

Note on the Cover Illustration: 'Moorish Tauromachy'

By Nigel Jackson



The figure of the mounted *toreador* upon a white horse, who drives his lance into the bull in the sacrificial-ritual combat of the *Tauromaquia*, is preserved from Visigothic and Moorish antiquity in Spain and elsewhere as far as Tamil India. The lance or spear of the *toreador* is the axial symbolic weapon, the intelligential Divine Ray or '7th Ray of the Sun' (*Mabat* or *Buddbi* in Vedantic terms) which trans-pierces, illuminates and inter-links the hierarchic planes of the micro/macrocosmic being¹.

The taurine symbolism relates to the zodiacal symbolism of the Bull (the fixed earth-sign in which the moon is exalted in traditional astrology) conveying echoes of more ancient 'tauroctanies,' including

¹ As Rene Guenon says (ch. 9 'Symbolic Flowers' in 'Symbols of Sacred Science'): 'The lance...is identified with the "Celestial Ray"...and in this connection let us also recall that the solar ray is frequently assimilated to weapons such as the lance or arrow.'

figures such as the primaeval ox Gavevagdāt, created of the earth of Eran-Vedj in Indo-Iranian tradition and the classic Mithraic iconology (the sword of Mithras surviving as the *estoque* of the matador with which he dispatches the beast with the death-thrust called *estocada*). Carven reliefs at Persepolis depict a related symbolism via imagery of the solar lion gaining victory over the lunar-tellurian bull. In the Cabalistic tabulation of the Sefirot in ch. xiii, Bk II of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's 'De Occulta Philosophia' the bull is the animal which corresponds to the lunar sphere.

The red cape employed by the matador is called the Veronica, named after St Veronica who gave her veil to Christ to wipe his face on the way to Calvary and caught the miraculous imprint of his divine countenance on the fabric. This affirms the sacrificial mystery or 'passion' of the Tauromaquia.