

# ROSIKRUCIAN ALCHEMY AND THE HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

by Jean-Pascal Ruggiu

(present Imperator of Athathöor Temple No. 7, Paris, France)

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Many people, when they think of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, immediately think of "Magic" or "Magick." Others would be surprised to learn that the Golden Dawn is not, nor has it ever been a "Magical" Order. It is rather the Inner Order behind the Golden Dawn, the Ordo Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis (R. R. et A. C.) which has been from the very beginning a depository of the Rosicrucian spiritual tradition. Furthermore, that which today has popularly become known as "Magic" or "Magick" is actually a development of that aspect of the Rosicrucian tradition known as "Theurgy."

Prior to the founding of the Inner Order behind the Golden Dawn, Theurgy had never before been the primary focus of the Rosicrucian spiritual tradition, but rather Alchemy instead. Indeed, the Rosicrucian tradition itself grew out of the Alchemical tradition. The true place of Theurgy within the Rosicrucian tradition has always been as a complementary discipline to Alchemy.

Alchemy was a part of the curriculum studied by the members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn; but, excepted some very concise definitions given in the "Knowledge Lectures" about several terms used in Alchemy, very little was really taught about Alchemy in the Outer Order. In the Second Order of R.R.&A.C. there was just a short study titled "Alchemy" written in 1890 by Frater Sapere Aude (Dr. Wynn Westcott) and registered as "Flying Roll N° VII". The only document concerning practical Alchemy was a Z.2 Mss available to advanced Inner Order members. This Z.2 document on Alchemy is quite valuable and extremely interesting, so I shall try to analyze it in the second part of this paper.

Now, in the curriculum studied by members of the old Golden Dawn, we must also include all the books edited by Wynn Westcott in his *Collectanea Hermetica* because it was considered in fact as the true curriculum of study for all the dedicated members of the Outer Order. Indeed, this collection of

books constituted very valuable sources of information concerning the rituals of the Outer Order. Among the treatises published in the *Collectanea Hermetica*, there were several on Alchemy; these were the following :

- Vol I. *Hermetic Arcanum* by Jean d'Espagnet with notes by Sapere Aude.
- Vol III. A short Enquiry concerning the Hermetic Art by "A Lover of Philalethes" (with an introduction to alchemy and notes by S.S.D.D. Florence Farr).
- Vol IV. *AEsch-Metzareph or Purifying Fire from the Kabbalah of Rosenroth* (translated by "A Lover of Philalethe" - 1714 - with notes by S.A.)
- Vol VII. *Euphrates or the Waters of the East* by Eugenius Philalethes (Thomas Vaughan) with a commentary by S.S.D.D. (Florence Farr).

The notes and commentaries of Frater S.A. and Soror S.S.D.D. about these alchemical treatises reflect a deep knowledge of the subject. We must not forget also that members of the Golden Dawn could consult the famous "Westcott Hermetic Library" founded in 1891 for the convenience of their esoteric research. This Hermetic Library contained many very rare books on Alchemy (in Latin, in German, in French and in English) of which I give here the complete list :

- Abraham Eleazar : *An ancient alchymic Work, translated in English by W.S. Hunter from a German Mss*" (Frankfort, 1774).
- Alchemy - 25 alchemic tracts in Latin.
- Alchemy - *An account on some experiments on Mercury, silver and gold in 1782* by J. Price (Oxford, 1782).
- Alchemy - *The Science of Spiritual and Material*, by Sapere Aude (W.Wynn Westcott) - London, 1893.
- Becher - *Tripus Hermeticus Fatidicus* (three tracts on Alchemy) - 1689.
- Borrichius - *Hermetis Aegyptiorum et chemicorum sapientia* (Hafniae, 1674).
- Bourguet - *Lettres philosophiques sur la formation des sels et des cristaux* (Amsterdam, 1729).
- Chambon - *Traité des métaux et des minéraux* (Paris, 1714).
- Combachius - *Sal Lumen et Spiritus Mundi Philosophici or the dawning of the discovered* (London, 1651).
- Flamel Nicolas - *The Hieroglyphical Figures of 1624* (edited by Wynn Westcott).
- Geber - *His treatises on Alchemy in Latin illustrated* (1682).
- Hitchcock - *Remarks upon Alchemy and the Alchemists* (New York, 1865).
- Kendall - *An appendix to the unlearned Alchemist*.
- Kirwan - *Elements of mineralogy* (London, 1784).
- Maier Michael - *Arcana Arcanissima - Cantilene Intellectuales de Phoenice redivivo - Scrutinium Chymicum* (1687) - *Symbolica Aureae Mensae* (1617).
- *Museum Hermeticum* (21 alchemical treatises).
- Paracelsus - *Compendium* (1567).
- Philalethes Eirénée - *Kern der Alchemie* - (Leipzig, 1685).

- Philalethes Eugenius - Lumen de Lumine or a New Magical Light and The Second Wash - (London, 1651).
- Rosenkreuz Christian -Chymische Hochzeit (1616, Strasburg)
- Salmon Guillaume - Dictionnaire Hermétique (Paris, 1695).
- Salmon - Polygraphics (contains valuable articles on Alchemy).
- Stuart de Chevalier - Discours philosophiques sur les 3 Principes Alchimiques - (Paris, 1781).
- Valentine Basile - Triumphant Chariot of Antimony.

As this list demonstrates, Dr. Westcott was deeply interested in Alchemy; indeed, the examination of his Map of the Heavens shows several Egyptian symbolical degrees connected with alchemy and medicine. The members of the Order could also read with profit all the articles written by the scholar Arthur E. Waite (Fratr Sacramentum Regis) about alchemy, for instance :

- "What is alchemy ?" (in The Unknown World review - 1894)
- "Thomas Vaughan and his Lumen de Lumine" (an introduction to the edition of Lumen de Lumine or A New Magical Light by Thomas Vaughan - 1910).
- "A Hermetic Apocalypse" (in the Occult Review, Vol 17, 1913)
- "Kabbalistic Alchemy" (in Journal of the Alchemical Society, Vol 2, 1914).

All these articles were edited once again by R. A. Gilbert in his book "Hermetic Papers of A. E. Waite, the unknown writings of a modern mystic" (Roots of the Golden Dawn Series - Aquarian Press 1987).  
Moreover, Waite wrote several interesting studies about alchemy, such as :

- Lives of Alchemystical Philosophers (1888)
- The Secret Tradition in Alchemy (1926)
- Raymond Lully (1922)

Waite edited and translated also many classical alchemical treatises:

- The Magical writings of Thomas Vaughan (1888)
- A Lexicon of Alchemy or Alchemical Dictionary by Martinus Rulandus.
- The Hermetic Museum Restored and Enlarged (1893)
- A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels by Benedictus Figulus.
- The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony by Basilus Valentinus (1893)
- Collectanea Chemica (1893)
- The Alchemical Writings of Edward Kelly (1893)
- The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus (1894)
- The Turba Philosophorum, or Assembly of the Sages (1896)
- The Works of Thomas Vaughan (1919)

Among the GOLDEN DAWN. members, Westcott and Waite were not alone with their interest in Alchemy: there were also Mathers, Florence Farr, William Alexander Ayton, Frederick Leigh Gardner, Dr. Felkin, Dr. Bullock, Allan Bennett and Julian Baker. Among them, we know that Westcott, Ayton, Felkin, Bennett and Baker could practise alchemy because they had the necessary knowledge on

chemistry due to their professions (they were chemists or physicians).



## **THE SECRET ALCHEMICAL TRADITION OF THE GOLDEN DAWN**

Was there really a secret alchemical tradition inside the Golden Dawn and does this secret tradition still survive to day ? I can testify that alchemical GOLDEN DAWN. tradition existed and is still alive, because I had the privilege to receive it as Imperator of Athathöör Temple. I shall explain later how it was transmitted in France, where we possess a strong alchemical tradition, but before, it is useful to explain the origin of the GOLDEN DAWN. Alchemy.

### **THE ROOTS OF THE GOLDEN DAWN ALCHEMICAL TRADITION**

What is the origin of the GOLDEN DAWN. Alchemical tradition? Curiously, the answer to this question is connected with the mysteries of the Order's origins. Indeed, the main part of GOLDEN DAWN alchemical tradition comes from the so-called "Hermanubis Temple N° 2" founded by Kenneth MacKenzie and Frederick Hockley. According to the research of A. E. Waite, MacKenzie and Hockley were the authors of the famous GOLDEN DAWN. Cypher Mss; this thesis seems to be confirmed by several modern scholars and actual members of the GOLDEN DAWN., such as R.A. Gilbert.

My own historical research on this subject validates their conclusions; despite Westcott's claims about the so-called Woodford's Cypher Mss transmission, he probably received these manuscripts from Mrs. Alexandrina MacKenzie after the death of her husband (Mrs. MacKenzie was indeed among the first initiates received into the Golden Dawn under the significant motto Cryptonyma).

Frederick Hockley seems to have been the main source of alchemical knowledge transmitted to the first members of the Golden Dawn. Among the thousands books he possessed in his private library, there were a lot of old alchemical treatises; but his practical knowledge about Alchemy certainly came from Sigismund Bacstrom. It is well-known that Hockley possessed the alchemical diary and the certificate of admission of Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom into the Societas Rosae+Crucis by the Earl Louis de Chazal at the island of Mauritius on 12 September 1794. Hockley made several copies of this document under the title A Journal of a Rosicrucian Philosopher, which he published in the S.R.I.A. review The Rosicrucian (Hockley belonged to the S.R.I.A). Dr. Percy Bullock (who was one of the first Golden Dawn's members) bought a copy of this document after Hockley's death and showed it to A. E. Waite.

It is highly significant that Bullock was more interested by the alchemical process of the Philosophers' Stone described in the Bacstrom diary than by his Rosicrucian Certificate; but Waite was more interested, as a historian, by the certificate. Indeed, this certificate proves that a genuine Rosicrucian

transmission still existed at the end of 18th century in a French dominion (in the island of Mauritius).

In a letter written to Alexander Tilloch, dated 16th March 1804, Bacstrom explained that Louis de Chazal was initiated into a Rosicrucian Lodge in Paris in 1740, possibly by the famous Count de Saint-Germain himself. According to the traditional rules of the Rosy+Cross, the Earl of Chazal gave complete instructions about the Great Work to Sigismud Bacstrom because it was his duty to form at least one apprentice before the end of his life (he was aged 97 when he did this).

It is interesting to note that Dr. Bacstrom had also several pupils (for instance, a certain Dr. Ford) when he was living in the London district of Mary-le-Bone toward 1805. Curiously, it was also at Mary-le-Bone that Francis Barrett was living at the same time. Barrett wrote a famous book on Magic titled *The Magus or the Celestial Intelligence* and claimed to be also a *Frater Rosae Crucis*. Towards 1801, he founded an Academy of Magic at Mary-le-Bone composed of no more than 12 pupils. Hockley knew Barrett through his friend, John Denley who was a bookseller specialized in occult books (Hockley worked for Denley and was involved in copying many occult manuscripts for sale); according to Hockley, Denley gave much information to Barrett for his book, *The Magus*.

It is interesting also to underline that it was in Denley's bookshop that Lord Bulwer-Lytton claimed to have met the mysterious Brother of the Rosy+Cross who gave him the cypher Mss which he used for writing his famous novel "Zanoni". Lytton's Rosicrucian novel is quite autobiographical; for instance, when Glyndon asks Zanoni (his Rosicrucian Master) why he wanted to teach him the mysteries of Alchemy, Zanoni answered that he knew that one of Glyndon's ancestors belonged to the Fraternity, and therefore, according to the rules of the brotherhood, it was his duty to instruct him. In fact, this story is that of Lord Bulwer-Lytton himself, because one of his ancestors, John Bulwer, was an alchemist in the Sixteen Century and allegedly belonged to the Rosy Cross Fellowship...

Now, to come back to Dr. Bacstrom, we are informed through a letter Hockley addressed to Irwin, that Bacstrom pursued the Great Work until the end of his life, but died very poor. So, probably, he did not succeed in making the Philosopher's Stone according to the instructions that he received from the Earl Louis de Chazal and that he transcribed in his *Essay on Alchemy* (reprinted under the title of *Bacstrom's Alchemical Anthology* by Kessinger Publishing Company). It is to be noted that the alchemical way followed by de Chazal and Bacstrom was an Antimony Way. A quite valuable information about Bacstrom's process is given by the famous French alchemist Fulcanelli in his book *Les Demeures Philosophales*. Fulcanelli wrote that this process was not really Alchemy but "Archimie", i.e. a kind of particular process obtained from the exaltation of gold. Fulcanelli gave a strange information about Bacstrom and Hockley : he wrote that "Among the archimists having used gold for increasing it, with the help of successful formulae, we shall quote (...) Yardley, an English inventor of a process transmitted to Mr. Garden, a London glover, in 1716, then communicated by Mr. F. Hockley to Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom (who was affiliated to the Hermetic society founded by the Adept de Chazal, who was living in the Mauritian island in the Indian ocean, during the French Revolution). This process was the subject of a Bacstrom's letter to Mr. L. Sand, in 1804."

So, if Fulcanelli's information is correct, Hockley transmitted also an alchemical process to Bacstrom. Therefore, it is not impossible that Hockley was also a practicing alchemist. In any case, if Bacstrom died very poor, this was not the case for Hockley. When he died, he left a great fortune : over £ 3.500 (it was a quite substantial amount in 1885). Of course, Hockley was an accountant and quite wealthy, but it is not impossible that he obtained a part of his fortune through his alchemical works. If he did not obtain the true Philosopher's Stone (he died very ill at the age of 77), he could have succeeded in making gold by a particular Archemical process. It seems that Bacstrom received only the communication of a particular alchemical process from the Earl of Chazal, but not the true Philosopher's Stone.

According to a letter that Bacstrom wrote to Alexander Tilloch, we know that the Earl of Chazal "had

obtained the Lapis Philosophorum and the "Pierre Animale" (Animal Stone). By the first he acquired what he possessed and by the second, he had preserved his health to the age of 97."

This information is very valuable and proves that the Earl of Chazal was really initiated into the genuine brotherhood of the Rosy+Cross because there are only very few people who know what the Animal Stone is. Indeed, the communication of the secret of the "Animal Stone" is only given to the members belonging to the "Internal College" (or Inner Order) of the genuine and ancient Fraternity of Aureae Roseae+Crucis and still constitutes the main secret of "internal alchemy". According to the documents which are in my possession, this fraternity was founded in 1580 in Germany and was reorganized in 1666 and 1777 under the name of the Masonic Order of the Gold und Rosenkreuz Orden. It is interesting to note that the process of making the "Animal Stone" described in the alchemical operative corpus of the English Societas Rosae+Crucis of Dr. Bacstrom is very similar to that of the German Aureae+Crucis Fraternitatis. In fact, Dr. Bacstrom was in touch with German brethren of the Golden Rosicrucian lodges and translated in English many secrets documents written by German Fratres & Sorores, as Mathadanus, Anton Kirchweger, Dorothea Wallachin, etc.

In France, a Rosicrucian lodge of Aureae Crucis Fraternitatis was founded in 1624. The Hermetic Tradition survived mainly through the Masonic French Illuminist Lodges during the 18th century and through the "Egyptian Free-Masonry" during the 19th century.

Indeed, Egyptian Freemasonry (which was founded by Cagliostro) was prominent in the development of Alchemy in the 19th century. For instance, we know that Fulcanelli was in relationship with De Lesseps family involved with the Suez Canal building in Egypt. Ferdinand de Lesseps belonged to the high degrees of Egyptian Freemasonry and also to a very Secret Egyptian Society. Moreover, we know that Fulcanelli was a close friend of Dujols, a Paris bookseller who was deeply involved in the study of Alchemy and Hermeticism. Dujols was associated with Alberic Thomas who was an astrologer and chief of an Egyptian Masonic Lodge of Paris named The Rainbow. According to Volguine (a French astrologer who wrote some years ago an extremely interesting article about "Astrology and Secrets Societies"), Alberic Thomas was in touch with certain members of Athoth Temple N° 7 (founded by MacGregor Mathers in Paris in 1894); Alberic Thomas was effectively a close friend of Frater Ely Star (Eugène Jacob), a famous French astrologer and also Hierophant of Athoth Temple...It is also important to underline that certain rituals of the high degrees of the Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis are very similar to those of the Golden Dawn (for instance, the names of the officers are the same).

But these rituals are older than those of the GOLDEN DAWN.! So, they could be the main source of the Cypher GOLDEN DAWN. rituals. In any case, it could explain why Hockley and MacKenzie were so fascinated by Cagliostro, founder of Egyptian Masonry, and why they considered him as their chief Spirit in the Brotherhood of Fratres Lucis which they founded together in England. According to MacKenzie and Hockley's claims, they were initiated into the Fratres Lucis in France at Paris, possibly by Eliphas Levi who is alleged to be a member of this Brotherhood.

In fact, the original Fratres Lucis or "Brotherhood of Light" was founded in Germany by the baron Ecker Von Eckhoffen, a past member of the Golden Rosy+Cross and also founder of Asiatic Brethren.

All these German fraternities were deeply involved with the practice of alchemy. My historical researches into these topics proved that many members belonging to the Asiatic Brethren or Fratres Lucis became members of a German masonic lodge called L'Aurore Naissante (or "the Nascent Dawn") founded in Frankfurt-on-Main in 1807. Westcott wrote that this lodge was a "very ancient Rosicrucian Lodge of Frankfurt-on-Main where Lord Bulwer Lytton was received into Adeptship". It is true that Bulwer-Lytton went to Germany on a long visit during the years 1841-1843 (his novel "Zanoni" was first published in 1842), so he could have been initiated in the lodge of the Nascent Dawn which still existed at the time. But before this event, Lytton did also sojourn in Italy, at Naples, during the years 1833-34, where he received some occult instructions probably from the prince San Severo, who was a

member of the Golden Rosy+Cross.

Both Bulwer-Lytton and Kenneth MacKenzie knew quite well the famous French Magus Eliphas Lévi who was a practicing alchemist. Just before his second visit to England in 1861, Eliphas Lévi carried out some alchemical experiments with one of his pupil, Dr. Fernand Rozier (1839-1922), who became later a friend of the famous Papus. Moreover, one of Lévi's close friends was Louis Lucas, a leading alchemist and author of a novel entitled *Roman Alchimique*. Eliphas Lévi did claim to know the secret of transmutation. "I possess", he stated in an letter, "some very curious manuscripts of the hermetic art, and I have a profound knowledge of the mysteries of that science. I have seen the secret fire produced,

I have seen how two metallic sperms are formed, the white which resembles mercury, and the red which is a viscous oil resembling molten sulphur. I know what can be done with gold, but believe me when I say that I will never do it." Among the curious manuscripts about hermetic art which E. Lévi was referring to, the more important seems to have been the *Æsch Mezareph* which he published in 1861 as an appendix to his book *La Clef des Grands Mystères* ("The Key of Great Mysteries" which was later translated by A. E. Waite). Dr. Westcott published also the *Æsch Mezareph* according to an old english translation (dated 1714) from the Latin version of Rosenroth.

So it is not impossible that Eliphas Lévi knew the *Æsch Mezareph* from the English Adepts, but he wrote that he discovered this text hidden in a church. It must be underlined also that Eliphas Lévi visited London again in 1861, just after his initiation into Free-Masonry, in the company of his pupil and protector, the Count Alexander Braszynsky, a practicing alchemist who had a laboratory in the castle of Beauregard at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Mme de Balzac's home. The Count Braszynsky was, like Lévi, a friend of Lord Bulwer-Lytton, and the two men went to stay at his castle, Knebworth, in Hertfordshire. It was also the same year (1861) that Kenneth MacKenzie visited Eliphas Lévi in Paris. Alexander Ayton, the alchemist of the Golden Dawn, told W.B. Yeats that he made an elixir of life that he shewed to "a French alchemist", probably Eliphas Lévi himself when the latter visited England in 1861.

Now, the relationship between all these men is made clear by knowing that they belonged to the Internal College of the Rosy+Cross, which was always dedicated to the study and the practice of alchemy, the most secret occult science. Indeed, according to the tradition of F.A.R+C (*Frères Aînés de la Rose+Croix* or Elder Brethren of the Rosy Cross), a very secretive Order still existing in France, Lord Bulwer-Lytton was elected in 1849 as the 51st Emperor of their Order, until 1865; the 52d Emperor was Alphonse Louis Constant (Eliphas Lévi) from 1865 to 1874; the 53rd Emperor was William Wynn Westcott (1874-1892), the 54th Emperor was Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers (1892-1898), then Rudolf Steiner (1898-1900). An internal document about the Order history, *Legenda of F.A.R.+C.*, could explain the relationship between French and English Adepts. Indeed, the fraternity was created in 1316 after the persecutions of Knights Templar by Philippe le Bel, King of France.

Several Knights Templar escaped to England, then to Scotland. One of them, the baron Guidon de Montanor, who had been initiated in the Middle-East into the mysteries of Alchemy, instructed Gaston de la Pierre Phoebus in this Art. Both together they decided to found a new Order, the Elder Brethren of the Rosy+Cross, and to return to France with 25 others Knights Templar, under the secret protection of the Pope Jean XXII, who was residing at this time in the south of France at Avignon.

So, if Westcott & Mathers were really elected as Emperor of F.A.R+C., we could understand better why MacGregor Mathers considered that his "Secret Masters" were living in France at Paris; it is to be underlined that the mysterious French alchemist Fulcanelli was living there during that time and had many acquaintances among the French occultists surrounding Papus (Dr. Gerard Encausse) who was also initiated in Athathöor Temple on Saturday March 23rd 1895. Anyway, Mathers could not forget that he was from Scottish lineage and that the MacGregor's clan originated from the Argyll County, just near Mull island where the French Knights Templar took refuge. According to Mathers' claims, one of

his masters was a Scottish Adept living in Paris, Frater Ex Lux Septentriones.

## **THE GOLDEN DAWN ALCHEMICAL TRADITIONS'S SURVIVAL**

After the 1903 schism, it seems that a great part of the Alchemical Golden Dawn tradition survived both inside the Stella Matutina and the Alpha Omega.

### **STELLA MATUTINA ALCHEMY**

Dr. Felkin's contacts with the German occultist Rudolf Steiner, who was closely connected with an old branch of the German Rosy+Cross (the Illuminati) and Imperator of F.A.R.+C., were very fruitful. It seems that several spiritual alchemical practices were taught to Dr. Felkin by Steiner (for instance, the development of the Middle Pillar Ritual and the introduction to the Rosy Cross Ritual, which were Stella Matutina practices). The famous Z. 2 document on Alchemy was certainly written by Felkin, and not by Mathers. By the way, it must be underlined that the Rituals of R.R.&.A.C. were not entirely created by MacGregor Mathers, but that he was inspired by those of the German Golden Rosy+Cross, which I am quite sure he received by regular transmission. Indeed, I have the proof that the GOLDEN DAWN. wands' patterns were inspired by the Moses' Wand described in a very secret and old German document of the Golden Rosy Cross (dated 1514), a copy of which is in my possession and that I received from the Internal college of this Order. It is quite interesting to note that this document contains strong Polish Jewish Cabalistic influences, and especially those coming from the school of Shabbathai Zévi, who proclaimed himself in 1666 to be the Messiah awaited by all the Jews. This date (1666) is very interesting, because it is in accordance with a solar cycle of 111 years. Indeed, the German Golden Rosy+Cross Order was linked to this 111 years cycle; for instance, it was in 1777 that this Order was reformed with a new scale of grades, which was also adopted both by the S.R.I.A. and the Golden Dawn founded 111 years latter in 1888. Now, the Golden Rosy+Cross document which I referred to above, contains also many rituals which we find once again in the Golden Dawn (for instance several versions in Latin and in Hebrew of the Cabalistic Cross Ritual and the Middle Pillar Ritual). So, this document constitutes the proof that the Golden Dawn magical rituals are in fact the developments of those of the German Golden Rosy Cross; but as these latter rituals are still very secrets, it is also the proof that the founders of the GOLDEN DAWN. received a genuine German Rosicrucian transmission...

Now to come back to the Alchemical tradition of the Stella Matutina, it seems to be well preserved in New-Zealand, where Dr. Felkin went to live. Pat Zalewski, Chief of Thoth-Hermès Temple in Wellington, wrote to me and gave me very interesting information about his alchemical works; he underlined in his letter that he considered the practice of alchemy necessary in the R.R. et A.C. However, he wrote that the real practice of alchemy was revealed to advanced members of the Inner Order only. It was also the case in the Rosicrucian Order of Alpha Omega where practical alchemy was revealed only to Adepti Exempti.

### **ALPHA OMEGA ALCHEMY**

In England, the Golden Dawn Alchemical tradition was well preserved in the Rosicrucian Order of Alpha Omega, especially through the action of Frater Animo Et Fide (Edward Langford Garstin), Cancellarius of the London A.O. Temple. Garstin received from Moïna Mathers some very valuable alchemical treatises which her husband praised very much, especially Jacob Boehme's *Mysterium Magnum* and Kirchweger's *Aurea Catena Homeri* (1722). MacGregor Mathers valued also very much Salomon Trismosin's *Splendor Solis* because this treatise included 22 beautiful colored plates which Mathers correlated of course with the 22 Paths of the Tree of Life. But there is another alchemical

treatise of this kind that Garstin knew very well : Le Livre des 22 Feuilletts Hermétiques ("The Book of 22 Hermetic Leaves") of Kerdanek de Pornic which describes twenty-two hermetic Arcanes, a number recalling the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot. It is possible that it was MacGregor Mathers who discovered this very rare French booklet in France which Garstin received from Moïna. This booklet, which is in my possession, is very valuable because it is a very clear description of the 22 steps of the Great Work including many laboratory drawings. Strangely, the alchemical way which is described in the Book of 22 Hermetic Leaves is an Antimonial Way very similar to the Bacstrom's one.

Langford Garstin wrote two unpublished essays about alchemy : Alchemy and Astrology and A Glossary of Alchemical Terms. He published also two others books titled Theurgy (1930) and Secret Fire (1932). As an Englishman, Garstin was naturally more interested by the works of past alchemists in Britain, like Vaughan, Philalethes, Norton, Ripley, John Dee and Kelley. In fact, Garstin was not really involved with operative alchemy, but rather he practiced "spiritual alchemy" (I believe that a great part of this spiritual alchemy was given to B.O.T.A. through the Alpha Omega's American Temples).

Now, Edward Garstin was also the secretary of the Quest Society, to which belonged also Gerard Heym, one of his best friends. Gerard Heym was a French alchemist living sometimes at London. He was a close friend of S. L. MacGregor Mathers and Moïna Bergson-Mathers. However, he was never initiated in Athhör Temple because his name does not appear on the old Minutes Books of our Temple, but Gerard Heym was a founder-member of the Society for the Study of Alchemy and Early Chemistry and of its famous journal, Ambix. He was also member of a French literary society called Les Amants de la Licorne (The Lovers of the Unicorn) which was deeply involved in the study of alchemical symbolism. This society was founded by Claude d'Ygé who published an Anthologie de la Poésie Hermétique. This French Literary Society is still surviving to day in Paris, under the name of L'Orbe de la Licorne , of which I am a member.

In his introduction to the French translation of Gustav Meyrinck's novel, Le Dominicain Blanc, Gerard Heym shows his insight into the theory of Taoist Alchemy. It is possible that he belonged to the F.A.R. +C., because this French Rosicrucian Brotherhood is the only one in Europe to be involved with the survival of Chinese Alchemy and to practice the Way of the "Red Dragon".

Both Gerard Heym and Langford Garstin were friends of Archibald Cockren, who was the greatest British alchemist of this century. Cockren was a genuine adept living in London in the 1930's and seems to have been a member of Alpha Oméga. He wrote Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored (1940). Ithell Colqhoun wrote that when Garstin visited his wonderful laboratory, Cockren showed him "the Philosophers' Egg, a glass vessel of ovoid shape containing layer upon layer of basic matter in the traditional colors of black, gray, white and yellow. At the top these had blossomed into a flower-like form, a pattern arranged like petals around a center, all of a glowing orange-scarlet. By keeping his basic matter for a long time at a constant gentle heat, Cockren had caused it to grow; it had branches like a tree."

It is to be noted that Garstin's description about this philosophic flower is quite the same as that of the Red Flower described in the Book of the 22 Hermetic Leaves; indeed, Cockren worked along the way of the "Lead of the Wisemen". He followed directions he found also in the writings of Sir George Ripley - probably in the Bosom Book - which gives a method for preparing the philosopher's stone. According to Garstin, Cockren used always an "open Pentagram" during his alchemical experiments, which is the proof that he followed the instructions given in the Z.2 Golden Dawn Alchemical Rituals.

Archibald Cockren prepared oils extracted from metals, and especially oil of gold, the most powerful for healing diseases. He cured Mrs. Maiya Tranchell-Hayes (Soror Ex Fide Fortis, Imperatrix of an Alpha Omega Temple) of a nervous break-down by giving her three drops of oil-of-silver. Cockren

saved also the life of Gerard Heym at the beginning of the Second World War, by giving him a balsam when the latter was injured in the Fire Service. During the year 1965, Gerard Heym told Miss Colquhoun that one of his friends, aged 95, had taken potable gold given by Cockren with great benefit; its effect was to prolong his life and his youth. According to Miss Colquhoun, Archibald Cockren was killed during the Second World War when a bomb destroyed his laboratory; but according to C. R. Cammell, Cockren survived the wartime 'hit' on his laboratory which was protected. Cammell says that "when his laboratory was wrecked by the nearby explosion of a bomb, the glass retorts, containing the elixirs, in all states of transmutation, were unharmed - which seemed to be a miracle, as indeed it was".

According to Cammell, Cockren moved to Brighton "where on the threshold of final triumph (to discover the Philosophical Stone), he died some years since - about 1950".

Cammell claims that "Cockren gave him at different times two phials of an elixir of gold, the dose being a few drops taken in wine". Cammell says: "The benefit to me was astonishing. At the most dreadful period of the German air-attack in 1940, when I was constantly engaged in Air Raid Precaution work, this elixir so exalted me that, when taking it, I experienced little fatigue or nervous depression, required little sleep or food, and both felt and looked healthful and invigorated".

This description about the effects of the gold tincture is quite accurate, as I can testify by my own experience after I had taken some drops of potable gold given to me by the brother who initiated me into the F.A.R+C.



But the main part of the alchemical tradition of Alpha Oméga is preserved in the archives of our Ahathöör Temple which contains very valuable and rare papers, especially the famous Ancient Chymical Work of Abraham Eleazar, whose true name is Sepher Ha-Iorah (in Hebrew), published in German in 1735 and translated in English by Frater In Cornu Salutem Spero (William Sutherland Hunter) and in French by Soror Semper Ascendere (Mme Voronof), Praemonstratrix of Ahathöör Temple in 1925. The alchemical process described in the Sepher Ha Iorah is similar to the way described in the Second Book of the Thesaurus Thesaurorum a Fraternitate Rosae et Aureae Crucis Testamento and also in the Sigillum Secretorum or Magnalia Dei Optimi Maximi translated from the Latin in English by Frater Deo Duce Comite Ferro (S. L. MacGregor Mathers), which is also preserved in our archives.

I had the good fortune to discover one another very rare and beautiful French copy of the Sepher Ha Iorah copied and illustrated in colors with the master's hand of Eliphas Lévi himself. According to a note from Eliphas Lévi, his copy of this book was made from the original (alleged to have been the famous book of Abraham the Jew that Nicolas Flamel discovered!). Eliphas Lévi wrote that the original book belonged in the past to the famous French alchemist Duchanteau (a member of the Golden

Rosy+Cross). The original seems to have been written in Hebrew; in any case the copy of Eliphas Lévi is full of Hebrew words... Eliphas Lévi offered and dedicated his copy to his protector the Earl of Mniszech, who was also an alchemist and a friend of Lord Bulwer Lytton. Actually, this wonderful copy of Eliphas Lévi belongs to a private collector who is also a member of a very closed Hermetic Society of Paris.

Among the other valuable papers preserved in the archives of Ahathöör Temple, I must quote also :

- The Golden Age Revived by Mathadanus (Count Adrian Mynsicht - 1621) a Mss translated and written with the hand of Frater D.D.C.F. Mathers added at the end of his translation the following significant note :

"This latter work is partly reproduced from the manuscript Book given by the Secret Chiefs of the Inner Ring of the Rosicrucians to the Supreme Magus of the Order of the Rose and Golden Cross in the Outer, and de novo in safe keeping. Rosicrucians of the higher grades of the Outer will know what book I refer and it is for their benefit alone that I make this allusion."

- "Le Trésor des Trésors ou comment on peut ramener les corps à leur matière première dans le but d'obtenir leur génération ou leur multiplication". This Mss. has been accredited to François Borri, an Italian Alchemist who was the Master of Queen Christine of Sweden. This Mss was translated and transcribed by Soror Semper Ascendere on July 20, 1926. According to a note written by the Queen Christine at the end of the Mss, she succeeded in the Great Work. The way practiced is similar to that of Synesius.



## AN ANALYSIS OF THE Z.2 MSS ON ALCHEMY

Now, I should try to analyze this quite remarkable Z. 2 document because it is one of the very few writings on Alchemy explaining from a practical point of view the relationship between Magic, Alchemy and Astrology. The operative alchemical process explained in this Z. 2 Mss is rather theoretical.

Indeed, in real practical Alchemy the choice of the Materia Prima often determines the kind of way to be followed : dry or wet. For instance, very hard metals such as iron could not be treated in the same way as very soft one's, such as mercury : that is just a question concerning the melting point of metals. So, the technical operations of the dry way possess some analogy with metallurgy; those of wet way use glass vessels as in chemistry. Moreover, there are many different processes in the dry way or the wet way, not only according to the kind of the First Matter chosen, but also when using a specific matter. For instance, in the "Antimonial Way" (which is a dry way) there are a lot of various processes. Even more complicated is the "Magnesia Way", usually rather a Wet Way, but which it is possible to work also according to the Dry Way process !

It is interesting to know that the alchemical process described in the famous Z. 2 document belongs

essentially to the Wet Way. This way is longer than the dry one, but easier to practice and also safer : the dry way is very short, but quite dangerous. The Wet Way uses distillations and sublimations in a cucurbite of liquid substances at low temperatures; the Dry Way uses crucibles, dry substances and high temperatures. Nevertheless, the Z. 2 document begins by the Wet Way, and finishes by the Dry way. It is to be noted that the Bacstrom process is just the opposite : it begins by the Dry Way (with the crucible) and finishes by a coction made the Wet Way (in a glass vessel). Indeed, there is sometimes a bridge between the two ways, which is one of the main difficulties for someone wishing to study Alchemy.

Now, the examination of the different alchemical steps described in the Z.2 shows certain errors, especially concerning the "Regimen of Planets" which is not correct; indeed, the order described in the Mss is the following : Saturn - Moon - Sun - Mars - Mercury - Jupiter - Venus. The traditional planetary succession described in all Alchemical treatises is : Mercury - Saturn - Jupiter - Moon - Venus - Mars - Sun. In fact, this is the order of the color succession during the coction, which is always the end point of the Great Work. The Ancients described the colors changing of the Matter according to the old astrological color attributions of the planets. So, Mercury is symbolized by several various colors; Saturn, black; Jupiter, gray; Moon, white; Venus, green; Mars, red; and Sun, gold. But we must not forget than the GOLDEN DAWN. planetary color scale, the "Rainbow Scale", is different; so, if we take the planetary order described in the Z. 2. document, we obtain the following color succession : indigo - blue - orange - red - yellow - purple - green. This is not at all the usual color succession of the great coction.

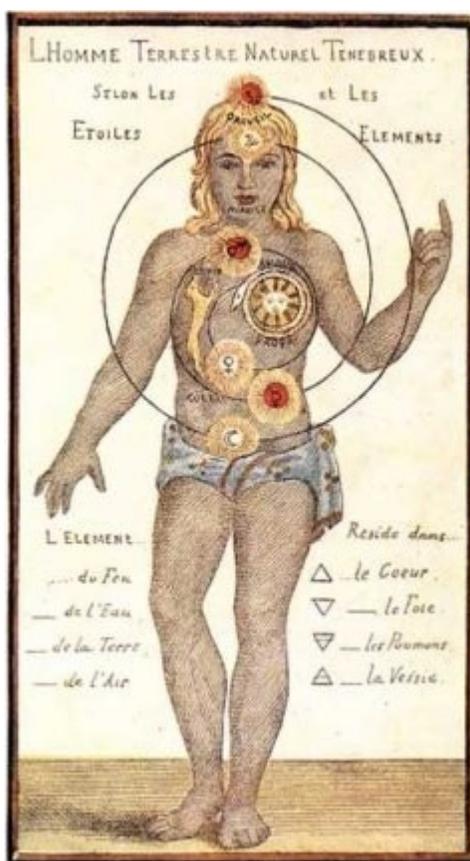
Another discrepancy of the Z. 2 document with other secret operative alchemical works concerns the exposure of the matter to sunlight and moonlight, the sequences which are not correct. However, the mere fact that this process is given proves that the author of the Z. 2 document was really well instructed in the mysteries of Alchemy, because this indication was never revealed in published texts (although it was often shown in many plates). Indeed, the action of light upon the matter, and above all, how and when it has to be applied, is one of the main secrets that the Philosophers reveal only to their pupils after due initiation and under oath. Fulcanelli gave a very good definition of Alchemy as being "the art of transmutation of the matter by the power of light".

At last, we could observe that in the process described in the Z. 2 document, the alchemist finally obtains a powder and an oil; but in the Great Work, oil and powder are always united through a long process called "imbibitions" until a red powder or tincture ("the Red Lion") is obtained.

So, we have to conclude that the process described in Z.2 does not concern the making of the Philosopher's Stone, but is rather a "particular process", for instance such as the extraction of the salt and oil (or "sulfur") of a metal or a plant.

One of the more interesting characteristic of the Z. 2 on Alchemy is that the magical rituals are connected with the alchemical process. Indeed, this kind of information is always missing in classical alchemical texts. However, one of the only magical instructions concerning alchemy that I could find (excepted the Z.2 Mss) are contained in a very secret text communicated to me by the Internal College of the Golden Rosy+Cross Fraternity, which is titled : "Testamenti Fraternitatis Roseae et Aureae Crucis - Liber II: "De Magia Divina et Naturali cum Chymico-Magicae Secretorum".

The process described in this document is an internal alchemical practice using "Potable Gold" linked with the evocation of the seven Planetary Intelligences and of the Artist's Guardian Angel. It is to be underlined that all these magical, or rather theurgical, practices were always possible after the achievement of the Philosopher's Stone, which was used as a kind of "astral magnet" for attracting spiritual entities.



The Adepts who gave me these secret instructions emphasized the fact that nobody could really practice Magic safely before having obtained the Philosopher's Stone and having been regenerated by its powers. Indeed, an English Adept told me that according to his own experiments, the Philosopher's Stone could awaken greatly the faculties of precognition, which could be very useful for communicating with spiritual beings during a magical evocation.

Now, it must be known that the ingestion of the Philosopher's Stone or of the Potable Gold could be dangerous to unprepared people, because these substances awake what the old Rosicrucians Adepts called "the subtle fires of the body" (the kundalini), and cause a great enhancement of the sexual power which is very difficult to control. If the pupil is not correctly prepared, the elixir could cause all kind of disturbances in his private life : he could be enslaved by his passions and unable to control and manage this new energy. If he does not know how to sublimate the power of the "secret fire" of his kundalini, this energy will be wasted on purely sexual activities or thoughts. In other cases, this "fire" could rise up to his brain and cause many hallucinations. If the pupil's mind is not enough purified, he could see monsters like Glyndon in Zanoni, the famous Bulwer Lytton novel. Generally, the elixir causes a great "karmic" elimination, especially concerning the pupil's love life.

This is the reason why the Adepts never give the Elixir, or Drinkable Gold, to unprepared pupils and to young people, but only to experienced pupils, aged at least 40 years old and only after 7 years of training. This training concerns in a certain way some "tantric" practices (far away from the so-called "sexual magic" of Aleister Crowley!). Indeed, the Internal College of the Golden Rosy+Cross knew this kind of practices, but they were always kept very secret because the Adepts feared that they could be misused. Another part of this magical training is a kind of "yoga" involving meditation on moon and sun light with magical mirrors. Of course, MacGregor Mathers knew something about these secrets practices (which are only unveiled to the grade of Exempts) because he received the operative corpus of the Golden Rosy+Cross and especially the secrets commentaries about the Salomonic et Mosaic

Magical Claviculae.

