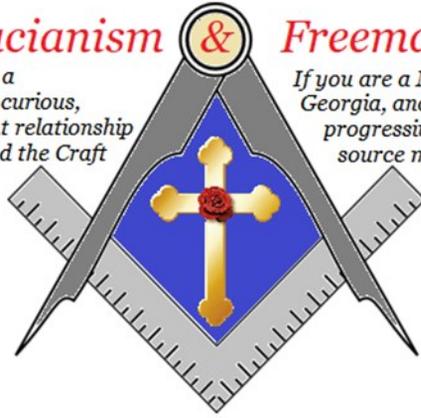


Rosicrucianism & Freemasonry

This Article Series presents a kaleidoscopic view into the curious, mysterious and ever present relationship between Rosicrucianism and the Craft through the ages.



If you are a Master Mason under the Grand Lodge of Georgia, and you would like to participate in a progressive and focused study of Primary Rosicrucian source materials, visit <http://magicalmason.info> for full particulars on reading requirements, meeting times, locations and sign-up details

Article #1: *Since Time Immemorial, Together*

The Intertwined History of Freemasonry & Rosicrucianism

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In Georgia Freemasonry today, there are multiple opportunities for Masons to explore the Rosicrucian Mysteries: There is a Rosicrucian Society, with nine mystical “Grades” (Societas Rosicruciana In Civitatibus Foederatis, or S.R.I.C.F.), as well as singular Rosicrucian degrees in the Royal Order of Scotland (the “Rosy Cross” degree) and the Scottish Rite (the “Rose Croix” degree). These masonic expressions of Rosicrucianism are present-day manifestations of a very long shared history between Rosicrucianism and Speculative Freemasonry. We will examine how these two distinct “currents of initiation” have *intertwined with each other in a mutually supportive partnership -- Since Time Immemorial* -- Which is to say, our earliest evidence of Speculative Freemasonry is always interlocked with evidence of Rosicrucianism at the same time.

Let’s start with the most basic of questions: We all have experience of Freemasonry -- But What IS Rosicrucianism, and where did IT come from?

Rosicrucianism in the 1600s (Background & Highlights)

The year is 1614 and within 4 years, European Politics shall explode with genocidal wars of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Intelligent men of letters -- now with access to private commercial networks of international publishing -- are free to seek out and propose their own answers, independent of either Church or State censorship and control. In their search for enlightened alternatives, they absorb and spread the Renaissance fascination with all-encompassing philosophies: Re-discovered mystical modes of thinking such as Platonism and Hermeticism promise to unite spiritual wisdom with material science and knowledge...

Injected into this mix of political danger and intellectual discovery are three anonymous “Rosicrucian Manifestos” (or long pamphlets) called the Fama fraternitatis (Legend of the Fraternity), Confessio fraternitatis (Rules of the Fraternity) and Chymische Hochzeit (Alchemical Marriage of Christian Rosy-Cross), widely published in the years 1614-1616. These purport to be communications from a Secret Society of “Invisible” brethren, over 200 years at work behind the scenes. The avowed goal of these “Rosicrucians” is nothing less than a complete reformation of society on all levels, social, spiritual, scientific and artistic.

This proposal is communicated via a sophisticated allegory of the Order’s Founder “Christian Rosy-Cross,” whose youthful pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1394 is abandoned. Christian opts instead for a much wider and productive tour in search of a synthesis of lost knowledge from multiple distant lands and sources. Returning to the Universities of Europe, his new learning is rejected by the establishment of the day. He initiates the brothers of his home Monastery into the secret and “invisible” Rosicrucian Fraternity, to continue the Great Work until the times are ripe for the revelation of their program -- which just happens to be the story’s “present-day,” or 1604. The allegory is filled with specific dates and suggestive places which mirror important actual events, both in the political history of the Christian Church, and the historical development of Renaissance thinking and innovation.

As masters of Publishing (the Press), the alleged “Order” communicates openly to all in print, but without revealing their own identities or locations. Their communiques require those who would join them to privately compose their own detailed responses, and

answer in kind (i.e. publish their answers as widely as possible). This triggers a massive flurry of publications from sympathetic and divergent audiences (Protestant and Catholic, Mystical and Scientific) not only in the German lands, but throughout Europe. This phenomenon is called the “Rosicrucian Furor (i.e. mania)” and peaks in volume from 1615-1660. This activity gradually shifts from German lands to England and Scotland, which continue the elaboration of Rosicrucian philosophy and literature throughout the mid 1600s. It is reasonable to assume this shift is because the Continent is engulfed directly in the displacements and carnage of the 30 years war (eventually totaling more than 8 million casualties) while the British Isles are relatively untouched by the conflagration...

Comparing Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry as “Currents of Initiation”

Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry differ as currents of “initiation” in several important ways. In terms of content, Rosicrucianism stresses mass scientific and spiritual reform, while Freemasonry focuses upon acts of charity and personal Moral Improvement. Rosicrucianism (in the 1600s) is initiated by the individual, via self-publication into a mass public dialogue. Freemasonry requires a lodge of other Freemasons to initiate a candidate in private.

There are important sharings as well -- At least by 1730 (the date at which the Master Mason degree is first developed), both Freemasonry & Rosicrucianism share a dedication to the transformative power of **allegory** as the tool of choice to encapsulate complex truths as symbolic characters & events. Rosicrucianism has its own Sacred Architecture (The Vault of Christian Rosy-Cross) and Freemasonry is not without its Alchemy either. If space allowed, this would be the perfect place to draw up a quick table of comparison of the two currents before moving on to what we came for: To witness the early cooperation, shared memberships, and synergy between the currents since Time Immemorial (N.B., to see the table, check out the article archive tab at <http://www.magicalmason.info>).

Early Printed References relating Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry

One of the most striking direct evidences of the intertwining of Rosicrucianism & Speculative Freemasonry during the latter’s early development, prior to the Grand Lodge period, occurs within the poem entitled “*The muses threnodie, or, mirthful mournings, on the*

death of Master Gall” (1638) by Henry Adamson. Brother Henry’s is the very first known printed mention of the “Mason’s Word” as an element of Speculative Freemasonry, and in the same breath he ties its meaning, understanding and usage to membership within the Rosicrucian brotherhood:

*For what we do presage is not in grosse
For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse;
We have the Mason word, and second sight,
Things for to come we can foretell aright.*

This is a widely reprinted quotation, often lacking context to deepen understanding. This short stanza is from a much lengthier poem by Brother Adamson to his deceased best friend, Master Gall -- and as a private and personal work was published only after Adamson also died. Thus while **published** in 1638, it was **written** between 1621 and 1625 at the height of the Rosicrucian Furor. and provides one of the first literary glimpses into early Speculative Freemasonry.

A further point about the larger poem is that its literary anchor is a royal Masonic “public works” program, to rebuild the stone bridge across the river Tay, which washed away in 1621. This pair of Rosicrucian-Freemasonic Brothers were intensely involved in promoting this operative masonic work to King James, as a holistic program of practical, philosophical and spiritual work.

Finally, it's important to unpack the nuances within these short lines. The line “*For what we do presage is not in grosse,*” means “*The future we see, is not about specific things.*” This is a very Platonic statement -- *Logically, If a vision is not about specific things, it must be about abstract things, i.e. the motivating Ideas or Principles behind all action -- Principles discovered because they are Rosicrucians, i.e. “For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse.” However, In the third line, this mystical Rosicrucian power of “second sight” is directly tied to the additional possession of the Mason Word. Restated, the Philosophy of Rosicrucianism requires the practice of brotherly-love that is Freemasonry symbolized by its communication of the “Mason word.” It is the combination that is stressed in order to “foretell aright” the “Things to Come” -- The Philosophical virtue of Rosicrucianism + The So-Moral virtue of Freemasonry = “Second Sight” -- A direct, personal literary evidence of Synergy between the two currents of initiation, occurring in the first printed mention of the “Mason word” itself.*

Further printed evidences linking Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism carry on throughout the developmental period prior to Grand Lodge. A last example comes from Poor Robin's Intelligencer in the form of a satirical "divertisement" published on October 10, 1676:

"These are to give notice 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 of November next, at the Flying-Bull in Wind-Mill-Crown-Street."

This is clearly a joke that yet reveals a true state of perception -- Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism are recognized as separate currents which "dine" together at the same table.

Identified Early Speculative Freemasons, and their deep ties to Rosicrucianism

With the Schaw Statutes of 1599, Scottish lodges of Freemasonry were required to start keeping minutes. This has been a treasure trove for Masonic scholars to debate who is the first Speculative Freemason. Prior to the availability of these minutes, scholarship tagged Sir Robert Moray (initiated 1641 in Scotland) and Elias Ashmole (initiated 1646 in England) as both were the first in their respective lands to write down the dates and details of their initiations in their own personal writings. While it is now clear that there are many earlier Speculative Freemasons that have been identified by the Grand Lodge of Scotland via Lodge Minutes, rich personal information on Moray and Ashmole is readily available as both will become members of the Royal Society in 1660 (first Scientific society). This makes them great studies of early Speculative Freemasons and their deep ties to Rosicrucianism in the 1600s.

On May 20th 1641, Sir Robert Moray was initiated at St Mary's Chapel in Edinburgh. Moray writes voluminous mystical speculations on the symbolism of the Craft, taking as his personal Mason's Mark the 5-pointed star, or Pentalpha, with the 5 lettered Greek word for "Love" (Agape) written about the points (think "5 points of Fellowship"). As a gifted Military engineer, Moray was a skilled Geometrician and dilates masonically upon this figure and others in his speculative writings. Moray maintained an intense personal interest in alchemy, and was the patron benefactor of the prolific Alchemist Thomas Vaughn.

Vaughn, in turn, was an avowed Rosicrucian, who personally translated the "Rosicrucian Manifestos" into English for the benefit of the English Rosicrucian movement. Vaughn authored multiple Rosicrucian works under the nom-de-plume "Eugenius Philalethes." This linkage of Moray to Vaughn, in turn links Moray and Ashmole.

Elias Ashmole was admitted in England at Warrington Lodge on October 16th, 1646. He was an antiquarian whose collection of Magical and Alchemical antiquities, notably preserving the diaries and ceremonial equipment of Magus John Dee, whose symbol graces the cover of the 3rd Rosicrucian Manifesto the "Chemical Wedding". Ashmole founded a key museum bearing his name (The Ashmolean). In his own writings, Ashmole self-identified as a "Son of Hermes" or Hermetick Adept (a practitioner of the Hermetic Philosophy). There is no doubt of Ashmole's Rosicrucian membership, inasmuch as he copied in his own hand the Manifestos translated by the Rosicrucian Thomas Vaughn -- along with his personal handwritten letter seeking admission to the Rosicrucian Fraternity according to the instructions given in the documents themselves. Masonic Brother Ashmole's "Spiritual Petition" into the Rosicrucian movement is under glass in the Bodleian museum.

There is little value in attempting to **conclude this article with a summary**, as it is intended to orient and **begin** deeper searches into the early history of the Craft. The rich findings of synergy between Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism speak their own appeal not to conclude but to continue in your own scholarship and personal exploration of this relationship. If you are interested in a deeper, progressive study of primary Rosicrucian source-works, look again to the header of this article for where to meet other Master Masons engaged in the same search into the mysterious ties between Freemasonry and the Fraternity of the Rosy

