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Is That A Rose On Your Cross?
For the Newly Dubbed Knights of the Rose Croix
By SP David Lindez

For the Newly Dubbed Knights of the Rose + Croix

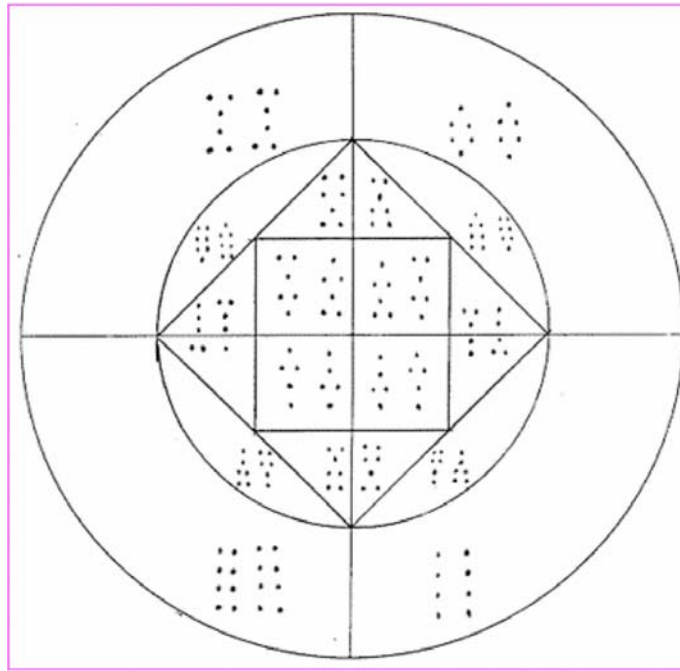
There are experiences which cannot be described. It is because of this that the initiatory secrets of occult orders cannot be fully betrayed. The etheric current of the rosy cross is something intangible and yet affirmative in the cognitive map. It has been espoused since the time of Frater Robert Wentworth Little¹ that in the Masonic lineage of Rosicrucians there were men who practiced *“great virtues and that the growth of ages had added to their stores of learning”*. Many unknowingly take a first step into Rosicrucianism by being made a Knight Rose Croix in either their Scottish Rite Valley, Orient or in the Ancient & Accepted Rite. Those who perceive the presence of gentle hints in this degree are often inclined to persevere still further as they strive to lift the veils of symbolism of all that remains of the wisdom, art and literature of the ancient world.

While observing differences in certain dogma and origins, one would be hard pressed to find an Order operating under the name ‘Rosicrucian’ that does not at some point instruct its aspirants and zelator initiates in the tetrad concept of the number four. Tetrad is a term used in physics and biology, but its initial use is in alchemy. A Rosicrucian initiation can be recognized by a subtle processing and reception of an initiate into the egregore via a spiritual ritual that represents an alchemical transmutation. This is interesting to consider when one realizes that the numeric value of four alone is known to describe a transition of consciousness. The formation of the fifth element would undoubtedly transpire at the center of the four points that form the four corners of a square. Classical Rosicrucian initiations are marked by elemental passings or trials, a Christian motif and a distribution of the sacraments. Whether one accepts the standard canon and exoteric story of the Christ Yashuah Ha’Mashiakh dying on the cross only to resurrect again, or one prescribes to some of the more sublime if not fantasist assertions of the mystery schools that a Christ Avatar died a physical death atop a pyramid in Egypt and ascended astrally there from (an aerial view would show a cross visually similar to the Teutonic origin with a point of death and resurrection in the middle), it nevertheless becomes a necessity to affirm that this rose in the epicenter of a cross is indeed an age old symbol. While many an author has pointed to the idea that

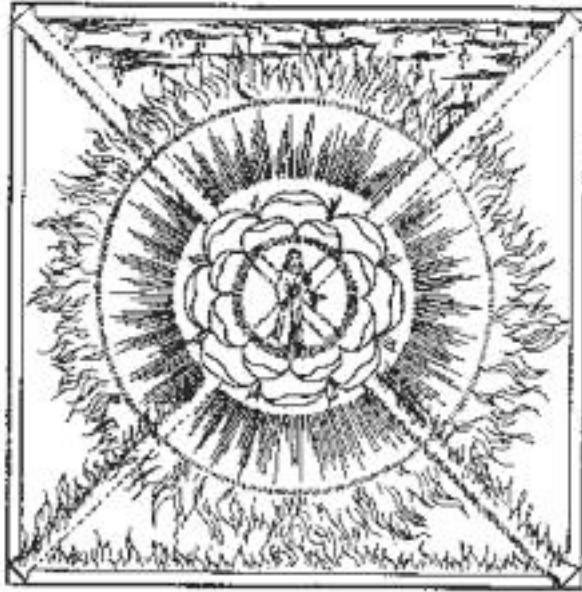
¹ Robert Wentworth Little was initiated in 1866 in Scotland by Anthony O’Neal Haye, Grand Master of the Scottish Rose+Cross Heredom of Kilwinning

Freemasonry came out of the Rosicrucian order, others have pointed to times where one might have infiltrated the other. Whatever the case may be, there is an undeniable connection.

With this in mind, one might do well to seriously consider the divination boards of the Ifa Society priests in Africa (an Order whose antiquity is known to reach back as far as pre-dynastic Egypt)



are based upon the same four cardinal point system in which each direction is assigned an element with the dot in the center of the "crossroads" where it serves as the divination point. It might also be wise to note that Father C.R.C.'s journey took him through Northern Africa...the archaeologically proven birthplace of mankind, numeric systems, religion, architecture and magic. This motif of four points in four directions



with a middle point alluding to the portal of divination at the center is quite common in our Order. The rose and its pedals unveloping is like the opening of a portal while the four cardinal points are the elementals which must be addressed in order to open the door and divinate.

Such a thing becomes radically engaging when placed over the layout of a Rosicrucian or Rose Croix lodge. One must make a distinction of course in Masonic circles as there are numerous versions of the Rose Croix grade in various Masonic Rites with a rather vast variance in actual Rosicrucian content. As a newly made Knight Rose Croix some might be a bit taken back by either the looks of bewilderment or even a few hostile rebuttals alongside the more commonly experienced robotic head-nodding (of noted disinterest of anything outside the realm of tricky trays and fundraising dinners) of members of the Scottish Rite in North America. As obvious as the correlation may seem to some, many have never thought of it as being Rosicrucian; other brethren might simply be unaware of what constitutes something as being 'Rosicrucian.'

The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction Knight of the Rose Croix ritual manual points out on page 6. that "It is certain that the Rose Croix Degree of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite has no historical connections with the Legend of the Rosy Cross; or with the Rosicrucians of the Middle Ages; or of the 17 or 18th centuries. (18th Degree Supreme Council 33rd NMJ) Sedir's work entitled "History and Doctrine of the Rose+Croix" would no doubt cause confusion by the use of the term 'rose croix' in such a vastly different context. Or is it

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vastly different? Freemasonry in general is a veiled system through which the seeker must persevere if he intends to ever find the source of the glimmers of light. While traveling this rough and rugged path, one is most certainly met with obstructions along the way. The current version of A&ASR ritual also states that although Jesus of Nazareth is the central figure, this is not a Christian degree. Again, with this being stamped as a sort of rule by such an esteemed and total authority as the Supreme Council, one can see why some are so adamant about their stance on the perceived relationship between the 18th degree and the Rosicrucians as being non-existent.

If one examines the symbolically sublime effect of circumambulating 360 degrees of finite knowledge of the square in the form of the cross on the altar in a Rose Croix Chapter and the 360 degrees of infinite knowledge of the circular path being walked by the candidate and conductor in the 18th degree, then this could incline one to think that the 720 degrees would equal $7+2+0=9$ and/or the geometria of 72. The number 72 is highly stressed and discussed in Rosicrucian circles & is accompanied by corresponding seals in operative work². Such details are not apart of the lecture nor the written rituals of the 18th degree as given in either the Northern or Southern Jurisdictions of Scottish Rite, but they are hinted at for those who would perceive. And is not geometry the underlying principle of any order?

Still one might ask where would the inspiration for the Rose Croix degree come from with its rose upon a cross? Leadbeater³ writes in *Freemasonry and its Ancient Mystic Rites* that "In later days a portion of its (the R+C Order) teaching and ritual passed into less exclusive hands, and it is through one of these semi-exoteric bodies that the Rose-Croix Ritual was transmitted into the keeping of the Council of the Emperors of the East and West." He goes on to describe in further detail how regions of Masonic jurisdictions tended towards diluting the blatantly Christian and esoteric aspects of the degree while others held firm. On page 176 he says,

"The Rose-Croix, as we have said before, is essentially a degree of Christhood, concerned with the awakening of the Christ mystical within the heart, the hidden love which is the heart of the mystic rose, and which can only be known when the heart is laid upon the Cross of the Sacrifice;" (Leadbeater, 1934)

² See the writings of Robert Ambelain

³ a noted fantasist but avid occultist

Now Leadbeater was a clergyman trained in the Anglican Seminary, ordained and then later re-ordained and subsequently consecrated an Episcopate Bishop in the Liberal Catholic Church as well as being an enthusiastic freemason, but he was not the composer of scholastically respected material.

It has been said that the current Rose Croix ritual is reminiscent of the inner order adept vault ritual of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn when the initiate is first introduced to the Rosicrucian Order. Could it have been inspired by the German Masonic Gold- und Rosen-kreutzers? It is significant to point out that in 'Commentary on the Rose Croix Ritual' written by Brigadier A. C. F. Jackson, Willermoz is said to be responsible for drafting the original French Masonic Rose Croix degree. Meunier de Précourt referred to Knights of the Rose Croix as "The Invisibles." While the Arch Angel Raphael (normally invisible himself) serves in the Rose Croix ritual as the guide for the candidate's journey. Jean-Baptiste Willermoz's ⁴ role in drafting the Masonic Rose Croix grade circa 1750 is quite fitting when one reads that before creating the mechanical draft for the 18th degree that Willermoz was actually initiated by one Rodolphe de Salzmann into The Society of the Unknown Philosophers which Irene Seguret describes as "a Rosicrucian Order." ¹⁰ Both Robert Amadou⁵ and Seguret have hinted strongly as this Society of Unknown Philosophers as the lineage out of which came the SRIA. This seems fitting since he referred to himself as Unknown Philosopher in imitation of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, and the one thing that every Rose Croix ritual has in common is that it is a degree of philosophy. It strikes me as being necessary to point out that Willermoz was an avid student of Martinez De Pasqually (R+C Adept and founder of the Vengeance Degrees of the theurgical Elu Cohen Rites in Freemasonry) and he interwove these magical concepts into the 'Stricte Observance' in 1777. Later on in a convention in 1778 it was decided that the Rite in the Province of Auvergne would go by the name of 'Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte' ; Knights Beneficent of the Holy City", commonly referred to as "C.B.C.S."¹

A.E. Waite of the SRIA points out that the Rectified Scottish Rite was approved at the Congress of 1782 as both a replacement and obvious derivative of the Strict Observance, but what is more noteworthy as that he described this time period as "when the Rosicrucians intervened" on page 6 of The Templar Orders in

⁴ Willermoz lived (1730/10/07 - 1824/05/20)

⁵ of the Scottish Rectified Rite & the Syrian Orthodox Church

Freemasonry. Waite goes on to differentiate the RER from other Chivalric Rites by pointing out that the alleged Christian mysteries of the Order are Kabalistic and magical. (Waite, 1911)

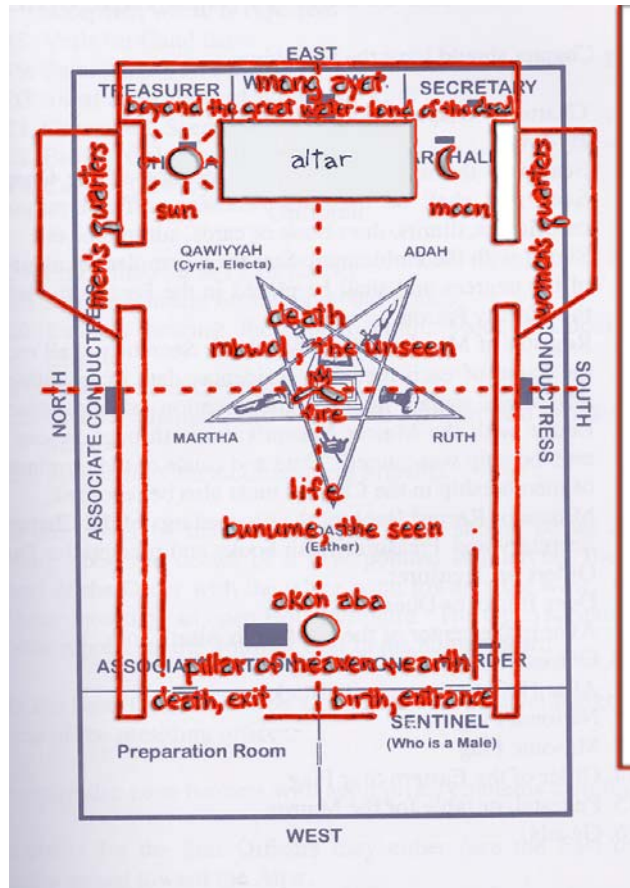
So the Rose Croix degree was apparently created by an avid mason and Rosicrucian Adept. Learned freemasons are aware several correlations between the Masonic Order and the Rosicrucian Order like that of the 1636 poem written and later published in a Scottish pamphlet by Henry Adamson M.A. called "The Muses Threnodie" that featured the lines:

"For what we do presage is not in grosse,
For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse;
We have the Mason word, and second sight;
Things for to come we can foretell aright."

Christopher McIntosh points out in *'The Rosicrucians'* on pages 85-6 that not only is Rose Croix Masonry and/or the 18th Degree hermetic and kabbalistic in nature, but that "Other fringe Masonic rites, such as those of the Memphis & Misraim also had their Rosicrucian grades." He goes on to note that, "Rosicrucian Masonry is now widely practiced as the so-called "Eighteenth Degree," which in Britain is one of the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted (Scottish) Rite." That statement alone is suffice to support my argument that the 18th degree Knight Rose Croix is blatantly Rosicrucian. Now on Page 137 Macintosh again emphasizes the Rosicrucian nature of the Rose Croix Masonic degree where he says, "We know that the Rosicrucian Elements did, in fact, become attached to Freemasonry in the 18th Century and there are still connections in the form of Rose-Croix Masonry." (McIntosh, 1997)

The Rose Croix or 18th degree is inherently an intermingling of Masonic and Rosicrucian doctrines in that it is as Masonic as it as Rosicrucian. That being said, it is only natural that Masons begin to treat some of the similarities and re-occurring themes between the Rose Croix and Rosicrucianism as supporting factors of an interlaced pattern of like origins. Initially, reference was made to the four point schema with a central mark. Esoterically, the tetragrammaton of the four points is turned into the pentagrammaton with the addition of spirit force symbolized by the rose in the Rosicrucian Order and marked by a black dot in the Ifa Society. Yet West African Bwinti Chapels and Ifa temples alike utilize a pentacle placed in the middle of the lodge floor at the divination point.

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Redundant reinforcement? Perhaps, as this is common in the Pan-African symbolism. This brings us to look at the Order of The Rose as a North African Sufic Order that is said to also have a fraternal enactment of a raising...similar to those recorded and attributed to the Essenes. If the four points are to be looked at as representing INRI and the alchemical elements in Hebrew, then one must examine the possibility of a Hebraic triad for each. This would result in 12 with the rose alone representing one. This 1+3 is the number 4 again of the teragrammaton, but it is also known to represent the unity of a magus with the cosmos.

The alchemical brotherhood of the Bell looked at it as a mask and symbol for the letter 'B.' This they took as a moniker and a literal alphabetic reference to their iron bells and the secret craft therein. This is important because any and every Order that claims to be Rosicrucian, deals with Alchemy exclusively or at the least in one grade or another. The 18th degree of Scottish Rite freemasonry points out INRI to the initiate in a rather exoteric wording...veiling the alchemical definitions of each word. In the end, the four elements clearly are composing the substance of the degree's content. This

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focus is something that one may find in any of the modern Rosicrucian Orders claiming to be practicing 'Classical Rosicrucianism.'

In presenting a discourse on the symbolism of the Rosy Cross as illustrated in a monograph by a Frater Achad known to be Charles Stansfield Jones in the profane world, Matt D.A. Fletcher examines the 22 petals of the great rose which are arranged in 3 layers. He points out that the "first, and inner most layer" symbolizes the 3 Mother letters of the Hebrew Alphabet as in: Aleph, Mem and Shin or Air, Water and Fire.

The fourth element of Earth is an "admixture of the three former elements, and thus the three may also symbolize Malkuth the Kingdom in its most fundamental aspect."⁷ I would venture that in the Rose Croix degree these first three elements correspond to the three pillars of the Doric, Ionic and the Corinthian orders of architecture which support the 3 virtues.

The Ifa Society existing among the Yoruban subcultures of Africa, places great emphasis upon the crossroads or divination point on the Ifa divination board which is essentially a scaled down version of an Ifa Lodge floor being a circle in a square marked by East, West, North and South with a middle point being the central focus. Though the explanation of INRI is given in blatantly Christian and exoteric terms...one must identify a veil for what it is. The original Rosicrucians comprised and comprise the inner church or esoteric Christianity. So hermeticism, kabbalism and Christianity are indeed a trinity in the core of esoteric Trinitarian doctrine. One must then look at the four elements applied to each of the directions...spelling out INRI. While the Rose Croix ritual explains that INRI means 'Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum I.N.R.I Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," it would serve well to note that these same initials are upon the rose and cross of mostly every Rosicrucian order including that of the Golden Dawn and SRIA traditions respectively. One must also understand that just as masons are said to speak in a forked tongue of dualistic meanings, so too does the Rosicrucian tradition operate in exoteric explanations while maintaining more elusive meanings for words and symbols.

Our cross symbolizes the four directions/four elements and the crossroads where they meet is the divination point marked by the symbol of immortality...the rose. The rose romanticizes everything from immortality, rebirth and beauty to silence, nature and secrecy. A red rose is explicitly used to symbolize blood and bloodlines in Celtic,

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Latin and Hebraic lore. The comparable symbol in Egypt being the Lotus flower, is also the central symbol of many cults, societies and mystery schools that teach of the rebirth of Ra out of the Celestial Waters and the Primordial Egg amidst an unfolding lotus flower with petals outspread as they emerge out of the triple stage of darkness known to represent the womb. In Egyptian mysteries the rose was symbolic of Isis and of the silent tongue of the initiates. Most Fratres and avid historians alike will point out that a rose was hung from the ceiling in meetings of secret Orders to denote discretion, hence the term "sub rosa." While Fletcher goes into considerable detail with regards to the numeric values associated with esoteric interpretations of a particular rosy cross monograph, the rose commonly is representative of the number 5 as in the fifth element and the five senses so meticulously relayed in our masonic ritual of fellows in the craft.

In the Higher Degrees Handbook, J.S.M. Ward points out that in the Scottish rite, the title of the 18th degree is Rosicrucian Knight. A Knight Rose Croix is a Rosicrucian Knight. The 18th degree's esoteric aspects are indeed hidden, and it does not require a great leap of faith to simultaneously agree that if one were to continue along the path of the Rosicrucian current then the more alchemical significance of INRI would no doubt be explained to the initiate. The initials are explained in some systems to stand for the four elements as known in Hebrew with **I**am as water, **N**our as fire, **R**uach as spirit breath of life known as air, and **I**abeshah the earth. Thus the Rose Croix mason is initiated into the elements, albeit it is not made known to him directly in the modern ritual of the Rose Croix. Just as some traditionalists of the Johannine tradition might identify with the number 13 as being that of Jesus & the disciples, there is the neo-Rosicrucian take on this number as being the foundation of every atom and thus every living thing as Rosicrucian Leader Max Heindel pointed out, it takes 12 balls of equal size to thoroughly conceal one ball. This becomes the ultimate division of matter as well as the basis of astrology and many other magical arts.

There are many who might harbor on the age old rift between the Hanoverian and Stuart struggles over the crown, the church and Masonic power structures. Johanannites would look at the bloodline of St John the Baptist or other personages by the name or avatar John as in "Brother John." Either way, the concept of blood or Aramaic "thet" is conveyed thru the mysteries as the source of life and the distinction among men, and the concept of a bloodline is relevant even today in

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Freemasonry where some Orders have a bloodline relation as a prerequisite for membership. The red and rosy blood drips as the Rose Croix Pelican tears at its breast to feed its young. This is a repetitive motif in that blood and the vessel of blood are something that go back to the marrow in the bone used for regenerative research sciences. The rose upon the cross is blood red like that which flows from the fingers of the curious who in their profanity might move to entertain a passing curiosity...only to be pricked by its thorns.

A. E. Waite once noted that Rostau is the name of the fifth duat of the Egyptian underworld, the location of the Library of Thoth, wherein is obtained complete knowledge. More prosaically, Rostau is the old Egyptian name for Gizeh, the site of the Great Pyramids. Perhaps "Ros-Ta" points to the origins of Rosicrucianism in Hermeticism or the Egyptian mysteries. Egyptian references are as much in the same spirit as Sufic references...comfortably at home when one understands that Sufic Mysticism dates itself well before the dawn of Al Islam, back to the teachings of Hermes/Tehuti in Egypt. This thrice coming one (Trismegistus) was affectioned as Al-Khidir in the Koran, denoting his emerald green aura & some relate him to the green man of the stonemasons in Europe⁶. All these names are referencing the same person. This person happens to play a major part in Western Mystery Traditions in the form of the Angel Michael. This angel Michael is the Melchisedek who is the High Priest of the Order that Jesus was initiated into. This is referenced only to point out that beyond the obvious comparison of a rose cross order and a rose croix order as being the utterly the same, the core ideals, elements, symbols and substance of both orders are inherently the same. The only difference being that the Rose Croix degree serves as a veiled introduction to the underlying alchemical nature of the esoteric Christian society of Rosicrucians. (Waite, 1903) A suitable meditation can follow here on a catechism of the high degrees of Scottish Masonry which was recorded as being shouted from the towers of imprisoned Stuarts, "A Rosicrucian Knight I am regularly made."

⁶ notably Br. Tim Wallace-Murphy of Scotland in his 4/2008 lecture at the MWPHGLNY

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