

GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET Institutionen för religionsvetenskap		Document name DOCTORAL DISSERTATION	Date of issue 2003-10-24
GÖTEBORG UNIVERSITY Department of Religious studies		Project name	
		Sponsoring organization	
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Title (Swedish) Från Mörker till Ljus. Västerländska Esoteriska Initiationsritualer			
Title (English) From Darkness to Light. Western Esoteric Rituals of Initiation			
<p>The purpose of this study is twofold; first, on a more general level, I wish to present the development of the phenomenon of, what I call, "masonic rituals of initiation" from an historical perspective. By masonic rituals of initiation I do not merely mean rituals of initiation of Freemasonry, but also rituals deriving from Freemasonry which have certain structural components in common with the former. Second, I will analyse the relationship between masonic rituals of initiation and western esotericism, and thus analyse how esotericism is transmitted through, what I call, "western esoteric rituals of initiation". In this connection I will address two basic questions: How is western esotericism transmitted through the western esoteric rituals of initiation? And: What "types" of esotericism are transmitted? The study thus consequently covers two fields of research, rituals of initiation and western esotericism.</p> <p>The first two chapters are devoted to the previous research of western esotericism and rituals of initiation. In the third chapter an historical background of western esotericism is outlined, offered as an introduction to readers unfamiliar with the history of western esotericism. It stretches from the Renaissance to the publication of the so-called Rosicrucian manifestos at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although there probably never existed a secret Rosicrucian fraternity at this period, the idea of secret or closed societies who were considered to be guardians of an esoteric doctrine, was firmly imbedded in western culture as a result of the publication of, and the subsequent debate on, these manifestos. Chapter four is devoted to an analysis of the Craft rituals of Freemasonry – the blueprints, as it were, of all later masonic rituals of initiation. It covers the period from 1697 to 1730, during which the masonic system of initiation developed from a system of two degrees, to a three-degree system. Chapter five deals with so-called high or additional degrees of Freemasonry, exemplified through an analysis of the ritual of True Mason, or Académie des Vrais Maçons, of the <i>Rite Ecossais philosophique</i>. In chapter six the most influential of all nineteenth century occultist initiatory societies, <i>The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn</i>, is discussed, and its Neophyte ritual is analysed. Finally, chapter eight is devoted to the first western esoteric initiatory New Religious Movement in the true sense of the word, Gerald Gardner's witchcraft movement of the 1950'ies.</p>			
Keyword / Indexing Western esotericism, rituals of initiation, ritual studies, Freemasonry, Wicca, Occultism		Security	
		Language English	
Supplemental bibliographical information and index		Pages vii, 271	Classification
ISSN 1102-9773	ISBN 91-88348-30-X		

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