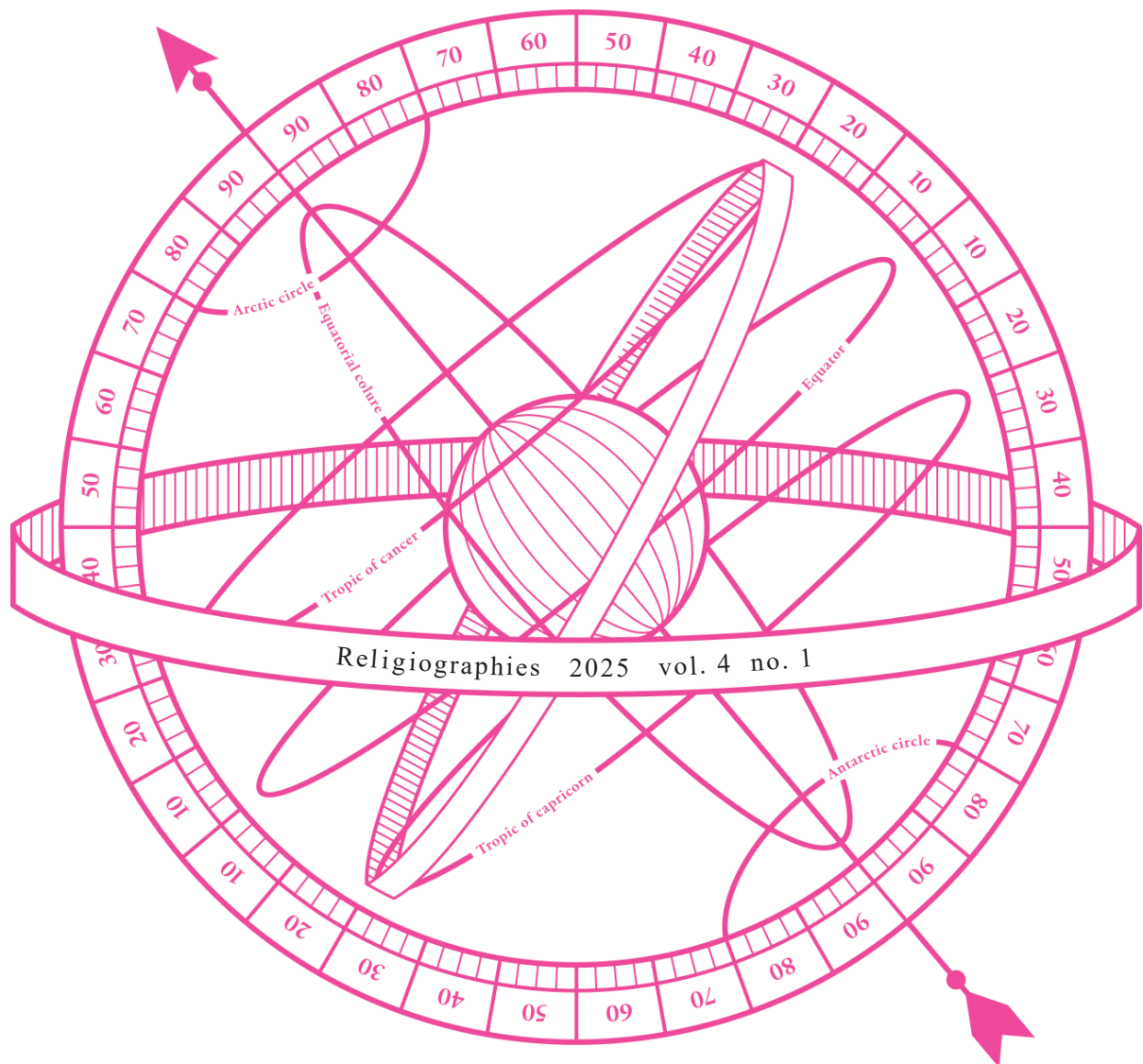


Religiographies



Special Issue

“The Eranos Experience: Spirituality and the Arts
in a Comparative Perspective”

edited by

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

The *Blue Book* of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Founder of Eranos¹

RICCARDO BERNARDINI
and FABIO MERLINI

Authors

Riccardo Bernardini
Eranos Foundation, Ascona
bernardini@eranosfoundation.org
Fabio Merlini
Eranos Foundation, Ascona
info@eranosfoundation.org

Keywords

Eranos, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Carl Gustav Jung, *Blue Book*, Meditation Plates, Visions

To cite this

Bernardini, Riccardo and Fabio Merlini. "The *Blue Book* of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Founder of Eranos." *Religiographies* 4, no. 1 (2025): 7–39. <https://doi.org/10.69125/Religio.2025.v4.n1.7-39>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69125/Religio.2025.v4.n1.7-39>

Abstract

The artworks of Eranos founder Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962) can be traced to two specific styles and periods. The first phase was essential for a series of "Meditation Plates," painted between 1926–1927 and 1934, and particularly during her collaboration with the theosophist and esotericist Alice Ann Bailey (1880–1949) for the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1930–1932), which preceded the creation of the Eranos Conferences in Ascona in 1933. The second phase concerns a collection of "Visions," arranged in twelve blue-bound albums and drawn between 1934 and 1938: these are the crucial years of the beginning of Fröbe-Kapteyn's cultural enterprise, Eranos. They also mark the beginning of her enduring intellectual relationship with psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), who was one of the main sources of inspiration at the Eranos Conferences. That period also coincides with her research on iconographic material for which Jung provided the impetus, which in turn led to the creation of the Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism (now at the Warburg Institute). In this contribution, written from the perspective of the Eranos Foundation, the authors trace the origins of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's interest in symbolism, describe her artistic corpus, which we rubricate under the name "Blue Book," and summarize the exhibition and publishing projects to date devoted to her pictorial work.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons [Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International]
To view a copy of this license, visit:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

Introduction

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) was one of the main sources of inspiration at the Eranos Conferences. The publication of the *Liber Novus* or *The Red Book*² and, more recently, *The Art of C.G. Jung*³ and the *Black Books*⁴ highlighted the conjunction between his personal life path, his imaginative world, and the construction of his scientific thought. Until now, some allusions by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962), the creator of the Eranos symposia,⁵ about the connection between existence, fantasy, and creativity seem less comprehensible. For example, she stated, “I beg your pardon if I am speaking through images! This is the way my mind works.”⁶ And again: “The story of Eranos can be found in an unwritten book, which I often leaf through, read, examine, and compare—I also look at the pictures, since there are many of them in this book—and search for the connections that form the whole in a meaningful and unifying way. The overall figure, the pattern that becomes visible, is so twisted and intertwined with the pattern of my life that it is indeed difficult to separate them”⁷ (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn and Carl Gustav Jung near the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, in Ascona-Moscia, in August 1935. Ph. Margarethe Fellerer. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Fröbe-Kapteyn’s words have been now clarified by the unpublished anthology of her artworks, which we rubricate under the name “Blue Book,” traceable to two distinct styles and periods: the “Meditation Plates” phase (c. 1926–1934) and the “Visions” phase (1934–1938).

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn’s Interest in Art and Symbolism⁸

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn was born on October 19, 1881, to Dutch parents, who lived at 7 South Villas in Bloomsbury, London.

Her father, Albertus Philippus Kapteyn (or Kapteijn, 1848–1927),

1

An early version of this contribution, expanded and updated here, was previously published as Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini, “Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962): A Woman’s Individuation Process through Images at the Origins of the Eranos Conferences,” *ARAS Connections: Image and Archetype* 4 (2020): 1–18. A further version of that study was then released, in Italian, as Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini, “L’arte di Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, fondatrice di Eranos,” *Rivista di Psicologia Analitica* 108, no. 56 (2024): 281–303 and as “L’arte di Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, fondatrice di Eranos,” in Veronica Cacioli, ed., *Arte, mistica, comunità* 2, 2nd ed. (Milan: Postmedia Srl, 2024), 34–44 (Atti del convegno tenuto al Museo delle Culture, Lugano, 11 e 12 febbraio 2022); a revised Italian/English bilingual edition was then reissued as Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini, “The Blue Book of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Founder of Eranos,” in *Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artista-ricercatrice*, ed. Raphael Gyga (Locarno: Museo Casa Rusca; Ascona: Fondazione Eranos; Bellinzona: Casa grande, in collaboration with Kunsthalle Mainz, 2024), 44–51, volume published at the occasion of the exhibition *Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artista-ricercatrice*, Museo Casa Rusca, Locarno, 8 agosto 2024–12 gennaio 2025; the current version, which originated from these earlier contributions and now significantly expanded, will be republished in the volume by Riccardo Bernardini, *The Art of the Self: The Blue Book of Eranos Founder Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn*, foreword by Fabio Merlini, preface by Murray Stein, afterword by Her Royal Highness Irene of The Netherlands, Princess of Orange-Nassau and Lippe-Biesterfeld, Zurich Lecture Series 2025 (Asheville, NC: Chiron, 2025).

2

Carl Gustav Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2009).

3

Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Ulrich Hoerni, Thomas Fischer, and Bettina Kaufmann, eds., *The Art of C. G. Jung* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018).

4

Carl Gustav Jung, *The Black Books*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani, 7 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2020).

5

For a panoramic view of Eranos, see Hans Thomas Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos: Unbekannte Begegnungen von Wissenschaft und Esoterik; Eine alternative Geistesgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bretten: Scientia nova-Neue Wissenschaft, 2001), later revised and expanded as *Eranos: An Alternative Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2013). On Jung’s involvement in the Eranos project and a bibliography on the subject (updated 2011), see more specifically, Riccardo Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos: Il progetto della psicologia complessa* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011). For a list of Eranos Foundation

in addition to being an avid photographer and friend of entrepreneur and photography pioneer George Eastman (1854–1932),⁹ was a mechanical engineer and worked as a director of the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company in London from 1880 to 1900. He was in charge of supervising the installation of Westinghouse materials for the Trans-Siberian Railway, later becoming vice-president of Westinghouse's activities for the entire European area. Son of Gerrit Jacobus Kapteijn (1812–1879), boarding school owner, and Elisabeth Cornelia Koomans (1814–1896), among his fifteen brothers were theologians, engineers, scientists, and also the famous astronomer Jacobus Cornelius Kapteyn (1851–1922).¹⁰ In 1909, Albertus Kapteyn was also the first chairman of the aviation department of the Royal Dutch Aviation Association.¹¹

Fröbe-Kapteyn's mother, Geertruida (Truus) Agneta Kapteyn-Muysken (1855–1920), was instead involved in various movements for women's emancipation and social renewal.¹² Daughter of Antoine Charles Muysken (1803–1868), notary and mayor of Hillegom, and Constantia Susanna Commelin (1810–1864), she was the youngest in a large family in Hillegom: twelve children were born before her, six of whom died in infancy. She grew up with two brothers and four sisters. Her mother died when she was nine, her father when she was thirteen.¹³ She was friends with Dutch pacifist and anarchist Bartholomeus (Bart) de Ligt (1883–1938);¹⁴ anarchist communist theorist Pyotr Alekseevič Kropotkin (1842–1921), who, based on her writings and personality, told her: “You are a great anarchist without knowing it”;¹⁵ socialist politician and later anarchist Ferdinand Jacobus Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846–1919);¹⁶ lawyer and anarchist feminist activist Clara Gertrud Wichmann (1885–1922);¹⁷ and playwright and socialist George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950).¹⁸ Through family connections, Fröbe-Kapteyn in her younger years had the opportunity to spend time with Ellen Key (1849–1926),¹⁹ the Swedish writer and feminist whom she deeply admired: “She is a great woman—Kapteyn wrote at the age of 20 to her friend Marie Charlotte Carmichael Stopes (1880–1958),—the greatest of our time.”²⁰

Fröbe-Kapteyn's parents were married in Haarlem on December 21, 1880. In 1881, the young couple moved to London, where Kapteyn was appointed general manager of the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company. Olga (“Olly”) Kapteyn was the eldest of three children. The second child, May (1883–1972), lived in Holland and—after her amicable separation from art historian Jan Kalf (1873–1954), Chief Restorer of Dutch churches—in Paris, where she was active in the resistance during World War II. She had no children.²¹ The third son, Albert (1886–1964), graduated in mechanical engineering in Zurich; enamored with the United States, he moved there soon after marrying. Beyond a temporary move to The Hague (where their parents owned a house, later sold) from 1937 to December 1939 for professional reasons (he was the European representative for United Aircraft, conducting business at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, mostly with KLM), Albert remained in the US permanently. He had two children, Polly Kapteyn Brown and James Kapteyn.²²

If we wanted to pinpoint the origins of Olga Kapteyn's interest in art, we would probably have to turn our gaze far back to the very beginnings of her personal history. She herself acknowledged in fact

publications over the years, see Nancy Cater and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., “Eranos: Its Magical Past and Alluring Future; The Spirit of a Wondrous Place,” *Spring: A Journal of Archetype and Culture* 92 (2015). For a list of the *Eranos Yearbooks*, lecturers, and contents, see Fabio Merlini and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., *Eranos in the Mirror: Views on a Moving Heritage/Eranos allo specchio: Sguardi su una eredità in movimento* (Ascona: Aragno*Eranos Ascona, 2019) and, further updated, in *Eranos Yearbook* 76 (2022, 2023, 2024).

6

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “An Attempt at Definition and Description of Eranos and of the *Eranos-Jahrbücher*” (unpublished typescript, 1953; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

7

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Vortrag” (unpublished typescript, 1939; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

8

The main biographical information on Fröbe-Kapteyn is contained to date in the unpublished works by Gerhard Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte” (unpublished typescript, 1995–1996; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), and Catherine Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn” (unpublished typescript, undated; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), as well as in the aforementioned works by Hakl and Bernardini. Information about her early years comes from the correspondence with Marie Stopes (now at the British Library), which we were able to access thanks to the transcripts kindly provided by Maite Karssenbergh in April 2024, based on her research for her forthcoming work on the life and work of Geertruida Kapteyn-Muysken.

9

Albertus Kapteyn wrote a number of articles for various trade journals such as *Lux* in 1914 and 1915 and *Focus* in 1917. (Augustus J. Veenendaal, Jr., “Kapteijn, Albertus Philippus [1848–1927],” in *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*, <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn2/kapteijnap>).

10

Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn,” 1–4.

11

Veenendaal, “Kapteijn, Albertus Philippus (1848–1927).”

12

Veenendaal, “Kapteijn, Albertus Philippus (1848–1927),” 4–6. Geertruida Agneta Kapteyn-Muysken suffered from psychological problems and went through a number of hospitalizations; she lived in a time before the advent of Psychology and, for this reason, as Fröbe-Kapteyn recognized, she could not receive proper treatment. (See Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vision Meine Mutter” [unpublished typescript, February 15–27, 1957; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia], 5). Kapteyn-Muysken

that her predisposition for iconography and symbolism could be traced back to her childhood years, when her father Albertus was processing photographic film in the darkroom of their in their Bloomsbury home, under the curious gaze of his daughter.²³

Every Sunday evening, moreover, Albertus used to read to his three children large, richly illustrated volumes: in particular, Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and a voluminous edition of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Olly, May, and Albert listened spellbound as he read to them aloud and recounted the characters. This custom went on for years and years. They grew up with these two books, fascinated and "filled" by the fantastic and compelling illustrations in them: "They were our inner world of images," Fröbe-Kapteyn still vividly recalled in the last years of her life.²⁴

Fröbe-Kapteyn's predisposition for symbolic art can also be traced back to her schooling and, in general, to the cultural environment in which she lived. She attended the North London Collegiate, a renowned girls' school open to children from the age of 4. Even at a very young age, she also had the opportunity to visit important European museums with her family: for example, in Paris, in 1899, the Louvre (she was particularly impressed by the works of Rubens and Rembrandt), and Notre-Dame. A portrait by Willem Witsen (1860–1923), the famous Dutch painter and photographer associated with the Amsterdam Impressionism movement, depicts a teenage Olly and is still on display at Eranos today.

Beginning in 1901, after moving to Zurich with her family because of Albert's work on January 18, 1900,²⁵ Kapteyn began working every morning in the studio of the chief draughtsman at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts or School of Applied Arts), from 9 a.m. to noon, also taking violin lessons. In addition, she devoted herself weekly to botanical drawing sessions. She was then Admitted to the Gewerbeschule (Drawing School) in early May 1901 and practiced intensive training in drawing for many hours a day, from 7 a.m. (with wake-up at 5:30 a.m.) to noon and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Alongside her training in drawing and tailoring, she also had the opportunity to listen to some university lectures on theoretical and clinical psychology. In 1904, she also worked four days a week in the metalworking department of a school of applied arts in Haarlem, where she learned everything she needed to know about metalworking—chiseling, hammering, firing, design, and welding—for her field. She became very skilled at sewing, embroidery, and jewelry making.

Among her many trips to Europe in those years, the trip to Florence helped imprint on her memory the magnificence of the art galleries, incomparable with anything else she had seen up to that time. During this period, she also traveled to the Swiss mountains with her father and brothers for strenuous mountaineering led by mountain guides. She was impressed by the majesty of the glaciers, with their peaks, crevasses, and seracs.²⁶ She also enjoyed the contemplative quiet of Lake Zurich, which she would experience again years later, on the shores of Lake Maggiore.

From 1906 to 1909, Kapteyn continued her education in art history at the University of Zurich. In 1908 she purportedly worked as a horsewoman in a circus²⁷ and, a skilled and trained skier,²⁸ she may

died on 5 September 1920 in a psychiatric institution in Arnhem. (Maite Karssenber, "Muysken, Geertruida Agneta," in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Muysken>).

13

Karssenber, "Muysken, Geertruida Agneta."

14

Bart de Ligt and his wife Catharina Lydia (Ina) de Ligt-van Rossem—who signed the Eranos Guestbook in 1935—were portrayed by Margarethe Fellerer in a series of photographs, still held by the Eranos Foundation Archives.

15

Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 5; Kropotkin spent some months in Cannobio, Ascona, and Locarno in 1908, 1909, 1911, and 1913. Cf. Hans Manfred Bock and Florian Tennstedt, "Raphael Friedeberg: Medico e anarchico ad Ascona," in *Monte Verità: Antropologia locale come contributo alla riscoperta di una topografia sacrale moderna*, Harald Szeemann, ed., (Locarno: Armando Dadò; Milano: Electa, 1978), 43.

16

Tjeu van den Berk, *In de ban van Jung: Nederlanders ontdekken de analytische psychologie* (Alblasserdam: Meinema, 2014), § 6: "De grote moeder en haar held. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962)."

17

van den Berk, *In de ban van Jung*.

18

George Bernard Shaw visited Ascona in the 1920s, staying with the writer Emil Ludwig (1881–1948) (cfr. Theo Kneubühler, "Gli artisti, gli scrittori e il Canton Ticino (dal 1900 ad oggi)," in *Monte Verità*, ed. Szeemann, 176), who owned a property adjacent to Fröbe-Kapteyn's land.

19

See, e.g., Luisa Ceccarelli, "Ellen Key e la rete delle scuole nuove in europa (1899–1914)," (PhD diss., Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, 2020), 73.

20

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, July 26, 1901 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenber). Stopes became a paleontologist and paleobotanist.

21

It seems that Fröbe-Kapteyn was never on particularly good terms with her sister May, whom she used to dismiss bluntly as a "communist" (Rudolf Ritsema, personal communication to Riccardo Bernardini, September 5, 2003, Ascona-Moscia). According to Fröbe-Kapteyn, the hatred that had always existed between the two was an expression of deep jealousy, since May was always their father's favorite, who had instead oppressed and underestimated Olga. May also acted as a barrier

have been among the first women to climb Mont Blanc.²⁹ In 1908, her parents returned to the Netherlands and Scheveningen became their home.³⁰

On May 13, 1909, Kapteyn married flutist and conductor Iwan Fröbe (1880–1915), an Austro-Hungarian citizen but Slovenian by birth. The couple had met in Zurich while enjoying the winter sports they both loved.³¹ Their wedding took place in London in a Dutch Reformed Church ceremony.³²

After a brief stay in Munich, the Fröbe couple moved to Berlin in 1914.³³ Their acquaintance with writer André Jolles (1874–1946) was facilitated by their shared residence in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. Jolles had known the Kapteyn-Muysken family for a long time. One of his best friends, Jan Kalf, would marry Fröbe-Kapteyn's sister, May.³⁴ Jolles was a philologist and scholar of classical literature, an art lover, and a devotee of Italian culture: between 1894 and 1900, he resided in Florence, making the acquaintance of Aby Warburg (1866–1929). Jolles had created a cultural circle in Berlin that brought together writers, painters, and musicians. In their small wooden house on Hohenzollernstrasse, Iwan Fröbe used to delight those present with excellent chamber music.³⁵ In 1911, Jolles also founded a sewing circle, "The Needle." Fröbe-Kapteyn participated in this circle together with her close friend Annemarie Pallat (1875–1972), who like her lived in Wannsee with her husband, the archaeologist and educationalist Ludwig Pallat (1867–1946), co-founder and director of the Berlin Center for Education and Teaching and one of the leading reformers of art education in secondary schools.³⁶ Jolles loved to make women's dresses inspired by the fashion of ancient Greece: cuts were kept to a minimum and their beauty came almost exclusively from the play of the fabric's natural folds. Fröbe-Kapteyn embellished her sartorial creations with refined embroidery: one of her silk blouses with colorful embroidery was exhibited in 1916 as part of a textile exhibition at the Museum of Applied Arts in Zurich.³⁷

Returning to Switzerland in April 1914, the Fröbe couple lived for about nine months in Gersau am Vierwaldstättersee, then moved to Zurich in December of that year.

With the declaration of war in July 1914, Iwan Fröbe, who had trained as a pilot, was enlisted as a military pilot in the Austro-Hungarian army. When he left home in May 1915, Fröbe-Kapteyn was convinced that she would not see him again until the end of the war. He passed away on September 11, 1915, during a training flight in a military plane,³⁸ but not without giving his wife twin daughters, Bettina Gertrude, dark-haired with her mother's dark eyes, and Ingeborg Helene, blonde with blue eyes, born in Zurich on May 3, 1915.³⁹

After her husband's death, Fröbe-Kapteyn created in Zurich her own cultural circle, "La Table ronde."⁴⁰ Among others, she rubbed shoulders with Baron Hanns Henning von Voigt (1887–1969). Von Voigt, better known as Alastair, was an artist and esotericist with whom Fröbe-Kapteyn cultivated a lasting friendship.⁴¹

Fröbe-Kapteyn knew the Ticino area from her youth: she had already vacationed with her family in Bellagio, Como, and Pallanza by 1899.⁴² On April 1, 1920, she returned to Ticino and spent her vacations first in Lugano and then in Porto Ronco, on the Swiss shores of Lake

between Olga and their father until his death (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Drei Zeichnungen" (unpublished typescript and drawings, March 23, 1934; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

22

Polly Kapteyn Brown, letter to William McGuire, undated (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). A few notes on Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn are included in the book by Polly Kapteyn Brown's son, Peter Falkenberg Brown, *Waking Up Dead and Confused is a Terrible Thing—Stories of Love, Life, Death & Redemption* (Gray, ME: World Community, 2020), 197 f.

23

Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 7; William McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collecting the Past* (Princeton, NJ: Bollingen Series, Princeton University Press, 1982), 21; and Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 34.

24

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Mein Vater: Albertus Philippus Kapteyn; Vision" (unpublished typescript, February 1 and 5, 1957; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 8. The library of Casa Gabriella still holds the splendid edition of Jules Verne's *Vingt Mille Lieues sous les Mers*, illustrated with 111 drawings by Alphonse de Neuville and Édouard Riou (a pupil of Gustave Doré) (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, 1889); from the same series, i.e., the "Voyages extraordinaires par Jules Verne," are also held at Eranos *Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, undated); *Les enfants du Capitaine Grant: Voyage autour du monde* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, undated); *L'Île mystérieuse* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, undated); *Cinq Semaines en Ballon: Voyage de découverte en Afrique* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, undated [1890]; and *Les Indes Noires* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, undated).

25

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by Catherine McGilvray in June 2025); and Id., letter to Marie Stopes, January 24, 1901 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg).

26

See, e.g., Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, July 22, 1901. In August 1901, during a family holiday in the Blausee area of Kandersteg in the Canton of Bern, Kapteyn went on a series of glacier excursions that made a deep impression on her. "From the top of the mountain—she recalled—we slept in a shelter, got up at 2:30 in the morning, and left at 3:10, because 'if you leave later, the snow becomes too soft.' After two hours, we were at the foot of the glacier . . . and we started climbing, after tying ourselves together with ropes. How can you describe a glacier? It's a mass of ice that in some places looks like frozen waves, with huge cracks and crevasses, often seemingly bottomless,

Maggiore, a few kilometers from Ascona.⁴³ In 1920, Fröbe-Kapteyn was treated—perhaps with her father—at the Sanatorium Monte Verità with natural remedies for her gastritis, probably caused by poor nutrition during World War I, as the food available was not always of the best quality. She stayed at Casa Semiramis and boarded at Casa Anatta.⁴⁴

In 1920 Fröbe-Kapteyn lived for a time at Casa Monte Tabor in Porto Ronco. She described to Stopes its garden full of mimosas, eucalyptus trees, camellias, and other tropical plants. About the area, she wrote to Stopes, “It is not as lonely as one would think, for Ascona is full of artists—poets, painters, philosophers—many of whom I know.”⁴⁵ Although it had a large atelier of about 65 m², probably used by the previous tenants as a music room, Casa Tabor did not satisfy the new tenant, who soon set out to find a new home.⁴⁶

In December 1921, Fröbe-Kapteyn moved to Villa Gabriella with her daughter Bettina in the hamlet of Moscia, near Ascona.⁴⁷ The old farm building had been purchased on October 12, 1920 by her father (at the time retired and residing in Scheveningen, The Hague) from the German ophthalmologist Ugo von Hoffmann (with whom he shared a passion for chess).⁴⁸ Hoffmann had probably lived there without practicing since about 1905. He had in turn bought Villa Gabriella one of Monte Verità’s first settlers, Karl Vester (1879–1963), who had purchased “Villa Gabriella” in 1904 and left it in 1919 to move to a farm on Monte Verità.⁴⁹ The French writer André Germain (1882–1971), a former guest of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s Zurich literary salon, for several years her “closest and most precious friend,”⁵⁰ and a friend of the Baron and banker Eduard von der Heydt (1882–1964),⁵¹ had also lived there in the 1920s.⁵² “To live in Casa Gabriella, yes; to live there with you, no,” was Fröbe-Kapteyn’s reply to her father when he asked her if she wished to share her new residence with him. She loved him very much, but with two strong personalities like theirs, it was also easy for them to clash frequently.⁵³

The property of Villa Gabriella purchased by Albertus Kapteyn and Olga Fröbe was immense: it covered about four and a half hectares of mainly wooded land, which stretched towards the hills, in the direction of Arcegno and Monte Verità on the right and Ronco sopra Ascona on the left. The estate stretched out on both sides of the current cantonal road, with grounds in the areas of Moscia and Rive Belle (in the municipality of Ascona) and of Curafora and Gruppaldo (in the municipality of Ronco). The four-story Villa Gabriella stood directly on the lake, with a well-kept garden that still extends over three terraces sloping down from the road to the water. Olga Fröbe and Bettina lived on the lower floor of the house, which had a large kitchen and veranda, and on the first floor, which had bedrooms and a study, which is still the center of the building. The second and third floors, with bedrooms and mansard rooms, were reserved for their guests.⁵⁴

Fröbe-Kapteyn obtained a residence permit in the municipality of Ronco sopra Ascona, issued by the Central Police Directorate in Bellinzona, on November 5, 1920.⁵⁵ She and her daughter Bettina became citizens of the Republic and Canton of Ticino, in the municipality of Ascona, fourteen years later, on January 10, 1934. She swore allegiance to her new homeland on January 30, 1934.⁵⁶

of an intense blue. These waves and elevations are often raised by sharp, white peaks and folds, which are wonderful to see; the crevasses are often covered with a light layer of snow, so it is absolutely necessary to be tied together. On the way back to Kandersteg, “they saw many avalanches, similar to tremendous waterfalls.” In the following days, they also reached Zermatt via the Gemmipass. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, August 1, 1901). On 31 March 1907, she wrote a postcard to her friend Johanna Westerdijk (1883–1961), who became a botanist and plant pathologist, from the San Gottardo Hospice (the letters were kindly provided to us by Karssenbergh in April 2024).

27

As a young girl, during stays in Vienna, Kapteyn had arranged with the director of a circus to come every morning at 6 a.m. to practice as a horsewoman with a teacher; all this, of course, without her father’s knowledge, who would not have appreciated such fantasies. (Cf. Ritsema-Gris, “*L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn*,” 8; and Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Erster Abend . . .” (unpublished typescript, undated [prob. 1957–1958 ca.]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia, 6).

28

In the Eranos Foundation Archives there was a silver towel holder engraved with her name, as the winner of a ski race, a summer competition held in the Swiss canton of Grisons. (Cf. Ritsema-Gris, *op. cit.*, 8; see also and Sybille Rosenbaum-Kroerber, “Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” in Szeemann, *Monte Verità*, 121.) In the winter of 1906, she skied for several weeks in Engadine. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, January 19, January 31, and November 19, 1906). In 1907, besides skiing in St. Moritz, she has also enjoyed memorable ski touring trips with Norwegian skiers, climbing and descending challenging mountains, such as Piz Lucendro (2964 m) from the San Gottardo Pass (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, Spring 1907 [British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenbergh]). In December 1907 and January 1908, she went skiing in Lenzerheide, stopping at the Alphütte Fops; in January 1909, she skied in the Rigi area. Here, together with Iwan, she was able to admire the “Nebelmeer” (sea of fog), which is particularly spectacular from the Rigi, giving the impression that one can walk on the sea, with the mountain peaks rising like islands (Eranos Foundation Archives).

29

McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collecting the Past*, 21.

30

Van den Berk, *In de ban van Jung*.

31

Ritsema-Gris, “*L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn*,” 9.

32

See Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “My marriage” (unpublished typescript, undated [1945?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

At Casa Gabriella, Fröbe-Kapteyn spent a long period of “concentration discipline” (*siebenjährige Konzentrationsdisziplin*)⁵⁷ lasting seven years, from 1920 to 1926, during which, in almost absolute solitude, she devoted herself—with only the company of Bettina and a servant woman—to studying the *Vedānta* and other classics of Eastern thought, meditation practices, and Eastern and Western paths of spiritual realization.⁵⁸ Since the second half of the 1920s, she began her geometrical painting practice, probably strongly influenced by the spiritualist and esoteric readings to which she had so intensely devoted herself in those years.⁵⁹

During this phase, Fröbe-Kapteyn’s contact with the outside world was sporadic. In 1924, during the so-called “triumvirate” (from 1923 to 1926), Monte Verità was run by Werner Ackermann (Robert Landmann), Max Bethke, and Hugo Wilkens, later joined by William Werner. The philosopher and Hebraist Martin Buber (1878–1965) held a free course on Lao-Tse and Chuang-Tse at Monte Verità, probably based on two of his earlier works;⁶⁰ a series of meetings on *Tao-tê-ching* was also attended by Fröbe-Kapteyn, who, unlike the other listeners, had a chair brought to her in the middle of the lawn so she could listen to the lecture with her torso firmly erect.⁶¹

Only in 1926 Fröbe-Kapteyn began writing again to her friends to come and visit her in Moscia.⁶² Starting in the second half of the 1920s, with the money she inherited from her father, she was also able to invite a relatively small number of people to Casa Gabriella. These included those few Dutch, English, and French artists, those few men of letters, musicians, and spiritualists with whom—despite her skepticism toward the Ascona bohemianism of the 1920s and 1930s—she felt a spiritual affinity.

Leo Kok (1893–1992), a Dutch pianist and bookseller, was one of those visitors to Casa Gabriella. Already a collaborator with the Ascona Puppet Theater, founded in 1937 by Jacob Flach (1894–1982), Mischa Epper Quarles van Ufford (1901–1978), Fritz Pauli Swiss (1891–1968), and Werner Jakob Müller (1899–1986), Kok composed the music for several poems written in the 1920s by Fröbe-Kapteyn, who in 1927 designed the cover of his *Petite chanson pour les enfants qui n’ont pas de Noël* (1926), graphically inspired by the geometric paintings she had recently begun to make as a form of meditative practice⁶³ (Fig. 2).

In 1927, while she was visiting the *Semaine Européenne* organized in Lausanne by Germain, Fröbe-Kapteyn made the acquaintance also of the Dutch poet Aadrian Roland Holst (1888–1976). She felt particularly in tune with him, probably because of their common interest in myth and dreams. Holst visited her in 1929, staying at Casa Gabriella until the following year and working with her on the English translation of the autobiographical work *De Afspraak*.⁶⁴

The famous perennial breeder and garden philosopher Karl Foerster (1874–1970) and his wife Eva stayed at Casa Gabriella in the late 1920s. In Potsdam-Bornim, in 1912, Foerster had begun creating a display and experimental area for perennials in his garden. He aimed to demonstrate the diversity of perennials and shrubs, treating each plant as an individual entity. He was contacted by Fröbe-Kapteyn, who visited him in Bornim in 1929, and helped his hostess to lay out, at least in part, her wonderful grounds overlooking the shores of the lake⁶⁵ (Fig. 3).

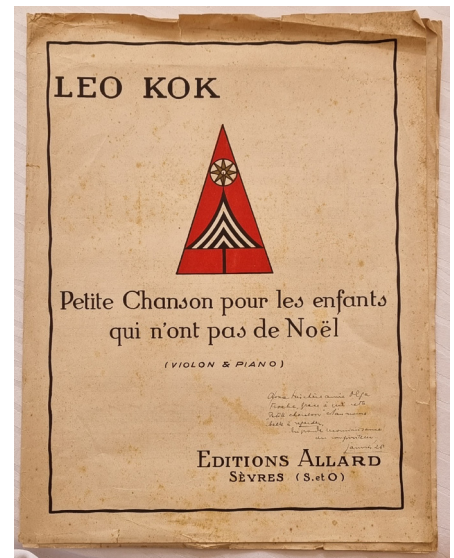


Fig. 2. Leo Kok, *Petite chanson pour les enfants qui n’ont pas de Noël* (1926), composition for violin and piano, with graphic design by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn; the geometric figure seems inspired by the “Meditation Plates.” Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.



Fig. 3. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, founder of Eranos, with landscape architect and garden philosopher Karl Foerster in 1929; behind them, on the walls of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, some “Meditation Plates” are displayed, and in particular, in the center, the larger painting entitled *Gethsemane*. Ph. (probably) Eva Foerster. Courtesy of Archiv Haus Foerster, Marianne Foerster-Stiftung in der Deutschen Stiftung Denkmalschutz, Bonn. All rights reserved.

33

In Berlin, Fröbe-Kapteyn had also the opportunity to meet and spend time with harpsichordist and pianist Wanda Aleksandra Landowska (1879–1959) (Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 9).

34

Cf. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes,

Gardening was indeed Fröbe-Kapteyn's great passion. She planted at Casa Gabriella the most beautiful and rare flowers and shrubs of all kinds. She was also proud to offer her guests delicacies from her lush vegetable garden.⁶⁶ On the top terrace close to the house stood a magnificent large cedar tree, under which one could enjoy the view of the lake from the upper terrace in front of the guest room. For her friends, Casa Gabriella was the most beautiful place to relax every year. "When I am reborn, let it be in Olga's flower soil!" ("*Wenn wieder ich geboren werde, So sei's in Olgas Blumenerde!*"), her friend Ludwig Pallat wrote in her guest book. Annemarie Pallat recalled that, besides gardening, at that time Fröbe-Kapteyn's "favorite pastime was painting, and she used a very unique technique to create fantastic images out of colors and line ornaments, all of which had deep symbolic meanings. She had become a theosophist.⁶⁷ To us as laymen, they appeared as pure, wonderfully beautiful symphonies of color, which she sometimes also executed as embroidery with bright silk threads on a black background."⁶⁸

Fröbe-Kapteyn was also in contact with Rudolf Maria Holzapfel (1874–1930), psychologist, philosopher, and "prophet of Pan."⁶⁹

A photograph of Fröbe-Kapteyn with Anton (Rudolf) Mauve Jr. (1876–1962), a Dutch naturalist painter, was probably taken in Moscia in the late 1920s.

The scholar Ludwig Derleth (1870–1948) who, although not directly involved in the Eranos adventure, would significantly influence its birth. He provided stimulus for Fröbe-Kapteyn's journey into the symbolic realm.⁷⁰ A poet and mystic, Derleth was close to the Kosmiker ("Cosmic" circle) of Munich, the group led by Alfred Schuler (1865–1923) that sought salvation from the corruption of contemporary civilization through the revival of a pagan-style religiosity.⁷¹ Derleth was also an advocate of a militant and archaic Christianity and was in some ways close to Jung in noting how the individual soul had impersonal forces capable of being awakened under certain historical circumstances and at particular moments of cultural crisis.⁷² Countess Franziska zu Reventlow (1871–1918), the queen of the Munich bohème who had settled in Ascona in 1909,⁷³ was an admirer of Derleth: she made a portrait of him and the "Cosmic" group in her novel *Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen*.⁷⁴ Derleth, whom Fröbe-Kapteyn had known since at least 1916,⁷⁵ had a considerable influence on her, not only by shaping her interest in symbolism but also by helping to initiate the Eranos project.⁷⁶

Lothar Helbing (Wolfgang Frommel, 1902–1986), a student of the poet Stefan George (1868–1933), recalled: "Once, [Derleth] confirmed to me what I had already learned from Mrs. Olga Fröbe, namely that a hidden thread led from the 'Cosmics' in Munich to the founding of Eranos in Ascona, and that it was Derleth himself who brought the first news about Creuzer, Bachofen, and various mysteries involving Baalbeck, Eleusis, and Samothrace to the then still silent house on Lake Maggiore."⁷⁷ There could be "secret threads" that linked the "Cosmic" group to the "prehistory"⁷⁸ of Eranos and its birth,⁷⁹ Fröbe-Kapteyn would probably have wanted Derleth to take part in the founding of Eranos—something that, for unknown reasons, never happened.⁸⁰ Derleth, for whom Fröbe-Kapteyn had a long-standing affection,⁸¹ of-

December 2, 2019 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenbergl).

35

Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 10.

36

Walter Tyhs, ed., *André Jolles (1874-1946), "Gebildeter Vagant:" Briefen en documenten* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press; Leipzig: Leipziger Universität GmbH, 2000), 994 ff.

37

See VV.AA., *1875–1975: 100 Jahre Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich*, ed. Elisabeth Grossmann, Hansjörg Budliger, and Urs Stahel, texts by O. Birkner, K. Akeret, E. Grossmann, E. Billeter, and P. Obermüller (Zurich: Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich, 1975); the image is reproduced in Szeemann, *Monte Verità*, 120); when she moved to Ascona, she also learned the gobelin stitch from Russian Anna ("Mama") Kessa (1880–1967): see Giorgio Vacchini, ed., *Ascona: Verdetti popolari e documenti* (Ascona: Comune di Ascona, 1996), par. 2034; Curt Riess, *Ascona: Die Geschichte des seltsamsten Dorfes der Welt* (Zurich: Buchclub Ex Libris, 1964), 111; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 249. The sewing and embroidery work, which also included meticulously applying pearls to the dresses she created, was an occupation that kept Fröbe-Kapteyn busy during the winters at Casa Gabriella, since the 1920s: see Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 10.

38

Iwan Fröbe entered service in September 1915, assigned to Vienna, where he was to carry out tests with aerial photography at Fischamend airport before leaving for the front. The plane crashed, killing both the pilot and him. See Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by McGilvray); and Id., letter to Marie Stopes, September 20, 1915 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenbergl).

39

Little Ingeborg was born with severe mental retardation due to medical complications during a difficult birth. Fröbe-Kapteyn consulted numerous doctors in Switzerland, Germany, and Vienna, but to no avail. In 1922, she decided to take Ingeborg to a pediatric clinic near Berlin: she could no longer afford to keep her in Switzerland, while Germany was much cheaper. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, March 23, 1922 and October 4, 1923 [British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenbergl]). She thus finally decided to have her admitted to a Berling institution, where she tried to ensure she received the best care available and visited her regularly. After being moved from a nursing home near Bremen (where Fröbe-Kapteyn had last seen her) to Gunzburg, in the South Germany, Ingeborg died in 1941, probably

ten visited in fact her and her daughter Bettina at Casa Tabor, but never at Casa Gabriella.⁸² In October 1922, Fröbe-Kapteyn and Derleth went together to Rome,⁸³ a city to which she would return on several occasions during the 1930s and 1940s for her iconographic research.

On August 23, 1921, Fröbe-Kapteyn wrote to Derleth, “You have brought me into relation, for the first time, with antiquity, and for this I am deeply grateful. It is strange how vivid and familiar these things are to me. I learn quickly and am far richer than in the Spring. Symbols are something that have become near and obvious to me. Now I look for them, and find them, in all things. In the Romanesque church of Sant’Ambrogio in Milan, [André] Jolles suddenly said, ‘Here you find magic in its highest form.’ I am sending you today a photograph of a bas-relief of Dionysus in London, which I have carried with me for many years. Jolles was telling the beautiful story of Ariadne and the Labyrinth yesterday.”⁸⁴ Philosopher of religions Alfons Rosenberg (1902–1985) recalled the episode in which Derleth invited Fröbe-Kapteyn to Munich: meeting at midnight sharp at Marienplatz, they walked together until dawn. Derleth described to her the symbolism of Munich, transfigured the city into a “carpet woven with symbols.”⁸⁵ Christine Derleth, who used to address Fröbe-Kapteyn amicably with the expression “Liebe Symbolistin!” wrote: “Olga, with sparkling eyes, sat on the Marienplatz opposite Ludwig, and absorbed the jumble of mythological images that formed the theme of the conversation. They expanded her inner life and transformed her into what she was to become in a decade: the founder of Eranos.”⁸⁶

From 1926–1935, Paul Zillmann, founder of the *Metaphysische Hauptquartier* and editor of the *Metaphysische Rundschau*, created in 1896, also played a decisive role in Fröbe-Kapteyn’s life; she described him as “present in the spirit at the laying of the foundation stone of Eranos” and felt him to be Jung’s “forerunner” in influencing her. He gave her a copy of *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (1929)⁸⁷ and the journal *Yoga*. In 1926, at a time when she “was feeling about for something to undertake, and did not yet know what,” he told her, “[t]he work will be found” (*das Werk wird sich schon finden*). Zillmann, whom Fröbe-Kapteyn considered an alchemist (he used homeopathic remedies, based on the studies of Paracelsus), gave her “distant treatment” (*Fernbehandlung*) for seven years. For her, he was nothing more than a voice throughout this period; they spoke by phone once a week and met once or twice a year for a few hours. He was her “directing Voice from beyond, or from within.”⁸⁸

In September 1927, (her father had died in January of that year), Fröbe-Kapteyn had the “sudden idea” (*Einfall*) of building a Lecture Hall and organizing conferences on topics she had been interested in for years.⁸⁹ The idea came to her when she was intent on making a “geometric drawing,” belonging to the “Meditation Plates” which she had begun painting in the mid-1920s. In that geometric drawing—inspired by the daily view from the windows of Casa Gabriella on the Brissago Islands, which played a significant role in her imagination—she recognized the “first manifestation of the Temple plan” (*Erstes Aufkommen des Tempelgrundrisses*),⁹⁰ from which the plan of Casa Eranos took shape. According to her, the highly geometrized style of the basic structure of the building harkened back to the “mathematical

as a result of the Nazi euthanasia program (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “History of a Symptom: Rhinitis vasomotoris” (unpublished typescript, 1949; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); Fröbe-Kapteyn, “7 November 1950” [belonging to the “Arbeit mit Dr. Szondi”] (unpublished typescript, November 7, 1950; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); and Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Lapis Exilis and the Grail MSS” (unpublished typescript, February 20, 1952; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); see also Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 11 f.; Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 20; Hakl, *Eranos*, 14; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 249.)

40

Cf. Robert Faesi, *Erlebnisse, Ergebnisse, Erinnerungen* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1963), 224 ff., and van der Berk, *In de ban van Jung*.

41

Cf. Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 36 f.

42

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, April 2 and 15, 1899 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenbergl).

43

Cf. Rosenbaum-Kroeber, “Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 119 ff.

44

Vacchini, *Ascona*, par. 2034.

45

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, April 21, 1920, written from Monte Verità, Ascona (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenbergl).

46

In 1931, Casa Monte Tabor became the property of Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970) and, upon his passing, that of his wife Paulette Remarque Goddard (1910–1990), actress and former first wife of Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977). (See Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 14.) Swiss painter Eduard Rüdisühli (1875–1938) was relatively certainly the previous owner of Casa Monte Tabor before Remarque, from 1905 to 1931, and used the villa as a summer residence from 1905 to 1915.

47

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by McGilvray). Although older, Casa Gabriella appears on the 1861 cadastral map of the Ascona area, drawn up by engineer Giuseppe Roncaglioli. The letters sent to Stopes on December 25, 1920, and November 16, 1921 are still sent from “Porto Ronco.” The first letter sent to Stopes from “Villa Gabriella” is dated March 23, 1922 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenbergl). Further information also come from

Animus” she inherited through the long line of mathematical geniuses in her father’s family.⁹¹ (Fig. 4). Jung wrote: “Anticipatory dreams, telepathic phenomena, and all that kind of thing are intuitions . . . It is always something that is unconscious until the moment it appears . . . The Germans call it *Einfall*, which means a thing which falls into your head from nowhere.”⁹² Casa Eranos was thus built in the Bauhaus style in 1928, before its purpose was known⁹³ (Fig. 5). The third house on her property, together with Casa Gabriella and Casa Eranos, was probably built between 1928 and 1929 and named Casa Shanti (Sanskrit for “peace”) in 1932;⁹⁴ the ceremony was presided over by a young Telugu-speaking Brahmin, Venkatesa (Venkatesh) Narayana Sharma (1897–1986), who had come to Europe from India through the Theosophical movement.⁹⁵



Fig. 5. A view of Casa Eranos, Casa Gabriella, and Casa Shanti in a 1929 photograph. Ph. Margarethe Fellerer (?). Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Before the creation of the actual Eranos project in 1933, Fröbe-Kapteyn made a first attempt at a congressional experience, with a more markedly esoteric imprint. In the late 1920s, while visiting her brother Albert in Long Island, United States, she got to know the works of the theosophist Alice Ann Bailey (1880–1949) and her Arcane School, which arose from a split of the Theosophical Society of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891).⁹⁶ During her stay in the United States, Fröbe-Kapteyn went to Bailey with a proposal to collaborate in the creation, in Ascona, of a “nondenominational spiritual center open to all scholars of esotericism of any geographical origin and religious faith,” offering hospitality to Alice and Forster Bailey (1888–1977) and their three young daughters, Mildred, Dorothy, and Ellison.⁹⁷

In 1929, Fröbe-Kapteyn devoted herself to preparing the first symposium⁹⁸ and on August 3, 1930, courses began at the International Centre for Spiritual Research.⁹⁹ There were eighty chairs in the conference room and fifteen nationalities were represented: the register of the congeess collected the signatures of ninety-four participants. The sessions lasted for three weeks, from Monday to Saturday, with three lectures per day, while a fourth week was made available for private meetings with the speakers.

In this “prehistory” of Eranos, in addition to Fröbe-Kapteyn and

an extract from the census records of the Municipality of Ronco/A, “Purchase and sale between Ugo von Hoffmann (formerly Ermano da Lippe-detmold) and Alberto Kapteyn (formerly Gerardo di Barneveld),” deed drawn up by Notary Vittorio Pedrotta on October 12, 1920. We would like to thank the Land Registry Office in Locarno for the kind cooperation.



Fig. 4. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, 1st “Eranos Mandala.” “Eranos Mandalas,” 1927. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. It inspired the floor plan of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, built in 1928. The same painting, in color, is part of the “Meditation Plates” series with the title *Duality* [5]. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

48

Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn,” 15.

49

Vacchini, *Ascona*, par. 2631. Karl Vester arrived at Monte Verità in 1902, before leaving for Samoa and returning to Ascona in 1904. Although he shared in the project, he always maintained a certain distance and independence from the Monte Verità community. A baker in the community, he inherited the Ascona property of financier Henri Oedenkoven when the latter left Ascona in 1920 to set up another vegetarian colony, first in Spain and then in Brazil (Monte Sol) (see the television report entitled “L’ultimo naturista del Monte Verità,” broadcast on October 4, 1963, as part of the program “Il Regionale” of Radiotelevisione della Svizzera Italiana [RSI]). Vester was in contact with Hermann Joseph Metzger “Paragranus” (1919–1990) from Ticino, who was also a baker; the latter was initiated in 1943 into the lodge of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) “Verità Mistica” in Ascona. Upon his death on September 24, 1963, Metzger remembered Vester in a short obituary (Peter-Rober König, *Das OTO-Phänomen. 100 Jahre Magische Geheimbünde und ihre Protagonisten von 1895-1994* (Munich: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für

the Baileys, the following lecturers were involved between 1930 and 1932: Frederick Kettner; Shri Vishwanath Keskar, author in 1931, together with James Graham Phelps Stokes, of *Pillars of Life*; Alexander, Grand Duke of Russia; Violet Tweedale, disciple of Blavatsky; the Irish writer James H. Cousins, whose first lecture was accompanied by an exhibition of modern art; Agnes Johanna Elisabeth van Stolk; Stephen Annett; Count Kuno von Hardenberg, formerly active in Hermann Keyserling's "School of Wisdom"; astronomer Robert Henseling; J. L. Schmitt; astrologer Paul S. Bendix, from Ascona; Hebraist Leo Baeck; Mirzá Aḥmad Sohráb, founder of the New History Society and the Caravan of East and West; Gerald Reynolds, director of the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau; J. C. Demarquette, who authored *Vers l'Australie. Notes d'un naturiste européen* in 1930; Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein-Wertheim-Freudenberg later decorated by John XXIII for his work in reconciling the Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church; Nikolaj Konstantinovič (Nicholas) Roerich, painter, theosophist, and expert on Tibet, who contributed to fueling the Blavatskian myth of Shambhala in the collective imagination of the West; Jean Emile Marcault, who authored *Psychology of Intuition* (1927) and *The Evolution of Man. Being an Outline of the Development of Human Consciousness as Illustrated by the Pre-Aryan and Arian Races* (1931) and translated the *Bhagavadgītā* commented by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan; novelist Raja Rao, among the fathers of Anglo-Indian literature; Eugen Georg; the scholar of Celtic religions F. C. J. Los; Helmut Palmié, first publisher of the journal *Yoga*; orientalist Erwin Rousselle; Roberto Assagioli, founder of Psychosynthesis;¹⁰⁰ and finally Vittorino Vezzani, professor of General Zootechnics at the University of Turin since 1938, director of the Institute of Animal Husbandry and Dairy Farming of Piedmont, and since 1955 vice president of the Italian Society of Metapsychics, who continued to nurture an interest in Eranos in the years that followed.¹⁰¹ According to William McGuire, Bailey would probably have liked to involve Jung in their project, but Fröbe-Kapteyn thought that the time was not right.¹⁰²

The International Centre for Spiritual Research remained operational for three years, from 1930 to 1932, a period generally referred to as the "Shadow" (*Schatten*) of Eranos, its "roots" (*Wurzeln*), or rather—as Jung used to call it—its "dark spirit" (*dunkler Geist*)¹⁰³ (Fig. 6). When this enterprise came to an end after the third session, in 1932, due to both Fröbe-Kapteyn's intellectual maturation and certain personal differences with Bailey that had become irreconcilable,¹⁰⁴ the Eranos project was finally ready to start.¹⁰⁵

The name "Eranos" (from Greek "banquet") was suggested to Fröbe-Kapteyn by historian of religions Rudolf Otto (1869–1937), who led the Marburg ecumenical group and wrote *The Holy* (1917), the groundbreaking essay on phenomenological analysis of religious experience.¹⁰⁶ Another of Otto's works, *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism* (1926)—a comparative study of Śāṅkara and Meister Eckhart—inspired Fröbe-Kapteyn in her choice of subtitle for her project: *Begegnungsstätte für Ost und West* ("Meeting Place for East and West").¹⁰⁷ Fröbe-Kapteyn had approached Otto in 1931. The Marburg ecumenical group, which emerged from liberal evangelical theology, took its name from the German uni-

Religions- und Weltanschauungsfragen, 1994), 49 (cf. Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, pp. 251 f.).

50

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, October 4, 1918; see also the letters of February 18, 1919, December 25, 1920, and 1922 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenbergh).

51

Baron Eduard von der Heydt purchased Monte Verità hill in 1926, at the suggestion of then-owner William Werner. He was enticed by the painter Marianne von Werefkin (1860–1938) and Fröbe-Kapteyn herself. (Cf. Hetty Rogantini-de Beauclair, *Dal Monte Verità di Ascona . . . a Berzona in Onsernone: Hetty De Beauclair racconta il meraviglioso mondo della sua infanzia*, ed. Yvonne Bölt and Gian Pietro Milani (Losone: Serodine, 2004), 21, fn. 23; and Hetty Rogantini-de Beauclair, personal communication to Riccardo Bernardini, October 1, 2010, Ascona-Monte Verità; on the extremely difficult relationship between Eduard von der Heydt and Fröbe-Kapteyn, see instead Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 3, passim.)



Fig. 6. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (seated, right) and Alice Ann Bailey on the terrace of Casa Gabriella in August (probably) 1930, during the period of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1930–1932), which preceded the birth of the Eranos Conferences (1933). Standing, from left: theosophist Foster Bailey; Vittorino Vezzani, professor of General Zootechnics at the University of Turin and metapsychic scholar; psychologist Roberto Assagioli, founder of Psychosynthesis; Frederick Kettner, founder of Biosynthesis; Shri Vishwanath Keskar, author, with James Graham Phelps Stokes, of *Pillars of Life* (1931); and writer and poet James H. Cousins. Ph. unknown. Courtesy of the Institute of Psychosynthesis, Assagioli Archives, Casa Assagioli, Florence. All rights reserved.

52

On October 8, 1920 from Ronco, Albertus Kapteyn wrote to Germain (who was staying at that time at the Grand Hotel in Brissago) who was about to meet Hoffmann: the latter was already close to finalizing the sale with another buyer, but he would wait to meet Albertus Kapteyn before deciding to whom to sell the property; Albertus Kapteyn saw Casa Gabriella for the first time, together with the then owner, on October 9, 1920, at 3 p.m. (Albertus Kapteyn, letter to André Germain, October 8, 1920 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); more in general, see André Germain, *Florence et*

versity where its most prominent representatives taught. Among them were the historians of religion Friedrich Heiler and Ernst Benz, who were later involved in Eranos as lecturers. This circle allowed Fröbe-Kapteyn to encounter for the first time a conception of religiosity that went beyond the study of religions as codified systems: this approach shifted the focus of the religious phenomenon towards a religiosity understood as a universal phenomenon of the human soul, namely the individual experience of the “numinous” (*numinosum*).

Fröbe-Kapteyn recalled her meeting with Otto as follows: “When, on that memorable evening in November 1932, I rang the doorbell of the great religious scholar Rudolf Otto, a creative moment began for me and, as if on a stage, the curtain rose. Otto himself came to open the door and everything about him welcomed me, Eranos, and the moment itself. It was both an inner and outer encounter, and he himself realized the significance of the situation.”¹⁰⁸ Otto welcomed Fröbe-Kapteyn’s proposal with particular enthusiasm, exclaiming, “I’m leaving for Locarno the day after tomorrow!” He thus visited her in Ascona the following December.¹⁰⁹ It was on that occasion, at Fröbe-Kapteyn’s request to suggest a name for her project, that Otto proposed the Greek lemma “*Eranos*” (“banquet”).¹¹⁰ He also gave her a long list of names of scholars who might be of interest to her program, thus “sponsoring” an initiative that he had not been able to realize until then with his Religiöser Menschheitsbund (“Interreligious league of mankind”), founded in 1921. Although he was too ill to take part in this new venture, Otto was considered by Fröbe-Kapteyn to be the “godfather” (*Pate*) of Eranos.¹¹¹

Sinologist Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930), who presented his translation of the ancient oracular Chinese text, the *I Ching*, in 1923,¹¹² was another important influence on Fröbe-Kapteyn. His work marked a turning point in the academic interpretation of the religious testimonies of extra-European cultures: they were no longer merely ethnological material, but expressions of subjectivity endowed with their own existential and spiritual reality.¹¹³

At the “School of Wisdom” (Schule der Weisheit), led by Count Hermann Keyserling (1880–1946), Fröbe-Kapteyn found a group of researchers devoted to the search for the “common roots of all religions” and encountered for the first time Wilhelm’s edition of the *I Ching*. Jung himself gave some lectures within this circle.¹¹⁴ Among the intellectuals close to the “School of Wisdom,” brought together by their interest in promoting Eastern spiritual thought,¹¹⁵ were psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Alfred Adler, ethnologist and Africanist Leo Frobenius, Thomas Mann, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929, philosopher Max Scheler, Rabindranath Tagore, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, theologian Ernst Troeltsch, and the philosopher of history Leopold Ziegler. Some, such as Count Kuno von Hardenberg, artist, critic and writer,¹¹⁶ Sigrid Strauß-Kloebe, psychotherapist and astrology scholar, the Jewish scholar Leo Baeck, and the historian of religions Gerardus van der Leeuw, would later reappear at Eranos as lecturers.¹¹⁷

In August 1933, Fröbe-Kapteyn started the Eranos Conferences (*Eranos Tagungen*), which attracted some of the most influential scholars of the twentieth century: among them, beyond Jung himself, the

Ascona [Paris: Sun, 1952]).

53

Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 15.

54

“L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 16.

55

No. 38561/2438.

56

Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 252.

57

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Die Geschichte von Eranos” (Ascona: unpublished typescript, 1952–1958; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), and specifically “Eranos, Fortsetzung” (unpublished typescript, 1952; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1; and Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Shadow of my Dedication to Eranos” (unpublished typescript, February 11, 1954; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), where she wrote about “the concentration training of 8 years. That kept me on the singleminded track of Eranos.”

58

On the “concentration discipline” period, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 95, 252.

59

Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 17 f.

60

See Ron Margolin, “Tre approcci allo studio della religione a Eranos,” in *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, ed. Elisabetta Barone, Adriano Fabris, and Flavia Monceri (Pisa: ETS, 2003), 190. Buber had learned about Monte Verità from two friends, Gustav Landauer (1870–1919) and Erich Mühsam (1878–1934), a German writer and anarchist. The latter had arrived in Ascona in 1904, after the failure of the suburban commune Die neue Gemeinschaft (“The New Community”) in Schlachtensee, near Berlin, founded in 1899 by the brothers Julius and Heinrich Hart: Buber himself had placed great hopes in this project (Ulrich Linse, “Il ribelle e la ‘Madre terra’: Il monte sacro di Ascona nell’interpretazione dell’anarchico bohémien Erich Mühsam,” in: Szeemann, *Monte Verità*, 31; and Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture begins; Ascona 1900–1920* [Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986], 126), who had joined it in the year of its foundation: it was in this context that he had met Landauer (Margolin, “Tre approcci allo studio della religione a Eranos,” 189, fn. 1). A revolutionary and anti-Marxist anarchist, Landauer was in close contact with various anarchists who gravitated around Monte Verità; he had a profound influence on Buber’s life and the formation of his political thought—Buber edited the posthumous publication of his *Die Revolution* in 1923—as well as on that of Gershom Scholem (Michael Lowy, *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe—A Study*

psychologists, Erich Neumann, Marie-Louise von Franz, James Hillman, Ira Progoff, Hayao Kawai, and Wolfgang Giegerich; the historians of religion, Raffaele Pettazzoni, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade, and Ernst Benz; the historians of Christianity, Ernesto Buonaïuti and Jean Daniélou; the historians of the religions of the classical world, Walter Friedrich Otto and Károly Kerényi; the orientalists, Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids, Paul Masson-Oursel, Heinrich Zimmer, Erwin Rousselle, and Giuseppe Tucci; the Hebraists, Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem; the theologians, Paul Tillich, Hugo Rahner, Pierre-Jean de Menasce, Victor White, and David L. Miller; the scholars of Islam, Louis Massignon, Henry Corbin, and Toshihiko Izutsu; the Egyptologists, Georges Hermann Nagel and Erik Hornung; the Sinologists, Paul Pelliot and Hellmut Wilhelm; the scholars of Gnosis, Henri-Charles Puech and Gilles Quispel; the scholar of Zen Buddhism, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki; the anthropologists, Paul Radin, John Layard, Laurens van der Post, and Gilbert Durand; the ethnologists, Theodor-Wilhelm Danzel, Richard Thurnwald, and Jean Servier; the archeologists, Charles Virolleaud, Vera Christina Chute Collum, and Charles Picard; the philosophers, Helmuth Plessner, Karl Löwith, Jean Brun, and Pierre Hadot; the art historian, Julius Baum; the literary critic, Herbert Edward Read; the physicists, Friedrich Dessauer, Erwin Schrödinger, Hans Leisegang, and Shmuel Sambursky; the electronic engineer, Max Knoll; the mathematicians, Andreas Speiser and Hermann Weyl; the musicologists, Victor Zuckerkandl and Hildemarie Streich; the scholar of Chinese medicine, Manfred Porkert; and many other thinkers. In the following years, Fröbe-Kapteyn focused on further enriching the annual symposia, which were becoming a “ritual,” a “dance,” which started anew each year, but always with different “dancers.” For a long time, Eranos was the sole venue for gathering together experts and lay people who were inspired by different cultural and spiritual interests and unfettered by their fields of specialization. As the only European conference center to remain active during World War II, Eranos has made an extraordinary contribution to European intellectual history.

Right in the early years of her congressional project, Fröbe-Kapteyn received further decisive impetus in her research into the world of symbols from Jung himself, who, beyond being a guiding spirit in the first twenty years of symposia, around 1934 commissioned her to search for iconographic material for his studies on alchemy and the concept of archetypes.¹¹⁸ She recalled a conversation they had in Zurich, in which Jung said to her: “I have a job here. So far, no one has wanted to do it. Perhaps you are the only one who can. I am looking for images [*Ich suche Bilder*].” Jung took an old illuminated parchment from his bookcase and showed her some woodcuts. They were symbolic representations of alchemy, completely unknown to her. Jung reiterated: “Images of this kind. There must be many images of this kind in the world, only I don’t know where. Someone has to look for them.” Fröbe-Kapteyn replied without hesitation: “I am willing to do this work.” Although she knew nothing about alchemy at the time, she threw herself into this adventure without a moment’s hesitation.¹¹⁹

Fröbe-Kapteyn thus began collecting a series of images illustrating the various archetypes “as a complement to Jung’s theoretical

in *Elective Affinity* [Stanford, NJ: Stanford University Press, 1992], 203 ff.).

61

Rosenbaum-Kroeber, “Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 119; see also Kneubühler, Kneubühler, “Gli artisti, gli scrittori e il Canton Ticino (dal 1900 ad oggi),” 176; and McGuire, *Bollingen—An Adventure in Collecting the Past*, 21. During the days of the course, Buber resided at Casa Semiramis (Hetty Rogantini-de Beauclair, personal communication to Riccardo Bernardini, August 22, 2003, Ascona; cf. Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 252). Martin Buber was later a lecturer at Eranos in 1934 and returned as a listener in 1947 (Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 226).

62

Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 16.

63

Leo Kok, *Petit Chanson pour les enfants qui n’ont pas de Noël (violin & piano)* (Sèvres: Al-lard, 1927), dessin de la couverture de Olga Froebe-Kapteyn; see Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn,” 17.

64

Cf. Jan van der Vegt, *A. Roland Holst: Biografie* (Baarn: de Prom, 2000), 282 ff. Holst revisited Fröbe-Kapteyn in later years. (Cf. Hakl, *Eranos*, 17.)

65

Annemarie Pallat, “Olga Fröbe” (unpublished typescript, April 29, 1962; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). The relationship between Fröbe-Kapteyn and Karl Foerster has yet to be properly reconstructed, but it is nevertheless documented in the accurate study by Clemens Wimmer, *Gärtner der Nation. Die vier Leben des Karl Foerster* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2024).

66

Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn,” 12.

67

As Karssenbergh pointed out, Geertruida Kapteyn-Muysken accompanied Frederik Willem van Eeden (1860–1932) in London to see Helena Blavatsky, who was living with Annie Besant in their theosophical headquarters, in October 1890, when Olga was nine years old (from the Kapteyn-Muysken diaries); therefore, she had probably heard about Blavatsky already at that age. Also, in her correspondence with Marie Stopes, she refers to Blavatsky’s readings and William Crookes’s (1832–1919) spiritualism. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, April 4, 1901 [British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenbergh]).

68

Pallat, “Olga Fröbe”

69

Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 54 f.

treatises on alchemy.”¹²⁰ Between 1935 and 1938, she carried out this iconographic research exclusively for Jung.¹²¹ She later recalled that this iconographic research was very hard work for her. Not only did Jung never pay her a proper fee, he also gave her very little money, which was often not even enough to cover her accommodation expenses during her research trips or the cost of the images that had to be photographed. However, she never rebelled. This task gradually became increasingly important to her; for at least ten years, this work, together with organizing conferences, became her main occupation.¹²² The photographs she obtained from the various archives were gradually placed in Casa Gabriella. However, “living” with all this “archetypal” material caused Fröbe-Kapteyn serious insomnia. At a certain point, Jung suggested that she take a vacation “anywhere,” in order to get a clear break from her work: “Archetypes never sleep, because they are identical to the river of life that flows within us, even when we are asleep” (*Archetypen schlafen nie, denn sie sind identisch mit dem Strom des Lebens, der in uns fließt, auch wenn wir schlafen*).¹²³

The Eranos Archive, as envisioned by Fröbe-Kapteyn herself¹²⁴ over the years and especially starting in 1941, became extremely important for the research of many scholars.¹²⁵ She constantly emphasized the link between the Eranos Archive and Jung’s work: “The recurrence of these archetypal images through the centuries and their frequently simultaneous appearance in widely countries show how their derivation from a common source or reservoir in the unconscious of mankind. C. G. Jung’s conception of archetypes is hereby fully confirmed.”¹²⁶ Jung, for his part, recognized its scientific value on several occasions.¹²⁷ Many illustrations featured in his works, particularly those depicting alchemy, came from the Eranos Archive or from iconographic research carried out on his behalf by Fröbe-Kapteyn.¹²⁸

The iconographical research that Fröbe-Kapteyn did between 1938 and 1941 was funded by Mary Elizabeth Conover Mellon (1904–1946) and Paul Mellon (1907–1999), who for more than twenty years (1947–1967) were the main sponsors of Eranos, personally and later through the Bollingen Foundation.¹²⁹ In the spring of 1943, Fröbe-Kapteyn transformed Eranos into a legally recognized Foundation, which could qualify for public and private funding. Thanks to Jung’s intervention, the new foundation obtained the support of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, from 1936 to 1956, and of the Pro Helvetia Foundation, which contributed funds from 1943. Once again, thanks to Jung, the Bollingen Foundation placed Eranos within its Program of Contributions to Institutions (General Humanities) beginning in 1947.¹³⁰ In 1949, the Bollingen Foundation acquired a duplicate of the Eranos Archive. A further copy of the approximately 6500 images was subsequently sent by Fröbe-Kapteyn to Jung, who, shortly before his death, transferred this material to the C. G. Jung-Institut in Zurich. The Bollingen Foundation also supported the project of cataloguing and expanding the Eranos Archive, beginning in 1959. The original Eranos collection was donated to the Warburg Institute (University of London) in 1954. The New York archive was renamed in 1960 to Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS): from then on, the history of the two archives continued along independent paths.¹³¹

Fröbe-Kapteyn devoted her entire life to cultivating her cultural

70

Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 17 f.; Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 30 ff.

71

On the Munich Cosmic circle, see Richard Faber, “Der Schwabinger Imperatorenstreit, (k)ein Sturm im Wasserglas. Über die Münchener Bohème im allgemeinen und die ‘Kosmiker Runde’ insbesondere,” in Richard Faber and Christine Holste, eds., *Kreise, Gruppen, Bünde: Zur Soziologie moderner Intellektuellenassoziation* (Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 2000), 37–64; on the connection between the Kosmiker circle and Eranos, see Barbara von Reibnitz, “Der Eranos-Kreis: Religionswissenschaft und Weltanschauung oder der Gelehrte als Laien-Priester,” in Renate Schleiser and Roberto Sanchiño Martínez, eds., *Neuhumanismus und Anthropologie des griechischen Mythos. Karl Kerényi im europäischen Kontext des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Locarno: Rezzonico, 2006), 427; Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 38–51; and Georg Dörr, “Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona: prossimità tipologica e umana (con lettere di Olga Fröbe a Ludwig Derleth),” in Barone, Fabris, and Monceri, *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, 105–21.

72

Barone, Fabris, and Monceri, *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, 114 f.

73

See Franziska zu Reventlow, *Der Geldkomplex* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1916).

74

Franziska zu Reventlow, *Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen- oder Begebenheiten aus einem merkwürdigen Stadtteil* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1913); see also Richard Faber, *Männerrunde mit Gräfin: Die ‘Kosmiker’ Derleth, George, Klages, Schuler, Wolfskehl und Franziska zu Reventlow* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994) and Alexandra Tischel, “Tra i profeti: I romanzi di Franziska zu Reventlow e le ‘tensioni’ di fine secolo,” in Barone, Fabris, and Monceri, *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, 253–67.

75

See Dominik Jost, *Ludwig Derleth: Gestalt und Leistung* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1965), 74.

76

Ludwig Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, with texts by Lothar Helbing, Stefan George, Dominik Jost, Christine Derleth, and Anna Maria Derleth (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1958), 70; Jost, *Ludwig Derleth*, 99 ff.; and Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 40.

77

Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, 70.

78

Jost, *Ludwig Derleth*, 99 ff.

enterprise, Eranos, and personally edited the first thirty *Eranos-Jahrbücher* (1933–1961). She passed away in Casa Gabriella, at the age of 81, on April 25, 1962.¹³²

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's Artistic Corpus

The first phase of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's artistic production, with a strongly geometric imprint, is recorded in a series of about 127 "Meditation Plates,"¹³³ painted between 1926 and 1934¹³⁴ (Fig. 7). These images, some of which were originally displayed in the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos (Fig. 8), express a rigor eschewing any naturalism of form and a choice of predominantly cold colors.



Fig. 7. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, *The Central Spiritual Sun*. "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.



Fig. 8. An article that appeared in the *Tessiner Illustrierte* concerning Fröbe-Kapteyn's project of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1930–1932), which preceded the start of the Eranos Conferences (1933); the walls of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos display some "Meditation Plates" painted by Fröbe-Kapteyn; the largest painting, in the center, is currently on display at the Hotel Tamaro in Ascona. Courtesy of the Fondazione Monte Verità, from the permanent exhibition at Casa Anatta, Ascona-Monte Verità.

There is a basic color contrast between black (nocturnal, unconscious, and destructive energy; deathly and disintegrative vibration; *Yin* principle in Taoism and *I Ching*) and gold (diurnal, conscious, and constructive energy; vital and integrative vibration; the *Yang* principle)¹³⁵ with the constant presence of red, almost always on a blue background. These paintings, created using mixed media on paper or cardboard and employing tempera, India ink, and gold leaf, document an obvious recurrence of certain stylized symbols: the cross, the chalice, the tao, the crystal, the lotus, the rays, the portal, the sword, the ladder, and "mandalic" shapes.¹³⁶ The overall result is an abstract figure, in which a spirituality purified of all corporality is staged.¹³⁷

Alice Ann Bailey made use of the "Meditation Plates" during the

79
Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, 70.

80
Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 40.

81
Hakl, 42 ff.

82
Christine Derleth, *Das Fleischlich-Geistige: Meine Erinnerungen an Ludwig Derleth* (Hessen: Hinder + Deelmann, Bellnhausen über Gladenbach, 1973), 96 f.

83
Jost, *Ludwig Derleth*, 103; James Webb, *Il sistema occulto: La fuga dalla ragione nella politica e nella società del XX secolo* (Milan: SugarCo, 1989 [1976]), 277; Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 46; and Dörr, "Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona," 106, fn. 3.

84
Quoted in Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 43 f., and Dörr, "Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona," 119 f. When he was back from his Italian travels, André Jolles used to stop for a few days at Casa Gabriella to catch up with his great friend, often in the company of his second wife, Grittli Boecklen, a drawing teacher with whom Fröbe-Kapteyn delighted in building puppets and other handicrafts (Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 44, fn. 60). She reached him in Venice in August 1937 and they returned together to Casa Gabriella in September of the same year. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, October 4, 2023 [British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg]).

85
Quoted in Hakl, *Eranos*, 22. A testimony by Rosenberg regarding the importance of Fröbe-Kapteyn's iconographic research can be found in Alfons Rosenberg, "Eranos oder Der Geist am Wasser," *Flugblätter für Freunde* 80 (1977): 7–8.

86
Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, 96; also quoted in Dörr, "Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona," 106.

87
Das Geheimnis der Goldenen Blüte: Ein Chinesisches Lebensbuch, ed. Richard Wilhelm (Munich: Dornverlag, 1929).

88
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan" (unpublished typescript, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 10. Zillmann "possessed my deep affection, which Jung has never done," Fröbe-Kapteyn recalled (Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan"). In a series of reflections on her inner visions, Fröbe-Kapteyn associated Zillmann with a "white magician" and Derleth with a "black magician" (Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Drei Zeichnungen," cit., 2) Zillmann is also mentioned by Alice Bailey in a letter sent on February 5, 1931 to Fröbe-Kapteyn, concerning

congress activities of the International Centre for Spiritual Research in Ascona. In its first session, on August 20, 1930, Fröbe-Kapteyn and Bailey gave a “Talk on Symbolism, and demonstration of a series of Occult Symbols,”¹³⁸ using eighty images from the “Meditation Plates.” Fröbe-Kapteyn exhibited some of the paintings and gave a short lecture on them. Bailey, on the other hand, offered an interpretation of a series of eighteen of these figures, which had been selected by Fröbe-Kapteyn, Bailey herself, and her husband Foster Bailey and were scheduled to be published shortly thereafter in New York; Bailey wrote some commentaries about each “Plate.”¹³⁹ The complete series, which at the time consisted of about eighty paintings, “represents the path of evolution from the dawn of the great creative process to the consummation of the age, including the path of discipleship and the path of initiation, as trodden by the human being.”¹⁴⁰ Also in the second session of the “School,” in August 1931, several “Lectures on Symbolology” were given and some “Teachings through Symbols” were imparted. They delved into the use of “Geometric Symbols” in the context of “occult training” and meditation.¹⁴¹

Between the late 1920s and early 1930s, Fröbe-Kapteyn composed a series of writings for her daughter Bettina¹⁴² and her friends. In these works, she sought to empathize with the existential questions and difficulties of others, recognizing that these themes were, in essence, her own. In the preface to one of these writings, *Gleichnisse* (“Parables”), she acknowledged that “[t]he deepest things in human life . . . can only be expressed in images.”¹⁴³ She used to give a copy of “Parables” to a very small circle of friends and correspondents, including reproductions of her “Meditation Plates.” Among those recipients was the painter Sophie Della Valle di Casanova Browne (1866–1960), who, together with her husband, Marquis Silvio Della Valle di Casanova—a musicologist, scholar of German literature, and poet with a taste for symbolism—hosted numerous artistic personalities at Villa San Remigio in Pallanza, including Gabriele D’Annunzio (1863–1938), Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916), and Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924).

Today, we know the names of other recipients of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s geometric works and, in some cases, their reactions and comments. The “Meditation Plates,” some of which in those years were displayed on the walls of the Lecture Hall, often revolved around the Grail theme, as in the case of the painting donated to psychologist Roberto Assagioli (1888–1974), who was among the scholars involved in this “prehistory” of Eranos¹⁴⁴ (Fig. 9). Philosopher of religions Alfons Rosenberg, who had worked for weeks in Fröbe-Kapteyn’s private graphic archive, recalled the “Plates” as “severe, mysterious, and solemn. But they exuded an atmosphere of frightening coldness. They were painted with the intellect and not with the heart; they were effective, but unsympathetic.”¹⁴⁵ Magda Kerényi believes that Fröbe-Kapteyn brought some “Meditation Plates” with her to show Ludwig Derleth during their meetings.¹⁴⁶ Rudolf Otto had some examples of these on display in his home¹⁴⁷ (Fig. 10); Fröbe-Kapteyn dedicated a “Plate” made in 1933 to him (Fig. 11). Friedrich Heiler (1892–1967) appreciated their symbolic meaning and color rendering.¹⁴⁸

The first letters exchanged between Jung and Fröbe-Kapteyn concerned precisely these images. In June 1932, for example, Jung wrote

the second meeting of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

89

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Institute for Research into Religious Symbolism (Archetypal Images)” (unpublished typescript, 1947; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 4; and Id., “Eranos Institut für Symbolforschung” (unpublished typescript, September 28, 1947; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

90

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Die Eranos Mandala” (unpublished typescript, 1927–1949; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

91

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Vortrag,” 1; cf. also Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Die Geschichte von Eranos,” and specifically “Notes for the Story of Eranos” (unpublished typescript, undated [1957?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

92

Carl Gustav Jung, “The Tavistock Lectures: On the Theory and Practice of Analytical Psychology” [1935], in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 18, *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings*, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), par. 26.

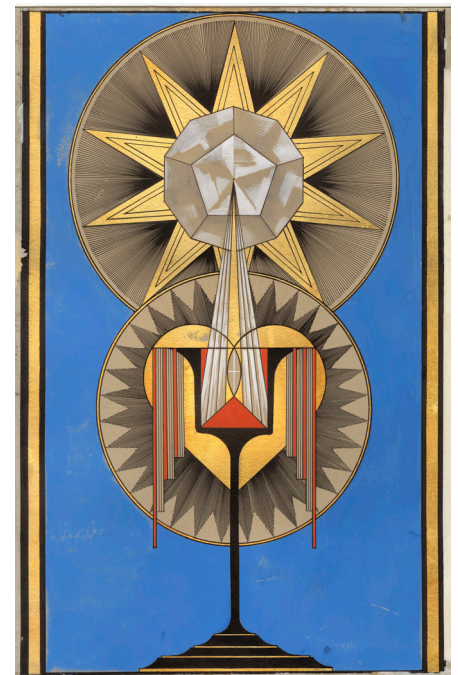


Fig. 9. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Courtesy of the Institute of Psychosynthesis, Assagioli Archives, Casa Assagioli, Florence. All rights reserved.



Fig. 11. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Meditation Plates," 1933. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. The painting is dedicated to Rudolf Otto. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

to her: "Dear Madam, receive my best thanks for kindly sending me your images. According to your description, you draw your images in exactly the same way as my patients draw theirs. These images originate from conscious perception, they arise in the unconscious, i.e., in the unknown. This unknown seems to have a collective character and not an individual one. The way in which these images are represented, however, is very different, but the underlying thoughts are of a general nature, and therefore such expressions can be subjected to psychological criticism. They have the value of *yantras*, which are intended to support a certain path of self-development as an instrument, and should therefore be examined for their psychological significance."¹⁴⁹ In May 1933, Jung noted the extreme technical perfection of these geometric images and asked Fröbe-Kapteyn how she could bring the content of these figures back to a broader spiritual structure and how she interpreted them from an intellectual point of view.¹⁵⁰

Despite Jung's initial appreciation of the "Meditation Plates,"

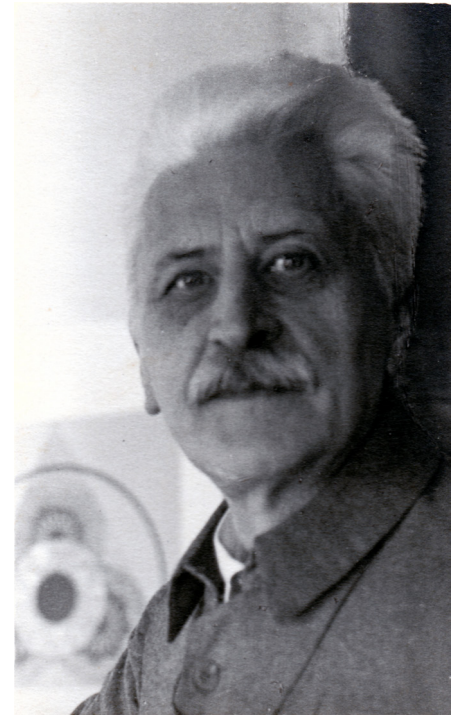


Fig. 10. Historian of religions Rudolf Otto, regarded by Fröbe-Kapteyn as the "godfather" (Pate) of Eranos; behind him is the painting *Consumption*, part of the "Meditation Plates" series. Ph. unknown. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

93

The first documented cadastral change (no. 86) relating to the construction of Casa Eranos is dated December 29, 1928. Construction work began in fact in December of that year: see Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by McGilvray).

94

Cf. Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 19. The first documented cadastral change (no. 736) relating to the construction of Casa Shanti is dated July 27, 1932. Casa Shanti was sold by Fröbe-Kapteyn in 1937 to Emma Hélène-von Pelet-Narbonne (1892–1967), who was joined in the same year by Alwina (Alwine) von Keller (1878–1965) (cadastral mutation no. 1253 of August 14, 1937).

95

William McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School," *Spring* (1980), 152; and Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 81. In 1931, Sharma married Ellen Teichmüller (1898–1978), daughter of Alwine von Keller. He was also among the audience at the 1933 symposium. (See Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano, "Appendix II: Alwine von Keller (1878–1965); A Biographical Memoir," in Carl Gustav Jung, *The Solar Myths and Opicinus de Canistris: Notes of the Seminar Given at Era-*

Fröbe-Kapteyn also told Rosenberg how Jung had helped lessen the influence theosophy had on her, just as Zillmann had done regarding the Arcane School as early as 1931 by giving her the journal *Yoga*.¹⁵¹ She admitted that she had been very shaken when Jung, on his first visit to Eranos in August 1933, harshly criticized the “Meditation Plates,” when he saw them arranged on the walls of the Lecture Hall. This led to a breakthrough in her research. The problem was not primarily the geometric aspect of the images. The members of Jung’s Zurich circle who were with him were in fact particularly shocked to have saw (whether consciously or not), among the eighty images, the symbol of the “Curse” (Fig. 12).

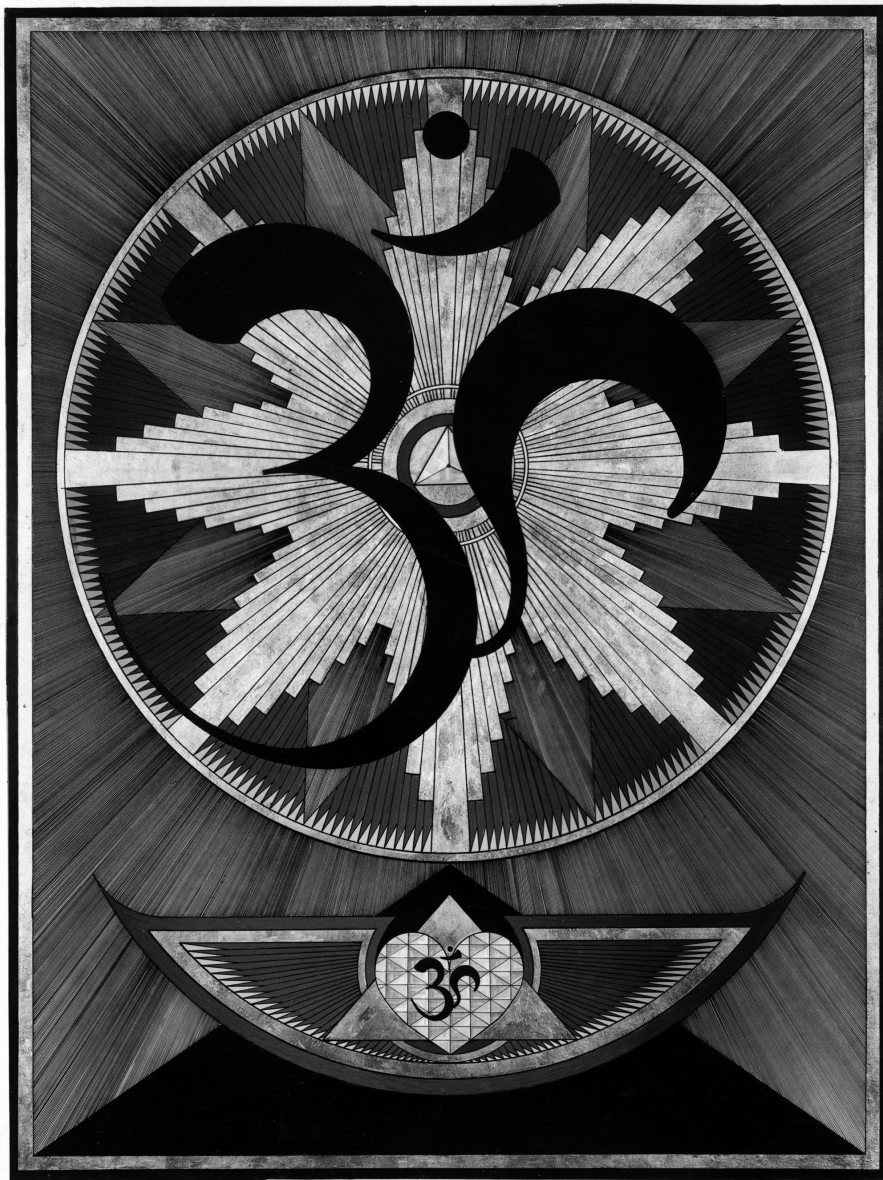


Fig. 12. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Pointing to that depiction of the “black *Om* [ॐ],” Jung even exclaimed, “This is the devil!” (“*Das ist der Teufel!*”). Curiously, the artist herself would later note that, among the many “Meditation Plates,” it was precisely this painting with which she had always most identified.¹⁵²

The *Om*, the most sacred and representative *mantra* in various

nos in 1943, ed. Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano (Einsiedeln: Daimon, 2015), 130, fn. 20; and Riccardo Bernardini, “In analisi con Jung: I diari di Emma von Pelet,” *Rivista di Psicologia Analitica* 91, no. 39 (2015): 219–36.

96

In May 1929, in New York, Fröbe-Kapteyn was initiated into the Arcane School at the rank of “Disciple.” She was active in the school for about two years; she would disaffiliate from this group four years later, in June 1933. Cf. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “19 Mai 44” (unpublished typescript, May 19, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

97

See Alice Ann Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography of Alice A. Bailey* (New York: Lucis Publishing Co., 1951), 217 ff.; Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 17 f.; and Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 35 ff. The Baileys stayed at Casa Gabriella for their first year, then moved to Casa Shanti in 1931. The rest of the participants stayed at the Hotel Monte Verità or the Hotel Collinetta (McGuire, “The Arcane Summer School,” 154). In Ascona, a friendship developed between the Bailey family and Baron Eduard von der Heydt, owner of Monte Verità since 1926 (Alice Ann Bailey, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, November 12, 1930 [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]; see also the “Gästebuch Monte Verità”, ed. Alexandra Barbian, in *Eduard von der Heydt: Kunstsammler, Bankier, Mäzen*, ed. Eberhard Illner (Munich: Prestel, 2013), 239; Fröbe-Kapteyn’s signature appears in the “Gästebuch” on August 18, 1930 – “Gästebuch Monte Verità”. However, the girls were involved in alleged erotic adventures that caused quite a scandal in Ascona: there is even mention of a little “getaway” to France, accompanied by Fröbe-Kapteyn’s driver, Mario Nigra: an episode that she did not appreciate at all (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Alice Ann Bailey, March 22, 1933 [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

98

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Vortrag,” 1.

99

The original name, “Summer School,” was replaced that same year with “International Centre for Spiritual Research.”

100

Present at the sessions of 1930, 1931, and 1932, Roberto Assagioli (1888–1974) had met Jung in 1907, while he was at Burghölzli preparing his thesis on the subject of psychoanalysis. Fröbe-Kapteyn had already mentioned Assagioli to Derleth in a postcard sent from Italy on May 23, 1928 (Eranos Foundation Archives). During the symposiums of the International Centre for Spiritual Research, Assagioli stayed at the Hotel Monte Verità. In a letter dated July 31, 1963, Assagioli informed Rudolf Ritsema that he would be unable to speak at that year’s Eranos Conference because he was busy with the International Meeting for the Education of the Supergifted (Capolona and Arezzo, August

Far Eastern traditions, from Hinduism to Buddhism, from Jainism to Sikhism, is a sacred sound, a vibration, and an invocation. It refers to the Absolute, to consciousness, to Ātman, and to Brahman. In Fröbe-Kapteyn's "Meditation Plates," the "Golden *Om*" or "Sacred Word," corresponding to the "golden swastika" (right-handed) and a "symbol of solar energy and power," is contrasted with the "Black *Om*" or "Cursed, Damned Word," corresponding to the "black or left-handed swastika, as it is [used] in Germany [i.e., as] a symbol of dark power [and] destruction . . . Both of these black symbols [the "black *Om*" and the "black swastika"] of highest but destructive power mean possession by the Devil. Just as Germany is possessed by him, the dark aspect of the Self. Or by Kālī the Destroyer."¹⁵³

In 1942, regarding the role of Eranos in the context of the war catastrophe, Fröbe-Kapteyn explained: "The commencement of Eranos in the year 1933, at the same time that Hitler came into power, is a fact that must not be overlooked. It is clear to me, and perhaps to a few others, that Eranos belongs to the *army of constructive forces*, as over against the destructive ones which seem to be ruling the world, and that it is one of the first visible signs that the former are beginning to stir."¹⁵⁴

Such a "dark aspect of the Self," which in all later "Meditation Plates" manifests itself as "black radiation," identified for Fröbe-Kapteyn not only her own personal Shadow, that "black occultism" that lived in her (over twelve years, Jung helped her with the difficult task of disidentification from it) but also the "dark spirit of Eranos." That dark spirit was connected with the "complex of the Arcane School, sunk in the unconscious," the reversal to the negative of the positive figure of the Tibetan, who, as spiritual master for Bailey (Master Koot Humi, believed to live at Shi-ga-tse in Tibet),¹⁵⁵ the followers of the Arcane School, and a small group of scholars involved in the International Centre for Spiritual Research, became instead the "black, the Super Dugpa [black magician or sorcerer, in theosophical literature], the Devil,"¹⁵⁶ or "his dark form."¹⁵⁷ More specifically, Fröbe-Kapteyn had covered that image with a black gable (*Giebel*), consisting of the dark *Om*. In the background stood the golden temple, even if separated from the viewer by the black pattern formed by the *Om* symbol. Jung, who had harsh words for that composition, claimed that Fröbe-Kapteyn had placed the devil between herself and the sanctuary, symbol of the divine. And that she had sided with the devil. This analysis deeply disturbed Fröbe-Kapteyn to such an extent that she could no longer look at the painting.¹⁵⁸

As a result of Jung's criticism—which was therefore a powerfully transformative occasion for Fröbe-Kapteyn's existence—she removed all the geometrical paintings from the Eranos Lecture Hall and showed them only rarely and to only a few people, while continuing to work on them, almost in secret, for a few more years.

Fröbe-Kapteyn sent some reproductions of the new figures that he began to create in March 1934 to occultist Dion Fortune (Violet Mary Firth, 1890–1946), explaining to her in this way the inner and artistic change that was taking place within her, partly as a result of Jung's decisive and harsh comments the previous Summer: "Since I last wrote, I have been working hard at the correspondences between Psychoanaly-

3–6, 1963); nevertheless, he expressed his interest in the work of Eranos and sent his best wishes for the success of the conferences. On Assagioli's participation in the activities of the International Centre for Spiritual Research, see Roberto Assagioli, *Educare l'uomo domani: Appunti e note di lavoro* (Florence: Istituto di Psicosintesi, 1988), 29 ff.; McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School," 151 ff.; Alessandro Berti, *Roberto Assagioli 1888–1988* (Florence: Centro Studi di Psicosintesi "R. Assagioli," 1988), 33; Paola Giovetti, *Roberto Assagioli: La vita e l'opera del fondatore della Psicosintesi* (Rome: Mediterranee, 1995), 45.

101

In 1930, Vittorino Vezzani (1885–1955) gave a series of lectures in English at the International Centre for Spiritual Research on "Yoga and the Education of the Soul," "Our Individual Place in Life and Our Mission," "The Fundamental Psychological Laws in Relation to the Education of the Soul," and "The Practical Application of These Laws." In 1931, in French, he spoke on "What is Mysticism," "Mysticism in Relation to Psychology, Philosophy, Art, and Science," "The Characteristics of Modern Mysticism," and, in English, "Common Sense and Spiritual Life" and "Profile of a Modern Mysticism"; in 1932, he dealt with topics such as "The Goal of Man" and "The Path of Attainment." Some of these essays later appeared in English in the *Hibbert Journal* and in *The Beacon* (Alice Ann Bailey, "August 1930" [unpublished typescript; Eranos Foundation Archive, Ascona-Moscia], 10), where also Fröbe-Kapteyn published an article (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Know Thy Self," *The Beacon: A Periodical devoted to Occultism* 8 (May 2, 1929): 31–35; we would like to thank Johanna Schade for bringing this text to our attention; Schade is working on a Dissertation project at the University of Halle on the topic "Eranos Conferences, science, and religion. Case studies from a study of religion perspective." Vezzani, who was also among the listeners at the Eranos Conferences in 1934, 1938, and 1952, published two contributions on Eranos in the parapsychology magazine *Luce e ombra* (see Gian Piero Quaglino, Augusto Romano, and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., *Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933–1952* [Turin: Antigone, 2007], 15). The magazine, founded in 1901 and suppressed in 1939 by the fascist regime, was edited in those years by Gastone de Boni (1908–1986), founder of the Archivio di Documentazione Storica della Ricerca Psichica (Archive of Historical Documentation of Psychic Research) in Bologna, who had a personal interest in Jung's work (Gastone de Boni, "Una visita a Carl Gustav Jung," *Luce e Ombra* 49, no. 4 [1949]: 212–19). The correspondence between Fröbe-Kapteyn and the Vezzani couple, Letizia and Vittorino, testifies to a sincere and deep bond. Contact was temporarily interrupted due to the war, but resumed in 1945 (Vittorino Vezzani, letters to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, November 5, 1945 and December 31, 1945, both from Rialmosso di Balma Biellese, [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]). In 1938, his signature in the conference register was followed by that of Pietro Ubaldi (1886–1972), a teacher, philosopher, and scholar of metaphysics who lived in Gubbio.

sis, the Kabbalah and ancient cults. Something seems to be happening to my subconscious regions, for suddenly after drawing geometrical symbols for about 8 years, and being quite incapable of drawing realistically,—suddenly mythical pictures have begun to appear, when I am meditating. Perhaps one should not call this meditation, but rather a condition of waking trance. The pictures are perceived inwardly, and I am sending you photos of this first series, which seem to me to be a definite set, all on the same background, all connected with the Cult of the Great Mother. It is like a mystery play, and also like some initiation through an ancient rite (Fig. 13).

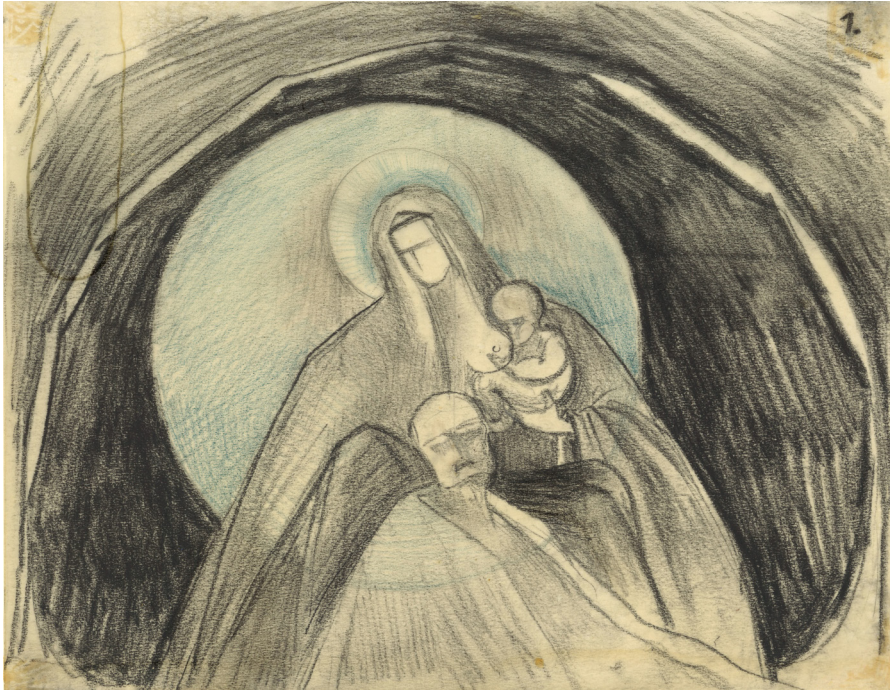


Fig. 13. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 1, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

The symbols seem to rise from what Jung calls the Collective Subconsciousness. They might be connected with a Mithras Ritual or Cybele cult. Some of the symbols are not familiar to me, for ex. the horned and winged male figure in the cave (Fig. 14), and also the second horned figure, in which snakes curl round the horns (Fig. 15). This last picture as well as two others seem to be connected with the process of Kuṇḍalinī (Fig. 16). At any rate it may interest you to see them. Probably many other others will follow, now the channel for symbols of this level is free."¹⁵⁹

On the subject of the realism of spontaneously experienced images, also with reference to our mind's ability to cyclically return to functioning in a creatively archaic way, Jung had already written in *Psychological Types* (1921): "Among primitives . . . the imago, the psychic reverberation of the sense-perception, is so strong and so sensuously coloured that when it is reproduced as a spontaneous memory-image it sometimes even has the quality of an hallucination . . . We only 'think' of the dead, but the primitive actually perceives them because of the extraordinary sensuousness of his mental images . . . When the primitive 'thinks,' he literally has visions, whose reality is so great that

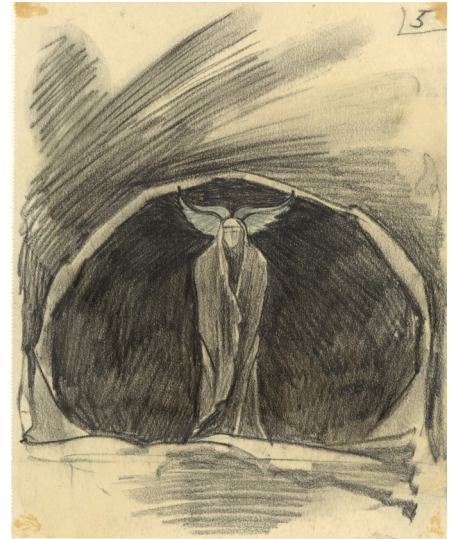


Fig. 14. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 5, March 1934. Pencil on paper. In her commentary on this vision, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn traces this figure back to a passage from *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912), in which Carl Gustav Jung refers to the Koranic figure of al-Khiḍr, known as "the Verdant One." He appears in the 18th sura, entitled "The Cave." The divine angel Al-Khiḍr (Helios), in his form as Dhulqarnein (Mithra), is an emblem of the Immortal, the Wise One in divine matters; his two-horned appearance, with his head veiled, refers to his power of divine solar wisdom, born from the depths of his mother. See Carl Gustav Jung, *Rebirth—Text and Notes of the Lecture held at Eranos in 1939 / Rinascere. Testo e appunti della conferenza tenuta a Eranos nel 1939*, eds. Fabio Merlini and Riccardo Bernardini (Ascona: Eranos Classics 1, Aragno * Eranos Ascona, 2020). Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

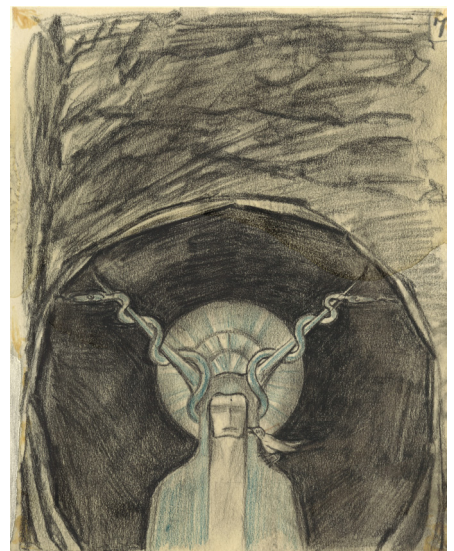


Fig. 15. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 7, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.



Fig. 16. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 12, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

he constantly mistakes the psychic for the real. How easily the primitive reality of the psychic image reappears is shown by the dreams of normal people and the hallucinations that accompany mental derangement. The mystics even endeavour to recapture the primitive reality of the imago by means of an artificial introversion, in order to counterbalance extraversion."¹⁶⁰

In April 1934, when he also received copies of those "ritual scenes"—which constitute the drawings contained in the first album of the "Visions"—Jung wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn that he had the impression that the figures were reminiscent of a sort of initiation into the kingdom of the "Great Mother," leading him to wonder what, in general, an entrance into the cult of the Goddess consisted of (Fig. 17). It was a cult that actually existed, he specified, in parallel to that of Mithra: in the latter, however, women were not allowed and thus came to the cult of the Goddess¹⁶¹ (Fig. 18).

Some "Meditation Plates" and perhaps the same early "Visions" were sent to esotericist Arthur Edward Waite (1857–1942), who in 1935 wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn that he was interested in her symbolic images, some reproductions of which she had sent him a long time ago;

102

McGuire, *Bollingen*, 22. In a letter written by Fröbe-Kapteyn to Jung on January 30, 1931, she invited him to give a lecture on "The Secret of the Golden Flower" (which he had received from Richard Wilhelm in 1928) during the second session of the International Centre for Spiritual Research. The letterhead, of course, did not yet bear the name "Eranos" (the Conferences would begin in 1933), but rather "Casa Gabriella." In a letter dated June 15, 1932, Jung replied to her: "If I should ever be in your area, I would like to visit you. I would prefer not to talk about the 'Secret of the Golden Flower,' as this would require psychological preparation that would be too demanding." (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung). Jung did not participate in the three sessions of the International Centre, but he did attend the first edition of the Eranos Conferences in August 1933.

103

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Arcane School: Positive Values, Negative Values" (unpublished typescript, undated [second half of the 1940s?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung), 2; and Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan," 5 and 9.

104

In Fröbe-Kapteyn's memory, Bailey directed everything in the early meetings of the International Centre. As head of the Arcane School, she wrote her books under the dictation of a Tibetan lama, Master Koot Humi—a bit like Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888),—had an air of superiority, and was a brilliant speaker, always surrounded by the mysterious aura of her Tibetan master, who was inaccessible to anyone else (he lived in Tibet, remained anonymous, and dictated telepathically). Fröbe-Kapteyn had read Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* in 1908, and, although she did not understand it, she considered it the most important book on theosophy (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, July 28, 1908 [British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenbergl]). In the third year of the Centre's activity, Bailey's leadership and power became unbearable to Fröbe-Kapteyn, who realized that Eranos' work would end up in a dead end if it continued in that way. She fell seriously ill just before the third symposium with the same Neuropathic pains in her back and head, with a fever of 40°. In the end, she opened the conference with enormous effort and in the Fall she severed her working relationship with Bailey (Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Drei Zeichnungen," 2; see also Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Alice Ann Bailey, March 22, 1933 [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

105

On the project of the International Centre for Spiritual Research, see McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School," and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 259–64.

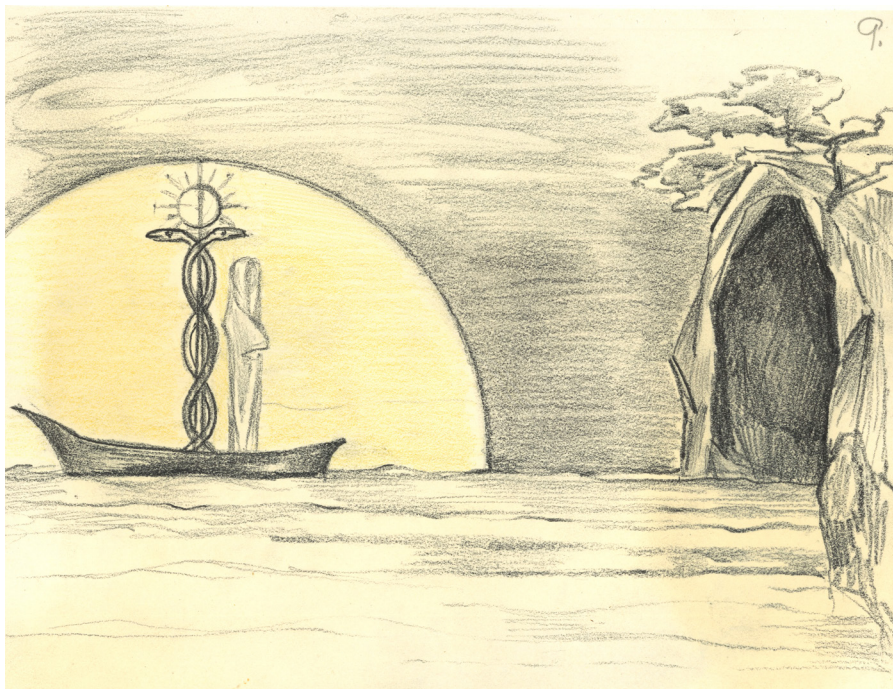


Fig. 17. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 9, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

he noted how they had now shifted from a geometric stage to one of "ritual scenes," acknowledging that her interpretation of them was also most suggestive to him.¹⁶² In 1936, Waite wrote to her that he was particularly interested in the "flowering of the Grail"—one of the most recurring themes in both the "Plates" and the "Visions"—in her representations.¹⁶³

As a result of delving more deeply into Analytical Psychology and the maturation of her intellectual relationship with Jung, Fröbe-Kapteyn's production thus increasingly turned toward a figurative style that recalled the active imagination, i.e., the psychological practice of dialoguing with the unconscious that Jung learned through his self-experimentation described in the "Red Book" and that became a "working model" his patients were invited to use.¹⁶⁴ A collection of 315 "Visions,"¹⁶⁵ arranged in twelve blue-bound albums, drawn between 1934 and 1938, can be traced at least in part to that technique.¹⁶⁶ These are the crucial years of the beginning of Fröbe-Kapteyn's cultural enterprise, Eranos; of her enduring intellectual relationship with Jung, who was among the main sources of inspiration for the Eranos Conferences; and of her search for iconographic material, for which Jung provided the impetus, which led to the creation of the Eranos Archive for Research on Symbolism.

In her artistic-therapeutic productions, Fröbe-Kapteyn abandoned the geometries and symmetries of the "Meditation Plates" and, over the course of about five years, created numerous small-format figurative drawings using oil pastels or wax crayons. As Rosenberg notes, she kept these images carefully hidden from the eyes of the public, in contrast to the "Plates." This means that these drawings, although laden with symbolism like the geometric paintings, had a completely different function: the "Visions" were not intended to have a suggestive effect on viewers, but rather to articulate the painter's inner life

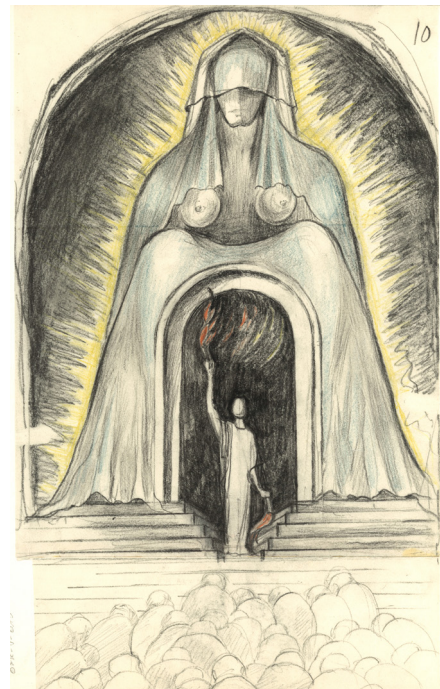


Fig. 18. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 10, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

106

Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee zum Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1922).

107

Rudolf Otto, *West-Östliche Mystik: Vergleich und Unterscheidung zur Wesensdeutung* (Gotha: Leopold Klotz, 1926).

108

Quoted in Aniela Jaffé, "C. G. Jung und die Eranostagungen" (1975), Italian translation: "Carlo Gustav Jung e i convegni di Eranos," in *Saggi sulla psicologia di Carl Gustav Jung*, Aniela Jaffé (1975; Roma: Paoline, 1984), 113.

109

Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos, Fortsetzung," in "Die Geschichte von Eranos," 1.

110

Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos, Fortsetzung," 2. In 1933, Otto also said he would call her "Erana" (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Mary and Eranos" (unpublished typescript, November 23, 1942; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). On the Greek meaning of the word and its use throughout history, up to Fröbe-Kapteyn's Eranos, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 1.1: "La parola eranos," 29–39.

111

Rudolf Otto pointed out to Fröbe-Kapteyn how the palindrome of the noun *eranos* was a Latin and Italian verb: *sonare* (see Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 21; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 42 f. and 56). On the influence of Rudolf Otto on the work of Eranos, see

in the sense of an artistic-therapeutic activity.¹⁶⁷ Among the “negative values” of the Arcane School, Fröbe-Kapteyn had in fact recognized in retrospect the “suppression of all dark things, including the *shadow*” and the “direction of all work ‘upwards’! never into the depths”;¹⁶⁸ she had the impression she was instead being led by the new images, which she began to make spontaneously in March 1934.

The “Visions” show a visionary reinterpretation of the nature, landscape, and architecture of the place where the author lived: they include real details—Lake Maggiore, the Alps, the Brissago Islands, and the Bauhaus style Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos—“transfigured” into symbolic and imaginative elements, in which reality and fantasy, outer environment and inner world, intertwine, permeate, and mingle in a stunning way. Some “initiatory” motifs also appear in the “Visions”: the somatic experience (breathing, lactating, bleeding) and physical transformation (into plant, animal, or divine being) of the female body. There are also the identification with a deity, the cosmic journey, and the complementary union of opposites.¹⁶⁹ Fröbe-Kapteyn recalled: “Jung once told me that all orders, such as that of St. John, the Templars, Freemasonry, and all others, are merely an outer expression of the *One Order of Brotherhood* in the unconscious (the White Lodge in Theosophy comes near to that). He also told me that any real initiation is only in the unconscious, for ex. the rites I used to draw of such visions, in which I was initiated. He also said: *Sie brauchen nicht mehr getauft zu werden, Sie sind schon mit allen Wässern getauft!!* [You no longer need to be baptized, you have already been baptized with all waters!] meaning these visions. Therefore, any ritual or initiation or degree on the outer plane puts us in touch with the *Inner Rite*. And *that* is the irrevocable thing. A brother who deserts his order, or a priest who leaves the church cannot *have his power taken from him*. He can only be excommunicated.”¹⁷⁰

Despite the absence of a proper analytical relationship, from 1934 until Jung died in 1961, Fröbe-Kapteyn continued to turn to him, not only to discuss issues concerning her cultural project, but also to ask him for advice on personal issues—as she did later with other analysts, such as Erich Neumann (1905–1960) in 1948 and Léopold Szondi (1893–1986) in Zurich in 1950, the father of “destiny analysis” (*Schicksalsanalyse*). Jung suggested that she write down her dreams and try to interpret their meaning, telling her to visit him from time to time, when she no longer knew how to deal with the material of her unconscious. As he instructed, she should devote herself every day for four hours to reflecting on her dreams, to drawing her inner images, and to carry out therapeutic work related to her own personal development.¹⁷¹ Jung provided her with particular assistance when she was conducting iconographic research for the Eranos Archive, during which she often had intense psychic experiences, also recorded in her “Visions.”

Fröbe-Kapteyn documented in her “Blue Book” the forms of imagination of a creative and independent subjectivity, capable of holding together the identities of woman, mother, scholar, artist, and spiritualist. Because of the care she had taken to draw, collect, and preserve, Fröbe-Kapteyn perhaps hoped that her “Blue Book” would survive her and allow future generations to rediscover and make it their own, as a special testament to that endless search for self, at once personal and

Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, eds., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1959), vol. 3, 954 ff.; Haki, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 92–99; Haki, *Eranos*, 39–43; Henry Corbin, “De l’Iran à Eranos,” *Du* 15, no. 4 (1955), 29; and Gerard Wiegers, “Henry Corbin and the Gospel of Barnabas,” in *Henry Corbin: Philosophies et sagesses des Religions du Livre; Actes du Colloque “Henry Corbin,” Sorbonne, November 6-8, 2003; Colloquium organized by the École Pratique des Hautes Études and the Centre d’Études des Religions du Livre*, ed. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Christian Jambet, and Pierre Lory (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 189.

112

I Ging: Das Buch der Wandlungen, ed. Richard Wilhelm (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1924).

113

See Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 47 f., and Rudolf Ritsema, “Encompassing Versatility: Keystone of the Eranos Project / Allumfassende Wendigkeit: Schlußstein des Eranos-Projekts / Versatilità englobante: Clef de voûte du projet Eranos,” *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 57 (1988), VII–LVII. On the significance of the *I Ching* throughout the history of Eranos, see also the recent work by Matteo Sgorbati, *L’I Ching a Eranos: Wilhelm, Jung e la ricezione del classico dei mutamenti* (Naples, Orientexpress, 2021), and also the work by Cruz Mañas Palaver, *El oráculo del I Ching: Un capítulo de la historia de la psicología profunda* (PhD diss., Escuela Internacional de Doctorado, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid, 2021).

114

Fröbe-Kapteyn and Jung are believed to have met in Darmstadt in 1930, on the occasion of the last conference organized at the “School of Wisdom.” (See Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Erster Abend . . .,” 15; Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn,” 20; Jaffé, Jaffé, “C. G. Jung und die Eranostagungen,” 113; McGuire, *Bollingen*, 24; Rosenbaum-Kroeber, “Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 119 f.; Nadia Neri, *Oltre l’Ombra: Donne intorno a Jung* (Roma: Borla, 1995), 187; Haki, *Eranos*, 26; and von Reibnitz, “Der Eranos-Kreis,” 110; in a private document, Fröbe-Kapteyn recalls instead that her first meeting with Jung took place in May 1933: cf. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “19 Mai 44,” 4.)

115

Sonu Shamdasani, “Jung’s Journey to the East” (1996), Italian translation: “Il viaggio di Jung verso l’Oriente,” in Carl Gustav Jung, *La psicologia del Kundalini-Yoga: Seminario tenuto nel 1932* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2004), 25 ff.

116

Kuno von Hardenberg participated in the second symposium of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1931).

117

On the relationship between the “School of Wisdom” and Fröbe-Kapteyn’s Eranos, see James Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (1976), Italian translation, *Il sistema occulto: La fuga dalla ra-*

universal, that Jung would theorize with the idea of the “individuation process.”¹⁷²

Conclusion

The Eranos Foundation is currently engaged in an extensive project to recover, catalog, digitize, and organize Fröbe-Kapteyn’s art collection. This is a fund of about 450 images, ninety percent of which are stored at the Eranos archives in Ascona. The corpus of these works is presently being restored.

From 1978 to the present, the Eranos Foundation has supported the inclusion of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s art materials as part of a series of important exhibitions:

- Thirteen paintings by Fröbe-Kapteyn from the “Meditation Plates” series were first included in the exhibition “Monte Verità—The Breasts of Truth,” curated by Harald Szeemann (Ascona, Zurich, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, and Ascona again, 1978–1980). They are now permanently displayed at Casa Anatta, Ascona, which has functioned as the main venue for the museum exhibition on the history of Monte Verità since 1981¹⁷³ (Fig. 19).



Fig. 19. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition “Monte Verità – The Breasts of Truth,” curated by Harald Szeemann (Ascona, Zurich, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, and Ascona again, 1978–1980), now a permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of Monte Verità, set up at Casa Anatta, Ascona. Ph. Roberto Pellegrini. Courtesy of the Fondazione Monte Verità, from the permanent exhibition at Casa Anatta, Ascona-Monte Verità. All rights reserved.

- Two “Meditation Plates” and some “Eranos Mandalas” were shown during the exhibition “Eranos—Images of a Mythical Journey into Our Times,” set up by the Eranos Foundation in Ascona (Aion Art Center, Museo comunale d’arte moderna, Museo Epper, and Monte Verità) and on the Brissago Islands from June 17 to September 2, 2006, and curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Claudio Metzger, and Giovanni Sorge. After the 1978 exhibition dedicated to the history of Monte Verità, which also included the Eranos experience, the 2006 exhibition—which coincided with the relaunch of the Foundation’s

gione nella politica e nella società del xx secolo (Milan: SugarCo, 1989), 278 ff.; Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn,” 20 f.; Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 45 ff.; Haki, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 63 ff.; and von Reibnitz, “Der Eranos-Kreis,” 110 ff.

118

Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Froebe-Kapteyn,” 27.

119

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Erster Abend . . .,” 14.

120

Fröbe-Kapteyn, 7.

121

Fröbe-Kapteyn, 14; see also Id., letter to Marie Stopes, December 1, 1937 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenbergh).

122

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Erster Abend . . .,” 15.

123

Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, September 20, 1937 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung).

124

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Eranos Archive” (unpublished typescript, undated [1947?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

125

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism” (unpublished typescript, undated [1947?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

126

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism,” 1.

127

Fröbe-Kapteyn, 8.

128

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Carl Gustav Jung, August 9, 1939 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

129

On the links between the Bollingen Foundation and Eranos, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 247–353, and Bernardini, “Neumann at Eranos,” in Murray Stein and Erel Shalit, eds., *Turbulent Times, Creative Minds: Erich Neumann and C. G. Jung in Relationship* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron, 2016), 199–236.

130

The Board of the “first” Eranos Foundation, which remained active until 1955, was composed of Adolf Portmann (1897–1982; Professor of Biology and Zoology at the University of Basel and later

activities after a few years of administrative transition—was the first project to systematically present Eranos through photographs, documents, letters, books, and paintings¹⁷⁴ (Fig. 20).



Fig. 20. Exhibition “Eranos – Images of a Mythical Journey into Our Times,” set up by the Eranos Foundation in Ascona (Aion Art Center, Municipal Museum of Modern Art, Epper Museum, and Monte Verità) and the Brissago Islands and held from June 17 to September 2, 2006, curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Claudio Metzger, and Giovanni Sorge. Ph. Riccardo Bernardini. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

- Some “Eranos Mandalas” were included in the exhibition “Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933–1952,” curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Turin, held from October 19 to November 9, 2007, at the Rectorate of the University of Turin¹⁷⁵ (Fig. 21). The eighty photographs of Jung at Eranos exhibited on that occasion in Turin, most of which had never been seen before, are masterpieces by Margarita Marianne (Margarethe) Fellerer (1885–1961), Eranos’s official photographer during the early decades of the Conferences. A monographic exhibition dedicated to her, “Margarethe Fellerer. Fotografa,” curated by Diana Mirolo, was organized by the Epper Museum from March 31 to May 28, 2012.¹⁷⁶ The photographic collection of Margarethe Fellerer was donated on that occasion by her heirs to the Eranos Foundation, which still preserves this extraordinary heritage of images.¹⁷⁷
- Two “Meditation Plates” were included in the exhibition “L’energia del luogo. Jean Arp, Raffael Benazzi, Julius Bissier, Ben Nicholson, Hans Richter, Mark Tobey, Italo Valenti. Alla ricerca del *genius loci* Ascona–Locarno,” directed by Riccardo Carazzetti and Mara Folini at the Museo comunale d’arte moderna, Ascona, Casa Serodine, Ascona, Casa Rusca Pinacoteca comunale, Locarno, and Atelier Remo Rossi, Locarno from April 4 to July 5, 2009.¹⁷⁸
- Twelve “Meditation Plates” were shown during the exhibition entitled “The Great Mother” and organized by the Trussardi

Rector Magnificus of the same University); Tadeus Reichstein (1897–1996; Professor at the Institute of Organic Chemistry, University of Basel and the 1950 co-winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine—along with Edward Calvin Kendall (1886–1972) and Philip Showalter Hench (1896–1965)—for the discovery of cortisone); Hans Conrad Bänziger (1895–1956; a renowned Zurich psychiatrist); and Walter Keller-Staub (a well-known Zurich lawyer). A “second” Eranos Foundation was established in August 1961. As stipulated in Fröbe-Kapteyn’s will, Adolf Portmann was nominated as its first president. When Fröbe-Kapteyn passed away in 1962, the role of guiding Eranos was inherited by Portmann, who was assisted by Rudolf Ritsema (1918–2006), the scholar of the *I Ching*. The Alwine von Keller Foundation was established in von Keller’s memory (1878–1965) by Emma Hélène von Pelet-Narbonne shortly before her death. Von Keller was a student of Jung’s who lived at Eranos from 1937 to the early 1960s. In March 1980, the Eranos Foundation and the Alwine von Keller Foundation merged, becoming the Eranos and Alwine von Keller Foundation. After Ritsema stepped down, there were several successive presidents: Christa Robinson (1994 to 2001; analytical psychologist), Wanda Luban (2001 to 2002; psychotherapist), Maria Daniöth (2002 to 2005; analytical psychologist), and John van Praag (2005 to 2009; classicist and businessman). In January 2008, the Foundation reverted to its original name, Eranos Foundation. The Board of the Eranos Foundation, headed since 2009 by Fabio Merlini, now includes representatives of the Government of the Canton of Ticino and of the Municipality of Ascona.



Fig. 21. Exhibition “Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933–1952,” curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Turin, held from October 19 to November 9, 2007, at the Rectorate of the University of Turin. Ph. Riccardo Bernardini. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

131

On the history of the Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 3: “Tracce. Jung e l’Archivio di Eranos,” 247–353. A recent contribution on the subject is that of Frederika Tevebring, “Images from the Collective Unconscious. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn and the Eranos Archive,” *The Public Domain Review* (February 22, 2023).

Foundation and the City of Milan at the Royal Palace of Milan from August 25 to November 15, 2015, in conjunction with the 2015 Universal Exhibition (Expo Milano 2015) on the theme, “Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life.” “The Great Mother” exhibition was directed by Massimiliano Gioni, assisted by Roberta Tenconi¹⁷⁹ (Fig. 22). Gioni had already curated the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), “The Encyclopedic Palace,” inspired by Jung’s *Red Book*. The curators displayed in a dedicated slideshow the figures collected by Fröbe-Kapteyn and dedicated to the Great Mother theme, which were originally shown during exhibition “The Great Mother,” set up in New York in 1939; the same slideshow was included in the exhibition “Judy Chicago: Herstory,” set up at the New Museum in New York from December 10, 2023 to March 3, 2024, and curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Margot Norton, and Madeline Weisburg¹⁸⁰ (Fig. 23).



Fig. 22. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition “The Great Mother,” organized by the Trussardi Foundation and the City of Milan at Palazzo Reale, Milan, from August 25 to November 15, 2015, in conjunction with World Expo 2015 (Expo Milano 2015) on the theme “Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life,” curated by Massimiliano Gioni, assisted by Roberta Tenconi. Ph. Fondazione Trussardi, Milan. All rights reserved.

- The same twelve “Meditation Plates” shown in Milan were also included in the exhibition entitled “The Keeper,” set up at the New Museum of New York from July 9 to October 2, 2016, curated by Massimiliano Gioni and Natalie Bell.¹⁸¹ (Fig. 24)
- Some images of the thirteen “Meditation Plates” originally included in Harald Szeemann’s exhibition “Monte Verità—Le mammelle della verità / Monte Verità—The Breasts of Truth” (1978–1980) have been featured in the exhibition dedicated to *Harald Szeemann. Museum of Obsessions*, curated by Glen Phillips and Phillip Kaiser, in collaboration with Doris Chon and Pietro Rigolo, at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles from February 6 to May 6, 2018.¹⁸²
- Six “Meditation Plates” were shown at the exhibition entitled “Elles font l’abstraction. Une autre histoire de l’abstraction au

132

Upon Fröbe-Kapteyn’s death, Szandor (Sándor) Végh (1905–1997), a Hungarian composer and violinist (later naturalized French), came specially from Basel to play Bach’s *Chaconne* for her (Ritsema-Gris, “L’Œuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn,” 22).



Fig. 23. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, slideshow with a selection of figures dedicated to the Great Mother theme belonging to the Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism, originally shown at the occasion of the exhibition “The Great Mother,” set up in New York in 1939. Exhibition “Judy Chicago: Herstory,” set up at the New Museum in New York on December 10, 2023–March 3, 2024, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Margot Norton, and Madeline Weisburg. Ph. New Museum, New York. All rights reserved.



Fig. 24. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition “The Keeper,” set up at the New Museum in New York from July 9 to October 2, 2016, curated by Massimiliano Gioni and Natalie Bell. Ph. New Museum, New York. All rights reserved.

133

The number 127 refers to the “Plates” preserved at Eranos or found to date in external funds. It has not been ruled out that the total number of works is greater; this may even be likely. Part of a series of fourteen “Meditation Plates” were sent by Fröbe-Kapteyn in the 1930s to Turin, Italy, to Industrie Grafiche Vincenzo Bona (still in existence), probably through Vittorino Vezzani (Foster Bailey, letters to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, February 25, 1931 and January 12, 1932) [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]. High-quality reproductions were to be made, but the printing press was partly destroyed by Nazi bombing. On the night between June 11 and 12, 1940, the first Allied raid struck Turin: bombs fell on the city until April 5, 1945, hitting factories, homes, public build-

20^e siècle,” organized by the Centre Pompidou in Paris from May 19 to August 23, 2021, under the direction of Christine Macel¹⁸³ (Fig. 25).



Fig. 25. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition “Elles font l’abstraction. Une autre histoire de l’abstraction au 20^e siècle,” organized by the Centre Pompidou in Paris from May 19 to August 23, 2021, under the direction of Christine Macel (pictured here with Riccardo Bernardini, during the lockdown period of the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic). Ph. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia.

- The same six “Meditation Plates” were included in the exhibition reset under the title “Mujeres de la abstracción” at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao from October 22, 2021 to February 27, 2022, again directed by Christine Macel¹⁸⁴ (Fig. 26).



Fig. 26. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf). Exhibition “Mujeres de la abstracción,” set up at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and held from October 22, 2021 to February 27, 2022, directed by Christine Macel. Ph. Erika Barahona Ede / FMGB Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa. All rights reserved.

- A first monographic exhibition dedicated to Fröbe-Kapteyn’s art was set up, under the auspices of the Eranos Foundation, at the Kunsthalle Mainz from June 30 to October 1, 2023. The exhibition, entitled “Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. Tiefes Wissen,” was curated by Yasmin Afshar and showed forty-seven “Meditation Plates” and, for the first time, a selection of sixteen “Visions.” The exhibition also included works by contemporary artists,

ings, monuments, and streets, and causing hundreds of deaths among the civilian population. Of the fourteen original paintings shipped to Turin, traces of ten were lost. Of the set of fourteen, however, several reproductions were saved; they are still preserved at the Art Institute of Chicago or for sale in European and American art galleries. We thank the Bona family and Pierdomenico Chiarabaglio, previously General Manager of Bona Industrie Grafiche, for their availability in searching for these works.

134

An early, still very embryonic study of the “Meditation Plates” is contained in Riccardo Bernardini, “Da Monte Verità a Eranos: Elementi di una rete culturale per lo studio della psiche e della complessità umana,” (master’s thesis, Università degli Studi di Torino, 2003), § 2: “Eranos: una retrodatazione? Le Tavole di meditazione della Arcane School, New York-Ascona,” 119–87, and “Appendice alla Parte Seconda, § 2: Tavole di meditazione dipinte da Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn spedite a Dion Fortune, con una lettera inedita di Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn del 19 marzo 1934. Su gentile concessione di Maria Babwahsingh / S.R.I.Am., Bayonne, NJ, ottobre 2023.”

135

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Hut and the Sacred Word” (unpublished typescript, Easter Monday 1945; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). In her visions, the color gold often appears as a symbol of the Self. (Cf., e.g., Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vision. 3 Juli 1947” [unpublished typescript, July 3, 1947; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

136

The “unifying” psychological function of the mandala, which we find widely present in both of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s artistic periods through the iconographic motif of the “Eranos Mandala” (series that was reconstructed and commented for the first time in Riccardo Bernardini, “Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos: Il contributo junghiano al Circolo di Eranos: ideazione, contributi e iniziative dal 1933 al 1952,” (PhD diss., Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, 2009), § 4.2: “Il ‘mandala’ di Eranos,” 330–51; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 1.5, 83–111 and 165 f.), is well documented in the seminar given at Eranos in 1943 by Carl Gustav Jung, *The Solar Myths and Opicinus de Canistris: Notes of the Seminar Given at Eranos in 1943*, eds. Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano (Einsiedeln: Daimon, 2015).

137

See Fabio Merlini and Riccardo Bernardini, “Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. 1881, Londres (Royaume-Uni)-1962, Ascona (Suisse),” in *Elles font l’abstraction. Exhibition Album*, ed. Christine Macel and Laure Chauvelot (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2021), 54; the biography sheet was later republished in the website of AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions a pour objet la création, l’indexation et la diffusion de l’information sur les artistes femmes du XIX^e et XX^e siècle: <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/olga-frobe-kapteyn/>.

e.g., Monia Ben Hamouda, Kerstin Brätsch, Hylozoic/Desires (Himali Singh Soin & David Soin Tappeser), Mountain River Jump!, and Sriwhana Spong¹⁸⁵ (Fig. 27).



Fig. 27. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard and “Visions,” c. 1934–1938. Pencil on paper. Exhibition “Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. Tiefes Wissen,” held at Kunsthalle Mainz from June 30 to October 1, 2023, and curated by Yasmin Afshar. Ph. Norbert Miguletz / Kunsthalle Mainz. All rights reserved.

- An exhibition, titled “La scia del Monte ou les utopistes magnétiques,” curated by Federica Chiocchetti and Nicoletta Mongini, was on view at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) from March 22 to September 15, 2024. Twenty-six contemporary artists dialogued with the works of artists who evoked the *genius loci* of Monte Verità in the first half of the twentieth century, such as Hans Arp, Marianne von Werefkin, and Fröbe-Kapteyn, with some of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s “Meditation Plates.” In conjunction with that exhibition, The Cool Couple artists set out to establish a dialogue between her work and synthetic thought: with the help of artificial intelligence, they thus combined Fröbe-Kapteyn’s meditative drawings with a dataset of images of organic and inorganic elements¹⁸⁶ (Fig. 28).
- A second monographic exhibition, entitled “Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artist—Researcher,” was set up at the Museo Casa Rusca in Locarno from August 8, 2024 to January 12, 2025. The exhibition, curated by Raphael Gygax, showed several “Meditation Plates” and “Visions” in addition to several figures from the Eranos Archives for Research in Symbolism. The exhibition also included works by contemporary artists Loredana Sperini and Lucy Stein¹⁸⁷ (Fig. 29). In association with the exhibition, a display entitled “Winding and Unwinding,” a project of the Italian duo The Cool Couple conceived for Monte Verità, was created. In a reinterpretation of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s futuristic research idea, in the wake of the previous exhibition at MBAL in Le Locle, the artists moved along the ridge of the

138

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Lecture Program. August. 1930” (unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

139

See Foster Bailey, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, November 12, 1930 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

140

[Alice Ann Bailey?], “International Centre for Spiritual Research, first session, August 1930” (unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 6; Bailey’s interpretation of these images were sometimes accompanied by a verse or paragraph “from the old commentaries contributed by the Tibetan” (cf. Alice Ann Bailey, “August 1930,” 1930 [unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia], 9 f.), the disembodied entity their group communicated with in those years and whom Fröbe-Kapteyn recognized in Master Koot Hoomi (see Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The 4th Function and the Tibetan,” cit., 3), using the techniques of *channeling* or *ultraphany*: see R. Bernardini, “Da Monte Verità a Eranos,” 128 f.

141

International Centre for Spiritual Research, “Program of Lectures. Second session. August 2nd to 22nd, 1931,” unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

142

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Im Anfang war das Wort: Geschrieben für Bettina. Ostern. 1928” (unpublished typescript; 1928; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Zwei Erhlungen: Der Ewige Gefhrte, Der Turm. Geschrieben für Bettina. Zu Weihnachten. 1929” (unpublished typescript; 1929; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); and Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Erzählungen. Geschrieben für Bettina. Ostern. 1931” (unpublished typescript; 1931; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).



Fig. 28. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition “La scia del Monte ou les utopistes magnétiques,” curated by Federica Chiocchetti and Nicoletta Mongini, on view at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) from March 22 to September 15, 2024. Ph. Luca Olivet. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Le Locle. All rights reserved.

relationship between art, philosophy, psychology, and natural forms, reinterpreted by artificial intelligence (Fig. 30).



Fig. 29. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Sensory visit for families: an art workshop for children aimed at creating works inspired by Fröbe-Kapteyn’s “Meditation Plates.” Exhibition “Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artist – Researcher,” curated by Raphael Gyga, on view at the Museo Casa Rusca in Locarno from August 8, 2024 to January 12, 2025. Ph. Museo Casa Rusca, Locarno. All rights reserved.

- Three “Meditation Plates” by Fröbe-Kapteyn were on display at the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, which hosted the exhibition “Tussen hemel en oorlog. Kunst en religie in het interbellum” [Between heaven and war. Art and religion in the interbellum] curated by Rozanne de Bruijne, from February 20 to June 15, 2025¹⁸⁸ (Fig. 31).



Fig. 31. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition “Tussen hemel en oorlog. Kunst en religie in het interbellum,” curated by Rozanne de Bruijne, on view at the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, from February 20 to June 15, 2025. Ph. Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht. All rights reserved.



Fig. 30. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Meditation Plates,” c. 1926–1934, reinterpreted by the artists The Cool Couple as part of the installation “Winding and Unwinding,” conceived for Monte Verità, in the wake of the previous exhibition “La scia del Monte ou les utopistes magnétiques,” curated by Federica Chiocchetti and Nicoletta Mongini, on view at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) from March 22 to September 15, 2024, and subsequently in conjunction with the exhibition “Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artist – Researcher,” set up at the Museo Casa Rusca in Locarno from August 8, 2024 to January 12, 2025.

143

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Gleichnisse” (unpublished typescript, October 1933; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

144

The use of the “Meditation Plates” within the International Centre for Spiritual Research is also documented by McGuire, “The Arcane Summer School”.

145

Quoted by Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 42, and Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 62.

146

Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 47, fn. 73.

147

Hakl, 62 and fn. 115.

148

Hakl.

149

Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, June 15, 1932 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung).

150

Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, May 20, 1933 (University Archives, ETH-Biblio-

- Six “Visions” by Fröbe-Kapteyn will be on display for the exhibition “Landscapes of the Mind C. G. Jung and the Exploration of the Human Psyche in Switzerland,” currently being set up at the Landesmuseum (Swiss National Museum), curated by Stefan Zweifel and under the direction of Pascale Meyer, taking place from October 17, 2025, to February 15, 2026¹⁸⁹ (Fig. 32).

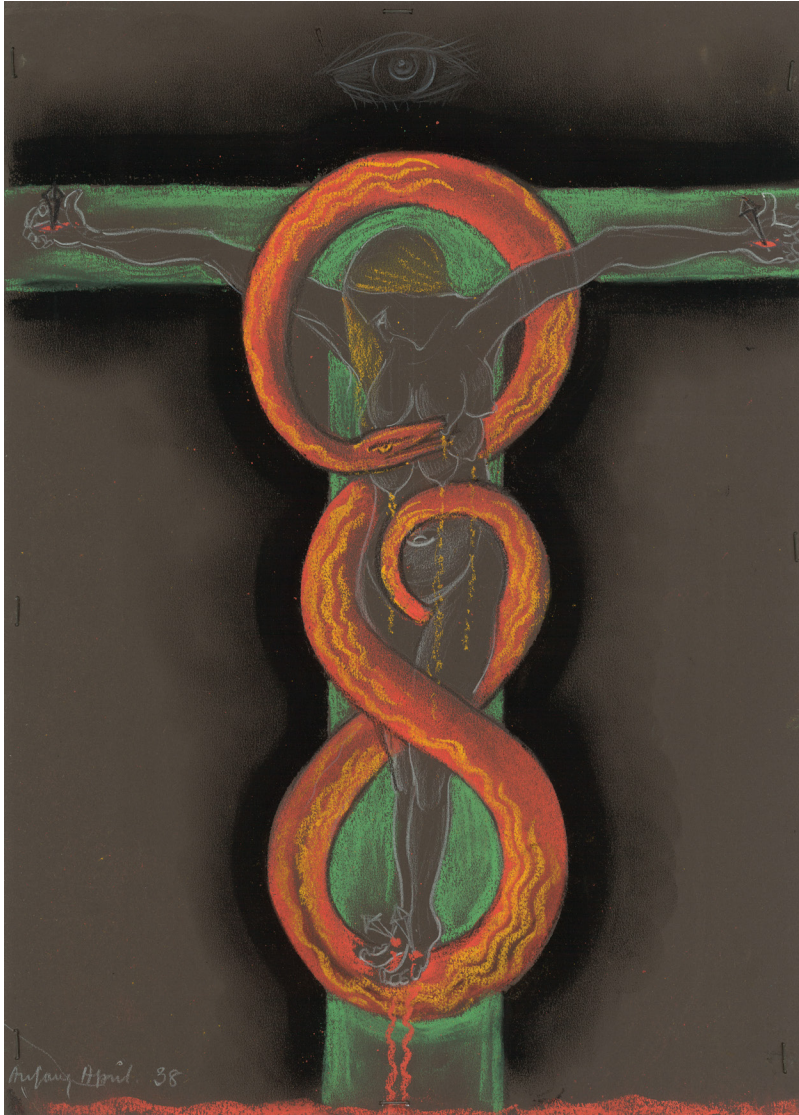


Fig. 32. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. “Visions,” out of series, April 1938. Pencil on paper. Exhibition “Landscapes of the Mind C.G. Jung and the Exploration of the Human Psyche in Switzerland,” curated by Stefan Zweifel and under the direction of Pascale Meyer, on view at the Landesmuseum (Swiss National Museum) from October 17, 2025, to February 15, 2026. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

- Another exhibition currently in preparation, featuring twelve “Meditation Plates” by Fröbe-Kapteyn, is entitled “Fata Morgana: Memories of the Invisible.” [Fata Morgana: Memories of the Invisible], curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Daniel Birnbaum, and Marta Papini; the exhibition is conceived and produced by the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi for Palazzo Morando—Costume Moda Immagine at Palazzo Morando, Milan, from October 8 to November 30, 2025.

thek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

151

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The 4th Function and the Tibetan,” 10.

152

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Curse” (unpublished typescript, undated; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). See also Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 2: “Eranos: una retrodatazione? Le Tavole di meditazione . . .” and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 263.

153

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Hut and the Sacred Word.”

154

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos: A Survey of its history since 1933, of the facts connected with it, a. the *Tagungen*, b. the Eranos Archive. The conclusions I have arrived at, my psychological realisations concerning it, its differences from other congress centres, and its chief problem” (unpublished typescript, 1942; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 15.

155

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “12 Mai 44” (unpublished typescript, May 12, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

156

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Arcane School,” 2 ff.; and Id., “The 4th Function and the Tibetan,” 1–8.

157

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “11 June 44” (unpublished typescript, June 11, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

158

Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 43.

159

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Dion Fortune, March 19, 1934 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). Dion Fortune, who recognized in Jungian theory a psychology correlated with esoteric psychology (Dion Fortune, *The Magical Battle of Britain* [1993; Cheltenham: Skylight, 2012], 158 ff.), maintained a correspondence with Fröbe-Kapteyn for some years (Gareth Knight, *Dion Fortune and the Inner Light* [Loughborough: Toth, 2000], 217; mentioned in Hakl, *Eranos*, 333, fn. 12). A portion of the “ritual scenes” had a curious fate, connected with Dion Fortune. Copies of them were preserved in the archives of an American Rosicrucian order, the Societas Rosicruciana in America (S.R.I.Am.) of George Winslow Plummer (1976–1944), which was formed in 1907 by Sylvester C. Gould from a schism of the American Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis of Charles E. Meyer (1839–1908) and later led by Maria Babwahsingh. The latter, about 45 years ago, acquired a “Dion Fortune Collection,” in which a series of reproductions of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s works were included. (Maria Babwahsingh, personal communication to

In anticipation of a future critical edition of the “Blue Book” by the Eranos Foundation, scholarly research on Fröbe-Kapteyn’s art, based on these exhibitions, continues to this day,¹⁹⁰ as does interest in her works in literature,¹⁹¹ music,¹⁹² documentary filmmaking, and cinematography.¹⁹³

This growing interest, not only in the scientific community (primarily linked to Analytical Psychology and the History of Religions), but also in the international art world, has given us the opportunity to continue the study of these works and gradually begin their conservative restoration (Fig. 33).



Fig. 33. Restoration of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn’s “Meditation Plates,” at the occasion of the 2015 exhibition at Casa Rusca Museum, Locarno. Ph. Patrick Zilic. Artifex Laboratorio Locarno. All rights reserved.

The future complete publication of the “Blue Book” will hopefully take the form of a catalogue raisonné, edited by the Eranos Foundation: an ambitious and essential project, which will hopefully allow future generations to continue to meditate on the forms of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s imagination and, perhaps, to rediscover in them the individual and universal value they had for their creator and, indirectly, for her cultur-

Riccardo Bernardini, August 30, 2003; and Hans Thomas Hakl, personal communications to Riccardo Bernardini, July 2 and 4, 2003; see also Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 182, fn. 9, and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 264, fn. 94.)

160

Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychological Types* [1921], in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 6, *Psychological Types*, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), para. 46 f.

161

Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, April 16, 1934 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung). The Picture Archive of the C. G. Jung-Institut in Zurich actually holds black and white copies of nine drawings from “ritual scenes” belonging to the first album of “Visions,” with handwritten notes by the author. Fröbe-Kapteyn’s drawings were not included in the exhibition held in 2018 on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the C. G. Jung-Institut (1948) at the Museum im Lagerhaus - Stiftung für schweizerische Naive Kunst und Art Brut in St. Gallen: see *Das Buch der Bilder: Schätze aus dem Archiv des C. G. Jung-Instituts Zürich*, eds. Ruth Ammann, Verena Kast, and Ingrid Riedel (Ostfildern: Patmos, 2018).

162

Arthur Edward Waite, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, April 16, 1935 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); quoted in Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 263, fn. 94.

163

White believed it might be useful for her to join his group—probably the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross founded in 1915—but this would involve a long initiatory path in their London temple. (See Arthur Edward Waite, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, April 19, 1936 [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

164

See, e.g., Riccardo Bernardini, “L’ultimo Jung nella stanza di analisi,” in “Postludi: Lo stile tardo,” special issue, *Elephant & Castle* 18 (2018): 4–34.

165

Fifteen “Visions” referring to her analytical work with Jung in October 1934 have unfortunately been lost—or perhaps were removed by the author herself.

166

A work on the “Visions” that was still propaedeutic is documented in Riccardo Bernardini, “Jung nel giardino di Eranos: il paesaggio dell’analisi,” *Eranos Yearbook* 70 (2009, 2010, 2011): 731–38, later reissued as Bernardini, “Jung nel giardino di Eranos: il paesaggio dell’analisi,” in *L’Ombra del Flâneur: Scritti in onore di Augusto Romano*, ed. Ferruccio Vigna (Bergamo: Moretti&Vitali, 2014), 35–46, and as Bernardini, “Jung in the Garden of Eranos: The Landscape of Analysis,” in *Eranos: A Play*, ed. Henry Abramovitch and Murray Stein

al and existential endeavor—Eranos (Fig. 34).



Fig. 34. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. Symbol sculpted in the early 1930s on the external wall of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, inspired by the paintings “Meditation [#1]” or “Meditation [#2]”, belonging to the “Meditation Plates” series, c. 1926–1934. Ph. Margarethe Fellerer, 1938 or 1939. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

(Asheville, NC: Chiron, 2025), 127–40.

167

Cf. Rosenberg, “Eranos oder Der Geist am Wasser,” 2 f.; see also, for more details on his meetings with Eranos, Alfons Rosenberg, *Die Welt im Feuer: Wandlungen meines Lebens* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1983), *passim*; and Wehr, “Eranos in seiner Geschichte,” 43.

168

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Arcane School,” 1.

169

On female initiations, see the fundamental study by Bruce Lincoln, *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Studies in Rituals of Women’s Initiation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); for an initial interpretive reading of Fröbe-Kapteyn’s “Visions” in this perspective, see Riccardo Bernardini, “Donne terrene, divine e demoniache: Le iniziazioni femminili: materiali antropologici per la psicologia del profondo,” in Marina Barioglio, ed., *La danza delle streghe: Energie femminili per una pedagogia spregiudicata* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2018), 176–90.

170

Fröbe-Kapteyn, “19 Mai 44,” 3. The theme of Baptism is addressed by her in a series of reflections, e.g., “The White Elephant” (unpublished typescript, 1940; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia)—a vision that, in her opinion, could have been entitled “The Book of Transformation”—and “The Circle and the Point” (unpublished typescript, 1949; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

171

Cf. Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 86.

172

The first lecture given by Jung at Eranos in August 1933 was precisely devoted to the concept of the individuation process: Carl Gustav Jung, “Zur Empirie des Individuationsprozesses (Hiezu fünf Bildtafeln),” *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 1 (1933): 201–14; Engl. ed.: “A Study in the Process of Individuation” [1934/1950], in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 9.1, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969²), 290–354.

173

Szeemann, *Monte Verità. Antropologia locale come contributo alla riscoperta di una topografia sacrale moderna* (Locarno: Armando Dadò; Milan: Electa, 1978); Harald Szeemann, ed., *Monte Verità: Berg der Wahrheit; Lokale Anthropologie als Beitrag zur Wiederentdeckung einer neuzeitlichen Topographie* (Locarno: Armando Dadò; Milan: Electa, 1978).

174

No catalog was produced for that exhibition.

175

Gian Piero Quaglino, Augusto Romano, and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., *Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos*

1933-1952 (Torino: Antigone, 2007).

176

Diana Mirolo, ed., *Margarethe Fellerer: Fotografa* (Ascona: Museo Epper, 2012).

177

See Riccardo Bernardini, "Collezionando ricordi: Margarethe Fellerer, fotografa di Eranos, e Carl Gustav Jung," in Quaglini, Romano, and Bernardini, *Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933-1952*, 133–41, and more recently Gian Franco Ragno, "La fotografa di Eranos: Margarethe Fellerer. Die Eranos-Fotografen: Margarethe Fellerer," *Ferien Journal Ascona* 71, no. 505/1, (2025): 22–26. The Eranos Foundation photo collection also holds works by photographers who succeeded Margarethe Fellerer, namely Tim N. Gidal, Luciano Soave, and Adriano Heitmann.

178

Riccardo Carazzetti and Mara Folini, eds., *L'energia del luogo: Jean Arp, Raffael Benazzi, Julius Bissier, Ben Nicholson, Hans Richter, Mark Tobey, Italo Valent; Alla ricerca del genius loci Ascona-Locarno* (Locarno: Armando Dadò, 2009).

179

Massimiliano Gioni, ed., *La Grande Madre: Donne, maternità e potere nell'arte e nella cultura visiva, 1900-2015* (Milan: Skira, 2015); Massimiliano Gioni, ed., *The Great Mother: Women, Maternity, and Power in Art and Visual Culture, 1900-2015* (Milan: Skira, 2015).

180

Massimiliano Gioni, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Margot Norton, and Madeline Weisburg, eds., *Judy Chicago: Herstory* (New York: Phaidon, 2023).

181

Massimiliano Gioni and Natalie Bell, eds., *The Keeper* (New York: New Museum, 2016).

182

Glen Phillips, Phillip Kaiser, Doris Chon, and Pietro Rigolo, eds., *Harald Szeemann: Museum of Obsessions* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2018).

183

Christine Macel and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska, eds., *Women in Abstraction* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2021); Christine Macel and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska, eds., *Elles font l'abstraction* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2021); Christine Macel and Laure Chauvelot, eds., *Elles font l'abstraction: Exhibition Album* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2021).

184

Christine Macel and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska, eds., *Mujeres de la abstracción* (Paris: Centre Pompidou; Bilbao: Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, 2021).

185

No catalog was produced for that exhibition.

186

Federica Chiochetti, ed., *Les voix magnétiques/le voci magnetiche/die magnetischen stimmen/the magnetic voices* (Le Locle: MBAL Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle, 2024).

187

Raphal Gyax, ed., *Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artis-ta-ricercatrice*, texts by Yasmin Afshar, Riccardo Bernardini, Raphael Gyax, Fabio Merlini, and Sara Petrucci (Locarno: Museo Casa Rusca; Ascona: Fondazione Eranos; Bellinzona: Casagrande, in collaboration with Kunsthalle Mainz, 2024).

188

Rozanne de Bruijne, ed., *Tussen hemel en oorlog: Kunst en religie in het interbellum*, preface by Josien Paulides, texts by Rozanne de Bruijne, Irène Lesparre, Korine Hazelzet, Lieke Wijnia, Lex van de Haterd, Tessel M. Bauduin, Katerina Sidorova, Marty Bax, Laura Stamps, and Dick Adelaar (Zwolle: Waanders, 2025); see also Josien Paulides, ed., *Tussen hemel en oorlog*, texts by Rozanne de Bruijne, Katjuscha Otte, Inge S. Wierda, Korine Hazelzet, Laura Stamps, Hanna Melse, Anouk Custers, Ingrid Henkemans, Elzemeek Aalpoel, Linda Coppens, and René de Kam, *Catharijne Museummanagize* 43, no. 1 (2025).

189

Swiss National Museum, ed., *Landscapes of the Mind. C. G. Jung and the Exploration of the Human Psyche in Switzerland* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2025).

190

In addition to the already mentioned contributions, see also Eva di Stefano, "Voices and Faces of Elsewhere," *Outsider Art Observatory* 19 (2020): 12–27; Marco Pasi, "The Art of Esoteric Posthumousness," in *The Occult Nineteenth Century: Roots, Developments, and Impact on the Modern World*, ed. Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter (Camden: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 159–76; and Sara Petrucci, "Hablamos Marciano: Los Futuros de Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962) y Emma Kunz (1892–1963)," *A*Desk: Critical Thinking* (September 20, 2021); Chloë Sugden is also currently working on a doctoral research project at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich (Professur für Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft) devoted to Fröbe-Kapteyn's occult cosmograms: see, e.g., *Newsletter of the European Society for the Study of Esotericism* 13, no. 2 (2022), which she edited.

191

A painting by Fröbe-Kapteyn was used for the cover of the book by A. Savage, *Introduction to Chaos Magick* (New York: Magickal Child, 1989), for the cover of the book by Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* (New York: Magickal Child, 1990), and more recently for the cover of *The Edinburgh Companion to Modernism, Myth and Religion*, ed. Suzanne Hobson and Andrew D. Radford (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023); see, though, the significance of Fröbe-Kapteyn's art in the work of Naja Marie Aidt, one of Denmark's most accomplished writers, who used a

"Meditation Plate" for the cover of her *Har døden taget noget fra dig så giv det tilbage: Carls bog* (København: Gyldendal, 2017), later translated into multiple languages; and also Jennifer Higgie's inclusion of Fröbe-Kapteyn's visionary practice in *The Other Side: A Journey into Women, Art, and the Spirit World* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2023), 231–34.

192

A painting by Fröbe-Kapteyn was used for the cover of the vinyl by Suzanne Ciani and Jonathan Fitoussi, *Golden Apples of the Sun* (Paris: Transversales Disques, 2023).

193

A selection of films, video testimonials, and video-documentaries—produced in particular by the Italian-language Swiss Radio and Television (RSI) over the decades—can be viewed on the Foundation's YouTube channel, through which the Foundation today documents almost all of its public cultural initiatives. The black and white video sequences included in the various films are taken from the silent movie *Eranos 1951*, directed by Ximena de Angulo-Roelli and Willy Roelli and produced by the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles (1951). They are kept in the Foundation's archives.