

Lax CIRCUS Chronology
Compiled by Paul J. Spaeth
[rev. 2/06]

Lax's father loved the circus and took him whenever one came to town; usually waiting at the train station when it first pulled in. The whole family liked the circus, but especially the father.

1939 (Summer): During a novel writing contest while staying with Columbia friends Thomas Merton and Ed Rice at the Marcus cottage in the hills above Olean, NY, Lax writes a "circus" novel entitled *The Spangled Palace*. The novel deals with a traveling nightclub.

[*The Man in the Sycamore Tree* / Edward Rice. NY: Doubleday, 1970. (29); *The Seven Storey Mountain* / Thomas Merton. NY: Harcourt, Brace, 1948. (240)]

1943: Lax meets the Cristiani family in NYC while his friend Leonard Robinson is on assignment for *The New Yorker*, writing a piece for the "Talk of the Town" section.

["Waiting for Lucio" in *The New Yorker*. 19:16 (June 5, 1943) 15-16]

1947 (September 20): An entry in Lax's Hollywood Journal can be seen later as a precursor to the poem "Sunset City" that will appear in *Circus of the Sun*.

[*Journal E = Tagebuch E: Hollywood Journal* / Robert Lax. Zurich: Pendo, 1996. (48-50)]

Some members of the Cristiani family visit Lax in Hollywood.

1948 (Christmas): Lax visits the Cristiani family in their wintering grounds in Sarasota, Florida with his cousin Bob Mack.

1949: Lax travels with Cristiani family circus through Western Canada. This experience forms the basis of the work later published as *Circus of the Sun*.

1949 (June/July): While visiting Robert Gibney & Nancy Flagg in the Virgin Islands Lax writes down impressions of his circus experiences in a notebook entitled: *afternoon at the circus*.

1950 (Spring) While staying in Olean, NY, Lax writes a version of *Circus of the Sun* in library of St. Bonaventure College. He follows the advice of Fr. Philotheus Boehner who advises him to write in the same place, and at the same time every day.

1951 (Spring): Among others (including Alexander Eliot) Lax shows his circus manuscript to Robert Butman who helps with the final editing before Lax leaves for France.

[Lax had met, and become friends with Butman while they were both working for the school magazine of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the mid-1940's].

1951 (June): "Circus of the Sun. Excerpt from a Novel in Progress" appears in *New-Story* 4 (June 1951) 34-36. This text contains a larger version of "Sunset City" than was to appear later.

1951 (July): Spends a month traveling with the Alfred Court Zoo Circus across the Italian peninsula from Rome, where he had been staying the previous month, to Pescara on the other side. This experience forms the basis of the work later published as *Voyage to Pescara*.

1953: An article on the Cristianis with text and photos by Lax appears in *Jubilee*.
["The Incomparable Cristianis" in *Jubilee* 1:1 (May 1953) 52-55]

1953: Publication of "Circus" in *The New Yorker* 29:15 (May 30, 1953) 45. Originally written in 1949.

1954: Publication of "Solomon's High Dive" in *The New Yorker* 30:28 (August 28, 1954) 75.

1956: Publication of *The Juggler*. New York: The Hand Press. Design and woodcut by Emil Antonucci. This is part of the material that will be published later as *Voyage to Pescara*.

1956: Publication of "The Day of the Circus" in *Jubilee* 4:2 (June 1956) 30-31.

1958: A selection from *Circus of the Sun* is published in *New World Writing* 13. This appears in the form of poetry and was included through the efforts of Reed Whitemore, who was the editor of the poetry section for that particular issue.

1959: Publication of *Circus of the Sun*. New York: Journeyman Books.
Drawings and designs by Emil Antonucci. Hardback edition of 500 copies. A paperback version is printed in 1960.

1981: Publication of *Circus Zirkus Cirque Circo*. Zurich: Pendo Verlag.
A polyglot version of *Circus of the Sun*, with design by Bernhard Moosbrugger, along with 26 of his photographs. German translation by Alfred Kuoni, French translation by Catherine Mauger, and a Spanish translations of selections by Ernesto Cardenal.

1987: *Circus of the Sun* published as an item in *33 Poems* / edited by Thomas Kellein. Stuttgart, London: Edition Hansjorg Mayer ; New York: New Directions (8-47). This volume also reprinted the poems "Circus" (7), and "The Juggler" (48-50).

1992: Publication of *Mogador's Book = fur Mogador* / edited by Paul J. Spaeth. Zurich: Pendo Verlag. The text consists mainly of transcripts from the *afternoon at the circus* notebook (1949), along with other circus material written at other times. The book bears the title that Lax originally wanted to use for *Circus of the Sun*.

1996: *Circus of the Sun* published as an item in *Love Had a Compass* / edited by James Uebbing. New York: Grove Press (49-96), including a "Postscript" from *Mogador's Book* (66-70)

2000: Publication of *Circus Days and Nights* / edited by Paul J. Spaeth. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press. Contains a reprint of *Circus of the Sun, Mogador's Book*, along with the first publication of *Voyage to Pescara*

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