

# The Cross of Hendaye

by J.B.<sup>1</sup>

(Translated by Reginald Freeman)

We have discovered at Hendaye this cross whose symbolism is truly curious.

It is Elevated upon three steps and the base is decorated on each of its faces:

On the West face, the Sun; on the East face, a Star with eight points; on the South face, four A's, and on the North face, the Moon.

The cross itself bears on the West face this inscription: O Crux Ave Spes Unica<sup>2</sup>; and behind, the four letters I.N.R.I. The upper branch is decorated with an X or Cross of St. Andrew.

We also note that the horizontal branch is oriented to the north and south, as the magnetized needle of a compass.

## The Inscription

### **O CRUX AVE S PES UNIC A**

What draws our attention first of all, is that the word "Spes" is spontaneously separated in two parts: **S** and **Pes**. There is a quite distinct intention there. The artist who sculpted this inscription has certainly not wanted to cause the **Pes** to stand out, a word which signifies **Foot**.<sup>3</sup> And the final letter, the **A** of **Unica** is moved away from it also.

Thus, the author shows us that it is not due to a lack of space that he has placed the letter **S**, initial of **Spes**, on the upper line.

It is a question then of a cabalistic phrase which must be read phonetically in exchanging the vowels according to the principles of the Initiates of the Middle Ages.

And this phrase, if we know how to read it, will give us the key to the monument in its entirety.

Here is the most simple sentence we are able to express:

**O Croix Hâve Espace Unique**<sup>4</sup> and the cross being the symbol of death, since it is that which one places on all tombs, we read: **O Mort hâve espace unique**.<sup>5</sup>

This cross shows us, then, that it relates to the Cycles of existence and to the end of the world. It shows to the Initiates what will be the parts of the world which will be attacked and also where safety is to be found.

This is the **Fire** which must bring about the end of our cycle; also, on the reverse of this inscription, we read: I.N.R.I., **Ignis Naturæ Renovatur Integra**, the Fire of Nature renews all entirely.

## The Ravenous Sun<sup>6</sup>

Directly beneath the inscription, we find the image of the “Ravenous Sun.” The expression of this figure is striking.

This sun possesses 16 rays. Now, in the Tarot, the sixteenth plate is the Tower<sup>7</sup>; ruin, catastrophe. Moreover, the number equals 1+6, that is to say 7. And we know that 7 is the scythe, it is Death.

This side faces West. It is then the Occident that will be destroyed.

The Sun, surrounded by four stars, tells us that only the active will can avoid the cataclysm.

## The Star

This is a star which is sculpted on the East side. It is a very simple star, without superfluous ornaments. This star is hope, it is salvation. Safety is in the Orient.

This star possesses eight rays. Eight is the number of Justice.<sup>8</sup> The just, the wise, the initiates will recognize here their Star.

## The Moon<sup>9</sup>

To the north, appears the Moon, The moon is intuition and inspiration. This is also Knowledge. That is why the artist has sculpted a facing eye, as in the Egyptian representations. One knows that the Egyptians never represent the eye in profile. This eye indicates to us also vision in obscurity, that is to say, the secret knowledge.

## The Four A's

Finally, to the south, we find the Four A's. That is to say, the four ages.

The division of the ages most generally accepted is that which as followed Ovid, and which includes four period:

The Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age.<sup>10</sup>

Golden was that first age which unconstrained,  
With heart and soul, obedient to no law,  
Gave honour to good faith and righteousness.  
No punishment they knew, no fear; they read  
No penalties engraved on plates of bronze;

No battlements their cities yet embraced,  
No trumpets straight, no horns of sinuous brass,  
No sword, no helmet then – no need of arms;  
The world introubled lived in in leisured ease.  
Earth willingly, untouched, unwounded yet  
By hoe or plough, gave all her bounteous store;

Springtime it was, always, for ever spring;

And streams of mild and springs of nectar flowed  
And yellow honey dripped from boughs of green.

When Saturn fell to the dark Underworld  
And Jove reigned upon earth, the silver race  
Replaced the gold, inferior, yet in worth  
Above the tawny bronze. Then Jupiter  
Curtailed the pristine spring and led the year  
Through winter, summer, autumn's varying days  
And brief precarious spring in seasons four.

Then men sought shelter – shelter under caves  
And thickets and rough hurdles bound with bark  
Then in long furrows first were set the seeds  
Of grain and oxen groaned beneath the yoke.

Third in succession came the race of bronze,  
Of fiercer temperament, more readily  
Disposed to war, yet free from wickedness.

Last came the race of iron. In that hard age  
Of baser vein all evil straight broke out,  
And honour fled and truth and loyalty,  
Replaced by fraud, deceit and treachery  
And violence and whisked greed for gain.  
Men sailed the sea – as yet the novice crew  
Scarce knew the winds; timbers that had long stood  
High on the mountain ranges triumphed now,  
Riding in arrogance on waves unknown;  
And on the ground, common till then and free  
As air and sunlight, far across the fields  
By careful surveys boundaries were marked.  
Nor did earth's rice return of crops and food  
Suffice; the bowels of the world were forced  
And wealth deep hidden next the gates of Hell  
Dug out, the spur of wickedness and sin.  
Iron now was in men's hand to bring them bane,  
And gold a greater bane, and war marched forth  
That fights with both and shook its clashing arms  
With hands of blood. Men lived by spoil and plunder;

Such is the picture that the author of *Metamorphoses* has left us of the primitive life of humanity. It is in allusion to this description that we employ the expressions of Golden and Iron Age to designate a happy time and a period of crimes and calamities. But the Greco-Roman mythology is not the only which offers us, under this symbolic appearance, the history of a cycle of humanity. This tradition of four ages is found, with some differences of form, in most of the peoples of antiquity; in Egypt and

India. It is, for example, very explicitly developed in the cosmogony of Manou. For the rest, the distinction of the two extreme ages, the Golden Age and the Iron Age, is now fundamental. Now, this tradition is a universal belief that has been discovered among all peoples, in all states of barbarity and civilization. It necessarily results that this tradition has an actual historical foundation, which rests on a fact that, despite the divers alterations that it has undergone in transforming itself from generation to generation, always retains its essential character.

\* \* \*

The upper branch of the cross is decorated with a Cross of St. Andrew. Let us hear what Fulcanelli tells us in *The Dwellings of the Philosophers*:

The bohemians utilize the cross of the **X** as a sign of recognition. Guided by the diagram traced on a tree or on some wall, they always camp exactly at the place occupied by their predecessors, near the sacred symbol which they call: **Patria**. One may believe this word to be of Latin origin, and the expression of this maxim: **Patria est ubicumque est bene**, wherever it is good, there is the fatherland; but this is a Greek word, **Patria**, which claims itself their emblem, with the sense of family, race, tribe. The cross of the Romanies or Gypsies indicates then, clearly, the place of refuge attributed to the tribe. It is conspicuous, moreover, that all the significations revealed by the sign of the **X** have a transcendent or mysterious value. **X** is, in algebra, one or more unknown quantities; this is also the problem to be resolved, the solution to be uncovered.

This cross, signed by the **X**, shows us that it acts there as a sort of picture puzzle.

The religious monuments are these which are the more respected, so in giving this form to this landmark it ensures its preservation. We will not conclude without reference to the “cabalists” who in scrutinizing attentively, with the yes of the spirit, the inscription “O Crux Ave Spes Unica,” such as it finds itself inscribed on our cross, will discover exactly and without possible error, the precise indication of the point of the globe which will not be touched by the impending catastrophe, by the next upheaval.

One should be aware that this word “upheaval” signifies reversal of the globe, reversal of the terrestrial sphere. That is to say, that the north pole become the south pole, and inversely when the Ravenous Sun (see our article on the Black Sun), having arrived at the culminating point of its course, has moved in an opposite direction, all which maintaining the same direction of rotation. We cannot publicly expose here the secret traditions; but these doctrines will be given to the members of the A.R.O.T. Who will be judged worthy. The A.R.O.T. (Association our la Révolution de l'Occultisme Traditionnel)<sup>11</sup> is, as we have already said, a genuinely initiatic group.

\* \* \*

We owe to the amiable kindness of Mr. Lemoine, artist of great talent, the documents which illustrate this article.<sup>12</sup> He might find here the expression of our recognition.

We had been indicating to Mr. Lemoine the existence of this cross and we had been asking him to bring us either sketches or photographs, but we didn't know where this cross was to be found exactly. At this point is placed an anecdote which we need to give:

Mr. Lemoine asked many people if they knew of a cross matching the description I had given him and

he obtained negative responses constantly. Catching sight of a priest who was passing, he posed to him the same question. The excellent abbé replied to him that all crosses match the description that he was giving and added that he believed that Hendaye did not have it there. Here is the dialog such as it was transmitted to us:

- But why are you researching this?
- It is for one of my friends in Paris who occupies himself with Archeology.
- Why does he do this? To what end?
- I have told you. Solely archeological.
- This person must occupy himself with other things than archeology.

And the good abbé dismissed himself.

Then, our friend wandered into town, quite decided to uncover our little monument. He found it, indeed, and settled in to take photographs and make sketches. At that moment, the priest passed and threw him, he tells us, a furious look.

Why is there always and everywhere this desire of obscurantism? Is this a password, a key-word?

The cross of Hendaye will suffer, without doubt soon, the same fate as the others. They will destroy it under whatever pretext and they will replace it with a grotesque cross of iron without any significance.

It is fit to recognize that the symbolism of the cross of Hendaye does not present a religious sense, quite clearly; and has owed and owes considerably to the trouble of men; the apostles of the Faith.<sup>13</sup>

- 
- 1 This article originally appeared in the journal *Consolation* in 1936. J.B. is Jules Boucher (a.k.a. Phalgus, 1902-1955). Boucher was a Bishop of the Église Gnostique Universelle, and a high-ranking member of the Ordre Martiniste Traditionnel. He founded the Ordre Martiniste Rectifié in 1948. He was also a Freemason and one of six principal leaders (along with Georges de Lagrèze, Robert Ambelain, Robert Amadou, René Chambellant, and Camille Savoie) of the Ordre des Chevaliers Maçons Elus-Cohen de l'Univers, which had been reconstituted in 1943 by Lagrèze and Ambelain.
  - 2 Latin: O Cross, Hail! Only Hope!
  - 3 Latin: pes = "foot"
  - 4 This translates roughly to: "O Pale Cross, Only Space." The original French has been left in the text because of its phonetic correspondence to the unusual line-breaks of the Latin. In this case, the Latin "Crux" has simply been translated into French, "Croix." The word "Ave," meaning "Hail" in Latin, has been phonetically (sort of) transformed into "Hâve," (the "h" is silent) meaning "Gaunt" or "Wan." The division of "Spes" (Hope) into "S pes" is taken by the author to indicate that the "S" should be pronounced separately, giving the word "Espace" meaning "Space" or "Area." Finally, "Unic" separated from the final "a" is phonetically interpreted as "Unique" meaning "Unique," "Sole," "Only," etc. It thus has the same meaning as the Latin "Unica." Curiously, however, although the author mentions the separation of the final A in the inscription, he does not account for it.
  - 5 Again, this would be roughly: "O Pale Death, Only Space."
  - 6 This image, as well as those of the other parts of this cross, are presented as sketches in the original article. Photographs of the various aspects of the cross may also be found in Fulcanelli's *Le Mystère des Cathédrales* (available in English translation as *The Mystery of the Cathedrals*).
  - 7 The French "Maison-Dieu" or "House of God" is given in the article, but I have inserted the English title for this card – the Tower.
  - 8 This is referring to the 8<sup>th</sup> Arcana of the Tarot.
  - 9 Although the Tarot is only mentioned by name once in this article, in reference to the Tower, we can see an allusion to other cards as well. We have already pointed out the reference to "Justice" but we also see reference to the Sun, the Star, and the Moon (19<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Arcanas respectively). There was also the mention of Death, but it was associated with

---

the number 7 – hieroglyphic representation of the scythe – rather than with its corresponding number in the Major Arcana of the Tarot – 13. Nevertheless, these attributes are obvious, and the reader may undoubtedly find additional Tarot correspondences concealed in this cross.

- 10 The following extracts from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is taken from the English translation by A.D. Melville (Oxford University Press, 1986). I am uncertain from which translation Boucher has drawn, or if it is his own, but it is presented in a prose that preserves nothing of the original poetic feel. So rather than give the reader a mediocre translation of a translation that seems rather unimpressive even in the French, it seem preferable to me to provide the corresponding passages from an edition that has been translated by a scholar of Latin literature. A comparison with the French, therefore, in this section of the article, will appear to differ considerably from the text given here in English, but I believe that the fundamental meaning remains unchanged, and should add considerably to the enjoyment of the reader.
- 11 Association for the Revolution of Traditional Occultism. Martinists and other Initiates will appreciate the anagram "A.R.O.T." for its other significations.
- 12 These illustrations are not included in this translation, but the images are easily found in the sources previously mentioned.
- 13 This concludes the article as I have it. But I must state that I do not have a copy of the original journal to work from, but a rather poor photocopy. If the article continues further, I am unaware, but would welcome such information.