

# ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST

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# ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST

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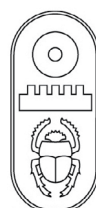


# H. SPENCER LEWIS ON ALCHEMY



*H. Spencer Lewis, Co-founder and Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC (1915 – 1939).*

The Rosicrucians and mystics who performed so many experiments in their laboratories, were seeking, through the material laws of the universe, to discover universal principles which had their action and reaction in the spiritual world as well as in the material world. They believed that just as the difference between gross metal and pure gold was a difference in character, constituted by the various rates of vibrations and by the presence of impure or unevolved elements, so the differences in human character were the result of impure and inharmonious elements which might be transmuted and changed into the pureness of spiritual life here on earth.



# MODERN ALCHEMY

H. Spencer Lewis, FRC

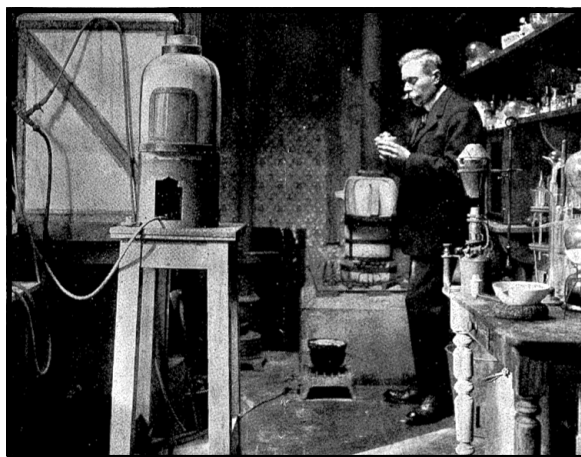
*The following article is an excerpt from an article originally published in the Rosicrucian Digest in February 1933, entitled: "Modern Alchemy: the Dreams of the Ancient Mystics are Being Realized Today."*

One of the great leaders in the alchemical movement throughout Europe, and perhaps the foremost alchemist in the world today is Mon. F. Jollivet-Castelot of Paris. He is not only an eminent scientist who has devoted most of his life to the study of transmutation and synthetic chemistry, he is also director of the Société Alchimique de France and Editor of a quarterly magazine called *La Rose-Croix*, which bears the Rosicrucian emblem. He is also an honorary member of the Rosicrucian Order in America, AMORC. Some years ago we published a photograph of Frater Jollivet-Castelot in his laboratory in our *Triangle Monthly*, and we have continuous reports from members of his association regarding their joint and individual achievements. Their monthly publication is filled with interesting items from their laboratories and quotations from other newspapers and scientific magazines regarding the art and science of alchemy and transmutation.

One would think that after having accomplished the feat on numerous occasions of producing small amounts of absolutely pure gold, the quest for the process and the search for the principles would be brought to an end. But here, I

remind the reader that the real quest is not for the purpose of making gold nor is the search intended to reveal a more simple manner of producing gold. The whole idea of the alchemists' studies and experiments is to observe nature's laws at work and to find more simple ways of demonstrating them. In the process of transmutation and in the study of alchemy generally, more of the fundamental principles of the universe

are revealed than in any other laboratory experiments that might be conducted and this is what makes the whole subject so fascinating and so fraught with new and surprising conditions, situations, and revelations.



*Francois Jollivet-Castelot stands in his laboratory in Douai, France, in April 1926.*

It was in 1894 that Frater Jollivet-Castelot published his first book dealing with the great studies of his life in alchemy and transmutation after having been a student of the Rosicrucian and mystical principles, which revealed the work and secret process used by the early mystics and alchemists. In 1904, Frater Jollivet-Castelot published other important instructions regarding the science of alchemy. Since then his writings have been read before the most learned scientific societies throughout the world and quoted in many popular books and treatises dealing with scientific subjects.

In 1896, Frater Jollivet-Castelot and others founded the Alchemical Society of France and it has many active and honorary members with constantly increasing interest in the subject. The articles appearing in their own magazine



representing their discoveries and findings are quoted in many of the newspapers and magazines of the world, showing a widespread interest in the subject of alchemy and transmutation.

Occasionally those who seek to criticize the Rosicrucians as being impractical people because of their advanced ideas and progressive programs, point to the fact that the ancient Rosicrucians were interested in alchemy and in the search for artificial gold. They think that this search constitutes evidence that the Rosicrucians were dreamers instead of practical men and women. Such persons do not realize that the parent of modern chemistry was alchemy and that although the child in the form of modern chemistry has grown to be a great and universally recognized science, the parent has not passed out of existence or out of the universal picture, for alchemy was limited to certain lines of research and those fields of research have not yet been exhausted even by the most modern achievements of science.

As stated before, the Rosicrucians and mystics who performed so many experiments in their laboratories were seeking, through the material laws of the universe, to discover universal principles which had their action and reaction in the spiritual world as well as in the material world. They believed that just as the difference between gross metal and pure gold was a difference in character, constituted by the various rates of vibrations and by the presence of impure or unevolved elements, so the differences in human character were the result of impure and inharmonious elements which

might be transmuted and changed into the pureness of spiritual life here on earth.

Much is said these days about vibrations and their effect upon our health and our lives generally, and we are coming to learn that all of life consists of vibrations which affect us and, in fact, compose everything of which we have any sense or understanding. It was in the laboratories of the alchemists

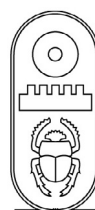
and mystics that the law of vibrations was first discovered and proved to be an actual fact. And while these mystics sought for an elixir of life which would prevent disease, old age, and so-called death and change gross material into pure gold, they found laws and principles which would enable people to cure disease and to overcome many of the obstacles to old age. They also found ways and means of producing many of the modern metals such as bronze and various

alloys, which have been extremely valuable to industry and commercial interests. So we have these ancients to thank for many modern achievements which they turned over to humankind as worldly benefits, while they still continue their searches and their inquiries.

Dreamers they may have been and dreamers many of them may still be, but they are the sort of dreamers who test their dreams in the crucible of materialism as well as the crucible of spirituality and they seek to turn their dreams into practical account and to practical application, and from their efforts we have derived so many benefits that it does not behoove anyone to criticize the mystics and their dreaming.



*H. Spencer Lewis's The Alchemist.*



# SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

Christian Bernard, FRC

*In this article, Christian Bernard, Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, inspires us to participate in the Great Work on ourselves, through the transformative power of Spiritual Alchemy.*



If there is really one essential thing for mystics in general and Rosicrucians in particular, it is spiritual alchemy. This form of alchemy amounts to one of the foundations of philosophy, and sets out the path we must follow in order to fulfill our inner evolution. Herein, indeed, lies the Great Work that each human being must accomplish in order to discover the Philosopher's Stone that is to be found in the deepest part of themselves, and achieve the perfection of their own nature. Material alchemy, also called "operative alchemy," has for centuries fascinated scientists and mystics too, but what is essential must remain for us the transmuting, the perfecting, and hence the evolving of our inner being. Whereas operative alchemy transmutes base metals into gold, spiritual alchemy transforms our soul. Before moving on to the latter, I would like to go over what comprises material alchemy.

Generally speaking, its aim was to transmute base metals, usually lead or tin, into gold. This transmutation was not, however, carried out directly upon the metal in question, but on a *materia prima*, that is to say on a primary or raw material, referred to as the "stone material" in some alchemical writings. It is difficult to say exactly what this *materia prima* was, because the descriptions given of it are confused, and they vary from author to author. According to certain sources it consisted of a naturally occurring ore, composed essentially of sulphur, salt, and mercury combined in precise proportions. It would seem that this ore was rare and could be found only in places known to the alchemists, which they kept a most closely guarded secret.

Having obtained the *materia prima*, the alchemists would place it in a container to which they gave the name of "philosophical egg," partly because of its oval shape, and partly to echo their belief that the whole of Creation arose from a universal "egg," within which it existed in a latent, or seed, state. From here they put the *materia prima* through several consecutive stages.

In the course of these stages, the *materia prima* took on various colors, until it appeared as a red magma. Upon cooling, this magma gave rise to a somewhat bulky stone of the same color: the Philosopher's Stone. This is the reason that transmutation aimed at obtaining gold was called "the red work." The process aimed at making silver, usually out of iron, was designated by the name "the white work," and also consisted of several stages.

The final stage of the Great Work was to reduce the Philosopher's Stone to a perfectly homogenous powder. Once this powder was obtained, the alchemist would cast it into the molten base metal, which on contact would gradually transform itself into gold.

This was the basic principle of material alchemy. We also need to be aware that it was practiced according to two methods. The first, designated the "damp method," gave precedence to the processes of dissolving and distilling. It lasted several weeks or even months, and required the use of retorts and stills. The second was called the "dry method" and favored the processes of heating and combustion, mainly involving the use of ovens and crucibles. This second method was the quicker of the two, but also the more dangerous, involving as it did the risk of explosions. It did sometimes happen that alchemists would get injured in the

practice of their art or, even worse, would get killed.

We know that the alchemists worked in special laboratories which were used for nothing else. Most often this was a cellar, an attic, or other building that was not well lit, as most of the necessary operations could not be carried out in daylight. The adepts also made use of various accessories. As well as the retorts, stills, ovens, and crucibles referred to, they also used scales, different sorts of pincers, pestles, bellows of various sizes, and even musical instruments.

The main furnace, called the athanor, was generally crude in shape and usually made of fireproof earth. For different situations, its fire would be provided by wood, charcoal, or sometimes even oil, allowing better control of its intensity during the most delicate procedures.

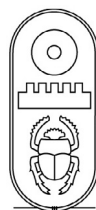
If you are wondering why the alchemists used musical instruments during their work, it was because by playing certain notes or combinations of notes, they produced vibrations which had a specific effect on one phase or another of the Great Work. From what we know, they mainly used string instruments such as the violin and guitar. Sometimes they used wind instruments though, such as the trumpet or a small organ. It is also likely that they intoned vowel sounds, although we have no proof of this. This was certainly the case with the Rosicrucian alchemists. The purpose of this was one and the same, to create vibratory conditions favorable for this or that procedure. We can also assume that at times it was to raise themselves to the state of consciousness required for their work.

In the case of the red work and the white work alike, the alchemists did their work by day or night, depending on the operation they had to carry out. While they always worked in a dimly-lit room, they thought that certain stages had to take place when the Sun was in a certain position in the sky, or when the moon was in a certain phase of its cycle.

It is also known that they attached great importance to eclipses, believing that they had a particular influence on alchemical procedures. They considered this influence to be either negative or positive in different situations, which then governed what they did. There is no doubt at all that alchemy drew on both astronomy and astrology. It is certainly not mere chance that the alchemists held there to be a precise correlation between the metals and the planets of our solar system. They also had a good knowledge of chemistry.

The question we may ask ourselves is whether the alchemists really succeeded in making gold. Judging from the accounts they have left us, there is no doubt whatsoever about this. Many authors too state that this was the means by which Jacques Coeur, Jean Bourré, Nicolas Flamel, and Cagliostro – to name just the most well-known – acquired their wealth. If we accept this as true, it is of note that these individuals were known for their generosity and altruism, which suggests that they were practicing their art in order to help the poorest in society and to pay for projects for the common good, such as hospitals, roads, bridges, and so on. Apart from these testimonies, however, we do not have absolute proof that the adepts of the Great Work really managed to achieve their goal or became wealthy by this means. We must each therefore form our own view on this point.

To know whether the alchemists of the past succeeded in transmuting base metals into gold is incidental. The most important thing is the fact that they were convinced that human beings have the power, not to take the place of nature, but to emulate it. In accordance with this conviction, they studied the laws of nature with the greatest respect. What is more, most of them were deeply spiritual, and used alchemy as an aid to their mystic quest. This is why their laboratories always included an oratory, meaning a place set aside for prayer, meditation, and for the study of divine laws generally. Usually the





oratory consisted simply of a chair and a table with candles, objects for rituals, and esoteric books.

Material alchemy was just the outward expression of an infinitely higher transmutation, that of the soul itself; the cornerstone of this transmutation is, purely and simply, spiritual alchemy. This mystic process consists in one transmuting one's faults by means of the crucible of life, urged on by the divine fire that burns within us. We are all imperfect, however the ultimate goal of our evolution is to attain that state of perfection which Rosicrucians call the "Rose-Croix state." This state can only come about, though, when we have purified our personality of its negative shortcomings; this entails awakening the virtues of the divine soul which is within us and which is seeking only to express its capacity for wisdom. But such a goal cannot be attained in one single lifetime, therefore we have to reincarnate for as long as we are imperfect.

To the extent that one has not awakened the virtues of one's divine soul, one manifests certain faults such as pride, selfishness, jealousy, intolerance, and so on. In return these same faults are detrimental to the person, for they generate negative karma that is expressed as trials of varying degrees in one's life. We therefore have at least two good reasons for perfecting ourselves: first, it is part of the process of evolution from which we cannot withdraw, whose ultimate goal is to attain perfection, such as we can demonstrate it as human beings; second, it allows us to "think" our behavior into being positive, and create positive karma for ourselves, which is expressed in our lives as joy in various forms, and is conducive to the happiness we are seeking. Surely what we ultimately want, after all, is

to have as happy an existence as possible and to gain mastery of life.

There are several stages required to reach the sought-after goal in spiritual alchemy, just as with material alchemy. The first consists in accepting the idea that we are imperfect and have faults to correct. When I say "accept," this means our own view as much as that of others. This involves both looking at ourselves as we are, in the mirror of our soul, and also paying attention to the image of ourselves that others send back to us. If we do not do this, we end up becoming blind to our real personality and give even more power to our faults, to the point where they generate negative conduct on our part and give rise to corresponding karmic tests.

If reading this article is interesting to you, it is probably because you started this spiritual alchemy at the same time as you did your personal mystic quest. There is no question that if your experience of life has endowed you with a modicum of wisdom, it will also have brought you clarity of thought. You are therefore in a position to know and to recognize your weaknesses, and I am positive that you have within you the potential to transmute these. I can assure you

for my part that I am well aware of my faults, deficiencies, and mistakes, and I am certainly endeavoring to improve myself. It is not from a position of detachment, therefore, that I am passing on my reflections to you, but rather as a human being to whom this alchemy also applies. If it is always easier to speak about good than to do good, the same can be said for the work and the betterment that we call for in others.

But accepting the concept of having faults is not enough to accomplish this inner transmutation. We must also want



Lion Devours the Sun,  
by Nikki Schiro, SRC.

to correct them, and this constitutes a key stage in spiritual alchemy. In other words, we must have the resolve to become better, in the human sense. This is only possible if we truly have the conviction that humankind's goal is to evolve, which presents the whole question of the real meaning we attribute to life.

For my part I am convinced that anyone who strives to perfect themselves receives the support of the God of their Heart and can find happiness, even if their faults are relatively numerous. If this is true, it is because karmic law always rewards any effort made in the same direction as the Good. Conversely, any person who has few faults but who lets themselves be controlled by them without ever striving to transmute them, attracts various problems and progressive trials to themselves for as long as they take pleasure in their weaknesses.

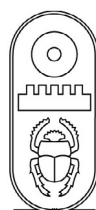
Once the decision to perfect oneself is taken, there comes another stage in spiritual alchemy. This consists in materializing our desire to become better by actually transmuting our faults. But to manage to do this, above anything else we must not attempt to fight against them, this unfortunately being our tendency. Fighting them like this in fact contributes to accentuating our faults, because our ego then uses this to give itself power and assert its hold over our conduct. On the contrary, we should disengage from the fault in question, and work on ourselves to acquire the opposite quality. To take an example, if a person is fundamentally overly proud and is aware of this, they should not try to fight against their pride, for in so doing they give it even more force and increase its ability to be harmful. They should endeavor to acquire the opposite quality, in this case, humility. This entails calling on the most divine within their nature.

But how do we acquire the opposite quality of a fault we are aware of? It seems

to me that the best way of achieving this is to first define the manner in which the quality expresses itself in everyday life. Having done this, we should make ourselves manifest it every time there is occasion to do so, until it is an integral part of our soul and becomes natural. Returning to the example of pride, anyone wanting to rid themselves of this fault needs to implement humility. How exactly? By making themselves stop highlighting their merits, demonstrating their intellectual or any other type of superiority, or seeking to draw attention to themselves, and making themselves act in the service of Good in a totally impersonal way, and so forth. With time, this determined effort to be humble ends up becoming habitual, in other words, it becomes a law to the subconscious. Pride is then transmuted. This is the basic principle of the spiritual alchemy we should apply to each of our faults.

A mystic who has transmuted all of his or her faults into their opposite qualities then experiences the final stage of spiritual alchemy, Illumination. If not perfect, then he or she is at least very close to the state of perfection, to the degree that it can be expressed by human beings on earth. The materia prima of their being, their soul, has then become pure and perfect. It is not just chance that the Rosicrucian alchemists symbolized the Great Work by a red rose, often with an aura of the color gold. Certainly, whoever has attained this state has brought about the celebrated "Chymical Wedding." In other words, they have accomplished the union between their human Self and their divine Self, symbolized in the language of alchemy by the marriage of the king and the queen, and by the union of sulphur and mercury. From that point on, they truly possess the elixir of long life, for they have become a pure agent of the Divinity, and are no longer obliged to reincarnate.

In your mind, in your heart, and in your life, may alchemy take place!



# LADY PERNELLE

*Hélène Bernard, SRC*



*The home of Lady Pernelle and Nicolas Flamel, the oldest house in Paris.*

*In this excerpt from her book Great Women Initiates, Soror Hélène Bernard introduces us to the fourteenth century Alchemist Pernelle Flamel (1326 – 1397) and her husband, Nicolas.*

Justice being most often administered in heaven, very rarely on earth, and still less in history, Lady Pernelle had a famous husband: Nicolas Flamel. In this article there are no great alchemical treatises or magical formulae, but only a few lines on the life of one of the most mysterious couples of the fourteenth century and perhaps even of past and future centuries.

Born in Pontoise, in the year 1330, young Nicolas Flamel opened a shop in Paris on the right bank, near the Cemetery of the Innocents, where many of his colleagues were established. But very soon an epidemic of the black plague forced the writers' guild to leave the neighborhood of the cemetery, then overpopulated, and to settle in the district of the Church Saint-Jacques de la Boucherie. It was in this agitated Paris that a "damned" science called *alchemy* thrived. One night, an angel, all clad in white, appeared to Flamel,

presenting to him a richly illustrated ancient manuscript and saying: "Flamel, look at this book, you do not understand it at all, but the day will come when you shall see therein what no other could even catch a glimpse of."

Time passed, and one day, in 1357, he was given the opportunity to buy, for two florins, a strange book in which he recognized the obscure language he had seen in his initiatory dream. This large golden book puzzled Flamel. The finely engraved copper cover concealed enigmatic illustrations and beautifully formed letters.

During that same year, the eminent writer courted Lady Pernelle, twice a widow of rich merchants in the district. Four years his elder, the well-to-do Pernelle took a deep interest in the new sciences. More than a devoted companion, both a patron of the arts and letters and an adviser, she transformed young Flamel, a simple bookseller and copyist of the Petit Marais district, as well as a zealous student of hidden knowledge, into one of



the most famous masters of divine magic. Like a queen, her first name was also her last. The name *Pernelle*, from “perpetual” or “perpetuity,” had a highly symbolical meaning for this “immortal” personage. Married in Saint-Jacques Church around 1360, the couple led a simple life in their home bearing the sign of “La Fleur de Lys.” Trade and good deeds occupied their days, while they devoted part of their nights to the search for the Philosopher’s Stone.

In 1372, husband and wife officially willed their property to each other, as Pernelle’s family looked with a suspicious eye at the eventual heritage that her two husbands had left her and that she exclusively devoted to research and mysticism. Only altruism, love for science, and the perfection of the philosopher’s stone motivated Pernelle’s and Flamel’s devotion. To decipher the great *Book of Abraham the Jew* – to be able to understand and become imbued with each sign and each symbol of the mysterious pages – this was what these two people (walking questions marks) aspired to! The building of Notre-Dame de Paris was completed, and this monumental temple was an inexhaustible source of inspiration to these adepts of light, condemned to act in the darkness of night and secret caves.

In 1378, Pernelle encouraged her husband to undertake the initiatory journey leading to Saint-Jacques de Compostella in Spain. Wearing a cloth coat and large hat and carrying a scroll and a walking stick, the pilgrim Nicolas Flamel began his journey departing from the parvis of Saint-Jacques de la Boucherie Church, on his way south, around Easter in the year 1379.

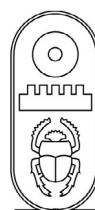
Inside his cloak, adorned with shells – symbols of his station as a devoted pilgrim to Saint-Jacques – he had sewn copies of the precious pages of his book. He hoped to meet, in the course of his journey, the

person capable of enlightening him on the meaning of these hermetic messages. The meeting took place in the province of Léon in Spain, through the agency of a merchant in Boulogne-sur-Mer, who introduced him to Master Canches, a learned man whose knowledge seemed to be boundless.

Enthused by the few sketches that Flamel showed him, Master Canches decided to undertake the journey back to Paris in order to see, consult, and press to his heart the sacred book whose existence he had heard about, and which he believed was lost. The two traveling companions returned to France. All during their long trek throughout the kingdom, Master Canches revealed to his fortunate friend the meaning of the ancient symbols. Alas, the old Master Canches did not have the chance to fulfill his dream: to examine the divine manuscript. After seven days of agony during which his faithful disciple did not leave his side for one minute, he died in Orleans. The Sainte-Croix Church in Orleans received his body while his soul walked beside Nicolas Flamel, who sadly went on his way.

During all that time, what was the bookseller pilgrim’s wife doing? She too was working for science. The alchemist Pernelle was busy studying the book and deciphering one hundred secrets therein. In December, after a few months’ absence, Flamel was back, rich with experiences and a newly acquired knowledge. The union of two individual but similar quests, and the power of the alchemical combination formed by the magic couple, guided these two seekers toward the apogee of the science of Hermes.

In the spring of 1380, Charles V, upon the advice of the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, forbade the practice of alchemy. By no means did this decree prevent Lady Pernelle and



Nicolas Flamel from continuing their experiments. After three years of working together, of ceaseless efforts, of joys and disappointments, on January 17, at noon, in the year 1382, the couple had the great happiness to accomplish their first transmutation: a strange projection upon mercury and the element was transmuted into half a pound of silver. On April 25 of the same year, at 5:00 pm, the ultimate experiment of the “magi” Pernelle and Flamel took shape. After the white stone, the red stone was born from their fingers and their inspired minds. Awed, Pernelle did not tire of gazing at and touching this pure gold, a wonderful product from divine nature and their labor.

The goal of these true alchemists was not the lure of profit. After having repeated their great feat three times, the Flamels intensified their good deeds already begun, owing to Pernelle’s dowry. In spite of their new resources, they continued to lead a modest yet fascinating life. Like all the French people at that time, they went through the troubled and dark Middle Ages. Cruelty and intolerance were evident at all times about them, and if it had not been for Pernelle’s prudent vigilance, “La Fleur de Lys” would have been ransacked like a great many of the neighboring homes, and their sanctuary profaned.

Under the benevolence of these two “gold-makers,” fourteen hospitals were established in the city of Paris, and several churches, chapels, and cemeteries benefited from their generosity. The poor from the nearby parishes, as well as from other districts in the country, gained from their kindness. Hieroglyphs, paintings, and carvings appeared in various parts of the old city. The benefactors of the street of the writers thus hoped to perpetuate, in an initiatory language, the knowledge whose

key they withheld during these years of obscurity.

More determined than ever to see truth and the happiness of others blossom forth, Lady Pernelle drew up her last will and testament in 1386, in favor of her mystical companion. Her sixty years did not seem to have altered her vitality, and her face did not show the signs of old age. Had they discovered the elixir of eternal youth? It was declared so at the end of the fourteenth century. If the kings officially rebelled against the “alchemists,” they nonetheless were very much interested in their research, from which they hoped to benefit. But nothing can turn away the sincere seekers of the philosopher’s stone from the right path. The discovery of the philosopher’s stone was different and much superior to the plain transmutation of common elements into precious metals. Their true wealth was not of this world, although they actively contributed to humankind’s acceptance of it.

On September 11, 1397, Lady Pernelle and Nicolas Flamel’s “alchemical marriage” ended in its earthly expression. To Flamel, only the continuance of their common work filled the void created in his home and heart by the passing of the wise Pernelle. Upon her tomb, in the Cemetery of the Innocents, the bereaved Nicolas erected a pyramid in her memory.

For him initiation continued. Alone, he lived another twenty long years. He went through transition on March 22, 1417.

Where did immortal Pernelle go? Did she, as a few traveling witnesses stated, retire with her beloved companion to the high plateaus of an Eastern land? Perhaps she has returned to the Cosmic Oneness where she now reigns.

History ends, legend begins...

# TRUE IMAGINATION IN ALCHEMY

Dennis Hauck, FRC, PhD

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There is a riddle from the Middle Ages that describes the true nature of the First Matter – a mysterious, etheric substance that is the source of all transformation:

The key to life and death is everywhere to be found, but if you do not find it in your own house, you will find it nowhere. Yet, it is before everyone's eyes; no one lives without it; everyone has used it. The poor usually possess more of it than the rich; children play with it in the streets. The meek and uneducated esteem it highly, but the privileged and learned often throw it away. It is the only thing from which the Philosopher's Stone

can be prepared, and without it, no noble metal can ever be created.

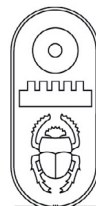
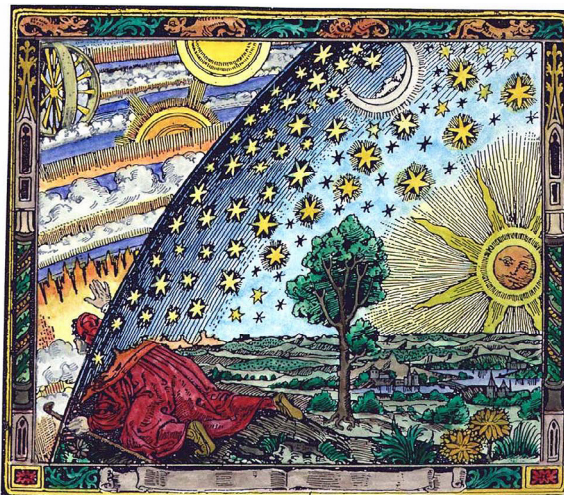
The riddle tells us that this secret power is commonly used and is in plain sight. But it is most obvious where we live (in our own minds?). Children play with it,

and humble poor people use it more than snobbish rich people. The uneducated lower class prizes it, but the educated higher class believes it is an idle waste of time. Yet this hidden ability – that so many condemn and take for

granted – is the only path to real wisdom and the only way to perfect anything.

One of the authors in the twelfth-century *Turba Philosophorum* (*An Assembly of Philosophers*) describes it as “a thing which is found everywhere, which is a stone and no stone, contemptible yet precious, hidden, concealed, and yet known to everyone. It is a thing stronger and more sublime than all other things.”

“It is familiar to all men, young and old,” explains the author of *Gloria Mundi* (*Glory of All Worlds* - 1620). “It is found in the country, in the village, in the town, in all things created by God; yet it is despised by everyone. No one prizes it, though, next to the human soul, it is the most beautiful and the most precious thing upon earth and has the power to pull down kings and princes.”





How you answer the riddle has a lot to do with your concept of reality. Where do you draw the line at what is real? Your fantasies? Your dreams? Your thoughts? Your soul? Matter – is that real? According to Hermetic philosophy, *everything is real*. Everything we perceive is part of the same One Thing, and the spectrum of our awareness is determined by the light of the One Mind. That primal light is reflected in each person's consciousness in the light of imagination, which is the answer to our riddle.

My ten-year-old nephew once described imagination as “walking around inside your mind.” For alchemists, it was a private world of infinite possibilities where much of the Great Work took place. To differentiate it from idle fantasy and day-dreaming, they called it the True Imagination. It is a special kind of mental imagery or visualization that is directly connected to the ground of reality. In our culture, we are taught to reject the True Imagination and sever our ties to the hidden reality while we are still children. Families, schools, churches – authorities of all types – deny our inborn connection to the divine mind and replace it with their own dogma.

“There is a secret stone,” explains one fourteenth-century alchemist, “hidden in a deep well, worthless and rejected.” “Our most precious stone,” laments another, “cast forth upon the dunghill, being most dear, is made the vilest of the vile.”

According to Paracelsus, “the True Imagination leads life back to its spiritual reality, and it then takes on the name of meditation.” What he meant was that the True Imagination envisions the divine source of anything, which can then be explored and understood through meditation.

The meditative methods used by alchemists consisted of prolonged and silent invocation of divine powers. Sometimes a person's “inner angel” or “higher self” was invoked. In their meditations, they were looking for the “angelic ray” that unites the world of forms with the divine ideals that are the source of everything.

The author of the *Rosarium* (1550) describes this special kind of alchemical meditation: “Take care that your door is well and firmly closed, so that he who is within cannot escape, and, God willing, you will reach the goal. Nature carries out her operations gradually; and indeed, I would have you do the same: let your imagination be guided wholly by nature, through whom the bodies regenerate themselves in the bowels of the earth. And imagine this with true and not with fantastic imagination.”

The True Imagination envisions the subtle processes of nature and connects them with their divine archetypes. It attempts to capture the “Seed of the World” as the divine mind dreams it. Therefore, when Hermetic writers speak of “seeing with the eyes of spirit,” they are describing a process that penetrates the deeper genesis of things beyond their outward appearances.

Alchemists believed imagination is a piece of heaven concealed within us, a divine connection to the cosmic One Mind. If you look up the definition of “imagination” in Martin Rulandus's *Lexicon of Alchemy* (1612), you will find it defined as “the Star in Man, a celestial or supercelestial body.”

“The alchemists' concept of *Imaginatio*,” explains Carl Jung (1875-1961), “is the most important key to understanding the Opus. We have to conceive of these imaginal

processes not as the immaterial phantoms that we readily take fantasy pictures to be, but as something corporeal, a subtle body. The act of imagining was like a physical activity that could be fitted into the cycle of material changes that brought these about and was brought about by them in turn. The alchemist related himself not only to the unconscious but directly to the very substance that he hoped to transform through the power of imagination. The act of imagining is therefore a concentrated extract of life forces, a hybrid of the physical and psychic.”

From his lifelong study of alchemy, Jung developed the new discipline of transpersonal psychology and a therapeutic method he called “active imagination” that uses the imagination as “an organ of understanding.” The technique allows unconscious issues and deeper feelings to act themselves out in visualizations that often involve conversations with imaginal figures, such as one of Jung’s “guides” Philemon (shown above).

Active imagination can also be practiced by automatic writing or artistic endeavors like painting, sculpting, music, and dance. The method opens a channel of communication between conscious and unconscious parts of a person’s psyche and also between the personal level and the collective unconscious.

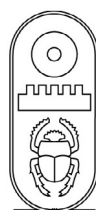
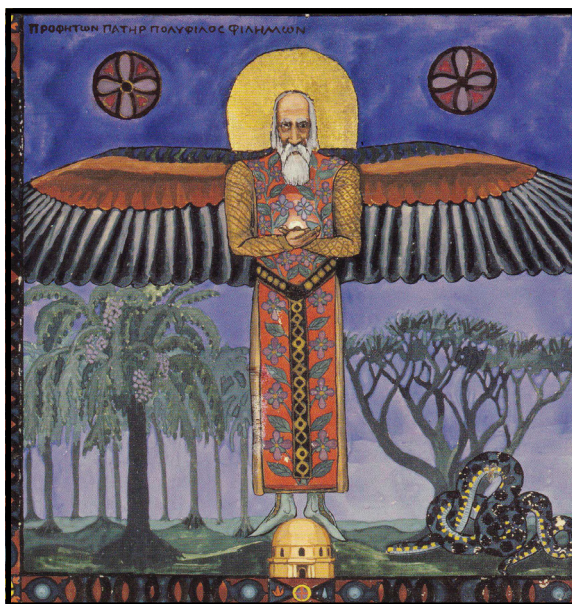
Active imagination demonstrates the reality of pre-existing images in the human

psyche corresponding to external events and objects. Surprisingly, this concept is a basic principle in the philosophy of

science. Galileo, Francis Bacon, Giordano Bruno, Johannes Kepler, Isaac Newton, and Gottlieb Leibniz all spoke of primordial images that are pre-existent in the human soul and can be perceived through the “innate instinct” of imagination.

Quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli (1900-1958) explained how these images are the source of scientific insight: “When one analyzes the pre-conscious steps to true concepts, one always finds ideas which consist of symbolic images. These inner pictures are produced by an ‘instinct to imagining’ and are shared by different individuals independently. Out of these archaic images grow rational concepts.”

Albert Einstein (1879-1955) used the True Imagination to see himself riding on a light beam through the cosmos, and he returned from his journey with the theory of relativity. Like the alchemists, he paid homage to the power of this divine gift: “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire universe, and all there ever will be to know and understand.”



# THE ALCHEMISTS AND THEIR SYMBOLS

*Serge Hutin, FRC, DLitt*

*Serge Hutin (1927-1997) was an important figure in French esotericism, a doctor of letters, a graduate of the Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes, and ex-attache of research at the CNRS (the French National Center for Scientific Research). He was also a long-term member of the Rosicrucian Order, during which time he wrote many articles and around forty books and was a regular lecturer for the Order. In his will, he donated all his writings to the Order.*

During medieval times, the alchemists, real and spurious, kept strange and very mixed company. There were nobles and commoners, priests and laymen, Christians and Jews, learned and illiterate men and women, scholars, simple artisans, doctors, and “magicians” – in other words, a cross-section of society. Wandering alchemists abounded in Germany, France, England, and Italy. They led vagabond and stray lives, and often changed their names. But once they had achieved a transmutation, they would leave wherever they happened to be, and would thenceforth take every precaution to remain anonymous. The alchemists were true “world citizens,” but they kept closely in touch, through their secret societies, which in some ways resembled the guilds; they had signs and countersigns so that the initiates could recognize one another. This explains how they were able to make long journeys, since wherever they went they could surely find a welcome; in the Middle Ages one could see the world cheaply. To be assured of board and lodging, the alchemists would often join bands of pilgrims, or even gypsies. In some towns, such as Paris and Prague, whole streets abounded with alchemists’ laboratories and meeting places.



Fear played a part in the prestige enjoyed by the alchemists. Having infiltrated the clergy and the guilds of the cathedral-builders, and being sometimes protected even by royalty, they formed a real occult power, and one to be reckoned with. Alchemy was considered by the scholars of the time a natural science, and in opposition to the scholastic teachings of the universities, it provoked a craze for experimentation. In addition, it became a vehicle for a number of more or less heretical doctrines, which had to be kept hidden from the Church.

## ALCHEMY AND THE CHURCH

Faced with these alarming developments, the Church did not remain inactive. The Vatican condemned the Hermetic art on several occasions. Pope John XXII (r. 1316- 1334) issued a bull of excommunication against all who practiced the art, although, curiously, one tradition asserts he was its protector. The Inquisition burned a number of alchemists at the stake, and the secular courts hanged others. But in spite of this persecution (which was only intermittent), alchemy thrived, and its adepts occasionally played important roles in politics. One such was Jacques Coeur, the “grand silversmith” of



King Charles VII of France, who was said to have found the Philosopher's Stone.

## THE TRAINING OF THE ALCHEMIST

How did one become an alchemist? The adepts had very high-flown ideas about their profession. "Whosoever has bent his back over our books," states the work known as the *Turba Philosophorum*, "and is faithful to our art, will not be led astray by frivolous thoughts; whosoever puts his trust in the Divine has discovered a kingdom that he will lose only in death." For the alchemists maintained that it was essential to possess high qualities, and even to receive divine help, in the form of revelation. This belief was still more pronounced in the adepts of the Royal Art, who often mentioned the episode in the Book of Matthew (22:11-14) of the guest who did not wear a wedding garment, which is to say that he had not purified himself morally before undertaking the Work:

*Know yourself.*

*If you are not wholly purified*

*The wedding feast will harm you.*

*Woe to him who stays too long*

*Let the light-hearted keep away.*

"The most prominent characteristic of the alchemist," writes Hoefer, "was his patience. He was never deterred by failure. A practitioner who was taken from his studies by unexpected death would often leave his son the heritage of an unfinished experiment; and it was common enough for the son to include in his own will the secrets of the incomplete experiment he had learned from his father." The candidate had to follow the maxim *Lege, Lege, relege, ora, Labora et invenies* (read, read, reread, pray, work, and thou shalt find). While having to read a lot, one had to be wary of merely bookish knowledge. Again, the adepts themselves constructed their own equipment, their ovens, glass retorts, and alembics.

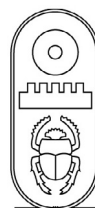
But alchemical instruction was mainly oral. The beginner would usually serve as an apprentice to a master, if necessary searching Europe to do so; like the many students of the time who attended distant universities in order to study under the most celebrated teachers. The training itself sometimes consisted of the study of one or more manuscripts, but more often took the form of a catechism to be memorized.

## THE "GREAT INITIATES"

At a later date the adepts of the *Ars Magna* arrived at a mystical conception of initiation. According to the Rosicrucian Robert Fludd (1574-1637), the initiates formed a "hidden Church" of the elect, which in different periods of history took different forms. Invisible, unknown to the vulgar, and vested with divine powers, they were the repositories and guardians of the Tradition. This doctrine was to have singular success: in the eighteenth century,



*Statue of Jacques Coeur (1395-1456), the "grand silversmith" of King Charles VII of France, who was said to have found the Philosopher's Stone. Jacques Coeur Palace, Bourges, France.*



Saint-Germain and Cagliostro never failed to announce themselves as “illustrious strangers,” and the same idea can be found in esoteric works even today.

## ALCHEMICAL LITERATURE

The alchemists did their best to keep the secrets of the Great Work – as well as their esoteric philosophy – from the profane. Why did they do so? It has often been said that it was for security reasons. Actually, this esotericism was deliberate, and was aimed at hiding from the common people secrets that it was thought they ought not to know. “By revealing the secret,” Roger Bacon writes in his *Opus Tertium*, “one lessens its efficacy. The people can understand nothing of it; they would make common use of it and take away all its value. It would be folly to give lettuce to a donkey, which is quite content with thistles; and the wicked, if they knew the secret, would misuse it and overthrow the world. I must not oppose the will of the Divine nor the best interests of science, so I will not write down the secret in a way that anybody can understand.”

Everything had to be done to discourage the curious. “At the door of the laboratory there must always be a sentinel armed with a flaming sword to question all visitors and to turn back those unworthy of being admitted.” There were few, the adepts held, who were fit to enter “the closed palace of the King” (in the words of Eirenaeus Philalethes). So their aim had to be disguised beneath mysterious symbols, and in this the alchemists were absolutely successful; it is quite impossible to understand any alchemical treatise without knowing the theory and so having a key to its principal symbols.

We must now make a kind of inventory of the alchemical literature, modern as well as medieval, for a great number of such works appeared before the end of the seventeenth century, and some even later.

## THE WRITTEN WORKS

The alchemical treatises that have come down to us are extremely numerous; they would fill a vast library. This abundant output can be divided into two groups: Latin translations of Arabic writings that



*The confused and dark matter sustained by the astral sulphurous sign. From Speculum Veritatis (The Mirror of Truth) Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Cod. Lat. 7286, author unknown.*



appeared in the West about the eleventh century, often confused and full of passages, even pages, taken straight from the Greek alchemists; and original works by Western alchemists, published first in Latin, then in the vernaculars (these become more and more frequent from the thirteenth century on). These writings are sometimes in prose, sometimes in verse. (The influence of Hermetic Philosophy on poetry was considerable.)

In spite of the very large number of works lost, those that remain are more than enough to acquaint us with alchemy. Some scholars have prepared collections of those texts that seem most representative, but the libraries of Europe still contain many little-known manuscripts, only a few of which have ever been published.

Even the most verbose of these works remain esoteric, and contain many strange symbols and mysterious injunctions, of the following sort: "You must make the now fixed Stone, by the ways of Sublimation volatile, and the volatile fixed; and the fixed Dissolved; and the Dissolved again volatile, and the volatile again fixed, until it flow and alter, into Solifick, and Lunifick, with certain Complement."

Often the procedure is set out in disordered form, in order to make the treatise even less comprehensible. Also, most of these works are not limited to the practical side, but deal with all the Hermetic teachings. They frequently begin with an invocation to the Divinity, such as this passage from the *Rosarium Philosophorum* of Arnold of Villanova: "Our heart will be restless until we have returned to Him, for the superior essence of the elements rises toward that Fire which is above the stars. And we, who issued forth from Him, rightly aspire to return to Him, the one source of all things." The texts become supported by illustrations; beside detailed drawings of apparatus appear such symbols as the hermaphrodite, who represents the

union of the male and female principles. From the fifteenth century on these plates become more and more numerous and complicated, to the extent that they are real pentacles, talismanic symbols summarizing a whole theory by including quite separate elements within a single image. These curious illustrations, of real artistic value, often help us understand the texts. They are particularly numerous in *The Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine*, the *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* of H. Khunrath, and the works of Maier and Fludd.

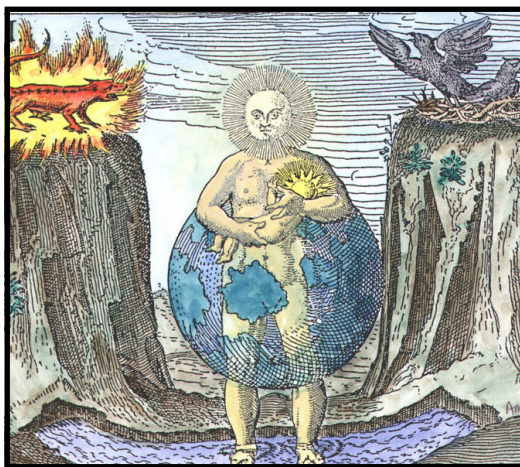
## THE ALLEGORIC DRAWINGS

Some works consist entirely of symbolic images. One such is the *Mutus Liber (Silent Book)*, which sets forth the various stages of the Great Work in a series of engravings without captions. Others are *The Hieroglyphic Drawings of Abraham the Jew*, with a commentary by Nicolas Flamel, and the *Rosarius Magnus*.

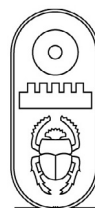
In this category also must be placed the famous Tarot, one of the most curious of Eastern esoteric objects.

## THE TAROT

The arrival of the Bohemians (or Zingari) in Western Europe is estimated to

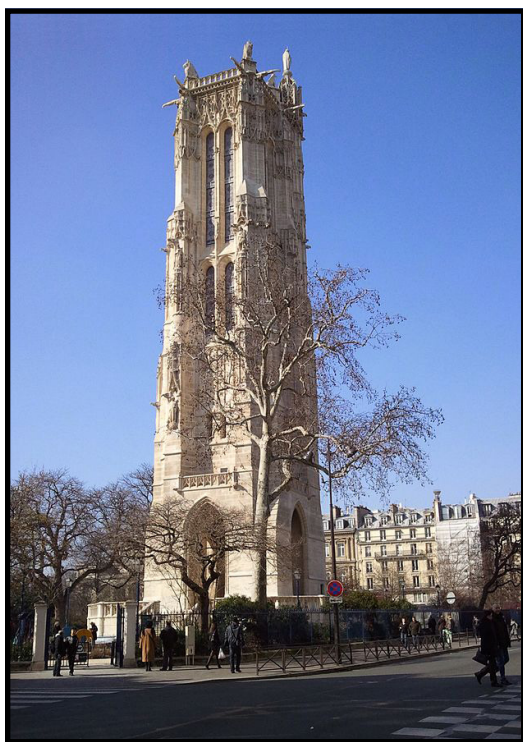


Engraving from J.D. Mylius's *Philosophia reformata*, Frankfurt, 1622. It shows a salamander in Fire, birds in Air, Water at the base of the mountains, and the engraving symbolizes a downward pointing triangle with the Earth globe at the center.



have occurred at the end of the fourteenth century. Bohemian esoterism included methods of divination; clairvoyance and magic, and mythical stories (perhaps of Indian origin), but most important it incorporated the Hermetic tradition, condensed into a symbolic and emblematic book, the Tarot (also called the Book of Thoth), which is not only a means of divination but also a sort of summary of Hermetic Philosophy.

The Tarot consists of seventy-eight leaves (divided into twenty-two “major” leaves and fifty-six “minor” ones) whose figures seem to have been designed about the fifteenth century. When the twenty-two “major” leaves are arranged in a specific order, the whole Hermetic cosmogony



*Saint-Jacques Tower is all that remains of the church Saint-Jacques-de-la-boucherie located on Rue de Rivoli at Rue Nicolas Flamel. The ancient church and its landmark tower welcomed pilgrims setting out on the road that led to Tours and headed for the way of St James, which led to the major pilgrimage destination of Santiago de Compostela. The famous alchemist, Nicolas Flamel, a patron of the church, was buried under its floor.*

is obtained: Chaos, the Creative Fire, the division of the one primordial matter into four elements, and so on. One can also detect a solar theology, knowledge by illumination (symbolized by the “Popess”), sympathy and antipathy, sexual dualism, evil, and the Fall. In these curious pictures, whose origin is most mysterious, one can also determine the different stages of the Great Work, according to certain modern occultists.

## ALCHEMICAL SCULPTURES

The alchemists also made use of the plastic arts to show their doctrines and practices. A number of buildings (Jacques Coeur’s house in Bourges) and religious buildings (the tower of Saint Jacques in Paris, built by Nicolas Flamel) are rich in the most interesting symbolic sculptures.

## ALCHEMICAL SYMBOLS

In order to conceal their mysteries from the people, the alchemists devised during the Middle Ages a whole system of symbols, which continued in use up to the beginning of modern times. Contrary to current prejudiced views, this symbolism, far from being arbitrary, remained constant through many centuries.

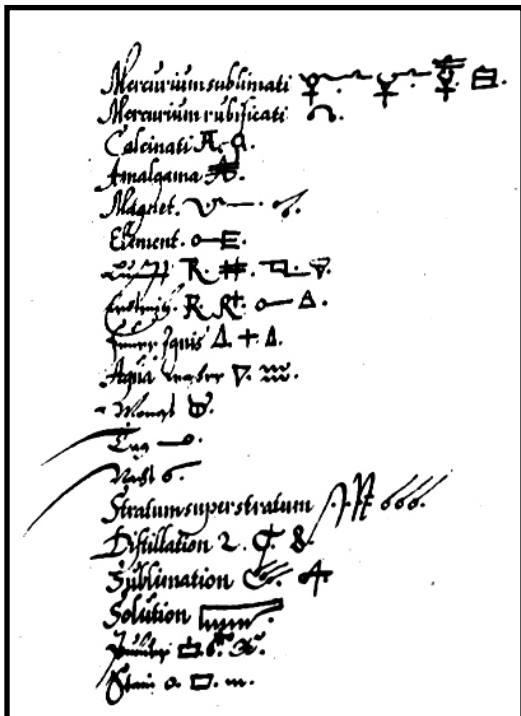
Signs resembling stylized hieroglyphics were already known to the Greek alchemists, and were handed down unaltered to the medieval adepts and their successors.

Certain treatises, such as the *Confessio de Chao Physico-Chimicorum Catholico of Khunrath*, are written almost exclusively in signs. John Dee, in his *Monas Hieroglyphica*, tried to erect an entire metaphysics around these alchemical signs; the sign of the Sun, for example, represents the Monad, or the dot, encircled by the world.

Anagrams, enigmas, and acrostics were used by alchemists to disguise their ideas. Thus the Philosopher’s Stone is denoted by the word *Azoth*, formed with the initial letter common to all alphabets



(A), followed by the last letter of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew alphabets (Z), signifying that the Stone is the beginning and end of all substance.



*Alchemical cryptic symbols. Anon., 16th century, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Leiden.*

## ALLEGORIES AND MYTHS

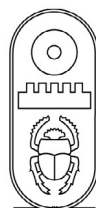
To disguise their experiments, the alchemists resorted to mythological fables. (The reverse was also thought possible, and some authors even made alchemical interpretations of Homer, Ovid, and Virgil.) One widely used myth was that of the phoenix, which rises from its own ashes. But the alchemists also fabricated their own allegories, with alacrity. One, taken from the German work *The Little Peasant's Casket*, symbolizes the colors adopted by matter during the Great Work: "Now as I set off on a journey, I found myself between two mountains, where I gazed upon a man of the fields. He was grave, and of modest appearance, dressed in a gray coat, with a black band on his hat, a white scarf around his neck, a yellow leather belt and red boots."

## CRYPTOGRAPHY

Alchemists frequently used cryptography, using letters (Raymond Lully), letters and numbers, mirror writing, or alphabets made up entirely of strange signs (Trithem). Some writers resorted to music, trying to coordinate the sounds with the reactions of matter; the Rosicrucian Michael Maier is notable here. (This attempt was taken up by Cyrano de Bergerac, in his *Comic History of the States and Empires of the Moon*.)

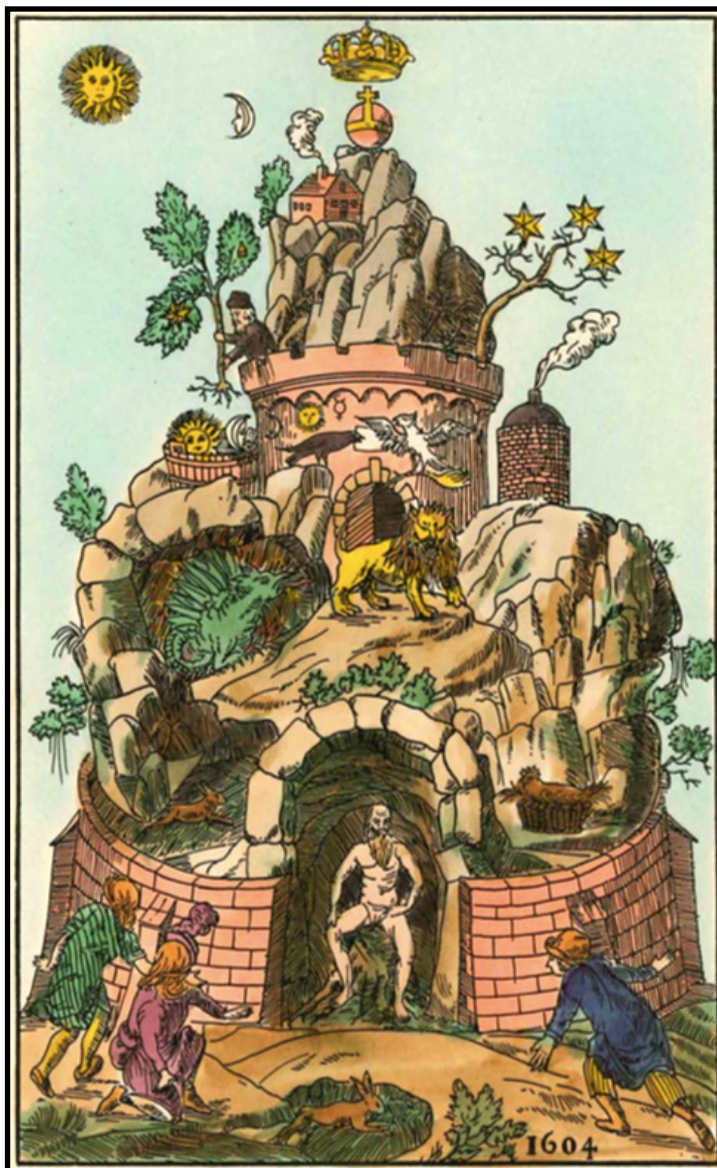
## ALCHEMY AND RELIGION

The adepts made numerous analogies with religion, and discovered a kind of nature cult. "Nature," writes Lully, in his *Theories*, "has fixed a time for conception, pregnancy, and childbirth. So the alchemist, after fertilizing the matter, must await the birth. When the Stone is born, he must feed it, as he would a child, until it can withstand great heat." The alchemists made endless comments on the evangelical text "If the grain does not die, it cannot bear fruit," which they interpreted to mean that as wheat must decompose in the earth, so the Stone must pass through a stage of putrefaction. In this way, alchemy affiliated itself to the domain of religion; certain writers, such as Ripley and De Nuysement, even made alchemical interpretations of the Scriptures. As George Ripley writes in his *Book of Twelve Gates*: "Both the world and the Stone issued from an unformed mass. The fall of Lucifer, like original sin, symbolizes the corruption of base metals." The Christian adepts tried to make of their art a kind of esoteric religion, superior to ordinary Christianity; they readily compared the Philosopher's Stone to Christ, for the Stone, assimilated to the final cause that can reproduce itself, fertilizes and engenders itself, like the Word of the Divine. The Ars Magna, augmenting the comparisons with the Passion of Christ, becomes a veritable Gnosticism.



# MICHELSPACHER'S MOUNTAIN OF THE ADEPTS

*Peter Bindon, FRC, MA*



*Peter Bindon is an anthropologist and botanist. He has served on the Editorial Board of the Rose+Croix Journal ([www.rosecroixjournal.org](http://www.rosecroixjournal.org)) for many years and is a frequent contributor to the Rosicrucian Digest. He was a presenter at the "Hidden in Plain Sight" Esoteric Conference held at Rosicrucian Park, where he presented a paper on "Ancient Alchemical Diagrams: Are they Mirrors of the Human Soul for the Modern World?" A few years ago he retired as Grand Master of the*

*English Grand Lodge for Australia, Asia, and New Zealand after many years of service in that position.*

*In this article, Frater Bindon helps us to ascend the Mountain of the Adepts and examines some of the symbolism of this diagram from the Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians of the 16th and 17th centuries. The version of this image shown above was hand colored by H. Spencer Lewis.*

Several illustrations that contain collections of symbols clustered around a mountain can be found in alchemical and Rosicrucian texts. The first thing that springs to one's mind concerning the central dominant image is that mountains are symbolic of an ascent in which effort is needed to reach a particular goal. It is interesting that these symbolic diagrams never seem to have their summit in the clouds, indicating that the goal to be reached is clear and can be distinctly seen or perceived. Such is the goal of the Rosicrucian adept.

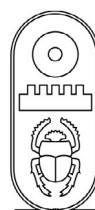
This diagram comes from the *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer* (*Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*), first published in Altona, Germany, in 1785, so the ideas contained in the diagram are only a little more than 230 years distant from our time. Despite the fact that we are far more advanced in material things, our spiritual and mystical development may be lagging behind that of our ancestors. There are many reasons for this situation but for now, we return to the “mountain of the adepts” and our own quest for spiritual advancement. I am certain that you wish to follow your instincts in searching out the meaning of the symbolism in this diagram, just as the hoodwinked men searching “in the dark” and the hunter are doing at the foot of the mountain. We will examine only a few of the more obvious symbols.

Before one can even attempt to scale the mountain, the wall, which is symbolic of false doctrines and beliefs, must be overcome. Guarding the gateway through this wall is the alchemical protector, thought by the alchemists to be Boaz, the great-grandfather of the biblical David. While above, an alchemist plants the tree of the sun and the moon (which bears the Philosopher's Stone as its fruit). Another tree has already borne its fruit, symbolized by the house built on strong rock foundations. Notice that each time

the main celestial bodies – the sun and the moon – appear, they are in pairs. What might this suggest, particularly when they are accompanied by the alchemical symbol for mercury? What does the rabbit rushing to its burrow symbolize? We could ask the individual meaning of each of the many symbols in the diagram in this way, but this quest would not bring us to the goal that the artist desired.

Let us assume that the ultimate goal of the Rosicrucian student using this diagram as a meditational mandala is union with the Cosmic. The goal appears as an orb, a symbol of the universe that is three-dimensional, has mass, and can be defined by sensory perceptions. The orb is crowned by a symbol for the King of heaven, the Cosmic influence that is not materialistic and cannot be perceived in the same manner as the symbolic orb. To attain Cosmic Consciousness, the student treads a zigzag path that begins at the lower left with the hoodwinked seekers and proceeds through the hen, to the dragon, the tree of potential, the fruitful tree, the house to the orb, and beyond. On this journey, various other symbolic manifestations are encountered.

The lion, the eagle, and the crow are most obvious, but why is there a second tower with a dark gateway? Can the seeker be assured that a Golden Dawn awaits the setting of the Silver Moon? I encourage you to take a few minutes on a few occasions to ponder the symbolic journey depicted in this diagram. As the well-worn cliché reminds us, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Alchemical and other mystical diagrams surely contain many more, as they generate different ideas for each individual that contemplates them. The encouraging aspect to such diagrams is that although the artist may have intended the viewer to understand a particular message, there are no wrong answers!



# THE ALCHEMIST'S LABORATORY

*Dennis Hauck, FRC, PhD*

The fire burns steadily in the athanor, the cylindrical brick furnace at the center of the alchemist's laboratory. Midway up the athanor, two glowing holes gaze out into the darkened room, while occasional puffs of falling ash drift from a wider opening below. On top sits a huge glass retort, its single opening stopped with clay; and inside the glass, a heavy mass of dark green mud folds about itself in slow, swirling currents.

The writhing blob represents months of hard work pulverizing, roasting, dissolving, and breaking down materials thought to contain a mysterious essence known as the First Matter. It could be found in nature in caves and crevices, locked in certain ores, or even deep within the human body. Some said it had an affinity for discarded or rejected materials, and many medieval alchemists believed it could be obtained from feces and urine.

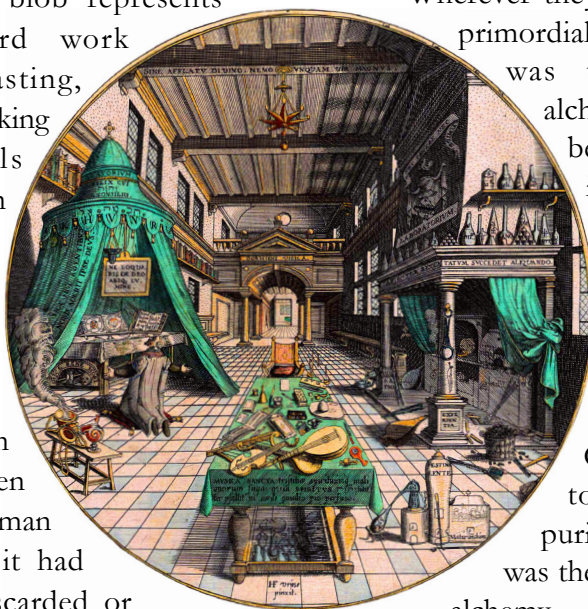
In 1669, German alchemist Hennig Brandt (shown on the following page) announced he had discovered the First Matter after distilling over 1,300 gallons (5,000 liters) of urine. After months of accumulating urine, he boiled it down to a thick syrup, which he distilled into a red oil. After adding the oil back into the blackened material that remained, he heated the mixture intensely for sixteen hours. Suddenly, it began emitting an eerie green light. He poured it into cold water,

where it solidified into a glowing white powder.

Alchemists throughout Europe began experimenting with urine, convinced they had found the First Matter and could use it to make the fabled Philosopher's Stone. However, what Brandt had actually discovered was phosphorus. Named from the Greek word for "light bearing," it fit the alchemists' expectations for the First Matter perfectly.

Wherever they could find it, this primordial, chaotic substance was the goal of all alchemists. It was their belief that, once they isolated enough First Matter, they could purify it and produce the Philosopher's Stone, which could perfect anything. Of course, just how to accumulate and purify the First Matter was the greatest mystery in alchemy.

Back in the laboratory, we turn our attention away from the blazing furnace. Along the wall to the right, we see two shelves stretching the length of the room. The upper shelf holds the carcasses of assorted frogs, birds, snakes, rabbits, and rats, while less identifiable creatures peer out from preservative-filled jars. Hanging from the ceiling is a preserved crocodile and some large dried fish. Alchemists believe the life force is like a subtle stuff that can be separated from living things and used to impart health to others, or even give life to inanimate objects. Many famous alchemists claim to have created







*Alchemist Hennig Brandt in a 1795 painting by Joseph Wright, depicting Brandt's discovery of the chemical element phosphorus.*

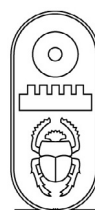
little beings (called *homunculi*) by infusing the life force into flasks of chemical compounds.

On the lower shelf along the same wall are assorted vials, bottles, crocks, and burlap bags holding various powders and liquids – each one marked with a unique name or symbol. Linger too long in this area, and your senses will be overcome by a foul odor similar to a mixture of rotten eggs and vinegar. It comes from the large beaker of Oil of Vitriol, a form of sulfuric acid. Another biting odor emanates from the Salt of Ammonia, which was first made from camel dung in ancient Egypt. By the Middle Ages, alchemists were distilling it from urine or extracting it from hartshorn (ammonium bicarbonate).

Other chemicals on this shelf are the Green Lion (iron sulfate), Liquor of the Soul (a solution of ammonia, lime, and sulfur), Powder of the Sun (sulfur with antimony and mercuric oxide), and white Natron (sodium carbonate). All the chemicals used by alchemists had both material and spiritual properties.

Beneath the two long shelves is a narrow workbench piled with odd-looking utensils, tongs, ladles, pincers, and leather bellows. At the center of the bench, next to a small herb press, a balancing scale seesaws aimlessly, caught in a passing draft of air. Meanwhile, in the dark space underneath the table, an iron cauldron full of decomposing organic matter gurgles suspiciously. This disgusting tub is known as the “digester,” in which materials rot and break down in an operation called putrefaction.

Against the opposite wall, two sturdy bookcases are stuffed with stained papers, manuscripts, and leather-bound books. Between the bookcases, an empty chair sits next to a broad wooden desk. On the cluttered desktop is a large notebook with a quill-pen waiting patiently in its inkwell. The pages are covered in a frenzied hash of words and numbers, bizarre diagrams, eerie creatures, and mythological figures intended to capture the alchemist's inner experiences during his experiments.





*Alchemist's Workshop in the Rosicrucian Alchemy Exhibit in San Jose, California.*

On the back wall, a bewildering array of glass vessels are supported on wooden pegs. Odd-shaped flasks, beakers, cylinders, and retorts of all sizes spread across the entire wall. Alchemists design their vessels for both practical and esoteric uses, and they believe the shape of a vessel affects the concentration of the ethereal substances with which they work.

The womb-shaped retort isolates living essences by heating. The Vase of Hermes (or aludel) is a pear-shaped glass open at both ends used in sublimation. The Pelican is a distilling vessel with two side arms that create a circulatory mixture of vapors. Other names for specific vessels were the Philosopher's Egg, Skull Cap (or Brain Pan), Angel Tube, Spirit Holder, Moon Vessel, Mother of the Stone, Matrix Vase, Cup of Babylon, and the Tomb of the Dead.

In the corner, an array of coiled copper tubing zigzags upward from a large gourd-shaped clay vessel on the floor. Known as a "serpent condenser," the giant air-cooled apparatus is used for distilling the foul-smelling solution poured off from the digester. Distilling purifies even the foulest liquid and concentrates the strength of its essences. The process is used to produce alcoholic spirits, essential oils, herbal extracts, tonics, tinctures, and elixirs.

Isolated in the opposite corner of the room, a large gray curtain hangs from the ceiling. Draped around a small altar, this tent or tabernacle forms a private meditation space called the Oratorium. As much work is done within the Oratorium as is carried out in the laboratory. Alchemists spend many hours in solitary contemplation, attempting to purify and focus their minds. Their motto is *Ora et Labora* ("pray and work").

Hidden somewhere near the Oratorium is the alchemist's incubator. This insulated, copper-clad wooden box – kept warm by the fermenting matter within – is where the alchemist directs his thoughts and visualizations. During fermentation, the First Matter is most open to the influence of the alchemist, who tries to enter a symbiotic relationship with the matter at hand and suffer with it through its transformations. If anyone other than the alchemist touches or even looks at the incubator, all is lost.

At this stage, the work is easily corrupted by impure thoughts. To alchemists, consciousness is a force of nature that can be purified and focused through meditation and then used like a fire to transform things. It is the one essential ingredient you will never find listed in the alchemist's recipes.

# THE ALCHEMICAL WEDDING AND THE CROWNING OF THE HERMETIC CHILD

Steve Kalec, FRC



The Alchemical Wedding.

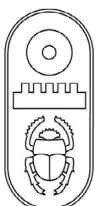
*Frater Steve Kalec, a Grand Councilor for the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, and a member of the Traditional Martinist Order, is a practicing alchemist, artist, poet, playwright, and lecturer. Frater Kalec's Jungian studies led him to understand the alchemical process as being a universal one throughout all aspects of being. This realization led him to the study and practice of operative laboratory alchemy. He has studied practical alchemy with the Philosophers of Nature and has followed Manfred Junius through his many European alchemy courses.*

A wonderful way to express and complement one's studies is to exteriorize one's understanding of them. A painting can reveal a lot, especially if it has an uplifting theme full of inspirational and philosophical symbols and allegories. Alchemy, a field of study that can lead one on a passionate quest for knowledge, is a good subject for such paintings. Before we explore this painting and before we take

a stroll through the scenery with its many symbols revealing the alchemical process, let us first look into the meaning of the alchemical Sun and Moon, the alchemical King and Queen.

## THE SUN AND THE MOON THE KING AND THE QUEEN

In Hermetic philosophy, the Sun has always been a symbol of a certain aspect of consciousness as it radiates outwards of itself. The Sun can only shine and give outwards its potent rays of light and warmth. It cannot receive or take; it is not its nature, for it is only half and a part of the oneness of being. The other aspect of consciousness is symbolized by the Moon as the feminine receptive nature of the unconscious mind. By herself, she is dark and cold and is a passive polarity compared to the active polarity of the Sun. Alchemically, the Lunar nature is one of





gathering inwards and nurturing, while the nature of the Sun is one of outpouring and expansiveness. The Sun, which is consciousness, sees himself in the Moon's reflection, while her darkness, symbolizing the unconscious, is warmed and made to shine with light. The Sun sees his own reflection in the Moon. As Fulcanelli has said, "the Moon secretly absorbs the rays of the Sun and nurtures them in her bosom."

Metaphysically, the inner process of meditation functions on the very same principles. The conscious mind directing thought and concentration is like the Sun. The unconscious aspect of our being is like the Moon and functions on a lunar level. The unconscious psychic energies within us must be warmed and kindled by the solar essence. This is that metaphysical insemination that philosophers speak of when they say that "consciousness must inseminate the unconscious." It is this act that brings to birth a third aspect of consciousness in our being: the luminous, subjective Self as the inner divine and Hermetic Child.

When one practices meditation, one can enter into the fertile feminine unconscious where the birthing of the inner divine child symbolizes the emerging Inner Self. One must first make the conscious effort of his or her active willpower and concentration and act upon the passive energies of the unconscious. In turn, the receptive and passive energies of the unconscious nurture and mature the divine seed of the Sun, or "our Gold," as the alchemists like to call it. In this way, the feminine aspect becomes the mother of divinity in that she brings forth the Son of the Sun. This is that mystical love affair, that passion and divine union of the male and female seed that the philosophers speak of which begets the Philosopher's

Stone. The Sun and the Moon, as the Father and the Mother, now see themselves in the divine Son. This is the true union of the bride and groom, the unification of Adam and Eve, and the mystical wedding of the alchemists

It is a most beautiful event to behold the Sun through the feminine reflection of the Lunar Astral Light, especially when she is pregnant and full. She is our most beautiful Diana. The alchemists have always spoken highly of her and expressed her beauty in most beautiful allegorical ways, such as the Lily of the Valley and the White Rose of the whitening stage of the alchemical process. To them it is symbolic of the beautiful body of their Diana, stripped of all her terrestriality. That means that it is a purely spiritual inner event. Thus the wife of the Sun becomes the very mother of our own rebirth. Consciousness becomes conscious of consciousness and we realize the source of a greater light coming from the Sun, the Father, within us. But we never forget our Mother, the Moon, and her fertility and gentle nurturing. In this symbolism and allegory we see the Osirian myth, and Isis, the Virgin Mother, who gave birth to Horus. We can also see the Christian mystery of the Holy Virgin Mother conceived of the Father. She also gave birth to the divine child who becomes our inner master and savior, as our regenerated soul and exalted consciousness.

### ***THE ALCHEMICAL WEDDING***

In my painting *The Alchemical Wedding*, attention is brought initially to the center, where two opposite but complementary forces of nature are represented. The feminine and masculine energies in nature are being brought into the union of the Alchemical Marriage. This is the *Heiros Gamos*, or the holy marriage of our inner archetypal, divine couple as the alchemical



King and Queen. Their offspring becomes the alchemical Hermetic Child, a symbol of our rebirth into a new and higher spirituality. We see this marriage being blessed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, represented by the descending dove that is the mediator between heaven and earth. We also see that the entire scene is divided into two equal parts, or aspects of consciousness. Two luminaries share this scene: the Sun to rule the day as the radiant conscious aspect of our beings, and the Moon to rule the night as the reflective and nurturing unconscious.

Beginning from the left side, in the depths of darkness, in a little far-off town, one alchemist is keeping his vigil. Even in his sleep he tends to his fire and keeps the light, for alchemists are always awake. This suggests to us that the Alchemical Wedding is to be experienced inwardly through spiritual practice, meditation, aspiration, and love for that which is divine in us.

As we explore the scenery, we pass by Diana's temple and realize that it is she who is our beautiful Queen and goddess. Her purity and chastity are symbolized by the unicorn as the single-horned white horse, tireless when under threat of capture by the impure of heart, but meek when approached by a virgin. According to Juan Eduardo Cirlot's *A Dictionary of Symbols*, the unicorn has been an emblem of the sword or the Word of the Divine. This also suggests to us that it is the secret fire of the alchemists, for the Word of the Divine is the same as fire.

Next we see a white swan that gently swims over darkened water. Alchemists

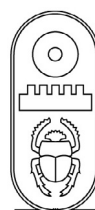
often watch for the appearance of the white swan, for when it appears over matter, the whitening stage of the alchemical process has begun. The white stage is the purification of the work. In the lake, we also see the water lily having spread its petals seeking to absorb the light of dawn. The lily is a beautiful symbol for representing that the highest in us is found in that which is the lowest in us, as the roots of this beautiful flower are anchored in the murky mud below the surface of the waters.

An important symbol not to overlook is the lilies of the valley at the feet of our Queen. The lily of the valley is a fragile flower that likes to live in the indirect light of the sun, hence in the valley. This is symbolic of the emerging Self also being fragile as it unfolds its petals to the light of consciousness. It cannot immediately look directly at the sun. Thus we must mature and get accustomed to the lunar reflective stage

*The lily is a beautiful symbol for representing that the highest in us is found in that which is the lowest in us, as the roots of this beautiful flower are anchored in the murky mud below the surface of the waters.*

of the emerging light as we begin to endure the higher intensities of the alchemical fire of the soul.

We are after all the athanor of our work, which is revealed by the athanor in the very center of the painting. There we see the vessel also containing our alchemical King and Queen, suggesting that this is a Hermetic Work, and that it is an inner event. We see the outer fire below the athanor heating the vessel and raising the vibrations within it, allowing for the alchemical process to be initiated. The outer fire also symbolizes the fire of passion, and of spiritual aspiration, deep breathing techniques, and spiritual



practice. All these will set the inner fire of the soul within the vessel.

As we continue to explore the scenery, we arrive at the right side of the painting. We see here the brightness of the light of day. We see the King's castle and a chapel on the hill. The ground is rich and fruitful with vines and grapes, suggesting the action of the solar force. Even the tree is in full bloom, as we have entered into the revival of nature in spring. This is an apt symbol of our own revival into a glorious awakening. The right side of the painting could be seen as being in sharp contrast to the left, however it could also be seen as being part of a harmonious union of opposing forces. This union is also symbolized by the pavement upon which stands our beloved couple exchanging wedding vows. The Queen, being the lunar white alchemical rose, offers herself to the King. The King offers himself as the solar red alchemical rose. The colors are suggestive of the white and red stages of the alchemical process. The flooring is checkered, representing the forces of light and darkness in harmonious balance. This is the marriage of the alchemical fire and water as our alchemical Sulfur and Mercury. It is said that if it was not for water, fire would burn up the world, and if it was not for fire, water would drown the world.

Behind the King follows the alchemical Red Lion, representing the ferociousness of the ego. There is nothing wrong with the ego as long as it is purified, subservient, and obedient to the King. In its positive aspects, the ego is will, fortitude, and the mighty power of the soul. It is the "I Am" principle, without which, as Carl Jung posited, we cannot be conscious. He said, "It seems as if the ego has not been produced by nature to follow its own arbitrary impulses to an unlimited extent,

but to help to make real the totality – the whole psyche. It is the ego that serves to light up the entire system, allowing it to become conscious and thus to be realized." The Red Lion in us must first be conquered and allowed to die, and later alchemically resurrected. Anyone who has experienced the "dark night of the soul" will understand this.

This painting was intended to allow the meditative and contemplative mind to realize the beauty of the alchemical process, which is a regeneration of the soul and consciousness, and the uplifting of one's ordinary human condition. Alchemy need not be a dark and mysterious journey. Though darkness will be encountered, it is to be accepted as the blessed darkness of the soul, within which is found the regenerative secret fire of the alchemists.

In the breaking through of unconscious content into consciousness, which is like the dawning of light, we first always enter into a darkness of consciousness. Just as a candle flame loses its brightness when brought from a dark room into the sunlight, the Greater Light diminishes the light of the ego. Until the assimilation of this most adorable solar fire is achieved, we enter into a lower level of consciousness, into a moment of obscurity. A certain part of us, as our lesser selves, must pass through the psychological "dark night of the soul" and its corresponding "philosophical mortification." Saint John of the Cross said, "The endurance of darkness is the preparation for light." We always keep our sacred vigil, for dawn occurs just after the darkest hour, revealing a "golden dawn," and a resurrection into a higher order of the Self. A Self, having passed through its alchemical marriage as an entity, becomes one with that which is the universal within him or her.

## THE CROWNING OF THE HERMETIC CHILD



*The Crowning of the Hermetic Child* is an extension of *The Alchemical Wedding* painting. When the painting above is placed adjacent to the Wedding painting, the scenery continues and the branches of the tree connect the two.

In a clear sky, breaking through a white cloud, we see the “All Seeing Eye,” as the Eye of Conscience and as the consciousness of the Divine within us all, being present and witnessing this miraculous and sacred event. Two castles stand in the distance, one just left of the King, and one just right of the Queen. One is the Palace of the Soul and the other the Palace of the Holy Spirit. There is peace within the world as the two aspects of consciousness have united their realms.

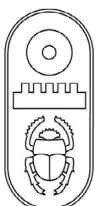
The two doves, as messengers and mediators between heaven and earth, symbolize spirituality and the powers of sublimation and fixation. They are perched on a tree branch whose roots extend into the earth. They seem content that their work has been done and that heaven has been brought down to earth.

The peacock to the right of the Queen is a symbol of totality, whose tail blends all colors into unity. The two peacocks side by side in harmony suggest the union of opposite forces within the original duality; spiritual energy and life force are now being received from such a unity. In meditation, just before the crystalline, pure, white light of a new and enhanced consciousness appears, all colors of the dispersed light of consciousness are seen

coming together and merging before the clear light of the Self appears.

In the center of the painting, we see the Hermetic Child being crowned by the Sun, who is its father, and the Moon, who is its mother. It is the Hermetic Child as our regenerated soul and consciousness.

This inner child often represents the inner developing “Light” of consciousness. Once developed and manifested into inner birth, the child represents the stage of life when the old person is transformed and reborn through the alchemical process. The child represents the inner guiding light of the new spirituality and consciousness that will unfold and become the revealed Master Within. In Hermetic philosophy, this Child is called Mercurius and is androgynous; it is both male and female. It is as a flower, with both stamens and pistils. It is capable of self-generation. The Hermetic Child is a representation of the Philosopher’s Stone. Here the child is being crowned as a spiritual achievement of the highest degree, where the alchemist’s soul has been regenerated through the youthful regenerative force of the alchemical process and elevated into a new and reawakened spirituality and expanded consciousness. The Hermetic Child is the offspring of the conjunction of the conscious and unconscious aspects of our being. It is a mystical and metaphysical realization of that which is the eternal and the Divine within us. As Baudelaire said: “Alchemy is the distillation of the eternal from the transient.”



# AN ALCHEMICAL JOURNEY TO THE BLACK FOREST

*Dennis Hauck, FRC, PhD*

The first alchemist I ever met was named Merus Favilla, a tall, thin Italian man with deep brown eyes and unruly black hair. He had set up a laboratory in Prague but fled the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and settled in Vienna in 1968. I met him at the University of Vienna, where he worked as a lab assistant.

At the time, I was a twenty-five-year-old graduate student who spent most of his time translating old alchemy manuscripts in the library. When I found out Merus was a practicing alchemist, I asked if he would teach me some laboratory techniques. Fortunately, he was seeking help with a long experiment he wanted to start.

Merus came from the *Mutus Liber* tradition that focused on isolating an elusive essence known as the First Matter. Alchemists believe it is an ethereal substance existing between energy and matter that is the source of all physical transformations. The First Matter is hidden in blackness everywhere in the universe. Blackness is its signature.

Merus explained the primary source for the First Matter in Europe was in the dirt from the Black Forest in southwest Germany (see map on next page). We would have to drive there to get some dirt and bring it back to his laboratory. Alchemists, he said, have been going there for centuries.

All seven metals of alchemy are found in the Black Forest, and some mines have operated continuously for over a thousand years. Many alchemists lived isolated lives deep in the woods to be close to the source of the metals. According to Merus, it is the concentration of First Matter that causes the metals to mature underground



and makes the trees, plants, and animals to grow so large there.

In the Middle Ages, the Black Forest was an almost impenetrable woodland. The trees grew so close together that the thick canopy they formed blocked out all the sun. Even in the middle of the day, it was like night in the woods. The forest became known as a crossroads between worlds, the home to all kinds of primal spirits and strange creatures.

We began our 500-mile trip to the Black Forest in the most uncomfortable vehicle ever made—a 1957 Puch 500. Produced by an Austrian bicycle company, the Puch had a roll-back canvas roof with windows glued into the doors. The body was only 52 inches high and 52 inches wide. Merus replaced the front seats with two children's beach chairs so he could sit up straight behind the wheel. I had to lay sideways in the rear seat. There were no springs anywhere in the vehicle. The



upholstery stunk from mildew, and I quickly nicknamed the car “the Puke.”

It took eleven grueling hours to go from Vienna to the Black Forest in the Puke. We stopped in Staufen, a quaint town just a few miles from the entrance to the Munstertal Valley at the southern tip of the forest. We checked into the *Gasthaus zum Löwen* (“Inn of the Lions”). Merus had reserved Room 5, where the famous alchemist Dr. Johann Georg Faust spent the last years before he died in 1539.

Everyone there insisted this was the same Faust on whom Goethe based his legendary character. Supposedly, Faust returned to Staufen in his declining years to be close to the nourishing energies of the Black Forest. There was even a painting of him hiking alone in the dark woods.

After breakfast the next morning, we packed up and drove into the Black Forest. We followed the main road into the valley and parked off the road near Mount Belchen. I took two burlap sacks and a small wooden spade out of the front of the car, and we headed off on our haphazard hike in the woods. After we got deeper into the woods, Merus began sniffing the air and kicking the dirt. A few times he stopped and stood in complete silence for several minutes. Three times

in different places, he paused to urinate in the dirt.

As we snaked our way through a dense, dark part of the woods into a small clearing, Merus got very excited and announced he had found the “virgin earth” he was looking for. With the tip of his shoe, he gently marked the spot with an “X.” I threw the sacks to the ground, and took out the carved hardwood spade alchemists used in handling materials thought to contain First Matter. At no time should metallic utensils or containers come in contact with First Matter, since it grounds and changes the energy.

I knelt down and started digging. The hard crust gave way in clumps, revealing the black soil beneath. I was surprised how loose and airy the dirt was as I dug deeper. It was just the opposite of what I expected, so I put down the spade and pulled out the dirt with my hands. Carefully, I placed each scoop of dirt deep in the sack.

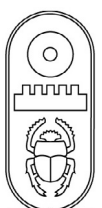
Suddenly, a root or something tangled around my hand and seemed to be tightening its hold. I gasped, yanking my hands out of the dirt. When I looked at my right hand, I could not believe my eyes. Coiled around my fingers was the ugliest creature I ever saw.

Nearly two-feet long and thick as a cigar, it looked like a mutant snake without any skin. I felt tiny claws on its underbelly digging into my hand, while its toothless mouth popped open wide. I whipped my arm downwards in a spasm of disgust, flinging the creature to the ground. The stunned snake stretched out and slowly began crawling back toward the hole.

“There’s a snake!” I screamed.

Merus replied calmly: “It’s just a worm.”

As it turned out, he was right. There is a giant earthworm called the *regenwurm* (“King of Worms”) that lives only in the





Black Forest (see photo above). Merus said the First Matter in the soil caused the worms to grow so big, and it was a sign we had found a good place to dig.

I decided to start using the spade again and eventually filled two sacks half-full of the precious black soil. We hauled them back to the Puke, and, after an excruciating ride back to Vienna, we safely sealed away the dirt in a large clay pot in Merus's cellar.

The next step in the process was to prepare the "menstruum," an alchemical term for any solvent used to extract essences from materials. In our case, the perfect menstruum was morning dew, so we began collecting dew from the grassy lawn in the park. We made three collection frames of burlap stretched on door-sized wood frames and suspended them about four inches off the ground. After the morning dew condensed, we unhooked the fabric and wrung out the precious liquid, which we stored in clay jugs. We did this every day for over a month, until we had enough. Merus then added sap from trees and living plant material to the dew, which he now called the "alkahest" or "universal solvent."

On the first day of Spring 1971, Merus began the tincturing work. He took out some of the Black Forest dirt

and began drying it. Then he filtered it through a mesh screen and poured the sifted dirt into a large glass retort about the size of a five-gallon water jug. Next, he added the menstruum and gently heated the vessel. Gradually over several weeks, there formed a layer of matted material like peat moss. This is known as the "Turf of the Philosophers," which indicates the First Matter is still viable and the work can proceed.

The layer of turf and another inch or so of loose material just below it was removed and dried. Then it was placed back in the retort with more dew, sap, and plant material. The concoction was distilled repeatedly. This whole process from beginning to end was repeated over and over. It would take Merus eleven years to complete his tincture.

During this time, I returned to the United States and lost touch with Merus. When I went back to Vienna in 1986, he told me he was working on the Philosopher's Stone from the isolated First Matter. He thanked me for my assistance and admitted he could not have made his tincture without me. He told me it was a great success and a German pharmaceutical company was interested in testing it. But despite repeated requests, he would never give me a sample.

# THE ALCHEMICAL ALLEGORY OF THE SEED AND THE FIELD

*Steve Kalc, FRC*

In the mystical philosophies, the alchemical processes involving the regeneration of the energies of the soul and consciousness are said to unfold through a cycle very similar to the passing of the yearly seasons of nature: there is the black winter, followed by the white bloom of spring, the red hot summer, and the golden autumn when our fruit is ready for the harvest. These are the color phases of the Great Work.

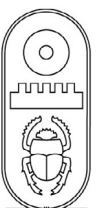
Let us begin by exploring the allegorical symbolism of the blackening of winter. As our days were shortened and our nights lengthened, a somber and darkening condition was felt in an all-embracing sense. Nature entered into a state of sleep, which very much alludes to a sort of death as the external activities of nature slowed down. Consciousness itself collectively seemed to be reduced as many kinds of creatures hibernated for the season. Plants, flowers, trees, and all kinds of vegetation became dormant and lifeless as they lost their vivid colors and gave way to the blackening and darkness of winter.

It would seem to be a very sorry state, melancholic and depressing. Yet if we look a little deeper into the esoteric principles that transpired, we might see that this blackness is really a blessed darkness, which is how it is viewed by mystics and Hermetic philosophers. A cold stillness and darkness may overshadow the world, yet a regeneration, and a new life is warming and developing within nature's very womb, and within the seeds of life itself.

It is in late fall, prior to the beginning of winter, that farmers plant their corn and other seeds into the earth. This ensures that the seed can have the time to undergo the alchemical process of the dissolution and the putrefaction. In order for the seed to bear fruit, it must die, putrefy, and be opened and readied for just the right time to germinate and come to life when the etheric energies of life pour out their greatest influences upon it in the spring.

*The Kybalion* states that "While All is in THE ALL, it is equally true that THE ALL is in All." This expresses for us the law of correspondence as "what is above is as what is below." We can readily understand that the forces of nature that operate in the macrocosm are also the forces that operate in the microcosm of humanity. There must therefore also be a certain correspondence between the outer activities of nature and the inner process of the transformation and elevation of humanity's soul and consciousness. The greater forces of nature can be found in the little universe of individuals. Therefore through the correspondence that exists between the outer and the inner world, there can be seen a sort of mirroring in the process of nature's regeneration, and the regeneration of humanity and the unfolding of everyone's soul and consciousness.

A seed holds within itself its potentiality of being. Within a tiny seed there lies the potentiality of a giant tree. One should meditate on this mystery, for this seed also contains within itself its entire species. One tiny seed contains







within itself an entire forest. If we succeed in our meditation, we will come to realize that this tiny seed also contains within itself all the trees of its species that have ever germinated into life. For it came from the first tree. In a deeper esoteric understanding, it is in itself the first tree and the last tree, the Alpha and the Omega. "All is in THE ALL...THE ALL is in All."

After the seed of our soul is placed in the black earth symbolizing the womb and the raw richness of the unconscious, the tomb of Osiris, or the sepulcher of Christ, it is reborn following putrefaction. It is in the cycle of our philosophic winter that, as a seed, our consciousness is sown into the earth to be broken, to be opened, to pass through philosophical death, to putrefy and enter our tomb, where we come face to face with the depths of our inner darkness. Oh, what a sorry state, what an agonizing situation. How can this be the blessed darkness of the alchemists?

In Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens*, in emblem six (seen above), there is a man sowing gold into a tilled field. The caption states, "Sow your gold into white foliated earth," that is into pure and tilled earth. It is said that it takes gold to make gold.

Here gold is used as seed and is planted to harvest more gold. Gold is the symbol of the sun, of the soul, and of consciousness. The earth and the field is the body.

The darkness of the tomb, and the cultivation of the earth and the field, readily bring to mind the saturnine aspect of matter and the body. In Chapter XIII of the Bhagavad Gita the body is called the field, and those who know this are called the knowers of the field. In the *Zohar* (3.141b, 1.27b), it is said: "Those alone to whom the mysteries are confided, are called the cultivators of the fields." In *The Hermetical Triumph* (page 31), Eudoxus states that, "The Stone is a Field that the wise cultivate, into which Nature and Art have planted the seed that must produce its fruit."

In Basil Valentine's *Eighth Key* (seen on the following page) there is a man in a cemetery resurrecting from a grave. At the foot of the grave, corn is sprouting, representing the fruition of our seed. Corn is also a symbol of immortality. Adjacent to the grave lays a corpse in a tilled field, symbolizing the idea that the seed that is not sown in the earth does not resurrect. We also see a man sowing grain, who is

met by an angel sounding a trumpet heralding the beginning of the Great Work. Basil Valentine said that, "Neither human nor animal bodies can be multiplied or propagated without decomposition; the grain and all vegetable seed, when cast into the ground, must decay before it can spring up again." This is the conversion of the old self and the ordinary personality. Two men have hit the target in the distant field with a key resting on its top surface. This represents that putrefaction is the key and they have attained the process.

Mystics and students of the esoteric philosophies know that this allegorical sowing of the seed is the sowing of our consciousness and must be understood as an inward process.

Consciousness must be turned inwards through a backward flow, and into the depths of our being, there to find the Gold within. This is that great task that we undertake when we meditate and practice inner spiritual techniques and spiritual exercises. Rosicrucians know this process especially as the "Overall Exercise." The slow fire of our putrefaction is really the regiment of the secret fire of our purified psychic energies, which allows for the blackest of our metal, the lead of the unconscious self, to be whitened through the action of the inner heat. "Decay is a wonderful smith," according to *The Golden Chain of Homer*, meaning that it transforms one element or state to another. The dedicated and disciplined sower knows his field and knows the body within which one can also find the psychic body. Through his vigilance he will see in the coming spring the efflorescence and

blooming of his unfolding consciousness. This is the first order of our transmutation. The darkness of our inner saturnine condition is transmuted into the brightness and shimmering reflective nature of silver. As we become accustomed to the action of the psychic energies, we are readied for the intensity of the solar fire of our philosophical summer. Our lunar reflective silver will proceed through transmutation and become our most noble, glittering, and incorruptible metal of gold, symbol of man's highest attainment and Cosmic Consciousness in the golden fall when our Great Work will be completed.

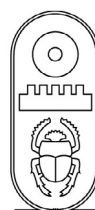
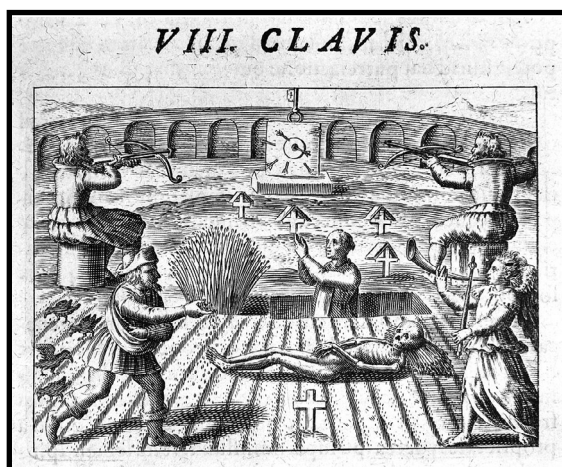
This theme speaks unanimously

through the works of the alchemists. In Mylius's *Philosophia Reformata*, in emblem fourteen, we can see again a man sowing grain, symbolizing the virtues of the soul having the power to tinge or convert. He is greeted by the winged angel of the revelation sounding

the trumpet of resurrection.

To everything there is a season, and the dark night of our winter will give way to glorious blossoming spring, where if we have kept our vigil, we will understand the words of 1 Corinthians 15:42: "What was sown in the earth as a perishable thing is raised imperishable."

Let us then obey the laws of nature and "follow in her footsteps." Let us look forward to our inner seasons and let us always be prepared for the work that is to be done in them as the blackening of winter, the white bloom of spring, the red hot summer, and the golden autumn.



# THE NEW ALCHEMY MUSEUM AT ROSICRUCIAN PARK

Respected Member of our Order,

When H. Spencer Lewis moved the headquarters of the Rosicrucian Order to San Jose, California in 1927, he envisioned Rosicrucian Park as a center for art, science, and mysticism that would inspire members and non-member guests for generations to come.

In 1929, he began the extraordinary collection of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, which is now the largest collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts on display in western North America.

In 1936, H. Spencer Lewis constructed the fifth planetarium in the United States, which continues to present complimentary star shows every day.

In 1939, Ralph Lewis and his brother, Earle, designed the Rosicrucian Research Library to house the exceptional collection of books that H. Spencer Lewis had bequeathed to the Order, along with other important esoteric works.

In 1949, following the Depression and wartime building supplies rationing, H. Spencer Lewis's recorded voice played during the dedication of the beautiful Grand Temple, which serves as the spiritual home to Rosicrucians around the world.

In 1966, the current Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, designed and constructed by Ralph and Earle Lewis, was completed and today welcomes more than 100,000 guests per year.

More recently we have continued H. Spencer Lewis's vision for Rosicrucian Park with the creation of the Rosicrucian Peace Garden (2004), an educational garden authentic to the Eighteenth Dynasty of Ancient Egypt; the Alchemy Garden (2012) with plants related to the four elements of the Great Work that can be used in the laboratory; the Rosicrucian Labyrinth (2015), a walking meditation tool for inner transformation, designed with native plants; the Research Library's Rare Books Room (2015), displaying some of H. Spencer Lewis's personal books and possessions and other historic works; and Rosicrucian Park's achievement of Net Zero Carbon status (2017), now producing enough clean, renewable energy to meet our annual energy consumption requirements.

In 2020, we will continue H. Spencer Lewis's legacy with the opening of the Rosicrucian Alchemy Museum in what is currently the RCUI building.

For three years, our magnificent Alchemy Exhibit has been a popular display at the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum. We are now ready to begin the construction of its permanent home.

The Alchemy Museum at Rosicrucian Park will offer an interactive introduction to the fascinating history of Alchemy (with its origins in Egypt), as well as hands-on demonstrations involving the seven steps of the alchemical process, lab workstations for up to twelve students, and a meditation chamber.



Most importantly, this newest addition to Rosicrucian Park will serve to educate our guests, through the symbolism of the alchemical processes, on the primary purpose that each of us shares as Rosicrucian students; that is, our evolution from a lower state of being (symbolized by the base metals) to a higher state of being (symbolized by the radiant gold of Illumination).

The new Alchemy Museum at Rosicrucian Park will assist us in bringing into public awareness the profundity of the mystic's perpetual search for the Philosopher's Stone, which is our greatest potential as human beings.

The estimated cost for the Alchemy Museum is \$4,994,900, which includes the complete renovation of the 84-year-old RCUI building, constructed by H. Spencer Lewis in 1934, and a world-class museum exhibit.

Please visit <http://www.rosicrucianpark.org/alchemy-museum> for details on the proposed features and experiences that this new addition to Rosicrucian Park will provide.

The Alchemy Museum, together with our other recent projects, ensures that Rosicrucian Park continues to serve as a center of wisdom and esoteric culture well into the twenty-first century.

We invite you to participate in perpetuating the legacy that has been bequeathed to all of us through a one-time gift <https://www.rosicrucian.org/donate/donate-alchemy.php> or through a monthly commitment, which you can make here: <https://www.rosicrucian.org/donate/monthly-recurring-donation.php>.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC!

Sincerely and fraternally,

The Board of Directors of the English Grand Lodge for the Americas

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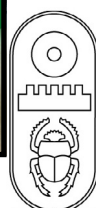
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Marie Toulouse Shaluly, Director



Above and on back cover - artist renderings of the New Alchemy Museum at Rosicrucian Park.



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