

# ROSIKRUCIAN INITIATIC JOURNEYS TO EGYPT

*Rosicrucian initiatic journeys to Egypt began in 1929 with Emperor H. Spencer Lewis leading the first group. These extraordinary pilgrimages continue until today. Seventy-five Rosicrucians from throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Europe accompanied H. Spencer Lewis on that first initiatic journey. The principal destination was Egypt, however on the way to and from that mystic land, the travelers visited mystical sites in the Madeira Islands, the Mediterranean, North Africa, the Holy Land, and Europe. As this was in the days before regular transatlantic air service, the journey lasted seventy days. It concluded on the Spring Equinox.*

*This trip was especially tailored for Rosicrucians. As is the case today, the travelers were treated to unique experiences and unusual sites normally passed over by the casual tourist of the day. At every site, in every city, members learned about cultural and mystical aspects related to the site generally unknown to the ordinary traveler. Of course the most special features of this trip were the unique initiations conducted by Emperor Lewis. This tradition continues today with Emperor Christian Bernard conferring the initiatic rituals in Egypt.*

*The entire 1929 tour was chronicled in eleven consecutive issues of The Mystic Triangle magazine (the predecessor to today's Rosicrucian Digest), from February through December 1929. We present below an excerpt from the original series.*



## The Luxor Initiation

After leaving Cairo, the Rosicrucian touring party proceeded into Upper Egypt by train up the Nile Valley, arriving at Luxor for the apex initiation of their journey to this mystic land.

We began our preparations on the morning of February 14, for the greatest event of our entire journey—the concluding initiation ceremony in Luxor. The Rosicrucians in Egypt had planned with us to have the ceremony begin at sunset and continue into the early evening, so that we might sit and meditate in the darkness of the ancient temple.

Early in the afternoon our entire party assembled on the lawn of the hotel and received final instructions from the Emperor so that everything would move with order and system during the ceremony. Then just at sunset our members strolled casually, in twos and threes out of the grounds of the several hotels and wended their ways



Rosicrucians in Egypt, 1929.

slowly and without attracting attention toward the ancient ruins on the banks of the Nile. And on every important height of the walls and ruins around the temple



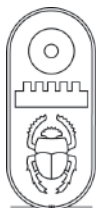
Rosicrucians in Egypt, 2014.

there were stationed members of the ancient Amenhotep Lodge of Rosicrucians of Luxor and Cairo as outer guards and tilers.

Finally, all of the members of the party were within the great court of Amenhotep's old temple, on the walls and columns of which were his cartouche and the cartouche of our Order. The temple contained thirty-two enormous columns arranged in four rows of eight, and each column was topped with the symbolic lotus in enormous size. The arrangement of the columns formed various aisles, the larger of which ran east and west, north and south. In the center where they crossed stood the symbolical Shekinah of black satin, with the Rosicrucian emblem embroidered in its center, and standing upon it a large bouquet of roses. In various parts of the aisles incense was burning, and the low setting sun just showing above the hills of Thebes, and shining across the Nile, illuminated the upper parts of columns of the temple with a golden hue, which reflected downward upon the members standing there in silence and reverence, bathing

them in the illumination which all Rosicrucians adore.

In the antechambers adjoining the temple were the officers of the Rosicrucian Lodge of Egypt, and standing in the eastern end of the west aisle stood the Emperor with his purple robe, white stole, golden rose cross, and embroidered emblems. At the south of the Shekinah stood the ancient stone lectern from which many Masters have read the ceremonial ritual for many holy assemblies. Each member of the party was brought before the East, facing the Shekinah, and the holy sanctum at the east end of the temple, so that all could sense the vibrations of the marvelous place containing as it did the holy thoughts of thousands of persons through many ages. As all the members stood in silence with their auras rapidly increasing in size, and as they were becoming attuned with the vibrations of the place, the Emperor invoked the presence of the great Masters seen and unseen, and in the darkening recesses of the shadowy parts of the sanctum we could plainly see the great lights gathering which indicated the pres-



ence of the several great Masters from Tibet and Egypt, who we knew would be present on this occasion.

I wish that I could go into detail regarding the entire ceremony, and tell you precisely what occurred during the hour or more that all of us stood there with our hearts welling up, our emotions overcoming us, and our vibrations so thrilling us with their electric power that we were almost unable to speak and to answer the questions that were put to us, or repeat the vowel sounds which made the place seem to tremble. One by one we pledged our allegiance, our loyalty, and our devotion to the Order, to its great principles, and to the jurisdiction of Egypt through whose power and under whose authority we were receiving this wonderful lesson.

During the ceremony each initiate was taken to the Shekinah and brought face to face with a solemn understanding of the ancient principles as performed so many times in the same manner. We were not surprised to see the appearance, personality, and even physical aspect of the Emperor gradually change and assume the likeness and mannerism of one of the ancient Masters; and then it was that we of the higher grades knew instantly why the Emperor was so familiar with ancient Egyptian history, the rituals, the customs, and the work of this great organization. His voice resounded throughout the temple, and echoed and reechoed from column to column with a power over us and an effect upon us that we could not possibly describe, which will remain with us the rest of our lives.

At the conclusion of the ritualistic part of the initiation, we were directed to seat ourselves upon the old stones surrounding the columns and in the soft light of pale evening, with incense filling the temple, with chanting carried on by the Rosicrucian members in the archives adjoining, and with oriental music playing softly in the courtyard. We sat in medi-

tation, eyes closed, awaiting the personal, intimate touch and whisper of the great Masters who walked about through the temple and came to each one of us as we were ready or prepared and gave unto us as we were qualified to receive. What messages were whispered in those few minutes! What consolation, advice, hope, cheer, and inspiration most of us received from just a handclasp, or a word, or a smile! Some there felt but little and heard even less, but most received in accordance with their development, and we who knew and understood in completeness will never forget what was given to us and what we were assigned to do for the future.

Can you wonder that I would like to tell you all that happened, and can you wonder that we shall never forget, and certainly never reveal what most of us actually saw and learned? Certainly if there had ever been doubt in the minds of any of us as to the high position that the Emperor occupied in the Order, or the high regard that he had in the other lands and in the minds and hearts of the great Masters, or if we had any doubt as to the relationship of our Order to this ancient temple of Amenhotep's in Egypt, or doubt of any kind pertaining to any phase of the work, these things were so quickly thrown aside and so completely dispelled and cast out of our consciousness forever that we cannot think of them as ever having existed.

When all of the ceremony was ended, and moving pictures had been taken of us standing there in that ancient place, we slowly wended our way again, humbled, thrilled, reverent, and inspired, toward the banks of the Nile. As we passed out of the walls of the enclosure, there were none of us who could venture to make a comment. The afternoon and early evening of February 14, 1929, will be a memorable occasion, not only in this incarnation of most of us who were there, but in many incarnations to come.