

Mons Philosophorum
The Mountain of the Philosophers
Zoran Perowanowitsch, FRC

Review Translation, made available to our readers.

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Abstract

Because of wars and the persecution of “heretics” over the centuries, a great deal of spiritual knowledge and the meaning of the traditional symbols has been lost. Modern people, steeped in intellectual thinking, must strive to find a new way to understand those traditions and overcome this paradigm of thought through spiritual training.

With regard to such an inner path of evolvement, in search of a central statement within Rosicrucian wisdom, I dealt with the emblem of the *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* from the book *The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*, published in the *Rose+Croix Journal*.¹ Within it came to light the entire evolution of humanity as well as that of Earth, when we deal with the individual meanings of the symbols.

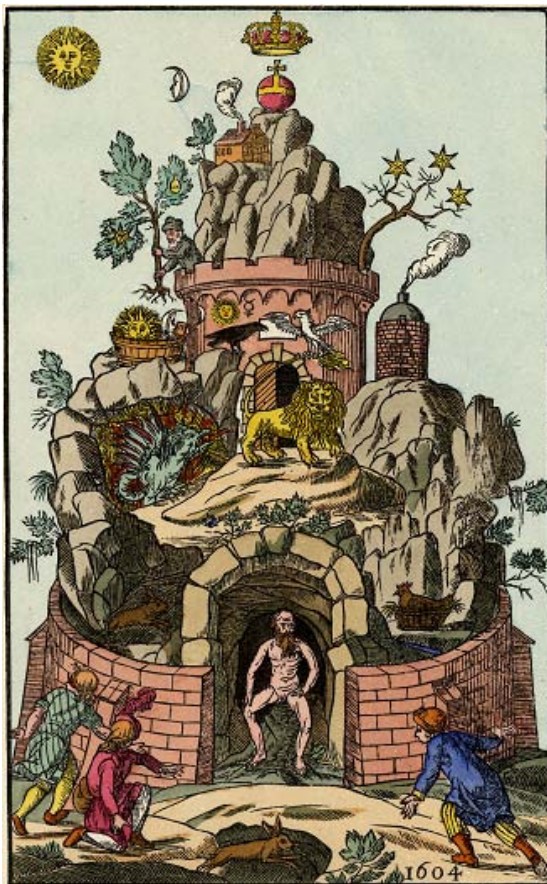


Figure 1

portion de la connaissance spirituelle et de la signification des symboles traditionnels a été

With the same purpose and applying the same method, I am now, in this present work, turning to another illustration from the *Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*², the *Mons Philosophorum*, the Mountain of the Philosophers.³

As I did in the examination of the *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis*, here again I try to unlock the individual symbols, with the aid of other selected symbols of Rosicrucian, alchemical, and late-medieval literature, for today’s consciousness. It becomes apparent that the central statement in the image of the *Mountain of the Philosophers* shows us the way to experience our true self, the Christ-Consciousness, as it did in the *Tabula Smaragdina*.

La montagne des philosophes

Zoran Perowanowitsch, FRC

Résumé

A cause des guerres et des persécutions des « hérétiques » au fil des siècles, une large

perdue. L'homme moderne, plongé dans la pensée intellectuelle, doit s'efforcer de trouver une nouvelle voie vers ces traditions et surmonter ce paradigme de pensées par la formation spirituelle.

Au regard d'un tel chemin intérieur d'évolution, à la recherche d'une déclaration centrale à travers la sagesse rosicrucienne, j'ai traité de l'emblème de la *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* du livre *Les symboles secrets des rosicruciens*, publié dans le *Rose+Croix Journal*. A l'intérieur, est apparu à la lumière du jour, en traitant avec les significations individuelles des symboles, l'évolution entière de l'humanité et celle de la terre.

Avec le même but et en appliquant la même méthode, je me tourne maintenant dans les travaux en cours vers une autre illustration des *Symboles secrets des rosicruciens*, le *Mons Philosophorum*, la montagne des philosophes.

De même que l'examen que j'ai effectué sur la *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis*, j'essaie ici encore de déchiffrer les symboles individuels à l'aide d'autres symboles sélectionnés rosicruciens, alchimiques, et de la littérature de la fin de la période médiévale, pour la conscience d'aujourd'hui. Et il devient apparent que la déclaration centrale dans la *montagne des philosophes* nous montre le chemin de l'expérience du vrai soi, la conscience christique, telle que dans la *Tabula Smaragdina*.

La Montana de los Filósofos

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Resumen

Debido a las guerras y persecución de los "herejes" a través de los siglos, una gran cantidad del conocimiento espiritual y el significado de los símbolos tradicionales se han perdido. El hombre Moderno, engrandecido en pensamiento intelectual, debe de esforzarse en encontrar una nueva vía a esas tradiciones y sobreponerse al paradigma de pensamiento por medio del entrenamiento espiritual.

Con relación a este camino interno de evolución, en busca de un estado central dentro de la sabiduría Rosacruz, me adentre dentro de los emblemas de la *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* del libro *Los Símbolos Secretos de los Rosacruces*, publicado en el diario *Rose+Croix*. El cual lo muestra cuando nos enfrentamos a los significados individuales de los símbolos, toda la evolución de la humanidad incluyendo la de la tierra.

Con el mismo propósito y aplicando el mismo método, estoy ahora, en este presente trabajo, enfocando hacia otra ilustración del mismo libro los *Símbolos Secretos de los Rosacruces*, en cual es: *La Montana de los Filósofos*.

Como lo hice anteriormente en la exanimación de la *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis*, trato aquí de nuevo de revelar los símbolos individuales, con la ayuda de otros selectos símbolos Rosacruces, alquímicos y también literatura del periodo tardío medieval que esta muy de acuerdo con la consciencia de nuestros días. Y así llega a ser aparentemente que la idea central de *La Montaña de los Filósofos* nos muestra el camino hacia la experiencia de nuestro verdadero ser, la Consciencia de Cristo, de la misma forma que en la *Tabula Smaragdina*.

A Montanha dos Filósofos

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Resumo

Por causa das guerras e da perseguição de “heréticos” nos séculos passados, foram perdidos muitos conhecimentos espirituais e os significados dos símbolos tradicionais. O homem moderno, embebido no pensamento intelectual, deve esforçar-se para encontrar um novo caminho em direção a essas tradições, e superar este paradigma do pensamento com o treinamento espiritual.

Com respeito a este trajeto interno de evolução, em busca de uma afirmação central dentro da sabedoria Rosacruz, eu tratei sobre o emblema do *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis*, do livro *Os Símbolos Secretos dos Rosacruzes*, publicado no *Jornal Rose+Croix*. Através da interpretação do significado de cada símbolo constatamos que está incluído neste emblema o caminho da evolução completa da humanidade, assim como da terra.

Com a mesma finalidade, e aplicando o mesmo método, estou agora, neste trabalho atual, dirigindo-me para uma outra ilustração dos símbolos secretos dos Rosacruzes, o *Mons Philosophorum*, a Montanha dos Filósofos.

Berg der Philosophen

Zoran Perowanowitsch, FRC

Zusammenfassung

Durch Kriege und Verfolgung Andersdenkender über Jahrhunderte hinweg ist ein großer Teil des spirituellen Wissens und die Bedeutung der überlieferten Symbole verloren gegangen. Wir heutigen durch ein intellektuelles Denken geprägte Menschen, müssen, wenn wir einen neuen Zugang zu diesen Überlieferungen anstreben, diese Einengung des Denkens durch einen spirituellen Schulungsweg überwinden.

Auf der Suche nach einer zentralen Aussage innerhalb der rosenkreuzerischen Überlieferung in Bezug auf einen solchen inneren Entwicklungsweg behandelte ich in der *Rose+Croix Journal*¹ das Emblem der *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* aus dem Buch *Die Geheimen Figuren der Rosenkreuzer*. Darin ergab sich, dass sich, wenn wir die einzelnen Aussagen der Symbole behandeln, darin der ganze Entwicklungsweg sowohl des Menschen, als auch der Erde in ihrer Evolution offenbart.

Mit dem gleichen Anliegen und derselben Vorgehensweise wende ich mich nun in dieser Arbeit einem anderen Bild in den *Geheimen Figuren der Rosenkreuzer*,² dem *Mons Philosophorum*, dem *Berg der Philosophen*,³ zu.

Wie bei der Untersuchung der *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* versuche ich auch hier die einzelnen Symbole in diesem Bild mit Hilfe anderer ausgewählter Bilder der rosenkreuzerischen und alchemistischen spätmittelalterlichen Literatur dem heutigen

Bewusstsein zu erschließen. Dabei wird offensichtlich, dass wir in dem Bild *Berg der Philosophen* und dem Emblem der *Tabula Smaragdina* dieselbe zentrale Aussage haben, die uns den Weg zum Erleben unseres wahren Selbst, dem Christus-Bewusstsein, aufzeigt.

The Mountain of the Philosophers

Zoran Perowanowitsch, FRC

In the center of the lower half of the image (Figure 1) sits a naked man at the entrance of a cave that leads into a mountain. The entire mountain is surrounded by a wall, which divides the realm of involvement into an inner and an outer part. In front of the wall, we identify three figures that are clad in the colors green, red, and blue. Between them we see a leaping hare. The heads of the man and the hare are pictured on the vertical axis of the image and point to the *first step* on the way to enlightenment when the ego (man) enters into an objective relationship with his soul powers. The hare stands for the randomly roaming thoughts that may quickly change from one direction to another. This inner unrest is the cause of the disorderly interaction of our different soul qualities. The more the randomness of our imagination is settled, the more the different soul parts of *thinking* (green), *wanting* (red), and *feeling* (blue) move into the service of self. The blinders over the eyes of the green figure (thinking) means the surrender of the personal arbitrariness in favor of the guidance of the self.

This is how we may understand the gestures of the three figures in front of the mountain, as they respectfully bow to the man who has shed his old clothes on the way to purification, through which he has learned to differentiate the powers of the soul and to bring them into his service. According to their nature, they will be placed into their corresponding plane, and only then become fruitful to the inner and outer life.

This first step is of importance because, to a certain degree, the three soul powers will be “released” to the outer life and will not become an obstacle to the further, inner involvement.

Within the wall, to the right of the man we again see a hare and to the left of it a hen, brooding near the water. They stand for powers of the soul that, in equal measure, unfold themselves within ourselves when the ready-to-serve thinking (green figure) and wanting (red figure, left in the picture), unite to the *spiritual power of alertness* (hare-inside). The purified sensitivity to the right of the picture (blue figure) changes into the *soul power of devotion* (hen). Those soul qualities create the condition of every inner development and will accompany us on our entire further, inner path. Always further evolving, they lead to further sublimation of thought (gilded green dragon), through which the *second step* of the picture is revealed to us and which is introduced by the *black raven* and the *white (silver) eagle*.

Baptism

The *black raven* over the green dragon is the symbol for a mind, a self, which though it has separated from the identification with the intellect, it hasn't discarded it but rather, has ennobled it. However, this self is still tied to the head and experiences itself still through the *first plane of polarity* of inside and outside. Thus the black raven symbolizes the old, completed path of the intelligence that is bound to the senses, while the white eagle introduces the new path of humility and devotion. The transition to the new path begins at the

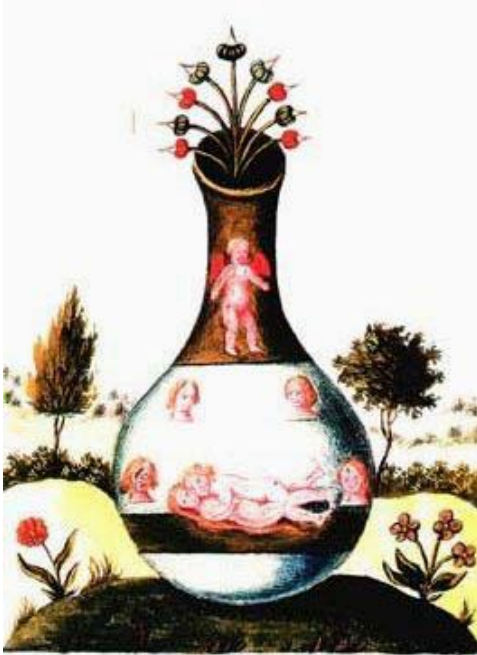


Figure 2

has overcome the reference point to the head, yet is still tied to the body, a change of “place” has occurred. The self-consciousness “falls” along the axis of the body of the tower. An interment occurs, which may be likened to the planting of a seed in the darkness of the earth. The process that now ensues corresponds to a “chaos”, a “bath” or a “baptismal,” in which occurs a synthesis of polarities, and out of which derives a liberated self. On the tower above the raven we see depicted the symbols of the Sun, the Moon, and Mercury. In the teachings of the Rosicrucians Mercury (Hermes) is also described as the child of the Sun and the Moon, that is the newborn self, derived from the synthesis of the polarities of the Sun (male) and the Moon (female) at the base of the tower,⁴ as we also find it expressed in the Tabula Smaragdina: “ Its father is the sun, his mother the moon. The wind has carried it in its belly.”⁵

moment when the self “reaches” the “place” *between* the horizontal, polar swing of the pendulum from inside to outside.

Between the black raven and the white eagle is shown a white surface, which reminds us that only those that are of the purity of an “empty page” will be admitted entry to the tower. Those, in other words, who will no longer be mainly guided by the imaginations and inclinations of the *first polar plane*.

The white eagle stands for the purified thinking, which introduces the further development on the vertical axis of the picture and with that the opening of the gate at the bottom of the tower.

This depicts a special point of inner development, in which the consciousness, following the inner growth process of the plant, begins to unfold. Since the self



Figure 3

Ascension

After the self has experienced “interment” (seed) and “baptism” (bath) in the darkness at the base of the physical and has sprouted new roots in the united, each supplementing qualities of the Sun and the Moon, it now experiences the *second vertical plane of polarity*, that of heaven and Earth. Now, in order to initiate the vertical unfolding, the powers of heaven through the “ascension,” cause the physical limitation to be overcome in their “blossoming.” These are the steps of the tower that lead up to the “tree of stars.”

To the left of the tower the Sun and the Moon are united in a bath and from the furnace to the right rises the spirit, in the form of smoke, overcoming the physical.

Inside the furnace may be seen a vessel that symbolizes the process that we have shown within the physicality, and which is depicted in detail in figure 3. It is the union between male (Sun) and female (Moon) enacted in the bath, as seen on the bottom of the vessel. Out of this synthesis derives the newborn self (Mercury), which then blossoms in the ascension on the other side of the vessel and beyond the physical.

Mercury (Hermes) is the messenger of the deities between heaven and Earth. In figure 3, he bears in his right hand the key to the sphere of cosmic wisdom, Sophia, who will be intuitively realized beyond the seventh planet Saturn. In his left hand he holds the staff of Mercury as a sign of conquest of the vertical physicality, which then leads to Jupiter, the planet of wisdom. After the horizontal polar view of the *inner and outer* was harmonized, the vertical polarity of *above and below* is now also overcome. Thus the gate of the seventh planet opens and the sphere of the fixed stars is intuitively realized.⁶

In several traditions we meet the act of initiation in the image of the tower and the figure seven. Thus, Christian Rosenkreuz,⁷ for instance, while being initiated, finds himself with other candidates at the base of a tower. Above an opening appears, from which a rope is lowered seven times, on which each time a candidate is lifted from the darkness of the tower.

The Cosmic Virgin Sophia

This level beyond Saturn, beyond the seven planets is depicted by the star-covered tree on the mountain, to which our changed, purified soul-self is led. It is the intuitive experience of pure consciousness, the “cosmic bubble” of our polar space-time-world. For the first time we experience “being” in the all-one-being, here beyond all objects of sensual polarity. It is the experience of the purified soul, which in the Rosicrucian Tradition is expressed by the starry sphere and in depictions of the “Virgin Mary” in her star-spangled mantle. Similarly, Christian Rosenkreuz is invited to the king’s wedding by a “magnificently beautiful woman in an all-blue dress, covered like the sky with golden stars.”⁸ These images are not selected randomly, but correspond to the experience of the sphere beyond the polarity of male-king and female-queen.

The Temptation of Emptiness

In the intuitive experience of pure consciousness as “emptiness,” there lies the great temptation⁹ to separate from the common evolution of Earth in the belief to have already reached “the goal” in this emptiness of consciousness. Such a belief will lead to the regard of all phenomena as mere dreams or illusions. Many people who are connected to Eastern wisdom will already see this plane as the end goal of inner evolution.

If, however, our spirit does not yet become self-satisfied at this level, then we may meet our “higher self,” the Christ, who will clarify for us the meaning of experience at this plane but also, through the vision of selfless love reveal something in the making that can only be realized through turning to Earth.

Turning to Earth

After meeting Christ, the man on the tower did not build his house under the starry tree (Sophia) but below the summit. In regard to inner evolution, this expresses an essential step.

On the first step sits the naked man who, in order to meet the *Cosmic Virgin Sophia* on the way to purification, had to shed his clothes. He had to be naked to meet her but the man on the mountain is clothed again.

After we have lived the rebirth of the self in baptism and the experience of the Sophia, we may once again don our old clothes, without sliding back into the old person. We can step in front of the Christ as we are. Thus through the Christ, we will be changed and don't have to burden those who come after us with our old clothes. Solely through reaching the plane of pure consciousness, we cannot accomplish this fundamental change.

Elevation of the Earth

As the alchemists express it, in the realization of the Sophia we have learned to make silver from base metals. We experience a change of consciousness that happens step by step, and which, in the tradition of the Rosicrucians and following the language of the alchemists, is described as the three steps of change from nigredo (blackening), to albedo (whitening/silver), and finally rubedo (Reddening/gold), which corresponds to the pictorial change from the black raven into white eagle.

When, further on, the beauty of consciousness is not held in a self-centered way, but turns once more towards Earth and surrounds the heart in its purity, then, because the door to the heart is opening, our true essence will reveal itself in the Christ. The more we will be permeated by the Christ, the more we will obtain the elixir for the transformation, for the elevation of matter to gold, which the man on the mountain, who is immersing the roots of the tree in the united qualities of the Sun and the Moon, preserves in the little flask in the crown of the tree.¹⁰

While we have in the starry tree *the six-pointed stars* as the symbols for the sphere of fixed stars, the leaves of the tree that the man, who holds the exilir flask, carries, shows a *seven-pointed star*.

In the center of the entire picture stands a golden lion on an island-like knoll symbolizing one who has passed through the *steps of evolvement* of the "philosophical mountain." He harmonizes in himself the polarities of left and right, of above-heaven and below-Earth, of female (feeling-blue, hen-devotion, starry tree-Sophia) and male (thinking-green, wanting-red, hare-alertness, dragon-gilded, man-active.) It is the symbol for the Sun, the ego which, after crossing through the portal of Saturn does not pause, but because of having met the "higher self," the Christ, turns humbly once again to Earth.

In meeting the Sophia, everything is taken from us, even our physical self so that all that is left of us is virgin consciousness and our experience of all-oneness. As in a further initiation, we cross into the portal of the heart and behold the Christ, our true being, then we experience a "resurrection" and receive a new "body," which is made from qualities of the heart, of fire,

light, and love. This affords us a faint foreboding of the immeasurable mystery that knows no answer, and which silences any imagination of an already-reached goal.

Through the elixir that we see in the crown of the tree with the seven-pointed star, which the man holds in his hands, we have gained the ability to cooperate with the Christ in the transmutation of Earth through the seven planetary steps, as it also finds expression in the seven-pointed star in the *Tabula Smaragdina*.¹¹

Through the red orb with the golden band, topped by the golden cross, below the crown, is expressed the gilding of the permutation of Earth by the Christ.¹²

Rosicrucian spirituality can only be thoroughly understood if the inner evolvment is not seen as a linear one that only follows the ascending path, but as an up-and-down movement, or as a harmonization of the powers of heaven and Earth. Though this requires the unfolding of individuality, it is not a final goal but again, the precondition to cooperate on the “Great Work,” as the Rosicrucians call it. This follows the realization that individual Evolvment, in the deepest sense, is impossible without the inclusion of all of creation, down into the material.

The Crown

The crown hovers over the mountain pointing to the highest spirituality that flows to us from the cosmic. It is the mystery of the father of whom no mortal may form an image.

Closing remarks

The visual examination of the individual symbols in *Mons Philosophorum*, the Mountain of the Philosophers, leads to the realization that here the same meaning has come down to us as in the emblem *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* with reference to the Rosicrucian teachings.

Thus we have shown in the *Mountain of the Philosophers*, as well as in the *Tabula Smaragdina* from the book, *Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*, the “royal path” of inner evolvment, which lets us connect to the roots of Rosicrucian spirituality to fulfill the task that falls to it within evolution.

End notes:

¹ *Rose+Croix Journal 2009, Volume 6.*

² *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer, Altona. 1785/88, new edition, Berlin 1919.*

³ I need to mention that there was a text attached to the picture, *The Mountain of the Philosophers*.

I chose not to comment on it, as I believe that said text had been added later on for some alchemical reason, which did not correspond to the meaning of the picture.

⁴ C. G. Jung comments on the problem of contradiction and its harmonization in several of his works, for instance, *Psychology and Alchemie*.

⁵ Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis, *Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*, Altona 1785/88, new edition, Berlin 1919.

⁶ In this connection, also of interest are the seven centers of energy of the human body in their correspondence to the seven planets as they are shown in the book *Theosophia Practica*, by Georg Gichtel.

⁷ *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz. Anno 1459*, Stuttgart 1978, p 21.

⁸ *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz. Anno 1459*, Stuttgart 1978, p 21.

⁹ Julius, Evola, *Die Hermetische Tradition*, Muenchen 2001, p 197.

¹⁰ Julius, Evola, *Die Hermetische Tradition*, Muenchen 2001, p 197.

¹¹ Arndt, Ulrich, *Metall Essenzen*, Freiburg 2003, p 68.

¹² The evolution of Earth through seven phases is also treated in the book *Die Geheimwissenschaft in Umriss* by Rudolf Steiner, Dornach 1968.