with whom I could speak about the Sophia of Jung. The work here is a perpetual monologue.

Work well and hang in there, dear Mircea!
I hug you like a brother.

Henry Corbin

Do you know if I could have the proofs (by plane?)

The Notes are all gathered on the last 2 pages (I have a copy of the manuscript)

N.B.: If there are people or journals to which you think that I should send the big book of Suhrawardi, make some suggestions.⁶³ Your copy left last week, but by ordinary post, and one should reckon a month of travel!

New York.

⁶⁰ Not many French intellectuals paid homage to Jung at this time. Louis Massignon, nevertheless, saluted his work in the following terms: 'Without being a specialist, I reflected on psychoanalysis, in particular with Jung: this psychoanalyst has the "common touch," he knows how to participate, through intelligent sympathy, in the point of view of the "people"; he has cured me of this distrust, this haughty disdain of the intellectual, who loses the contact with society, and who forgets what are the political demands most badly expressed and most bitterly hurtful for our self-love, and which are often the most authentic, the most profound, the most justified.' (Massignon 2009:59). On Jung and Massignon, see Serina (2021:284-293).

⁶¹ Eliade and Corbin were planning to publish a brochure entitled *Rencontres avec Jung* (Meetings with Jung), which was supposed to include the interview with Jung that Eliade had published in *Combat* and Corbin's 'La Sophia éternelle'.

⁶² Corbin probably means *Images and Symbols* here.

⁶³ Suhrawardi 1952.

The caviar departs Monday by plane!

9. Mircea Eliade, 30 December 1952⁶⁴

62 bis rue de la Tour, Paris 16th arrondissement

30 December 1952

Dear Friend,

I received your article three days ago, on Saturday evening.⁶⁵ I read it again just now and I am blown away. I congratulate you, and I very much thank you for having sent it to me. Rarely have I read a text that's more dense and more luminous. I don't speak here solely about the Jungian exegesis—the first one which is congenial to the master's thought—but also about the final pages on Mazdeism (richer, more luminous than the libraries of philologists and historians), and about the pages on Sophianology and angelology. Everything is perfect, bursting with sap, and robust! I hug you. And let me ask: why don't you take a few weeks every trimester (violently, if you must!) so that you may abandon yourself to philosophical studies of this type—that is to say: for writing up quick texts, which do not exhaust you with their documentation? For just like Saint Augustin or Unamuno, you think with the pencil in hand: it doesn't matter which book you read, because it's always your deep and personal thought that you follow. I realised this while I was reading the brilliant presentation of the *Antwort [auf Hiob]*. I do not dare to read this book anymore now: I'm scared of being really disappointed... By a strange coincidence (or synchronicity?), I met Father van der Mensbrugghe on the same evening when I received your manuscript, after I had already read a dozen pages.⁶⁶ I spoke to him about you and your article of course. He is very fond of you and has asked me to send you his regards—but he doesn't understand why

⁶⁴ This letter has been partially published in Jambet (1981:326).

⁶⁵ Corbin1953b.

⁶⁶ Alexis van der Mensbrugghe (1899–1980), Belgian theologian, who started out as a Benedictine monk and converted to Orthodoxy in 1929, eventually rising to the rank of archbishop (1971) of Düsseldorf. Corbin referred to one of van der Mensbrugghe's books (*From Dyad to Triad, a Plea for Duality Against Dualism and An Essay Towards the Synthesis of Orthodoxy*, 1935) in his essay on 'La Sophia éternelle.' (see Cazenave 1984:146).

you are interested in Jung (incidentally, he doesn't know him).

I've spoken yesterday with the director of the 'Revue de Culture Européenne'. He is besides himself. You will receive the galleys by plane—and you shall have 100 reprints. The fourth issue of the *Revue* will come out one of these days. The next one between 15 February and the 1 March. It's possible that after this issue, the *Revue* will be printed in Belgium. In any case, you will receive the galleys—and issue 5 will come out on the 1 March at the latest.⁶⁷

As for the projected brochure, I no longer have the courage to present myself, with my poor improvised and orally redacted interview, alongside your text.⁶⁸ But I will see to it to have the same text published separately—with one of my friends, the bookseller on Bd. Raspail—a few months after the article comes out.⁶⁹ I will keep you posted.

I called up Brice Parain, but he had already left on vacation. Last time, he told me that he had really loved your book, but he can't do anything by himself: a second reader must say his piece, and finally, it is always Gallimard who decides. (It's true that he told me the same thing about Cioran's books and mine). Therefore, I don't know what to think. I'll go over there to see him.

I have no other news to give you. Godel⁷⁰ made a beautiful gift to his

⁶⁷ Several weeks later, Corbin wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn: 'Eliade has written to me that my article on *Antwort auf Hiob* will appear in March in *Revue de Culture Européenne*. It's entitled "The eternal Sophia". I will send it to you straight away. In truth, I've put a bit of all my life in there'. (H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 20 February 1953, Fondazione Erano).

⁶⁸ M. Eliade, 'Rencontre avec Jung', in *Combat*, 9 October 1952(7). See the entry in his diary for 25 August 1952. In a letter to Jung written on 25 September 1952, Eliade said he was 'ashamed' to have misplaced the notes he took during the interview. In effect, he had to reconstruct the dialogue from memory. Jung added some corrections and explanations, but Eliade was unable to transmit them to the newspaper before publication. The interview (with corrections) was republished in C. Tacou (ed.) (1978:250-255), and in Eliade's final book (see Eliade 1986:43-54). It was taken up as well in *C.G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters* (Jung 1993 [1977]:225-234).

⁶⁹ An undated note written by Corbin contains the following: 'write to Eliade—book project that would contain under the title of *Meetings*... 1. Eliade text in *Combat* 9 oct. 1953. 2) Sophia aeterna; 3) Eliade text for Disque Vert 1955.' (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 124).

⁷⁰ Roger Godel (1898–1961), French cardiologist and philosopher who worked as chief physician of the hospital of the Suez Canal Company in Ismailia, Egypt. Eliade wrote the preface to his book *Essais sur l'expérience libératrice* (1952). He also contributed to a memorial volume edited after the death of Godel (see Eliade 1963; republished in Eliade 1986:251-260).

wife: a trip to India! She wrote us a lovely letter from Trivandrum. It seems like Godel's book is sold out. It's a great publishing success—and for me another proof that the public is interested in Oriental soteriology. We have not seen the Puechs again: we looked them up before Christmas, but they were absent during the day. Pity one can't go on visits after midnight, when one has finished working and would love to chat with friends!

Fortunately, I am working well on improbable books, as Cioran would say. *Images and Symbols* contains only a few pages that are unknown to you. I'm waiting for the Suhrawardi. Please give my regards to Stella and to both of you: I wish you a Happy New Year!

Friendly hugs,
Mircea

PS: I received the Suhrawardi on 31 December. Many thanks!

10. Henry Corbin, 31 October 1953

In Rome !
Albergo la Residenza
31 October 1953
Via Emilia 22
Roma

Dear dear Mircea!

Here is the opus. I entrust it to you. Read Paulhan the letter. If that could work for the NRF, I would naturally be overjoyed. Good luck with your work. Very fraternally yours,

Henry Corbin

11. Henry Corbin, 15 November 1953

Franco-Iranian Institute
178 Ordibehesht Ave
Iranology Department

Teheran, 15 November 1953

Dear Mircea,

Be a good sport! I'm sending you the copy of this article that I'm addressing to Lambrichs.⁷¹ I'm not happy with it, as I know very well it's six times too long. But I'm altogether incapable of writing a 'commercial' paper. So I chose to make a sort of review in advance, distilling the meaning of the book, such as I perceive it to be (this might even help you, if you plan on writing one, supposing that I understand myself well). I've told Lambrichs that he can cut, contract, subtract, glue back together, tone down as he pleases, so that it's finally accessible to the 'educated' subscriber. But I'm afraid that he will get discouraged if I lay this on him. Still, I have the impression that all the elements are there: it is merely a question of making a choice about how to arrange them in the display case. And I don't know how to do this. So please help Lambrichs if he asks you too, so that he brings it out as soon as possible. And give me quickly some news.

You should have received our postcard from Rome.⁷² It was a magnificent week. The conference happened a little like at the Guimet Museum⁷³—Tucci⁷⁴ was radiant, smooth, exuberant. What an excellent

⁷¹ George Lambrichs (1917-1992) worked as an editor for Éditions de Minuit in Paris between 1946 and 1955, and also as editor of the collections 'Le Chemin' and 'Cahier du Chemin' at Gallimard. He was editor in chief of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* between 1977 and 1986.

⁷² Not preserved.

⁷³ Corbin gave a lecture in Rome on 5 November, on the topic of 'Avicenna and the visionary recital' at the *Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente*. He had previously given this lecture at the Musée Guimet in Paris in October 1953. On that occasion he had written to the organiser of the Eranos meetings: 'The lecture on Avicenna has gone very well. I expected an auditorium of 50 people, but they were more than 300! The great hall of the Guimet museum was full. All "those of Eranos" who are in Paris were there; and that created a profound *Stimmung*. I am thus feeling a bit of assurance for reprising this lecture in Rome, at Tucci's.' (H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 29 October 1953, Fondazione Eranos).

⁷⁴ Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984), Italian scholar and Orientalist, and an expert on Tibetan Buddhism. His work had a formative impact on the young Eliade. Eliade met him for the first time in the house of Surendranath Dasgupta, his Indian mentor,

heart! We had lunch in his extraordinary temple-library. The presence of Ms. Froebe⁷⁵ made all of this a family reunion (well, a spiritual family of course, but I don't use that word!). Dear Olga even told us about the future of Eranos and future Tagungen. But I asked her to be on guard, lest my poor head muddles everything up and I end up bringing the lectures of another year at the proximate gathering.⁷⁶ Yes, I understand why you go to Rome each year: it's marvelous. Apart from that, the experience of the 'Comet' is extraordinary and also metaphysical in a way.⁷⁷ At the end of a truly 'elementary' battle, one climbs up to 12,000 meters, under a blue sky made of steel, in total stability and serenity; very, very far beneath, the small Earth; the Alps, of which one can see both slopes at the same time are no more impressive than a model in a museum—but so beautiful with their white cloaks.

Dear Tucci⁷⁸ naturally wants to publish the text of my lecture as soon as possible. But what's happening in Paris? Have you seen Paulhan?⁷⁹ Can he publish it like it is, or does he have to ask the *Synthèse*?⁸⁰

in 1929, and the two stayed in touch over the years. Eliade dedicated his 1976 book *Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions* to him: 'To Giuseppe Tucci, in memory of our discussions in Calcutta, 1929-1931' (see Eliade 1976). Corbin had only recently met Tucci in Rome, during a stay a few months before, and then encountered him again at the Eranos conferences in 1953, where Tucci spoke about 'Earth in India and Tibet'.

⁷⁵ Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962), the organiser of the Eranos meetings, had not announced her coming to him. But Henry Corbin sensed it nevertheless from one of the telegrams she sent him (now lost). He wrote to her a few days before his departure: 'Do you know your telegram has awoken a suspicion? That you most likely have the intention of coming to Rome yourself! In truth, it would be wonderful to meet there.' (H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 29 October 1953, Fondazione Eranos).

⁷⁶ Corbin wrote in February 1954 to Fröbe-Kapteyn: 'We started, in the course of our evening chats in Rome, to evoke the future of Eranos. It's a topic that's very dear to me, in which I deeply believe. My experience was so deep, that I am persuaded of the necessity of ensuring similar ones for the future' (H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 2 February 1954. Fondazione Eranos).

⁷⁷ The 'de Havilland DH 106 Comet' was the first commercial jetliner, which had just been introduced in 1952.

⁷⁸ Henry Corbin wrote to Giuseppe Tucci a week later to thank him for his hospitality in Rome and to send the typewritten text of his lecture (H. Corbin, letter to G. Tucci, 22 November 1953. Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 266.6).

⁷⁹ Jean Paulhan (1884–1968), French writer, literary critic and publisher, and editor in chief of *Nouvelle Revue Française* from 1925 to 1940, and from 1946 to 1968. His first contacts with Henry Corbin go back to the middle of the 1930s.

⁸⁰ It is finally the Belgian journal *Synthèses* that published the text, in a volume that gathered together different articles that did not fit into the issue of *Disque Vert* dedicated to C.G. Jung (see Corbin December 1955).

Here, we have found the country very calm, and the atmosphere incomparably better than in the month of June. But still, if it's not 'the fertile night' of the ground floor of rue de la Tour, at least it's the solitude of the Zarathustrian mountains. After this very busy month of October in Paris, and after Rome...Fortunately, there are lots and lots of things to work on.

Quick, quick with some news, my dearest Mircea! Best wishes from Stella. Give my friendly regards to Christinel.

With all my heart,
Henry Corbin

Have you moved back into rue de la Tour?

I received a letter from the *Revue de Culture Européenne* dated 11 October, demanding that I send a copy of my 'Étude sur le Livre des 2 Sagesses de Nâsir-e Khosraw'⁸¹ to Morcovescu⁸² for a review.⁸³ I have specifically sent a review copy to the *Revue* in June. Since it's a limited print run, I cannot send several copies to each journal! What to do?? Would you be so kind to explain this to them, and to tell them that sending a single copy is after all normal? Thanks!

12. Mircea Eliade, 26 November 1953

62bis rue de la Tour, Paris 16th arrondissement

26 November 1953

Dear Friend,

Quickly, a few lines—as you have written to me! If I do not actually write

⁸¹ Corbin 1953c.

⁸² Nicolae Morcovescu (1922–1996), Romanian author and academic. He studied chemical engineering in Bucharest and emigrated to Paris in 1948, where he took courses at École Pratique des Hautes Études and at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes. Later, he emigrated to the U.S., where he obtained his PhD at the University of Pennsylvania with a thesis entitled *La légende de Gauvain dans les romans du Graal avant 1200* (1964). After his doctorate, Morcovescu moved to Australia, where he taught in the French department at Monash University (1965-87). His letters to Eliade are published in Gligor (2012:189-236).

⁸³ We have not been able to locate this review.

to you today, I risk postponing for a few more days. And I'm very keen to reassure you. I've seen Lambrichs, and we've made the necessary cuts—the leaflet is in preparation. Lambrichs, ever enthusiastic about your book, is getting ready to launch it. As for the foreword, I've confessed my hesitations to him: how could I dare to present a Master without ridiculing myself? He agrees to a review in *Critique*, which would round off my article in the *NRF*.

I've spoken to Paulhan by telephone, because Wednesdays at the *NRF* he is swamped with work. He is sorry: your article will take up 33 pages. He doesn't think he would be able to publish it without making ruthless cuts. He claims he has written to you about this and awaits your decision. In any case, *Synthèse* is ready to publish it—which reconfirms what Lambrichs and R. de Solier⁸⁴ have told me. Paulhan has promised to send me the manuscript if your decision is negative. Hence, I will send it to *Synthèse* (through Solier, who will take care of this, because I don't know anybody at the *Revue*...).

Don't worry about the review for *RCE*: Morcovescu will do it using the available copies (mine or the one that the editorial board already has).

Your visit to Rome, our meetings, your success at the ISMEO⁸⁵ have served to console us these past few weeks on rue de Boulainvilliers, where we have lived without heat, depressed, without books or a desk to work on, etc. Fortunately, we have returned to rue de la Tour: just a few days ago, as the Laforgues have 'ungenerously' prolonged their stay in Paris (so much for gratitude towards one's benefactors!...) Thus, I've been able to start working again—and I don't know what to get down to first: *Yoga*, or the poor unfortunate last chapter of my long-in-the-making-and-several-times-abandoned novel...I also have a few articles to write. And as usual, when I'm overwhelmed with work, my mind soars up toward new subjects of study (I hope it is not my mind, I hope it's the 'collective unconscious' who's playing these tricks...). At any rate, this is the predestined life of any Orientalist who has betrayed...

I saw Puech on his return from his lightning visit to Zurich: Jung in good form, American and Swiss journalists, banquets, etc.

Dear friend, could I ask you for a great favor? I'm about to re-write my chapter on Tantrism (*Yoga*, 1936). I've verified the texts and I've added important portions. It's impossible for me to find in Paris this book

⁸⁴ René de Solier (1914–1974), French historian and art critic. Starting in 1952, he was co-editor of the journal *Le Disque Vert*, founded by Franz Hellens.

⁸⁵ Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

by MM. Bose, *Post-Caitanya Sahajia Cult*, which you have the good luck of having there.⁸⁶ Perhaps you could send it to me by diplomatic courier? I'll only keep it for a week, or ten days at the most—and I will return it to the person you will indicate at the Quai d'Orsay.⁸⁷ I need this book before 1 March—the deadline that I have set to myself for finishing this work begun in June 1930 and started again in 1941...Many thanks!

Christinel sends her best wishes to Stella and you. She will write to you shortly. My respects to Stella.

With all my heart,

Yours,

Mircea Eliade

13. Henry Corbin, 7 December 1953

Franco-Iranian Institute
178 Ordibehesht Ave
Iranology Department

Tehran, 7 December 1953

Dear Mircea,

Warm thanks for your letter of 26, and for all the pains you have taken to secure my interests. We are reassured to know that you have finally moved back into rue de la Tour, as we can easily imagine everything that must have been unbearable during the intermediary situation.

I am also writing to you in haste (for the Notes for my Eranos are making for a devil of a job—I hope to be done with them this week⁸⁸). But there are a few important and urgent points:

1°/ Paulhan and the NRF. Just before your letter, I received a kind

⁸⁶ M.M. Bose, *The post-Caitanya Sahajīā cult of Bengal*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1930.

⁸⁷ French Foreign Office.

⁸⁸ Henry Corbin was finishing up the manuscript of his text for the *Eranos-Jahrbuch*: 'Terre céleste et corps de résurrection d'après quelques traditions iraniennes (Mazdéisme, Ishrâq, Shaykhisme)' (1954a).

note from Paulhan offering me a choice between two solutions: either to make the cuts to my Avicenna, or to publish it whole, but in the March issue.⁸⁹ I immediately wrote to him, opting for the second solution, obviously.⁹⁰ It's impossible to mutilate my child (even if the good Eliade takes up the task). Would you be so kind as to confirm by telephone that he agrees, and that he'll publish it in whole in the March issue (April at the latest!)? If not, you are authorized to retrieve the manuscript and to pass it on to *Synthèses*. Paulhan wanted to know if I could delay the appearance of the volume until then. Give him assurances! With the majestic slowness of Iranian things, the first volumes will not arrive in Europe before March-April (and we will have the famous millennial in Tehran at the end of May!) I would naturally like the NRF better, but it must be certain. And then this delay should allow him to send me the proofs.

2°/ Éditions de Minuit: Lambrichs wrote me a nice letter.⁹¹ Thank you for seeing to it that the subscription bulletin was legible! There were also three copies (printed) of the contract draft. So I ask for your advice. What is the significance of article 8, giving right of preference (unlimited) for 'my future works' to the Éditions de Minuit?? Naturally, I am very fond of them, and would be happy to do other things with them. But I am also editing the Iranian Library here (texts but also studies in French). I cannot commit to first 'present' to the Éditions de Minuit the works which, professionally, I owe to my collection. I have also made a deal with Masui⁹² (possibly for other volumes.) The UNESCO is about to ask me for other things, etc. What should one do? Should one (out of simple loyalty as well) demand a restrictive provision to this article? In what shape and how to specify it? How do you do yourself between Gallimard and Payot? I'm grateful to them for launching my opus, but I would really need your

⁸⁹ J. Paulhan to H. Corbin, 17 november 1953 (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 265.1): 'I am at the same time enthralled and dismayed: your Avicenna is fascinating. But it is 35 pages long, and it is for us physically impossible to print it in the nrf before March or April. There are two solutions: either you postpone the book's launch, or you allow us to make certain cuts in your text. Please. You are very dear to me'. He added: 'Mircea Eliade would ready to make the cuts. He also wishes that the nrf could bring out Avicenna'.

⁹⁰ J. Paulhan, letter to H. Corbin, 7 December 1953 (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 265.1): 'Big thank you for the permission. I often have to ask another one. If by chance we don't have all the necessary space before March, please accept than in a case of extreme necessity I will be able to ask a few cuts from Mircea Eliade'.

⁹¹ See the letters from 5 October and 27 November 1953 (Campus Condorcet, FHCS, 265.14-A).

⁹² Jacques Masui (1909–1975), French editor and Orientalist. He was an editor of the journal *Synthèses*. Eliade knew him as well.

counsel regarding this famous article 8. Maybe the word ‘preference’ is too wide? According to you? After your [?] only will I write to Lambrichs.

3°/ For your *Postchaitanya Mystic*. There is a much simpler solution. We will make a microfilm as quickly as possible. Like this you will have it in your possession, and you will be able to read it when you want at Trocadéro or at Guimet (they have microfilm readers—at any rate, there is one at National Library). Transporting the precious book itself, by way of intermediaries, is a dangerous undertaking, as I know by experience.

In any case, I am very happy to know that the new Yoga is advancing. Did you know that Mircea Eliade has a considerable influence in Tehran? The Belgian representative⁹³ and his wife are returning with his complete works. The gentleman is perusing the *Patterns*, the lady is poring over *Shamanism*. And I’m playing the exegete, for one must guide the candidates for initiation through the labyrinth. They are delighted and have an admiration for the author which I am trying each time to make ever more fervent!

As you can see, we are following everything very closely. Everything here is calm, verging on euphoria (Dinner the other evening at the embassy, with general Zahedi⁹⁴). A bunch of projects in my head. But this letter is a terrible business letter. Still, I could only write it to you, so it is at the same time a very personal letter.

Both of our good wishes for Christinel.

I am with you with all my heart, dear Mircea.

Hugs,

Henry Corbin

I fear that my writing may not be very legible (because of the BIC!)

⁹³ Louis Goffin (1904–1975) was the official representative of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the various ceremonies and events that took place in Tehran on account of the celebration of Avicenna’s Millennial celebration.

⁹⁴ Fazlollah Zahedi (c. 1897–1963), Iranian general and statesman who replaced democratically elected Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh through a coup d’État.

14. Mircea Eliade, 17 December 1953

Paris, 17 December 1953

Dear Friend,

I'm writing to you again in great haste, because I already feel myself guilty for the lateness. I was able to speak to Paulhan: your article will come out in the March issue. You will receive the proofs.

About the contract with Éditions de Minuit, rest assured: the option clause about your future works is only a figure of speech in a text that is too sadly juridical. For my part, I never read contracts: signing them humiliates me enough. The option clause, in as much as it does not pertain to best-sellers like Gheorghiu's⁹⁵ or J. P. Sartre's does not bind you in any way. The editor is always happy to not publish you.

The day that I announced on rue Sébastien Bottin, that Payot would publish the *Patterns*: we almost got drunk out of joy; everybody was happy! Sign the contract and let Lambrichs know that you have X engagements.

Many thanks for the microfilm. I have a microform reader in my neighborhood. I will be happy to re-read this book after twenty years...

My step-daughter Adalgiza⁹⁶ has been with us for the past few days. You can imagine how overwhelmed everyone is: at last, a South American passport in a family of stateless people!...

I work when I can. With a bit of luck, the book will be ready in a few months.

Christinel and I send you the best wishes for Christmas and New Year's and wish you legendary Christmases in Paris. My respects to Stella—and again, Christinel's best wishes for you both.

Friendly hugs,
Mircea Eliade

⁹⁵ Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu (1916–1992), Romanian author who lived in exile in Paris. He was the author of the bestselling novel *The 25th Hour*, published in 1949. Eliade supported his work at first, until revelations about Gheorghiu's antisemitism and shady character drove them apart.

⁹⁶ Adalgiza Tătărescu was the daughter of Mircea Eliade's first wife, Nina Mareş. She emigrated to Argentina in 1948.

15. Mircea Eliade, 1 February 1954

Paris, 1 February 1954

Dear Friends,

I do not dare to speak to you about your grief. I am writing these words to let you know that we are close to you. I very much pray that you are granted strength and serenity. I will never forget the radiant figure of Professor Leenhardt,⁹⁷ his generosity and grace. I was nourished by his work. I am grateful that, through You, I was able to know him: his sympathy honored me and I did not want to disappoint him ever. He will no longer read my books, but he will read my thoughts. I wish I could still have his approval, as I did in the past, when he did me the honour of dealing with me in his Journal.⁹⁸

I hug you both, with friendship and solidarity

Yours,

Mircea Eliade

Dear Henry, thank you for the film and thank you for the letter Stella. I will write to you soon.

16. Stella and Henry Corbin to Mircea and Christinel Eliade, 8 February 1954

Tuesday, 8 February 54

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your quick and affectionate message. It has moved us a lot. My father loved both of you a lot and it was a real joy for him to listen to

⁹⁷ Maurice Leenhardt (1878–1954), French pastor and ethnologist, Stella Corbin's father. Stella was his third child. Leenhardt was also the founder and editor of the journal *Le Monde non-chrétien*.

⁹⁸ Eliade is most likely referring to the review of his book on Shamanism (see Leenhardt 1952).

Mircea, whose work he appreciated it so much.

From far away, this departure has strange resonances. But would I dare write you that I feel exiled, to you, my friends, who must feel that every day.

May our friendship abolish this feeling from time to time.

I kiss you with much sadness

Stella

PS: Have you received the film?

Very dear Mircea! Terrible adventure with my 'Paraphrase on C.G. Jung and Buddhism'. The four essays have led me to a thingamajig that's probably too long for the Disque Vert. But 1°/This could also serve for the small book that we devised together. 2°/ Solier could choose (with you) one of the four paragraphs that are independent from each other (if not, taken together they will make for about 50 printed pages. It is true that Solier has always told me: no limits!). By the way: where are we with this project? For I still have a few days to put the final touches on my epilogue and on the index for Avicenna. After that, the revision of my Jung will require several days. And I am a bit worn out by all of that.

I have finally got a wonderful idea for my introductory chapter for the 'Combat pour l'Ange'. This will be totally new and very little 'novelised'. It's not the place to tell you here my 'secret'. But I cannot finish it before April, since, on top of everything, you know, we will also have 10 days troubled by the famous millenary celebration.

What is happening with Paulhan? Has he decided to publish my text? The April issue is the ultimate limit (remind him of the millenary celebration, which will take place between 21 April and the 1 May). If not, I will regret to have to...

Dear Mircea, I am out of space. But everything that is I write in my heart for you, you can read it in... Friendly wishes for Christinel. From all my heart to you,

Henry

Could you give us again the address of Dr. Roland Cahen?⁹⁹ We have left

⁹⁹ Henry Corbin and Roland Cahen had a friendly and mutually respectful interaction

it in Paris.

17. Stella Corbin, 6 March 1954

Saturday, 6 March 1954

Dear Friends,

Our letters have intersected. For your friendly sympathy, which touched us a lot, I will say again from the bottom of my heart: thank you.

Today, I take Henry's place to scribble these lines—he is absolutely swamped—once more to bother you, my poor Mircea... But before that, let me tell you that yesterday I took a walk in the mountains with one of your unknown admirers, a businessman about to launch his career in Tehran...and who applauded you in Geneva.¹⁰⁰

Henry is without news from the *NRF* and despairs of ever seeing his Avicenna being published in it.¹⁰¹ For the *Disque Vert*, he has a pretty long draft on Jung and Buddhism.¹⁰² But he is harassed and doesn't know when he will be able to smooth it out. If Paulhan cannot publish

with each other. Stella Corbin's datebooks, which cover the period 1957-1967, show that the couple often frequented the former student of Jung during their stays in Paris. For example, in 1959, Cahen dined with the two of them and Cioran in February; then on the 4th and 5th June with them and C.A Meier and his wife; on the 17th with Paul Mus. A certain 'cooling' of relationships occurred at a certain point, according to Cahen (R. Cahen, letter to S. Corbin, 17 October 1978). Stella Corbin nevertheless donated a whole section of her husband's library to Cahen's French Society of Analytical Psychology, notably Corbin's copies of the *Eranos Jahrbücher*, as well as multiple copies of C.G. Jung's books, which Jung inscribed for Corbin on the occasion of their meetings in Switzerland. Eliade's relationship with Cahen seems to have been a lot more distant.

¹⁰⁰ In September 1953, Eliade took part in the conference *Rencontres Internationales de Genève*, a post-war initiative that sought to bring together theologians, writers, artists, scholars in order to discuss present problems that were confronting the world. Eliade gave a talk there on 4 September 1953, which was later published as chapter 9 of the book *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (1960).

¹⁰¹ See above. The day after his lecture at musée Guimet, Jean Paulhan proposed to Henry Corbin to publish the text in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. Finding the text too long, Paulhan postponed the publication, foreseeing at first that he could insert it into the March 1954 issue. The text was finally published by the journal *Synthèses*.

¹⁰² Corbin 2019:9-99. In a letter to the organiser of the Eranos meetings, Corbin regretted that his work had taken the form of a 'paraphrase of four introductions.' (H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 2 February 1954).

‘Avicenna’ in April, could you Mircea, with all your diplomatic skill, take back the manuscript and hand it over to Solier—who is asking for it—as a contribution on symbols for the *Disque Vert*¹⁰³? This would lighten up the schedule...¹⁰⁴

Many thanks. Everything is well here and I think that five weeks from now you will receive the volume ‘Avicenna and the Visionary Recital’.¹⁰⁵ There will be a celebration in May at the Sorbonne for Avicenna,¹⁰⁶ and Henry has been asked to speak, but he will not be able to be in Paris...it wouldn’t be bad if the lecture appeared before.

Best wishes to you both,

Stella

A brief appearance, dear friends, to kiss Christinel’s hand and to embrace Mircea. I have to run (I must finish correcting my *Eranos*¹⁰⁷, phew!)

Henry

18. Mircea Eliade, 18 March 1954

Paris, 18 March 1954

Dear Friends,

Apologies for answering with such delay. I had and still have a thousand troubles. The last one, and the most awful is this case of shingles, which has been bothering me for the last ten days. Fortunately, the virus has attacked the thigh. Pains, stings, insomnia, nervousness. I am saturated

¹⁰³ In July 1954, René de Solier, co-editor of *Le Disque Vert*, wrote to Henry Corbin to belatedly let him know that Mircea Eliade had sent the text of his lecture on Avicenna. R. de Solier (letter to H. Corbin, 29 July 1954, Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 265.14-C).

¹⁰⁴ Besides his usual activities, Henry Corbin was also taking part in the preparation for Avicenna’s millenary celebration in Tehran, which were set to take place in April.

¹⁰⁵ Corbin 1954b; 1960a. See also Eliade 1955.

¹⁰⁶ On 14 May 1954, a reception was held in the grand amphitheatre of the Sorbonne in Paris for Avicenna’s millenary celebration; in attendance were the ambassador of Iran, M. Rais, André Marie, the French minister of education, as well as a number of scholars, such as Louis Massignon.

¹⁰⁷ Corbin 1955; republished in Corbin (1982:70-166).

with vitamins, etc.

Jean Paulhan is on vacation. I went by the NRF to speak with Marcel Arland.¹⁰⁸ He had the flu. The secretary was unable to find the ms. to give it back to me: Paulhan probably has it, or the printer (although I strongly doubt this, for the artist wasn't announced in the summary of future issues). In any case Henry, do not worry. I'll go back next week and retrieve the ms. Solier assures me that I can give him my article around the 15 April. So, we have time...but the homage-volume will appear, I fear, between July and October...

We are staying in rue de la Tour for another 7-8 days, and then again on rue Duhesme. It's only in September that we hope to move to Val-d'Or. But the 'existence' on rue de la Tour is difficult right now: no carpet, no curtains, etc. As you know, Dr. Laforgue is moving to the 5th floor, and the house is empty before our eyes. Terrible days!...I hope to become optimistic again in my next letter. Christinel sends you all the best.

I kiss your hands Stella. Henry, my hugs and best wishes for you,
Mircea

19. Mircea Eliade, 30 April 1954

c/o Dr. Franz Riklin, Stocklenstr., Meilen (Zch)

30 April 1954

Dear Friends,

I have been here for ten days, at the friendly invitation of Dr. Riklin.¹⁰⁹ Christinel is in Rome, at a friend's, and will only join me a few days before the end of my course, around the 15 May. I have accepted, somewhat unwisely, the suggestion to give five lectures (2 hours each!) on the symbolism of shamanic initiation; I say 'unwisely,' because the course at the Institute has upset my schedule for the spring, and for the first time

¹⁰⁸ Marcel Arland (1899–1986), French novelist, literary critic, and journalist.

¹⁰⁹ Franz Riklin Jr. (1909–1969), Swiss psychiatrist, member of the Curatorium of the Jung Institute and son of Franz Beda Riklin (1878–1938), Bleuler's assistant at the Burghölzli and Jung's onetime collaborator. Eliade was in Switzerland to lecture on shamanism at the Jung Institute, having been invited at Jung's request.

in four years I am not going to Italy... Anyway, one can't have it all. The atmosphere in the class is pretty enjoyable. You can imagine how many times per day one speaks of you! (with the Riklins, we speak a lot!). I've brought along a few copies of *RCE* V, and ten copies of your offprints—I distributed them to 'key positions' at the Institute and elsewhere and, of course, I've given five offprints to Mrs. Jung. Everybody in town speaks only about your article.¹¹⁰ I will meet Mrs. Froebe tonight, who is returning from Holland, and I will not miss the opportunity to give her the *Revue*. Excuse-me if I was so eager to distribute your article, but the temptation was too big! I've read the text once more, with the same interest and profit: it's a very beautiful thing! The *RCE* has now a good distribution abroad—therefore, you are doing Jung an enormous service.

Dear friends, I am delighted that I will see you soon. Between 20 May and the 20 June, we will be at Mrs. Froebe's. I hope to see you in Paris in when we return. I aim to read all your Eranos articles at the Casa Gabriella so as to write a review in the *Monde non-chrétien*. My respects to Stella. Dear Henry, friendly hugs to you.

Mircea Eliade

20. Stella Corbin, 17 May 1954

Sunday, 17 May 1954

Many thanks for the brotherly letter of Mircea from 30 April. Since then you have no doubt met up are perhaps on the way to Casa Gabriela, to which I send you these lines.¹¹¹ Above all, do not forget to send our

¹¹⁰ Eliade gave a copy of 'The Eternal Sophia' to Kurt Binswanger (1887–1981), the first president of the Swiss Society for Analytical Psychology, who wrote to Corbin to thank him: 'Here, we are all enthusiastic about the depth of your understanding for "Antwort auf Hiob". There are not many who have understood our master Jung like you have!' (K. Binswanger, letter to H. Corbin, 19 July 1953. Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 274). Henry Corbin received an invitation from the Psychological Club in Zurich to give a talk the following autumn (C. Brunner, letter to H. Corbin, 25 February 1954. Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 274). Corbin declined it due to other commitments. (H. Corbin, letter to C. Brunner, 1st March 1954. Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 274). Cornelia Brunner renewed the invitation for the following year, but again without success (C. Brunner, letter to H. Corbin, 22 November 1954. Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 274).

¹¹¹ Stella Corbin had written to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn concerning him: 'We have had no news of Eliade for two months. He seems tired and annoyed to not be able to move

affectionate greetings to your host during this stay at the edge of the lake.

The *RCE* has thus arrived, and so have the offprints. But the most important thing was the extraordinary letter of Jung.¹¹²

Sometimes suddenly, a meeting shows to us its entire meaning.

Henry thanks you a lot Mircea for distributing this article so quickly. Here, this same article evoked some interesting reactions among the Europeans. Yesterday evening, had you been amongst us, you could have heard them speaking about it in a vast garden, where ‘the whole Tehran’ could be found...there was the corner of bridge players, the circle of dancers and a small group of three, conversing passionately by the water.

Henry is now correcting the proofs of his ‘Avicenna and the Visionary Recital’ (which I really love), while also working on the lectures for Eranos. It’s an awful work, for he must look up the passages concerning the subject in big lithographed books...which have neither table of contents, nor index. An old Sheikh—very likeable—came over the other day to help Henry. One regained courage upon seeing this venerable man, with his turbaned head hunched over the same book together with Henry—a harmony was established between East and West.

Henry is very moved that you are doing this review for the *Monde non-chrétien* (I don’t like this title)—but he thinks that there, it will reach a public that’s pretty removed from these problems...You two will talk again about this in Paris, where we will return at the end of June. Would you be able to send this review somewhere else as well?

The celebrations for Avicenna’s Millenary will probably not take place in June, in light of the situation. All the better: I don’t feel I have enough strength to receive the influx of ‘authorities,’ which these celebrations would have brought us...with the onset of summer, my courage decreases....it’s time to go for a dip...

Soon then a small telephone call...I don’t tell you well enough how much Henry enjoys reading you...he will tell you again one of these evenings. Give our best regards to Mrs. Fröbe, and tell her how delighted we are that we will see her again soon.

In friendship to you both,

Stella

to the new apartment.’ (S. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 11 May 1954. Campus Condorcet, FHCS, 126). The Eliade couple stayed in Ascona between 15 June and 15 July.

¹¹² C.G. Jung, letter to Henry Corbin, 4 May 1953 (Campus Condorcet, FHCS, 272); also published in Jung (1991:115).

21. Mircea Eliade, 8 June 1954

62bis rue de la Tour, Paris 16 arrondissement

8 June 1954

Dear Friends,

I have just received the *opus magnum*! I am delighted, I congratulate you and I'm also happy to think about you—delivered from a terrible labor (correcting the proofs, index, etc.), supremely free, already ready for another work, even greater and more audacious. But I am also happy to think of myself, and the hours of enthusiastic reading which await me. I am writing to you in haste, because I'm still fatigued. You know, perhaps (for I don't remember if I had written you about this), that I suffered from an attack of shingles (fortunately, not facial), which has exhausted me. I've nevertheless managed to finish my *Yoga*, whose manuscript has been at the printer's for some time. Unfortunately, I had to commit myself to other labors immediately, which has spoiled the pleasure of having finished something. In addition, we have changed our residence twice this spring. Unsettled, overworked, the escape into the imaginary has not delayed to impose itself, and for two weeks I've been buried in my novel—I hope to finish it this month. Guillermou¹¹³ is about to translate the first part, and poor Christinel, barely relieved of the *Yoga* (600 pages), is now grappling with Guillermou's manuscript, which, unfortunately, will have the same number of typed pages. I strongly doubt whether a publisher will have the courage to bring out a novel of such thickness, but at any rate, I shall be happy the day I finish it.

I have told you about all of this to explain why your *Avicenna* has been on my work-table for two days, and I have yet to read the first chapter! I only read at night: during the day I dream with my characters...But next week we will be in Ascona, and it is there, at our place, where I will pursue the reading of your beautiful volumes. As we are too tired to remain in Paris for the whole of June, we shall be at Casa Gabriella between 17 June

¹¹³ Alain Guillermou (1913–1998), French translator and academic. He translated a few of Eliade's novels (*Forêt Interdite*, *Le Vieil homme et l'officier*, *La Nuit Bengali*) and was also Professor of Romanian at the Institute of Oriental Languages (1948–1978) in Paris.

and 15 July. I hope that we will meet there, before our return to Paris.

Dr. Godel returns on the 15 June, and we are waiting for him. The home at Val d'Or is already ready to welcome us, but we are allowing the too kind owners to have the bliss of inaugurating it. If everything goes well, we will move there in September. I forgot to tell you that Dr. Laforgue has moved to the same building, on the 6th floor: the apartment you know, on the ground floor, where we are still located, is now almost empty: but still very comfortable, and we are happy to have it...

Dear Henry, I thank you again from all my heart for this book that I've been waiting for since January. I was sometimes fretful and worried that I might not receive it...My sincere respects to Stella. Christinel sends you both her warm regards. We are already rejoicing about our next meeting.

Brotherly yours,
Mircea

22. Henry Corbin, 6 July 1954

19 rue de l'Odéon
Paris VI

6 July 1954

Dearest Mircea,

Your long and good letter arrived safely in Tehran.¹¹⁴ Thank you from all my heart. We have commiserated—I don't have to tell you—with all your misfortunes this winter; it's awful. At any rate, I think the horizon has lightened up a bit.

We arrived a week ago. I slept for about three days—that's how much the heat and the overwork of Tehran have exhausted me; like every year I have almost lost my sleep for days and days; I could not recognise which day of the week it was anymore. After that, seventeen hours on the plane will put you in a state of knock-out.

As you have no doubt seen, I have been called to succeed Massignon

¹¹⁴ This letter has not come to light.

at the Hautes Etudes.¹¹⁵ I am delighted and overwhelmed, but I surmise too well what you must think. I will try to do a good job. I'm thinking pleasurably that we will spend long winters together. But, while we wait, we have to deal with exhausting material, practical and administrative problems. For a few years, we will no doubt return to Tehran for a trimester.

Dear Mircea, I am so much looking forward to see you again. When are you coming back? Why did you not wait for us, so as to be at the Casa Gabriella together? There is much to speak about.¹¹⁶ I've spoken much about you with our friends, the Dehollains. I have seen the latest leaflets and the 'Inner diary' of the Abellio¹¹⁷ group.

¹¹⁵ Henry Corbin succeeded Louis Massignon to the chair of 'Islam and the Religions of Arabia' at the Fifth Section of the EPHE.

¹¹⁶ See M. Eliade's letter to O. Fröbe-Kaypten, 2 February 1954, cited in the introduction.

¹¹⁷ Raymond Abellio, pseudonym of Georges Soulès (1907–1986), French writer and esotericist. Exiled to Switzerland after World War 2, he founded in 1953 the *Journal intérieur du Cercle d'Études Métaphysiques*, together with Jean Largeault and Bernard Noël. He first met Henry Corbin in Geneva at Denis de Rougemont's house on 5 September 1951. In a letter to Christian Dehollain, Abellio evoked an 'enthralled' conversation, and a 'pleasant and fruitful contact', mentioning as well that 'Corbin really knows the Persian tradition and a lot more besides, and he brings to this knowledge the freedom of thought that academics usually dare not take' (R. Abellio, letter to C. Dehollain, 8 septembre 1951, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Raymond Abellio papers, NAF 28 200). Abellio wrote the following in his diary on the day of their meeting: 'We spent the afternoon together. He is, unfortunately, a bit hard of hearing, and I fear my flow might have bothered him. He is returning from Ascona, where he has participated, as in other years, to the cycle of "Eranos" conferences of C.G. Jung. [...] very pleasant and dynamic, Corbin appears to follow my works on numbers and on the Kabbalah. According to what he tells me, a considerable wealth of documents is about to come out. All the fundamentals of exegesis will be turned upside down in twenty years. He has a great admiration for Schwaller de Lubicz and speaks to me of the aggressivity of officials Egyptologists towards him. The stakes are enormous. It's a question of comprehending a civilisation, of its sacred inspiration. Same problem with the Kabbalah, which the "officials" declare to be apocryphal. Moving on from the external critique, in which we have discussed the problems of origin and transmission, to the internal critique, in which we want from the beginning to elucidate the meaning. Mircea Eliade, who was in Ascona, has told Corbin that I was the only epic novelist of the moment. They are both very touched by the portrait of Father Carranza. Who is he? I answer him, of course: he is me. He is doing in Tehran a work of research of considerable erudition. Everyman with his job. But, still, it is him who, on the other hand, has translated Heidegger. The distance seems enormous. But it is perhaps this contact with modernity that has saved him, and which infuses his work of erudition with life. Disgusted by Sartre who, he says when speaking of Heidegger, has compromised in an impardonable way a great thing. He adds: "He should do cinema or theatre, but he shouldn't touch that". No more than in Egyptology, this is not a question of a quarrel between "specialists", but it is always the same problem with the "academic" philosophers. Have they an inner life? Are they simply logicians putting words together

It's absolutely appalling! I am very scared that at the end of the day this will turn out to be a phenomenon of delirium of our times, and all the contributors seem to be more or less future prey for the psychiatric clinic. It's serious. The words of the Tradition, of Gnosis, are, I fear, profaned there. A single corrective: it is almost unintelligible. Anyway, we will speak again more at length.

I am also looking forward to hear about this great novel.¹¹⁸ Is it a novel that deals with synchronicity?¹¹⁹

The Belgian minister (Goffin), will be in Chenonville, close to Chartres. He has an enormous admiration for you and a great desire to know you. He's a very nice man. He is inviting us to spend a day with him together. When you'll be there, we'll let him know and we'll go all four of us.

Quickly a small note, a very small note with the news dear Mircea. I am also sending a letter to our dear Olga through this same courier.¹²⁰ All the affectionate thoughts from Stella, and my friendly homage for Christinel.

To you from all my heart, totus libi,

Henry Corbin

23. Mircea Eliade, 9 July 1954

Casa Gabriella, Ascona

which real life has no use for? Do they really think that the philosophical dissertation is the supreme expression of life?' (Abellio 1979:356-357). Eliade had also met Abellio in Paris, on 28 October 1953, at Marie-Louise and Christian Dehollain's home.

¹¹⁸ *The Forbidden Forest* (Eliade 1987b).

¹¹⁹ Eliade seems to have presented some of his fictional work in this fashion, for example in the dedication he wrote on a copy of *Nächte in Serampore* that he gifted to C.G. Jung, and which is in the latter's library in Küsnacht.

¹²⁰ That same day, Corbin wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn so as to evoke the success of the congress on Avicenna, the delay incurred in some urgent work, his election to EPHE to the position of Massignon, and the consequences that this nomination were to have on the personal side of things. He ended by saying 'I've included as well a message for dear Eliade.' (H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 6 July 1954, Fondazione Eranos).

9 July 1954

Dear Henry,

I am terribly happy that you are in Paris and that we will meet around the 20 July—above all I am happy because of your apotheosis at the *École des Hautes Études* (an event which reconciles me with official science).¹²¹ Congratulations, dear!¹²² I imagine your schedule, weighed down with administrative tasks and multiple more or less academic visits—but this is also part of the initiation ritual which you are about to go through. So hang in there! I hope that by the time we get back, this purgatory will be behind you...

At the middle of June in Paris I was the same you were in Tehran two weeks later: very tired, overworked, unable to work. This is why we were looking forward to staying in Casa Gabriella. Fortunately, everything worked out well: I have finished my novel while still in Paris. Here, in Ascona, I have advanced a little with my Eranos text, and I've been working at remaking *Magic, Metallurgy & Alchemy*.¹²³ As for the novel, I would rather not tell you anything. Guillerrou has already finished translating the first part and is now working on the second and last part. I am waiting to have it all translated and typed up before I ask you to go through it. Stock is intending to publish a translation of *Nächte im Serampore*—it seems that A.-M. Schmidt¹²⁴ is willing to take-up the translation. I won't speak about your opus: I'll wait to meet you in Paris. I am now re-reading *La Terre céleste*. I hope that you have already received the proofs of *La lutte pour l'Ange*. What a busy schedule you have ahead of you! It's the same with me: the *Yoga* proofs are waiting for me at home, there's an index to be done and a lecture to finish...I cannot think anymore...

If you happen to see the Dehollains¹²⁵ before they leave for Ascona, give them our best: tell them as well that Olga is expecting them, but on condition that they arrive with an ample supply of detective novels! Their

¹²¹ Corbin had just been appointed Director of Studies in Islam and the Religions of Arabia at the fifth section of École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, succeeding Massignon. Corbin evoked this event in 'Post Scriptum'.

¹²² English in the original.

¹²³ See note 4.

¹²⁴ Albert-Marie Schmidt (1901–1966), a French academic, translator and literary critic.

¹²⁵ Christian Dehollain (1914–1977) and Marie-Louise Dehollain (1913–2009), friends of the Corbins and of Christinel and Mircea Eliade.

villa, mid-way between Moscia and Ascona, is charming.

Why are you arriving so late? Olga is sorry to hear this. She is expecting you around 8 August—incidentally, she will write to you.¹²⁶

Many things to tell you, to ask—so I will refrain. I will send you news of our arrival by means of the pneumatique. See you very soon then! My respects for Stella. Christinel hugs you both, eager to see you.

Dear Henry, my brotherly hugs,

Mircea

24. Stella and Henry Corbin, 2 November 1956

Friday 2 November [1956]

Franco Iranian Institute
BP 1570
Tehran
Iran

Dear Friends,

During these days where all of our old Europe is in turmoil,¹²⁷ we think a lot about you, we think a lot about everything we love.

We are wondering how your stay there is going and we would like to have some lines from Christinel, so as to know your impressions. You must be living through the hustle and bustle of the electoral campaign.¹²⁸

Here the life is much calmer. The visits of neighbouring foreign heads of state give the town the appearance of a celebration. But what is beautiful beyond all expression is this autumnal light, translucent and triumphant. We have returned from a small promenade in the surrounding area: we have gone through kilometres of barren land when suddenly one

¹²⁶ In fact, it was Henry Corbin who wrote to her on 6 July to tell her that he will be free of obligations between 8 and 10 August (see H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 6 July 1954. Fondazione Eranos).

¹²⁷ A reference to the Hungarian Uprising of 1956.

¹²⁸ The United States was just approaching the end of a presidential campaign. On 6 November 1956, the incumbent president Dwight D. Eisenhower was reelected against the Democratic nominee Adlai Stevenson.

sees the sudden rise of a forest of poplars.

Who will recount the splendour of the supple silhouettes pointing their golden foliage towards the blue sky? This year, Henry is taking advantage of this landscape, and I am thus doubly pleased. But he has had a lot of delay in the works of the Iranology Department, and it took a shaking of many lethargies so as to set everything back on track... Molé¹²⁹ has arrived, a bit gloomy, I think, without his young wife...but what can one do?

In principle we will be in Paris on the 27 December for we might stop in Rome to celebrate Christmas, but that will depend as well by our stop in Bayreuth, will it be possible in 6 weeks?

We sincerely hope that everything is going well with you.

Thousands of affectionate friendly wishes,

Stella

My very dear Friends! Yes, we are thinking intensely about you. Here, everything is perfectly calm, and the work is progressing normally. But we are looking forward to knowing your impressions...I have recently come across the book of an American from Chicago (Marshall G. Hodgson), about Ismaelism. Desperate for publicity, he has dared to call it *The Order of the Assassins*¹³⁰—it's an idiocy that has made us all here in Iran breathless with indignation (you can tell him, if you run into him). How are the lectures going, dear Mircea? How good it will be to meet in March. Where will the world be? My friendly homages to Christinel. My fraternal good wishes to Mircea.

Henry

¹²⁹ Marijan Molè (1924–1963), Iranist of Slovenian-Polish extraction, who wrote in French. He was the author of a thesis entitled 'The Zoroastrian problem and the Mazdean tradition,' which he defended at the Sorbonne in July 1958, and published with the title *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*. Molè spent three years in Tehran working at the library of the French Institute for Iranology. He killed himself at the age of 39. Part of his research was completed and edited posthumously by the Orientalist and Dominican Jean de Menasce (1902–1973) in two volumes : *L'Iran ancien* (1965) and *La légende de Zoroastre* (1967).

¹³⁰ Hodgson 1955. Hodgson refers several times to Corbin's work, deploring, in passage, his romantic understanding of *ta'wil*: 'Corbin writes suggestively but perhaps romantically of the significance of the *ta'wil* in his introduction to Nâsir-e Khosraw, *Le Livre réunissant les deux sages*':17, n. 13.

25. Christinel Eliade, 30 November 1956

Friday, 30 November 1956

Dear Friends,

It has been a long time since I have been wanting to write to you, but I do not know how the days pass.

We are terribly nostalgic for France, for all of you, for everything that we love and of which we are now far. And alas! we are not returning anytime soon, because Mircea has had to accept to do the course until the end of the year. We will thus only be in Paris at end of June. The Haskell Lectures have ended successfully. In general, however busy he may be, he is still happy from this point of view—course, etc.

We live in the university ‘Campus,’ as they say, close to the lake, and it is very pretty. Our hosts are affable and very accommodating. I would even say too much so—for we have had few moments of respite.

Anyway, we hope that everything will go well, despite the *dor*.¹³¹

Thanks for the letter, which has given us an immense pleasure. As usual, all the best wishes to you! We are very impatient to see you, and to see ourselves returning to France.

Give us your news—as soon as possible—that will make the distance more bearable for us.

Very affectionately,
Christinel

26. Mircea Eliade, 9 December 1956

9 December 1956

5707 Woodlawn Av., Chicago 37

¹³¹ Romanian word that means ‘longing’ or ‘yearning’.

Dear Friends,

I am truly unpardonable! I kept Christinel's letter for ten days, in the hope that I would write you a long missive about the university milieu here, and especially about Henry's colleagues (von Grünebaum, etc). But I'm going through an attack of graphophobia! It's only with enormous difficulty that I manage to write down my plan for the course. I hope that this attack will pass—if not, I will have to change my occupation...

What to say? The political events, and especially the Hungarian tragedy, have shaken me. Sometimes, I feel discouraged; I don't see a solution anymore. In desperation, I hang my faith on a distant hope, a little like Unamuno.¹³²

Useless to describe to you the atmosphere at Chicago University. You know it already. I was offered the chair of history of religions—I am now functioning as visiting professor.* I don't dare to accept—but I find it difficult to refuse.

For now, I am satisfied in varying the response. In any case, I am morally obliged to stay until the end of the school year. I am passionate about the classes; I only have about ten young scholars, who are preparing their theses in the history of religions. I feel that I could be of service to them. But to start again, for the third time, and in a third language, the same scientific career...A few months before my 50th birthday, I wonder if I have still the energy, the interest to do it...In any case, in July we will be in Paris, with or without the definitive commitment with Chicago University.

In the meantime, I would have the time to make a decision.¹³³ I wish you, very dear Friends, a good Christmas and a happy holiday in Italy.

My fraternal hugs,

Mircea

¹³² Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo (1864–1936), Spanish philosopher. Mircea Eliade admired his work, most of which he read while he was living in Portugal (see Eliade 2010).

¹³³ Corbin wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn: 'What is happening to our poor friends the Eliades in their American exile? A long letter from him made me sense a cruel dilemma.' (H. Corbin, letter to O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, 11 January 1957, Fondazione Eranos). Concerning them, Fröbe-Kapteyn replied: 'I have also had two letters from them and I know they have a great nostalgia for Europe. But I had the impression that everything is well.' (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to H. Corbin, 16 January 1957, Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 126).

27. Stella Corbin to Chrstinel, 18 January 1957

Dear Friends,

We are quite late in wishing you a good and happy year! To tell you the truth we have thought a lot about you since this European tragedy and here we talk so much of you with all the common friends, that I always have the impression that I have written to you. But this evening a word from Richard Ettinghausen¹³⁴ tells me you will be in Washington on the 25th, so I hurry to scratch these words which I am entrusting to Richard. I very much hope you will see Elizabeth and R. Ettinghausen, who are very good friends. If you have time and if you find it amusing Christinel, ask them to see their colour photographs of Italy...and of Persia!

How are you? We only got back on the 30 December and since then we have been hit by a whole series of family joys. Here I am a great aunt...I suddenly feel a centenarian! I have nevertheless seen Marie-Louise [Dehollain] (a bit tired). Christian is finding work again. M.M. Davy has lost her mother; Suzanne Tézenas¹³⁵ very on form follows the two hours of class at H.[autes] Ét.[udes.] There Henry is very happy; the classes are getting better and better. He has just done an article for the February issue of *La Table Ronde*, dedicated to the Apocalypse. He has chosen as title: 'On the 12th Imam'.¹³⁶

Pardon this quick note. I want to still write to the Ettinghausens and as their letter comes back to me from Tehran I have to do it quickly so that my reply arrives before your stay there.

Take advantage of this time, of the Washington museums. Mircea, Henry always wants to write you long letters...but it would be better to take up all these problems together on an evening in July.

Many good wishes,
Stella Corbin

¹³⁴ Richard Ettinghausen (1906–1979), German-born historian of Islamic art who lived in Washington where he worked as a curator for the Freer Gallery. His wife Elizabeth Sgalitzer Ettinghausen (1918–2016) was also a historian of art.

¹³⁵ Suzanne Tézenas (1898–1991), French patron of the arts, the daughter of a famous industrialist, who ran a salon in the 16th arrondissement in Paris which was frequented by many writers, poets, painters and musicians. Both Eliade and the Corbins attended her salon.

¹³⁶ Corbin February 1957.

28. Stella Corbin to Christinel, 28 March 1957

My dear Christinella,

It was a great joy to see Isma, your mother, and to get from her thousands of details of your life ‘in the Americas’. But why spoil us so much! We were thrilled Marie-Louise and I to have so many pretty stockings at the same time...thank you so much.

I hope you are happy and that Mircea’s work is going well.

What to say of our good old Paris that you will no doubt find quite old when you return from the New World, but how insistent! In honor of the British Queen, the quays and banks of the Seine are well taken care of and the flowers are already blossoming, while the storefronts on rue Royale and the streets neighbouring l’Élysée attire themselves every day in regional decorations.¹³⁷ At the Opera there is the Martyr of St. Sebastian, this magnificent Debussy music which we will go see on Sunday: Kempf¹³⁸ has given many concerts. We have seen when it was playing with the orchestra of the Paris conservatory a splendid Brahms concert under the direction of Prêtre,¹³⁹ a young conductor to whom everyone is predicting a great future.

At Francine’s,¹⁴⁰ it’s the central train station...Incessant to and fro under the easy-going air of faithful Pompom, Ariane’s¹⁴¹ dog. This one, very beautiful, is meeting her first great successes.

We have seen Cioran, who thinks he is gravely ill, we have been told, but he looked very well. Puech seems tired; during the 3rd trimester he will go to the clinic to have a check-up. For us it is the studious life between Tehran and Paris (perhaps you will find a similar solution for I would be very sad to lose you...) You should have received the latest document signed by Brody and Olga on the topic of the 25th anniversary

¹³⁷ Queen Elizabeth II visited France between 8 and 11 April 1957, in her first official foreign visit as queen.

¹³⁸ Wilhelm Kempff (1895–1991), German pianist.

¹³⁹ Georges Prêtre (1924–2017), French conductor.

¹⁴⁰ Francine Gastambide, née Leenhardt (1913–1990), Stella Corbin’s sister, who was married since 1934 with pastor Jean Gastambide (1906–1988).

¹⁴¹ Ariane Gastambide (born in 1939), the daughter of Francine and Jean Gastambide.

of Eranos. Henry is tapped out!¹⁴²...I very much regret the Benzes will not be in Ascona; but I am very happy we will be there at the same time as you at our dear Olga's. How many impressions you have to tells about!

I know that Marie-Louise [Dehollain] has to write as well, so I will not give you her news. She is in form and is watching her figure, which suits her.

Write a little, dear Friend, you will give us all pleasure

Many

Many good wishes,

Stella

29. Mircea Eliade, 30 April 1958

Dear Friends,

Excuse me for writing to with such delay—and in great haste. Like everybody, and as always, I am swamped with work. Since I have lost the hope of becoming free again in a humanly calculable future, I resign myself to sending you these lines, the shorthand of an abolished discourse. I am waiting impatiently to meet up with you in Paris—and to find Henry's book. What am I doing? Besides the course, I have fine-tuned the text of my Haskell Lectures, which Harper will publish in September with the title 'Birth & Rebirth'. I have started to work a bit on 'Mort et Initiation'. A good deal of my time has been devoured by the revision of the English translation of several books that will be published this year. I have equally lost more than two weeks on lectures I gave at Columbia, Drew, and Pennsylvania State Universities. But I have met interesting people.

Henry, I am dedicating the Spring seminar to a text by Jung (Transformation Symbolism in the Mass) and to your 'Eranos Paper' : Cyclical Time, etc. The students are in the process of reading you. Their first comment: it is very hard—but beautiful!* (not bad for Americans, right?)

¹⁴² Corbin provided a German translation of his text on 'The Time of Eranos', which had appeared in English in Campbell (ed.) (1957:XIII-XX); 'Eranos Zeit', in Brody (1958:197-208). The original version of this text, including three previously unpublished pages, appeared in Corbin (1963a):177-186.

And now for the sad, tragic news: Decei¹⁴³ has been picked up by communist agents. I had met him in Munich, and we had talked a lot about you too...What can one do?

30. Stella Corbin, 30 May 1959

Saturday 30 [May 1964]

Dieppe—tasting oysters with a little ‘home-made’ wine...Christinel dear, what a pity you are not here, it is exquisite and relaxing...¹⁴⁴

A few lines to invite you to dinner on Tuesday 23 June with Alain Daniélou, who will be in Paris around that time.¹⁴⁵ We have set the date a little in advance, because D. is going to Rome and I imagine you will be very busy in June. Will you however set aside another evening for dining and chatting in peace? Be nice and phone quickly on your return.¹⁴⁶ Henry forgets the manuscripts when contemplating the emerald sea. Friendly wishes to Riklin. My hugs.

Good wishes from Henry,
Stella

¹⁴³ Aurel Decei (1905–1976), Romanian historian, expert on Ottoman history and diplomat. Corbin met him in Istanbul in 1942. See *Cahier de l’Herne Mircea Eliade* (Paris, 1978). After the Communist takeover in Romania in 1947, Decei remained in exile in Turkey. In 1957, the Securitate lured him to West Berlin, from where he was kidnapped and brought to Romania, where he was made to stand trial for espionage. He was sentenced to death. His sentence was later commuted, and he was finally released during a general amnesty in 1964 (see also M. Eliade, letter to S. Wikander, 14 May 1958, in Timuş (ed.) 2005:177-8).

¹⁴⁴ Stella Corbin and Christinel Eliade saw each other a few days earlier so as to have some time in the company of the wife of Henri-Charles Puech, Francine, as well as Marie-Louise Dehollain. Stella wrote on 30 May in her datebook: ‘Thursday in Lille reception, departure for Arras on the 29 at noon—magnificent Abbeville and Dieppe, where we arrived around 4 o’clock in a dazzling light and high tide. Varengeville, where H.[enry] found again his memories from when he was 12, the harmonium of the church on which he played. Saturday rest, the plenitude of a relaxation in two.’ (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 331-32).

¹⁴⁵ Stella Corbin noted this day in her datebook: ‘To dinner, Alain Danielou, the Eliades, and Mokri’ (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 331-332).

¹⁴⁶ The Eliades and the Corbins saw each other again on the 11 June according to Stella Corbin’s datebook (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 331-332).

31. Henry Corbin, 31 August 1959

31 August 1959

Dear Mircea,

We have just arrived in Lausanne after a magnificent but implausible trek via Domodossola and Simplon, where the trains run the same way as when the railways were first inaugurated...But I am not pouring out my prose just to recount this to you...¹⁴⁷

If you had stayed another 24 hours¹⁴⁸, you would have been the witness to an emotional bomb dropping at Eranos. I inform you about this in my first free moment. During Portmann's¹⁴⁹ lecture, our dear Olga has signed an official act which ensures the perpetuity and future of Eranos. Her decision is overwhelming. I am giving you the elements of the situation, such as Brody¹⁵⁰ has presented them to us two hours later.

Olga has sold all of the estate—Gabiella and Eranos—to a group made up of Corti, Brody, Portman and Jacques Barrett.¹⁵¹ As long as she'll be among us, Eranos will continue such as it was. When she leaves us, the estate will become the headquarters of the Academy projected long

¹⁴⁷ Stella Corbin recorded this day in her datebook: 'Departure for Lausanne, by way of the Domodossola—the Valais: terrible wind—Sierre and Sion seduce us.' (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 331-332).

¹⁴⁸ According to Stella Corbin's datebook, Mircea and Christinel Eliade left Ascona on the 26 August (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 331-332).

¹⁴⁹ Adolf Portmann (1897–1982), German zoologist, 'expert in the Natural Sciences, (in the spirit of Goethe)', according to the words of Henry Corbin ('Post-Scriptum'). After having regularly participated in the Eranos meetings, he presided over the circle together with Rudolf Ritsema after the death of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. On Portmann see Ritsema (1982).

¹⁵⁰ Daniel Brody (1883-1969), Hungarian born publisher and owner of Rhein-Verlag, the Swiss publishing house that brought out the *Eranos-Jahrbücher* from 1934 until 1972. Eliade noted the following in his diary with regard to Brody (24 August 1950): 'Kerény, to whom I proposed in 1950 that I will deal with his translation, and who today owes his existence in French bookstores to me, did not even thank me. The genius—to whom all things are due! He barely said hello to me here the day before yesterday. He's jealous that he has not spoken for two years at "Eranos" and that I have taken his place. And the editor, Dr. Brody, Hungarian as well, I see him green with envy every time he hears my name. It was foolish of me to hope for anything else with Hungarians...' (M. Eliade, Diary, Notebook 14, Box 15, Folder 5, 838).

¹⁵¹ John David Barrett Jr (1904-1981) was the president of the Bollingen Foundation between 1956 and 1969.

ago—as you know—by Corti. One month per year, it will be the home of Eranos.¹⁵²

The decision has ripened over the course of several weeks. The interested parties themselves have been seized by a vertigo of speed. We have hardly been able to talk about it afterwards. Corti left that same afternoon in a state of prophetic exaltation, which was pleasant to see.

It's with Brody that we have conversed the longest about this. We do not know how we will 'think' the Eranos community ; we know only that it will exist. Everything is very new. And as long as dear Olga is here, it will probably not be very decent to make the projects more precise.

Benz,¹⁵³ Layard¹⁵⁴ and myself have been enchanted, as you probably will be. He thought that there might be reticences on Sholem's¹⁵⁵ side—I did not really understand why. We are seeing Jacques Barrett in Paris next week and will learn more. For the moment, however, I did not want you to stay in Florence without knowing the news.

The final days have been very pleasant. Layard and I have had the pleasure of making our mutual acquaintance.

We left very happy—and very happy with one another. Everything

¹⁵² Walter Corti founded in February 1955 in Zurich a Platonist Academy, which was supposed to merge with the Eranos circle after the death of its founder, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. In a letter (dated 15 August 1959) to John Barrett, Fröbe-Kapteyn claimed that 'Eranos and the Academy spring from the same root, and he [Corti] sensed that fact much earlier than I did' (Hakl 2014:216). Two weeks later the contracts were signed, which stipulated notably a right to purchase the Casa Gabriella, which Corti was to move into, as well as the organisation of future meetings of the circle. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn however, changed her mind and wanted to tear apart the contract, and give Corti only two plots of land on the other side of the road. Upon her death the Eranos House was bequeathed to the Eranos Foundation, which also bought Casa Gabriella, which had been bequeathed to her daughter Bettina Beguin-Fröbe. For more details on this part of the history of the circle, see Hakl (2014:215-218).

¹⁵³ Ernst Benz (1907–1978), German theologian and historian of the Church, 'to whom no religious movement is foreign either past or present', according to the words of Henry Corbin in his 'Post-Scriptum'. He was a regular at the Eranos meetings.

¹⁵⁴ John W. Layard (1891–1974), English anthropologist and psychologist who was also part of the Eranos circle.

¹⁵⁵ Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), historian and philosopher, a specialist in the Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism. Speaking of his Eranos friends, Corbin wrote about him: 'I must, however, rank among the very first of these my friend Gerschom Scholem, to whom Kabbalistic studies owe their complete renewal. His monumental work is for us, not only an unlimited resource but one that carries with it an imperative message we cannot ignore: we must no longer consider the "esoterisms" of the three great "Religions of the Book" as isolated phenomena.' ('Post-Scriptum').

that he told us about himself has deeply moved us. There was a final dinner at the Casa Shanti-Dehollain, with the Benzes in very good form.¹⁵⁶ Today, everybody is dispersed. Sic transit...May the 12th Imam reunite us!

How is it going in Florence? Has the speedy journey—Daniélou¹⁵⁷—gone well?

All our best from us two to you two.

Maybe in Paris.

Very fraternally yours,

Henry Corbin

19 rue de l'Odéon
6th arrondissement

32. Mircea Eliade, 15 March 1962

Chicago, 15 March 1962

Dear Friends,

Today at noon, I have finished my course, and I have regained my freedom until October 1963. The first letter, i.e. my first act as a free man, is this piece of paper which you are reading now. I hope to be pardoned for my long silence by way of this symbolically charged ritual...

I have received a few days ago two copies of the *Trilogie ismaélienne*. How could I congratulate you Henry? It's an exceptional work. It has already blown me away while I was cutting the pages! I will save it for the vacation reading next week—the reading of a man delivered from classes and seminars...it will be announced, together with *Terre céleste*, in the next issue of the *H[istory of] R.[eligions]* (until now, we have not announced the books received...the too perfect American organisation...).

¹⁵⁶ According to Stella Corbin's date book, this dinner took place on 27 August 1959 (Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 331-332).

¹⁵⁷ It is not clear to what Corbin was referring here. Alain Daniélou (1907–1994). Alain Daniélou was invited to Eranos by Henry Corbin, but came only once, as he found the conference 'boring and pretentious, with psycho-mystical tendencies that were far removed from human reality.' Quoted in Hakl (2014:209).

You know, of course, the long story of Christinel's operation. Everything has gone back to normal since November. As to what concerns my arthritis, I am almost always bothered by it—no attacks, no sharp pains, but I can feel my skeleton, which is not always pleasant. I have been able to work a little: a small book for Harper's, *Aspects of Myths*, which I have begun in English and hope to finish in French, before the 15 April.

It is only afterwards that, *deo concedente*, I will face up to a real task (a thick volume on archaic religions). Freed from the *Eranos*, I will have a real vacation.

We are thinking of going to Greece in September. Since I am not giving any courses, we will return to Chicago in the middle or the end of October.

In theory, we will arrive in Paris around 15 June and stay for a month. Olga has invited us for July, but we will stay at hers between 15-30 July. On 1 August we need to be in Abano (where I have noticed that I can write my Memoirs very well...).

The winter has been long and atrocious. The exile seems ever more difficult. My terror is that the day we decide to return to Paris for good, we will be prevented by 'History'. But can we stand to lose a homeland for the second time?

Christinel and I embrace you fraternally—and in three months!

Mircea

33. Henry Corbin, 15 December 1964

DEPARTMENT OF IRANIAN STUDIES
OF THE FRENCH-IRANIAN INSTITUTE
Post Box 1570

Tehran, 15 December 1964

Dear,

We are leaving Tehran in three days, and by an amazing stroke of luck I have several hours 'to kill.'

I am taking advantage by committing an equally extraordinary act:

writing you a letter!

I have on my table the latest issue of your journal ‘History of Religions’ (IV, 1),¹⁵⁸ and this issue is so well put together, and of such an exceptional interest that I would feel guilty if I did not warmly congratulate you for it.

Everything, from K.J. Narr’s article to yours, is ‘revolutionary’ in the good sense of the term (even if I have certain reservations about the analyses of Montgomery Watt, which seem to lack something essential, an element that can be rightly found in the other articles). I particularly liked those by R. Patai, J. Neusner, F.S. Stung¹⁵⁹...that’s a good group of collaborators. Be happy!

You know we have been terribly disappointed not to see you at Eranos!¹⁶⁰

As always, the Tagung was really different than others and yet really similar as well: Gilbert Durand has made an excellent debut,¹⁶¹ and I have made my own debut in the field of comparative ta’wil: Swedenborg and the Ismailian Gnosis.¹⁶²

The result was that I had to go on for an ‘extra hour’ one afternoon. There were a lot of young people (one of the them was Dr. Hillman,¹⁶³ a young Swedish-American, new director of studies at the Jung institute). After the Tagung, Yehudi Menuhin¹⁶⁴ stopped by for two days at the Gabriella (first time in Ascona): a simple fellow, profound, charming,

¹⁵⁸ *History of Religions*, vol. 4, 1 (1964).

¹⁵⁹ This is a typo. Corbin is referring to Frederick Streng (1934–1993), who had published an article in the aforementioned issue of *History of Religions*.

¹⁶⁰ Even if he seems to have anticipated taking part in the meeting, Eliade wrote to Rudolf Ritsema on the 6 August 1964 to announce his arrival in Europe a week after the end of the Tagung. M. Eliade, letter to R. Ritsema, 6 August 1964, Fondazione Eranos.

¹⁶¹ Gilbert Durand (1921–2012), French philosopher and sociologist, author of a doctoral thesis published as *Les structures anthropologiques de l’imaginaire*. Corbin and Durand met for the first time on 20 May 1963. Thanks to a recommendation of Henry Corbin, Durand was invited to take part in the Eranos meetings of 1964, where he presented the paper ‘Dualisme et dramatisation: régime antithétique et structures dramatiques de l’imaginaire’ (*Eranos-Jahrbuch 1964*, XXXIII, 1965:245-284). He later claimed that the meeting with Corbin had had ‘the thunderclap effect of a veritable revelation.’ G. Durand, ‘La reconquête de l’imaginal,’ in *Jambet* (1981):267.

¹⁶² Corbin 1965. In English it was translated as Henry Corbin, *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam* (1995).

¹⁶³ James Hillman (1926–2011).

¹⁶⁴ Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999), American-born violinist and conductor.

mystical...Incidentally, with the Ritsemas, there is now a lot of music at Eranos¹⁶⁵ (speaking of which, I have become aware of something—particularly through a lecture by Olivier Lacombe,¹⁶⁶ who passed through Tehran on returning from India—namely that one has acquired the habit of associating our names: Bachelard,¹⁶⁷ Jung, Eliade, Corbin, Durand, etc.etc., as constituting a symbolist school, restive about historicism, sociology, etc. Very good. As you will see, the next volume of the Society of Symbolism will give them some reason for this¹⁶⁸).

Unfortunately, we did not have the Dehollains either, and this makes for another great absence. You have learned in the meantime of Catherine's¹⁶⁹ wedding. Judging from letters, the ceremony was very beautiful and moving (performed at the Temple Sainte-Marie, where the pastor is one of my brothers in law¹⁷⁰).

Rhein-Verlag seems to be flourishing again, and your dear old Brody¹⁷¹ appears to be finding a new youth. They will provide a German translation of my 'History of Islamic Philosophy' vol. 1.¹⁷² There will also be a Persian translation.

But we have not yet been able to trigger a decision about an English translation, and I am a bit unhappy about that. Bollingen is bringing out a translation of my Ibn' Arabi (by Mannheim), which is enough for them.¹⁷³ The other publishers contacted by Gallimard have only considered the 'paperback' aspect, and fear that it will be too scholarly for that! But it isn't at all necessary for it to come out in a 'paperback' series. At Rhein Verlag, the German translation will first come out in an ordinary edition.

¹⁶⁵ Catherine Ritsema, the wife of Rudolf Ritsema, was an opera singer.

¹⁶⁶ Olivier Lacombe (1904–2001), French Indianist, who taught at the Fifth section of the EPHE between 1947 and 1971.

¹⁶⁷ Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962), French philosopher.

¹⁶⁸ Henry Corbin published the article 'Mundus imaginalis ou l'imaginaire et l'imaginal' in *Cahiers internationaux de symbolisme* 6 (1964a):1-26 (for an English translation see Corbin 1995:1-35). This issue contained as well contributions from Jean-Charles Gille, André Guimbretière, Jean Lescure. On the genesis of this journal, which was connected in the beginning to the Congrès de symbolisme founded in the 1950s by Moïse et Suzanne Engelson (see Quinon 2008:145-175).

¹⁶⁹ We have not been able to identify this person.

¹⁷⁰ Raymond Leenhardt (1903-1982), pastor of the Reformed Church of Sainte-Marie, located on rue Castex in Paris, and known today as the Temple du Marais.

¹⁷¹ See above note 150.

¹⁷² Corbin 2014. The German translation was never published.

¹⁷³ Corbin 1969.

What do you think about this? Would this not interest Chicago University Press? (or what other publishing house?) An advice and a master stroke from you would do your old friend some good.

Here, the trimester has gone well in terms of work and in terms of the Iranians (from the French administrative side, a little less well). We have now a small, tightly knit team studying Shiite esotericism.¹⁷⁴ Together with one of my colleagues, a young Molla, who is a kind of Molla Sadra redivivus, we are working on an anthology of our Iranian philosophers since the 17th century. Fifty names! The students are dispersing. Herman Landolt¹⁷⁵ (brilliant thesis at the Hautes Études), who has translated my work for *Antaios*,¹⁷⁶ is now a lecturer on Sufism at McGill University. Judging from his letters, he is both happy and not very satisfied...about a certain missionary spirit. He will be there surely for two years, but I am pointing out his name to you, because he's an admirable young man, a very conscientious young scholar; if not you, then maybe some other University in the USA could call on him someday (he is from Basle).

Right, but what's the status of your projects dear friends? Will the Chicagoan (or Chicagonite, I'm not sure) pleasures keep you absent from Europe for a long time? When do you think you will come next spring?— (I have spoken a lot about you with Tucci, whom I only see in Tehran every year, always the same, affectionate and enthusiastic, but a little tired

¹⁷⁴ Stella Corbin wrote to Ritsema: 'In spite of the administrative bothers, which already made themselves known during our stay in Ascona, the work has progressed very well. Henry has had numerous very interesting contacts, and his group of Iranian students at the University is around him a lot. But it is obvious that the plan of settling in France restricts our financial means and it is always sad to not be able to develop an institution that demands only to grow. We will have to live day by day. We shall see.' (S. Corbin, letter to C. Ritsema, 12 December 1964, Fondazione Eranos).

¹⁷⁵ Herman Landolt (born in 1935) was Henry Corbin's student for three years at the Fifth Section of EPHE. He authored a thesis entitled 'L'Épître sur le soufisme de Nûroddîn 'Abdorrahmân-e Esfârayenî (639/1242-717/1317) intitulée Kâshef ol-Asrâr (Le révélateur des mystères)'.

¹⁷⁶ *Antaios* was a journal co-founded by Mircea Eliade and Ernst Jünger in 1959. They were, however, only also the nominal editors, as in reality the journal was run by Philip Wolff-Windegg (see Hakl 2009). Herman Landolt translated several texts by Corbin into German: 'Mir Damad und die Ispahaner Schule der Theologie im 17. Jahrhundert' (Corbin 1962a; translation of Corbin 1960b); 'Über die philosophische Situation der Schî'itischen Religion' (Corbin 1963b; translation of Corbin 1964c). He also translated 'Über die prophetische Philosophie im shî'itischen Islam,' in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1962* (Corbin 1963c), a summary of 'De la philosophie prophétique en Islam shî'te,' published in the same volume (Corbin 1963d). See also Landolt's homage to Corbin: 'Témoignage,' in Jambet (1981:304).

by his triple digs in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Phew!¹⁷⁷).

If you also happen to have a moment of respite between the two celebrations, scribble a few lines for me. Together with Stella's good wishes, give my best to Christinel!

Yours truly and brotherly,
Henry Corbin

(19 rue de l'Odéon ! 6th arrondissement)

Of course: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, but this one comes a little too quickly!

34. Mircea Eliade, 1 January 1965

New York, 1 January 1965

Dear Friends,

We wish you a very happy New Year! We're in New York, with the Perleas.¹⁷⁸ It was a great joy to receive Henry's long and fraternal letter! Quickly some news, while you wait for a more responsible letter (maybe at the beginning of February from Mexico: we'll be there for four weeks, and I hope to find the time to write to friends!). Henry, I have spoken about your book with the director of Chicago University Press, and I have given him my copy. In addition, I have just spoken with my New York editor (Harper).

I've made what is called a 'written proposal.*' A copy needs to be sent as soon as possible to:

¹⁷⁷ Stella Corbin had written three days earlier to Catherine Ritsema: 'Did I tell you that Tucci was here? Every year we meet him between the voyages that he has to take to Afghanistan, to Pakistan, for the digs which he is directing. He is a vibrant and likeable nature. Henry is always very happy to chat with him.' (S. Corbin, letter to C. Ritsema, 12 December 1964, Fondazione Eranos).

¹⁷⁸ Ionel Perlea (1900–1970), Romanian conductor who was married to Christinel Eliade's sister Lisette.

Mr. Melvin Arnold
 Harper and Row,
 49 East 33 rd Street
 New York, N.Y.

With your business card, and mentioning that you are sending him the book at my request. (Otherwise, your book will take the exasperating route=first reader, second reader, etc. etc.) I will chase him up again in two weeks. Harper is a kind of Gallimard, i.e. a monstrous, gigantic publisher, but they publish good books, both ‘hard back’ and ‘paper back.’ Furthermore, I will follow the trail of my copy at Chicago Univ. Press.

We have also missed the European vacations! I have taken advantage of the summer to advance my ‘Memoirs’ and to write a few short stories (in Romanian). We hope to arrive in Paris in June, July in Abano, August-Rome, etc. Impossible to come down to the Eranos, because alas!—at the beginning of September we have to be in California for the History of Religions Congress.¹⁷⁹ The year is set to be difficult. I will finish my class around 15 March, but in April-May we will be in Princeton, for a semester with our colleagues (i.e. without students). So one must work...

P.S. I have not yet received the extracts from the Eranos Jahrbuch. I fear that Bücher has shipped them to Tehran, Jerusalem or Tokyo!...

35. Stella Corbin to Christinel Eliade, 1967¹⁸⁰

Tehran 1967

¹⁷⁹ Eliade informed Rudolf Ritsema about this in September 1964, assuring him nevertheless that ‘there could be no question of a defection regarding Eranos.’ (M. Eliade, letter to R. Ritsema, 25 September 1964, Fondazione Eranos). At the end of 1970, as a result of Eliade’s continuing refusals, Ritsema told the Corbins that Eliade ‘seems to have lost interest in Eranos.’ (R. Ritsema, letter to H. Corbin, 21 December 1970, Fondazione Eranos).

¹⁸⁰ Greetings card, bearing the inscription ‘With all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year’.

We hope that everything is going well with you two, dear friends, and we are affectionately sending you the same good wishes. I think you are leaving for California. Do send us a postcard with news, dear Christinel. The stay here is very good. The Institute of Research is coming along well. Visit of Prof. Adams,¹⁸¹ who has included us in his projects: there's a reinforcement for Islamic philosophy! Isfahan. The old bridge over the Zayanderud, after an engraving.

Hugs! Happy New Year!

Stella and Henry

36. Mircea Eliade, 12 July 1971

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL STUDIES

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12 July 1971

Dear Henry,

Many thanks for your latest book. I'm so happy that it's become accessible—in bookstores, in libraries! Buried as it was in the impossible to find *Ombre et lumière*—which I was the only one to possess a copy of, at least here, in the Middle East (sic!)—one could only read it by making it into a microfilm.¹⁸² Three of my students were forced to copy it (through the

¹⁸¹ Charles Joseph Adams (1924–2001) was Professor of Islamic Studies at McGill University, and director of the Institute of Islamic Studies between 1964 and 1980.

¹⁸² This volume was edited by the Académie septentrionale and Father Bruno de Jésus-Marie. Corbin had a text in the collection: 'Physiologie de l'homme de lumière dans

‘Xerox’ system) and have bankrupted themselves (seven cents per page!...). Now we will have it in the library (sure, the first copy will disappear in less than six months—for one steals the books here, before, during and after reading them—but we will always have the second reserve copy...)

Everything is well. I have started working again, although I am still on a diet (no salt!). In principle, we will be in Rome around the 15 August, and in Paris on 1 September. We can’t wait to see you again!

From us two to you two, our most fraternal wishes,
Mircea

37. Stella Corbin, 24 December 1971

DEPARTMENT OF IRANIAN STUDIES
OF THE FRANCO-IRANIAN INSTITUTE
POST BOX 8 6173

Tehran, 24 December 1971

Dear Friends,

This quick note so as to send Mircea a ‘Christmas present’, the complete collection of stamps issued upon the ‘celebration of 2500’,¹⁸³ which he has asked me for in Paris.¹⁸⁴

I hope that this is what you wanted.

Many thanks for the offprint *Spirit, Light and Seed*, which Henry has read with the same interest as always.¹⁸⁵ He will speak to you about it

le soufisme iranien’ (1961). This study was re-issued ten years later as *L’Homme de lumière dans le soufisme iranien* (1971). The English translation came out in 1978 and was re-issued in 1994 (see Corbin 1994 [1978]).

¹⁸³ The 2500 year celebration of the Persian Empire took place between 12-16 October 1971.

¹⁸⁴ Stella Corbin had written to R. and C. Ritsema: ‘Have I written to you that we have seen the Eliades in Paris? He is much better. They are both always charming and lively.’ (S. Corbin, letter to R. and C. Ritsema, 12 November 1971. Fondazione Eranos).

¹⁸⁵ Eliade August 1971.

again on your next encounter.

For a brief moment, we have entertained the thought that we might see you in Los Angeles at the Colloquium on ‘Dream and the Human Societies,’ organized by Grunebaum¹⁸⁶ next May.¹⁸⁷ Alas! As Henry is weighed down by the ‘construction’ of the index for the 4 volumes for Gallimard,¹⁸⁸ he has ended up refusing the invitation, and Grunebaum has invited Nasr in his place...Gilbert Durand has accepted as well, and he will no doubt speak better about the imaginal world than Nasr.¹⁸⁹ We are hoping that it’s only a matter of time and that we will one day get to see you in your ‘American halo’.

The celebrations in Persepolis were really beautiful—hieratic.¹⁹⁰ The International Iranian Studies Congress, which took place in Shiraz at the same time, had as its theme ‘Iranian Continuities’. This allowed Henry to revisit the thesis that he has argued for previously, and which he developed in *Celestial Earth...*¹⁹¹—incidentally, the same thesis behind which everybody seems to be rallying nowadays. Windengren¹⁹² was there

¹⁸⁶ Gustav E. von Grunebaum (1909–1972).

¹⁸⁷ Corbin took part in the conference on dreams that took place in Royaumont in 1962 (see Corbin 1962b). Corbin’s talk was entitled ‘Des rêves visionnaires en spiritualité islamique’ and Eliade’s ‘Initiatory Dreams among the Siberian Shamans’. G. E. von Grunebaum had written Corbin in September 1971 to invite him to take part in a conference organized by Roger Caillois in Los Angeles between 10 and 17 May 1972 on the phenomenology and history of human imagination (G. E. von Grunebaum, letter to H. Corbin, 21 September 1971, Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 266.39). Corbin replied in February 1972 to express his regret at not being able to attend because he was busy with the index for his *En islam iranien*, as well as with the preparation of his courses for EPHE (H. Corbin, letter to G.E. von Grunebaum, 14 February 1972, Campus Condorcet, FHSC, 266).

¹⁸⁸ H. Corbin, *En islam iranien*, 4 vol. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971-72).

¹⁸⁹ Probably Seyyed Hossein Nasr (born in 1933). On Durand’s views of the imaginal see Durand (1971; republished in 1981).

¹⁹⁰ The Corbins had written to Ritsema: ‘we were invited to Persepolis. That was very beautiful. The journalists were being very petty when they spoke only of “festivities,” since it was also a commemoration, the effort of an entire people to remember, to find again its roots. The parade was very hieratic, every army marched to the rhythm of a historical music. A military march without weapons, which ended with the army of knowledge and the legions of servants of humankind. We were facing the ruins, and so we could enjoy the sunset setting ablaze for a final time the old stones, while the music could still be heard in the distance, and the guests were slowly making their way to their cars.’ (S. Corbin to R. and C. Ritsema, 12 November 1971, Fondazione Eranos).

¹⁹¹ Corbin 1954a.

¹⁹² Geo Windengren (1907–1966), Swedish historian of religions who worked on Iranian religions, and had the chair of History of Religions and Psychology of Religions

as well, very charming. He wanted Henry to go to Visby in August.¹⁹³ But I do not know if this will be possible.

Christinella dear, I hope you had a good Christmas, perhaps in New York with your sisters. Rest well you two so that you may come back to us next summer in very good form.

Our very affectionate wishes to you two dear friends, and our friendly thoughts.

Stella and Henry

Christinella, was the stay in Santa Barbara as delectable a break as you hoped?

38. Mircea Eliade, 1972

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL THOUGHT
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

Dear Friends,

Useless to excuse myself for the delay with which I write—this is all a part of the destiny of a European in America...

Stella, thank you from all my heart for the beautiful commemorative stamps. I did not think there would be so many of them, otherwise I wouldn't have had the courage to ask you! If you happen to know—among your friends in Paris or Tehran—someone who is interested in US stamps, do let me know. I would be happy to send them.

Henry, I am advancing slowly, but with pleasure, into your magnum opus. I have just finished the first volume and I am preparing to delve deep into the second one (which I have, however, leafed through several times—for how can one resist the temptation of the Grail?). We will have what to talk about in Paris! I hope to finish reading volume II before I at Uppsala University between 1940 and 1973.

¹⁹³ The 6th Congress of Arabic and Islamic Studies took place in Visby and Stockholm in August 1972. Corbin did not participate.

receive volumes III and IV. (The work will be discussed in *History of Religions*, but I cannot remember now by whom—as many ‘Orientalists’ who were approached by our Book review Editor have hesitated before the task...)

As to the news from Chicago, they are not sensational. I finished my course today, and I am free until October; I’ve written a long novella, as I am more and more concentrating on my Romanian output; the first volume of the *Autobiography* has been translated into English and I am revising now the translation; finally, the most enjoyable of surprises: the publication of the second volume of the original Romanian of *The Forbidden Forest* (it is encouraging to see that 27 years of exile have not yet exhausted our émigré community!).

We wish you good health and good luck with the work, but also happiness and success!

Fraternal hugs,
Mircea and Christinel

39. Mircea Eliade, 1st July 1973

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

1 July 1973

Dear Friends,

Here we are at the height of summer...But we have decided to remain here until 15 August, for I am swamped with work. Quite likely, we’ll be in Finland at the end of August (The Congress of the History of Religions in Tualen), and at the beginning of September in Rome. Then Paris.

Henry, our journal has received volumes II-IV of your opus magnum, but not me! Has Gallimard sent them to 4 Place Charles Dullin?¹⁹⁴

We wish you both a good vacation.

Very friendly embraces,
Mircea and Christinel

¹⁹⁴ The Eliades had an apartment in Paris located at this address.

40. Henry Corbin, 19 May 1974

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ÉCOLE PRATIQUE DES HAUTES ÉTUDES
Department of Religious Sciences
SORBONNE

19 r. de l'Odéon
75006 Paris
326-58-75

19 May 1974

Dear, dear Mircea!

Finally, I get to write you a letter, which I have been meaning to do for months and months. This evening we are leaving behind a nightmarish threat, you know which one. Finally, at 22h 1/2, Giscard was elected.¹⁹⁵ The world will go on! Phew!¹⁹⁶

What I wanted above all, is to tell you with what passionate interest I have read your journal from one end to the other.¹⁹⁷ To start with, it reminded me of our 'youthful memories' from Eranos. But not only that! There is a flurry of ideas—the books which one fears one will not have the time to write, and from which one saves at least an idea for a page of sketches.

On p. 310, for example, there is a whole book to write on the question of karma. There is all that you say about Japan. There is, alas, the

¹⁹⁵ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, a candidate of the National Federation of Independent Republicans (FNRI) had just been elected to the presidency of France, winning against François Mitterrand, the candidate of the Union of the Left. The race was the tightest in the history of the Fifth Republic, since Giscard d'Estaing won it with only 50.81% of the vote. No candidate of the left had yet won a presidential race, and a potential victory of Mitterrand, who was allied with the Communist Party, frightened the more conservative and anti-Communist segments of French society.

¹⁹⁶ The week before, Stella Corbin had written to Ritsema: 'The work advances, but everything hangs on the result of the elections!' (S. Corbin to R. and C. Ritsema, 12 May 1974, Fondazione Eranos).

¹⁹⁷ Eliade 1973 (the work appeared on 26 October).

evocation of the stupidity of Westerners who do not manage to understand what's happening in Eastern Europe. All in all, to show you how much I loved these pages, you will find in our (or rather my) 'Manifesto of the University of Saint John of Jerusalem' (safely arrived?) several lines cited fresh from your work, which say so much of what we have to say.¹⁹⁸

I have seen the Dehollains together with Cioran fifteen days ago. It was the evening before the first round of elections. We were worried and irritable. Strange: Giscard has been my candidate ever since the death of Pompidou!¹⁹⁹

The work continues, absorbingly. I am still giving a short cycle of lectures at the Hautes Études. We are putting together an Association of the Friends of the 5th Section, of which I will probably be president.²⁰⁰ There's an Eranos for which the preparation is difficult, but will be very fruitful.²⁰¹ And the Anthology of Suhrawardi! In Tehran (where we remained until the end of February—I was made Honorary Professor of the University!²⁰²), the prime minister has managed to secure the founding of an Iranian Institute of Philosophy, which will allow me to still go to Iran for years—for as long as my health will allow it. But life moves on, and one becomes less inclined to travel. And you?

When should we expect you two? When will you be in Paris? What books are you concocting?

By the way: remind your Mormon friends to send me all of their books, in English of course. Those of Joseph Smith (The Book of Mormons, etc.) as well as those of Brigham Young. At Christmas in Tehran, I listened to an exceptional Mormon record (of the Tabernacle) at some friends': choirs, pipe organ, orchestra. Impossible to find in France. If they, or if you can find me one like that, thanks! We are looking forward. It's really beautiful. Obviously, I will take care of whatever it costs.

I have worked a lot these days on Qumran—this is making me see the origins of Christianity and Islam in an entirely new light (I have found the books of American theologians on the topic to be quite remarkable).

¹⁹⁸ See Corbin 1975. On this order, see Corbin's 'Post-Scriptum.'

¹⁹⁹ The president of France Georges Pompidou (1911-1974) was suffering from Waldenström's macroglobulinemia and died in office in early April 1974, two months before the end of his term.

²⁰⁰ This association was founded in 1975.

²⁰¹ Portmann & Ritsema (eds.) 1977.

²⁰² Henry Corbin had been awarded a doctor *honoris causa* by the University of Tehran in 1958.

At any rate, see you soon, I think, dear Mircea.

Stella sends Christinel and you her most affectionate wishes. I add my friendly regards. For you, my dear, all my fraternal and sincere friendship,

Henry CORBIN

Christinel dear, thank you for your greetings card. See you soon, right?

Hugs to you both,
Stella

41. Mircea Eliade, 15 June 1974

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

15 June 1974

Dear Friend,

I am happy you received the journal (Gallimard's press service is appalling); happy, above all, that you love these 'youthful' pages!...I have not seen your Manifesto of the University of Saint John of Jerusalem.

What am I doing? I've finished fine tuning a volume for Chicago Univ. Press (which Gallimard will publish in French as well). I am doing my best to reduce the 2000 typed-up pages of my *History of Religious Ideas*²⁰³ down to 600 (I have already wasted several months on this fruitless labor). A funny detail: I just gave the 'Freud Memorial Lecture' in Philadelphia on...the occultist vogue in America.²⁰⁴

But we will talk about all this in Paris, where we will spend July and September (August in Palma de Majorca). We will let you know when

²⁰³ Eliade 1978a.

²⁰⁴ 'The Occult and the Modern World' was presented by Eliade on 24 May 1974 as the twenty first annual Freud Memorial Lecture in Philadelphia. It was published in the *Journal of the Philadelphia Association for Psychoanalysis* 1, 3 (September 1974):195-213, and was reprinted in *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions: Essays in Comparative Religion* (1976:47-68).

we arrive.

Alas, we have no Mormon friends. But Christinel is now searching for the Mormon record.

Our affectionate wishes from us two to you two! And see you soon!

Brotherly hugs,

Mircea

42. Sibille Cottescu, 1974²⁰⁵

Christinel and Mircea will be celebrating their silver wedding anniversary on Friday 10 January 1975. We would be very happy to be together for this event and we are expecting you at 'La flûte de pan' from 8:30 pm.

43. Mircea Eliade, 20 May 1976

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

20 May 1976

Dear Friends,

A big thank you for the admirable *Archange empourpré!*²⁰⁶ I have been waiting for this book for twenty years!...

I hope Payot has sent you *History I*. I have been doing my best to reduce about 40-50% the 1200 typed pages of vol. II. I hope to have more luck with the third volume...²⁰⁷

See you very soon! We embrace you fraternally,

Christinel and Mircea

²⁰⁵ Christinel Eliade's sister, who taught in a Catholic high school in Paris. She died of cancer in 1977.

²⁰⁶ Suhrawardī 1976.

²⁰⁷ Eliade 1982; 1985.

P.S.: And the article you promised for HR?

44. Stella Corbin to Christinel Eliade, 30 November 1976

30 November 1976

Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy
P.B. 14/1699
IRAN. Tehran

Dear Friends,

Mircea's charming visit on the eve of our departure from Paris has moved us greatly, and since then we have quite often thought of you two.

How about you? How is Sybille? We would very much like to hear that she is doing better and that she was able to resume her work.

I am sending her through this same envelope a short friendly note.

You have probably had a visit—if you were in Paris at the beginning of December as you intended—from an old student of Henry's, Darius Shayegan,²⁰⁸ a brilliant Iranist who wanted to invite you two as well as the Ricoeurs²⁰⁹ here to Tehran for a colloquium next year. It would be a great joy for us to see you here.

For the moment you are probably preparing for the Belgian reception, and we hope that writing your speech wasn't too too tedious.²¹⁰

The work here proceeds well. Henry is holding a class each week for an international audience. Among the auditors there are two American students who have particularly distinguished themselves through their openness to various problems and through their knowledge.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Daryush Shayegan (1935–2018), Iranian philosopher.

²⁰⁹ Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), French philosopher who taught at the University of Chicago and who was good friend with Mircea Eliade.

²¹⁰ Mircea Eliade was elected to be a foreign member of the Belgian Royal Academy of French Language and Literature on 20 September 1975.

²¹¹ James Morris (born 1949) was one of them. Stella Corbin had written in her turn in a letter to Ritsema: 'There would be as well for Islam, one day, an American student of Henry's, who has taken his courses at the Iranian Philosophy Academy. He is now at Harvard, where he is finishing up his thesis, I think, a very subtle poet, very profound. Henry loves him enormously. He has written me a deeply moving letter. His wife is also very nice. James Morris. He is also a friend of Stéphane Ruspoli. To inscribe in your

Henry was invited to give a lecture in Tabriz²¹² and we used this as an opportunity to visit Azerbaijan. We were able to go into the mountains, towards Maku, to visit a very old small Armenian church perched on a rocky outcrop. At the end of a long and magnificent valley. The landscape was spectacular.²¹³

If you have a moment Christinel, tell us about your projects. We would love to see you in January and that might be possible if we knew the date of your departure. In principle, we are thinking of going back around the 9 January, if the wheels don't come off the wagon.

Lots of success with the Belgian trip, dear friends.

Our very friendly wishes are accompanying you.

Stella

PS: Mircea, the book 'Homage to H.C.' will finally appear, and Dr. Nasr has written the preface. It seems like they are printing the bibliography... Insh'Allah!²¹⁴

tablets.' (S. Corbin, letter to Ritsema, 17 November 1978, Fondazione Eranos).

²¹² Henry Corbin gave a lecture on 23 October 1976 at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Tabriz. It was published as 'Trois philosophes d'Azerbaïdjan', in *Philosophie iranienne et philosophie comparée*, and re-issued in 1985 (see Corbin 1985b[1977]).

²¹³ Reference to the Monastery of Saint Thaddeus, nicknamed 'the Black Church,' situated in the North of Iran, close to Maku. Stella Corbin wrote on the same day to Ritsema: 'We have had to take a beautiful trip to Azerbaijan, so as to find the places where Sohrevardi lived [...] We went toward Maku, on an excellent road which we left behind so as to follow for 50 km a track that followed lengthwise a high and magnificent valley, where, perched on a dry spur, one finds one of the oldest small Armenian churches. The Iranian government has asked a French "comrade" to come and restore it. In this beautiful setting, meeting this solitary and haughty comrade has enthused Henry and has given us confidence in the future of our world. All this landscape around lake Rezaïeh (Urmia) is splendid. Henry has found it to be very "visionary"' (S. Corbin, letter to R. and C. Ritsema, 20 November 1976, Fondazione Eranos).

²¹⁴ Nasr (ed.) 1977. Eliade also submitted a text entitled 'Mythes cosmogoniques indiens' (ibid:103-114). The volume includes contributions from Gilbert Durand, Hermann Landolt, Ernst Benz and Gershom Scholem.

45. Stella and Henry Corbin, 9 March 1977

9 March 1977

Dear Friend,

We would have loved to celebrate this new decade²¹⁵ with fewer worries and with the knowledge that Sybille was in better health...

Our most friendly wishes accompany Christinel and yourself.

We are thus waiting for you on 20 March at 5:30 pm. Meeting you will be a dream come true for Yves Jaigu.²¹⁶

See you soon then.

With joy and all our friendship

Happy Anniversary!

Stella

Henry

46. Stella Corbin, 1st April 1978

1 April 1978

Christinel Dear,

We have been living with you and Mircea ever since we received the latest issue of the *Cahier de l'Herne*.²¹⁷ It's a magnificent volume from which we have devoured all of Mircea's texts.

We had hoped you would arrive at the beginning of March and I have even sent you a note to place Charles Dullin. In fact, you have, by mistake, addressed me a letter meant for Marie-Louise, but she herself has not received the letter that was meant for me...where is it? In short, in this letter you were envisaging a trip to Paris at the beginning of March.²¹⁸ It would have been wonderful to celebrate together the appearance of the

²¹⁵ Mircea Eliade's 70th birthday.

²¹⁶ Yves Jaigu (1924–2012), French senior public servant, essayist, journalist and director of the radio station France Culture.

²¹⁷ Tacou (ed.) 1978.

²¹⁸ This letter was not preserved.

volume about Mircea!

The trimester here was difficult: bad weather, repeated bouts of flu... we look forward to going to the South for a little while, so as to find tranquility and the sun. We will do this around the 20 April.

See you soon, we hope from the bottom of our hearts.

I hug you

Stella

47. Henry Corbin, 1st April 1978

1 April 1978

Two lines, dear Mircea, to tell you how pleased I am with this magnificent *Cahier* and how much I congratulate you for it. There was also a very good article by Claude Mauriac in *Le Monde*.²¹⁹ No doubt, you have received it.

I am overwhelmed myself by quantity of tasks, of which I will tell you about. But I am pleased with the progress of my researches.²²⁰

And the Bohemians...oh well the Bohemians. I have lost myself in it with delight, as in the Night in Serampore²²¹ and that which follows upon it.

Some news soon. Pleasant travels and good health!

Fraternally and affectionately yours,

Henry Corbin

²¹⁹ Mauriac 1978.

²²⁰ Stella Corbin had written to R. Ritsema in July: 'there are many things: the session of the USJJ [University of Saint John of Jerusalem] very fruitful and encouraging, the defence of the truly brilliant thesis of Stéphane Ruspoli [...] There was also for Henry the composition of the text which he intends to give to the Cahier de l'Herne and now the correction of the proofs for *Terre céleste*' S. (Corbin, letter to R. Ritsema, 16 July 1978. Fondazione Erano).

²²¹ A reference to Eliade's short story 'Nights at Serampore' (see Eliade 1970). Eliade noted that Corbin liked this story in a letter to Stig Wikander (see Eliade, letter to S. Wikander, 27 December 1955, in *Întotdeauna Oriental*:166).

48. Stella Corbin, 1 September 1980

19 rue de l'Odéon
75006

1 September 1980

Dear Mircea,

I am incapable of tearing myself away from the reading of the *Memoirs*²²²—I have lived, thanks to you, a wonderful Sunday.

What you write about alchemy, Balzac, Brand, Kierkegaard, and orthodoxy, has reminded me of your conversations with Henry. He would have devoured this book...but maybe he has read it already, hence that bond, so deep, of your friendship.

Thank you from all my heart, and quickly! The French text for the Centenary and the sequel to the *Memoirs*.

I kiss both you and Christinel,
Stella

49. Stella Corbin, 15 March 1981

15 March 1981

Dear Friends,

The beautiful book 'The General's Uniforms'²²³ arrived around two weeks ago. My heartfelt thanks for it. I have enjoyed so much Maria's cry (p.39) 'For the angels' and the linden tree (p.131) which is outside of time. I have really enjoyed many other pages.

I hope you have received the *Cahier de l'Herne*²²⁴ and the two books by Henry which I sent to you. At the Hune²²⁵, at St Germain des Prés, right next to Les Deux Magots, they have in a window, the *Cahier de l'Herne* surrounded by the picture of Mircea laughing with Henry, that of Henry

²²² The first volume of Eliade's autobiography, which had just been published in French: *Les Promesses de l'équinoxe (1907-1937). Mémoire I* (1980).

²²³ Eliade 1981.

²²⁴ Jambet (ed.) 1981.

²²⁵ La Hune was a bookstore, founded in 1949 by Bernard Gheerbrant at number 170 boulevard Saint-Germain, in Paris. It closed permanently in 2015.

with Jung and Scholem, and Heidegger's letter.²²⁶ This would have made Henry smile, a little malicious smile, somewhat detached but also a tiny bit satisfied.

See you soon, no doubt, dear friends.

Your faithful friend,

Stella

50. Christinel and Mircea Eliade, 17 January 1981²²⁷

Many kisses from your lazy friends, who nevertheless think a lot about you.

Christinel and Mircea ²²⁸

My only reading: Henry's books !.. (I am preparing the paragraphs on Shiism)²²⁹

²²⁶ Stella Corbin alludes here to a set of pictures published in the *Cahier de l'Herne* dedicated to her husband.

²²⁷ Postcard sent from West Palm Beach, Florida. The picture on the front is of a marina with palm trees.

²²⁸ Christinel Eliade wrote this sentence and signed for herself and her husband.

²²⁹ Sentence added by Mircea Eliade. He is referring to vol. 2 of his *History of Religious Ideas*.

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