

**The Admission Badges of the Golden Dawn  
Grade Rituals**

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## Introduction

The elemental grade rituals of the Golden Dawn's Outer Order all follow a similar pattern. The aspirant is brought into the hall, is challenged on her knowledge of the preceding grade, traverses a path corresponding to one or more paths on the Tree of Life, and experiences encounters. At the beginning of each ritual or entrance, the aspirant presents an admission badge in order to progress through the ceremony. This paper examines the admission badges of the grade rituals: their nature, purpose and function within the rituals themselves.

## The 1=10 Zelator Hall

Our study begins with the 1=10 Advancement into the Hall of the Zelatori (hereafter referred to as the Zelator ritual, for brevity). The ceremony of Opening the Hall of the Neophytes accomplishes the first initiation of an aspirant into the Order itself, and does not utilize admission badges. It is therefore not addressed here in detail. The Zelator ritual differs somewhat in structure from the rituals which follow it. The Neophyte, having passed the requisite tests and examinations, is ready to begin the actual advancements through the grades, beginning with Zelator, which equates to the sphere of Malkuth on the Tree of Life. There is no "path" *per se* to traverse as in the halls which follow, because the aspirant here is beginning her journey up the Tree. Instead, there is the "Ceremony of the Three Paths", which refers to the three paths leading out of Malkuth, namely the 31<sup>st</sup> path of Shin (Malkuth to Hod), the 32<sup>nd</sup> path of Tau (Malkuth to Yesod), and the 29<sup>th</sup> path of Qoph (Malkuth to Netzach). The aspirant does not actually get to follow or step onto any of these paths, for first she must symbolically enter into the sphere of Malkuth itself, which is the focus of this ritual. At the beginning, the aspirant is fetched by the Hegemon, and given the Fylfot Cross (also called the Hermetic Cross in this ritual) to carry. No explanation is given to the aspirant initially as to the nature of this first of the admission badges, a pattern which is followed throughout the grade rituals. The Hierophant demands of the hoodwinked aspirant, "*...by what aid dost thou seek admission to the 1=10 Hall of the Zelatori?*" and the Neophyte responds with a list of knowledge items or qualifications,

concluding with “*By this symbol of the Hermetic Cross*”. At this point the Kerux takes possession of the badge, and the Neophyte is required to demonstrate her knowledge, and make pledges. Next, she is introduced to the concepts of the Tree of Life, the eternal night of space as embodied by Nuit, the limitless light of Hadit and the reconciling figure of the Malkah, Babalon. These concepts are further reinforced as the ritual progresses and we shall see how the admission badge relates to them.

In the next portion of the ritual, the aspirant is led first up the left-hand path, the Path of Shin, leading towards Hod, and representing a step onto the Pillar of Severity and further, into the void of empty space that is Nuit. The aspirant is turned away, and re-directed towards the right-hand path, the Path of Qoph, leading towards Netzach, and representing motion towards the Pillar of Mercy and the Light of Hadit. The aspirant, being still a Neophyte, may not progress further in either direction at this time, being unready. She is once again directed forward, up the center path, towards Yesod and the sphere of the next grade, Theoricus. Although the aspirant is once again prevented from actually moving into that sphere (which would again not be appropriate at this stage) the Hierophant interposes in the name of Babalon, reconciling the Dark and the Light, and bestows the mysteries of the Zelator Hall, which will be needed for entry into the next portion of the ceremony. As part of the instruction, the Hierophant expounds the meaning of the Fylfot Cross admission badge, presented by the Kerux. In succeeding Halls we will see that it is the Hierophant who explains the first admission badge(s), while the final one, the one which admits the aspirant to the Hall of the grade, is explicated by the Hieres.

The Fylfot Cross is explained as being formed of seventeen squares out of a square of twenty-five (five by five). Regardie (*The Golden Dawn, Sixth Edition, 2000*, p. 68) says that “The 17 Squares out of a square of lesser squares, refer to the *Sun* in the twelve Signs of the Zodiac and the Four Elements.” The signs radiate out from the center sun in the order of cardinal, fixed and mutable, ending with the triangular elemental sign. Although it is the admission badge for the Zelator ritual, the Fylfot Cross appears in the Third Knowledge Lecture, which is the material studied while in the Theoricus grade for advancement to Practicus. (It would seem perhaps more appropriate to study this while in the Zelator grade, the one in which it is used for advancement.) With this badge the aspirant is introduced to the symbol sets for some important ideas and areas of knowledge she will need to master, resumed in a compact form. The Golden Dawn is a solar path. It seeks to educate its adherents and give them the tools and

knowledge that will enable them to achieve knowledge and conversation with their Holy Guardian Angel (“HGA”), also sometimes referred to as the Augoides, the Body of Light. (It should be noted here that not all practitioners of the system agree that this is the goal of the work; others would offer a different definition of the HGA.) In the Qabalistic Tree of Life this refers to the solar sphere of Tiphareth and the 5=6 Grade, the culmination of the outer order and Portal rituals. The central position of the sun in the Fylfot Cross stands for the solar nature of the work the Neophyte has just embarked upon. The sphere of Malkuth, which she is about to enter ritually, is the sphere of Earth but one which also contains and exemplifies the four elements, which are also represented in the Fylfot. Also presented for the first time are the signs of the Zodiac, which will appear in varying arrangements throughout the Knowledge Lectures in relation to the Tarot trumps, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the paths between the spheres on the Tree of Life, and the Geomantic signs, to name but some.

Besides the specifics of the badge’s symbolism, there are two other important aspects of the Fylfot Cross admission badge to consider. Each section of the grade rituals has an energy form associated with it, which the officers and members visualize, as if it were laid out on the floor of the Hall, as part of their work. The shape or pattern of the energy form always matches the admission badge associated with that portion of the ritual. Thus, the energy form of the Zelator ritual throughout the opening and the succeeding sections is that of the Fylfot Cross or swastika. In addition, the admission badge for the entry into the grade is always one of the officers’ lamens, with the exception of the Zelator ritual, which does not use one.

In the second section of the Zelator ritual, the Neophyte actually enters the temple in Malkuth. Here, as noted above, the Neophyte has no admission badge to enter the Hall of the grade – unlike in the grade ceremonies which are to follow. It’s not clear whether this omission is a design flaw on the part of the author(s) or if it is intentional. It may be that in the case of this ritual the admission badge presented in the Ceremony of the Three Paths counts for entry into both sections. On the other hand, the Dadouchos’s lamen, which has a swastika on it, could serve for this purpose. It’s possible that at some point the symbol of the swastika was deemed too controversial due to associations with the Nazis, and its explicit use as an admission badge was dropped (a topic for another paper!). The Cypher Manuscript does not show the use of an admission badge at this point in the ritual.

Returning to discussion of the badge itself, we find that the badge nicely reflects or resumes one of the two major teachings the aspirant receives, namely the signs of the zodiac (the Girdle of Nuit). In the Fylfot we have the first of many badges (and corresponding energy forms) in the shape of a cross, here a cross with bent arms. As we progress in this examination of the admission badges it will be seen that the Calvary cross predominates. Including the Portal ritual's admission badges, we have a total of 6 crosses (including the Fylfot), 2 pyramidal shapes, and 4 lamens. In my opinion this reflects a preoccupation with the Christian Calvary cross, which, even when superimposed with Hermetic data, is unpalatable for 21<sup>st</sup> century Pagan sensibilities. It may be that a redesign of some of these admission badges is in order. According to the Ciceros (*Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple, Book 1: Creating Magical Tools, 2004, p.133*) the Fylfot cross has associations with fire, being formed in a square of 25 squares, which is the number of squares found in the Kamea of Mars. This also explains why the Fylfot is the symbol of the Dadouchos's lamen, again according to the Ciceros. They also state:

“In addition, the Fylfot is a symbol attributed to the first Sephirah, Kether. Here it represents the four latent (primal) elements whose energies are united in Kether, activated by the Primum Mobile or First Whirlings. These energies are finally differentiated into the four base elements of Fire, Water, Air, and Earth on reaching the level of Malkuth on the Tree. The Fylfot Cross, given to the candidate in the Zelator grade, points out a close relationship that exists between Kether and Malkuth.” (Ciceros, p. 133)

## **The 2=9 Theoricus Hall**

In the ceremony for the advancement in to the Hall of the Theorici, the pattern of admission badge usage as described above stabilizes. After the opening of the Hall, the aspirant is brought in, holding in her hand the Greek Cubical Cross. On it are painted the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. After the challenge to prove her knowledge of the words and signs of the Zelator grade, she pledges to penetrate the mysteries of the next Path and Grade, using the Cubical Cross during the making of her pledge. This is the only instance where the admission badge is actually used during the pledge, which possibly attests to the importance of the Hebrew alphabet portrayed upon it. The Zelator carries the Cubical Cross with her as she traverses the Path of Tau and encounters the Elemental Cherubim. These beings, embodied by the various floor officers, challenge the Zelator to provide their elemental and solar names.

Throughout the opening of the Theoricus Hall and the advancement on the Path of Tau, the energy form at work in the Hall is that of a thick equal-armed cross, matching and relating to the Greek Cubical Cross.

In her responses to the Cherubim, the Zelator must also provide the Hebrew letter which is the key to their individual elements. She has previously been introduced to the Hebrew alphabet in the 1=10 ceremony, with particular emphasis on the twelve simple letters and their relation to the signs of the Zodiac as expressed in the symbol of the Girdle of Nuit (Hegemon's lection, entering the Temple in Malkuth), and the seven double letters, as another manifestation of the magickal number seven (Hierus's lection, entering the Temple in Malkuth). Now, she must understand (and cite) the three Mother letters at the elemental stations, plus their combination as a referrant for North. All the while, she carries the badge which depicts the entire alphabet. The Hierophant has this to say of the Greek Cubical Cross:

“The Cubical Cross is a fitting emblem of the equilibrated and balanced forces of the Elements. It is composed of 22 squares externally, thus referring them to the 22 letters that are placed thereon. Twenty-two are the letters of the Eternal Voice, in the Vault of Heaven, in the depth of Earth; in the Abyss of Water; in the All-Presence of Fire. Heaven cannot speak their fullness; Earth cannot utter it. Yet, the Creator-Creatrix has bound them in all things. They are mingled in the Water. They are whirled aloft in Fire. They are sealed in the Air of Heaven. They are distributed through the Planets. They are assigned unto the Twelve Constellations of the Universe. “

With these lofty words, the Zelator is given the full key to the Yetziratic meanings of the letters. She already knows of the three Mothers or elemental letters (with Aleph-Mem-Shin standing in for earth) and now has the knowledge that the seven planets and twelve constellations or zodiac signs comprise the rest of the set. Thus, the ritual and its admission badge reinforce and build upon the knowledge that is communicated in the previous Hall. We will see this mechanism repeatedly used throughout the rituals: ideas and symbols are introduced ritually and didactically (via lectures and diagrams) that are summed up in the admission badges

In the Cypher Manuscript, the main source document upon which the Golden Dawn grade rituals were based, all of the admission badges are specified. While the Fylfot Cross's components are listed in detail (Carroll Runyon, *Secrets of the Golden Dawn Cypher Manuscript*, 1997, p. 83), the Cubical Cross is merely depicted in its form, which the Hierophant describes as being of twenty and two squares (Runyon, pp. 97, 101). The cross used by the OSOGD has its letters arranged as follows: on one face of 5 squares, there is a vertical column of

Shin at the top followed by Aleph and Mem at the bottom, with Resh and Gimel to the left and right respectively. This gives us the three Mothers (elements) balanced by the Sun and Moon. On the reverse side, the five squares contain the letters for the remaining five planets, with Beth for Mercury at the top, descending to Tau/Saturn and Kaph/Jupiter, balanced by Daleth/Venus to the left and Peh/Mars to the right (a neat opposition!). So, the faces of the Cross give us the elements (Mothers) and the planets (the double letters). The remaining squares that form the outer perimeter of the Cross, as it were, are those of the twelve simple letters equating to the signs of the Zodiac, and arranged in that order beginning with Heh/Aries at the left and continuing around the edge. This design, conceived by the OSOGD's Chief Adept, stands in contrast to that described by the Ciceros (*Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple, Book 1: Creating Magical Tools*, pp. 135-137). The front face of the Ciceros' cross shows the sun/Resh in the middle surrounded by the 4 elements, with Aleph/air above, Mem/water below, Shin/fire to the right and Tau for earth to the left. On the back face are the remaining "planets": vertically we see Beth/Mercury at the top, Kaph/Jupiter in the center, Gimel/Moon at bottom, balanced by Daleth/Venus to the right and Peh/Mars to the left (a slightly different opposition). Around the edges we again find the zodiacal letters, arranged in elemental groupings. So for example, on the arm of the cross with Mem on the front, we have for water Qoph/Pisces, Nun/Scorpio and Cheth/Cancer. This reinforces the idea of the Cubical Cross as the "symbol of equated forces", namely the elemental forces.

The Path of Tau is full of fours: the admission badge's cross has 4 equal arms; the encounter is with the 4 Cherubim of the 4 elements who also represent the 4 elements and the 4 stations or positions of the sun. The sun has its own path, just as those who follow this solar Path do. All of these ideas of the elements, the planets and the celestial signs of the zodiac are "symbolically united" in the twenty-first Key of the Tarot for this path, the World. The ceremony ends with another set of 4, the four powers of the Sphinx. In the next portion of the advancement, the Zelator, having traversed the Path leading out of Malkuth, enters the Temple in Yesod. Here, the energy form of the Hall shifts to that of a Caduceus, and in order to gain admittance, the Zelator carries a Caduceus badge or lamen. Pat Zalewski refers to this badge succinctly as "the blueprint of the ceremony in Yesod". The Zelator, having stepped onto the Tree in Life in Malkuth, now begins to travel upwards on it and may be said to be in the Tree. The Hieres expands this idea in his speech to the Zelator about the badge: "*The Tree of Life*

*and Three Mother Letters are the Keys with which to unlock the Caduceus of Hermes and the Caduceus of Hermes is the Key with which to unlock this Hall*". The Hieres then goes on to explain how the Caduceus can be superimposed on the Tree of Life (with a little bending!). The Caduceus or staff of Hermes in this way equates with the whole of the Tree of Life, which, wielded, like a staff provides immense and complex power for the magickian. The three Mother letters may likewise be superimposed on the central shaft of the Caduceus, reinforcing the concepts of the 4-in-3 elements and chief letters of the Hebrew alphabet. (Both of these ideas are included in graphical diagrams for study in Knowledge Lecture Three, which is the one to be studied while in the Theoricus grade.) The economy and elegance of these ideas is summed up by the Hieres: "*Altogether the Caduceus forms an active fusion of the whole of the Tree of Life and to wield it is to wield the whole Tree*". Additional layers of meaning are reinforced when the Hierophant states, "The Tree of Life is the Structure upon which our rituals and myths are built. It shows the Way of Creation and is the Union of Heaven and Earth enabling the Mage to ascend to the utmost heights" and introduces the special practice of the Theoricus, the Middle Pillar. Having been instilled on numerous levels with the building blocks of the elements, the planets and the zodiac, and the alphabet which magickally expresses them, the new Theoricus receives a fuller exposure to the Tree of Life (building on the introduction received in the Zelator Hall) and its central position in the Golden Dawn canon – all resumed in the admission badge of the Kerux's Caduceus lamen. According to the Ciceros this badge "is an explicit representation of the same energies found hidden in the wand and lamen of the Keryx." (*Secrets of a Golden Dawn Temple, Book 1: Creating Magical Tools*, p. 139). Calling it a "symbol of precise symmetry", they note that:

"The winged sphere and intertwined serpents also suggest the tri-unity of heraldry (a shield between two supporters), always expressive of the idea of active equilibrium, of opposing forces balancing one another in such a way as to create a higher, static form. It is this equilibrating and reconciling aspect of the caduceus which allies it to the element of Air." (Ciceros, p. 140).

Pat Zalewski mentions the alchemical significance or symbolism of the Caduceus:

"Alchemically you have the unification of opposites, the conjunction, the masculine Sulphur and feminine Quicksilver, held in equilibrium, at the most crucial and final part of the experiment."

(Pat Zalewski, *Golden Dawn Rituals and Commentaries Volume Two*, [privately printed], p. 262)

He also views the central shaft and serpents twining about it as akin to the three Indian (Vedic)

nadis or channels of energy, the serpents being the Ida and Pingala referred to by the Hieres in the ritual. The multilayered symbolism and levels of meaning in a single admission badge is typical of the built-in complexity of the Golden Dawn rituals, of which the admission badges are but a part.

## **The 3=8 Practicus Hall**

When first exposed to the Practicus ritual, some may find the fiery quality of the text contradictory, given that the Hall is attributed to the element of water. As the aspirant ritually climbs the Tree, the rituals themselves become more complex, and the reflexive and paradoxical aspects of the 3=8 ritual is part of that complexity. Thus in the Practicus Hall we have a very fiery ritual, and we will see further on that the Philosophus Hall is similarly watery. (This is due in part to the traditional Kabalistic elemental attributions to the spheres in association with the Tetragrammatron.) In the Practicus Hall there are two paths to traverse before entering the temple in Hod: the 31<sup>st</sup> Path of Shin, leading from Malkuth into Hod, reflecting the sphere of Fire, and the 30<sup>th</sup> Path of Resh, leading from Yesod to Hod, reflecting the sphere of the Sun. Certainly by their symbolism these are two very fiery paths, and this fiery nature is expressed in the first admission badge, the solid triangle or tetrahedron of fire. The energy form of this hall is likewise triangular, with the apex at the Hierophant's throne extending to the other two angles anchored by the Hieres and Hegemon (who are the only officers conducting the ritual). The Theoricus carries the Tetrahedron of fire as she traverses the Hall, on the Path of Shin, the letter of elemental fire, and encounters the three beings known as the Kabiri

Regardie describes the admission badge as follows: "The solid triangle or tetrahedron, or Pyramid of Fire, the Admission for the Path of Shin, represents the Simple Fire of Nature and the Latent or Hidden Fire. The three upper triangles refer to Fire – Solar, Volcanic and Astral, while the lower or basal triangle represents the latent heat." On the badge itself are inscribed words for these types of fire: Aud-active, Aub-passive, and Aur-equilibrated. On the bottom is the word "Asch" for Fire itself. So, the Theoricus is given a pyramid representing all types of fire to carry as she walks the Path of Fire. As she enters the Hall, the Hegemon proclaims, "*Then also the Pyramid was builded so that the initiations might be complete.*" (emphasis mine) Is this a hint that the Theoricus must "pass" her initiation into this fiery Hall and its inhabitants in order to

complete her initiation (advancement) into the Practicus grade? As she proceeds, she meets in succession the three Kabiri, each of whom challenges her to examine the fiery objects they hold and tell them about its nature. As the Theoricus encounters fire Solar, Terrestrial/Volcanic, and Astral, she participates in building the Pyramid of Flame in the Hall, at the same time that she is carrying the key to the demands of the Kabiri. In discussing this badge the Ciceros state that “The angelic powers, called forth by the student journeying upon the Tree, determine what aspects of the initiate are unsuitable for his or her spiritual growth. These undesirable qualities are slowly burned away by the purging fire of Shin.” (Ciceros, p. 143) Pat Zalewski has more to say on the triangular energetic form of the floor of this Hall than on the badge itself. In his training, only when he began to perceive the energetic forms was he given instruction in the relationship between the badges and those energy forms laid out on the floor of the halls. Zalewski mentions some papers discussing this: “For some reason or another very few would be given the papers of the Admission Badges on the Temple floor plans.” (Zalewski, Vol. 2, p. 306) (I have no idea what these papers are or if they are still extant or available; it would certainly be interesting to find out.) Further, he says his mentor Jack Taylor felt that this particular energetic floor plan “...was one of the most significant in the Outer Order rituals. Not so much for hidden currents of energy on the floor but for the deep symbology, which Taylor told me was almost alchemical by nature. For this part of the ritual leads to the water grade of Hod, Splendour, though it is supported by the Triangle of Fire, the base of the cup.” He provides further explanation of these alchemical references, but what may be most useful here is to note that the triangular base of the cup, found on the lamens of Stolistes, which is used as the admission badge into the Temple in Hod, is that of fire. Viewed from the throne of the Hierophant, it is the elemental triangle of water. Again one thinks of the correspondences between the triangles of fire and water between the grades of Practicus-Hod-Water and Philosophus-Netzach-Fire

Having succeeded on the Path of Shin, the Theoricus next must traverse the Path of Resh, leading from Yesod to Hod. The Sun and its corresponding Tarot card are the symbols associated with this path, and the ritual addresses itself to these solar themes. The aspirant once again encounters the Kabiri as she travels about the Hall. Upon entering the Hall, she receives the admission badge of the Greek Solar Cross or Cross of Thirteen Squares. The Hegemon proclaims, “*Then the sun did appear unclouded, and the mouth of Asi was upon the mouth of Asar.*” This not only previews the solar nature of the journey the Theoricus is about to embark

upon, it also makes a connection to the admission badge, and it subtly reminds the aspirant of the solar quality of the Work she has undertaken. Whereas in the Path of Shin (fire) the aspirant was challenged to speak of the varying natures of fire, here she is required to articulate the nature of fire in relation to the positions of the sun as embodied in certain objects. Just as she journeys about the Hall, the earth journeys about the Sun and so we experience the Sun in “greatest elevation” at the Summer Solstice, in the “greatest depression” of the Winter Solstice (all oriented for inhabitants of the northern hemisphere, of course!), and at the balance of the Equinox. According to Zalewski, quoting Wynn Westcott, this is derived from the celebration of the Samothracian Mysteries performed at the vernal equinox. These mysteries honored the beings known as the Kabiri (Axieros, Axiokersos and Axiokersa plus the aspirant Kasmillos). Here we see the incorporation of some lesser-known classical themes and images which are solar in nature, neatly fitted into a ritual journey along the Qabalistic Tree of Life’s 30<sup>th</sup> path of the Sun. Zalewski says of this, “At this point it should be noted that what the Golden Dawn is trying to do is not merely take some Godforms from an old current of power but actually tap into that ancient current conceived by the Kabiri and draw from its energies yet within the framework of the Order.” (Zalewski, Vol. 2, p.312)

The admission badge of the Greek Solar Cross fitly has the sun at its center, surrounded by radiating arms showing the signs of the zodiac. These are similar to those of the Fylfot cross, in that the signs are arranged by element, radiating outward in order of Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable signs, though they lack the elemental symbols. When the cross is held so that the signs are upright, the lower arm or stem of the cross is that of the water signs, so that the aspirant naturally grasps the cross by the arm of water, as is suitable to the grade she is entering. (This cross appears in the Fourth Knowledge Lecture, to be studied while in the grade of Practicus, presumably so that the aspirant may further study the ideas and concepts presented in this advancement.) The Hierophant succinctly explains it as being “...*formed of thirteen squares which fitly refer to the Sun’s motion through the Zodiac, these signs being further arranged in the arms of the Cross according to the Four Elements with the sun in center and representing that luminary as the center of the whole.*” Over and over we are reminded of this idea of the centrality of the Sun. Not surprisingly, the energy form of the hall is a slim equal-armed cross, to match the admission badge. The Ciceros draw another parallel between the admission badge and the Intelligence of the Path it is associated with. The Hierophant speaks of the Collecting

Intelligence of the Thirtieth Path, saying “...it is so called because from it the Astrologers deduce the judgment of the Stars and of the Celestial Signs, and the perfection of their science according to the rules of their resolutions.” The Ciceros relate this Collecting Intelligence to the governance of the many factors comprising an individual personality, as expressed by the signs of the zodiac, vessels of planetary influence.

“A person’s sun sign is central to both his or her present and past incarnations. The Thirtieth Path signifies a collecting of knowledge on every level. On the path, the ‘collected’ parts of the student’s personality are given an infusion of the Sun’s intellectual qualities of warmth and light. Here the student also begins to perceive the higher forces which have formed his or her own personality.” (Ciceros, pp. 144-145)

The natal astrology chart can be an excellent tool for understanding an individual’s personality, and the admission badge is another vehicle for illustrating and driving home the significance of the Zodiac in the Golden Dawn rituals and curriculum.

Having approached the Sphere of Hod on two different fiery paths, the Theoricus at last enters the Temple in Hod, bearing as her admission badge a most appropriate symbol, the lamén of the Stolistes. To enter the grade dedicated to water, the aspirant bears a portrait of a cup, rich in meaning on multiple levels in typical Golden Dawn fashion. To bear a cup is a sign of service (serving others), to drink of it is to quench the thirst for knowledge, for spiritual development and understanding, and the thirst that arises from the exertions in striving for them. The cup holds many things, nourishment and refreshment, and signifies receptivity as well as a pouring out. Its cool moisture stands in contrast to the fiery imagery of the preceding paths. We see here duplicated the pattern of meaning attached to the Kerux lamén in the Theoricus Hall: a lamén is the entrance badge, its shape dictates the energy form of the hall, the three elements of air-water-fire are found in its formation, and it is interpreted as a mapping for the Tree of Life. This parallel is made explicit in the Hieréus’s speech to the aspirant (holding true to the pattern of the explanation of the lamén badge provided by the Hieréus). The Hieréus says, “*Like the Caduceus, it further represents the Three Elements of Water, Air, and Fire. The Crescent is the Water which is above the Firmament, the Circle is the Firmament, and the Triangle, the consuming Fire below, which is opposed to the Celestial Fire symbolized by the upper part of the Caduceus.*” (Note that the three shapes of the parts of the cup are also those of the corresponding elemental Tattwa cards.) The reference to the Triangle of Fire reminds the aspirant of the paths she has just traversed. It is also described in terms of being composed of

Yesod and Malkuth, the spheres of the Halls she has already achieved, and forming the pedestal of the cup as well as the lower portion of the Tree of Life, another opportunity to deliver a lesson in the composition of the Tree in terms of the shape of the admission badge.

## **The 4=7 Philosophus Hall**

In the Philosophus grade rituals we will see a very close replication of the patterns of the Practicus ritual, expressed in terms of water and watery imagery. Just as the Theoricus experienced the fiery paths of and entrance into the watery Practicus grade, here the Practicus treads the watery paths into the fire grade of Philosophus. Zalewski again relates this to alchemical processes and types of alchemical fires. (I'm not convinced that this is a useful layer of meaning, even if it is true, but that is a topic for further research and outside the scope of this paper.) He does state that his mentor Jack Taylor informed him that "...the previous level of Practicus is the one that starts to stir the Fire Element within and the Philosophus level is but an expansion of it." (Zalewski, Vol. 2, p. 323) In the most elaborate ritual yet, the aspirant treads three paths before entering the Temple in Netzach. All four sections of the ritual follow the patterns we have seen so far. The aspirant is given an admission badge to carry while she traverses the hall, encounters beings or experiences, and the badges are explained by the Hierophant until she enters the Temple of the Sephira when it is explained by the Hieres. The energy patterns on the floors of the Halls match the shape of the badge. The first three admission badges resume and reinforce symbol sets and knowledge systems that the aspirant must learn, internalize, and be tested upon in order to progress in the Golden Dawn system. These sets and systems comprise some of the building blocks of magickal knowledge: the signs of the Zodiac, the four elements, the ten sephiroth of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. The final badge is the Lamen of the Hegemon, used in the way we have to come to expect, as a means of mapping yet another grouping of the sephiroth. What else can be said at this point about the badges? Rather a lot, as it turns out.

The admission badge for the 29<sup>th</sup> Path of Qoph is a Latin cross of twelve squares, holding the glyphs for the signs of the Zodiac. The horizontal bar of the cross is populated by the fixed Kerubic signs of the four elements (from left to right, Taurus, Aquarius, Scorpio, Leo) used in the invocations at the opening of the rituals, with Cancer in the middle. The vertical bar holds

the remaining signs in order of their occurrence minus the ones in the crossbar. Now, on this path of Qoph, associated with Pisces and the Moon, both watery images, the aspirant is challenged by three beings ruling three types of water, that are also associated with time. Like the Kabiri with their objects of fire, Than, Lilith and Theli each offer a cup to the aspirant and command her to tell them of its nature. In this way the aspirant experiences the stagnant waters of the Past, the empty, waterless cup of the Future, and the sweet, balanced cup of the Present. The Hierophant by way of explaining the badge says, *“The Latin cross of Twelve squares fitly represents the Zodiac which embraces the Waters of Nu, as the ancient Egyptians called the Heavens, the Waters which are above the Firmament. It also alludes to the Eternal River, divided into four streams which find their correlations in the four triplicities of the Zodiac.”* Here we have, in my opinion, a not completely comfortable melding of Christian and non-Christian symbology. We have the waters of Nu as a reference for the heavenly home of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, which echoes back nicely to the Zelator Hall and the Girdle of Nuit. But why arrange them on a cross? Surely there must be some other ways to represent the Zodiac, perhaps in some other shape or symbol harking back to Egypt. Even for Christians, it seems inappropriate to use the shape of the Calvary cross, the instrument on which Jesus was tortured and killed, as a means of presenting the Zodiac. Traditional Golden Dawn practitioners such as the Ciceros and Pat Zalewski accept and are evidently comfortable with the explanation that the Calvary cross alludes to the Garden of Eden, specifically the “Eternal River of Eden, divided into four heads”. The Ciceros describe this river Naher as flowing out of Eden which they liken to the Supernal Triad. They continue this Qabalistic imagery by stating that Naher divides at Daath into four elemental streams that pour into Geburah (Pison, fire), Chesed (Gihon, water) and Tiphareth (Hiddekel, air) with the fourth (Phrath/Euphrates) flowing down to Earth while receiving the virtues of all three. (Ciceros, pp. 149-150) I’m not convinced that this imagery would work all that well even for Christians; it really feels like it’s stretching to make it all fit on the cross. For modern Pagans, it really does not hold water. Zalewski speaks of the analogy of the aspirant taking a journey on the Egyptian river of Life. I don’t see this at all in the traditional Philosophus ritual. He further says “When Mathers created this part of the ceremony, he also combined the theology of the Ra boat going through the heavens which is why the Admission badge consists of the twelve squares of the zodiac.” (Zalewski, Vol. 2, p. 350) Modern scholarship seems to indicate that it is Westcott who wrote most of the Outer Order

rituals, and the aforementioned theology is not evident. Zalewski also mentions almost in passing, while discussing the energy form being activated in the hall, that it relates to the Calvary Cross Squares on the Enochian Tablets. This seems a more fruitful line of inquiry that should be followed up in a separate paper. Finally, while all the discussion is of a Calvary or Latin cross, the energy pattern illustrated in Zalewski's volume is that of an equal-armed cross, which further does not seem to make sense. This admission badge remains a pastiche which could be improved by retaining the Zodiac signs and jettisoning the Cross.

Having traversed Malkuth to Netzach, the Practicus next must essay the 28<sup>th</sup> Path of Tzaddi from Yesod to Netzach. Along the way she meets three new beings, each of whom embodies not only a type of water, but also a river, and one which is placed or located on Earth. So we have Lorelei of the River Alpheus in Europe, offering a cup of water for her Waters of the Earth; Laxmi of the River Laxmi in India offering a cup of wine for her Waters of Life; and Lilith of the River Naher in Chaldee, offering a cup of milk for the Celestial Waters. In this section, there are no "right" answers to the challenges, only a test of the aspirant's perceptions and understanding of the symbolism and qualities of water. The admission badge for this journey is the solid pyramid of the elements, a four-sided pyramid bearing on its side the names of the four elements in Hebrew, the word Olam or World on the base underside, and the word Eth or Essence on the truncated, flat top. In explaining the badge, the Hierophant notes the square based representing the Material Universe and the apex containing the word for Essence. The pyramid does not serve merely to remind the aspirant once more of the importance of the four elements. It also serves as a preview of the work that must be done once the aspirant has passed from the grade of Philosophus into the Portal, when the four elements must be invoked separately and then together in order for the quintessence to arise out of them. In speaking of the energy form of the hall, Zalewski relates the four sides of the pyramidal shape to the four rivers arising out of Eden and says that this is a time when the candidate is lead back to a state of "pure spirituality and harmony that existed before the Fall." It's not clear to me what he bases that statement on, even in the context of the traditional ritual. How do these four rivers relate to a four-sided pyramid inscribed with the name of the four elements? And how does that relate to a Christian notion of pre-Fall purity? What purpose does it serve at all?

The Practicus has one more path to travel, the 28<sup>th</sup> Path of Peh, before she can enter the Temple in Netzach. Here the water imagery is left behind as she approaches Netzach from Hod,

on the path of Mars and the Tower card. The Hegemon proclaims “*Herein is the forge of Hephestus, the smith of Ptah*” as the Practicus takes in her hand yet another cross for her admission badge. She travels from water to fire through this forge, harried by the imps and their dinning noise, while the three officers read the Martial poetry of Part 1 of *Liber Liberi vel Lapdis Lazuli*. At the end of this trial, which may recall the noise of an actual forge, the officers cry in unison: “*I cried aloud the word – and it was a mighty spell to bind the Invisible, an enchantment to unbind the bound; yea, to unbind the bound.*” Like the images of destruction on the Tower card, the aspirant in the Golden Dawn system must be willing to come undone, to dissolve or break up into disparate pieces and then bind herself back together into a new, whole entity, ready to take up the work of an Adept. Like the pyramid of the elements in the preceding path, this theme presages the work that must be done in Portal. The Hierophant as is usual explicates the latest cruciform badge: “*The Latin Cross of Ten Squares refers to the Ten Sephiroth in balanced disposition, before which the Formless and the Void rolled back. It is also the opened out form of the double Cube and of the Altar of Change, the Anvil of the Universe.*” This last is an apt metaphor given that the aspirant has just traversed the smithy of Ptah, and been psychically beaten on or tempered by the imps. Once again we have a key set of symbols resuming a cornerstone of the knowledge necessary to progress through the system, presented in the form of a cross. I posit that the same arguments that make the cross an unnecessary or inappropriate vehicle for the signs of the Zodiac in the 29<sup>th</sup> Path of Qoph may be applied here. Surely the ten sephiroth of the Tree of Life are just as important, and their presentation in the form of a Calvary cross is just as unsuitable. Why not create an admission badge that is a physical representation of the Tree itself? If the spheres can be “rearranged” so as to fit in the shape of a Caduceus or a Cup, why not choose a more appropriate shape such as a blade, or a hammer, or an ankh. It’s all well and good to say that the cross is the opened out form of the double cube, but is that good *enough*? The cross of ten squares is shown in the Cypher Manuscript (as are the other admission badges) but the contents of the squares are not specified. (Runyon, p. 153-154) Zalewski discourses on the possible confusion between the Altar of Incense and the Altar of Burnt Offerings (Zalewski, Vol. 2, pp. 333-334) in reference to the opened out cube, but to no effective end. The Ciceros talk about the Altar of Incense in reference to the Path of Peh being one of purification (Ciceros, p. 156) , which seems accurate, except that the Altar of Incense is only referenced in the traditional ritual, so their remarks are not very useful for this discussion. And

what exactly is the “balanced disposition” of the ten sephiroth? How is fitting the ten spheres into a cruciform object balanced, when the cross does not resemble the shape of the Tree of Life, and the rightful arrangement of the spheres is not even close to maintained? (Surely we can do better than this!) I contend this is not only unsuitable for modern Pagan practitioners, it was probably also not very functional for the original members of the Order either, Christians though they were. Given all this, the visualization and development of a cruciform energy shape on the floor of this Hall seems similarly useless. This admission badge is likewise a candidate for a makeover.

Holding true to the pattern, for the entry into Netzach the Practicus is given the lamen of the Hegemon. The Hieres has one more opportunity to explain how the six Sephiroth of the Microprosopus refer to the six squares of the unfolded cube, and how the cross (with the usual allowance of bending the imagination) can be interpreted to embrace Malkuth, Yesod, Hod, Netzach and Tiphareth. By this point the repeated symbolism of the cross and the arrangements of the spheres begins to seem rather shopworn, and the corresponding pattern of energy in the hall to be without interest or utility. One wonders if there was some plan to utilize each of the officers’ lamens as admission badges, regardless of how fitting they were for the job. In the Cypher Manuscript one can see the glyph for this badge provided by the author(s) of that document. In the Cypher, it looks more like a card on which are ten dots for the ten spheres on the Tree. There is an upright cross drawn that encompasses Yesod and Tiphareth vertically and Hod and Netzach horizontally. A circle is drawn around the cross, with its lowest point touching Malkuth and its upper portion touching Chesed and Geburah. Runyon says in a footnote that this is “Venus on the Tree of Life”. (Runyon, p. 155) Again this seems like stretching things a bit but it makes more sense than some of the other explanations of the cross forms. The Ciceros state that “This badge is given to the Philosophus to emphasize the balance that must be attained in the 4=7 grade between Water and Fire, emotions and intellect. The Calvary Cross of Six Squares underscores the reconciling sphere of Tiphareth, tempering and equilibrating between the opposing energies which meet head-to-head in this grade.” (Ciceros, p. 159) I cannot agree completely with either of these statements. How does this badge particularly reflect balance? The Philosophus grade is attributed to the element of fire and in it one begins to get the sense of tempering, of the individual’s primal matter being refitted, reforged into something new. The actual balancing work comes later, in the Portal. Water does not balance the Fire here, any more

than Earth balances Air in Yesod. As to the Calvary cross underscoring the reconciling sphere of Tiphareth, I would say rather that it resonates with the Hegemon's office and its function to reconcile between light and darkness, which has more to do with her godform of Ma'at than the sphere of Tiphareth.

## **Conclusion**

The aspirants in these elemental grade rituals are given admission badges to hold as they enter halls, traverse paths and meet challenges. The badges are usually taken away from them shortly after entering, and explained at the end of the first hall or shortly after entering the temple of the Grade. What purpose do they serve other than ceremonial? It may simply be that their primary function is to give the aspirant a tangible representation of the energy form of the hall she is about to enter, and to link her to that energy form, even if she is unaware of the purpose behind it at the time. The badges also serve as teaching tools either at the end or the beginning of a ritual section. In not every case is the information resumed on the badge pertinent to the part of the ritual where it is used. A strong case can be made for rethinking the symbology of what is depicted on some of the lamens badges. An even stronger case can be made for replacing the various cross-shaped badges with some in more meaningful shapes, either harking back to ancient ones such as the ankh, or perhaps looking at what modern science (physics, chemistry, astronomy) can offer us in terms of imagery. This would make an excellent project for a future redaction of the Golden Dawn rituals.