

Fama Fraternitatis

AD ROSAE CRUCIS



1614

Seeing the only wise and merciful God in these latter days hath poured out so richly his mercy and goodness to mankind, where by we do attain more and more to the perfect knowledge of his Son Jesus Christ and Nature, that justly we may boast of the happy time, wherein there is not only discovered unto us the half part of the world, which was heretofore unknown and hidden, but he hath also 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 (in this our age spotted and imperfect) to perfection; so that finally man might thereby understand his own nobleness and worth, and why he is called Microcosmus, and how far his knowledge extendeth into Nature.

Although the rude world herewith will he but little pleased, but rather smile and scoff thereat; also the pride and covetousness of the learned is so great, it will not suffer them to agree together; but were they united, they might out of all those things which in this our age God doth so richly bestow upon us, collect *Librum Naturae*, or a perfect method of all arts: but such is their opposition, that they still keep, and are loth to leave the old course, esteeming Porphyry, Aristotle, and Galen, yea and that which bath but a mere show of learning, more than the clear and manifested light and truth; who if they were now living, with much joy would leave their erroneous doctrines. But here is too great weakness for such a great work. And although in theology, physics, and the mathematics, the truth doth oppose itself nevertheless the old enemy by his subtlety and craft doth show himself in hindering every good purpose by his instruments and contentious wavering people. To such an intent of a general reformation, the most godly and highly illuminated father, our brother, C.R. a German, the chief and original of our Fraternity, hath much and long time laboured, who by reason of his poverty (although descended of noble parents) in the fifth year of his age was placed in a cloister, where he had learned indifferently the Greek and Latin tongues, who (upon his earnest desire and request) being yet in his growing years, was associated to a brother, P.A.L. who had determined to go to the Holy Land.

Although this brother died in Ciprus, and so never came to Jerusalem, yet our brother C.R. did not return, but shipped himself over, and went to Damasco, minding from thence to go to Jerusalem; but by reason of the feebleness of his body he remained still there, and by his skill in physic he obtained much favour with the Turks. In the meantime he became by chance acquainted with the wise men of Damasco in Arabia, and beheld what great wonders they wrought, and how Nature was discovered unto them; hereby was that high and noble spirit of brother C.R. so stirred up, that Jerusalem was not so much now in his mind as Damasco; also he could not bridle his desires any longer, but made a bargain with the Arabians, that they should carry him for a certain sum of money to Damasco; he was but of the age of sixteen years when he came thither, yet of a strong Dutch

constitution. There the wise received him (as he himself witnesseth) not as a stranger, but as one whom they had long expected; they called him by his name, and showed him other secrets out of his cloister, whereat he could not but mightily wonder. He learned there better the Arabian tongue, so that the year following he translated the book M. into good Latin, which he afterwards brought with him. This is the place where he did learn his physicks, and his mathematicks, whereof the world hath just cause to rejoyce, if there were more love, and less envy. After three years he returned again with good consent, shipped himself over Sinus Arabicus into Egypt, where he remained not long, but only took better notice there of the plants and creatures. He sailed over the whole Mediterranean sea for to come unto Fez, where the Arabians had directed him. And it is a great shame unto us, that wise men, so far remote the one from the other, should not only be of one opinion, hating all contentious writings, but also be so willing and ready under the seal of secrecy to impart their secrets to others.

Every year the Arabians and Africans do send one to another, inquiring one of another out of their arts, if happily they had found out some better things, or if experience had weakened their reasons. Yearly there came something to light, whereby the mathematica, phisic, and magic (for in those are they of Fez most skilful) were amended. As there is nowadays in Germany no want of learned men, magicians, cabalists, physicians, and philosophers, were there but more love and kindness among them, or that the most part of them would not keep their secrets close only to themselves. At Fez he did get acquaintance with those which are commonly called the Elementary Inhabitants, who revealed unto him many of their secrets. As we Germans likewise might gather together many things, if there were the like unity, and desire of searching out secrets amongst us.

Of these of Fez he often did confess that their Magia was not altogether pure, and also that their Cabala was defiled with their religion; but notwithstanding he knew how to make good use of the same, and found still more better grounds for his faith, altogether agreeable with the harmony of the whole world, and wonderfully impressed in all periods of times. And thence proceedeth that fair concord, that, as in every several kernel is contained a whole good tree or fruit, so likewise is included in the little body of man the whole great world, whose religion, policy, health, members, nature, language, words and works, are agreeing, sympathizing, and in equal tune and melody with God, heaven, and earth. And that which is dis-agreeing with them is error, falsehood, and of the Devil, who alone is the first, middle, and last cause of strife, blindness, and darkness in the world. Also, might one examine all and several persons upon the earth, he should find that which is good and right, is always agreeing with itself; but all the rest is spotted with a thousand erroneous conceits.

After two years brother C.R. departed the city of Fez, and sailed with many costly things into Spain, hoping well [that since] he himself had so well and so profitably spent his time in his travel, that the learned in Europe would highly rejoyce with him, and begin to rule and order all their studies according to those sound and sure foundations. He therefore conferred with the learned in Spain, showing unto them the errors of our arts, and how they might be corrected, and from whence they should gather the true Indicia of the times to come, and wherein they ought to agree with those things that are past; also how the faults of the Church and the whole Philosophia Moralis was to be amended. He showed them new growths, new fruits, and beasts, which did concord with old philosophy, and prescribed them new Axiomata, whereby all things might fully be restored. But it was to them a laughing matter; and being a new thing unto them, they feared that their great name should be lessened, if they should now again begin to learn and acknowledge their many years errors, to which they were accustomed, and wherewith with they had gained them enough. Who-so loveth unquietness, let him be reformed.

The same song was also sung to him by other nations, the which moved him the more because it happened to him contrary to his expectations, being ready then bountifully to impart all his arts and secrets to the learned, if they would have but undertaken to write the true and infallible Axiomata, out of all faculties, sciences, and arts, and whole Nature, as that which he knew would direct them, like a globe or circle, to the only middle point and Centrum, and (as is usual among the Arabians) it should only serve to the wise and learned as a rule. That also there might be a Society in Europe, which might have gold, silver, and precious stones, sufficient for to bestow them on kings, for their necessary uses and lawful purposes; with which such as be governors might be brought up, for to learn all that which God hath suffered man to know, and thereby to be enabled in all times of need

to give their counsel unto those that seek it, like the heathen oracles. Verily we must confess that the world in those days was already big with those great commotions, labouring to be delivered of them; and did bring forth painful, worthy men, who broke with all force through darkness and barbarism, and left us who succeeded to follow them: and assuredly they have been the uppermost point in trigono igneo, whose flame now should be more and more bright, and shall undoubtedly give to the world the last light.

Such a one likewise hath Theophrastus been in vocation and callings, although he was none of our Fraternity, yet nevertheless hath he diligently read over the book M: whereby his sharp ingenium was exalted; but this man was also hindered in his course by the multitude of the learned and wise-seeming men, that he was never able peacefully to confer with others of his knowledge and understanding he had of Nature. And therefore in his writing he rather mocked these busy bodies, and doth not show them altogether what he was: yet nevertheless there is found with him well grounded the aforementioned Harmonia, which without doubt he had imparted to the learned, if he had not found them rather worthy of subtle vexation, than to be instructed in greater arts and sciences; he then with a free and careless life lost his time, and left unto the world their foolish pleasures.

But that we do not forget our loving father, brother C.R., he after many painful travels, and his fruitless true instructions, returned again into Germany, the which he (by reason of the alterations which were shortly to come, and of the strange and dangerous contentions) heartily loved. There, although he could have bragged with his art, but specially of the transmutations of metals, yet did he esteem more Heaven, and the citizens thereof, Man, than all vain glory and pomp.

Nevertheless he built a fitting and neat habitation, in which he ruminated his voyage, and philosophy, and reduced them together in a true memorial. In this house he spent a great time in the mathematicks, and made many fine instruments, ex omnibus hujus artis partibus, whereof there is but little remaining to us, as hereafter you shall understand. After five years came again into his mind the wished for reformation; and in regard he doubted of the aid and help of others, although he himself was painful, lusty, and unwearying, he undertook, with some few joined with him, to attempt the same. Wherefore he desired to this end, to have out of his first cloister (to the which he bare a great affection) three of his brethren, brother G.V., brother J.A., and brother J.O., who besides that, they had some more knowledge in the arts, than in that time many others had, he did bind those three unto himself, to be faithful, diligent, and secret; as also to commit carefully to writing, all that which he should direct and instruct them in, to the end that those which were to come, and through especial revelation should be received into this Fraternity, might not be deceived of the least syllable and word.

After this manner began the Fraternity of the Rose Cross; first, by four persons only, and by them was made the magical language and writing, with a large dictionary, which we yet daily use to God's praise and glory, and do find great wisdom therein; they made also the first part of the book M. But in respect that that labour was too heavy, and the unspeakable concourse of the sick hindered them, and also whilst his new building (called Sancti spiritus) was now finished, they concluded to draw and receive yet others more into their Fraternity; to this end was chosen brother R.C., his deceased father's brother's son, brother B. a skilful painter, G. and P.D. their secretary, all Germans except J.A. so in all they were eight in number, all bachelors and of vowed virginity; by those was collected a book or volume of all that which man can desire, wish, or hope for.

Although we do now freely confess, that the world is much amended within an hundred years, yet we are assured that our Axiomata shall unmovably remain unto the world's end, and also the world in her highest and last age shall not attain to see anything else; for our Rota takes her beginning from that day when God spake Fiat, and shall end when he shall speak Pereat; yet God's clock striketh every minute, where ours scarce striketh perfect hours. We also steadfastly believe, that if our brethren and fathers had lived in this our present and clear light, they would more roughly have handled the Pope, Mahomet, scribes, artists, and sophisters, and had showed themselves more helpful, not simply with sighs, and wishing of their end and consummation.

When now these eight brethren had disposed and ordered all things in such manner, as there was not now need of any great labour, and also that everyone was sufficiently instructed, and able

perfectly to discourse of secret and manifest philosophy, they would not remain any longer together, but as in the beginning they had agreed, they separated themselves into several countries, because that not only their Axiomata might in secret be more profoundly examined by the learned, but that they themselves, if in some country or other they observed anything, or perceived some error, they might inform one another of it.

Their agreement was this: First, That none of them should profess any other thing than to cure the sick, and that gratis. 2. None of the posterity should be constrained to wear one certain kind of habit, but therein to follow the custom of the country. 3. That every year upon the day C. they should meet together in the house S. Spiritus, or write the cause of his absence. 4. Every brother should look about for a worthy person, who, after his decease, might succeed him. 5. The word C.R. should be their seal, mark, and character. 6. The Fraternity should remain secret one hundred years.

These six articles they bound themselves one to another to keep, and five of the brethren departed, only the brethren B. and D. remained with the father, Fra. R. C., a whole year; when these likewise departed. Then remained by him his cousin and brother J.O. so that he hath all the days of his life with him two of his brethren. And although that as yet the Church was not cleansed, nevertheless we know that they did think of her, and what with longing desire they looked for. Every year they assembled together with joy, and made a full resolution of that which they had done; there must certainly have been great pleasure, to hear truly and without invention related and rehearsed all the wonders which God had poured out here and there through the world. Everyone may hold it out for certain, that such persons as were sent, and joined together by God, and the heavens, and chosen out of the wisest of men, as have lived in many ages, did live together above all others in highest unity, greatest secrecy, and most kindness one towards another.

After such a most laudable sort they did spend their lives, and although they were free from all diseases and pain, yet notwithstanding they could not live and pass their time appointed of God. The first of this Fraternity which died, and that in England, was J.O., as brother C. long before had foretold him; he was very expert, and well learned in Cabala, as his book called H. witnesseth. In England he is much spoken of; and chiefly because he cured a young Earl of Norfolk of the leprosy. They had concluded, that as much as possibly could be, their burial place should be kept secret, as at this day it is not known unto us what is become of some of them, yet everyone's place was supplied with a fit successor. But this we will confess publicly by these presents to the honour of God, that what secrets soever we have learned out of the book M. (although before our eyes we behold the image and pattern of all the world) yet are there not shown unto us our misfortunes, nor hour of death, the which only is known to God himself, who thereby would have us keep in a continual readiness. But hereof more in our Confession, where we do set down 37 reasons wherefore we now do make known our Fraternity, and proffer such high mysteries, and without constraint and reward. Also we do promise more gold than both the Indies bring to the King of Spain; for Europe is with child and will bring forth a strong child, who shall stand in need of a great godfather's gift.

After the death of J.O., brother R.C. rested not, but as soon as he could, called the rest together (and as we suppose) then his grave was made. Although hitherto we (who were the latest) did not know when our loving father R.C. died, and had no more but the bare names of the beginners, and all their successors, to us, yet there came into our memory a secret, which through dark and hidden words, and speeches of the 100 years, brother A., the successor of D. (who was of the last and second row and succession, and had lived amongst many of us) did impart unto us of the third row and succession. Otherwise we must confess, that after the death of the said A. none of us had in any manner known anything of brother R.C. and of his first fellow-brethren, than that which was extant of them in our philosophical Bibliotheca, amongst which our Axiomata was held for the chiefest, Rota Mundi for the most artificial, and Protheus the most profitable. Likewise we do not certainly know if these of the second row have been of the like wisdom as the first, and if they were admitted to all things. It shall be declared hereafter to the gentle Reader, not only what we have heard of the burial of R.C., but also made manifest publicly by the foresight, sufferance, and commandment of God, whom we most faithfully obey, that if we shall be answered discreetly and Christian-like, we will not be afraid to set forth publicly in print our names and surnames, our meetings, or anything else that may be required at our hands.

Now the true and fundamental relation of the finding out of the high illuminated man of God, Fra. C.R.C. is this. After that A. in Gallia Narbonensis was deceased, then succeeded in his place our loving brother N.N. This man after he had repaired unto us to take the solemn oath of fidelity and secrecy, he informed us bona fide, that A. had comforted him in telling him that this Fraternity should ere long not remain so hidden, but should be to all the whole German nation helpful, needful, and commendable; of the which he was not in any wise in his estate ashamed of. The year following, after he had performed his school right and was minded now to travel, being for that purpose sufficiently provided with Fortunatus' purse, he thought (he being a good architect) to alter something of his building and to make it more fit. In such renewing he lighted upon the memorial table which was cast of brass, and containeth all the names of the brethren, with some few other things. This he would transfer in another more fitting vault; for where or when Fra R.C. died, or in what country he was buried, was by our predecessors concealed and unknown to us. In this table stuck a great nail somewhat strong, so that when he was with force drawn out, he took with him an indifferently big stone out of the thin wall, or plastering, of the hidden door, and so, unlooked for, uncovered the door. wherefore we did with by and longing throw down the rest of the wall, and cleared the door) upon which was written in great letters, Post 120 annos patebo, with the year of the Lord under it. Therefore we gave God thanks and let it rest that same night, because we would first overlook our Rotam. But we refer ourselves again to the Confession, for what we here publish is done for the help of those that are worthy, but to the unworthy (God willing) it will be small profit. For like as our door was after so many years wonderfully discovered, also there shall be opened a door to Europe (when the wall is removed) which already doth begin to appear, and with great desire is expected of many.

In the morning following we opened the door, and there appeared to our sight a vault of seven sides and corners, every side five foot broad, and the height of eight foot. Although the sun never shined in this vault, nevertheless it was enlightened with another sun, which had learned this from the sun, and was situated in the upper part in the center of the ceiling. In the midst, instead of a tombstone, was a round altar covered over with a plate of brass, and thereon this engraven: A.C.R.C. Hoc universi compendium unius mihi sepulchrum feci. Round about the first circle, or brim, stood, Jesus mihi omnia In the middle were four figures, inclosed in circles, whose circumscription was, Nequaquam vacuum, Legis Jugum, Libertas Evangelii, Dei gloria intacta. This is all clear and bright; as also the seven sides and the two Heptagoni: so we kneeled altogether down, and gave thanks to the sole wise, sole mighty and sole eternal God, who hath taught us more than all men's wits could have found out, praised be his holy name. This vault we parted in three parts, the upper part or ceiling, the wall or side, the ground or floor.

Of the upper part you shall understand no more of it at this time, but that it was divided according to the seven sides in the triangle, which was in the bright center; but what therein is contained, you shall God willing (that are desirous of our society) behold the same with your own eyes; but every side or wall is parted into ten figures, every one with their several figures and sentences, as they are truly shown and set forth Concentratum here in our book.

The bottom again is parted in the triangle, but because therein is described the power and the rule of the inferior governors, we leave to manifest the same, for fear of the abuse by the evil and ungodly world. But those that are provided and stored with the heavenly antidote, they do without fear or hurt tread on and bruise the head of the old and evil serpent, which this our age is well fitted for. Every side or wall had a door or chest, wherein there lay divers things, especially all our books, which otherwise we had. Besides the Vocabular of Theoph: Par. Ho. and these which daily unfalsifieth we do participate. Herein also we found his Itinerarium and vitam, whence this relation for the most part is taken. In another chest were looking-glasses of divers virtues, as also in another place were little bells, burning lamps, and chiefly wonderful artificial songs, generally all done to that end, that if it should happen after many hundred years the Order or Fraternity should come to nothing, they might by this only vault be restored again.

Now as yet we had not seen the dead body of our careful and wise father, we therefore removed the altar aside, there we lifted up a strong plate of brass, and found a fair and worthy body, whole and unconsumed, as the same is here lively counterfeited, with all his ornaments and attires. In his hand he held a parchment book, called I., the which next unto the Bible is our greatest treasure, which ought to be delivered to the censure of the world. At the end of this book standeth this

following Elogium: Granum pectori Jesu insitum.

C. Ros. C. ex nobili atque splendida Germaniae R.C. familia oriundus, vir sui seculi divinis revelatiombus subtilissimis imaginationibus, indefessis laboribus ad coetestia, atque humana mysteria; arcanave admissus postquam suam (quam Arabico, & Africano itineribus Collegerat) plusquam regiam, atque imperatoriam Gazam suo seculo nondum convenientem, posteritati eruendam custodivisset & jam suarum Artium, ut & nominis, fides acconjunctissimos herides instituisset, mundum minutum omnibus motibus magno illi respondentem fabricasset hocque tandem preteritarum, praesentium, & futurarum, rerum compendio extracto, centenario major non morbo (quem ipse nunquam corpore expertus erat, nunquam alios infestare sinebat) ullo pellente sed spiritu Dei evocante, illuminatam animam (inter Fratrum amplexus & ultima oscula) fidelissimo creatori Deo reddidisset, Pater dilectissimus, Fra: suavissimus, praeceptor fidelissimus, amicus integerimus, a suis ad 120 annos hic absconditus est."

Underneath they had subscribed themselves,

Fra. I.A., Fr. C.H. electione Fraternitatis caput.

Fr. G.V. M.P.C.

Fra. R.C. Iunior haeres S. Spiritus

Fra. B.M., P.A. Pictor & Architectus

Fr. C.G. M.P.I. Cabalista

Secundi Circuli

Fra. P.A. Successor, Fr. I.O. Mathematicus

Fra. A. Successor Fra. P.D.3. Fra. R. Successor patris C.R.C. cum Christo triumphant.

At the end was written: Ex Deo nascimur, in Jesu morimur, per spiritum sanctum revivscimus.

At that time was already dead brother I.O. and Fra. D. but their burial place where is it to be found? We doubt not but our Fra. Senior hath the same, and some especial thing laid in earth, and perhaps likewise hidden. We also hope that this our example will stir up others more diligently to inquire after their names (whom we have therefore published) and to search for the place of their burial; for the most part of them, by reason of their practise and phisic, are yet known, and praised among very old folks; so might perhaps our Gaza be enlarged, or at least be better cleared.

Concerning Minutum Mundum, we found it kept in another little altar, truly more fine than can be imagined by any understanding man; but we will leave him undescribed, until we shall truly be answered upon this our true hearted Fama. And so we have covered it again with the plates, and set the altar thereon, shut the door, and made it sure, with all our seals. Besides by instruction and command of our Rota, there are come to sight some books, among which is contained M. (which were made instead of household care by the praiseworthy M.P.). Finally we departed the one from the other, and left the natural heirs in possession of our jewels. And so we do expect the answer and judgment of the learned, or unlearned.

Howbeit we know after a time there will now be a general reformation, both of divine and human things, according to our desire, and the expectation of others. For it is fitting, that before the rising of the sun, there should appear and break forth Aurora, or some clearness, or divine light in the sky. And so in the mean time some few, who shall give their names, may join together, thereby to increase the number and respect of our Fraternity, and make a happy and wished for beginning of our Philosophical Canons, prescribed to us by our brother R.C., and be partakers with us of our treasures (which never can fail or be wasted), in all humility and love to be eased of this world's

labour, and not walk so blindly in the knowledge of the wonder-fill works of God.

But that also every Christian may know of what religion and belief we are, we confess to have the knowledge of Jesus Christ (as the same now in these last days, and chiefly in Germany, most clear and pure is professed, and is nowadays cleansed and void of all swerving people, heretics, and false prophets), in certain noted countries maintained, defended and propagated. Also we use two Sacraments, as they are instituted with all forms and ceremonies of the first reformed Church. In Politia we acknowledge the Roman Empire and Quartam Monarchiam for our Christian head; albeit we know what alterations be at hand, and would fain impart the same with all our hearts to other godly learned men; notwithstanding our hand-writing which is in our hands, no man (except God alone) can make it common, nor any unworthy person is able to bereave us of it. But we shall help with secret aid this so good a cause, as God shall permit or hinder us. For our God is not blind, as the heathen Fortuna, but is the Church's ornament, and the honour of the Temple. Our Philosophy also is not a new invention, but as Adam after his fall hath received it) and as Moses and Solomon used it. Also she ought not much to be doubted of; or contradicted by other opinions, or meanings; but seeing the truth is peaceable, brief; and always like herself in all things, and especially accorded by with Jesus in omni parte and all members. And as he is the true Image of the Father, so is she his Image. It shall not be said, this is true according to Philosophy, but true according to Theologie. And wherein Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras and others did hit the mark, and wherein Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Solomon did excel, but especially wherewith that wonderful book the Bible agreeth. All that same concurrerth together, and makes a sphere or Globe, whose total parts are equidistant from the Centre, as hereof more at large and more plain shall be spoken of in Christianly conference.

But now concerning (and chiefly in this our age) the ungodly and accursed gold-making, which hath gotten so much the upper hand, whereby under colour of it, many runagates and roguish people do use great villanies and cozen and abuse the credit which is given them. Yea nowadays men of discretion do hold the transmutation of metals to be the highest point and fastigium in philosophy, this is all their intent and desire, and that God would be most esteemed by them, and honoured, which could make great store of gold, and in abundance, the which with unpremeditate prayers, they hope to attain of the all-knowing God, and searcher of all hearts. We therefore do by these presents publicly testify, that the true philosophers are far of another mind, esteeming little the making of gold, which is but a parergon; for besides that they have a thousand better things.

And we say with our loving father C.R.C. Phy: aurum nisi quantum: aurum, for unto them the whole nature is detected: he doth not rejoyce that he can make gold, and that, as saith Christ, the devils are obedient unto him; but is glad that he seeth the heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending, and his name written in the book of life. Also we do testify that under the name of Chymia many books and pictures are set forth in Contumeliam gloriae Dei, as we will name them in their due season, and will give to the pure-hearted a Catalogue, or register of them. And we pray all learned men to take heed of these kind of books; for the enemy never resteth but soweth his weeds, till a stronger one doth root it out. So according to the will and meaning of Fra C.R.C. we his brethren request again all the learned in Europe who shall read (sent forth in five languages) this our Famam and Confessionem, that it would please them with good deliberation to ponder this our offer, and to examine most nearly and most sharply their arts, and behold the present time with all diligence, and to declare their mind, either Communicatio consilio, or singulatim by print. 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. And this we say for a truth, that whosoever shall earnestly, and from his heart, bear affection unto us, it shall be beneficial to him in goods, body, and soul; but he that is false-hearted, or only greedy of riches, the same first of all shall not be able in any manner of wise to hurt us, but bring himself to utter ruin and destruction. Also our building (although one hundred thousand people had very near seen and beheld the same) shall for ever remain untouched, undestroyed, and hidden to the wicked world.

SUB UMBRA ALARUM TUARUM, YHVH