

February 2018

## **Introduction**

### **Whence We Came?**

“Whence we came?” is an aged old question. We know the Grand Lodge of England was formed in 1717, but where did the four lodges that formed the Grand Lodge come from? How far back do our traditions go? Does our ancestry really date only so far back as the age of taverns and bars? Over the next series of articles, we will explore our history and in the process, travel through time to ancient lands and rediscover ancient wisdoms. This month we leave the British Isles and travel to Germany to visit our cousin, Brother Christian Rosenkreutz.

### **Whence We Came? Rosicrucianism**

Rosicrucianism is an esoteric organization, long kept secret, until it announced itself to the world in 1607 with the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis RC* and in 1616 with the publication of *Confessio Fraternitatis*. The order professed to be the keepers of certain esoteric Truths that date back to ancient times. These Truths were hidden from the common man, and provided only to the adepts who were ready and prepared to receive, keep, and understand the Truth. They were based on Kabbalah, Hermeticism, and Christianity and provided insight into the physical universe and spiritual realms. They taught a philosophy of knowing God through a study of science and nature.

The *Fama Fraternitatis RC* introduces us to a German mystic known as Father C.R.C., born in 1378 (more on that later), who lived for 106 years. He travelled the world, studied ancient philosophy in the Middle East (Sufism?), and shared his knowledge with a small circle of friends, eight in all, whose only reference we have are their initials<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Brothers C.R.C., P.A.L., G.V., I.O., B., G.G., P.O., and I.A.

The order took an oath to (i) heal the sick for free; (ii) they would practice the faith of the country in which they lived; (iii) once a year they would meet in secret at the house of Sancti Spiritus; (iv) before they die, to seek their worthy successor; (v) the word R.C. would be their mark and seal; and (vi) they would remain secret for 100 years.

We see similarities with Freemasonry, such as an oath to help, aide, and assist all poor and distressed brethren, the use of a Sanctum Sanctorum as a holy meeting place, secrecy about the order. Could the word of R.C. be similar to the true word or password of master mason that we use to recognize one another? In the text, C.R.C. describes brother R.C. as “C.R.C.’s deceased father’s brother’s son” as opposed to describing him simply as his cousin. Some authors have described this strange phraseology as a reference to rebirth or regeneration as if C.R.C. went through some metaphysical transformation and became R.C. Could this be ourselves transforming from the rough ashlar to the perfect ashlar.

At the end of the *Fama Fraternitatis RC* is a description of C.R.C.’s burial vault, a strange vault of geometric shapes and symbols, which includes the description “Unto the Glory of the Rose Cross I have constructed this Tomb for myself as a Compendium of the Universal Unity”. Some have defined this statement to be about a spiritual resurrection within the individual, the concept of a death so that a person can then be reborn and reunited with God or that Universal Unity.

The *Confessio Fraternitatis* continues the concept of a true philosophy ultimately replacing the falsehoods that currently existed within society. As one passage states:

We ought to observe well, and make it known unto everyone, that God hath certainly and most assuredly concluded to send and grant to the world before her end, which presently thereupon shall ensue, **such a truth, light, life, and glory, as the first man Adam had, which he lost in Paradise**, after which his successors were put and driven, with him, to misery.

Wherefore there shall cease all servitude, falsehood, lies, and darkness, which by little and little, with the great world's revolution, was crept into all arts, works, and governments of men, and have darkened the most part of them.

**All the which, when it shall once be abolished and removed, and instead thereof a right and true rule instituted,** then there will remain thanks unto them which have taken pains therein. But the work itself shall be attributed to the blessedness of our age.

Some have theorized the author of this text was Francis Bacon, who if you recall from last month's article was thought to have influenced Freemasonry and the Royal Society.

These two works hit Europe just before the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, which took place between 1618 and 1648, a war that tore through Europe along religious lines between Roman Catholic States and Protestant States. In contrast to these divisions, we have a secret order expressing ideas of the universality of man, religious toleration, and to abandon "blind faith" and instead adopt "reason and science" to know God. What do we say in the Fellow Craft degree:

Geometry the first and noblest of sciences, is the basis on which the superstructure of Freemasonry is erected. By geometry we may curiously trace nature through her various windings, to her most concealed recesses. **By it, we discover the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the Grand Artificer of the Universe.**

### A Little Fun with Math

As you may know, in Hebrew there are no numbers, but instead every letter has a numerical value (see grid at the end of this article), and by extension every word has a numerical value.

If we take the names of our three Grand Masters:

- King Solomon or “**MeLeK ShLoMoH**” spelled (i) Mem-Lamed-Kaph (ii) Shin-Lamed-Mem-Heh we get the sum  $40+30+20+300+30+40+5=465$
- King Hiram of Tyre or “**KuRiM MeLeK TsoR**” spelled (i) Kaph-Resh-Mem (ii) Mem-Lamed-Kaph (iii) Tzadik-Resh we get the sum  $20+200+40+40+30+20+90+200 = 640$
- Hiram Abiff or “**KuRiM ABI**” spelled (i) Kaph-Resh-Mem (ii) Aleph-Beth-Yod we get the sum  $20+200+40+1+2+10=273$

And the sum of all three Grand Masters together is  $465+640+273 = 1378$ , the supposed year of CRC's birth. Is C.R.C. being reborn in 1378, as a new man, after he masters the virtues of Strength, Wisdom, and Beauty, the three pillars represented by our three Grand Masters? Was Freemasonry influenced by Rosicrucianism? Did Francis Bacon, influenced by Rosicrucianism influence Freemasonry? Is it all a coincidence, that throughout Europe there were Rosicrucian temples merging with Masonic lodges? Did they all espouse the same Truths? Does it have any relationship to the Scottish Rite degree, Knight of the Rose Croix de Heredom?

Next month join us as we leave Europe for the Holy Land and explore the Knight Templars.

RW Michael S Neuberger

Grand Historian - 2017

## Hebrew alphabet, English Equivalent, Sound, and Numerical values

<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Sound</u>	<u>Number</u>
א	Aleph	(A)	1
ב	Bet	(B)	2
ג	Gimmel	(G)	3
ד	Dalet	(D)	4
ה	Heh	(H)	5
ו	Vav	(V)	6
ז	Zayin	(Z)	7
ח	Chet	(Ch)	8
ט	Tet	(T)	9
י	Yod	(I/Y)	10
כ	Caph	(K)	20
ל	Lamed	(L)	30
מ	Mem	(M)	40
נ	Nun	(N)	50
ס	Samech	(S)	60
ע	Ayin	(Eye)	70
פ	Peh	(P)	80
צ	Tzadik	(Ts)	90
ק	Koph	(K)	100
ר	Resh	(R)	200
ש	Shin	(Sh)	300
ת	Tav	(Th)	400