

The Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, AMORC: Its origins, organisation and some notes on ceremonies

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There are many trunks and a number of branches on the Rosicrucian tree from which sprouted the branch producing *The Antiquus Mysticusquae Ordem Rosae Crucis* or more familiarly *The Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, AMORC*. Let us imagine that each of the spreading roots of the Rosicrucian tree have their own theme, and let us say for the sake of this explanation that these themes include theosophies, alchemy, philosophy, Pietism, Gnosticism and others. Any one of the trunks of this tree may draw some nourishment from a variety of these roots.

Origins

The Antiquus Mysticusquae Ordem Rosae Crucis or, *AMORC* for short, is a non-Masonic, relatively recently organised and modern entity that arose from an older branch on the Rosicrucian tree, which included organisations like the *Kabbalistic Order of the Rosy Cross* and *Order of the Catholic Rose Cross, the Temple and the Grail*. But there were other organisations and ideas that also contributed to its birth and present form. It was established in 1915 in its present guise by Harvey Spencer Lewis, in New York U.S.A. He had become a Rosicrucian while in Europe, and received initiation in France in about 1909. The turmoil in the major Rosicrucian groups, mentioned above (which will be mentioned again below) meant that in his search for an already existing form of Rosicrucianism, Lewis was directed to Toulouse which had been the birthplace of these groups. Here, guided by Clovis Lassalle he met with Count Reynaud E. de Bellcastle-Ligne and three other members of a declining Rosicrucian Order of Languedoc. He was initiated into this order and provided with information including documents, diagrams and symbols relevant to beginning a new manifestation of the order in America.

AMORC's early existence was chaotic with the first headquarters being in New York, before moving west to San Francisco in California, then down to Tampa in Florida. It returned to California where it settled in the old Spanish capital of San Jose. More recently the headquarters moved to Lachute in the province of Quebec, Canada before finally moving back to San Jose in California. Here it maintains two of its principal educational facilities, an Egyptian Museum housed in Egyptian revival buildings, and a planetarium. Although the research library associated with the former Rosicrucian University is still open, the University itself has closed its doors for the time being.

The Order has had four Imperators, as the ruling head is called. When the founder, Harvey Spencer Lewis experienced the Great Initiation of Transition in 1939, his son Ralph succeeded him as "Supreme Autocratic Authority," and "Imperator for North, Central and South America, the British Commonwealth and Empire, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Africa." The inclusion of France is interesting, because as we will see, by this time there had been some divisions among the Rosicrucian organisations that he had visited in Europe and a crack opened between groups in that country that allowed the newly created American Order to enter. The second Imperator, Ralph Maxwell Lewis passed through transition in January 1987 and was replaced by Gary L. Stewart. Somewhat ironically, Stewart changed the composition of the governing body known as the Supreme Board, to include all the members of the Grand Master's Council. In a subsequent meeting he was voted out of office by this expanded and now hostile group and in 1990, following the reorganisation of the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC, Christian Bernard the previous Grand Master of the

French Language Jurisdiction was elected as Emperor. He has continued in that role until the present.

As a young man of 21, Harvey Spencer Lewis was elected president of *The New York Institute for Psychological Research*. Within this group, an inner enclave referred to themselves as "*The Rosicrucian Research Society*," a group that included I. K. Funk, of encyclopaedia fame, E. R. Hubbard at that moment heavily involved with his "Roycrofters" movement and the writer of mystical tales E. W. Wilcox.¹ Although this group delved through many documents relating to Rosicrucianism, obviously, they were unable to self-generate as an authentic Rosicrucian organisation. Eventually they all went their various separate ways except Ella Wilcox who became a Board Member of Lewis' newly founded *Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis*. Following an experience in the Metropolitan Church (in which he was ordained) on Seventh Ave, New York on the Thursday after Easter, 1908, Harvey Spencer Lewis found himself able to respond to the visionary message that he received then and travel to France in search of Rosicrucian initiation or at least letters patent from a French Rosicrucian Order giving him permission to establish that Order in the United States of America. This was not going to be an easy task for someone with little knowledge of French and no real idea of who to see and where he would find a Rosicrucian source in France once he arrived there. However, he succeeded in receiving initiations in at least one and perhaps more Rosicrucian traditions while he was in Europe and returned to the United States of America with letters and other papers giving him permission to found a Rosicrucian see in the USA. Lewis proceeded to assemble a group of like-minded individuals who would form the nucleus of the new group to establish a governing body for his Rosicrucian organisation. Meetings and discussions began to be held in 1915 and were brought to a conclusion in 1917 when a committee '...composed of ten or more well-known Freemasons...familiar with ritualistic and fraternal law...' approved the adoption of a revised French constitution for use in the U.S.A. They reported that Rosicrucianism '...was distinctly different from anything they had contacted in their other affiliations, and worthy of the deepest and most profound study on the part of every seeker for the greater light.'²

Thus was established the new ritualistic and ceremonial platform on which the initiatic tradition could continue its existence within the branches of the huge Rosicrucian tree. A grade structure was established by the new group, slightly modified from the French model and at first extended to twelve grades and an honorary 13th. This structure was similar to that adopted by the English occult society known as the *Order the Golden Dawn* and by other Rosicrucian orders. The present structure is: *Neophyte* (a preliminary rank), *Zelator* 1st degree, *Theoricus* 2nd degree, *Practicus* 3rd degree, *Philosophus* 4th degree, *Adeptus Minor* 5th degree, *Adeptus Major* 6th degree, *Adeptus Exemptus* 7th degree, *Magister Templi* 8th degree, *Magus* 9th degree and *Ipsissimus* (beyond the 9th degree). To this particular platform of initiatory levels each with its appropriate ceremonials was added a vast number of topics of interest to the student of humanity and the mystic. These are called "the teachings" and they include subjects derived from Buddhism, Cabalism, Christianity, Gnosticism, Hinduism, Masonry, Odd Fellowship, pantheism and Theosophy. Lewis himself always thought that this early attempt to establish something akin to a correspondence school was an important part of modern Rosicrucianism. AMORC was the first esoteric order to offer such general instruction and the whole range of topics was designed to benefit the body, the mind and the spirit of each student. This side of AMORC was perhaps of greater importance in the 1920s when access to home-study education was at a far lower level than it is today. But even then Lewis was heavily criticised by other esoteric and occult organisations for taking this direction which was considered as inappropriate, mainly because the initiatic steps taken between each of the themes studied at home also occurred in the home, and the idea of "self-initiation" was considered to be impossible. Lewis' position regarding this argument was that when possible and attainable,

¹ Roycrofters were participants in a reformist community of craft workers and artists founded by Elbert (Ron) Hubbard in 1895. The village of East Aurora, New York, in the USA was the site of this art colony, the surviving buildings of which being awarded National Historic Landmark status in 1986. The Roycrofters (royal craftsmen) strongly influenced early 20th century American architecture and design.

² Rosicrucian Questions & Answers p.176-7

the student would attend a Rosicrucian Group to have the simple home initiation conferred in a dedicated temple with a ceremony that simultaneously enhanced and ratified the ceremony that the student had performed in a home sanctum. Weathering these particular criticisms, AMORC went on to establish radio stations, TV production houses and even a sanatorium where all the external influences that might act on a medical patient which could be controlled were controlled including light and colour, sound and music.

So what were some of the topics addressed by the home study lessons that were meant to be studied each week?

Preliminary studies: Practical experiments assist with an understanding of the Human Aura, Telepathy, Vibroturgy, Metaphysical Healing, Mystical Sounds, Spiritual Alchemy, Time and Space, the Illusory Nature of Time, Human Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness, Intuition and Meditation.

In the **First Atrium** the student considers how the creative power of thought affects the material world. Experiments look at techniques of concentration, visualisation and mental creation, explore consciousness as the organising principle of matter, consider the vibratory nature, composition and structure of matter.

The Second Atrium increases the student's understanding of the connection between mind, matter and the physical body; how thoughts influence health, the role of breathing in health and vitality as well as psychic development and Rosicrucian healing techniques. Experiments consider the mystical effect of sounds.

The Third Atrium moves beyond the physical body and the psychic faculties into the realm of the mystical examining the subtle inner promptings of intuition, inspiration and illumination. Practical exercises explore the nature of Soul; consider spiritual evolution, reincarnation and karma, and the cycles of the life of the soul.

The First Temple Degree introduces the concept of polarity and its relationship to the subatomic world and its differing rates of vibration leading to a consideration of the mystical aspects of the full spectrum of physical and non-physical manifestation. An understanding of these subjects gives the student an appreciation for the system and order of the universe, the interconnectedness of all nature and how everything is governed by natural law.

The Second Temple Degree explores the workings of the mind. The student learns how to use various mental faculties to strengthen will, eliminate bad habits and establish good ones, tap into the levels of the subconscious, reason more effectively, and integrate principles of psychology and mysticism to achieve personal goals.

The Third Temple Degree explores the meaning of existence on many levels, including living and “non-living” matter, life at the cellular level, the mysteries of death and rebirth and the eternal nature of the Soul.

The Fourth Temple Degree introduces Rosicrucian ontology (the study of the nature of being), and lays out the cosmological framework for all creation. It explores the meaning, understanding and use of symbols as the language of the subconscious.

The Fifth Temple Degree. By nature, a mystic is fundamentally a philosopher. In this degree, the student studies excerpts from the works of classical and modern philosophers. An exploration of the ancient roots of Rosicrucian philosophy demonstrates the timelessness of certain philosophical principles.

The Sixth Temple Degree presents the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual components of health and disease. The student is introduced to specific Rosicrucian healing techniques.

The Seventh Temple Degree student learns how to accomplish psychic projection, how to develop the mystical aspects of a personal aura and how to perceive other people's auras with a view to understanding how they are reacting to the stimuli to which they are subjected at any one moment in time. A special study is made of the physiological, psychic and spiritual influence of specific tones and sounds.

In the Eighth Temple Degree the student explores the theme of immortality, the mysteries of birth and death, reincarnation and karma and the evolution of the soul personality through various incarnations.

The Ninth Temple Degree gives the student the opportunity to utilise the highest metaphysical powers in practical ways to positively affect conditions in their environment and life in accordance with achieving the greatest good for humanity and self.

Historical Influences:

We have already considered the metaphor of imagining Rosicrucianism as an enormous tree. Its huge taproot extends down to the very source of the idea, the 17th Century Rosicrucian trilogy, the three published documents which were the seed from which this tree germinated. But this tree has many other roots that draw together ideas and ceremonial from the surrounding fertile soil of esotericism. Around the 1870s European nations were becoming exposed to various "brotherhoods" of supposedly Egyptian extraction including such entities as the *Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor*, the *Hermetic Brotherhood of Light* or more simply, *Brotherhood of Light*, about which more later. The Nineteenth Century Western European fascination with things Egyptian was not particularly new. Egyptian civilisation had already endured for 2000 years when the Greeks, the first Westerners to do so, arrived on its shores. They were astonished by the ancient pyramids, the wealth of the country and the massive temples in which they found Egyptian priests who were willing to share their knowledge with the newcomers. It was the Greeks who established the reputation of the Egyptians as being guardians of great wisdom. Later the Romans arrived to conquer the land that had been adopted by Mark Antony but they were not so appreciative of the culture that they found despite copying its art and architecture. Following the fall of Rome, Muslim Arabs took over Egypt and a curtain of silence and ignorance fell between it and the Christian west. Napoleon's invading French army of 1798 was accompanied by a smaller army of scholars whose work eventually re-opened Egypt's past to Western scrutiny. However there were 500 years of fanciful ideas and opinions about Egyptian culture that needed to be sorted through to gain insight into what was actuality. It was not until Egyptian hieroglyphs were finally unravelled in 1824 that the legacy of this ancient culture began to be comprehensively studied. A century later in 1920 the headlines in most of the world's newspapers announcing the discovery and excavation of the tomb of an Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen, added impetus to a craze of "Egyptomania" as the Louvre named an exhibition of Egyptian influences in art and architecture that was opened in the 1990s.³

Even in Britain there was a popular if not scholarly Egyptian influence on esoteric Orders during the late 1800s and early 1900s and some interesting coincidences arise regarding the North African source of wisdom. You will recall that in Britain various 17th century individuals had published Rosicrucian works.⁴ By the end of the 19th Century a character calling himself Max Theon, known privately as Louis Maximilian Bimstein (1850-1927), and professionally as "Theosi" or "M. Theon" advertised as follows in the spiritualist press: "Theon, the Eastern Psychic Healer, cures all diseases [...] sure preventive of Cholera." He lived in Saint John's Wood, in the north of London. When the *Hermetic Brotherhood of Light* was founded, Theon allowed himself to be named as the Grand Master and in their publications was referred to as an "exalted adept." In fact, he did not write any of their teaching documents and he didn't divulge his own occult teachings, which he published later as his "Cosmic Philosophy." This system, which is of considerable originality and combines Kabbalistic with Vedic elements, was developed by Theon in collaboration with his English wife a powerfully mediumistic woman skilled in automatic writing. By the time it was complete and beginning to be published (in French), Theon had severed all

³ Many recent publications discuss the origins of a number of Western traditions in Egypt. Concerning cultural matters, see for example FREEMAN, Charles, 1997, *The Legacy of Ancient Egypt*, Andromeda, Oxford, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

⁴ To give just three: Robert Fludd (*A Compendious Apology for the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, Pelted with the Mire of Suspicion and Infamy, but now Cleansed and Purged as by the Waters of Truth*, 1617?); Michael Maier (*Themis Aurea*, 1618); Irenaeus Agnostus (*Epitimia Fraternalis Rosae Crucis*, 1619).

connection with the *Hermetic Brotherhood of Light* and settled permanently in Algeria. Did he think that he was returning to the source?

Algeria at the time was still a French colony and France and more especially Paris had been for some time a centre of esotericism. In the streets of Paris in August 1623 there had appeared anonymous posters, which proclaimed: "We, deputies of the principal *College of the Brethren of the Rosy Cross*, are staying visibly and invisibly in this town by the Grace of the Most High, to whom the heart of the just turns. We show and teach without books or masks how to speak the language of every country where we wish to be, to bring our fellow men out of the error of death." Not much seems to have come from this announcement except a flurry of activity aimed at uncovering the identity of the poster hangars, but at least the announcement itself tells us that at that time there was more than one group calling themselves Rosicrucians. France does seem to have preserved certain aspects of Rosicrucianism as we see from many French publications on the subject. However, many of these contradict one another, and it soon becomes evident that there is no apostolic or written teaching lineage among Rosicrucian organisations that leads directly and uninterruptedly back to the Rosicrucian Trilogy. Furthermore, not all of those who purported to belong to the brotherhood are likely to have been initiates.

So where were the secrets and traditions of the 17th Century Rosicrucians being kept if they were preserved at all?

In the second half of the 18th Century, Catherine the Great had suppressed the Russian orders, and they were also suppressed in Austria during the late 18th Century. But many of their ideas and principles did continue to exist in Europe within other Orders, some of which had arisen around the time of the demise of those in Eastern Europe. One of these newly created entities, *Theosophy*, emerged from the writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, when she, together with Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge, and others founded the *Theosophical Society* in 1875. I don't wish to follow the Theosophist trail there, but interestingly, by the end of the Nineteenth Century, all the principal European Theosophists also belonged to the *Hermetic Brotherhood of Light*. Within this Order many friendships and acquaintanceships were formed amongst members of the various *Martinist Orders*, the *Gnostic Church*, the *French Theosophical Society*, the *Kabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross*, and a variety of Masonic and quasi-Masonic groups. The Frenchman Papus was a great publicist for the HBL as was the Austrian industrialist Karl Kellner (1850-1905), and the Theosophist Theodor Reuss (1855-1923). In 1895 Kellner and Reuss conceived the idea of a "Masonic academy" which later materialised as the OTO (*Ordo Templi Orientis*). Its ceremonial was based on the *Rite of Memphis and Misraim*, which had been obtained from John Yarker. After the appearance of Aleister Crowley amongst its ranks in 1898, the OTO fragmented and metamorphosed into a number of different entities. H. Spencer Lewis was certainly corresponding with some of these personalities and may even have been an O.T.O. initiate. He was probably aware of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light's teachings, although no ideas or teachings that can be precisely identified with this group exist among the present teachings of AMORC.

Two eccentric French characters that were within the HBL circle were the poet Stanislas de Guaita and the novelist and occultist Josephin Paladan, or Sar Paladan, as he called himself. Together they founded an order called the *Kabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross* in 1889 receiving their authority from the more-or-less inactive group of very old Rosicrucians resident in Toulouse. Despite the Lutheran origins of Rosicrucianism itself, the *K.O.R.C.* seems to have been a Catholic version of Freemasonry which also incorporated a strong magical component in addition to the study of Cabalism and the Hermetic tradition. However this organisation fragmented following an argument between the two founders who were both strong-willed eccentrics. They quarrelled following Paladan's expulsion of certain members whom he disliked. This inept style of leadership resulted in two moribund branches forming. Paladan named his order, the "*Order of the Catholic Rose Cross, the Temple and the Grail*." It was both an occult order and an artistic and cultural organization and operated a theatre where plays dealing with mystical and esoteric themes were performed. It ran a series of annual art exhibitions known as the *Salons des Rose Croix*. It had an orchestra, for which much of the music was written by Erik Satie. This orchestra also

did a great deal to promote the music of Wagner in France. Thus, Paladan's Order had a seminal influence in many cultural spheres. When he died in 1918, leadership passed to a Belgian disciple, Emile Dantinne, who called himself Sar Hieronymus. He founded an order called the *Rose Croix Universelle* and later collaborated with the *Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis* (AMORC) in founding an international federation of occult societies, the *Fédération Universelle des Ordres et Sociétés Initiatiques* (FUDOSI). We can see that there must have been some disappointment on the part of the old Rosicrucians of Toulouse in these developments and it is probably due to the decline of these Orders that they considered it wise to entrust certain aspects of Rosicrucianism to Lewis who was outside the influence of European esotericists.

So what roots to our Rosicrucian tree developed elsewhere in Europe? Unlike its neighbour Russia, Germany fostered religious and esoteric thought. So there, in the early eighteenth century we find a sudden revival of Rosicrucianism, but the revived forms had constitutions and sets of rules that were very different from the Rosicrucianism presented in the three manifestos. New interest in the Rose and Cross was generated in 1710 by a publication with the title: *The True and Perfect Preparation of the Philosophical Stone of the Golden and Rosy Cross Brotherhood*. Pietism, alchemy, and Rosicrucianism all come together in this book so we will pause for a moment to look at the Pietist movement, which has its own trunk on the Rosicrucian tree.

Pietism originated a century previous to the appearance of this book in a reaction against German Lutheran Church orthodoxy that took place during the 17th century. This new religious movement was somewhat idealist and aimed its members towards a revival of devotional practices related to the earliest forms of Christianity. One of its predecessors was the Reformed Church of the Netherlands and it also has parallels with English Quakerism and Quietism in France. Among its primary theologians was Philipp Jakob Spener, born in 1635 in Alsace. Spener was appointed pastor and senior in 1666 at Frankfort on the Main. In his sermons he emphasized the necessity of a lively faith and the sanctification of daily life. These ideas brought him many adherents among the more serious of his hearers; but recognising the impossibility of leading the people at large to the desired degree of perfection, he conceived the idea of an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*. This first took the form of private assemblies in his own house for pious reading and mutual edification. In 1670 he formalised this arrangement and established the so-called "*Collegia pietatis*" (whence the name Pietists).

There was a strong Gnostic streak in Pietism which was deeply influenced by mystical writers like Jacob Boehme and also by what Freemasons might recognise as "speculative alchemy," which fitted with their Gnostic ideology, since alchemy is also rooted in the Gnostic tradition. The goal of the Pietists to raise themselves up spiritually or the notion of spiritual rebirth they considered analogous to the alchemist's attempt to raise base matter to a higher state. The writings of the Pietists are full of alchemical images and metaphors speaking of God as the great "Smelter," and they compare the Divine Spirit to a "holy tincture" or a "quintessence." Some of them also actually practiced alchemy and believed that the Holy Trinity is actually present in the world of matter in the form of the three alchemical principles of salt, sulphur and mercury.

The author of the book *The True and Perfect Preparation of the Philosophical Stone of the Golden and Rosy Cross Brotherhood* was a Silesian Protestant pastor named Samuel Richter. His *Golden and Rosy Cross Order* is of key historical importance and enormously interesting in its own right. We know quite a lot about its tenets, its rituals, its organizational structure, and so on, partly from published exposes of the order and partly also from unpublished documents and correspondence between members, which have survived in various archives. Consequently, we also know the names of many of the members. Here, for the first time, is a Rosicrucian fraternity of which we have concrete proof and that we can describe in some detail. The order was a curious mixture of Freemasonry, alchemy, and a Pietistic, Gnostic type of Christianity, mixed with elements of the original Rosicrucianism of the three manifestos. The organized lodges of the 18th century like the Lodge of the Black Rose in Prague had elaborate rituals of admission. There

were many symbols exhibited in their gatherings, including a pedestal of seven steps supporting a glass globe divided into two parts, representing light and darkness; three candelabra, placed triangularly; nine glasses, symbolizing male and female properties, the quintessence, and various other things; a brazier; a circle and a napkin. The postulant faced the usual symbolic death and rebirth initiation procedure, and he agreed to support his brethren and lead a virtuous life.

The essential aim of the brotherhood, as described in one of its own documents, was "to make effective the hidden forces of nature, to release nature's light, which has become deeply buried beneath the dross from the curse, and thereby to light within every brother a torch by whose bright light he will be able better to perceive the invisible God ... and thus become more closely united with the original source of light."⁵ This philosophy is pure Gnosticism and refers to the dualistic idea of the divine spark imprisoned in the world of matter. So we can conclude that *The Golden and Rosy Cross* was essentially Gnostic. Alchemy also played a major part in its activities, and alchemical symbolism featured in the initiation ceremonies. Members were also supposed to have their own laboratories and work diligently at their furnaces and retorts and crucibles. Many of the alchemical manuscripts that circulated among the fraternity still survive and a selection of the more relevant of these is used by AMORC.

The order was grouped into circles of nine members each and was hierarchical having nine grades of initiation. The names of some of these were: Junior, Theoreticus, Practicus, Philosophus, Minor Adeptus, Major Adeptus, Adeptus Exemptus, Magus, names we have heard before. Ordinary members did not know the names of those higher up in the hierarchy above the level of their own circle. The command structure had various levels. There were circle directors, there were regional directors in charge of several circles, there was a Grand Priory, and right at the very top, there were the so-called Unknown Superiors, probably three in number, who were the ultimate authority rather like the "Secret Chiefs" of the Golden Dawn, except that the Unknown Superiors were real people, and there is some evidence as to who they were. One of them may have been a physician at Sulzbach in Bavaria called Schleiss von Lowenfeld, who wrote a book defending the *Golden and Rosy Cross*.

For many historians the *Golden and Rosy Cross* appears as an anti-Enlightenment force because certain of its members played a leading part in the campaign to discredit the *Illuminati of Bavaria*, which was an ultraradical, revolutionary group led by Adam Weishaupt (1748-1830);⁶ its members objected to the arrogant rationalism of the Enlightenment, and were opposed to the evolving medical practices that seemed at the time to be mechanistic and that ignored the connection between spirit and body.

The *Golden and Rosy Cross* faded away after the death of King Frederick William II in 1797, but even before then it had diminished in importance owing to internal disputes and bad publicity. It had given birth to a group called the *Asiatic Brethren* with a mixed Jewish and Christian membership, and this group in turn produced a Masonic Lodge at Frankfurt with similar membership, called the *Lodge of the Rising Dawn*, perhaps by chance providing an antecedent of the name "Golden Dawn." But to return to the story of the *Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis*, what we need to note is that in the 1690s, well before all this later furore, a group of German Pietists emigrated from Europe to Pennsylvania in the American Colonies, taking with them an early version of a Rosicrucian work called *Codex Rosae Crucis* published a century later as *The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*. One group of these Pietists occupied a semi-monastic community at Ephrata in Pennsylvania, which is still preserved as a museum. This community, its social adhesion, its gathering of buildings dedicated to its ideals and its stoic resistance to external criticism inspired the young H. S. Lewis as he and the companions mentioned earlier searched for Rosicrucian authenticity in his homeland. It did not take long to discover that he would

⁵ 6. *Eingang zur ersten Classe des preisswiirdigsten Ordens vom Goldenen Rosen Creutze nach der ktzten Haupt und Reformations Convention* (reproduced in J. J. Bode's *Starke Erweise*, 1788).

⁶ 8. Christopher McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason: Eighteenth Century Rosicrucianism in Central Europe and Its Relationship to the Enlightenment*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.

have to seek elsewhere for Rosicrucianism divorced from a practising religion. Thus as we already have seen, he voyaged east to Europe.

Organisation

Numerous commentators on Rosicrucian groups confuse the international and national arms of AMORC which they examine and this confusion leads to a complete misunderstanding of who is the head of the Order as well as how it is organised. AMORC has an international section known as the Supreme Grand Lodge consisting of about 16 Grand Masters, a treasurer, a secretary and the Emperor, the titular head of the Order. On the next lowest level are the various regional Grand Lodges and Administrations whose jurisdictions are determined first by language groups and then by geographical areas. There are three English Language Jurisdictions, one for Europe and Africa, one for the Americas and one for Australia, Asia and New Zealand.

The headquarters for the latter jurisdiction is in Leichardt in Sydney from where the whole of the jurisdiction is administered. The Grand Lodge is ruled by a Board of Directors consisting of a CEO and four other Directors who are scattered through the jurisdiction. It has typical company registration, pays GST and taxes, runs a publishing house and an outlet for specialist supplies.

Membership is based on what are known as "home sanctum members" who study the various topics in their respective level at home or wherever convenient. Each student is encouraged to set up a sacred space in their home called a "sanctum." This contains a table at which the student sits during study periods and to where they may retire for meditation and contemplation. Perhaps the table carries a centrepiece consisting of a red rose fastened to a cross flanked by two candles. As this particular jurisdiction functions in a number of countries where people belong predominantly to the Islamic faith to which any cross is anathema, members in those countries may choose to use the less confronting "ankh" cross with a rose at its centre instead of the trefoil cross that is usually used. The sanctum represents the alchemist's laboratory and is also a quiet and private place to which the student can retire free of external distractions.

This jurisdiction has members in India, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and of course in Australia. In localities where there are several members, Rosicrucian Groups are organised. These groups conduct forums on the topics they are studying, carry out ceremonies and provide companionship. Individuals appointed as Regional Monitors oversee the activities of local Rosicrucian Groups, and these individuals report to a regional Grand Councillor who reports directly to the Grand Lodge Director in charge of Rosicrucian Groups, and to the Grand Master.

The smallest group of individuals who may meet in rented premises is called an "Atria." A "Pronaos" is the next smallest division consisting of about 30 members. The word "Pronaos" comes from the Greek (and not the Egyptian, as many Rosicrucians believe) and refers to the space in front of a temple, enclosed by the walls or colonnade, a sort of portico. Next in size comes the "Chapter" and finally a "Lodge." Apart from differences in number of subscribing members, these groups are differentiated by the kinds of ceremonial that they are permitted to conduct with initiations taking place only in the Lodge but sometimes in a Chapter by special dispensation.

In the Lodge, a Master is seated at one end on a triangular dais; at the other end is his female counterpart, the Matre, while a temple servant symbolic of each individual's conscience and of peace that should always reign within the Temple, sits nearby the Master and guards the symbolic Greater Light of the Universe. Between the Master and the Matre, in the centre of the room, is the altar-like triangular Shekinah representing the presence of the Creator. Members line the walls along the sides, wearing aprons to symbolise that they are involved in working for their own spiritual advancement and for the benefit of all humanity.

Ceremonial

It is little wonder, that given the direct influence of a series of rituals based loosely around what were then called the "Egyptian Mysteries" and influenced by the dramatic advances in human philosophy, theology and humanism that were being unravelled from 18th dynasty Egyptian history Harvey Spencer Lewis was determined to use an eastern theme as a base on which to build the ritualistic work of AMORC. Inspiration from a Pharaoh of the Eighteenth dynasty of Egypt known as Akhenaton, but known as Amenhotep IV at the start of his reign, provides the mythological basis for the early degree initiations. Later ones are set around legends and stories recounting the various advances in civilisation made by humanity up to more recent times. These ceremonies are enhanced by some simple alchemical operations designed to teach lessons about the fallibility of our senses, that one should not underestimate the omnipotence of God and that each human soul should praise God in the way that is suitable for the society and culture in which it lives out its earthly life.

The Order has an order of service for marriage ceremonies; a Rosicrucian "Rite of Appellation," which replaces baptism for those under 18 months old; and funeral rites. There are ceremonies that mark the annual progress of the year somewhat akin to "harvest festivals" and the like as well as commemorations of important events in the Order's history and evolution. Around the time of the Vernal Equinox, the "fraters" and "sorors" gather together to eat corn and salt and drink grape juice, while at the Autumnal Equinox they hold an Outdoor Fete. On the third Saturday of June they hold a special ceremony dedicated to World Peace. These, like other aspects of the AMORC ritual are not oriented towards any specific religious belief, but do acknowledge the presence of the Creator among us.

This branch of the Rosicrucian tree has spread from its original home in France through USA and the Americas to every continent and most countries in the world. Its members still adhere to the earliest principles laid down for members to work, worship, study and strive to improve themselves and the world in which they live.

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