

The Origins of the Qabalistic Tradition of the Golden Dawn

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The Golden Dawn tradition is the result of a syncretistic effort to unify different branches of the Western Esoteric Tradition within a Qabalistic and Hermetic framework, using the Rosicrucian mythos and teaching as the unifying agent. The Rosicrucian traditions which found themselves being united in the Inner Order of the Golden Dawn, the *Ordo Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis* (R.R. et A.C.), mainly came from two English and two German branches.

One of the English lineages, which found their way into the Golden Dawn, was the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (S.R.I.A.). Two of three founders of the Golden Dawn, namely Dr. William Robert Woodman (1828-1891) and Dr. William Wynn Westcott (1848-1925), were elected to be the Supreme Magus, the title of the highest Chief of the S.R.I.A. The similarities between the Golden Dawn and the S.R.I.A. can thus superficially be seen in (a) the threefold order structure of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Orders, (b) the office of the Chief-Adept, (c) the general design of the cloaks of officers (see Figure 1), (d) some of the designs of the wands – look especially for the ceremonial wand of the Supreme Magus, with colored bands, which seems to be a blend between the Lotus Wand and Fire Wand of the Golden Dawn (see Figure 1), (e) the cross design of the Supreme Magus surmounted by the crown, which bears striking similarities with the cross design on the Lid of the Pastos of the Adeptus Minor Grade (compare Figures 1 and 14), and (f) some basic designs for the Vault of Adepts, even though the S.R.I.A. version is not as detailed and evolved as that of the Golden Dawn.

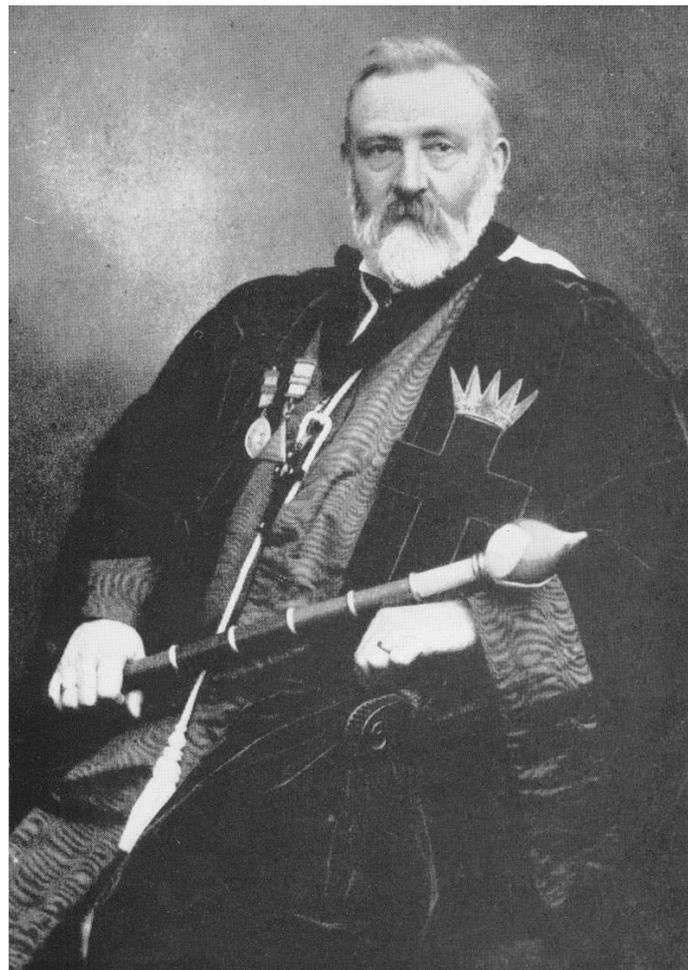


Figure 1 – W.W. Westcott dressed up in his Supreme Magus regalia

Furthermore, with some further research one also will find influences from Sigismund Backstrom's *Societas Roseæ+Crucis* (S.R.C), more obviously seen in the Adeptus Minor oath and the design made by Moina Mathers on the Second Order Membership Roll (see Figure 2) but perhaps even more subtly so thorough some of its alchemical teachings. So, while there are obvious influences from these two important English Rosicrucian currents into the Golden Dawn, because of its close proximity to the British esoteric community, I still consider them to be of minor significance compared to the continental sources behind the First and Second Orders of the Golden Dawn.

The very foundation for the Second Order was received through S.L. MacGregor Mathers' Secret Chief and envoy from the Third Order, mysteriously referred to as *Lux E Tenebris*, who handed MacGregor Mathers (1854-1918) all the material he needed to found the R.R. et A.C. in 1892, such as the Adeptus Minor Ceremony and Ritual "Z", and probably the major bulk of the "Rituals" from A to Z. But it is an established fact that also the First or Outer Order, at least in part, was founded from a similar mysterious envoy of the Third Order half a Century earlier, through the mysterious Cypher Mss. which W.W. Westcott received from the estates of Kenneth R.H. MacKenzie.

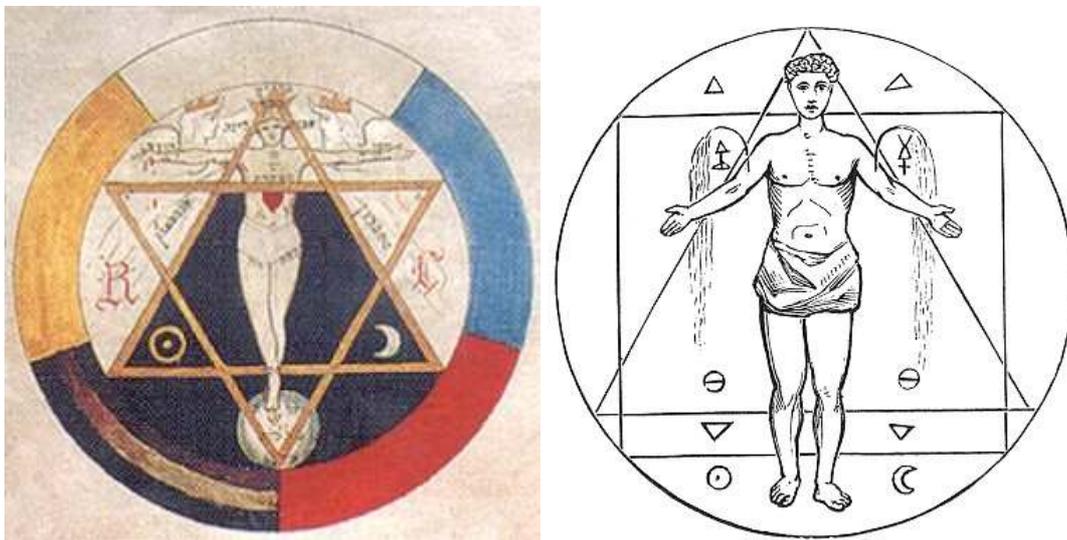


Figure 2 – Seal on the membership roll of the R.R. et A.C. (left) and that of the S.R.C. (right)

There is strong evidence which supports the assertion that the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in fact is a continuation of and stems from the oldest known Rosicrucian organization referred to as the *Fraternitate Rosæ et Aureæ Crucis* (R. et A.C.), with earliest documented records from 1580 and by some claimants even as early as 1517 (see below), which seems to have had early Lodges in both Italy and France during the 17th Century. This Rosicrucian body later re-surfaced in Germany in 1710 as the *Orden des Gùlden- und Rosen-Creutzes*, heralded by Samuel Richter, who was known by his pseudonym or magical name of "Sincerus Renatus." This German Order of "Golden Rosicrucians" went through several reformations during the 18th Century, now referred to as the *Gold- und Rosenkreutz Orden*, and under the leadership of Hermann Fictuld in 1757 and 1767, and lastly through a general reformation in 1777 by "Phoebron," or Dr. Bernhard Joseph Schleiss von Löwenfeld, which changed its orientation entirely into a Masonic framework in its workings referring to it as *Gold- und Rosenkreuzer des alten Systems*.

The Golden Rosy+Cross has been a major influence on later modern Rosicrucian organizations, besides the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, no doubt because of its publication of the *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer* or "Secret Symbols of the

Rosicrucians” in 1785, such as the S.R.I.A. and even later American Rosicrucian “re-creations” of the 20th Century. According to Jean-Pascal Ruggiu, the acknowledged French scholar on Rosicrucianism and the Golden Dawn, some of the rituals and wand designs of the Second Order actually derives from the Order of the Golden Rosy+Cross. In his highly interesting and original article *Rosicrucian Alchemy and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*, Mr. Ruggiu has the following to say:

It must be underlined that the Rituals of R.R. & A.C. were not entirely created by MacGregor Mathers, but that he was inspired by those of the German Golden Rosy+Cross, which I am quite sure he received by regular transmission. Indeed, I have the proof that the GOLDEN DAWN wands patterns were inspired by the Moses’ Wand described in a very secret and old German document of the Golden Rosy Cross (dated 1514), a copy of which is in my possession and that I received from the Internal college of this Order. It is quite interesting to note that this document contains strong Polish Jewish Cabalistic influences, and especially those coming from the school of Shabathai Zévi, who proclaimed himself in 1666 to be the Messiah awaited by all the Jews. This date (1666) is very interesting, because it is in accordance with at solar cycle of 111 years. Indeed, the German Golden Rosy+Cross Order was linked to this 111 years cycle; for instance, it was in 1777 that this Order was reformed with a new scale of grades, which was also to be adopted both by the S.R.I.A. and the Golden Dawn founded 111 years later in 1888. Now, the Golden Rosy+Cross document which I referred to above, contains also many rituals which we find once again in the Golden Dawn (for instance several versions in Latin and in Hebrew of the Cabalistic Cross Ritual and the Middle Pillar Ritual). So, this document constitutes the proof that the Golden Dawn magical rituals are in fact the developments of those of the German Golden Rosy Cross; but as these latter rituals are still very secret, it is also proof that the founders of the GOLDEN DAWN received a genuine German Rosicrucian transmission...

Mr. Ruggiu in his paper also claims the existence of a French Golden Rosy+Cross Lodge in 1624. In this quote we see a reference to the peculiar branch of the Sabbatian Qabalistic tradition, which brings us to the subject matter of this essay. Thus in the context of the Qabalistic tradition I would like us to turn the attention to another Rosicrucian organization which has had an even greater impact of the Golden Dawn tradition than that of the Golden Rosy+Cross, namely the Asiatic Brethren, a short form of “Brotherhood of St. John the Evangelist from Asia in Europe.” This organization later changed its name into the *Ritter und Bruder des Lichts*, or simply as the *Fratres Lucis* or “Brotherhood of Light.” The unique character of this organization is that it took not only the amalgamation of the Hermetic and Qabalistic traditions even further than that the Golden Rosy+Cross, but that it more distinctly than ever before took its Qabalistic influences from the peculiar Polish version of Sabbatian Qabalah into its fold. Jean-Pascal Ruggiu thus continues:

The original Fratres Lucis or “Brotherhood of Light” was founded in Germany by the baron Ecker Von Eckhoffen, a past member of the Golden Rosy+Cross and also founder of Asiatic Brethren. All these German fraternities were deeply involved with the practice of alchemy. My historical researches into these topics proved that many members belonging to the Asiatic Brethren of Fratres Lucis became members of a German masonic lodge called *L’Aurore Naissante* (or “the Nascent Dawn”) founded in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1807. Westcott wrote that this lodge was a “very ancient Rosicrucian Lodge of Frankfurt-on-Main were Lord Bulwer Lytton was received into Adeptship.”

We will return to the topic of the Lodge *L’Aurore Naissante* in a short while, but I would like to point out that the hebrew name of this Lodge, or the “Chevrah Zerach Bequr Aur,” was also identified by the Jewish scholar Gershom Scholem as having some high ranking

Frankist/Sabbatian members. All these Qabalistic influences originated from the Asiatic Brethren. David Griffin writes the following in his article *Did W.Wynn Wescott try and steal the Golden Dawn's legitimate Rosicrucian lineage for the S.R.I.A.?*, in which he claims a direct Qabalistic transmission into the Golden Dawn through the Asiatic Brethren:

The Asiatic Brethren was a schismatic Rosicrucian order founded in 1780 by then member of the Gold und Rosenkreutz order Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen (1750-1790). Interestingly, the Asiatic Brethren was a Rosicrucian order which allowed Jews among its members at a time that antisemitism was rampant in Germany. Among its Jewish members figured prominent Qabalists from the heretical sect of Sabbatai Zevi such as Ephraim Hirschfeld (?- 1819) and Thomas von Schonfeld (whose real name was Moses Dobrucshka). Thus the order of the Asiatic Brethren holds a unique place in the history of the Rosicrucian tradition, as having fully developed its Qabalistic aspect for the first time. Interestingly, the Sabataian Qabalah of the Asiatic Brethren is of exactly the same nature as that later found in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

But the Sabbatian sect in Poland of 1777 mentioned in the quotation wasn't exactly of the same nature as that professed by Sabbatai Zevi, or Shabtai Tzvi (1626-76), and his prophet Nathan of Gaza (1643-1680). The Qabalists of the Asiatic Brethren were actually Frankists, or in other words followers of Jacob Frank and his very radical and antinomian version of Sabbatianism. Jacob Frank, or Yakov Leib Frank (1726-91), was regarded by his followers and himself to be the next avatar, the reincarnation of the Messiah Sabbatai Zevi. This Frankist sect soon became notorious and branded as heretic by most Jewish rabbis, because of its stance against organized religion (Hebrew, Christian and Islamic alike) as representing the Shells (Qlippoth) who entrapped God. Thus it was the task of the Jewish Qabalist, according to Frank, to convert to Christianity (who he referred to as the sons of Esau; i.e. the Edomite Kings) and thus free God or the divine sparks from its imprisonment in the Christian religion, as they already had done with their own Hebrew religion. Hence Frank's followers converted to Catholicism *en masse*. This they did in the spirit of the Holy Apostasy of Sabbatai Zevi, who was forced to convert Islam in 1666 by the Turkish sultan Mehmed IV.



Figure 3 – Sabbatai Zevi

Sabbatai Zevi had a brief career as the Messiah, which was expected to free the Jewish population of the Diaspora from its exile and prosecution. His mission suddenly emerged in

the wake of Polish persecution of Jews and the fact is that the majority of the Jewish Diaspora believed him to be the real Messiah in 1665, in the wake of Nathan of Gaza proclaiming him as such. Zevi soon became a threat to the Muslim community in Turkey, where he held most of his ministry, and was forced to convert to Islam under sword point. Following his apostasy Zevi joined the Bektashi Sufi Order, which resulted in a blending of Islamic Mysticism with the Qabalah. This “holy apostasy” was likened by Nathan of Gaza as the descent of the Messiah into the mouth of Samael (Satan). Later, Sabbatai Zevi created a following amongst the Turks called the “Donmeh” (Turkish for “convert”), who seems to exist even today as an ethnic minority, although fully integrated with the Turkish population and outwardly living as professed Muslims. Jacob Frank was in fact initiated into the Sabbatian Qabalah by the Turkish Donmeh circle that emerged from Osman Baba (Baruchiah Russo), before he later entered his missionary life in Poland.



Figure 4 – Nathan of Gaza

The Frankists, who had a large following in Poland and other eastern European countries, also engaged in sexual practices through some form of sexual mysticism. They embraced sin, not as “sinners” but as “saints” to free the sin (the spark of God from the Qlippotic Shell) through indulgence or integration. But we have to remember that Sabbatian Qabalah follows the teachings of Isaac Luria, or “Arzial,” where matter is suspended in a fallen state, mixed up as it is with the Qliploth – the shells or husks from the first and aborted creation – which gives matter its characteristics as it is known to us today. The goal is restoration, or *Tikkun ha-Olam*, which means that matter is submitted to an alchemical process of separation of the gross (the Qliploth) from the fine and the creation of a new Eden and a New Adam or Christ. Lurian, as well as Sabbatian and Frankist Qabalah, is unanimous in its message that the spark of God which is entrapped within the shells (Qliploth) must become liberated – redeemed – for this restoration to occur.

Obviously the Frankist Qabalah was highly controversial and it’s no surprise that it was soon also to be banned by the Catholic Church, and Jacob Frank himself imprisoned as a heretic, even though the Christian Church at first had supported Frank’s followers in their apostasy. Little did the Church know that what we see here in Sabbatianism is an urge to unite all abrahamic religions into a coherent whole. As a matter of fact, the Frankist movement tried to institute a new form of universalistic messianic religion and considered Christianity as an intermediate stage towards it, with Jacob Frank himself as the next avatar or reincarnation of the Messiah Sabbatai Zevi.



Figure 5 – Jacob Frank

These universalistic tendencies could later be seen in the Asiatic Brethren who “baptized” its Jewish members with Christian names and gave its Christian brethren Hebrew sounding names. This perennial tendency within the Sabbatian-Frankist Qabalah has survived with the Golden Dawn, which blends many different western religions and pantheons into a coherent whole. Furthermore, the Asiatic Brethren also celebrated both Christian and Jewish holidays, and therefore incited the Jewish followers to break Hebrew law, as for example eating pork with milk. This was clearly an antinomian practice that surely was inherited from the teachings of Jacob Frank through people like Moses Dobruschka (1735-1794), who was the cousin (often referred to as the nephew) of Frank, also known as Junius Frey and Thomas von Schoenfeld. In his book *Kabbalah* from 1978 Gershom Scholem says:

Moses, the son of Schoendel Dobruschka, [Jacob] Frank’s cousin, who was known in many circles as his nephew, was the outstanding figure in the last generation of Frankists, being known as Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld (a German writer and organizer of a mystical order of a Jewish Christian kabbalistic character, the “Asiatic Brethren”), and later as Junius Frey (a Jacobin revolutionary in France).

So as can be seen the *Fratres Lucis* or Asiatic Brethren were basically a splinter group of the Golden Rosy+Cross (Gold- und Rosenkreutz) Order which, as with the former organization, blended Hermetic and Qabalistic notions into a coherent Rosicrucian philosophy. But as the Golden Rosy+Cross seemed to lay a greater emphasis on Hermeticism and Alchemy, the Asiatic Brethren on the other hand laid more emphasis on Qabalah and Magic. One other great difference between these two organizations was that the Golden Rosy+Cross, in vogue with mainstream German Freemasonry, was restricted to Christians while, as we have seen, the Asiatic Brethren permitted both Christians and Jews as members on an equal basis.

These universalistic tendencies and openness to both Jews and Christians can also be seen in the later Freemasonic Lodge in Frankfurt-am-Main, founded in 1807 and referred to as the “judenloge.” Actually, Gershom Scholem was one of the first modern scholars to identify this Lodge as the *L’Aurore Naissante* or “Chevrah Zerach Bequr Aur.” It is a well known fact that prominent members of the Asiatic Brethren were involved in the creation of this Jewish Lodge, and that it became the heir to the tradition of the Asiatic Brethren. What is

Strangely at it seems, William Wynn Westcott claims that the Rosicrucian MacKenzie-Apponyi connection was the true origin of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (S.R.I.A.). David Griffin also has the following to say regarding MacKenzie:

In his 1947 paper, “The Origin of our Rosicrucian Society,” [The Freemasonic Scholar Bruce] Wilson reveals an astonishing discovery. It turns out that Kenneth MacKenzie actually had been initiated into a Rosicrucian society and had indeed received a warrant from Count Apponyi. Furthermore, MacKenzie did actually use this warrant to found a Rosicrucian organization, but it was not the SRIA! Wilson reveals that the warranted organization was none other than the first phase of the Golden Dawn, as a branch of a Continental society called the Brothers of Light. This is a reference to the Order of the Asiatic Brethren (also called the Ritter und Bruder des Lichts or Knights and Brothers of Light).

Thus MacKenzie re-used the name of *Fratres Lucis* for his own English member of the rosicrucian body, also known as “The Society of Eight.” Thus what we see here is a clear esoteric lineage and transmission from the Frankist-Sabbatian Qabalah, which constitutes one of the pillars of the Qabalistic teachings of the Golden Dawn. The other pillar is of course the more recognized Christian Qabalistic tradition, which stems from renaissance philosophers such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680), and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-1689). Rosenroth’s *Kabbala Denudata* was in fact a premiere source text for the Golden Dawn and several of its illustrations ended up in the diagrams of the Outer Order advancement ceremonies (see Figure 8). In this book one may find the writings of S. Abraham Cohen de Herrera, amongst others, whose systems present a blending of Neoplatonism with Qabalah, along with Islamic Philosophy and Christian Qabalah. Cohen de Herrera received his Qabalah from Israel Sarug, who was a disciple of Isaac Luria. Thus the Kabbalah Denudata is replete with Lurianic teachings, which together with the Sabbatian influences gives the Golden Dawn a solid foundation in tradition. And in this context we have to remember that the Sabbatian Qabalah, as developed by Nathan of Gaza, is a direct continuation of the teachings of Isaac Luria.

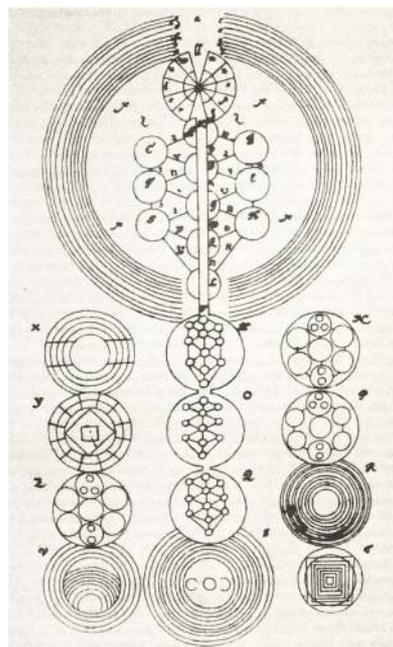


Figure 8 – Illustration from the *Kabbala Denudata*

Now, as we have established the fact that there actually exist an esoteric transmission between the Sabbatian Qabalah and the Golden Dawn, we should ask ourselves in which ways this school of thought has survived to this day through the Golden Dawn tradition. First and foremost, I would say, that this could be discerned by the non-dogmatic approach towards spirituality in the Golden Dawn. This may be explained by the extremely antinomian nature of the Frankist Qabalah and its vehement revolt against religion. But there are lots of more traces of the Sabbatian Qabalah to be found in the symbol system of the Golden Dawn, something that will soon become obvious to the reader.

Taking the above-mentioned facts into consideration it becomes clear that the Frankist Qabalah blends very well with the Hermetic Rosicrucian tradition because of its strong ties with Christianity. As a matter of fact Jacob Frank and his followers adored the Holy Mother – The Virgin Mary – The Virgin of Częstochwa or Black Madonna of Poland, which Frankists associated with *Shekhinah*. The cult of the Black Madonna is a form of a worship of the Divine Feminine, and in reference to the Qabalistic theory on the *partzufim* or “countenances” it thus blended well with the Sabbatian-Frankist movement – also in virtue of its sexual mysticism. We know that Jacob Frank was a devout worshiper of the Divine Feminine, which is easily discernable in one of his sayings: *“In a dream in Częstochowa I saw the Goddess who came to me appearing as a beautiful virgin.”*

But it’s no surprise that the Polish Sabbatian Qabalah could blend so well with the regional Catholic faith and the worship of the Virgin Mary, as the Frankist take on Qabalah can be considered to be a species of a “Christian Qabalah”. But in this instance it is the Jew which embraces Christian mysticism, not the other way around like with Pico della Mirandola of the Italian school of Hermetic Qabalah. As the Sabbatian Qabalah initially blended with Islam, through the holy apostasy of Shabtai Tzvi, Jacob Frank likewise encouraged his followers to embrace Christianity in its messianic mission, as it considered the religion of Christ to be an intermediate stage towards a new form of messianic religion. It even considered Poland as a substitute for Jerusalem for “the place of the Ascent.” Hence it being labeled as “heretic” in the eyes of contemporary Jewdom. As residents of Poland, it was only natural for them to embrace the peculiar cult of the Virgin Mary, which no doubt blends naturally with the Qabalistic view on sexual polarity. No wonder then that *Inner Alchemy* – with its emphasis on the Venusian current – took a prominent place amongst the Asiatic Brethren. Its no surprise either that Frankist Qabalah was chosen to blend with Rosicrucianism, considering the Christian natures of both.

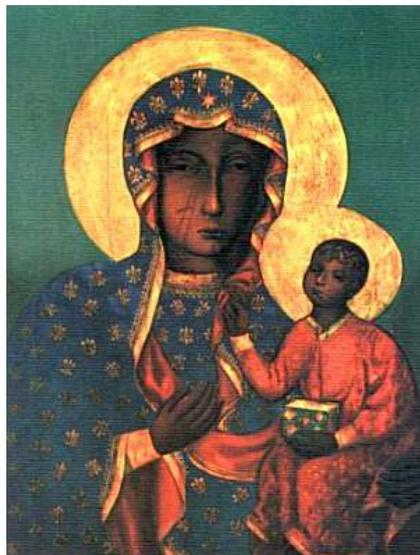


Figure 9 – The Black Madonna of Częstochowa

“The Virgin” of Częstochowa is a reference to the painting often called “The Black Madonna” which is held in the Polish castle and monastery of Częstochowa. This image is a true icon of the Polish nation and people, and she is taken through several cities and villages on an annual cult-like journey, where she is worshiped in an almost pagan fashion. In Poland the worship of the “Mother of God” is very prominent as she is said to have appeared in different parts of Poland, and effectively selecting the Poles as her “chosen people.” As a young child, with ancestry in Poland, I heard a story told by one of my Polish relatives which is quite fascinating, and says a lot of the beliefs held in the minds of the common Polish people. During the war with Sweden in the 17th Century the Swedish Army under Karl X Gustav held a siege on the castle Częstochowa. It is generally believed that a Swedish officer took his sword and stabbed the Black Madonna twice at her chin. The two scars are easily seen on the image (See Figure 9). It is generally believed by Poles that the two wounds are wandering towards the throat. When they reach it the Apocalypse will be a fact, if it hasn’t prevented by prayer, a responsibility that is the lot of the Polish people.

That the Virgin Mary often is conflated with the Woman of the Apocalypse, in the same manner as Christ is identified with the Alpha et Omega in the Book of Revelation, may be clearly perceived in the icon which is in my possession (see Figure 10). This particular icon was purchased in Poland in the 1960’s by my Polish parents. It is typical of Polish iconography to “frame” a phonograph of a picture of the Virgin Mary with an image as shown below, but in this case the imagery makes clear references to the Woman in the Revelation, which “*appeared [as] a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.*”



Figure 10 – The Madonna as the Woman of the Apocalypse

Thus she really can be seen to be the Divine Mother in the Qabalistic partzufic Holy Trinity of Father, Mother and Son. All of this makes a very interesting connection to the diagram of *Garden of Eden Before the Fall*, taken from the Grade of Practicus of the Golden Dawn in the Outer, and the angelic female figure surmounting this diagram (see Figure 11). This image expresses the divine feminine, the Holy Qabalah referred to as *Aima Elohim*, which may be translated as “the Mother of God”. Through the imagery she directly corresponds to the Woman of the Apocalypse from the 12th Chapter of the Book of Revelation as quoted above. I further believe that the dynamics between the Virgin Mary and the Woman of the Apocalypse is a very interesting subject, the former being the earthly, fallen and (in matter) entrapped lesser version of the Greater Mother as represented by the latter. In the diagram below the Lesser Mother is represented by the feminine figure (Eve) at the base of the Cross holding the two Pillars, serving as the foundation of existence.

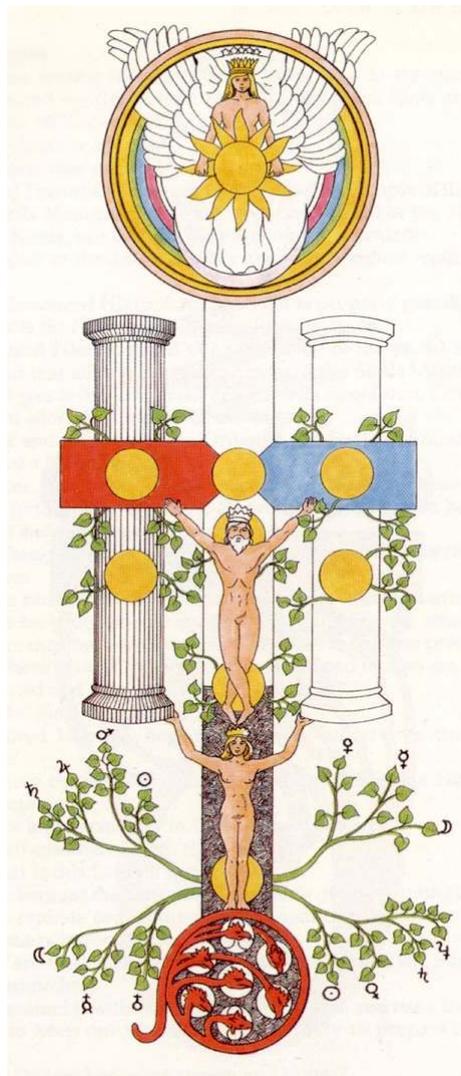


Figure 11 – Diagram of the Garden of Eden before the Fall

However, the truly unique development and clearly antinomian aspect of Sabbatian Qabalah is the acknowledgment of the “evil” and “demonic” as equal parts of God as the “good” and “angelic.” It proposes the concept of a “divine ambivalence”, even on the level of *Ain-Soph* or the “No-Thing”. *Ain-Soph*, according to Nathan of Gaza, consists of two kinds of lights, the “thoughtful” and the “thoughtless”. The former is in favour of creation, the latter trying to

hinder it and conserve the original state of blissful “nothingness”. This latter “light” is “thoughtless” because it lacks the image necessary for creation. The *tzimtzum* (or retraction) – which created cosmos out of chaos – occurred within the “thoughtful light”, which through its creative intention was able to emanate its light towards the first monad or *Kether*. But as a result of all this the “thoughtless light” was also dragged down in the process of creation, which because of its limiting nature tried to prevent it. This created the dialectics between a positively creative force and a destructive power.

Personally I compare these original impulses with the “life” and “death” drives of Sigmund Freud, the latter manifesting as an atavistic drive of regression into the blissful state of the womb, the former the drive of individuation and progress into adulthood. These two conflicting divine intentions of the Macrocosm, which also is reflected in the Microcosm, manifests as the two Pillars of Qabalah, which in the Golden Dawn are painted as black and white to further their polarity and association with the two kinds of lights (See Figure 11). This state or nature of Godhead is also indicated by the Adoration of the Lord of the Universe, which states that he is the “Lord of the Light and of the Darkness.”

Nathan of Gaza also originated the concept of the infernal abyss filled with serpents, set out to destroy creation, also in Zoharic terms called *Sitra Ahra* (or “the Other Side”), the world of shells or Qlippoth, situated below the Supernals on the Tree of Life, in which the thoughtless light resides (see Figure 12). This clearly refers to the Red Dragon symbolism of the Golden Dawn, which can be seen in the Diagrams the Garden of Eden Before and After the Fall from Practicus and Philosophus Grades respectively (see Figures 11 & 12).

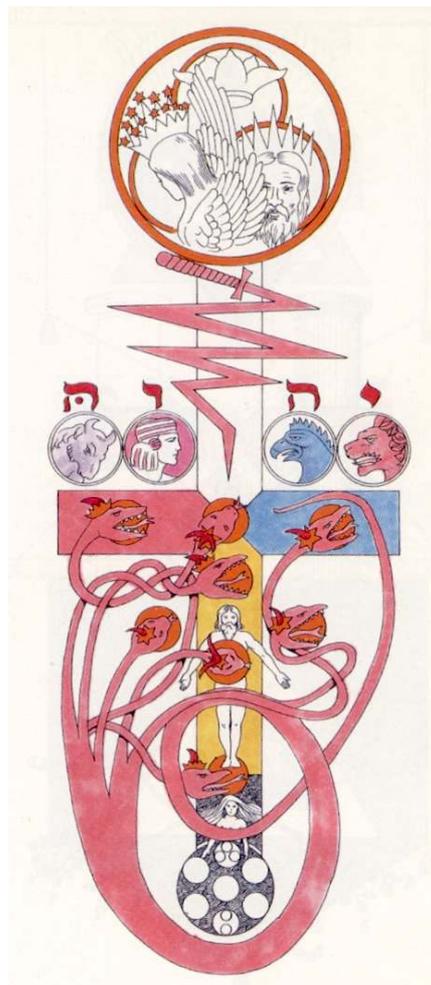


Figure 12 – Diagram of the Garden of Eden after the Fall

This Red Dragon is related to the Lesser Mother, in the image seen as descended into Hell or *Sitra Ahra* proper, represented by the circle with seven spheres at the bottom of the Tree of Life (see Figure 12). Thus the Dragon Power is properly speaking a symbolical representation of the impulse of the Fallen and Lesser Mother to ascend and reunite with her consort at the Supernal Eden. The Red Dragon with seven heads is of course another reference to the Book of Revelation, which states that “*there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*” It is also to be found on the floor of the Vault of Adepti (see Figure 13). Reading the teachings of the Golden Dawn regarding the Red Dragon one becomes struck with the controversial contents of its antinomian teaching, where the goal of the Adept is to ride upon the back of the Dragon, harness the forces of “evil” and gain strength therefrom. This concept also has its equivalent in the Zoharic concept of “The Rider of the Serpent.”



Figure 13 – The floor of the Vault of the Adepti

The Golden Dawn teachings concerning the Fall and the Garden of Eden concerns the process which leads to the “breaking of the vessels.” Note that the diagram of the *Garden of Eden after the Fall* (see Figure 12) depicts the Three of Life in the form of a cross, which only contains the seven lowest Sephiroth and Daath (which indicates the centre of the cross), and at the mercy of the Red Dragon. According to Nathan of Gaza, the only part of the Three of Life which is saved from the attacks of the Dragon, is the Supernal which is symbolized by the great circle, because of it being protected by the four (Elemental) Cherubim and the Flaming Sword which God placed there for the protection of the Garden. According to Nathan, this is the place of the “thoughtful light” upon the Tree of Life.

According to Nathan the creation below the Abyss is in a hopeless condition that only can be restored by a Messianic figure. This is a reference to the New Adam in the philosophy of the Golden Dawn, which is said to be able to reclaim his throne in Tiphareth and rule with his Rod of Iron, a clear reference to the 12th Chapter of the Book of Revelation. The Messiah is the offspring of the fatherly Chokmah (Wisdom) and the motherly Binah (Understanding) – Abba and Aima, the “thoughtful light” and the “thoughtless light” respectively. Together they beget the created world below the Abyss but also its redeemer – the Messiah – that can be seen as being represented by Daath (Knowledge). Daath is both involved with the Fall but simultaneously also constitutes its highest point and the intermediary between the Supernal

Triad and the fallen universe. The Messiah, according to Nathan, stands above the law of Torah and cannot be judged by the common criteria of morality concerning what is good and what is evil. As the redeemer of the fallen world, and the intermediary link between that which is above and that which is below the Abyss, he must also become part of its fallen condition. Thus he must descend into the pit of snakes, and in the Diagrams of the Garden of Eden Before and After the Fall he is represented by the crucified man (Adam) who partakes in the fall of Eve (see Figures 11 & 12). Nathan explains that the soul of the Messiah, as well as ours, constitutes both the “thoughtless light” and the “thoughtful light.” In his mission he cleanses and redeems the fallen ones, but becomes himself unclean and fallen in the process. He is according to Nathan “the holy serpent” which subdues the “serpents of the abyss,” which reminds us of the numerical concordance between the word *mashi'ah* (the anointed) and *nahash* (serpent). This is clearly shown forth in the Adeptus Minor Grade and the Lid of Pastos in the Vault of the Adepti, in the image of the Messiah subduing the serpents or dragon of the infernal abyss (see Figure 14).

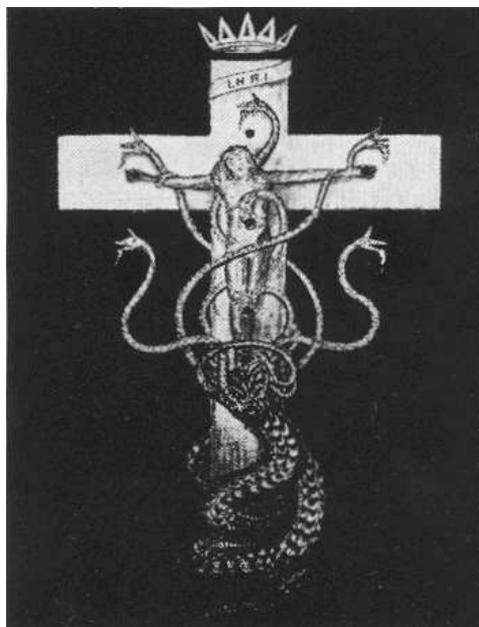


Figure 14 – The image of the Lid of Pastos

Now, this brings us to the sixth Sephirah of Tiphareth, which has a central position in both the Sabbatian doctrine and in the Golden Dawn. It refers to *Zaur Anpin* (Microprosopus), which by Nathan was conceptualised as *Malkah Qadisha*, or “the Holy King,” in his aspect as united with his Queen – the *Shekinah*. It is also called the God of Faith by Nathan. Nathan speaks of the scorch of Tiphareth or the light of *Ilana Yaqira* (the precious tree at the level of Atziluth, the highest of Qabalistic Worlds), created by the harmonious union of the thoughtful light and the thoughtless light. This union is considered necessary, since the thoughtless light has the powers of creation, whereas the thoughtful light, in spite of its desire to create, is impotent, and has to employ the creative forces of the thoughtless light. This light of the God of Faith is then emanated downwards through the other three Qabalistic Worlds, being part of the Abyss of Serpents. This emanated force is called *Mana Yaqira* and is used by the thoughtful light to subdue the Serpents. This light also incarnates in the Messiah, elevating him to a Godhead – The God of Faith. As a matter of fact, Nathan explained off Sabbatai Zevi’s manic depressive disorder in these terms; that he in his own person united both the “Thoughtful” and the “Thoughtless” lights, the former being the manic phases while the latter marking the depressive states of the Messiah.



Figure 15 – Harpocrates, the God of Silence

Lastly we find in the Frankist Qabalah also the notion of *Ma'asah Dumah* (The Work of Silence), which has a clear relationship to the Godform of Harpocrates – the God of Silence of the Golden Dawn and also of Freemasonry. Jacob Frank has been quoted in the *Dicta of the Lord* (a collection of Frank's sayings) as stating, "*The gods of Framassoncy* [i.e. Freemasonry] *will have to do that which those two did.*" The first of these two being Shabatai Zevi and the second Baruchiah Russo, who Frank repeatedly referred to as "The First" and "The Second" avatars. Thus there may be a direct correspondence between the pledge of secrecy of Freemasonry and the Frankist "Ma'asah Dumah," perhaps even referring to Freemasonic Frankists.

So, now, what can we learn from the Sabbatian and especially the Frankist tradition and position to further understand the Golden Dawn tradition? Above all, that the Golden Dawn neither is nor ever should become a religion. The Golden Dawn is a spiritual science and art, which makes use of certain religious symbols, predominantly Christian. But it has nothing to do with religious dogma. Adepts of our tradition should always maintain the integrity of spiritual independence towards organized religion. But at the same time we must remember the admonition of the Neophyte Grade to revere ALL religions as containing a spark of spiritual truth. No religion is truer than the other. No religions, of whatever flavour, can ever contain the whole truth about God. To truly see God we must forsake religion, to see beyond the mental projections of common man that governs the consensus image of Him; man in fact has created God into his own image. He was created out of man's fear of punishment and out of guilt. To see God we must let go of all preconceived notions about His true nature. We must let go of all guilt and the cultural consensus ideas about the nature of sin. We must embrace God as children, pure and undefiled – mentally and spiritually speaking. This is the true significance of Sabbatian antinomianism.

Postscript – Was Jacob Frank a Rosicrucian?

The facts, as presented above, tells us plainly that Jacob Frank's cousin Thomas von Schönfeld, a.k.a. Moses Dobrucshka or Junius Frey, was one of the founding members of the Asiatic Brethren. This compelling evidence clearly shows us the strong link between the Qabalistic Frankist movement on one hand and the Rosicrucian Asiatic Brotherhood on the other. The next logical step is to ask ourselves if this indirect link between the Frankist and Rosicrucian movements, maintained by the intermediary of the cousin von Schönfeld, was all that there is to it or if there also may have existed a more direct connection? Was Jacob Frank himself perhaps a Rosicrucian initiate?

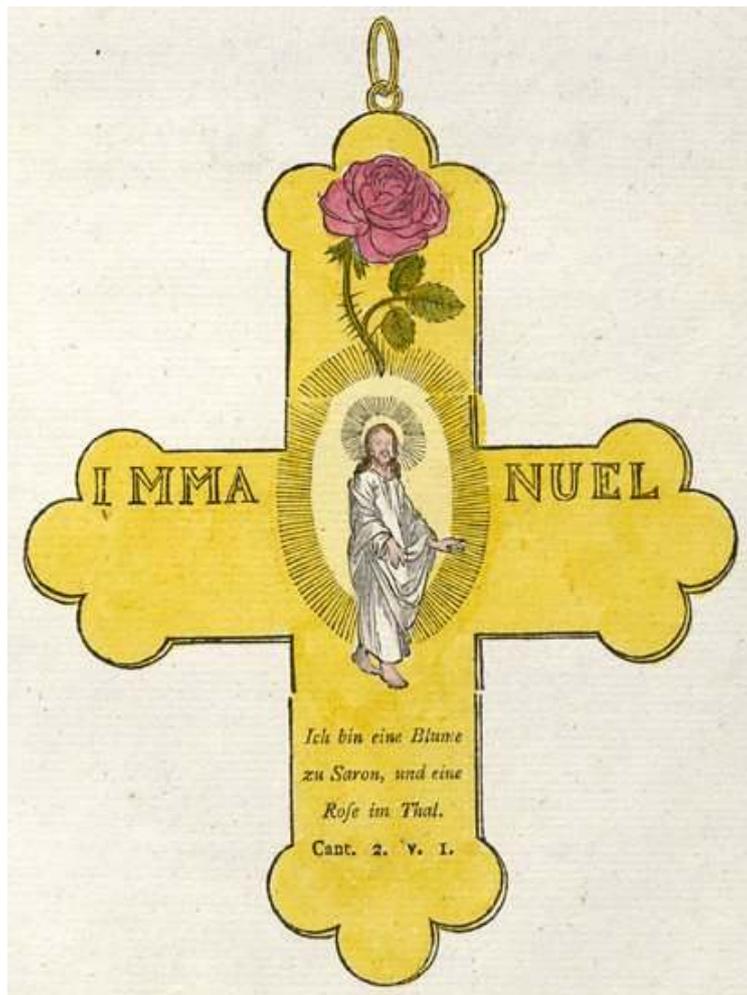


Figure 16 – The Golden Rosy Cross

First of all it must again be made clear that there were two great Rosicrucian fraternities in Germany, the Asiatic Brethren and the Golden Rosy+Cross, the former being a schismatic offshoot of the latter created in 1780 by Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen, an ex-member and initiate of the Golden Rosy+Cross. Together with Hebrew Qabalists, such as Ephraim Hirschfeld and Thomas von Schönfeld, he created the Asiatic Brethren as a much more eclectic version of Rosicrucianism compared to the more professed Christian Esoteric and pietistic orientation of the Golden Rosy+Cross. If Jacob Frank was to belong to anyone of these two big name Orders, he would naturally has been a member of the former. But was he actually?

We do know that Frank was engaged in Alchemical practices. In his book *Jacob Frank: The End to the Sabbataian Heresy* Alexandr Kraushar discusses Frank's alchemical activities in Brunn (or Brno), Moravia, between mid-1770s to 1786:

Franks activities involved... alchemy: successfully persuading his followers that there were certain herbs that, when spread over iron, transmuted that metal into gold; also that there was a 'certain substance' giving eternal life...

Before the element of magic was used by Frank in an attempt to practice alchemy for the purpose of creating gold, the master passed for a doctor, restoring health to the sick by the use of means known only to him...

...when he was feeling better, he began to think about ways to locate new sources of income, to create gold through alchemy. He reminded himself how he had toiled over alchemy with Rabbis Issachar and Mordechai...

...he gathered his brothers, and encouraged them to pursue the knowledge of how to make gold... At Frank's court, there began the preparation of 'gold drops' as a medication 'for all diseases.'

But this fascinating account of Jacob Frank's dabbling with Alchemy doesn't present any actual proof of him being a Rosicrucian. Alchemy was very popular in Germany during the 18th Century, as opposed to France where the enlightenment had ended the openly practice of the Royal Art, which by now had become superseded by modern medicine. But the situation was very different in Germany where Alchemy prevailed and probably were as big as Homeopathy is today in 21st Century Germany. So, even if the practice of Alchemy was a sign of the true Rosicrucian, most Alchemists probably were not. So we have no proof yet of Jacob Frank being a Rosicrucian, even if the plausibility finally has been raised.

Now, throughout this essay I have had the benefit of valuable pointers being made and references given by the Sabbatian Qabalist and Hermetic scholar Olen Rush. Nowhere has he been a more helpful recourse than regarding this question of Jacob Frank's involvement with the Asiatics. He has also asserted me that Jacob Frank and many of his followers were involved in Freemasonry and has furthermore presented some fascinating information which corroborates Mr. Kraushar's findings. Mr. Rush asserts that not only did Frank practice Alchemy but also that he owned several Alchemical laboratories, first in Brunn and later in Offenbach. In the *Dicta of the Lord* Jacob Frank instruct his disciples (Ma'aminim) thus: "*Just as the entire world seeks and wishes to make gold, so I wish to transmute you to refined gold.*"

Mr. Rush refers to yet another tradition which states that Hayyim ben Joseph Vital, who was the disciple of Isaac Luria and recorded the latter's teachings, also practiced Alchemy. His son Schmu'el, who preserved the Lurian teachings and his father's writings, was a guest for some time at the Egyptian home of the Chelebi Raphael Joseph, whose family were Sabbatians. There was a strong Arabic Alchemical presence in Northern Africa, particularly in Fez Morocco, and there was also some crossover to Jewish Alchemy, according to Mr. Olen as late as in the 1920's. Remembering that Jacob Frank was at close ties with the Turkish Donmeh, there is also a possibility of an influence from the Muslim Bektashi Sufi tradition and also from activities of the Donmeh in certain "guilds", perhaps even with Freemasonic connections. Furthermore, in studies of the Qabalistic Alchemical treatise *Aesch Mezareph* ("The Purifying Fire"), which on several accounts resembles some of Vital's descriptions, one needs a Lurianic outlook to unlock its message.

So here we have established the idea of a strong Alchemical tradition behind or parallel with the Lurian and Sabbatian Qabalah, through Rabbi Chayim Vital (who according to Mr. Rush wrote on the subject of Alchemy) and Chelebi Raphael Joseph, the latter being a possible link of a Jewish (i.e. non-Rosicrucian) Alchemical transmission between the Lurianic and Sabbatian Qabalah. We already know that Jacob Frank in fact was working with Alchemical processes for the ten year period while in Brunn and then afterwards also in Offenbach. These facts alone surely make his brand of Qabalah suited for mixing with the Rosicrucian-Alchemical tradition. But still nothing of this is any proof of Jacob Frank being an actual initiate of the Rosicrucian tradition in the real sense of the word.

What's interesting though is that I myself have seen many parallels between Lurianic Qabalah and Alchemy, having knowledge of both systems. "Arzial" is very Alchemical in his exposition of the Qlippoth and the description of the Restoration, which indeed can be compared to the Alchemical principle of *Solve et Coagula*. The freeing of the sparks is clearly analogical with the sublimation of Sulphur and Mercury, and the purification of the Salt from the *Caput Mortum*, the latter actually representing the Qlippoth. Thus Lurianic Qabalah comes into new light or becomes easier understood through the analogy of Alchemy and Spagery. So all these obvious connections, both in history and in theory, has now established a clear Alchemical nature in Lurianic Qabalah, which was transmitted to the Sabbatian and especially Frankist Qabalah. But again, what all of this proves is that there has always existed a Hebrew Alchemical tradition (at least through analogy) parallel to the Hermetic-Rosicrucian Alchemical tradition. But could there also have been a connection between these two in some point of history?

Its very likely that Jacob Frank at the very least was involved in some form of Freemasonry, as he made references to it in his writings, such as the one previously quoted. I furthermore found a very interesting reference to a "Freemasonic Lodge" made by Professor Harris Lenowitz:

In 1786, having bankrupted Brunn, he [i.e. Jacob Frank] moved to Offenbach and carried on in the same manner, appearing in public, but always in a state of pomp and ceremony, and in an exotic costume; he was the pet of the Prince of Ysenburg. During the years in Brunn and Offenbach Frank was closely tied to the founders of the Freemasonic lodge known as the Asiatic Brothers, contributing ideas to their constitution and adopting some of the practices, garb and style of Freemasonry.

So here we find ourselves back to the main subject matter of the Asiatic Brethren. If Professor Lenowitz is correct about this information Jacob Frank was directly involved with the founding and operation of this Rosicrucian society, which were created six years prior to him moving to Offenbach. No wonder then that he practiced Alchemy in Brunn and Offenbach! The Asiatic Brethren continued the Rosicrucian Alchemical tradition of the Golden Rosy+Cross, at least to some extent. So, considering these facts as presented by Professor Lenowitz, we must conclude that Jacob Frank not only practiced Alchemy for at least a decade, but that he himself also most probably was a Rosicrucian initiate!

Fine.