Do you want to know a secret? It is a secret that has been kept intact for centuries, but it is of supreme importance, actually indispensable for understanding the real essence of Christianity and the hidden development of Western culture. It can give you the key to penetrating the core of all religious traditions in the world. Here it is: during the Last Supper, it is not bread and wine that Jesus Christ gave to the apostles as symbols of his body and of his blood. What Jesus really offered on that occasion, which was to become the model for the central ceremony of Christianity for centuries to come, was his sperm. Since then the practice of spermatophagy (literally, the eating of sperm) has been the central, albeit hidden ritual practice of the Catholic priesthood. But references to this practice can also be found in all the religious traditions of the world.

What I have just described is, in a nutshell, the thesis that a Belgian spiritualist, the Chevalier Georges Le Clément de Saint-Marcq (1865–1956), presented to the world in a pamphlet first published in 1906, *L’Eucharistie*. Is it possible to think of anything more scandalous, outrageous, indeed bewildering for the average Christian believer, whatever his or her denomination? Yet Le Clément de Saint-Marcq was intimately convinced that he had discovered a truth of supreme importance for the progress and the welfare of humanity, and that it was his duty to spread it as widely as possible, using all the resources that his intelligence and his personal fortune could offer him. This he did, stubbornly and tirelessly, over a period that spanned most of his adult life. He had to pay a high price for it, but his unwavering, if eccentric, commitment has made him one of the most enigmatic figures in the history of modern Western esotericism.

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* I wish here to thank William Breeze and Peter-R. König for reading a draft version of the present article and commenting on it.
There are two main reasons for this. On the one hand, his ideas have been interpreted in the framework of “sexual magic,” a new phenomenon that emerged in occultism around the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, Le Clément de Saint Marcq has acquired a kind of legendary status among authors interested in this topic. On the other hand, and despite this legendary status, scholars have not paid him enough attention, hence a veil of mystery still surrounds his figure and works. Most of the authors who have written about him repeat a series of statements that, although not necessarily false, have never been proven to be true either. Le Clément’s biography remains largely uncharted territory, and his works still need to be seriously studied and analysed. He has been considered as a fundamental source for the development of sexual magic in twentieth-century occultism, but no one has yet attempted to reconstruct his intellectual profile or give a comprehensive overview of his ideas. In short, he has not been adequately understood, and his role in the history of modern western sexual magic still needs to be assessed. In this chapter I will offer a brief overview of the problems related to Le Clément’s role in the history of sexual magic. These are the first results of an ongoing research project on Le Clément’s life and works in which I am currently engaged.

1 Apart from some of the essays collected in the present volume, scholarly studies that have tackled the subject as a phenomenon per se, even if focusing only on particular aspects or authors, are very few. We can mention here Introvigne, Il ritorno dello gnosticismo, Deveney, Paschal Beverley Randolph, Urban, Magia Sexualis, and Urban, “Magia Sexualis.” Urban’s book, *Magia Sexualis*, is now the most complete historical overview of the phenomenon of sexual magic from a scholarly point of view and offers many important insights into the subject. However, the picture it presents is also partial, focusing mostly on Anglo-American material and neglecting (with the exception of Julius Evola) some very significant developments of sexual magic in continental Europe (such as in France, Germany, and Italy). On a more popular level, Francis King’s book, *Sexuality, Magic and Perversion*, is now dated and also focuses only on the English-speaking area. S. Alexandrian’s work, *La Magie sexuelle* is, on the other hand, more comprehensive, and offers interesting insight and a useful overview of the topic. A comprehensive scholarly history of the phenomenon still has to be written.

2 So far, the best scholarly treatment of Le Clément has been by Introvigne in his *Il ritorno dello gnosticismo*, 155–160. The same elements presented in that book have later been used by the same author for an article in French, “Le Clément de Saint-Marcq.” Before Introvigne, Helmut Moller and Ellic Howe had dedicated to Le Clément a couple of well-informed pages in their biography of Theodor Reuss, *Merlin Peregrinus*, 179–180. The “legend” of Le Clément has been built mostly on the basis of two contemporary sources: René Guénon, *L’Erreur spirite*, 321–327; and Pierre Geyraud (pseud. of Pierre Guyader), *L’Occultisme à Paris*, 109–120, to which we will return later. To this we should add a letter written in 1950 by the German occultist Henri Birven (1883–1969) to an ex-disciple of Aleister Crowley, Gerald Yorke (1901–1983), which has been quoted at length in Moller’s and Howe’s biography of Reuss referred to above (180).