

THE INFLUENCE OF J.B. KERNING ON MASONRY, FRINGE MASONRY AND BEYOND.

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The central figure for the narrative I am about to tell is one Jean Baptiste Krebs, also known as J.B. Kerning, henceforth I will refer to him by the latter, which was his pen name. While known to German Masons, Kerning was virtually unheard of in Anglophone Masonry until relatively recently. His influence, nonetheless, was considerable, not only was he a central figure in Stuttgart Masonic circles but he also took on Masonic administrative duties in South Germany generally. It is not, however, his administrative capacities that this paper will examine, rather its object is to explore his mystical Masonry and outline the nature of the practices that he taught. To do this I begin with a brief biographical sketch, I will then introduce some of the key people who inherit and transmit his teachings. This line of transmission certainly extends further into the 20th century than we will take it here, and there are other interesting lines of transmission that we will not explore. For our purposes it will be sufficient to take our narrative to some of the key players in the esoteric and fringe Masonic world of late 19th century Vienna, particularly Friedrich Eckstein, Carl Kellner, Franz Hartmann and some of their associates, like Gustav Meyrink, Karel Weinfurter and the Bardon family. With that rather spectacular esoteric lineage in place, we will then turn to explore the nature of Kerning's mystical teachings. We will find that he offers a very embodied approach to spirituality, one which connects to sound and vocalisation, particularly the vocalisation of words, terms or names, that are thought to take us closer to the divine within.

The exact origins of Kerning's practices are not known, their similarity to Sufi techniques has recently been argued by Gladwin, yet, as Kerning never left Germany, Gladwin sets the notion aside, leaving it as an intellectually provocative suggestion for further research. Here we will speculatively extend Gladwin's thought, we will show that perhaps 'Mohammed' did not need to go to the 'Mountain' after all; that a confluence of more or less circumstantial evidence should turn our interest in Kerning's sources toward Sabbatianism, and the work of a fringe Masonic group, the Asiatic Brethren, which we can certainly place within Kerning's intellectual context and certainly connect to figures and institutions he was associated with. As such with the nature of Kerning's system sketched out, and a possible source for its work indicated, we will end by returning to Eckstein, Kellner and Hartmann and the influence of Kerning on Sigmund Freud's Vienna Circle, the work of Karl Jung, and early psychological and psycho-analytic theory.

To give a brief sketch of Kerning's life: he was born to a relatively poor, catholic family in Überauchen in Baden in the year 1774. He was originally moving towards a clerical career, and commenced theological studies at Freiburg, but his life took a musical turn around 1794, one which would lead him to become an opera singer in the Fürstenberg court. By 1821 he had become the director of the court Opera, a position he maintained for the next 30 years¹. In terms of his Masonic history, he first joined Masonry in Berlin, at the Lodge 'Zum Widder'² in 1820, his influence on Masonry in Stuttgart becomes most pronounced in the 1830s and in 1835 he founded the lodge 'Wilhelm zur aufgehenden Sonne im Orient'. He served as its Worshipful Master virtually uninterrupted until 1851 when he passed to the Grand Lodge above. His work was discretely continued through his students. Perhaps the most influential line of communication for his ideas moves firstly from Carl Wenzeslaus zu Leiningen-

¹ Gladwin, I. *Letters on the Royal Art: The Spiritual Alchemy of JB Kerning's Esoteric Masonry*. Pansophic Press, (2022). p. 23.

² Loc cit.

Billigheim (1823–1900), the Lord Steward of the Grand Duchy of Baden, who had a direct association and friendship with Kerning, and from him subsequently to his son, Carl Polycarp zu Leiningen-Billigheim (1860-1899)³, who was born after Kerning had died but was quite active in terms of preserving Kerning's ideas.

Carl Polycarp is an important figure. While serving a diplomatic role in Vienna, as an attaché of the Bavarian court, he became involved in Viennese Theosophical circles. This brought him into contact with one of the most important figures for this story, Friedrich Eckstein. Baier has reported that in 1887, Carl Polycarp gave a talk on Kerning's system to the Theosophical Society and his knowledge of Kerning was well appreciated within that circle. While the most likely source of Carl Polycarp's understanding of Kerning would be his father, we can speculate that other Masons in his father's social group could have also been important mentors. Eckstein himself refers to Carl Polycarp being present at a summer gathering at Bellevue Castle in 1888⁴. In 1891 Eckstein, with Carl Polycarp, travelled to Prague where they helped to establish its first Theosophical Lodge, *Loge zum Blauen Stern*,⁵ a Lodge that involved figures like Gustav Meyrink, Karel Weinfurter and Viktor Bardon. It is clear from Weinfurter's own writings in *Man's Highest Purpose*⁶ that Kerning's teachings were an important feature of the work of that Lodge⁷. While Meyrink and Weinfurter are significant for the further transmission of Kerning's ideas within esoteric circles, I won't pursue that line too far, further light will be shed in Sam Robinson's forthcoming book on Rosicrucianism in Germany in the wake of Kerning⁸.

Eckstein's introduction to Theosophy came through another figure of interest, Franz Hartmann. Prominent in the Theosophical Society, Hartmann joined the American branch in 1882 and in 1883 he travelled to Adyar in India where he became more deeply involved in the Society. He remained there until 1885 when he and Helena Blavatsky travelled back to Europe together⁹. Both through professional or business activity and through a mutual interest in the esoteric, Hartmann developed an association with a somewhat infamous figure in fringe Masonry, Carl Kellner¹⁰. Together, Hartmann and Kellner, with the assistance of Theodore Reuss, went on to form the foundations of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) in its pre-Crowley embodiment¹¹. It is important to note here that the pre-Crowley OTO was quite different to the system developed by Crowley; it essentially acted as a vehicle for reflecting on Masonry and communicating its own ideas about meditation and what, for Hartmann and Kellner, amounts to a form of Western Yoga, or a system of self-transformation through practices centred on the body and significantly influenced by Kerning. These practices had a more ascetic feel to them than would be typical of the popular conception of the post-Crowley OTO. Crowley and Theodore Reuss took the OTO in a different direction after Kellner's death, but the fate of the OTO in their hands is not a concern for this paper, nor does the direction in which they took the organisation reflect much about what was occurring in its first embodiment. In any case, as we are told by Baier, "Being a friend of Eckstein and Hartmann, Kellner was, of course, connected

³ Baier, K. *Occult Vienna: From the Beginnings until the First World War*. In, Hoedl, H.G., Mattes, A. and Pokorny, L. (eds.), *Religion in Austria*, Vol. 5, Praesens, Vienna (2020). p. 30.

⁴ Loc cit.

⁵ Loc cit.

⁶ Weinfurter, K. *Man's Highest Purpose (the Lost Word Regained)*, Capelton, A. and Unger, C. (trans), Rider and Co., London (1930).

⁷ Ibid. See, for example, p. 54.

⁸ Robinson, S. Personal communications.

⁹ Goodrich-Clark, N. *Hartmann, Franz*. In *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Hanegraaff, W. (ed), Brill, Leiden (2006). p. 458.

¹⁰ Ibid p. 459.

¹¹ Pasi, M. *Order Templi Orientis*. In Hanegraaff, W. p. 898

to Theosophy and Eckstein's circle. According to Franz Hartmann, he joined the Theosophical Society in 1887"¹². This is, of course, around the time that Carl Polycarp was associated with the Eckstein and the Vienna Theosophical society.

Before returning to these figures, it is worth developing an account of the nature of Kerning's teachings and their sources. Here the discussion will be both in terms of esotericism broadly conceived, and more particularly in regard to Masonic teachings of an esoteric nature. One of our key sources for the former is Karel Weinfurter (1867-1942)¹³, an associate of Gustav Meyrink and mentor of Franz Bardon. As we have seen Franz's father, Viktor Bardon, was directly involved in the *Blauen Stern* Lodge with Weinfurter and Meyrink and through his father Franz came under Weinfurter's mentorship. For the more directly Masonic version of Kerning's teachings the main sources will be Gladwin's 'Letters on the Royal Art'¹⁴, which translates Kerning's correspondence with Idealist philosopher Joseph Franz Molitor (1779-1860) and Kerning's own *Sabbithengrad* Degree¹⁵ – a ceremony appended to the Craft Degrees as practiced in Kerning's Lodge.

The fact that Kerning had both Masonic and non-Masonic versions of his mystical system¹⁶ shows us that while this system can certainly be articulated into symbolic teachings of Masonry, its ideas are broader and not enclosed within the exclusivity of a Lodge. Weinfurter presents Kerning's system as a form of Christian mysticism and as lying in a long mystical tradition. After anchoring the origins of Christian mysticism in traditions flowing out of commonly cited sources, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Babylon, India and Kabbalah, Weinfurter tells us that within the Christian mystical tradition, "the file-leader remains J.B. Kerning"¹⁷. We need to temper this a little, as clearly Kerning is himself influenced by significant figures in the German mystical tradition, Jakob Bohme comes to mind in that regard, yet Weinfurter's enthusiasm shows us how significant Kerning's work was for those in the *Blauen Stern* Circle in Prague. For the Prague circle, Kerning presents not so much a speculative, theoretical system, but a practical mysticism and Weinfurter even refers to him as "Master Kerning"¹⁸. Consider the following where Weinfurter quotes from Kerning's *The Key to the Spirit World*, "By a *persevering practice* my mental horizon became extended, and I found within myself a new life, of which I did not know before. To that life I gradually devoted myself in full, and have reached that point where I seek all counsel in eternity"¹⁹. The centrality, indeed, priority, of practice is also emphasised by Gladwin when he tells us that for Kerning there is but one mantra "*practice, practice, practice*"²⁰. This does not mean that Kerning avers theory or, as we might say, 'speculation', but it does indicate the priority of practice. This thought is further emphasised in one of the first lines delivered after opening of a Lodge in the *Sabbithengrad*, "I do not like to do this ritual beforehand, because I'm afraid it will not be useful. You will hear it, talk about it, argue for and against it, but not practice, and then it would be as much as

¹² Baier, K. *Yoga within Viennese Occultism: Carl Kellner and Co.* In, Baier, K., Maas, P.A. and Preisendanz, K. (eds) *Yoga in Transformation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Vienna University Press, Vienna (2018). p. 396

¹³ Op cit. Weinfurter, K.

¹⁴ Op cit. Gladwin, I.

¹⁵ Stettner, K. *The Sabbithengrad*. Eike, C. (trans), Manuscript of Translation supplied by Sam Robinson, personal communications, (2024).

¹⁶ Robinson, S. Personal communications (2024). Further details forthcoming in Robinson's book on Rosicrucianism in the wake of Kerning.

¹⁷ Op cit. Weinfurter, p40

¹⁸ Ibid. p170.

¹⁹ Op cit. Kerning in Weinfurter p54 (emphasis mine)

²⁰ Op cit. Gladwin p. 19.

nothing”²¹. Exactly what is being practised we will need to explore further, it is, however bound up with what has been described as “alphabet mysticism [or]...*buchstabenmagie*”²². One might assume here that we will be led into Kabbalah, but that assumption should be kept in abeyance for now, the story is more complex.

It is important that Kerning himself describes his practice as prayer²³, but insists that in prayer only a few words are to be used, that long wordy prayer is not useful. Weinfurter clarifies the role of prayer in Kerning suggesting that the term prayer should be taken as the “mystical concentration of thought”²⁴. Further, we know from Weinfurter that one of the phrases Kerning taught was ‘Our Father’, here Kerning suggests that “You shall pray nothing else but that, repeating it so often in silence, until not only your mouth, but also your heart, why your whole nature from the skin into the inmost point of your body knows it by heart. If then you feel the effect of it, when your hair is standing up and your bones are burning, then think you have received the baptism”²⁵. What we see here is that an internal process, which Gladwin has described as internal or spiritual alchemy, is thought to issue in physical manifestations signalling an internal change. This gives us a sense of the core practice in Kerning’s mysticism, a practice, as we have indicated, he taught outside of the Masonic setting. There are further intimations in these ideas of the practices that will later develop in the work of Alois Mailänder, a Rosicrucian whom we know studied Kerning’s works²⁶ and recommended them to his students (which included Weinfurter). In particular it seems to resonate with Mailänder’s practice of ‘soul work’ which involved the repetition of short phrases²⁷, somewhat in the fashion of *mantra*. Indeed, this is how Weinfurter and others saw Kerning’s work, as recommending practices they assimilated with Yoga, such as *mantra*²⁸. Mailänder, however, had his own system, which again was not restricted within Masonic circles, but was associated with Kerning’s teachings and he will also go on to become influential on Eckstein, Meyrink, Hartmann, Kellner and others. These figures therefore inherit what amounts to a dual Kerning influence, both in direct line from Kerning and through the teachings of Mailänder who encouraged his students to read and study Kerning.

Turning now to Kerning’s more Masonic teachings, we will find ourselves quickly led into exotic terrain. Within Kerning’s Stuttgart Lodge, *Wilhelm zur aufgehenden Sonne im Orient*, there was a specific interpretation of Masonry, based on his mystical views. While we have seen above that, in his non-Masonic teachings, there was a strong emphasis on Christian themes, such as, ‘Our Father’, prayer and an experience of ‘baptism’, the Masonic teachings have, at times, shown traces that are more exotic. Gladwin rightly notes the difficulty in reconstructing the influences Kerning brought to bear on Masonry, he mentions a similarity to the Kabbalistic ideas of Abraham Abulafia, but due to differences in the practices, such as the absence of ‘*Mudra*’ type exercises in Abulafia, he sets that aside²⁹. Gladwin also notes possible influences from *Hurufism*, through Sufi *Bektashi* Orders³⁰ which were known to have existed in Southern Europe and the Balkans, but he sets this aside due to the fact that Kerning never left Germany.

²¹ Op cit. Kerning in Stettner (2024)

²² Op cit. Gladwin p. 15

²³ Op cit. Weinfurter p. 54

²⁴ Loc cit.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 55

²⁶ Robinson, S. *Alois Mailänder: A Rosicrucian Remembered*. Pansophic Press. 2021

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Op cit. Weinfurter pp. 85-87.

²⁹ Op cit. Gladwin p. 16

³⁰ Loc cit

We might speculate, however, that Kerning may have picked up ideas that had been transmitted from Asia Minor. One path for this might flow from Sabbatian and Frankist sources. The Sabbatians were heterodox and at times antinomian Jews, the founder of the movement, Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676), claimed to be the Messiah and had a keen interest in Kabbalah. Thus, in Zevi we find mystical or esoteric ideas meeting with Jewish messianism³¹. Zevi was born in Anatolia but spent time in Thessalonica, Jerusalem, Cairo and Montenegro. There was also some apparent contact with the Jewish community in Italy (Livorno) where his ideas had spread and from where his marriage to Sarah was arranged. A climactic moment in Zevi's life comes when, under pressure from the Sultan, who was concerned that members of community around Sabbatai saw him as a prophet, forced Zevi to convert to Islam. He took the name Mehmet Efendi, perhaps a reference to Vani Mehmet Efendi, a Kurdish religious official who was present when he agreed to convert³². Significantly for this narrative Zevi, as Scholem reports, had contact with "Muslim mystics among the Dervish orders"³³. David Marc Baer tells us that Sabbatians in Thessalonica recounted a story that "Shabbatai Tzevi met with antinomian Sufis, including Halveti Sheikh Niyazi Mısri"³⁴. Baer goes on to explain that Mısri had in fact established a Sufi Lodge in Thessalonica. While it cannot be confirmed that a meeting between Mısri and Zevi this took place, Baer notes that there is an undoubted connection, in the eyes of the Sabbatian community of Thessalonica, between their religion and Sufism.

Jacob Frank (1726-1791) was in some senses Sabbatai's spiritual heir. He spent much of his life in South Poland, Turkey, the Balkans, Austria and Germany. His final years were spent at Offenbach near Frankfurt, where a sizable community gathered around him at Isenburger Schloss, where in effect he had established his 'court'. Frank was influenced by Baruchiah Russo³⁵, a leader within the Dönme community, a community of Sabbatians many of whom had converted to Islam with Sabbatai Zevi; they followed Islamic traditions publicly but maintained Jewish traditions privately and held them together with forms of Jewish mysticism, particularly Sabbatian Kabbalah. The specific Dönme sect that Russo belonged to was known as Karakashi (*Karakaş*), essentially a radical and highly antinomian community of Sabbatians. The Dönme, according to the Encyclopedia Judaica, "were on friendly terms with Sufic circles, and with the dervish orders among the Turks, particularly the Baktashi"³⁶. Baer tells us "Their religion was a spiritual synthesis based on two religions, which incorporated elements of Kabbalah Judaism and Sufi Islam ... into a new construction that neither Jews nor Muslims recognized"³⁷. More specifically, for Baer these Sufi influences were "Bektaşî for the Karakaş"³⁸. Further Baer, citing Yıldız Sertel, a descendent of a Karakaş Dönme family, indicates that their community also maintained Sufi Lodges as important places of worship³⁹. Notably Baruchiah Russo, on his conversion to Islam, took the name Osman Baba, with Baba being a Sufi title; the resonance of his adopted Islamic name with that of the Alevi Sufi mystic of the same name shows the importance of Sufi tradition for this sect. One last fascinating connection before moving on, Frank's father-in-law, who was also a member of the Karakashi

³¹ Scholem, G. *Kabbalah*. Meridian Books, New York (1974), pp. 79-80, and 245-6.

³² Baer, D.M. *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*. Stanford University Press, Stanford (2009). p. 2.

³³ Op cit. Scholem (1974). p. 268

³⁴ Op cit. Baer, p. 9.

³⁵ Op cit. Scholem (1974). p 274

³⁶ Encyclopedia Judaica, *DOENMEH (Dönme)*, The Gale Group (2007): <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/doenmeh> (accessed June 2024).

³⁷ Op cit. Baer p17

³⁸ Loc cit.

³⁹ Ibid. p 10

sect, went by the name, Dervish Efendi, again indicating that the link to Islam was more specifically a Sufi one.

While the foregoing is interesting, we are yet to see how it might connect to Kerning or his Lodge. Sabbatian and Frankist influences were certainly a feature of the fringe Masonic world, particularly *The Knights and Brethren of Saint John the Evangelist of Asia in Europe*, also known as The Asiatic Brethren, who had been active in Germany a few decades prior to the period in which Kerning was active. By the time Kerning had entered Masonry, the Asiatic Brethren were something of a remnant. But as Faivre suggests “its discreet but enduring presence is documented well into the 20th century in a variety of similar Systems which took their inspiration from it”⁴⁰, in particular he cites the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. One of the most interesting individuals for our story here is Thomas von Schönfeld⁴¹. Schönfeld was not only a Sabbatian, but his mother, Schöndl Dobruschka, was a powerful member of the community and was Jakob Frank’s cousin. Frank had resided on her estate in the mid 1780s. Von Schönfeld and his friend, Ephraim Joseph Hirschfeld, were the two members who were most responsible for the introduction of Kabbalistic, Sabbatian and antinomian elements into the Order⁴². It was they who largely shaped the rituals and traditions of the Order, drawing Kabbalah and other mystical aspects of Sabbatian or Frankist teachings into it. Hirschfeld, who had a more orthodox upbringing, was likely led toward Sabbatian ideas by von Schönfeld, but he was certainly quite connected to the Frankist movement. Indeed in 1792, a year after Frank’s death, he moved to Offenbach, where Frank had been resident until his death, and where the ‘court’ had now been taken over by Frank’s daughter, Eve. While the Asiatic Brethren as an Order was in decline by this point, Hirschfeld’s esoteric activities continued, he maintained contact with the Frankist community in Offenbach, and maintained Freemasonic contacts; in 1796 he wrote the *Biblisches Organon* which Faivre has described as “one of the most interesting theosophical works of the late 18th century”⁴³. Most importantly, Hirschfeld was in communication with the Idealist philosopher and Kabbalist, Joseph Franz Molitor, Kerning’s friend and correspondent.

We can now turn back to Kerning. We know that he had been exposed to Sabbatianism, because we know that he had some familiarity with the work of the Asiatic Brethren. Within his Lodge the version of Masonic ritual that was practised was the Fessler Rite, the 6th Degree of which contained a critical examination of the teachings of the Asiatic Brethren. Furthermore, Kerning’s friend, Molitor, is well known for having written on the foundations of the Asiatic Brethren. That there was some connection between the Asiatic Brethren and Fessler System of Masonry is evident from the title of the key source for information on the Asiatic Brethren, a text from 1803 whose title translates as *The Brethren St. Johannis the Evangelist from Asia in Europe or the only true and genuine Freemasonry next to an appendix, Fessler’s Critical History of Freemasonry and its voidness, by a High Advanced One*. The title seems to indicate that relations between the two systems were not entirely amicable, but nonetheless the Fessler system and the Asiatic Brethren are interlocutors of sorts. Whether or not Kerning read that work we cannot say, but Kerning was very well read in regard to Masonry and very well read in regard to theology and philosophy.

From Gershom Scholem we also learn that Molitor was in communication with Hirschfeld, this most likely came sometime after 1813 when Molitor’s focus turned to Jewish mysticism and

⁴⁰ Faivre, A. Asiatic Brethren. In Hanegraaff p 108

⁴¹ Ibid. p 107

⁴² Loc cit.

⁴³ Ibid. p 108

before Hirschfeld's death in 1820⁴⁴. Molitor's Kabbalistic studies commenced under "a very learned Jew named Metz in Offenbach, whom he met in 1813"⁴⁵. Exactly who Metz was and whether he was also moving in Frankist circles in Offenbach we do not know, but his association with Offenbach, home of the Frankist 'court', is curious, particularly given Molitor's close contact with Hirschfeld. The connection between Molitor and Hirschfeld is not a fleeting one, they worked together on a number of projects, most significantly they cooperated in trying to establish a Jewish Lodge in the area, the details of which I will set aside, but in a discussion of this activity, Katz tells us that Hirschfeld attempted to introduce the rites of the Asiatic Brethren into this Lodge in 1816⁴⁶. It seems from what Katz tells us that the rituals of the Brethren were still being worked by Hirschfeld during this period of activity with Molitor.

We can conclude, therefore, that Kerning certainly knew of the existence of the Asiatic Brethren and knew something of their ritual, how much he knew is a question, but again we simply indicate that he was well read on Masonic, theological and philosophical materials. Through the Fessler system he would have been, at least indirectly, exposed to some elements of Sabbatian and Frankist thought. More cautiously there is the possibility that he was more directly exposed to Sabbatian and Frankist ideas via Molitor, who prior to his correspondence with Kerning had been in communication with Hirschfeld. Although it must also be said that Kerning's exchange with Molitor comes quite late. On the other hand, Molitor shows that Christian Germans with mystical and Kabbalistic interests did turn to Frankist sources and that within the Frankist community, Jewish, Islamic and Christian thought coalesced. Sabbatians and Frankists did communicate with the Christian community and indeed around Isenburger Schloss, this had been the case since the 1730s when Nikolaus Zinzendorf took refuge under the Count of Ysenburg-Büdingen. Sabbatian ideas were thus in the air both through Jews who identified as Sabbatian and through the work of the Asiatic brethren, and they readily communicated with Christians about matters of religion and theosophy. The similarities between Kerning's teachings and practices to the work of Abulafia and to Sufism thus could well have been influenced from these directions, which do not require him to have left Germany. These ideas had been elements of Sabbatian, and particular Frankist traditions and the work of the Asiatic Brethren, particularly the esoteric elements therein were Sabbatian and Frankist. The influence of the Asiatic Brethren had spread across Austria, Switzerland and Germany, with quite an influence through the South of Germany, home to Kerning. Their work was well known to German Masons, even if it was viewed with suspicion for failing to be exclusively Christian⁴⁷. Finally, we can note that one of the more important Sufi practices to enter the Sabbatean tradition is the practice of *dhikr*, the repetition of the divine name to induce trance⁴⁸, this mantra-like practice certainly resonates with Kerning's injunction to the repetition of 'Our Father'⁴⁹, and also with transformation through vocal technique. Furthermore, this is the sort of practice that men like Weinfurter, Kellner and Hartmann associated with 'Yoga'⁵⁰.

Returning now to Kerning's more direct Masonic teachings, particularly as laid down in his correspondence with Molitor. Gladwin's discussion sheds more light, as he points out the fascinating influence of Swiss-Italian education theorist, Pestalozzi⁵¹. The latter's work seems

⁴⁴ Op cit. Scholem (1974). p. 257

⁴⁵ Loc cit.

⁴⁶ Katz, J. *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (1970). pp.66-67.

⁴⁷ Op cit. Katz. pp. 44-5

⁴⁸ Goldish, M. *The Sabbatean Prophets*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (2004). p. 62

⁴⁹ Op cit. Kerning in Weinfurter. p. 55

⁵⁰ Op cit. Baier (2018).

⁵¹ See also Baier, (2020), p. 55.

to reflect the Rousseauian quest for a practice of education that draws out the natural ‘goodness’ or virtue of the student, and the Rousseauian emphasis on “reasons of the heart”. Pestalozzi had emphasised practice prior to theory, and the importance of experience in learning, which is very much in line with Kerning’s method⁵². Further, as Gladwin points out, Pestalozzi’s ideas were to lead to a condition whereby “one’s ‘true’, or innermost, nature becomes connected to a greater reality, where the heart, above all is meant to lead”. While the notion of the heart leading is reminiscent of Rousseau’s Savoyard Vicar⁵³, for us what is interesting is that “Kerning’s method unfolds out of the experience of symbols, gestures, and sounds that affect one’s true, inner, and divine natures”⁵⁴. We can clearly see how such ideas could have structured the way Kerning developed the teaching of his practices, if not the specific content of what he taught. Kerning uses Masonry and Masonic symbolism to develop a process and practice of internal alchemy, the transformation or renovation of the interior condition of the one who follows this process. This process also takes us to the heart, as Kerning says, “For the founders of the Christian Religion the Mithras Temple was too large, so the teacher directed his followers to their own heart, where the riches of heaven, God and eternity are to be found”⁵⁵.

Sound is of particular importance for Kerning, his teachings are seen as a form of *buchstabenmagie* or ‘letter mysticism’ similar, as we have seen to Kabbalah and Sufi Hurufism. Remember that Kerning is a singer and vocal trainer. In particular he points to the sounds delivered through the letters of the alphabet. This is not the more complex system of Kabbalistic correspondence seen as fundamental to the Western Esoteric tradition, but more directly the vibratory force of vocal sound and its transformative effect within the body of the mystical practitioner – thus it is more practical and experiential. Here one might point not only to Kerning’s experience as a vocal trainer, but to the work of Jakob Bohme and his discussion of letters in *Mysterium Magnum*. Weinfurter had already seen that the letter practice reflected this Behmenist discussion⁵⁶, but it is worth quoting direct from Bohme “The spirits of the letters in the Alphabet are the form of the one spirit in the Language of Nature, the five vowels bear forth the holy tongue of the five holy languages out of the name Jehovah, from whence the Holy Spirit speaketh”⁵⁷. Now consider this from Gladwin’s discussion of Kerning: “we can look to the purification of the soul through the transforming power of the spirit found in the vowels and later the consonants... we are left with the discovery of the Lost Word [that for which all Masons seek], the actualisation or manifestation of spiritual matter, the perfected elements of one’s being”⁵⁸. But what Gladwin says here can also be seen in light of the work of Bohme, continuing the earlier quote from Bohme: “for the five vowels are the holy name of God, according to his holiness. For the name Jehovah hath nothing in it, save for the five vowels”⁵⁹. This is an odd claim given that, on the face of it, Jehovah seems to hold three vowels, so we need to clarify this.

It has long been held⁶⁰ that the Lost Word of Masonry is the true pronunciation of the *HaShem*, a stand in for the name of God which, in Hebrew literally means ‘the Word’. But I want to

⁵² Op cit. Gladwin p. 17

⁵³ Rousseau, J.J., The Creed of the Savoyard Priest, from *Emile*. Stephen Hicks (2024) pp. 1-3.

⁵⁴ Op cit. Gladwin p. 18

⁵⁵ Op cit. Kerning in Gladwin p. 34.

⁵⁶ Op cit. Weinfurter p. 145.

⁵⁷ Boehme, J. *Mysterium Magnum: An Exposition of the First Book of Moses called Genesis (Vol. 1)*. John Sparrow (trans). Hermetica, San Rafael, (2007) p. 300

⁵⁸ Op cit. Gladwin p. 18.

⁵⁹ Op cit. Boehme p. 300

⁶⁰ Pike, A. *Pike’s Esoterika: The Symbolism of the Craft Degrees of Freemasonry*. Arturo de Hoyos (ed), Scottish Rite Research Society, Washington (2022).

consider a quote from Weinfurter citing Bohme, and in particular I want to draw our attention to what must be a cleaver Kerning inspired misquote. The misquote involves the ordering of the five vowels, whereas in Bohme's discussion of the connection of the five vowels to the divine name he places them in the usual "A, E, I, O, U"⁶¹ arrangement, Weinfurter renders them in lower case (perhaps indicating phonetic use) and gives them in the following misquoted order "i, e, o, u, a"⁶². An order which when pronounced phonetically gives a peculiar though recognisable form of the name Jehovah. To see how this plays out directly in Kerning we can turn to his 'Eighth Letter' in the exchange with Molitor: "The Old Master Word by which the slain man was brought back to life is Jehovah, yet actually, i e o u a. The two H's were inserted to indicate the activity of inhaling and exhaling. This Old Master Life Word has played an important role in higher institutions in all times"⁶³. The Masonic significance of that passage would be clear for any Master Mason, for the Master Mason does not receive the lost word, but merely a substitute, which in other Orders of Masonry is eventually revealed as the name of God. But of further importance is the notion of 'hearing' the word. Connecting this back to Jewish thought, while the spelling of the name of God is known, its proper pronunciation is the preserve of the High Priest. Thus, the lost secret of Masonry, the "Mason word" is not – as it seems in some of the High Degrees of Masonry – the spelling, or letters of the name, but for Kerning the vibratory force of the pronounced name. Here it is interesting that Kerning noticed the peculiar way the words of the three Degrees of Craft Masonry are exchanged: in the First Degree the word is exchanged by 'lettering' (one letter at a time, essentially spelling); in the Second Degree by syllable, and; in the Third Degree through the full pronunciation of the Master Mason's Word (which is not the real word but merely a substitute, the Master Mason being left to seek out the true word). The whole course moves us in a developmental path from letters, to syllables to words – but it rarely strikes the Mason that sound is important, and this despite the fact that the Mason is told to seek the lost word in the 'Centre' (of the Temple) which in Hermetic correspondence theory correlates with sound, but also the heart, where "heaven, God and eternity are to be found"⁶⁴.

It is through the Three Degrees of Craft Masonry that Kerning then articulates a practice that leads to the discovery of the 'Lost Word', but this discovery happens through a process of integrating that 'Word' into the body, so as to renovate not just the interior of the person but in fact their whole being. The signs, words and grips of Masonry provide the keys for how this process is performed. Again, this is not about complex schemas of correspondence such as is typical of the Western Esoteric or Western Hermetic tradition, rather it is a contemplative practice for the individual to pursue, resonant with *Mantra* and *Mudra*. Gladwin's text shows us much about how this relates to the Blue or Craft Degrees. Kerning tells us "We see God's word and we hear it, but it is only when we sense and understand it through experience that a union with God and man is established. God is in man and man is in God. Sign, Grip and Word. Seeing, feeling and hearing... [f]or example, the Freemason forms the sign of an angular measure with his hand. He places the sign on the throat, the root organs of speech, and he spells the Entered Apprentice word until the throat is spiritually awakened, thereby making him able to speak freely and spiritually, inwardly and outwardly"⁶⁵. This indicates that it is not merely the hearing of the Word pronounced, but rather that the practitioner is seeking to awaken God's word within, or as he puts it awakening "the inner Word of wisdom"⁶⁶. While the above discussion gestures to practices related to the Entered Apprentice Degree, Kerning

⁶¹ Op cit. Boehme, p. 300

⁶² Op cit. Weinfurter p. 145.

⁶³ Op cit. Kerning in Gladwin p. 70

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 34.

⁶⁵ Ibid p. 36.

⁶⁶ Loc cit.

goes on to say that the other Degrees provide other techniques that will eventually lead to the awakening of the Mason's "entire nature"⁶⁷, which – as we will see below – is the awakening of 'Basic Force'⁶⁸. Further, while Weinfurter understands this practice in light of the notion of *Mantra*, given that, ultimately, the Mason Word is the divine name, and that the words of the three degrees are steppingstones to that name, we could perhaps better anchor this practice in the Sufi notion of *dhikr*, important to the Sabbatians, the repetition of words or phrases that focus one's being on God. This then would lead us to see Kerning's work as having its structure provided by Pestalozzi, but its content stemming from a more Sufi, Hurufic (Bektashi) approach, but filtered through Sabbatian and Frankist thought and the Sabbatian Kabbalistic tradition of the Asiatic Brethren.

While 'Letters on the Royal Art' develops many of the practices that Kerning taught for the Blue or Craft Degrees, there is, in fact, a Degree or Ceremony that Kerning produced and communicated through his Lodge for those who had progressed to Master Mason. This is something of a Capstone Degree to the Craft Degrees and thus it supplements the material that we obtain through Kerning's correspondence with Molitor. The Degree is known as *The Sabbithengrad* – a Degree taken only by those who had progressed to Master Masons. The version I am working from here was translated by Christine Eike, based on a version from 1922 published by Konrad Stettner, with notes from a Brother A. Wenig. The copy was kindly provided to me by Sam Robinson⁶⁹. Wenig notes that the work of the *Sabbithes* (the name of those who have received the Degree) is anchored in Aristotelian philosophy, but other notes from Wenig also point to Pythagorean notions, this need not bother us too much as here I will not go into the fine detail of the ritual, but just sketch a broad view. The title of the Grade, and the name of its holders '*Sabbithes*' of course indicates the Sabbath and planet Saturn, the latter of which was held as particularly important in Jewish messianic traditions. Notably Sabbatai Zevi's name indicates the Sabbath and Saturn, which is fitting for one who claimed to be the Messiah. At this stage, a direct connection between the name of the Grade and its holders to Sabbatianism is speculative, but it is curious that within a Lodge practising Fessler and led by a man who is connected to Molitor, a close friend of Hirschfeld, there is a practical Masonic teaching that is resonant with the practice of *dhikr* and a form of 'letter mysticism' resonant with Hurufi teachings. This is a line of thinking for further research.

Taking a closer look at the *Sabbithengrad*, the first point to note, and it is resonant with what Gladwin tells us about the centrality of practice in Kerning's work, is that the ritual tells us "I do not like to do this ritual beforehand, because I'm afraid it will not be useful. You will hear it, talk about it, argue for and against it, but not practice, and then it would be as much as nothing"⁷⁰. Clearly, for Kerning, the Degree is not meant to feed our speculative thirst, not meant as something for us to theorise on or draw into complex conceptual schemes, it is primarily to encourage practice. Thus, as per Gladwin, Kerning's mantra "*practice, practice, practice*"⁷¹, the secrets of the *Sabbithengrad* are to be experienced and felt, it is not the Masonic (or Kabbalistic) puzzle-box offered in other quarters. The *Sabbithengrad* thus brings the teachings that Kerning communicated in relation to the three Degrees of Craft Masonry to a conclusion.

The *Sabbithengrad* moves to a discussion of the importance of sound. In the opening of the Degree, we see a reference to 'Tones' and 'Beats', and we are told that the 'Tones' "are always

⁶⁷ Loc cit. p. 36.

⁶⁸ Op cit. Kerning in Stettner.

⁶⁹ Sam Robinson (personal communication 2023)

⁷⁰ Op cit. Kerning in Stettner.

⁷¹ Op cit. Gladwin p. 19

sounding”⁷² and are “streams of life”⁷³, and the ritual makes clear that these ‘Tones’ are in fact the vowel sounds; they are eternal, having “neither beginning nor end”. This we can relate to Bohme’s notion that “the five vowels are the holy name of God... [for] the name Jehovah hath nothing in it save for the five vowels”⁷⁴. Yet now, when brought into relation with Kerning’s notion that the tones are manifest as streams of life, we get a sense that we, as living manifest beings, participate in the tones, a Logos coursing through the universe. The ‘Beats’, which are the consonants B, D and G, must, however, be renewed when we want to hear them⁷⁵. Yet we are told that largely these ‘beats’ are directed towards the same object, so if the tones are ‘streams of life’ that are expressions of the divine name, then the consonants seem to be a quite human manner of active participation in shaping the streams of life. In the first long discourse of the Degree, delivered by the Master, we are told very clearly that in Masonry we are given words, yet as entered apprentices we only spell those words, this indicates that we cannot yet speak the word, we can only make simple sounds. In the Fellowcraft Degree we progress to syllables, for while we still cannot speak whole words we are now, as Fellowcraft Masons, able to combine simple sounds. It is only as Master Masons that we come to be able to speak in whole words. This capitulates, through explicit formulation, what is taught by Kerning in the ‘Letters’ between himself and Molitor.

Kerning criticises the Masonic tendency to want to interpret the words of its Degrees conceptually rather than to ‘feel’ the simple power that resides within them, and it is this tendency, to think rather than feel and experience, which is the cause of Masons not achieving their goal – the retrieval the Lost Word. In the course of the initial lecture, we find the Master suggesting that God is alive in the process of the world, in life, or as per a note from Wenig, the deity is dissolved into the laws of nature. This leads the Master to suggest that one of the ways to find the word is through life itself – leading us into the interiority of that life we are most familiar with, our own. As the ceremony moves into its second phase, some of the working tools of Masonry are introduced, they are first connected to geometry, but the ritual contains the insistence that while this might seem like ordinary geometry it cannot be taken in that sense, rather something else is going on. This is then explained by the suggestion that the art of geometry is there to facilitate our hearing of the tones and beats – thus the visual leads us back to the auditory but this itself is supposed to lead to a sense in which all senses are contained, which is described as the ‘Basic Force’. Obtaining that basic force is the object of the Sabbithes. What is this basic force? Wenig includes a short and enigmatic note containing a single word “Actuality” or in German *Wirklichkeit*, a word that has a peculiar philosophical connotation, particularly within the Idealist philosophical circles in which Kerning moved. There it implies the actualisation of an internal telos or goal, the final unfolding of an entity according to a blueprint held within it, or, more theologically, we can see it as the manifestation of the Logos within, the logical unfolding of the human being towards a goal embedded within us, redemption. We obtain the basic force through the actualisation of the Logos, or ‘Word’ within, or in more simple terms, the actualisation of the divine within.

To illustrate the importance of this for the practice of ‘letter mysticism’ we can consider the following discussion, by Shahzad Bashir, of the work of the founder of the *Hurufi* tradition Fazlallah Astarabadi. A consideration that will throw light on both Kerning and Hurufism. Fazlallah taught that God had communicated, to Adam, the 32 letter/sound pairings of the Persian language, these were communicated as names (combining sign and sound) and these

⁷² Op cit. Kerning in Stettner.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Op cit. Bohme p. 300

⁷⁵ Op cit. Kerning in Stettner

names were gates to the “greatest cosmic secrets”⁷⁶. This is the language of God, in its Edenic form, taught to Adam, and constitutes a metalanguage that is central both to the creation and comprehension of these cosmic secrets⁷⁷. While the shape of these letters is important, the pronunciation is also essential as it was the letter/sound pairing that is the focus. Further Astrabadi “argued that all letters originated from three basic shapes: straight (*mustaqim*), rounded (*mustadir*), and bent (mu’wajj). These shapes were exemplified by the letters *alif*, *lam*, and *ha*, which was no accident since these three letters form the word *Allah*. The alphabet as a whole could thus be seen as pointing to God. The shapes of the letters corresponded directly to the parts of the human body as well, recalling the connection between speech and material reality going back to the command ‘be’ uttered by God in the beginning of creation.”⁷⁸. While the Hurufi held that the divine verb was in fact the entire alphabet (28 letters in Arabic, 32 in Persian), the more specific idea is that the name of *Allah* is comprised of the three basic shapes fundamental to all letters, so the keys to creation, and its comprehension, are the letter/sounds which are themselves derived from the name of God. Further it is clear from the above that the keys to creation are also related here directly to the body, that material, or created, reality that we are most familiar with. This brings the letters into relation with the body (creation), and the name *Allah* into relation with the straight, the angular (bent) and the round, from which those letters are formed.

Now consider this passage from Kerning’s *Sabbithengrad* which relates to naming the measuring instruments of geometry that are central to Masonry, the gauge-rule, the square and the compasses. Here the Master asks one of his principle officers this question “What was their [the measuring instruments] original name?” The answer he receives “They were given no names, they called themselves and were called I, O, A,”⁷⁹. So: 1) the gauge-rule is connected to the I, a straight line - “With the inch gauge. It measures straight lines”; 2) the square is connected to the A, which gives a right angle (bent) – “By the square I search the sizes of the bent lines”, and; 3) the O is the compass, which gives the circle – “How does the *Sabbithe* use the compasses? ... He compares the circular lines with other circular lines”⁸⁰. Thus these three central tools or altarpieces of European Masonry, laid across the Bible indicate the straight the bent and the square and are intimately connected to divine revelation (Bible). The I, O, A, formula, as the ritual progresses, then becomes constitutive of the signs and tokens (grips) for the Degree, such that signs and grips articulate IOA, indicating its centrality to their symbolism - IOA is the central mystery. While this letter combination is different to a similar one discussed in *Letters on the Royal Art* (the latter uses the Gnostic IAO), this specific letter combination, is in fact a truncation of the word for God generated by the five vowels that we encountered through Bohme⁸¹, Weinfurter⁸² and Kerning’s ‘*Letters*’⁸³. It is simply a truncation of i, e, o, u, a or Jehovah.

Thus we are led to the exhortation “Great Architect of the world [creator]. Your beats [sounds] ... called us! We stand before you in the signs [shapes] of your sublime tools. I. O. A.”. To get a sense of the cosmic nature of what is happening here consider the following question and answer: the Master asks “Lines and angles are objects for the eye [shapes/letters], tones and beats for the ear [sounds]! How is it possible for the ear to hear where the forms touch only the

⁷⁶ Bashir, S. *Fazlallah Astarabadi and The Hurufis*. Oneworld Press, Oxford (2005). p. 50

⁷⁷ Loc cit.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 75.

⁷⁹ Op cit. Kerning in Stettner.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Op cit. Boehme p. 300.

⁸² Op cit. Weinfurter p. 145

⁸³ Op cit. Kerning in Gladwin p. 63

eye? Solve this contradiction!” The answer takes us to a cosmic scale: “Inside creation, nature, life and man there is only one meaning. The others, as local emanations, are all contained in these... In this way the unity arises and the *Sabbithe* finds his principle proven”. The *Sabbithe* is seeking out a unity that lies behind the duality of sign, or shape (letter) and phonetics (sound). This creative unity lying behind duality and expressed through IOA, is stated to be “Actuality” which we have seen is the *Logos* behind creation. Thus exploring the letter/sound pairings are thought to lead the *Sabbithe* back to something more primal, as in the *Hurufi* tradition they are gates to seem to constitute a fundamental connection to, or gates to, the divine and are principles of, and means to comprehending, creation. Here we find a resonance with *Hurufi* and *Bektashi* mysteries right at the heart of Kerning’s mysticism and letter magic.

We can now circle back to where we began, to those who came in the ‘wake of Kerning’, to borrow from Robinson’s forthcoming book title, in particular Eckstein, Kellner and Hartmann. Baier has convincingly argued that, in the context of late 19th Century Vienna, and particularly from within an intellectual culture informed by the teachings of the Theosophical Society, it was easy for these inheritors of Kerning’s work to assimilate it with Eastern techniques⁸⁴. In particular he suggests, “Kellner’s appreciation of *Haṭha Yoga* is just as inconceivable without Kerning and Mailänder as Meyrink’s concept of a spirituality of bodily metamorphosis”⁸⁵. Much of the appreciation of Kerning’s work in this later generation of esotericists stems from seeing his work as a practice of Christian Yoga and reinterpreting it in light of Yoga⁸⁶. Weinfurter, while clearly having a respect for the practice of Yoga, discussions of which are scattered across the text *Man’s Highest Purpose*⁸⁷, suggests that it is not a path that is suited to the Western temperament⁸⁸. He tells us, “the forcible and quick ways... for instance, asceticism and the Yoga practices... is impossible to a European, and is rather dangerous, as it cannot be in accordance with the circumstances under which we are living”⁸⁹. Yet, he still views Kerning in light of his understanding of Yoga, for the above quote, from a chapter titled ‘The Origins of the Mantra Practices’⁹⁰, then leads into a discussion of Kerning’s “mantra” work (repetition of short phrases)⁹¹. Here it is clear that Weinfurter understands this as an embodied mode of spirituality for he tells us that these sentences must be “practiced in all parts of the body”⁹². He then proceeds to quote from a parable told by Kerning that takes us directly to the embodied nature of Kerning’s work: “All that you have performed outwardly has also to take place inwardly. The first climbing touched but the skin, and now we are going to penetrate the flesh and the bones, through the loins, liver, lungs, and heart, into the very marrow in order to come nearer to the desired perfection”⁹³.

While reading *Man’s Highest Purpose* shows that Weinfurter appreciates the Christian nature of Kerning’s work, this was not what appealed to Kellner and Hartmann, rather it was the connection they saw in it to Yoga⁹⁴. Here Baier quotes from Kellner “Finally, I have to mention, that among the Christian mystics, Jakob Boehme in his discourse between the master and his disciple and J. Krebs ... represent the best that has ever been written in German about

⁸⁴ Op cit. Baier (2020) p. 58.

⁸⁵ Loc cit.

⁸⁶ Op cit. Baier (2018) p. 401.

⁸⁷ Op cit. Weinfurter.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 178.

⁸⁹ Loc cit.

⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 93-187

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 179

⁹² Loc cit.

⁹³ Ibid. p. 184

⁹⁴ Op cit. Baier (2018). p. 401

yoga practices, albeit in a form that might not be to everyone's taste"⁹⁵. Of course, the mention of 'Jakob Boehme' indicates that Yoga is being used in a peculiar, quite loose, or perhaps 'universal' sense, but most importantly, in regard to Kerning, it shows how his very embodied approach to spiritual practice was appreciated by Kellner. This bodily spirituality is put forcefully and perhaps polemically by Weinfurter: "Master Kerning constantly shows the fact that God is present in a man in his whole body. Consequently, as soon as we begin to seek God within ourselves ... God commences to manifest Himself in all our body. Ninety-nine per cent of occultists suppose the mystical evolution to begin in a man's soul. This presumption is one of the greatest errors in modern Occultism"⁹⁶. This gives us a clear sense of why Kellner describes Kerning's work in light of Yoga, for 'mystical evolution' as Weinfurter describes it, begins in the body. Indeed, Baier has argued that it was the work, first of Kerning, and later of Mailänder, that helped to mediate a positive reception of Yoga into central European occultism and particularly in Vienna⁹⁷. This was facilitated by Hartmann's essays on Yoga, published in his own journal, *Neue Lotusblüten*, but also in more widely circulated journals such as the *Wiener Rundschau*⁹⁸.

It is in Vienna that Eckstein, along with Herbert Silberer, a Mason, Rosicrucian and likely practitioner of Kerning's work, that connects esotericism with early psychoanalytic theory. In his famous *Civilisation and its Discontents*, Freud himself mentions a 'friend' who "through the practices of Yoga, by withdrawing from the world, by fixing the attention on bodily functions and by peculiar methods of breathing, can in fact evoke new sensations and coenaesthesias in oneself, which he regards as regressions to primordial states of mind which have long ago been overlaid. He sees in them a physiological basis, as it were, of much of the wisdom of mysticism"⁹⁹. Merkur, who views these lines from Freud as failing to get the attention they deserve from scholarship, also informs us that, according to Anna Freud, the 'friend' referred to here is Friedrich Eckstein. Thus the 'yoga' referred to by Freud is more a reception of yoga that has been brought into dialogue with what was learned from Kerning and practiced as such. Eckstein seems to have had more than a passing influence on Freud, and while Baier claims that he influenced Freud's account of regression¹⁰⁰, Merkur tells us he also influenced Freud's understanding of Nirvana. The other, lesser known figure in Freud's circle, and a man who had been engaged to Carl Kellner's daughter for a time, was the above mentioned Herbert Silberer. While his relationship with Freud and the other members of Freud's circle was fraught, and perhaps his marginalisation from that group contributed to his suicide, Merkur claims that Freud's paper 'On Narcissism' was substantially written as a response to Silberer's work on mysticism and symbolism¹⁰¹. Silberer also applied a mystical, indeed Yogic, lens to discussions of libido, and drew in notions such as the union of opposites, so important to the alchemical tradition, further he recontextualised Freud's notion of sublimation situating it as the essence of the mystical self-transformative practice¹⁰². His association with the Kellner family did not, however, prevent him from taking a critical view of Kellner's friend and colleague, Hartmann, and of Theosophy more generally, he was a critical thinker after all. Yet Silberer does not take the same view of Kerning's work, while he felt Kerning was a little too uncritical, he also held "To-day, too, there is a royal art. Freemasonry bears this name. Not only the name, but its ethical ideal connects it with the spirit of the old

⁹⁵ Loc cit.

⁹⁶ Op cit. Weinfurter p. 170

⁹⁷ Op cit. Baier (2018). p. 402

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 395.

⁹⁹ Merkur, D. *Explorations of the Psychoanalytic Mystics*. Rodopi, Amsterdam (2010). p. 12

¹⁰⁰ Op cit. Baier (2018). p. 403.

¹⁰¹ Op cit. Merkur p. 8

¹⁰² Op cit. Baier (2018). p. 433

alchemy. This statement will probably be contradicted and meet the same denial as did once the ideas of Kerning [sic]”¹⁰³.

But it was not only Freud who was influenced by these inheritors of Kerning’s work, Jung also partly rehabilitates the contributions of Silberer by seeing him as one of the first to investigate the connection between esoteric symbolism and the unconscious. Silberer’s discussion of mysticism as a form of introversion is likely to have influenced Jung’s technical use of that term. Further, at the Third International Congress for Psychology, held in Munich in 1896, which Kellner and Hartmann attended¹⁰⁴, a booklet Kellner had prepared on Yoga was circulated. It is interesting to note that we find early American psychological pioneer, William James, citing Kellner’s booklet in *Varieties of Religious Experience*. James did not attend the Congress, but the text made its way to him regardless. While more work needs to be done to track these influences, we know that Silberer published several psychoanalytic papers and texts, and even if Freud rejected him or treated him badly, Jung acknowledged the importance of his contributions and attempted to rehabilitate his reputation. Eckstein also delivered several papers to Freud’s Vienna group, although their influence is difficult to trace. Kellner and Hartmann, at least in 1896, were rubbing shoulders with the elite of the burgeoning movement in the science of psychology. All these figures, Eckstein, Kellner, Hartman and Silberer, received the Kerning tradition, and with the *Zeitgeist*, allowed that tradition and their understanding of Yoga to weave together in dialogue shaping their understanding of the mysteries. A dialogue that discretely plays itself within psychological and psychoanalytical circles in the late 19th and early 20th century Vienna.

To conclude, it is my hope that this discussion has provided some useful context for thinking about the work of J.B. Kerning and its influence on German Masonry, Fringe Masonry, and esotericism. We have traced the inheritors of Kerning’s system to some of the most influential and prominent figures in central European esotericism and fringe Masonry. We have also indicated the way that those influenced by Kerning interacted with psychologists and psychoanalytic theorists, including Freud and Jung. While further work needs to be done in exploring the sources of Kerning’s work, I have demonstrated that there is a plausible line of transmission for Sufi and indeed Bektashi practices into Central Europe and Germany through Sabbatian networks. I have shown that these networks certainly did feed directly into 18th Century Fringe Masonry, particularly the Asiatic Brethren. It is clear that Kerning was exposed to elements of the work of the Asiatic Brethren, but it is unclear how much or how deep that exposure was. It has, however, been demonstrated that Kerning’s friend and correspondent, Joseph Franz Molitor, had quite a deep understanding of the work of the Asiatic Brethren, and had, for a number of years, cooperated with one of the key Kabbalists of that Order, Hirschfeld. The fact that Molitor’s association with Hirschfeld and his study of Kabbalah has its centre of gravity in Offenbach, home of the Frankist ‘court’, supports the idea that at least Molitor would have had considerable exposure to Sabbatianism. Regardless, what we have found in Kerning is a form of mysticism that centres on sound, vibratory force and embodiment. This system was articulated by Kerning through his Lodge and was brought to a climax in the Sabbithengrad ceremony. The two key areas for further research lie around the possible influence of Sabbatianism on Kerning and the further cultural and intellectual influence of those who inherit his work, in particular the influence of Kerning inspired mystics on psycho-analysis and psychology.

¹⁰³ Op cit. Silberer in Baier (2018). p. 434.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 410.