

The European Myth and Mystery



The myths that describe Europe's role in the world and the mysteries or sacred dramas that reveal how that role is best acted out and assist its performance.

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The Mysteries

“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages.”

Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII.

The word ‘mystery’ refers not only to something hidden from us, for us to try to discover, but also to the sacred allegorical dramas of the mystery schools wherein each drama or play—each containing profound wisdom or truth—is known as a mystery. The purpose of these is to initiate people, leading them step-by-step, degree by degree, past veil after veil, into an ever-increasing illumined and practical knowledge of truth.

Freemasonry has an expression for this, which is the search for the Lost Word, which Word is the divine Wisdom or Truth. In discovering this Word or Truth, in all its different aspects and degrees of expression, we in turn become the embodiment of truth and know that truth, which knowledge is illumination and what is termed ‘mastery’ (i.e. of life).

The best guiding light for this is the teaching given by Orpheus, Jesus Christ, St John, Francis Bacon and other great masters, which is that God is Love, and that the nature of God is goodness or love in action. We are born to be imitators or manifesters of this, as an image or likeness of God. By becoming servants of love, practising love, we become masters of love and thereby illumined, knowing the truth, which knowledge is joy. The Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten referred to it as “living in truth”. This is absolutely the highest, greatest goal and achievement possible.

As Jesus said, the great or summary commandments (laws) are two: “Love God, and love your neighbour as yourself.” All the law and prophets depend on this. St John summed it up by saying that “God is love”, therefore “love God and love one another.” This is what is known as the ‘double truth’. To be both immortal and mortal, Son of God and son of man, is another double truth. So also the fact that there is heaven and earth, above and below, inside and outside, spiritual and natural, ideal and real, male and female, darkness and light, lover and beloved, and so on and so forth.

The Gemini myth is based on this double truth or law, wherein the mortal loves the immortal and the immortal loves the mortal twin. The two thereby become blended as one in love. The Hindu version of the classical myth symbolises these two twins united as the Hamsa Swan, the vehicle of Brahma and Saraswati. Brahma sounds the Word; Saraswati gives it beautiful form or expression. Again, these two—the double truth—are one.

When there is polarity, there is automatically the relationship between and blending of the two. This is the ‘third’, thereby making all things a Trinity.

In theatre, all actors need an audience, just as an audience needs the actors. The relationship between them makes the third—which, when the play and the acting are good and the audience appreciative, can be magical and light-imbued. This magical relationship is the child of its parents, the actors and audience. Together they are three-in-one, one-in-three.

So it is when we love God, who/which is Love, and we love each other. The love relationship is the child. The lover and beloved create love, the active or magical manifestation of God.

We, as actors on the stage of the world, have heaven above us and earth beneath us. The earth is our stage. As mediators between heaven and earth we can marry the two. Heaven overlights, inspires and guides; earth reflects, supports and nourishes. We are and can be consciously three-in-one—natural, human and divine—mortal, immortal and a blend of the two. How well we do this is up to each of us. This is the mystery.

The Dionysian Myth

The great myths of the world are allegories which were and still are acted out as mysteries, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. They are stories that describe the process of life—of evolution and initiation, of transformation and transmutation—in this world.

From the classical myths, the main one that sums up the human mystery is that of Zeus, Persephone and Dionysus. Persephone, loved and impregnated by Zeus in the metaphorical form of a bull, gives birth prematurely to Zagreus. After eight months' pregnancy she asks to see the 'glory' of the father and as a result is consumed in fire. The child is held in the 'thigh' of Zeus for a further month and then has his second birth from that 'thigh'. He is immediately attacked by the Titans. To escape them, Zagreus changes into various symbolic animal forms, culminating in that of a bull-calf. The Titans catch Zagreus in this bull form and tear him apart, devouring the pieces; but Pallas Athena, the Tenth Muse, rescues and raises up the heart of Zagreus, building around it a new form—a beautiful form of light. In this way Zagreus becomes Dionysus, the twice-born 'son of God'.¹ As for the Titans, they are destroyed by Zeus with fiery thunderbolts and turned to ashes.²

Zeus, which translates as 'Deus' in Latin or 'God' in English, is the spirit of divine love. Persephone signifies the natural human soul. Dionysus is the spiritual soul, the perfect blend of spirit (Zeus) and psyche (Persephone): hence he is the immortal-mortal or 'Son of God, son of man'.

The story describes how true love, when resulting in love in action, can not only transform the natural form or personality of the soul but also transmute it, or part of it, into a spiritual form of light. This is why, in Persephone's story, she is consumed in the fire of Zeus. This fire is the fire of love in action, which is what gives birth to the child, just as a candle flame gives birth to a sun of light. It is the process of illumination. The child is then said to be held in, protected by and born again from Zeus's thigh, which is another synonym for love in action. Then follows the testing of the illumined initiate, so that only the very strongest and purest part of the spiritual soul remains, symbolised as the heart, which is then resurrected, raised up and given a glorious and immortal form of light. This child of light, Dionysus, is

synonymous with joy which, once created, is never lost, only added to: thus the child grows to adulthood and beyond.

The Christian story follows this Dionysian myth, it having been acted out as a mystery wherein the Virgin Mary played the role of Persephone and Jesus that of Zagreus-Dionysus. As for Joseph of Nazareth, Mary's husband, he is symbolized as an ox or bull in Christian tradition.

In terms of the world stage, this is particularly the European Mystery, and it is not for nothing that Jesus' disciples were sent into Europe to prepare the way for "the end of the age".³ This "end of the age" also refers to the end of a Great Age—a 26,000-year (approx.) cycle of time—and birth of a new Great Age. The death of the old and birth of the new is happening simultaneously right now.⁴

The Europa and Bull Myth

The continent of Europe takes its name from the classical myth of Europa and the Bull, which is another form of the Dionysian myth. The child of Europa and the Bull (Zeus) is Mercury, meaning 'True Word'. This is a description of Dionysus, whose name means 'Son of God'. The Son of God is known as the Word of God.

Taurus (the Bull) traditionally rules the throat, which is associated with sounding or speaking the Word of Truth. Taurus is known as the Alpha sign of the Zodiac—the Creator. It is the symbolic form via which the creative Word is sounded, creating all things anew. This gives a clue as to the position of Europe in the world's chakra system and the role it is destined to play as we begin a new Great Age.

This is also the Baconian Mystery. Dionysus is also known as Bacchus. The Italian form of Bacchus is *Baco*, which is also the Italian spelling of Bacon's name. The 'reborn' initiate of the Dionysian Mysteries was hailed as "Liber Bacchus", meaning "Bacchus the Free". The word 'free' is derived from the Sanskrit word *fri* or *pri*, meaning 'love'. 'Free' is the meaning of the name Francis: hence 'Francis Bacon' is synonymous with 'Liber Bacchus'.

Like John Dee before him, Francis Bacon knew the significance of the Europa and Bull myth in the context of Europe. He knew that, in planetary landscape terms, Europa is represented by the British Isles and the Bull by mainland Europe.⁵ Like the mystery schools of old, which included the inner core of the Knights Templar, the 'Navigators', and later the Renaissance 'AA' mystery schools and societies of Europe, they worked in Hermetic fashion to consciously link heaven and earth, not just in terms of immortal with mortal and mind with matter, but also in terms of the projection of the starry sky upon the landscape of the planet and the planet's response—the landscape being considered the interface and marriage point of heaven and earth.

All these 'marriages' (heaven-earth, immortal-mortal, mind-matter, sky-landscape), are in imitation of the original divine Creation wherein the spirit (or breath) of God moved upon the face of the waters, speaking or vibrating with the Word of love and thereby creating light, physical and metaphysical. It is an ancient science, known also to the Celts who laid out, for instance, the landscape zodiac of Britain that Bacon and the Rosicrucians used and incorporated in the Shakespeare mystery.

Europa is synonymous with Persephone, and also with Athena, Persephone's spirit or goddess counterpart. Athena is the same as Britannia. She is the Spear-shaker. The Bull is, at first, the form that Zeus takes in order to woo, love and impregnate Europa. Europa then gives birth to her child, known in the Europa and Bull myth as Hermes or Mercury ('True Word'), but who corresponds to Zagreus. This child also ends up in the symbolic form of a bull, like his divine father, Zeus,⁶ but as a mixture of Zeus and Europa.

The form of the Bull can be seen imaginatively in the landscape of mainland Europe, wherein the lowered head of the bull is represented by the Iberian Peninsula, with the Atlantic coastline of Portugal being the 'face' of the bull, Madrid marking the bull's eye, and the great pilgrimage centre of Santiago de Compostela marking the crown chakra. The main chakra system of the European Bull follows the great pilgrimage route from Istanbul in the east to Santiago in the west, passing *en route* through Constance (the heart) and Bourges (the throat).

The British Isles, known anciently as the sacred or blessed isles of the west and composed primarily of the three lands of Scotland, Ireland and Britain (England and Wales), signifies the triple goddess. She is Europa in the Europa and Bull myth, or Persephone/Athena (i.e. Britannia) in the Dionysian myth. In the sky she sits on the neck of Taurus as the star-cluster known as the Pleiades ('the Seven Sisters') or collectively as Maia ('Mother'). In Catholic tradition the British Isles are known as the dowry of the Virgin Mary, for a goddess or queen is represented by and considered synonymous with the land. She and the land are each the Holy Grail.

The Leda and Swan Myth

The myth of Leda and the Swan is likewise associated with the throat chakra. This can also be found in the landscape of Europe. Leda is represented by the British Isles, the Swan (the form of Zeus) by mainland Europe. Geomantically, the Swan is marked out in the landscape of Europe by the 9° north-south longitudinal meridian that forms its spine of chakras. This 'Swan Line' passes through Constance, the focus of the heart of the Swan as also of the Bull of Europe. The curvaceous east-west chakra spine of the Bull marks the wings of the Swan.

The two spines, of the Bull and the Swan landscape temples, form the Cross of Europe, which is a fitting symbol of Zeus/Jupiter whose cabalistic number is 4 and whose emblem is the Cross of Light.

Whereas in the Europa and Bull story the child is called Hermes or Mercury ('True Word'), in the Leda and Swan story there are four children—the immortal twins Pollux and Helen, and the mortal twins Castor and Clytemnestra. Castor and Pollux, the twin brothers who are known as the Gemini ('Heavenly Twins'), fuse together in friendship and love as the mortal-immortal, their form being that of a Swan (i.e. Hamsa). They are shown prominently on the headpieces to each of the main Shakespeare works—the poems, sonnets and plays—as also on the *Manes Verulamiani* collection of tributes to Francis Bacon, and on the Shakespeare Monument in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Orpheus, the great master and instaurator of the Dionysian Mysteries, was symbolised as a swan and associated in the sky by the constellation Cygnus, the Swan, as also was Jesus of Nazareth. The constellation Cygnus is alternatively known as the Northern Cross.

The Rose Cross

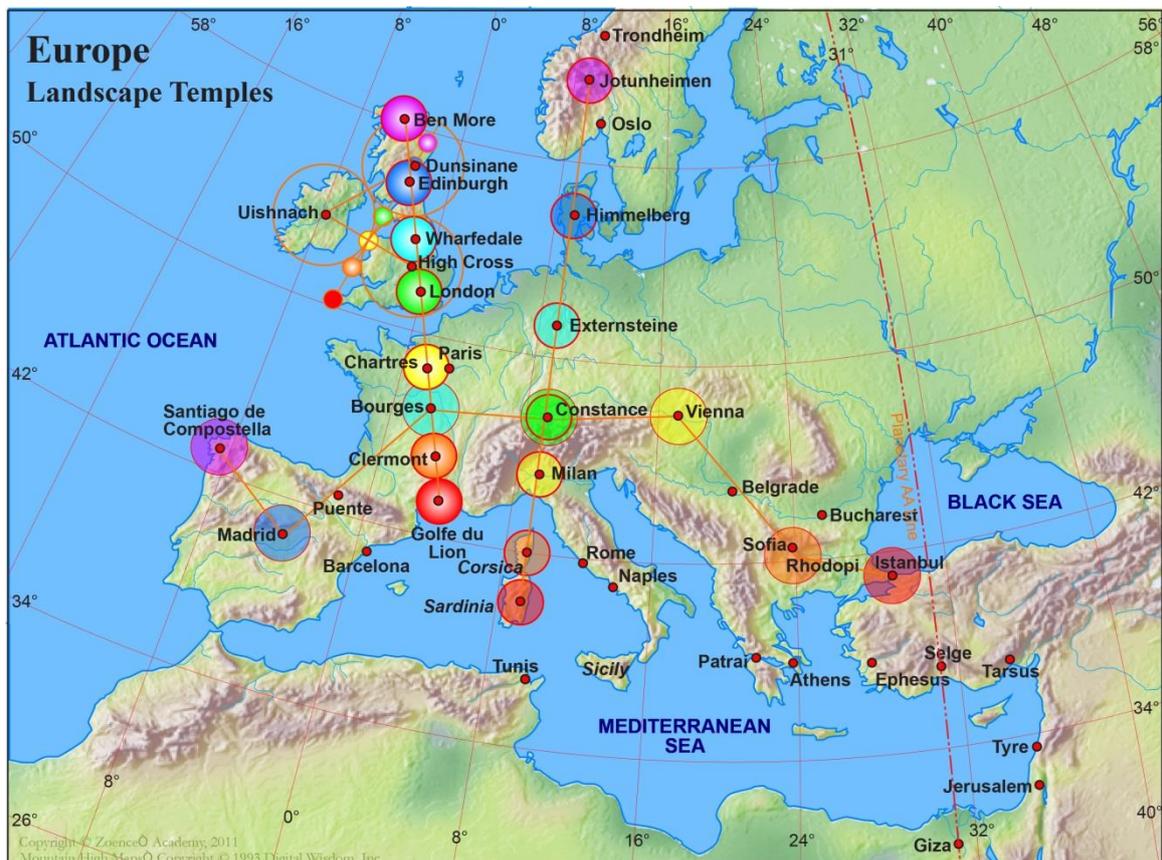
Whilst Zeus' emblem is the Cross, Persephone's emblem is the Rose. The child of Zeus and Persephone is thus the combination of the Rose and Cross—the Rose of Beauty and the Cross of Light. The Cross of Light is also the Cross of Matter.

In Christian terms, the name Christ is derived from the Greek word *Christos*, itself derived from Ancient Egyptian *Kheru* (Horus). *Kheru* was written *KhR*, which was translated into Greek as *Chi (X) Rho (P)*. Combined, this is none other than the Rose Cross, also known as the Cross of Life or Chrismon (✠), the original Christogram.

The Golden Child

The child (Mercury/Hermes) of Europa and the Bull seems to be represented in the landscape by the landscape temple known as the Grail Land (or Grail Kingdom), whose spinal axis spreads from Les Saintes Maries-de-la-Mer in the south of France to Ben More Assynt and Cape Wrath in the north of Scotland. This special landscape temple, in which can be found nearly all the main stories connected with the Holy Grail, is also probably the landscape representation of the mortal-immortal Gemini child of Leda and the Swan. Mercury/Hermes is the immortal-mortal, as are the Gemini. In essence they are one and the same, even though described differently in the different myths.

It is significant that the spinal axis of the Grail Land passes through Bourges, so that its hara centre coincides with the focus (Bourges) of the throat chakra of the Bull of Europe. The Grail Land's heart centre is marked by London, and specifically by Westminster Abbey and its surrounds.



The Grail Land forms the main link between Europa (the British Isles) and the Bull (mainland Europe). It is also the main link between Leda (the British Isles) and the Swan (mainland Europe). In other words, it links the British 'Rose' with the European 'Cross', thereby representing the 'Rosy Cross' relationship between the two—the relationship that is the child Zagreus-Dionysus.

In a more general way, however, all that is truly good and pure throughout the whole of Europe, which has been achieved through a blending of the best of Europa/Leda (the British Isles) with the best of the Bull (mainland Europe), could be considered to be Zagreus-Dionysus, the Rosy Cross Word of Truth.

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Endnotes

¹ In some versions of the myth, Zeus implanted Zagreus's heart into the mortal woman Semele, from whom the child was eventually born as Dionysus. In other versions of the myth, Demeter, the mother of Persephone, gathered together all the parts of Zagreus, reassembled them around his heart, and then resurrected Zagreus as Dionysus.

² The classical Dionysian myth is equivalent to the Ancient Egyptian myth of Osiris, Isis and Horus, wherein Osiris takes on the metaphorical form of a bull, Isis that of a cow, whilst Horus is their bull-calf.

³ Matthew 24.

⁴ The 26,000-year cycle (approx.) of a Great Age is also known as a Phoenix Cycle, at the end of which the phoenix (i.e. world) immolates itself on a fiery pyre of incense and then is resurrected, reborn anew from the ashes.

⁵ See my essay, #053, *General and Rare Memorials*. Available to FBRT Friends only, it can be found in the Friends folder or Friends Area on the FBRT website.

⁶ Zeus-Pater is the Latin for God the Father, changed phonetically to Deus-Pater, then Iu-pater, then Jupiter.