

## **Historical Influence of the Rosicrucian Fraternity on Freemasonry**

### Introduction

Freemasonry has a public image that sometimes includes notions that we practice some sort of occultism, alchemy, magic rituals, that sort of thing.

As Masons we know that we do no such thing. Since 1717 we have been a modern, rational, scientifically minded craft, practicing moral and theological virtues. But there is a background of occult science in Freemasonry, and it is related to the secret fraternity of the Rosicrucians.

### The Renaissance Heritage<sup>1</sup>

During the Italian renaissance of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, scholars rediscovered and translated classical texts of Plato, Pythagoras, and the Hermetic writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, thought to be from ancient Egypt. Over the next two centuries there was a widespread growth in Europe of various magical and spiritual practices – magic, alchemy, astrology -- based on those texts. The mysticism and magic of Jewish Cabbala was also studied from texts brought from Spain and the Muslim world. All of these magical practices had a religious aspect, in the quest for knowledge of the divine order of the universe, and Man's place in it. The Hermetic vision of Man was of a divine soul, akin to the angels, within a material, animal body.

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century every royal court in Europe had its own astrologer and some patronized alchemical studies. In England, Queen Elizabeth had Dr. John Dee (1527-1608) as one of her advisors and her court astrologer. Dee was also an alchemist, a student of the Hermetic writings, and a skilled mathematician. He was the most prominent practitioner of Cabbala and alchemy in 16<sup>th</sup> century England.

Dee was an advanced student of mathematics and was known for his Preface to a new edition (1570) of the works of Euclid. Dee studied numbers in the context of the three spheres of cabbalistic thought, the elemental (earthly), celestial (astrological), and super-celestial (angelic). He wrote that in the elemental sphere of this world, numbers are useful to applied science; in the celestial sphere of the stars, numbers apply to astrology and alchemical correspondences; and in the super-celestial sphere above the canopy of heaven, he believed that he had discovered cabbalistic numerical computations by which one could summon and command angels. This was cabbalistic magic of the highest order.

Dee developed a synthesis of mathematics, Cabbala, and alchemy to conceive a system in which the magician or magus could move up and down through the three spheres.<sup>2</sup> Our symbol of Jacob's ladder, providing a route of angelic travel and a line of union between

heaven and earth, may have cabbalistic significance in this sense, although the ladder was not used in Masonic imagery until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that alchemy was the quest to discover the divine within the material world, and to serious practitioners the quest to transform lead into gold had a higher meaning, that is, the transmutation of the material to the spiritual, or as we know it metaphorically, the transformation of the rough to the perfect ashlar.

John Dee's work was alluded to in the later Rosicrucian writings of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and were still of intense interest later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to Elias Ashmole, a Freemason.

In addition to the spread of occult philosophy, the 16<sup>th</sup> century also saw the division of Europe into Catholic and Protestant factions. Into this context of conflict, idealism, and the practice of magic and alchemy, the Rosicrucian manifestos appeared.

### The Rosicrucian Manifestos

The Rosicrucian writings were the last widespread expression of the magical ideals of the Renaissance. The Rosicrucian phenomenon had an impact on Freemasonry in its formative period during the century before the constitution of the Grand Lodge in 1717.

In 1614 and 1615 two documents were published in Germany, which proclaimed the existence of a secret fraternity throughout Europe, devoted to the 'Universal and General Reformation of the whole wide world', through study and healing. This was the Order of the Rosy Cross. The purpose of the Order was to study and spread knowledge, while doing good works and healing the sick.

The first Rosicrucian manifesto was circulated in manuscript as early as 1610, and was published in Germany in 1614. Its English title was the *Fama Fraternitatis of the Laudable Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, written to all the Learned and Rulers of Europe*. It tells the story of 'Bro. C.R.', later identified as Christian Rosencreutz. He was said to have been born in 1378 and had travelled to the east, to Arabia, then west to Morocco, another centre of Muslim scholarship. In those lands he learned 'mathematics, phisic, and magic... Magia and Cabala'.<sup>4</sup> He learned Arabic to translate some writings which he later brought back to Europe. He tried to spread the ancient knowledge back in Europe but was ignored, so he formed a small, secret group of brethren to promote the spread of knowledge. Their headquarters was called the House of the Holy Spirit.

The *Fama Fraternitatis*, that is, the 'Fame of the Fraternity', announced the existence and expansion of the order after the discovery of the concealed grave of Bro. C.R. The secret vault was found by one of the brethren engaged in renovations of the fraternity's headquarters, 'he being a good Architect' – in other words, a Mason. The vault had seven sides, with geometrical markings on the walls, and was lit from within by 'another sun'. It contained an altar, with the body of C.R. entombed under it. On the altar was engraved 'This compendium of the universe I made in my lifetime to be my tomb.'<sup>5</sup>

In a cabbalistic vision of Jacob's ladder, and reminiscent of John Dee's beliefs, the *Fama* said that Bro. C.R.C. 'seeth the Heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending ...'<sup>6</sup>

The manifesto announced the existence of the secret fraternity in countries across Europe, dedicated to the co-operative promotion and sharing of knowledge among the scholar brethren. It called on all 'learned men, magicians, Cabalists, physicians and philosophers' to share their knowledge and work together. It announced that out of the *Librum Naturae*, the Book of Nature, scholars would find 'a perfect method of all arts'.<sup>7</sup>

The manifesto declared that God has 'made manifest unto us many wonderful, and never heretofore seen, works and creatures of Nature, and moreover hath raised men, imbued with great wisdom, who might partly renew and reduce all arts ... to perfection; so that finally man might thereby understand his own nobleness and worth'.<sup>8</sup> The 'nobleness and worth' of Man refers to the Hermetic notion of the divine nature of Man's spirit.

The *Fama* announced that 'there will now be a general reformation, both of divine and human things'.<sup>9</sup>

The fraternity lived according to the customs of the places they travelled to, not letting themselves be known as members of the order. They were later sometimes referred to as 'the Invisibles'.

The learned of the world were invited to join the secret fraternity for the promotion of reform in society, religion, learning and education.

And although at this time we make no mention either of names or meetings, yet nevertheless everyone's opinion shall assuredly come to our hands, in what language so ever it be; nor anybody shall fail, who so gives his name, but to speak with some of us, either by word of mouth, or else, if there be some let, in writing.'<sup>10</sup>

The announcement of the secret fraternity and the invitation for others to apply for admission caused great excitement across Europe.

The second Rosicrucian manifesto was published in Latin in 1615, the *Confessio Fraternitatis, or the Confession of the Laudable Fraternity of the Most Honourable Order of the Rosy Cross, Written to all the Learned of Europe*. The preface to the *Confessio* was titled 'A Brief Consideration of More Secret Philosophy', which was based on the alchemical writings of Dr. John Dee, and in part quoted Dee's work *verbatim*.<sup>11</sup>

Again, the *Confessio* invited the learned to join the order, and promised wonderful secret knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

... all learned who will make themselves known unto us, and come into our brotherhood, shall find more wonderful secrets by us than heretofore they did attain unto, and did know, or are able to believe or utter.

... although we do not lightly esteem and regard such mysteries and secrets, we nevertheless hold it fit, that the knowledge thereof be manifested and revealed to many.

The *Confessio* stated that knowledge was available to all, but not all could understand:<sup>13</sup>

Although that great book of Nature stands open to all men, yet there are but few that can read and understand the same.

The third and final Rosicrucian publication was *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz* (Bro. C.R.C.), published in 1616. It is an allegorical story with allusions to alchemy, and uses John Dee's symbol of the 'Monas Hieroglyphica' on its title page.<sup>14</sup>

Dee's explanation of this hieroglyph refers to the unity of heaven and earth, and its symbolic components include the signs of all the planets, the sun and moon, the astrological sign of Aries signifying fire and alchemy, and a cross signifying the four elements. He wrote that the lines of the cross could be joined to signify both three and four, combining the symbols for spirit and matter in one – a key metaphor for the Hermetic view of Man.<sup>15</sup>

The *Chemical Wedding* also describes a hidden vault inscribed with images and symbols, reminiscent of the tomb of Bro. C.R. in the *Fama*.<sup>16</sup> In alchemical terms the 'chemical wedding' refers to the synthesis of different essences to reduce material form to its divine essence (spirit in matter). It also refers to the transmutation of the human soul from animal nature to divine.

The story of the wedding of Christian Rosencreutz also includes a ceremony of initiation into an alchemical order of chivalry, the Order of the Golden Stone. The first Rule of the Order alludes to the distinction between demonic and angelic or natural magic:<sup>17</sup>

You, my Lords and Knights shall swear that you will at no time ascribe your order either unto any Devil or Spirit, but only to God, your creator, and his hand-maid, Nature.

The point that 'magic' was simply natural science was made by the publisher of the first English edition of the Rosicrucian manifestos. He wrote in 1650, 'Magic is nothing but the Wisdom of the Creator revealed.'<sup>18</sup>

A publication of 1618 praised the Rosicrucians as possessors of 'the Ancient Wisdom, formerly taught in the Magia of the Egyptians and Persians',<sup>19</sup> that is, the Hermetic writings. The texts formerly attributed to an ancient Egyptian scribe, Hermes (or Mercurius) Trismegistus, once thought to be a contemporary of Moses, had been revealed

in 1614 to be a much later mix of Christian and classical philosophy.<sup>20</sup> Still, the Hermetic philosophy continued to be influential until the 18<sup>th</sup> century scientific revolution.

Rosicrucian writings pointed to the Book of Nature as the object of pious study, and this was echoed by later scientific and Masonic writers. A defence of the Rosicrucians published in German in 1615 refers to ‘reading the hieroglyphs and characters in the Book of Nature’ as a pious pursuit. In 1617 and 1618 other writers in support of the Rosicrucians also praised the pious study of ‘the Book of Nature’.<sup>21</sup> The same expression was used by their contemporary Galileo, who wrote:<sup>22</sup>

God is the author of two books, the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature ... What we observe and know to be true in nature cannot be false. And if Scripture seems to contradict what we know, the problem is not Scripture, but human interpretation of Scripture.

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the great mathematician Sir Isaac Newton wrote, ‘there is no way (without revelation) to come to the knowledge of a Deity but by the frame of nature.’<sup>23</sup> James Anderson in the 1738 edition of the *Constitutions* wrote ‘Our Religion is the Law of Nature; and to love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourself ...’<sup>24</sup>

New Rosicrucian publications stopped about 1620. The European reform movement promoted by the Rosicrucian manifestos depended on the patronage of the protestant princes of Europe,<sup>25</sup> but by 1620 the Catholic armies of the Hapsburg emperor had defeated the protestant claimant to the imperial throne. The thirty years war over religion in Europe had begun, and the Rosicrucian reform movement there was silenced.

### The Rosicrucian Movement in England

The Rosicrucians were not forgotten in England. Francis Bacon’s utopian *New Atlantis* published posthumously in 1627 clearly draws on Rosicrucian notions. The ideal society he describes includes a ‘great college, called Saloman’s House, [where] an order of priest-scientists pursued researches in all the arts and sciences, the results of which they knew how to apply for the benefit of men.’<sup>26</sup> Certain details allude to the Rosicrucians, such as an official of the city wearing a white turban with a small red cross (Rosy Cross), and the free medical care provided to all in the New Atlantis.<sup>27</sup>

The *Fama* and the *Confessio* were printed in an English translation in 1652, possibly under the patronage of Sir Robert Moray,<sup>28</sup> a Freemason. Earlier versions had circulated in England in manuscript as early as 1616. The Rosicrucian manifestos continued to be written of in England well into the time when Freemasonry was experiencing its growth in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. *The Voyage to the Land of the Rosicrucians* was published in 1660, and pointed out the parallels between the Rosicrucians and Bacon’s *New Atlantis*.<sup>29</sup>

As soon as the Rosicrucian texts started circulating in England, some scholars there began soliciting membership in the secret fraternity.

First was Robert Fludd (1574-1637).<sup>30</sup> Fludd published works on hermeticism and alchemy, which he counted as good magic, an essential part of natural philosophy, that is, natural science. He praised the Rosicrucian use of magic, Cabbala, and astrology as scientific and holy, and especially praised their use of mathematics, perhaps recalling John Dee's earlier use of mathematical magic. Fludd wrote that there was 'universal knowledge in nature'.<sup>31</sup>

In 1616 and '17 Fludd published works praising the Rosicrucian fraternity, and asking to be admitted to its membership. Years later he wrote that he had received no reply.<sup>32</sup>

There were many published appeals from those wishing to be admitted to the fraternity, but there is no record of anyone ever receiving a reply, or of any member of the fraternity ever being identified. 'There is immense evidence for a passionate search for Rosicrucians but no evidence that they were ever found.'<sup>33</sup> It is most probable that the manifestos were an idealistic appeal, a sort of propaganda for reform, but that no Rosicrucian fraternity ever existed in fact.

### Elias Ashmole

Elias Ashmole (1617-1692)<sup>34</sup> was an English gentleman and scholar, interested in the occult sciences of the Renaissance and the new experimental science. He was a keen student of alchemy and published three books on the subject. He was a student of the *Hermetica*, once referring to himself as 'Mercuriophilus Anglicus', that is, an English lover of Hermes (Mercurius). He wrote a poem on numbers, which begins: 'For Number is the Mother of the Key of Arts...', echoing Pythagoras and John Dee.

In 1652 Ashmole published a compendium of English alchemical texts titled the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*. The book begins with a quotation from the *Fama Fraternitatis*.<sup>35</sup> Ashmole praised the work of John Dee, and he had a copy of Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564) which he had transcribed for his own use.<sup>36</sup> Ashmole later acquired a collection of Dee's original papers, his 'spiritual diaries' from 1581-83, including Dee's 'guide to the seven orders of angels and their operations in the governance of the universe'.<sup>37</sup> Ashmole also studied Hebrew, presumably to pursue knowledge of the Cabbala.

Ashmole possessed a copy of the Rosicrucian manifestos, and recopied it himself by hand.<sup>38</sup> He once received a letter claiming that one of the Rosicrucian fraternity had confirmed that Dr. John Dee had been a member of the Order. Found among Ashmole's papers was an appeal he had written to 'the most illuminated Brothers of the Rose Cross', asking to be made a member of the order. Believing that the Rosicrucian brethren were conversant with angels, he may have believed that the fraternity would know of his appeal even though he had nowhere to deliver his letter to them.

Ashmole's significance to Masonry is that his is the oldest surviving record of the initiation of a non-operative mason into an English Lodge (although there are earlier examples from Scotland). Ashmole was an officer in the Royalist army during the English Civil War. In 1646, soon after the defeat of King Charles I, Ashmole was initiated into a Masonic Lodge, along with a former officer in the Parliamentary army, his father-in-law.

Although his diaries record only one other attendance at Lodge many years later, this cannot establish that Ashmole did not continue to be involved. He was still in contact with the fraternity in 1682, when his diary records his 'summons, to appear at a Lodge to be held the next day at Masons Hall London.'<sup>39</sup>

Ashmole became one of the founding members of the Royal Society in 1660. At that time alchemy was considered a science, a subject of natural philosophy, so it is not unusual that Ashmole was both an alchemist and a member of the 'Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge'. The society had been meeting before 1660, the members referring to themselves as an 'Invisible College', reminiscent of the invisible fraternity of Rosicrucian scholars. Many of the founding members of the Royal Society were also Freemasons.

### Sir Robert Moray

Sir Robert Moray (c.1607-1673),<sup>40</sup> like Ashmole, was a scholar and a gentleman. The two men knew each other. While serving in the Army of Scotland during the English civil wars, Moray was initiated into the Lodge of Edinburgh in 1641. He was initiated at Newcastle, England, during the Scottish invasion of the north in support of the Parliamentary forces fighting King Charles I. Moray also became a founding member of the Royal Society, he was its first Secretary, and he usefully obtained the patronage of King Charles II for the new society.

Moray was a patron of Thomas Vaughan, who published the first English edition of the Rosicrucian manifestos, and Moray's father-in-law had earlier transcribed a manuscript copy of the *Fama* and *Confessio*, so it is likely that Moray was aware of the manifestos.<sup>41</sup>

Historian David Stevenson suggests that Moray's interest in joining a Masonic lodge was the mathematical, geometrical, and technical expertise of the operative trade, useful to him in his military duties pertaining to artillery.<sup>42</sup> He was also, however, clearly interested in speculative matters. Moray adopted the five pointed star as his 'Mason mark'. He wrote of the symbol as 'famous among the Egyptians and Grecians', and assigned five letters to the points, spelling 'agape' or spiritual love, and he assigned a word to each letter, signifying five moral virtues. Moray was in no need of an operative Mason's mark to sign his work, and the star as he explained it is clearly symbolic or speculative.<sup>43</sup>

## Sir Isaac Newton

Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727) was the brilliant mathematician who proved Kepler's heliocentric theory of the solar system and explained the orbits of the planets by the laws of gravity. He became a member of the Royal Society in 1672, and its President in 1703, being re-elected to that position every year until his death.

Newton's occult interests are less well known. He owned a copy of the English edition of the two Rosicrucian manifestos,<sup>44</sup> and Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* was his primary text for his study of alchemy.<sup>45</sup> Newton's private papers contained his unpublished writings concerning alchemy,<sup>46</sup> including his transcription of the Hermetic *Emerald Tablet*.<sup>47</sup> Newton kept his esoteric writings in his government office at the Royal Mint, stored in a sack. They were discovered in storage two centuries after his death.<sup>48</sup>

Newton studied sacred geometry. He studied Talmudic texts to try to determine the exact dimensions of the Temple at Jerusalem, as a key to the divine order of the world. He wrote:<sup>49</sup>

... the God of Nature should be worshipped in a temple which imitates nature, in a temple which is, as it were, a reflection of God. Everyone agrees that a Sanctum with a fire in the middle was an emblem of the system of the world...

Temples were anciently contrived to represent the frame of the Universe as the true Temple of the great God.

The whole heavens they reckoned to be the true and real temple of God and therefore that a Sanctum might deserve the name of his Temple they framed it so as in the fittest manner to represent the whole system of the heavens. ... So then twas one design of the first institution of the true religion to propose to mankind by the frame of the ancient Temples, the study of the frame of the world as the true Temple of the great God...'

Note the similarity to the tomb of Christian Rosencreutz, described as a 'compendium of the universe'. Newton believed that the Temple of Solomon was the oldest and was a model for the ancient Egyptians and Greeks.<sup>50</sup>

It is not strange that an 18<sup>th</sup> century mathematician should also be a student of occult philosophy. Newton was both, like Dr. John Dee before him. Mathematics was considered the key to the divine structure of creation. The 17<sup>th</sup> century astronomer Galileo, for example, wrote to a critic of his theory of the solar system:<sup>51</sup>

You look in the books of men. But the book of nature is where one must look. ... And the language of that book is number and geometrical form...'



The Rosicrucian author of the *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz* said much the same thing in a book published in 1619. He describes 'the Supreme Architect of the Universe [working] by measures, numbers, proportions, ... harmony.'<sup>52</sup>

Isaac Newton is not known to have been a Freemason, but his long-time research assistant and secretary, John Theophilus Desaguliers, also a member of the Royal Society from 1714, was central to the work of the new Grand Lodge after 1717, and was Grand Master in 1719-20.<sup>53</sup>

Desaguliers, Ashmole, Moray, and many other Freemasons were active in the foundation and development of the Royal Society. They were acting on the Rosicrucian promise that the 'great book of Nature' would reveal the hidden secrets and mysteries of the universe.

### Rosicrucians and Freemasons

Sir Robert Moray and Elias Ashmole in the 1640's were not the first, but the first *recorded* initiates into speculative Freemasonry in England. They were both students of natural philosophy, the new science of the book of nature. Both were received into Masonic lodges as speculative Freemasons. It is a natural inference that these men hoped to find in the mysteries of Masonry something of the secret and ancient wisdom of the Rosicrucian brotherhood. As David Stevenson puts it:<sup>54</sup>

If the invisible brethren remained invisible, then the semi-visible masonic lodges were better than nothing. Even when few retained any real hope of discovering the real Rosicrucians, by joining a lodge a man could declare his faith in the ideals scholar-priests were supposed to have stood for.

Another scholar, initiated in 1721, explicitly recorded in his memoirs that 'curiosity led [me] to be initiated into the mysteries of Masonry, suspecting it to be the remains of the mysteries of the antients'.<sup>55</sup> He was William Stukeley (1687-1765), a well known antiquarian who did pioneering research at Stonehenge. He was the first Secretary of the Society of Antiquarians in 1717, and became a member of the Royal Society in 1718.

There must have been other gentlemen scholars who were attracted to the secret society of Freemasons by the earlier promises of ancient wisdom made in the Rosicrucian literature.

Rosicrucians and Freemasons were certainly linked in the popular imagination. A Scottish poem of 1638 links the Masons to the Rosicrucians:<sup>56</sup>

For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse:  
We have the Mason word and second sight  
Things for to come we can foretell aright...

A satirical periodical of 1676 similarly linked the Rosicrucians, Hermetic students, and Freemasons. A mock announcement gave notice<sup>57</sup>

‘That ... the Ancient Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross; the Hermetick Adepti and the company of Accepted Masons intend all to dine together on the 31<sup>st</sup> of November next...

Note the impossible date, November 31<sup>st</sup>. The notice goes on to warn readers that the assembly may be invisible !

At least some Freemasons did share the Rosicrucian interest in Cabbala. The history of the Craft in the 1756 Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of the Antients states that ‘at Solomon’s Temple ... it received the name of Free-Masonry, because the Masons at Jerusalem and Tyre were the greatest Cabalists then in the world’.<sup>58</sup> The Grand Lodge of the Antients claimed to preserve the older traditions abandoned by the Moderns’ Grand Lodge formed in 1717.

Rev. James Anderson’s Constitutions of the Free-Masons of 1723 also refers to Magi, or magicians, in relation to Freemasonry:<sup>59</sup>

In these parts, upon the Tygris and Euphrates [in ancient Babylon], afterwards flourished many learned Priests and Mathematicians, known by the Names of Chaldees and Magi, who preserved the good Science, Geometry, as the Kings and great Men encouraged the Royal Art. But it is not expedient to speak more plain of the Premises, except in a formed Lodge.

### Why Masonry?

Of all the operative trades and guilds, why did the Mason’s Lodge draw men looking for secret wisdom? First, there was the appeal of antiquity, arising from the preservation and occasional reading in lodge of the Old Charges of the medieval stone masons. Those charges included references to sacred Geometry, Euclid, Pythagoras, Hermes, and ancient Egypt.

One of the oldest of the old charges, the *Cooke MS* of about 1450, contains a traditional history of the craft of masonry, repeated in later versions of the old charges. It describes the two pillars of stone engraved by the sons of Noah, with all the knowledge they had of the crafts and sciences, to preserve that knowledge from God’s punishment by fire or flood. And after Noah’s flood had receded the pillars were found:<sup>60</sup>

A great clerk that was called Pythagoras found the one, and Hermes, the Philosopher, found the other, and they taught forth the sciences that they found therein written.

The Old Charges tell of the ancient Egyptians learning geometry from Euclid, and the Hermetic wisdom of the Renaissance occult philosophy was also believed to derive from ancient Egypt. It has been argued that Renaissance Hermeticism was introduced into Scottish masonic lodges as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century by William Schaw. The masonic work of architecture and engineering required practical knowledge of geometry and mathematics, but such knowledge was also seen as an aspect of occult Hermetic practice. Geometry and mathematics were a bridge between Hermetic magic and the new experimental science. Masonic lodges were a natural home for those interested in the hidden mysteries of nature and science.

### Conclusion

Whether men like Moray, Ashmole, Stukely and others found ancient wisdom in Lodge or not, that hope was probably part of their motivation for seeking admission. In that sense at least, the Rosicrucian movement contributed to the development of speculative Freemasonry in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Freemasonry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century became predominantly a society of merchants, professionals, scientists, and free thinkers in religion; the old occult traditions were cast aside by the modern Grand Lodge of 1717, although esoteric references in the rituals were retained. Magic had been overtaken by Science.

Research into the Renaissance and early modern sources of our rituals can help us to understand their allegorical and symbolic meanings, which all point to the presence of a divine higher nature within our material being.

Central to Hermeticism is the notion of divine emanation, the presence of divinity in all creation, and of the semi-divine nature of Man – a divine spirit in a material body, midway between angels and animals.

As modern Freemasons, we still practice a form of alchemy when we use symbolic ritual to transform ourselves, to refine a rough stone into a perfect ashlar.

Bro. Michael MacDonald  
Ionic Lodge, No. 25 G.R.C.  
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## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Yates, *Occult Philosophy*
- <sup>2</sup> Yates, pp. xii-xiii. All references to Yates are to *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, except where specified in notes 1 and 20.
- <sup>3</sup> Zeldis, p. 224
- <sup>4</sup> *Fama Fraternitatis*, in Yates, pp. 299-300. The complete text of the English translation of the *Fama* and the *Confessio* is reproduced in Yates, Appendix.
- <sup>5</sup> *Fama*, Yates, pp. 305-6
- <sup>6</sup> *Fama*, Yates, p. 311
- <sup>7</sup> *Fama*, Yates, pp. 298-9
- <sup>8</sup> *Fama*, Yates, p. 298
- <sup>9</sup> *Fama*, Yates, pp. 309-310
- <sup>10</sup> *Fama*, Yates, pp. 311-12
- <sup>11</sup> Yates, pp. 54-5
- <sup>12</sup> *Confessio*, Yates, p. 313
- <sup>13</sup> *Confessio*, Yates, p. 318
- <sup>14</sup> Yates, pp. 55, 83-6
- <sup>15</sup> Yates, p. 64
- <sup>16</sup> Yates, p. 90
- <sup>17</sup> Yates, p. 85
- <sup>18</sup> Owen, P. 169
- <sup>19</sup> Yates, p. 131
- <sup>20</sup> Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, pp. 116-7
- <sup>21</sup> Yates, pp. 131-3
- <sup>22</sup> Kors, p. 47
- <sup>23</sup> Peters, p. 212
- <sup>24</sup> Owen, p. 184
- <sup>25</sup> The author of the manifestos was clearly a Protestant. He wrote: '... we do condemn the East and the West (meaning the Pope and Mahomet) blasphemers against our Lord Jesus Christ': *Confessio*, Yates, p. 312; and: '... if our brethren and fathers had lived in this our present and clear light, they would more roughly have handled the Pope...': *Fama*, Yates, p. 303. There are many other anti-papal comments in the *Confessio*.
- <sup>26</sup> Yates, p. 164
- <sup>27</sup> Yates, pp. 165-7
- <sup>28</sup> Yates, pp. 237-8
- <sup>29</sup> Yates, pp. 241-2
- <sup>30</sup> Yates, p. 103-8
- <sup>31</sup> Yates p. 105
- <sup>32</sup> Yates, pp. 103-5
- <sup>33</sup> Yates, p. 263
- <sup>34</sup> In general, see Churton, *Magus*, and Yates, chapter 14
- <sup>35</sup> Yates, p. 256
- <sup>36</sup> Yates, p. 252; Churton, *Magus*, p. 145
- <sup>37</sup> Churton, *Magus*, p. 260

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- <sup>38</sup> Yates, p. 249
- <sup>39</sup> Churton, *Magus*, p. 231
- <sup>40</sup> In general, see Churton, *Freemasonry*, chapters 7 and 8, and Stevenson, chapter 7.
- <sup>41</sup> Stevenson, p. 101
- <sup>42</sup> Stevenson, p. 167, and in general, chapter 7
- <sup>43</sup> McLeod. R.W. Bro. Wallace McLeod, Past Grand Historian, Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, disagrees, on the ground that the moral values cited were generic and not specifically Masonic.
- <sup>44</sup> Owen, p. 164; Yates, p. 255
- <sup>45</sup> Churton, *Magus*, pp. 147-8
- <sup>46</sup> Yates, p. 255
- <sup>47</sup> Bauer, p. 65
- <sup>48</sup> Bauer, p. 59-60
- <sup>49</sup> Peters, pp. 209, 212
- <sup>50</sup> Peters, p. 207
- <sup>51</sup> Kors, p. 46
- <sup>52</sup> Yates, p. 190
- <sup>53</sup> Bauer, pp. 69-73
- <sup>54</sup> Stevenson, p. 104
- <sup>55</sup> Spurr, p. 126
- <sup>56</sup> Stevenson, p. 126; Yates, p. 268
- <sup>57</sup> Yates, p. 268
- <sup>58</sup> Dermott, p. 9
- <sup>59</sup> Anderson, p. 10
- <sup>60</sup> Churton, *Freemasonry*, p. 146, and in general, pp. 141-151

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