

# **MARTINISM AND MARTINIST ORDERS**

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All that needs to be known about this doctrine and its applications.

Martinism is a spiritualistic education founded on the writings of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, known as the Unknown Philosopher.

In the present study we propose to offer what is essential to know about this subject.

## **LOUIS-CLAUDE DE SAINT-MARTIN**

Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin was born on 18 January 1743, in Amboise (Indre et Loire); he died in Aulnay, near Sceaux (Seine), on 13 October 1803. It is important to place his existence in time, so as to imagine the era particularly troubled during which he lived.

Saint-Martin studied Law and became a lawyer in Tours. That situation however did not convene him at all, and in 1765 he obtained an officer's brevet in the Regiment of Foix. It is his admission in the regiment that made him decide about his philosophical career, one the one hand, because of the free time his new profession offered him, and on the other, because of his acquainting with the captain de Grainville. The latter belonged to a group that had been created by Martines de Pasqually.

## **MARTINES DE PASQUALLY**

Before going any further, it would be fair to speak a little about Martines de Pasqually, of whom Saint-Martin had been the disciple, and even the secretary. Martines's birthday and place are unknown. Some affirm that he was Jewish without however being able to establish this for certain. It has also been said that he was from Portuguese nationality, based on the fact that in 1772 he had gone to saint Domingue so as to collect some inheritance, and that Grainville, his fervent disciple, was a native from the Antilles. Others pretend that he was born in Grenoble. We acknowledge, indeed, that we know nothing certain about his origin.

During twenty years, from 1754 to 1774, year of his death, Martines de Pasqually worked incessantly on the construction of his temple of Elus-Cohens (1).

In 1754, he founds in Montpellier the Chapter of the Scottish Judges. ("Les Juges Ecossais"); in 1760 he establishes a temple of Elus-Cohens in Foix and he initiates de Grainville; in 1761 he becomes affiliated with the Loge La Française (the French Lodge) in Bordeaux and he founds a temple Cohen. In 1764 this loge La Française becomes La Française Elue Ecossaise, so as to indicate by means of the new name that it has a chapter of higher degrees. The direction of the Masonic Obedience however whence abolishing itself in 1766 all the constitutions relative to the degrees higher than the three first ones (Apprentice, Companion, and Master), the chapter finds itself suspended. It was in that

very year 1766 that Martines came to Paris and founded a Cohen Temple with Bacon de la Chevalerie, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, Fauger d'Igneacourt, the comte de Lusignan, Henri de Loos, de Grainville, etc. In 1767, he established his Sovereign Tribunal which came to regent the whole Order of Elus-Cohens.

In 1768 Martines de Pasqually met Saint-Martin who was introduced to him.

That meeting came to have some great importance for each one of them (2).

Pasqually's personality and teachings made a profound and durable impression on Saint-Martin. And Martines himself was influenced by Saint-Martin.

The latter left the military service in 1771 and became Martines's secretary.

Martines, who until then had but sketched a bit everywhere his Order Cohen in a somehow incoherent way, put order into it, and sent more precise instructions, rituals, etc.(3). We recognize right there Saint-Martin's collaboration.

In 1773, Martines leaves for Saint-Domingue, and dies on 30 September 1774.

### **THE "TREATY ON REINTEGRATION"**

Martines de Pasqually has exposed his doctrine in a book: Treaty of Reintegration of Beings in their primary properties, spiritual and divine virtues and powers (*Traite de la Reintegration des Etres dans leurs premieres propriétés, vertus et puissances spirituelles et divines*). This book was published in 1899 by the Bibliotheque Chacornac (Library). Prior to that publication, only some manuscripts were known that differed in their form of expression although their foundations remained the same.

This work is difficult to read and easily discouraging. Martines exposed his theory of the Fall and of the Reintegration. Some excerpts might give some idea about Martines's work:

"Before time, G-d emanated spiritual beings, for His own glory, in His divine immensity...thus they were free and distinct from the Creator and one cannot refuse them the free will with which they had been emanated without destroying in them the faculty, the property, the personal and spiritual virtue that were necessary to them so as to operate with precision within the boundaries where they were to exercise their power... (p. 7).

How could (these spiritual beings) they condemn the divine eternity? It is by willing to give the Eternal an emanation equal to their own, perceiving the Creator as a being similar to themselves, and that consequently spiritual creatures may be born from them who might depend at once on them in the same way that they themselves depended on the One who had emanated them. This is what we may call the principle of spiritual evil, while being assured that any bad will conceived by the spirit is always criminal before the Creator, even if the spirit would not put it into effect. It is in punishment for that

simply criminal will that the spirits have been precipitated by the Creator into places of subjection, deprivation, of misery impure and contrary to their spiritual being who used to be pure and simple by means of their emanation... (p.11-12).

Just when these demons or perverts spirits had conceived to operate their own emanating will, similar to the Creator's, they were precipitated into dark places for an immense duration of time, by the immutable will of the Creator. These fall and punishment prove us that the Creator could not ignore the thought and the will of His creation; these thought and will, good or bad, are to be heard directly by the Creator who receives or rejects them. We would therefore be wrong to say that evil comes from the Creator, under the pretext that everything emanates from Him. Out of the Creator came any spiritual being, good, saintly, and perfect: no evil is and can be emanated by Him. We may ask ourselves however, wherefrom that evil has emanated? I would say that evil is born from the spirit and it is not created..." (p. 17-18).

The *Traite de la Reintegration* is a compacted work of about four hundred pages, with no division into paragraphs or chapters. Often Martines comments the Scriptures and gives an explanation of the Hebraic names. It has been said earlier that Martines was Jewish. Here is now the distinction he makes between the meanings of the words: Jew, Hebrew, and Israelite:

"The word Jew means just; and the Judaic language means the language of the holiness of the divine Spirit that directs the operation of these just men. The word Hebrew means the posterity of a wise man whom the Scriptures call Heber; and the Hebraic language means the language of the posterity of Heber. This language is however very different from the Judaic one because there is, among the Heber posterity, none of these true men just or Jew, and that, for all the time past, no one has been created by the Eternal to instruct perfectly that posterity with the true tongue it has lost, in spite that it believes to be its own and to follow it very exactly...I am using here the word Israelite although the name of Israel was not known yet in the time of which I am speaking. Israel means strong against G-d, and Israelite means strong in G-d. That is why I give that name to the Noachites sages of Noah's posterity. All this therefore teaches us that the word Hebrew means confusion, in the same way that the name of Israel teaches it to us very perfectly, given to that people by order of the Creator, and which means strong against the Eternal. Nothing in the world is nicer and stronger toward the Creator than the prayer and invocation of the Jews, and nothing more different and more plundering than the Hebrew heart. This must not surprise us, since that people no longer possess the divine laws and that it contents itself of the ceremonial which has been taken away from it in an ignominious way..." (p.193-194).

### **SAINT-MARTIN'S "MASTERS"**

If Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin was under Martines de Pasqually's influence, there was another "master" who should not be neglected: Jacob Boehme.

Let us remember that Boehme, a German mystic, was born in 1575 and died in 1624; he wrote numerous works in a peculiar style, the terminology of which is alchemical or better, hermetical.

Saint-Martin was enthusiastic by the reading of Jacob Boehme and he translated into French several of his works.

Saint-Martin himself has summarized the influences that acted upon him in *The Portrait of Saint-Martin*, self-portrait published in his *Posthumous Works*. He wrote:

“It is a work from Abbadie entitled *The Art of Knowing Oneself* that I owe my detachment from things of this world. It is to Burlamaqui that I owe my taste for things natural about Man’s reason and justice. It is to Martines de Pasqually that I owe my introduction to higher truths. It is to Jacob Boehme that I owe the most important steps I made in these truths”.

The treaty of Jacques Abbadie: *The Art of Knowing oneself, or the research of sources of Morale* was published in 1692 and had numerous re-editing. Abbadie was a protestant theologian (1654-1727) of very great reputation. Saint-Martin was like Boehme, his posthumous disciple.

Burlamaqui, who was born and died in Geneva (1694-1748), was a jurist and a philosopher. His works have been printed under the general title *Principles of the Law of Nature and People*.

The sole master alive whom Saint-Martin dealt with was therefore Martines de Pasqually. Often it has been said that Swedenborg had influenced Saint-Martin, this is however doubtful, because Saint-Martin does not mention him. Let us remember that Swedenborg was a Swedish mystic who lived from 1699 to 1772.

## **SAINT-MARTIN’S PERSONALITY**

Saint-Martin was not a disciple, in the habitual meaning of that word. He affirmed very early his peculiar personality.

In Martines’s teachings, the “*Practical Works*”, occupy a large space. These works consisted of the evocation of what Martines named “*The Thing*”, which manifested by “*passages*”, that is to say, fleeting and luminous apparitions.

Saint-Martin rejected these operations as being too “*material*”. “*Are so many operations necessary, he said, to pray G-d?*” Saint-Martin was a Freemason, not finding in Masonry however the high spirituality that was his, he retired from it, and demanded that his name be erased from the list where he was mentioned.

Martines was also a Mason. He did above all attach himself to the institution and to the updating of high grades, but he did not succeed to reform Masonry the way he wished it.

## **THE BOOK OF “ERRORS AND TRUTH”**

Following this introduction, we will briefly study Saint-Martin’s written work.

His first work: Errors and Truth, or The Men called back to the Universal Principle of Science, was published in 1775, with the following subtitle: Work in which, while making the observers notice the uncertainty of their researches, and their continual contempt, we indicate the path to follow so as to acquire the physical evidence about the origin of good and evil, the sacred nature, the foundation of political governments, the authority of the sovereigns, civil and criminal Justice, the Languages and the Arts, by an unknown philosopher.

This work was composed by Saint-martin while he was a guest of Willermoz in Lyon.

“Willermoz and the little circle of loyal ones were acquainting with the work while Saint-Martin was writing it .They debated together on what could be said and what should not . It was not easy to decide and many times the discussions took place. The best proves about the existence of the non-material and divine world was precisely what they had sworn an inviolable secret. What degree of clarity, could one give about the notions: “on the why and how of things of which the knowledge is at all times reserved for a small number”?”

“They all agreed that such precious truths should not be expressed other than enigmatically, so as to safeguard the sacred engagements which in all centuries of the world have rigorously commanded to the initiates their silence and discretion.” (4)

This explains why the obscurities and the reticence wanted that are found in this book.

## **JEAN-BAPTISTE WILLERMOZ**

The portrait of the Willermoz we have just mentioned deserves some attention.

Willermoz was born in Lyon in 1730 and died in the same in 1824. He was initiated in Masonry as soon as 1750, and in 1753 he founded The Lodge of Perfect Friendship, of which he was elected as Venerable. He organized Masonry in the entire Lyon region and in 1762-63 he becomes Grand master of the Mother-Lodge. In 1766, following the disorders that marked Masonry, we know that the meetings were forbidden by means of an edict and that the Count of Clermont, who was Grand Master, pointed out that “the Comite Directeur de Paris” suspended its works. It was that same year that Willermoz acquainted with Martines’s Order and was admitted to it, in Versailles, by Martines himself.

In 1771, Willermoz received some instructions that emanate no longer from Martines, but rather from Saint-Martin, whose order and method he appreciated. Willermoz was a mystic very attached to the form of “experiences”, although he was constantly disappointed. Saint-Martin tried to engage him into the “inner” path, but Willermoz, who, in ordinary life was a wise merchant, and by this means, essentially “practical”, could not follow him. Willermoz needed “proves” so as to affirm his spiritualism.

## **MARTINES, SAINT-MARTIN, AND WILLERMOZ**

We should notice that these three men: Martines, Saint-Martin, and Willermoz, so different from one another, could have formed together a potent society.

Martines brought his initiator’s dynamism and his own practical knowledge of magical operations. Saint-Martin brought his high mystique, his talent as a writer and analyst; Willermoz, his organizational ability and his practical idealism.

In such a society, Martines would have been the “body”, Saint-Martin, the “spirit”, and Willermoz the “soul”, that is to say, the intermediary that binds the mind to the body.

In fact, Martines has left “Martinesism” and Saint-Martin, “Martinism”. Two teachings which, if not opposed, are nonetheless very different. The first is an “outer” path, and the second, an “inner” path.

## **THE WORKS OF SAINT-MARTIN**

Saint-Martin’s second work is *le Tableau Naturel des Rapports qui existent entre Dieu, l’Homme et l’Univers* published in 1782 (Natural Scope of Relations between G-d, Man, and the Universe). This work was printed again in 1900 by Papus, and was recently re-edited in 1946. This work contains 22 chapters and because of that number we have wished to see in it an analogy with the 22 arcans of the Tarot.

Then came: *L’Homme de Desir* (the Man of desire); *Ecce Homo* (1792); *Le Nouvel Homme* (1792) (the New Man); *Considerations Philosophiques et religieuses sur la Revolution Française* (1797) (Philosophical and religious considerations on the French revolution); *Éclair sur l’Association Humaine* (1797) (On Human Association); *le Crocodile ou la Guerre du bien et du mal* (1798) (the crocodile or the war between good and evil); *le Ministère de l’Homme-Esprit* (1802) (The Ministry of the Man-Spirit). This is only the citation of his principal works.

Saint-Martin translated some of Jacob Boehme’s works, notably: *l’Aurore Naissante ou la Racine de la Philosophie* (the Nascent Dawn, or the root of philosophy); *de l’Astrologie et de la Theologie* (on Astrology and Theology). This work was published in 1800 and a reprinting (in French) was done in Milan in 1927.

This book is a marriage between Boehme’s and Saint-Martin’s thought. To this effect, the latter wrote in his introduction:

“My readers will agree that my task as a translator had in itself enough difficulties, when they learn that the most advanced knowledgeable ones of the German tongue have pain to comprehend Boehme’s language, either because of his antique style, rough and somewhat untidy, or because of the depth of the subjects he is treating, so foreign to the ordinary men. When they know, above all, that in these types of topics, the German tongue has numerous wording, each one containing an infinity of different meanings; that my author has constantly those undecided words, and that I had to seize and vary the precise determination according to the diverse occurrences...”.

## **EXCERPTS OF SAINT-MARTIN’S WORKS**

In order to offer a glimpse of saint-Martin’s doctrine, or Martinism, we will quote some passages of his works, extracted from the collection published by Andre Tanner in 1946.

Here is firstly: “Origine et Fin de l’Homme” (Man’s origin and end), extracted from le Tableau Naturel. In this passage we may sense well Martines de Pasqually’s influence and that of the Doctrine of Reintegration.

“Let us distance ourselves from those criminal and senseless ideas about that nothingness, to which some blind men teach that we owe our origin. Let us not weaken our being: it is made for a sublime distinction, but it can only be no more than its Principle since according to the simple physical laws the beings cannot elevate themselves more than to the degree from which they had descended. Nonetheless those laws would cease to be true and universal, if the Man’s principle would be the nothingness. Everything however announces us enough our rapport with the center itself, being the producer of immaterial universality, and of the corporal universality, since all our efforts tend to continually appropriate one and the other, and attach to them all the virtues around us.

Let us observe that this doctrine, about the emanation of man’s intellectual being, agrees with the one which teaches us that all our discoveries in some way, are nothing but reminiscences .We may even say that these two doctrines mutually support one another: and if we are emanated from a universal source of truth, then no truth must seem new to us; reciprocally, if no truth seems new to us, and if we only perceive the memory of or the representation of that which was hidden in ourselves, we must have taken knowledge of it in the universal source of truth...” We may advance that all beings created and emanated in a temporal region, and Man consequently, toil at the same work, which is to recover their resemblance with their principle, that is to say, to grow unceasingly till they come to a point of producing their own fruit, just as they have produced their own within themselves. That is why Man, having the reminiscence of Light and Truth, proves that he has descended from a sojourn of Light and Truth...” (pp. 51-54).

The following considerations about time and space are utterly metaphysical:

“Time is nothing but an interval between two actions: it is nothing but a contraction, a suspension, in the faculties of a being. And each year, each month, each week, each day,

each hour, each moment, the higher principle takes away and returns the powers to the beings, and it is that alternative what forms time. Meanwhile I can add that the surface experiences equally that alternative, that it is submitted to the same progressions than time: which makes that time and space are proportional. Lastly, let us consider time like the space contained between two lines that form an angle. The further the beings are from the vertex of the angle, the more they have to subdivide their action to complete it or to run the space from one line to the other; on the contrary, the closer they are to that top angle]]]]], the more their action simplifies itself: let us judge by this which must be the simplification of action in the Principle-Being, who himself is the vertex of the angle. This being having not to run more than the unity of its own essence to reach the fullness of all its acts and of all its powers, time are absolutely null for him..." (p. 91-92).

Here is a passage which our modern physicians would not disclaim:

"It is unquestionable that matter does not exist solely by movement; because we see that when the bodies are deprived of the one who is given to him for a while, they dissolve and disappear insensibly It is as ascertained by this same observation that the movement that gives life to a body, does not belong to them, not properly, since we see him cease within themselves, before they ceased to be sensitive in our eyes; also, we cannot doubt that they be absolutely in his dependence since the cessation of that movement is the first act of their destruction. Let us conclude therefore that if all disappears as the movement withdraws, it is obvious that the surface does not exist solely by the movement, which is well different from saying that the movement is at the surface and in the surface... (p. 95). Excerpts from Errors and Truth."

For Saint-Martin the candidate to spiritual initiation is called "The Man of Desire". Here are some lines from the "Ministry of the Man-Spirit (Ministere de l'Homme-Esprit) to enlighten this designation:

"On the one hand the magnificence of Man's natural destiny is not to be able to be partial truly and radically produce everything. This only thing is the desire of G-d; all the other things that lead Man, the man is not partial to them; he is the slave or the toy of it. On the other hand, the magnificence of his ministry is to be able really and radically act only according to the positive order pronounced to him at any instant , as if by a master to his servant and this, by the sole authority that might be equitable, good, consequent, efficacious, and conform with the eternal desire."

## **MARTINISM IS CHRISTIAN BUT NOT CATHOLIC**

We have said with reason that Martinism was essentially Christian, because it refers fundamentally to the Christian religion independently of any cultural form, but it is not catholic. To be convinced, it suffices to refer to Saint-Martin's certain attacks against Catholicism:

„Catholicism to which belongs properly the title of religion, is the path of tests and of work to arrive at Christianity. Christianity is a region of enfranchisement and of liberty;

Catholicism is nothing but the seminary of Christianity; it is the region of rules and discipline of the neophyte.

The exercise of these very faculties Christianity fills the whole world as an equal to G-d's spirit. Catholicism does not fill but a part of the globe, although the title that it bears presents itself as universal.

Christianity carries our faith up to the enlightened abode of the divine eternal word; Catholicism limits that faith to the limits of the written word or of the traditions.

Christianism dilates and expends the use of our intellectual faculties. Catholicism tightens and circumscribes. Christianity shows us G-d uncovered in the bosom of our being, without the assistance of forms and formulas. Catholicism leaves it up to us to find G-d under the mechanism of ceremonies. Christianity has no monasteries, no anchorites, because it cannot isolate itself more than the sunlight, and because it searches like it to spread everywhere its splendor. It is Catholicism that has crowded the desert with solitaries, and the towns with religious communities, some to abandon themselves more fruitfully to their particular salvation, some others to offer the corrupt world some images of virtue and piety that may wake it up from its lethargy.

Christianity has no sect, since it embraces unity, and unity being alone cannot be divided from within. Catholicism has seen the birth in its bosom of multitude of schisms and sects which have brought further the reign of division more than that of concord; and that Catholicism itself when it believes to be in its most perfect degree of purity barely finds two of its members whose belief is uniform. Christianity has aroused no more than war against sin; Catholicism has aroused it against Men. (p.163 and sq.)”

### **SAINT-MARTIN'S TEACHINGS**

Martinism, of which it has been said that basically was just a philosophy like the „Cartesianism” of Descartes, or the „Spinozism” of Spinoza, is a very high form of spirituality that gives a vision of the world detached from any material contingency to the one who has the ability to possess it.

“Man, while discovering the science of his own greatness, learns that by leaning on a universal base his Intellectual Being becomes the true temple, that the torches which must enlighten him are the lights of the thought that surround him and follow him everywhere; that the Sacrificer, is his own confidence in the necessary existence of the Principle of order and of life; it is that burning and fecund persuasion before which death and darkness disappear; that the perfumes and offerings are his prayers, his desire, his zeal, for the reign of the exclusive Unity; that the altar, it is that eternal convention founded on his own emanation, and to which G-d and Man come, one, to find his glory, the other, his happiness. In one word, may the fire destined to holocausts, that fire which would never die. It is that divine spark placed on the path of the Throne of the Eternal, so as to enlighten the footsteps of those who had gone apart from it.; because finally Man must

not doubt that he had received the existence solely to be the living witness of Light and of Divinity.”

This citation from the Tableau Naturel shows well that for Saint-Martin it is the Spirit of Man that is the sole and true Temple.

### **KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO SAINT-MARTIN**

Truth bursts in each phenomenon of the Universe. Intimate Knowledge is accessible to each one if he knows how to meditate and understand. Such is the introduction of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, in the Tableau Naturel. To this effect we can compare the Universe to a book:

The First Cause being the writer, or Nature Naturing.  
Nature, the book writes, or Nature Natured.  
Man being the reader.

This reader however does not understand, or he understands poorly, the exact meaning of the pages of the book. In order to have that intelligence, it is necessary to have patient meditations.

Saint-Martin perceives two natures in Man: the sensitive being, and the intellectual being. The first manifests in impulsion of the senses and the second, in the deliberation of the spirit.

The creative thought is superior and anterior to the object created by man, who “thinks his machine before machining his thought”.

From what or whom from does Man hold his faculty for thinking?

From what does he hold his physical being? It is impossible to think that “random” only could produce the world. Before any machine built by Man can we know the inventor, first his physical being, then his spiritual faculties, just by examining the machine?

Nonetheless the materialists while scrutinizing the world observe that the machine is made to function, they examine attentively the whole mechanism, they gaze at the exact and precise role of all the organs and astonish themselves when a possible “inventor” is admitted outside the machine! Our discoveries, in all domains, only make manifest the rapport that exists between our own light and things. That dependence of Man in relation to sensible things gives him the idea of a force and of a supreme and unique wisdom. All the philosophical and religious doctrines tend toward Unity.

Martinism is utterly the doctrine of Unity. No religion, no philosophy can respect more than Martinism the individualism of those who have rallied to it. This doctrine elevates Man spiritually and “inwardly”. This is why it is truly esoteric.

## MARTINIST ORDERS AND RITES

If we cannot prove that Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin has ever formed a group having a form, and a structure, it is because the documents are missing. If however he had formed a true secret society, there has been no archives and the members could have been bound by a non-transgressible oath (5).

Moreover, van Rijnbeck signals (6) three texts that are in favor of the hypothetical group formed by Saint-Martin. These texts are the following:

A passage in *Souvenirs du Comte de Gleichen* who reports that Saint-Martin had created in Paris a small school.

A friend of Varnhagen Von Ense dated 1821, where can be read: “Saint-Martin decided to found himself a society with the goal would be the “purest society”.

A letter, author unknown that was addressed 20 December 1794 to Professor Koster. It speaks of Saint-Martin and of the members of his “intimate circle”. In it, there is, properly said, a question of a “Society of Saint-Martin” and of a subsidiary of Strasbourg of that society.

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In *Masonic Orthodoxy* Ragon notes the existence of a Martinist Rite including firstly ten grades that were later reduced to seven.

It is improbable that Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin has ever, in no epoch, created a “Martinistic Masonic Rite”.

There has been very early some confusion between the first name Pasqually: Martines is the very name of Saint-Martin. From there the appellation “Martinist” applied indifferently to the Masonry of Martines and to the disciples of Saint-Martin. Albert Lantoine, a scholarly Masonic historian, also made that confusion; in *La Franc-Maconnerie de chez Elle*” speaks of the rite of the Elus-Cohens of Pasqually; he wrote:

“One of the adepts, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, known as the Unknown Philosopher, is so seduced by the system that he commits himself to perfection it. He creates a dissident branch, a little more complicated than the first one, where the Swedish Swedenborg’s mystical reveries blend with the German Jacob Boehme. Of course he adds, he too imagines new grades...”

Albert Lantoine adopted without verification, his predecessors’ theses. It is unconceivable that Saint-Martin, who had retired from Masonry would have created a particular rite and, above all, that he would have given it his name.

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It is in 1887 that Papus created a Martinist Order whose “subsidiaries” are discussible. He knew how to give that Order a rather great impulsion since he lasted till his death in 1916.

It was Teder (Charles Detre) who succeeded him, then Jean Bricaud. In 1913 a certain Ritual of the Martinist Order appeared under Teder’s signature, with approval of Phaneg, who was secretary of the Sovereign Council, and of Papus, who was Grand master of the Order.

Under Bricaud’s Grand mastery the Order did not admit but 3<sup>rd</sup>. Degree Masons, of the grade of Master. The Martinist order (named Martinist Order of Lyon) continued its existence with Chevillon as a Grand Master. We know that the latter was assassinated by some militia members during the Occupation.

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Victor Blanchard, who was substitute for the Grand Master of the Ordre Martiniste, did not want to accept Bricaud’s Grand Mastery; he retired and founded a Martinist and Synarchique Order, of which he was recognized as Grand Master. The adjective “synarchique” does not let understand that this Order had anything in common with the political movement known as “Synarchy”.

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In 1931 some members of the Sovereign Council of the Martinist order founded by Papus, which did not admit Bricaud’s initiatives and who did not want to rally with Blanchard, created “L’Ordre Martiniste Traditionnel” of which Victor-Emile Michelet, then Augustin Chaboseau were successively Grand Masters. This Order fell asleep in 1939. In September 1945 the O.M.T. strengthened with vigor under the Grand Mastery of Augustin Chaboseau. The latter died in January 1946 and he designated his son Jean Chaboseau as his successor as a Grand Master. Jean Chaboseau did not obtain unanimity of the Sovereign Council, of which several members left and retired from the Order. In September 1947, he abdicated by himself while affirming the “non-legitimacy” of such Martinist Order

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By one of the members of Augustin Chaboseau’s Sovereign Council a Rectified Martinist Order was founded 1948.

We can therefore establish now the table of the different Martinist Orders:

Martinist Order of Papus, now disappeared. (O.M.P.)

Synarchique Martinist Order of Blanchard. (O.M.S.)

Martinist Order of Lyon.

Traditional Martinist Order. (O.M.T)

Rectified Martinist Order. (O.M.R.)

Let us signal that in 1946 a society was founded entitled “Les Amis de Saint-Martin”, a society which, while it rejected all aspect of obedience proposed to form circles of study (study groups).

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Without falling back in Papus and Teder’s errors that made from their own Martinist Order a copy of Masonry by their Ritual, it is legitimate to think that a society without structure is not viable. Moreover it is to notice that it is its structure itself that gives to masonry its vitality and its longevity.

Also, the Rectified Martinist Order has established some frame rather supple that respect individualism that characterizes true Martinism, and rigid enough nonetheless so that the order may not disaggregate itself with the least air blow.

The Martinist Order confers the S.I. degree. Many meanings have been given to these two letters, Superieur Inconnu, Sovereign Judge (degree of Martines’ Elus-Cohens), Societe des Inities (Society of Initiates), Societe Inconnue (Society Unknown), Sage Inconnu (Sage Unknown), etc...Some even went up to see in these two letters the initials of the Society of Jesus! (7).

The O.M.R. gives to these two letters the meaning of “Sage Initie”, that is to say, in a simple way, “Placed on the Path of Wisdom”. Here is the Declaration of this Order’s principle:

I. The O.M.R. is a spiritualistic grouping uniting, fraternally all those who admit the necessity of an individual and collective redemption, based on the teachings of L.-C. de Saint-Martin.

II. Conformity with the teachings of Saint-Martin, the O.M.R. recognizes the truth of the Fall of Man and affirms the necessity of Reconciliation of Man with his Principle.

III. The O.M.R. joins the Tradition Chretienne (Christian Tradition) in what it contains as “truly universal” but could not be alleged to any exoterism whatsoever. The initiatic heritage preserved and transmitted by the O.M.R. is a transcendent spiritualism. The O.M.R. respects the different forms of the Tradition, which are but some fragmentation of the Primordial Tradition.

Here is first an excerpt from the general rules:

“The Martinist initiation does not have more than one degree, that of S.I. This degree is conferred only to those who justify a sufficient knowledge of the doctrine and works of L.-C. de Saint-Martin and who declare their adhering to the Principles of O.M.R. The O.M.R. wants sincere Martinists and does not confer the initiation of which it is the transmitter to those who are not qualified to receive it.”

## **CONCLUSION**

In this summary exposed, many points have been voluntarily left out. It was only about giving a broad view that would not be too imperfect. If it is not easy to give a resume of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, such as it is evidenced in his works, it is however more difficult to untangle the facts about his history; we hurt ourselves unceasingly to an entanglement that makes this task very hard. If curiosity has not entirely satisfied, at least, perhaps has it has been triggered. Such was our desire and we wish to have succeeded.

**Jules BOUCHER**

Footnotes:

- (1) Cohen is a Hebrew word meaning ‘priest’.
- (2) See Gérard Van Rijnberk, *Martinès de Pasqually*, T. I (1935).
- (3) *Idem*, p. 24
- (4) Alice Joly, *Un Mystique Lyonnais (a Mystic from Lyon)*(1938), pp. 57-58.
- (5) It is necessary to make a distinction between the secret societies that are not necessarily known, and the discrete societies, such as Masonry, which are known societies.
- (6) Van Rijnberk, *op. cit.*, p. 111 et ss.
- (7) *Idem*, T. II, pp. 34-35.

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