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## **G.R.S. Mead and the Construction of Esotericism as “Western”**

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Scholars are now paying attention to how, beginning in the 19th century, the category of “Western esotericism” was co-produced by scholars and practitioners. I will analyze this relationship between scholarship and practice through a case study of Theosophist scholar G.R.S. Mead, one of the “amateur scholars” who helped define the category of Western esotericism following the Academy’s abandonment of this area of research (Hanegraaff 2012). Mead proposed that “Western” scholars turn to “Western” sources—a late (1891), more subtle, and less polemical position than “the Hermetic reaction” (Godwin 1995). A direct influence on C.G. Jung (particularly his concept of “gnosis”), Mead and his society The Quest are important links between emic and etic categorizations of and within the field of Western esotericism. I argue, following Strube (2017) and Granholm (2013), that cases like Mead’s highlight the fact that Western esotericism is best approached as an emic category.

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