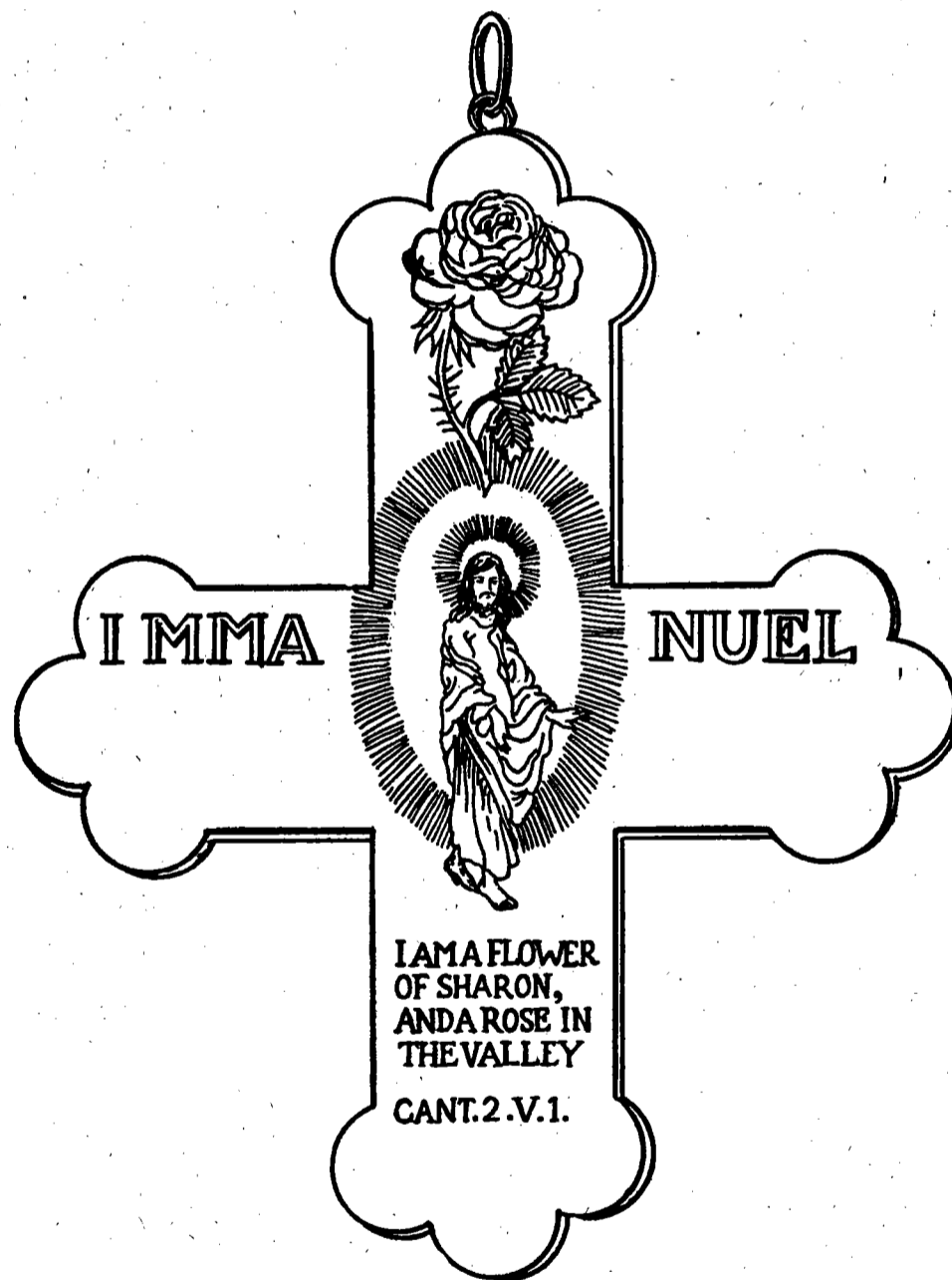


Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians

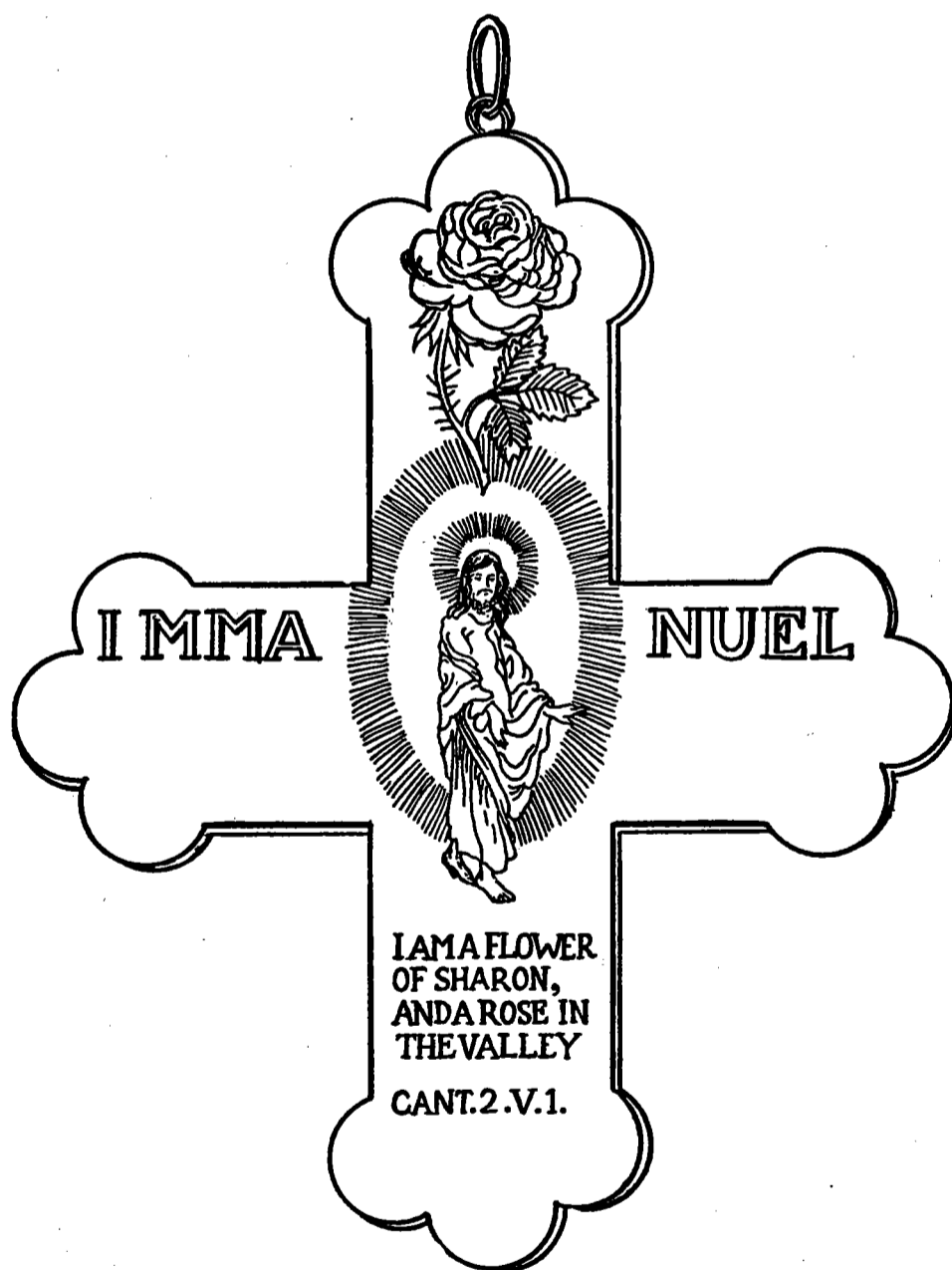
of the 16th and 17th Centuries



POPULAR EDITION

AMORC

Secret
Symbols of the Rosicrucians
of the 16th and 17th Centuries



Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians

AN EXACT REPRODUCTION
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POPULAR EDITION

Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC, Inc.
Printing and Publishing Department
San Jose, California

P R E F A C E

by

H. SPENCER LEWIS, F. R. C., PH.D.

The increasing interest in all things Rosicrucian shown by a large portion of the public in the Western World has brought to light in the past twenty-five years hundreds of rare publications of a Rosicrucian nature. Within the past three years the search for more of the original copies of known and unknown works on this subject has unearthed some very rare, important books and manuscripts in which indisputable facts and unquestionable evidence create a new and admirable story of the ancient and modern Rosicrucians.

However, the old book by the unknown *Frater*, revealing — yet concealing — the Hermetic, Alchemical and Spiritual meaning of the unique Rosicrucian symbols and Philosophical Principles, will always remain one of the cherished possessions of the sincere student. Several reprints of this book, made by lovers of its designs and text and admirers of its Sacred Revelations, have become *jewels* in the libraries of collectors.

Naturally, the Rosicrucians of the Occident rejoice in this newest reprint, made with such tender consideration for the original text and subtle illustrations which contain so many secrets in little elements of word or line. That only a limited edition of this reprint is provided for, is in keeping with the ancient spirit of the Brotherhood. This assures another long period of the preservation of this book in the archives of newer centers of activity, without detracting from its essential privacy.

I have been happy to check its text and observe the preservation of the coded principles and terms. The sincere student would do well to analyze with care, each idea or ideograph presented in word, phrase line or color. In the

years 1785 to 1788 when the Symbols and Principles contained herein were in use to such an extent that the first edition of this book was warranted, the thoughts of man were being directed in channels quite new. The uniqueness of the text was, therefore, startling; but today the world needs these surprising *truths* to an equal degree.

I have seen two of the original copies, in German text, so thumb worn as to proclaim the useful service they have rendered for many years. Their old, yellowed and faded condition spoke eloquently of the passing of time, but from each page came the voice of eternal truth.

I cannot recommend too strongly that each *Frater* and *Soror* of the advanced, esoteric grades of the Fraternity see to it that one copy of this rare old work be placed in the archives of each Lodge or Chapter of the Rosy Cross for future reference by the followers who from year to year "Cross the Threshold."

And, in behalf of many thousands of Neophytes and Adepts whom I represent, I wish to thank the publisher for his vision and altruism in undertaking such a tedious and costly task, and in making such a timely contribution to the Bibliography and literature of true Rosicrucianism.

In the Bonds of the Order

H. SPENCER LEWIS

Imperator for North and South America

San Jose, Calif.

November 15, 1935

FOREWORD

In the year 1614 there appeared at Cassel, Germany, "The Discovery of the Brotherhood of the Worshipful Order of the Rose-Cross," containing the history, constitution and laws of the Order. This was followed in 1615 by "The Confession of the Brotherhood of the Rose-Cross," giving 37 reasons for their existence, defining their objects and the means for attaining them. These two publications are generally referred to by their Latin titles, "Fama Fraternitatis," and "Confessio Fraternitatis." This was the first time that this most hidden and secret order had issued anything officially, over their name and seal. Innumerable works, both for and against them, began to appear all over Europe, and for a time, a learned controversy of considerable violence raged. By the year 1630, or thereabouts, it subsided and the succeeding years saw the appearance of numerous philosophical and alchemical works, which implied Rose-Cross affiliation, though they did not bear the "imprimatur" of the Right Worshipful Brotherhood itself. Among these were many illustrious names, and there is more than a suspicion that they were writing from the high ground of the Brotherhood of Adepts.

There are many unpublished manuscripts in European libraries and some in private hands, concerned with the problems of Alchemy, professing to expose to the reader the most hidden secrets of the "Stone of the Wise," the "Universal Medicine," and the method of concocting the "True Tincture." These are written in the enigmatic language of Allegory and Symbolism, requiring a key to unlock their meaning. Many of these seem to have been intended for private circulation among students and not for publication or public perusal. Some of the manuscripts are beautifully illustrated with symbolic pictures and elaborate designs, intended to instruct the initiated reader in the mysteries of Occult Philosophy.

From the subsidence of the tides of controversy, there was complete silence, as far as the Brotherhood was concerned, until the year 1785, when the first part of a work appeared at Altona, Germany, bearing many guarantees of authenticity, and constituting a contribution of supreme importance to Rosicrucian literature. A second part appeared in the year 1788, completing the work. It consisted of 36 colored plates, of folio size, each plate lettered closely in Latin and German, and 16 pages, double columns, of German text.

This work is second only, in importance, to the original "Fama" and "Confessio" and its value to the student would be difficult to estimate. It is concerned throughout with the Secret Teachings, Philosophy, and Praxis, of the Brotherhood, expressed in Allegory, Signs, Symbols, and Mystery Numbers. This is the language of the Secret Tradition, which may be understood only by those who have learned the meaning through experience and practice, to others it may have nothing to say. The earlier documents were addressed to the learned, everywhere, but the "Secret Symbols," is, by its very nature, a sealed book to all except those who have made some progress on the way of the "Great Quest" of what is variously called, "The Stone of the Wise," the "Summum Bonum," and by many other names, or simply "The Stone," implying thereby, all that the word means in the language of the Secret Tradition.

In its manifold representation of the subject from all aspects, it seeks to lead the student by enigmatic ways, to a progressive initiation into the ineffable mysteries of God, Man, and the Universe, combining Astrology, The Holy Qabalah, Alchemy, The Three Principles of Jacob Boehme, The Creation Mystery of Genesis, the Chariot of Ezekiel, the Logos Philosophy and Apocalyptic Visions of St. John. This is the high altitude of Spiritual Alchemy, leading the way to Spiritual Regeneration and the Renewal of Life. The combined effect of all these aspects of the Secret Tradition, brought together in one volume, staggers the imagination. One may truly find here a study for a life time, a very Book of Books for the Curriculum of the "House of the Holy Spirit."

"The Secret Symbols of the "Rosicrucians" claims on the title pages to be taken from an "ancient manuscript," and now published for the first time. This leads one to suppose that there was a single manuscript from which the published work was made. But upon examination, it is found that two of the Alchemical treatises which are included in the work, were printed previously, one in 1621, the other, presumably in 1625. Thirty of the thirty-six colored plates, which form the most notable and important part of the book, are known to have existed previously in a unique manuscript, produced sometime around the year 1700.

The work in its original form as published at Altona, in 1785-8, consists of three separate treatises, a long poem, 36 full page colored plates, with 3 smaller ones in the text. An untitled tract on the Philosopher's Stone occupies the first place, consisting of 4 pages of text and followed by 10 plates. After this appears a full page plate of the "Emerald Tablet of Hermes," together with the enigmatic inscription, and followed by a long explanatory poem, occupying two pages and arranged in double columns. Then follow the 4 pages of Madathanus, "Golden Age Restored," and 13 plates. The third treatise, "A Golden Treatise on the Philosopher's Stone," the longest in the collection, occupies all of part two, consisting of 8 pages of text and 11 plates. The second and third treatises, appeared in a Latin translation, in the three editions, of the "Museum Hermeticum," 1625, 1678, 1749. The German original of the "Golden Age" was printed in 1621, while "A Golden Treatise," though nothing is known certainly concerning its first appearance in the original German, is believed to have been printed in 1625, the same year as the Latin text. It is barely possible that copies of the excessively rare and little known books survived and came into the possession of the editor of the "Secret Symbols," but it seems more likely that they too were handed down in manuscript and circulated among members of the Brotherhood together with the symbolic illustrations. The private circulation of hand written copies of books dealing with the Secret Teachings of the Brotherhood is a well known practice and many books have survived in this form and never were printed.

The 30 plates referred to, occur in a beautifully painted manuscript which came to this country, presumably, the precious possession of one of the early 18th century German Mystics who sought a new freedom in the New World and

settled in Pennsylvania. It is referred to by Dr. Julius F. Sachse in "The German Pietists of Pennsylvania," where several of the plates are reproduced in black and white. Comparing these plates with the Altona publication, it is evident that they are close enough to suggest a common source. The manuscript, while undated, can be reasonably placed sometime near the year 1700, from the style of writing, the coloring of the plates, and the quality and texture of the paper employed, suggesting a late survival of the German art of illumination. It may possibly be one of several painted and written copies intended for private circulation and differing in minor details according to the skill of and care of the artist. The differences from the printed book are in matters of arrangement and detail and do not materially affect the meaning and purpose of the symbols represented: besides, allowance should be made for the greater freedom of the hand-worker as compared with the mechanical work of the printer and engraver.

This is the first complete and unabridged English translation of the Altona text of "The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians," with faithful reproductions of all the plates. "The Golden Age" and "A Golden Treatise" appeared in the English translation of the "Museum Hermeticum," edited by A. E. Waite, London, 1893, and certain fragments were offered by Dr. Franz Hartman in his inaccurate edition of the "Secret Symbols," published in Boston in 1888. The Parable from the "Golden Treatise" was translated from the original German in the English version of Dr. Herbert Silberer's "Problems of Mysticism and its Symbolism," New York, 1917, where it forms the main text for his psychoanalytic explanation of the Symbols of Mysticism and Occultism.

With the exception of these portions of the text no complete English translation has ever before been attempted.

The plates, all of which have numerous Latin and German mottoes, quotations, and descriptive labels explaining the Figures and Symbols, have never before been reproduced in their entirety, except in the German photo-lithographic facsimile made in 1919.

The Boston edition referred to includes only 25 of the 36 plates, omitting whole sections of the German text belonging on the plates, ignoring important key matter, paraphrasing and abridging arbitrarily. This translation is often meaningless. It draws upon modern Theosophy, Indian Philosophy and what not, to eke out a few pages of text, including a Dictionary of Occult Terms, in place of the translation promised on the title-page.

In the Boston edition there is no attempt to translate the first treatise in the book but substitute for it a rambling introduction. Of the "Golden Treatise" there is less than a third translated; of Madathanus but a few meagre and unsatisfactory extracts. The German text of the three treatises is garbled even worse than the inscriptions appearing on the plates. Except for the 25 plates the book would be quite worthless to anyone, for it is incomplete, inaccurate, misleading, and thoroughly uncritical.

It is believed that the translation of "The Secret Symbols" here offered for the first time and the fine reproductions of the entire set of plates will find a ready welcome among students of the Secret Tradition, and will make available to the English reader, the second most important contribution to Rosicrucian literature. It is a work of outstanding importance in the literature of Occultism and merits close and careful study on the part of Occult students of all orders.

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"Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians."

The Altona Edition. Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer, aus dem 16ten und 17ten Jahrhundert. Erstes Heft. Aus einem alten Mscpt. zum erstenmal ans Licht gestellt. Altona, 1785. Gedruckt und verlegt von J. D. U. Eckhardt. Zweites Heft. Altona, 1788. (This is the general title occurring on the first leaf. The main title-page is as follows.)

Die Lehren der Rosenkreuzer aus dem 16ten und 17ten Jahrhundert. Oder Einfältig A B C Buchlein für junge Schuler so sich täglich fleissig üben in der Schule des H. Geistes; Bildnissweise vor die Augen gemahlet zum neuen Jahrs-Exercitio in dem Natürlichen und Theologischen Lichte, u. s. w. Folio, 18 by 11½ ins. 36 plates and 18 pages of text.

The title is given at length in order that it may be compared with the title of the Manuscript, given later on.

* * *

Facsimile of the Altona Edition. This was issued in 1919 and on the first half-title occurs the following note.

Dieses Werk, "Die Geheimen Figuren der Rosenkreuzer," wurde von der Lithographischen Kunstanstalt C. Paris (Jnh. Bandt) Berlin N. 58, Pappel-Allee 27 für den Verlag Von Hermann Barsdorf in Berlin W. 30, Barbarossastrasse 21 auf photolithographischen Wege originalretreu im Jahre 1919 hergestellt.

To have this is about as good as having the original edition.

* * *

English Edition of Franz Hartmann. Cosmology, or Universal Science, containing the Mysteries of the Universe, regarding God, Nature, Man, the Macrocosm and Microcosm explained, etc., by means of the Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Copied and Translated from an Old German Manuscript, and provided with a Dictionary of Occult Terms. By Franz Hartmann, M. D., Boston, Occult Publishing Company, 1888. Folio 16½ by 11 inches, 25 plates, 45 pages of text.

Only 19 pages are translation, representing about 5 of the original Altona Book. The rest of the book consists of a lengthy Introduction and the Dictionary of Occult Terms.

SOURCES OF THE ALTONA BOOK

Manuscript. Phisica, Metaphisica, et Hyperphisica. D. O. M. A. ***Einfältig A-B-C- Büchel, für junge Schuler so sich fleissig üben in der Schule des Heiligen Geistes, ganz einfältig Bildnissweise für Augen gemahlet, zum Neuen Jahres Exercitio, in dem natürlichen und theologischen Lichte. Folio 12 by 14 inches, 30 beautifully colored plates, painted and lettered about the year 1700 by a member of the Fraternity.

It is frequently quoted by Dr. Julius F. Sachse in "The German Pietists of Pennsylvania," where several plates are reproduced. It is an heirloom in the Sachse family. The title compares very closely with that of the Altona book.

* * *

Madathanus, Hinricus, (Count Adrianus a Mynsicht) Aureum Seculum Redivivum das ist die uhralte entwichene Guldene Zeit, so nummehr wieder aussgangen, lieblich geblüher und wollrichenden güldenen Samen gesetzt U. S. W. Octavo, 23 leaves. No place given, 1621.

The author is called "Theosophus Medicus et tandem Dei gratia aurae crucis Frater."

Taken from Gardener's "Bibliotheca Rosicruciana."

* * *

Musaeum Hermeticum, omnes Sopho-Spagyricae Artis discipulos fidelissime erudiens, etc. Small quarto, with engraved titles and copper plate engravings. Frankfurt, 1625.

The first edition of this famous work, containing nine Latin tracts on Alchemy, is addressed to the Brethren of the Gold Cross, an alternate and early designation of the Rose Cross. The first place is occupied by "The Golden Treatise" of the Anonymous German Adept; the second by "The Golden Age Restored" of Henry Madathanas.

* * *

Musaeum Hermeticum Reformatum et Amplificatum. Quarto with engraved title (dated 1677) frontispiece to "The Golden Treatise," four folding plates & 41 illustrations in the text. Frankfurt, 1678. This is the second edition enlarged and containing 22 Tracts, (though the title page calls for 21) including the 9 of the original edition. This is undoubtedly, the best and most desirable edition and the one generally referred to by later writers.

Musaeum Hermeticum Reformatum et Amplificatum. Quarto. Frankfort, 1749. The third edition, being a reprint of the edition of 1678 without noticeable change.

* * *

The Hermetic Museum restored and enlarged. First done in English from the edition published in Frankfurt in the year 1678. 2 volumes, small quarto, London, 1893.

This, the only English translation, is edited by A. E. Waite, who, in the Preface, disclaims the actual work of translation, which he credits to another hand, but "it has been subjected to a searching revision at the hands of the present editor."

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