

Édouard de Lapasse, Martinism & the Order of the Lily and the Eagle

Historical contact and the limits of doctrinal transmission

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Abstract

This essay examines the relationship between Édouard de Lapasse's medical Hermeticism, the Martinist milieu of Papus and the initiatic synthesis associated with Demetrius Plato Sémélas and Marie Routchine-Dupré. It argues that the available evidence establishes points of contact and identifiable doctrinal affinities, but does not demonstrate a direct initiatic succession or textual dependence from Lapasse to Sémélas. Comparison of Lapasse's *Essai sur la conservation de la vie* with Selaït-Ha's alchemical teaching in *ÉON* reveals shared concerns with natural law, active and passive forces, the relationship between spirit and matter and the transformation of human capacities. Their differences are equally consequential. Lapasse critically qualifies Rosicrucian doctrine, while the Lily and Eagle explicitly connects personal development with charity and collective welfare. The strongest conclusion is therefore one of historically situated convergence within an interconnected esoteric environment. This conclusion preserves the significance of the relationship without converting opportunities for transmission into proof that transmission occurred.

Introduction

Édouard de Lapasse's relation to Martinism and the Order of the Lily and the Eagle presents a problem in historical interpretation before it presents a problem in initiatic genealogy. Lapasse's principal work appeared in 1860, well before the formation of the Martinist organisation associated with Gérard Encausse, known as Papus, and before the Lily and Eagle's foundation in Cairo in 1915. The Bibliothèque nationale de France identifies the latter as a Rosicrucian society founded by Marie Routchine-Dupré and Demetrius Plato Sémélas.¹ These chronological relationships rule out Lapasse's membership in either later organisation. They leave open a more substantial question: whether his writings and the Toulouse tradition associated with his name contributed to the environment in which those organisations developed, and whether similarities between their teachings indicate transmission or a common intellectual inheritance.

The argument advanced here is that historical contact and doctrinal resemblance must be investigated together while remaining distinct kinds of evidence. A catalogue reporting Papus's ownership of Lapasse's book establishes a possible material route of reception. Accounts of Sémélas's collaboration with Papus establish another route through which ideas could have circulated. Neither route, by itself or in combination, establishes that Sémélas read Lapasse or derived a particular doctrine from him. The most defensible interpretation is that the traditions became adjacent within a shared intellectual and organisational environment. A close comparison then explains why such

adjacency could have been meaningful. It does not license the historian to supply a missing act of transmission.

This distinction matters because esoteric traditions often express continuity through the names of masters and successors. Historical investigation must ask what each connection actually represents: personal acquaintance, institutional authority, ownership of a text, correspondence, doctrinal borrowing or a retrospectively asserted spiritual inheritance. These relationships are not interchangeable. A succession chart that uses one arrow for all of them creates a misleading appearance of evidential uniformity. The present essay instead follows the texts and the documentary routes separately, before considering their intersection. Its central claim concerns a changing understanding of human regeneration, rather than an unbroken sequence of initiators.

Evidence and historical method

The principal text consulted for Lapasse is the digitised Harvard copy of the 1860 *Essai sur la conservation de la vie*. For Sémélas's environment, the essay uses scanned issues of *ÉON*, including the May and November–December 1923 numbers, alongside the March 1921 number and modern transcriptions of the meditation essay and Saint-Martin's first chapter. The contemporary periodical is especially valuable because it distinguishes contributions signed by Selaït-Ha from the anonymous study of Saint-Martin's *Tableau naturel*. Institutional websites, an antiquarian catalogue and the catalogue of the Philippe Encausse collection supply supplementary evidence. These materials have different functions. A nineteenth-century publication supplies evidence of what its author wrote; a modern order's website supplies evidence of how that order presents its teaching and remembers its history.

This distinction also prevents a false division between trustworthy secular sources and worthless initiatic testimony. Internal accounts can preserve genuine documents and important memories. Their evidential value depends on how those materials are presented and whether they can be independently inspected. The 2013 paper circulated under the name Spyros V., for example, reproduces material attributed to correspondence between Sémélas and Papus, including an interpretation of initiation as alchemical work. It remains a mediated witness rather than the autograph correspondence itself.² Its statements should therefore be attributed to the paper, not presented as though the original letters had been examined. Likewise, a bibliographical description is not a substitute for a complete manuscript reading.

The comparison undertaken here is consequently selective, rather than a claim to have collated every surviving work of either author. It examines passages whose subject matter bears directly on the proposed connection: the Great Work, will, natural forces, regeneration, symbolic interpretation and the purposes of initiation. No independent verification of the identity of Lapasse's alleged initiator Balbiani or Sémélas's claimed master Megas Atticos is offered. The discussion also avoids relying on disputed exact biographical dates when they do not affect the argument. The object is to determine what the consulted evidence supports, rather than to adjudicate the spiritual legitimacy of any present-day order.

Lapasse and the Toulouse Rosicrucian tradition

Lapasse's Rosicrucian reputation rests partly on the testimony of Firmin Boissin and partly on later reconstructions of a Toulouse succession. Christian Rebis's historical account cites Boissin's *Visionnaires et illuminés* of 1869, page 17, as describing Lapasse as a surviving representative of the fraternity, and his *Excentriques disparus* of 1890 as recounting the Palermo initiation by Balbiani. Rebis also notes the absence of satisfactory evidence establishing Balbiani's existence.³ Since Boissin's books have not been directly collated for this essay, their testimony is cited through Rebis. This remains an important lead, but its proximity to Lapasse cannot resolve questions that the original passages and their context have not yet been made to answer.

Lapasse's own discussion is more complex than a declaration of Rosicrucian allegiance. On page 59 of the *Essai* he states that some Rosicrucian adepts still existed, then conjectures that their secret involved a kind of pantheism merging the material element with the intelligent principle. Crucially, he qualifies that doctrine on pages 59–60: it is unacceptable as an absolute explanation, but potentially useful when restricted to material nature and the underlying unity of bodies.⁴ He therefore does not simply reproduce a Rosicrucian doctrine as his own. He evaluates it, preserves part of it and rejects its unrestricted metaphysical application. The often-quoted reference to surviving adepts is significant, but the qualification immediately following it is equally significant.

This passage changes the comparative argument. Lapasse cannot safely be treated as the spokesman of a wholly unified Rosicrucian cosmology in which divine intelligence and matter become indistinguishable. His account keeps them conceptually distinct even while seeking their relationships. The difference is not incidental. It bears upon whether regeneration means reorganising matter, restoring the human relationship with a transcendent source, or discovering a unity in which that distinction disappears. A historian who extracts only the statement about living Rosicrucians risks turning a critical commentator into an unquestioning doctrinal witness. Lapasse's text offers stronger evidence for his engagement with Rosicrucian ideas than for his precise institutional standing.

His manner of engaging with earlier authorities also resists a simple opposition between ancient wisdom and modern science. He repeatedly attempts to retrieve observations and hypotheses from alchemical literature while discarding what he considers superstition or exaggeration. In his treatment of Kabbalah he distinguishes philosophical theory from practical claims about amulets and verbal power; on page 47 he presents alchemy as the application of such theory to natural science.⁵ These are Lapasse's classifications, not neutral descriptions of the traditions themselves. Their historical importance lies in his attempt to render inherited esoteric material intelligible within a nineteenth-century language of forces, physiology and lawful causation.

The Great Work as medicine and moral change

Lapasse's interpretation of the Great Work provides the clearest foundation for comparison. On page 50 he rejects the reduction of alchemy to the manufacture of gold. He argues that metallic transmutation was understood as a consequence of a more important undertaking: the discovery of a

universal medicine or life-preserving preparation. In the same discussion he quotes a text attributed to the French translator of Nicolas Flamel in which attainment changes the practitioner's moral character, removing avarice and producing generosity and piety.⁶ The medical and ethical meanings of the Work are therefore already combined within the authorities he selects. Neither meaning can be reduced to a purely decorative metaphor for the other.

This conjunction is important because it complicates the tempting sequence in which Lapasse restores the body, Martinism restores the soul and the Lily and Eagle finally introduces society. Such a sequence can be useful as a first orientation, but it becomes misleading if treated as historical development. Lapasse's chosen alchemical sources already connect transformation with moral conduct. The practitioner's altered relation to wealth and suffering belongs to the account of successful attainment. Conversely, concern with bodily life need not exclude religious purpose. The more precise comparative question is how each author or institution places these concerns in relation, and which concern organises the others.

Regeneration receives further attention on pages 57–58. Lapasse quotes an alchemical authority describing it as a renewed spiritual and temperamental condition in which an impaired body becomes more like soul and spirit. He interprets the aim as modifying human matter so as to heighten the faculties, and relates that possibility to contemporary vitalist physiology and the action of concentrated will.⁷ However, he also criticises the expectation that a single compound could produce the whole result. His procedure is not to endorse every promise of the universal panacea. He separates the general possibility of transformation from the exaggerated adequacy of one proposed means. This distinction gives his medical Hermeticism a critical structure that later idealised summaries tend to obscure.

The resulting conception of knowledge is practical. Knowing a law means becoming able to work within its conditions; learning the vocabulary of a tradition does not establish mastery of its operations. Yet Lapasse's standard remains inseparable from the particular claims about physiology and *materia medica* he discusses. His defence of alchemical investigation should not be rewritten as evidence that those therapeutic claims were experimentally established. The historically defensible point is that he sought to recover a coherent relationship between explanation and intervention. The Work matters because it claims to alter the living being, and its moral implications matter because intervention is never entirely detached from the character and purposes of the person undertaking it.

Will natural law and the human composite

The *Essai* gives will a role that is especially relevant to the later comparison. On page 47 Lapasse describes the world and its human miniature through the interaction of intelligence, emanating from God, and matter, created by divine will. Human intelligence can act upon material combinations when its own will operates within immutable natural laws. On page 48 he links knowledge and will to power, while recognising the danger of hallucination and extravagant speculation in attempts to exercise that power.⁸ The important qualification is the requirement of lawful action. Will is not described simply as an unrestricted command capable of abolishing the conditions under which nature operates.

This provides a precise question for comparing Lapasse with initiatic teachings: does their emphasis on will mean arbitrary self-assertion, or does it mean the capacity to act knowingly within a larger order? These possibilities imply different conceptions of freedom. The former imagines freedom as release from limits; the latter imagines it as an acquired relation to limits that were previously misunderstood. Lapasse's formulation falls closer to the latter, although his hypotheses about the reach of intelligent action remain historically specific. The similarity to later teachings becomes meaningful where will is joined to understanding and discipline. It remains insufficient to demonstrate borrowing, because that conjunction could circulate through numerous texts and practices.

His preface also prevents an exclusively individual interpretation of his project. Lapasse briefly considers relations between forces in collective life and contemplates a possible physiology of nations. He then limits the book to the individual's life and health. Nevertheless, he observes that intelligent will acquires greater power collectively and that an idea becomes practically useful through its reception by others.⁹ The immediate subject is individual conservation, but its framing is already social. This passage supplies firmer evidence for a relationship between personal and collective well-being than any later projection of the Lily and Eagle's programme backwards onto him. It also shows that his medical argument belongs to a broader reflection on organised human activity.

Papus as a possible route of reception

The contemporary OKRC website places Lapasse within a Toulouse tradition and links Boissin and the Péladan brothers with Guaita's foundation of the Parisian order in 1888. It also names Papus among the associated figures. These are the institution's claims about its historical inheritance, not a set of initiation certificates independently examined here.¹⁰ They explain why the Toulouse–Paris connection is relevant, but cannot establish an unbroken succession simply by listing its participants. The Péladans and Guaita provide a proposed historical bridge; the continuity of specific doctrines still requires textual evidence. Lapasse's relation to Martinism therefore remains indirect even if the general account of that bridge is accepted.

The most concrete material connection is the antiquarian description of an *Essai* copy bearing Papus's ex-libris. La Fontaine d'Aréthuse identifies it as originating from Gérard Encausse's library.¹⁰ This is a provenance report concerning an object, not a record of its use. It supports the proposition that a Lapasse volume belonged to Papus, subject to verification of the described copy. It does not date the acquisition, demonstrate attentive reading, identify marginal annotations or establish that Papus discussed it with Sémélas. The distinction is not a minor reservation. It determines the strongest historical claim that can be made from this particular evidence.

The Philippe Encausse collection at the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon supplies a different documentary connection. Its inventory includes Ms Encausse 51, a Péladan dossier, and Ms Encausse 52, attributed to Sémélas and entitled *Discours sur les égyptiens*.¹¹ The collection was assembled through Philippe Encausse and contains material spanning several generations. Consequently, consecutive shelfmarks do not prove that Papus himself arranged the documents together, received both at a particular time or read them comparatively. The catalogue establishes

that relevant materials survive in the same collection; it does not establish an intellectual relationship through their numerical adjacency. Their actual contents and provenance require separate examination.

These cautions do not make the evidence trivial. A volume and a manuscript collection offer specific avenues for testing a relationship that would otherwise remain an abstract resemblance. They shift the inquiry towards acquisitions, annotations, correspondence and textual comparison. But they also indicate why the conclusion must remain narrower than an initiatic chart. The possible reception of Lapasse by Papus can be investigated independently of the alleged Toulouse succession. Even if a particular succession claim proved mistaken, the circulation of Lapasse's book could remain historically significant. Conversely, the existence of an accepted succession within an order would not establish which passages Papus read or transmitted.

Sémélas within the Martinist environment

Christian Rebisse's account of modern Martinism places Sémélas and Eugène Dupré in the Cairo Temple d'Essénie and describes Sémélas's later association with Papus in France. It cautiously reports a proposal around 1915 to replace Martinism's dormant inner Rosicrucian circle, the *Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix*, with the *Rose-Croix d'Orient*. It also describes negotiations involving the Rectified Scottish Rite, interrupted by Papus's death.¹² These statements establish what an identifiable Martinist historical account reports. They should retain its cautious wording, rather than becoming evidence of a completed union or formally accomplished succession. An intention to reorganise relations between orders is not the same event as that reorganisation's completion.

The Lily and Eagle's own account identifies a different inheritance for Sémélas, through a claimed transmission from the last master of the School of Attica, called Megas Atticos, before his return to Egypt. It presents his association with Papus as a meeting with another initiatic order.¹² This account should not be collapsed into the Toulouse tradition. The shared Rosicrucian designation establishes neither a common historical initiator nor an identity of doctrine. A synthesis could bring different inheritances into relationship without making their earlier genealogies identical. Moreover, Routchine's place as founder prevents the Lily and Eagle from being treated simply as a new institutional name for Sémélas's personal transmission.

The mediated correspondence presented by Spyros V. adds a more specific doctrinal element. In a letter attributed to Sémélas, the initiator is treated as an alchemist, the recipient as the material of the Work and the temple as the laboratory. The paper also describes plans for practical alchemical teaching.¹³ This is a striking formulation, but the archival original remains unexamined here, and the online copy includes an automated translation layer. The safe conclusion is that an internal account preserves this interpretation of Sémélas's Martinist programme. It cannot yet determine the exact original wording, its full epistolary context or Papus's precise response.

The formulation nevertheless opens an important philosophical problem. A candidate conceived as material for an initiator's work might appear passive, while the Lily and Eagle's published teaching insists on personal independence. The two claims can be reconciled only if the alchemical analogy

describes a temporary condition of learning rather than permanent subordination to a master. The analogy does not itself settle that question. A critical comparison must therefore ask what educational agency the candidate possesses, how the initiator's authority is limited and how the outcome is recognised. The apparent continuity of alchemical language can conceal considerable differences in the practical relations it authorises.

Selaït Ha and the published alchemical teaching

The November–December 1923 *ÉON* contains the third chapter of *Alchimie — Premiers éléments* under the name Selaït-Ha, the name associated with Sémélas in the internal historical material. The chapter, on printed pages 26–31, interprets the triangle, circle, cross and square through combinations of active and passive forces. It then discusses the four elements and the signs associated with iron, copper, tin and lead.¹⁴ Here the evidence is considerably stronger than a retrospective description of a teaching programme: the periodical gives the actual published exposition. Its purpose is to train interpretation of symbolic forms as accounts of material states, principles and energetic relations.

The triangle's horizontal base is explained as passive, while the converging lines represent active energies. The cross and square are compared as differently organised right angles, with the square expressing material fixation. Elemental signs are read through ascent, descent, density and the relative predominance of activity or passivity. The discussion proceeds from the visible mark to the relation it supposedly embodies. This is more than an inventory of traditional emblems. It is an attempt to give the student a method of reading them. Its persuasive force depends on accepting correspondences between geometry, natural movement and metaphysical significance, rather than on demonstrating those correspondences by the procedures of modern chemistry.

The account of metals introduces another layer. Matter used for the Work is designated through *hylē* and chaotic matter; the signs of particular metals express qualities of attraction, fusibility and the dominance or restriction of latent forces. This establishes an actual correspondence with Lapasse's concern for forces operating in matter. Yet the correspondence is structural rather than verbally distinctive. Lapasse's intelligence–matter relation does not simply reproduce Selaït-Ha's geometrical exposition, and the latter does not name Lapasse in the chapter examined. The texts share questions about the lawful organisation of material activity, but they organise their answers differently. That difference must carry as much interpretative weight as the shared vocabulary.

In particular, this chapter does not justify equating the philosopher's stone with a regenerated person. It discusses the Great Work through the names and conditions of matter; it is not, by itself, a complete exposition of initiation as personal transformation. The reported letter and the printed chapter can be compared, but neither should be forced to supply what the other does not say. The symbolic human interpretation belongs to the mediated correspondence; the geometric and metallic interpretation belongs to the directly consulted periodical. Keeping their evidential roles distinct allows a richer account of Sémélas's possible synthesis while preventing a modern spiritual reading from replacing the material language of his published alchemy.

Saint Martin and the work of interpretation

Saint-Martin enters the comparison through an explicit textual act of reception rather than through an inferred resemblance. The May 1923 *ÉON* publishes an *Étude sur le Tableau naturel de Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin* signed only by a Supérieur Inconnu. The author states that the study reorganises the principal ideas of Saint-Martin's chapters into theorems and supplies symbolic arcana for meditation.¹⁵ A modern transcription attributes it to Sémélas, but that attribution is an editorial identification beyond the anonymous signature printed in the original.¹⁶ The secure historical claim is therefore that Saint-Martin's work was actively interpreted within Sémélas's periodical. Personal authorship requires additional evidence.

The first chapter offers a philosophical bridge between the medical and initiatic discussions. Its initial theorem presents the surrounding world and the living force of the elements as intelligible expressions of a higher principle. Subsequent propositions argue from the human capacity to make material works towards the priority of invisible creative faculties over their products.¹⁷ The argument is analogical: the relation between a human maker and an artefact becomes a model for understanding the relationship between creative powers and the universe. Nature is consequently neither a mere collection of objects nor an independently self-explanatory mechanism. It becomes evidence through which the student is invited to reason about what exceeds immediate sensation.

This is a more defensible connection than a general assertion that Lapasse, Saint-Martin and Sémélas all taught exactly the same doctrine of living nature. Lapasse's text concerns the conditions under which intelligence and will can act upon matter. The *ÉON* study concerns the relation of creative faculties to their material effects. Selaït-Ha's alchemy concerns symbols expressing the organisation of forces. Their shared problem is the relationship between invisible agency and visible manifestation; their arguments are not interchangeable. The presence of the *Tableau* study demonstrates Saint-Martinian reception because it names its source and declares its interpretative task. No equivalent explicit acknowledgement of Lapasse has been identified in the examined Sémélas material.

The first chapter of Saint-Martin's original *Tableau* also allows the editorial operation to be tested. It moves from the intelligibility of the world to the invisible faculties through which a human being conceives and makes an artefact. The *ÉON* study preserves this movement while separating it into numbered propositions.¹⁷ The correspondence is therefore demonstrable at the level of argument, rather than merely inferred from a common theme. It clarifies the meaning of return implicit in the comparison: understanding creation should bring the human being nearer to the principle from which that creation proceeds. This is a different objective from extending the organism's duration, although both objectives involve overcoming an impoverished account of human existence. The distinction between temporal preservation and spiritual restoration prevents longevity from being mistaken for reintegration.

The pedagogical operation is also important in its own right. Turning a difficult work into propositions and symbolic images changes how it can be studied. It may make an argument accessible, but it can also sharpen, simplify or redirect meanings present in the original. The resulting

text is both a vehicle of reception and a new interpretative construction. An academic comparison should therefore distinguish Saint-Martin's original philosophy from its *ÉON* exposition. Treating the latter as a transparent transcription would overlook the very activity through which a tradition renews itself. Transmission, where demonstrable, involves choices made by interpreters rather than the automatic preservation of an unchanged doctrine.

Regeneration freedom and collective responsibility

Sémélas's *La Méditation* supplies a different perspective on human transformation. In the modern transcription of the March 1921 *ÉON* article, the present human being is described as an incomplete image of an original human type; initiatic aspiration concerns both immortality and the awakening of latent powers. The discussion distinguishes psychurgy, magic and theurgy and relates imagination and will to the exercise of particular capacities.¹⁸ This language makes the restoration of human powers a concrete element of the teaching. It also shows that the project cannot be reduced to the modern language of psychological confidence or self-improvement. Its anthropology presupposes realities and faculties extending beyond ordinary bodily existence.

The Lily and Eagle's present teaching places freedom and personal work at the centre of its public explanation. It presents propositions attributed to Rouchine as material for the initiate's own reflection, rather than as conclusions to be accepted without examination.¹⁹ This is primary evidence for the order's current self-presentation, not sufficient proof that every phrase belongs unchanged to 1915. Nevertheless, it identifies a productive tension in the tradition: guidance should awaken a personality capable of judgement, while an initiatic hierarchy claims privileged knowledge of the path. The philosophical question is whether the latter serves the former or replaces it. A declaration of independence establishes an aim; the methods through which independence is achieved remain a separate matter for investigation.

A contemporary institutional statement in the 1923 *ÉON* gives the social dimension firmer historical footing. It connects moral education, instruction in esoteric sciences and continual charity; recognises personal liberty; rejects material privileges derived from spiritual hierarchy; and allows members to retain their political and religious convictions.²⁰ These commitments place a limit on the social consequences of initiatic rank. Spiritual differentiation is acknowledged, but it is not offered as a warrant for unequal material entitlement. The document therefore supplies a distinctive answer to the problem of hierarchy: a hierarchy of attainment is asserted within a framework that formally protects equality in collective life.

The same published regulations expose the practical limits of the universal language. Admission requires literacy, recommendations and obligations to the organisation. Such requirements do not nullify the declaration of equality, but they show that an inclusive ideal coexists with institutional selection. An account that repeats only the public ideal would miss the conditions governing participation. The order is not simply an unrestricted community of inwardly regenerated persons; it is also an organisation that defines membership, authority and conduct. This makes the comparison with Lapasse more precise. His writing advocates an understanding of life-preserving forces, whereas the Lily and Eagle also legislates relationships among those who undertake a shared work.

Charity therefore need not be interpreted as a final stage added to an otherwise private spiritual ascent. In the institutional statement it helps define what the work is for. The contemporary goals page similarly describes personal development, generosity and collective benefit as connected purposes.²¹ Yet the historian should avoid claiming that the order uniquely discovered this connection. Lapasse's preface already acknowledges collective will, and his alchemical authorities associate attainment with generosity. The difference lies in the explicit organisational formulation. The Lily and Eagle gives social obligation a declared institutional place; this is more specific and more defensible than an evolutionary narrative in which an earlier bodily or spiritual concern finally becomes ethical.

Convergence without a demonstrated lineage

The comparison yields a substantial relationship, but not the particular relationship that a succession chart would suggest. Lapasse's text integrates medicine, natural law and a qualified defence of alchemical knowledge. Selaït-Ha's published chapter teaches a method of interpreting symbols through active and passive relations. The *ÉON* Tableau study explicitly receives Saint-Martin through a new pedagogical arrangement. The Lily and Eagle's institutional statement connects personal work with charitable obligation and limits the material authority of spiritual rank. These positions belong within a shared field of questions about the formation of the human being. Their common field does not erase the differences among their metaphysical premises, interpretative procedures or institutional purposes.

To demonstrate dependence on Lapasse, further evidence would need to identify more than conventional terminology. An explicit reference in Sémélas's correspondence, an annotated copy demonstrably used by him, a distinctive sequence of argument or a shared unusual citation could materially alter the conclusion. A repeated error might be particularly revealing, because it would be less readily explained by independent use of a common vocabulary. The principal archival priorities are therefore the described Papus volume, the Sémélas–Papus correspondence and Ms Encausse 52. These are concrete research objects. The unresolved question is not whether similarities can be found, but whether a particular route of reception explains them better than the broader circulation of Hermetic ideas.

The strongest present conclusion is historically situated convergence with identifiable opportunities for exchange. Papus provides a plausible point of contact between Lapasse's textual afterlife and Sémélas's activity, but "plausible contact" should not be promoted into "probable doctrinal transmission" without additional evidence. At the same time, the absence of a demonstrated direct lineage does not impoverish the philosophical comparison. It allows the traditions to be understood as different attempts to relate knowledge to the transformation of the knower. Their deepest comparative interest lies in how they connect understanding, agency and responsibility, and in the different conditions they impose upon the claim that a human being has been regenerated.

Notes

1. Bibliothèque nationale de France, “Ordre du lys et de l’aigle,” authority notice FRBNF11385419, last modified February 3, 2020, <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb113854196>.
2. Spyros V., “Le Martinisme de Sémélas,” revised version, 2013, 1–3. The online rendering identifies the underlying paper as a revised English version of a 2011 conference address, but displays automated French translation. Statements from it are paraphrased, not quoted as authenticated wording of the letters.
3. Christian Rebisse, “Joséphine Péladan et les Salons de la Rose-Croix,” note 2, <https://www.rose-croix.org/josephine-peladan-salons-rose-croix/>. Rebisse cites Firmin Boissin, *Visionnaires et illuminés* (Paris: Liepmannssohn et Dufour, 1869), 17, and *Excentriques disparus* (1890). These earlier works were not directly consulted here.
4. Louis-Charles-Édouard de Lapasse, *Essai sur la conservation de la vie* (Paris: Librairie Victor Masson, 1860), 59–60. Digitised Harvard copy, Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/essaisurlaconse00lapagoog>. Page references throughout refer to the printed pagination.
5. Lapasse, *Essai*, 44–47.
6. Lapasse, *Essai*, 50–51. The moral passage is an earlier authority quoted by Lapasse, rather than an autobiographical declaration.
7. Lapasse, *Essai*, 57–59.
8. Lapasse, *Essai*, 47–48.
9. Lapasse, *Essai*, v–vii, especially vi.
10. Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix, “Our Tradition,” <https://www.okrc.org/tradition-okrc?lang=en>; La Fontaine d’Aréthuse, “*Essai sur la Conservation de la Vie*,” catalogue reference 12 12 034 024, <https://fontainedarethuse.com/accueil/13560-le-macrocosme-ou-traite-des-mineraux-et-autres-textes-inedits.html>. The provenance is reported by the dealer; the physical copy was not inspected.

11. Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, “Inventaire du fonds Philippe Encausse,” Mss Encausse 1–64, entries Ms Encausse 51 and 52, Catalogue collectif de France, <https://ccfr.bnf.fr/portailccfr/ark:/16871/004LYOF010062>. The linked record displays the collection inventory as well as an individual Papus dossier. Manuscripts themselves were not consulted.
12. Christian Rebisse, “Le Martinisme à l’Époque moderne,” sections 3–4, *Ordre Martiniste Traditionnel*, <https://www.martiniste.org/le-martinisme-a-lepoque-moderne/>; *Ordre du Lys et de l’Aigle*, “Fondateurs,” <https://www.ordredulysetdelaigle.org/en/filiation>. The latter presents the Attic transmission as part of its own lineage narrative.
13. Spyros V., “Le Martinisme de Sémélas,” 3–4. Accessed through the online copy listed in the bibliography; original correspondence not inspected.
14. Selaït-Ha, “*Alchimie — Premiers éléments*,” chap. 3, *ÉON*, 3rd year, second series, nos. 7–8 (November–December 1923): 26–31, https://iapsop.com/archive/materials/eon/eon_v3_n_7-8_nov-dec_1923.pdf. The contents page attributes the contribution to Selaït-Ha.
15. Un S. I., “*Étude sur le Tableau naturel de Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin*,” *ÉON*, 3rd year, second series, no. 1 (May 1923): 16–21, https://iapsop.com/archive/materials/eon/eon_v3_n_1_may_1923.pdf.
16. Commandery of Attica in the West, “*Étude sur le Tableau naturel*,” chap. 1, editorial introduction signed KePu, November 2024, <https://archatoz.net/etude-tableau-naturel/etude-sur-le-tableau-naturel-1-FR-EN.php>. The identification with Sémélas is editorial and is not an expanded signature in the 1923 publication.
17. Un S. I., “*Étude*,” 16–19, especially theorems I–IX; Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, *Tableau naturel des rapports qui existent entre Dieu, l’homme et l’univers* (1782), chap. 1, French transcription, <https://archatoz.net/le-tableau-naturel/tableau-naturel-FR-EN-1.php>. The comparison uses the French text rather than relying on the accompanying modern English translation.
18. Demetrius Plato Sémélas, “*La Méditation*,” *ÉON*, nos. 7–8 (March 1921): 8; attribution and transcription by the Commandery of Attica in the West, paragraphs 3–11, <https://archatoz.net/articles/la-m%C3%A9ditation-semelas.php>. The corresponding printed page was checked in the IAPSOP scan. The modern transcription supplies the personal attribution; the passage itself is unsigned on that page.
19. *Ordre du Lys et de l’Aigle*, “Enseignements,” <https://www.ordredulysetdelaigle.org/en/enseignement>.
20. *Ordre du Lys et de l’Aigle*, institutional statement and regulations, *ÉON*, nos. 7–8 (November–December 1923), front matter, i–iv. Compare the corresponding statement in the May 1923 issue, i–ii. Both issues were consulted as digitised scans.
21. *Ordre du Lys et de l’Aigle*, “Buts,” <https://www.ordredulysetdelaigle.org/en/buts>. This is a present-day statement and is distinguished from the contemporary evidence cited in note 20.

Bibliography

All online sources were accessed October 7, 2026. The bibliography lists consulted sources. Earlier works encountered only through another author's quotation are identified in the relevant notes rather than presented as directly consulted. French passages have been paraphrased in English; no claim is made to a complete critical edition of either author.

Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon. "Inventaire du fonds Philippe Encausse." Mss Encausse 1–64. Inventory by Pierre Guinard and Marie-Noëlle Tekfa. Catalogue collectif de France. <https://ccfr.bnf.fr/portailccfr/ark:/16871/004LYOF010062>.

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