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Introduction

The *Fama Fraternitas* is a document chock full of Christian, Hermetic, Alchemical, Astrological, and Qabalistic symbolism. This fact alone seems to indicate that this story is allegorical and not meant to be taken in a literal sense. The story itself is internally consistent when taken in this manner, but gets questionable when we try to take it literally. In fact, the *Fama* does several things, some of which are literal. It attempts to bridge the widening gulf between science and religion (Churton, 2005) ¹, and it also strikes at the author's perceived corruption and misunderstanding that have crept into alchemy, magic, religion, and spirituality of the 17th century. The *Fama* also has a strong Christian Gnostic subtext that conveys the steps we can take to come to an understanding of Self. This supports the position that the narrative does not relate the literal travels of Brother C.R., the protagonist of the story.

Much has been written about these documents. Sometimes the focus is on the symbolism. Many times the writers form a linear interpretation of the document. Some researchers do both. In the end, the irony is that their opinions shed more light on the authors' personalities rather than the intent and meaning of the *Fama Fraternitas* itself. I suspect my treatment of the subject is much the same. As Dr. Christopher McIntosh stated (and I'm paraphrasing from Churton): these manifestoes were and are important because they attempted to holistically fuse all the arts, sciences, and religion while highlighting the need for an understanding of the "Book of Nature." This is necessary if we are to "save the environment. And we are still very much in need of the transformative vision" that the Rosicrucian allegory can provide. (Churton, 2005. p. 395) ²

To make it easier on you, the reader, I've included the entire text of the *Fama* and prefaced each inclusion.

From the Fama

Seeing the only Wise and Merciful God in these latter days hath poured out so richly his mercy and goodness to Mankind, wherby we do attain more and more to the perfect knowledg 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 & hidden, but he hath also made manifest unto us many wonderful, and never-heretofore see, Works and Creatures of Nature, and moreover hath raised men, indued with great Wisdom, which 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 knowledg extendeth in Nature.

Although the rude World herewith will be 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 Porphiry, Aristotle, and Galen, yea and that which hath but a meer shew of learning, more then 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 weaknesses for such a great Work: And although in Theologie, Physic, and the Mathematic, the Truth doth oppose it self; nevertheless the old Enemy by his subtilty and craft doth shew himself in hindering every good purpose by his Instruments and contentious wavering people.

The authors of the *Fama* are Christian and make no bones about it and when they indicate that they are attaining “*perfect knowledge of his Son Jesus Christ and Nature*” we get the distinct impression that their Christianity is influenced, in whole or in part, by Gnosticism. This influence is an important thread in the *Fama* and ties directly to their intention to bridge the gulf between science and religion. In fact, “*perfect knowledge*” indicates their possession of the Gnostic knowledge of Self and is consistent with material throughout the Gnostic Gospels that clearly states knowledge of Self is Knowledge of God and knowledge of The World. A few examples from the Gnostic Gospels may help to elucidate what this “*perfect knowledge of God*” meant to the Rosicrucians:

“He who doesn’t know his own Self knows virtually nothing, but he who does, has gained knowledge of the profundity of the All.” (Jacobs, 2006)³

“It’s impossible to know God unless you worship Him, and know your own Divine Self which is also God.” (Jacobs, 2006)⁴

In the Sophia of Christ, Jesus states: *“But I my Self... ..I AM here, I know God...”* (Jacobs, 2006)⁵

In tandem with knowing God, there is the knowledge of the Nature of things. The Book of Nature and the Liber Mundi (Book of The World) are frequently mentioned and point to another thread in the *Fama*: Science and the Worlds it studied. In the *Fama*’s century, science included many of the occult arts. “*World*” was synonymous with “*Universe.*” This included the idea that the World was intelligent and that this intelligence was singular and not many. By extension, these references are symbolic of a scientific (as the Rosicrucians defined it) knowledge of Reality (or the Nature of Things) and everything in our World. (Tyson, 1994)⁶

We have a new way to understand our world and ourselves when science and Gnosis are used together. The authors considered the Gnostic Self and Man as microcosm and the World, or Universe, as macrocosm. Each is a reflection of each other and both are a reflection of that which is divine. This is a distinctly Hermetic concept and Self, or man as the Microcosmus can best be understood via the Hermetic axiom, *“That which is above is like that which is below”* (Internet Sacred Texts Archive, 2009)⁷. Much of the symbolism of the vault (which comes later in the text) indicates that the idea was central to Rosicrucian through.

The Rosicrucians lay out a detailed “*science*” for attaining gnosis in the *Fama*. In fact, “*God doth so richly bestow upon us... ..a Perfect Method of All Arts,*” could mean that the “*Perfect Method*” is a state of mind or way to approach life. To the Rosicrucians, a universal attitude to living life and learning is achieved via a form of Gnosis that bridges exoteric scientific thought and internal spiritual development. *“In gnosis, consciousness of being is being,”* and philosophy is *“also an attitude that expresses a philosophy”* that has been repeated many different ways

using a core set of ideas. (Churton, 2005. p. 7) ⁸ As the Rosicrucians state in the *Fama*, they present nothing new. What they offer is their method for undertaking the age-old quest of understanding Self and World.

From the Fama - The Cloister

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 Cloyster, 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.

Brother C.R. is a role model for what our spiritual progression *might* look like if we did everything 100% according to Hoyle and we can extend *his* example to represent *our* allegorical Self. As such, being placed in a cloister has several meanings. The first is a reference to the influence of Church and religion on our Brother. This makes sense when we consider his desire to go to the Holy Land. The second interpretation indicates that he receives his education from the Church. In the context of the times, this makes perfect sense. If education was to be had, you'd as likely find it at monastery as a University. In fact, Universities of the day were heavily influenced if not controlled outright, by the Church. Finally, and this may be the most important interpretation, Brother C.R. decides that the path of organized religion, perhaps even an ecclesiastical vocation, is the right path for his spiritual development.

The authors note that, though impoverished, he is born of noble parents. It is symbolic of the fact that we are spiritual as well as material children. His poverty is spiritual and intellectual in nature and may allude to a form of physical poverty that is not pecuniary, but akin to ignorance of how the physical world operates. The idea that Brother C.R. is of noble descent introduces a subtle, but typical, Gnostic dualism to the story: we are currently in a sorry state, yet, because we contain a spark of the divine from our Noble Parents, we can rise above it if we choose to do so.

When we look at the symbolic definitions for mother and father given by the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* (Fillmore, 1995) ⁹, we find that Mary (and I choose Mary because this is a Christian allegory and, by all accounts, she was a pretty decent gal) represents the feminine and the soul. She also represents the emotions, whether limited by our normal senses or elevated to a higher state. Father, of course, alludes to God in the Gnostic sense. In other words, it is a reference to God as the center of Self.

Brother C.R. “*learned indifferently the Greek and Latin tongues*” while under the tutelage of the Church. Paul Foster Case notes that the term “indifferent” is used in a more archaic sense and the passage means that he learned them equally well. (Case, 1985) ¹⁰ This imparts a different interpretation to the passage and the symbolism of Greece and Rome support it. Per the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, Greece is Intellect and Rome is Will. (Fillmore, 1995) ⁹. Per Case, Greek represents the study of philosophy and religion and Latin represents the study of the sciences. (Case, 1985) ¹⁰ Both sets of definitions are complementary and highlight another dualistic subtext that occurs throughout the *Fama*: Brother C.R.’s training is both exoteric and

esoteric, scientific and religious (perhaps what we'd call magical, to some degree), or theory and application. There were not clear lines between the disciplines of science as we know them today, and the occult sciences practiced at the time. For example, Astrology was Astronomy and Alchemy was Chemistry (and vice versa) at that time. Though the process of separation was underway by the time the Manifestoes were written, the sundering of these disciplines happened at a much later date.

In effect, the authors state that both forms of education are necessary to advance in a balanced and well-rounded manner. Hermeticism holds that a good education is the key to self-realization. It could be posited that this is the foundation necessary for us to learn about how we work at an intellectual, physical, and spiritual level. It is also the cornerstone that gives us the tools necessary to bring together the disciplines of science and the occult (Self and World) as a cohesive, Gnostic, whole.

From the Fama - Events in Cyprus Change The Travel Itinerary

Although this Brother dyed 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 Physick he obtained much favour with the Turks: In the mean time 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 stired 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 shewed him other secrets out of his Cloyster, 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 Physick, 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.

While he is cloistered, Brother C.R. gets to know Brother P.A.L. His P.A.L. wants to go to the Holy Land. This is consistent with his religious training. A trip to the Holy Land would be a wonderful achievement because it *is* the ultimate goal for the devoutly religious. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately since a linear interpretation of events is not what the authors intended, Brother P.A.L. dies in Cyprus.

The *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* defines “brethren” as our senses and Cyprus is a fair, frank, honest, just, unbiased state of mind. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ Senses in this context may be extended to encompass a persons sensibilities, perception, and personal judgment. In Cyprus, and in the face of intellectual objectivity, Brother C.R.’s consciousness and perspective change, transmute, and evolve into something else. The *Fama* does not state what this transmutation is, but the underlying symbolism gives us hints.

Case does some gematria gymnastics and notes that the initials P.A.L. can be linked to the Bull, among other things. (Case, 1985)¹¹ The Bull denotes the animal life of the organism and it is usually tied to sacrifice. These burnt offerings are symbolic of transmutation of the sensual (or material) into the spiritual. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ This meaning can be extended to encompass the act of denying (or more accurately, properly interpreting) the information that our senses give to us. When we do that, the true character of things may be uncovered. *Danger, Will Robinson. Danger! The Surgeon General warns that fair and unbiased states of mind are detrimental to the survival of traditional religious values.* Though Brother C.R. leaves Cyprus with his religious values intact, it doesn’t last. Those values can’t continue to exist in someone who is working toward a Gnostic, perhaps even scientific, knowledge of Self and World. At this stage, it isn’t clear if he is aware that this knowledge is the ultimate outcome of the journey.

Damascus and Damcar, the double D

After the transmutation his senses are clearer and he travels to Damasco (hereafter referred to in its Anglicized form of Damascus) with his carry-on baggage in P.A.L.’s empty seat. This city represents intellectual thought and reasoning about life. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ Damascus can also represent sensual and body experience. The phrase “*weak in body*” may allude to the fact that he *is* human and that physical experiences will always be a part of his spiritual makeup. Damascus may represent a turning point where he becomes focused on understanding his universe from a physical, spiritual, and intellectual perspective instead of trying to make sense of it from the religious point of view. There’s more to his life now than just faith.

The esoteric/exoteric theme pops up again because, from the exoteric perspective, he becomes acquainted with the Turks and gained favor with them because of his medical skills. This does seem to support the scientific frame of mind he is currently experiencing. Esoterically, he also makes the acquaintance of the Arabian Wise Men and they receive him as a brother.

After learning from the Magi, he becomes very excited and decides that Damascus is next, not Jerusalem. Yes, he is already in Damascus and yes, he makes bargains with people to take him there. It doesn’t make literal sense, but it does make symbolic sense. It means that Damascus was once intended as a short lay over, but is now a destination in itself. What does this mean? What changes his mind? Has he found what he needs right where he is at? Has he had a revelation that makes going to Jerusalem unnecessary? We can find some clues as to why he changes his travel plans in the meaning of Jerusalem. From a metaphysical perspective, Jerusalem signifies the habitation of peace and the perfect expression of all the mental faculties under the dominion of the I AM. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹. Yet, he turns away from it and, whether his reasons are religious or metaphysical, is clearly quite comfortable with the decision. Why?

An answer can be found in the symbolism of Arabia, where Damascus is located. Arabia has many symbolic connotations. It is an outer state of consciousness, undisciplined, and a wilderness. It is also the stored up resources of the soul that rise to the surface when stirred by a great revelation. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ I think the authors of the *Fama* intended both meanings. He is feeble in body, i.e. undisciplined in some way. Yet, once he has himself in hand, he has moved to the more positive aspects of Arabia and has some very profound insights regarding himself that get him quite excited.

What are those insights? If visiting Jerusalem and obtaining what it represents is no longer necessary, then he is now intellectually and spiritually in the place Jerusalem represents. Furthermore, Jerusalem is the Holy Land for three of the major monotheistic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The *Fama* might indirectly indicate that the answers to Brother C.R.'s questions are not to be found in the religions of man. This agrees with Hermetic and Gnostic doctrines about the individual nature of transformation. (It also agrees with the Rosicrucian's obvious dislike of the Church). He no longer needs to go somewhere else because of his personal revelation that spiritual answers come from within,

When you realize that everything you need comes from yourself, it is a very powerful insight with profound implications and deep consequences for your future spiritual development. In C.R.'s case, these insights into the nature of Self and World necessitate rebuilding his mindset and reorganizing his priorities to bring them into line with his revelation. To accomplish this, he learns the Arabian tongue and translates Book M., Liber Mundi, or The Book of the World, into good Latin. Again, the Liber Mundi refers to classic concepts of the World as intelligence, and knowledge of the World gives the practitioner knowledge of Reality. This makes sense when we refer to Bradatan. He notes that the term "Word" is translated from the Greek term "Logos." It means word *and* reason and makes the world both readable and comprehensible. The process of world knowledge is one of self-cognizance whereby we recognize our reason as "*the essence of the world which came into being via the Supreme Reason.*" This is generally the focus for one trying to find knowledge of the world. (Bradatan, 1999)¹² Note that Supreme Reason can also mean God in the Gnostic sense.

Furthermore, when we consider portions of Case's interpretation of the meaning of Arabia: new insights and an understanding of occult healing and mathematics, we might say that Brother C.R. melds his exoteric and scientific skills with his esoteric spiritual skills. This becomes more plausible when we consider that Arabia was at that time considered to be a center for scientific thought and learning and, as Dion Fortune indicates, "*the good occult student should have a sound knowledge of natural science, history, mathematics and philosophy... ..it is essential that he should have a background against which he can see his knowledge in perspective.*" (Fortune, 2007. p. 23)¹³

This learning of the exoteric in tandem with the esoteric points to the occult fact that solid grounding in exoteric science can be used as a stepping-stone to improve one's esoteric knowledge, and vice versa. This is consistent with the esoteric/exoteric/Gnostic/Hermetic subtext found throughout the *Fama*. The esoteric by itself isn't good enough. A solid education is also necessary to put that knowledge in its proper place. A spiritual awakening is required to properly apply it. With the tools of science, personal revelation, and occult philosophy we can be successful occultists and come to grips with our selves and the Universe.

As a side note, Paul Foster Case re-interprets the *Fama* to say that Brother C.R. travels to a place called Damcar after he is in Damascus. This may be justified due to the mention of Damcar in the second Rosicrucian Manifesto, *The Confession of the Rosicrucian Fraternity*. In essence, Case uses this interpolation to highlight the importance of C.R.'s revelatory experience. Paul Case's motivation is clarified by his definition for Damcar. It is gematria for "blood of the lamb," by extension (well, by my extension) the Gnostic Christ, and a great spiritual awakening. (Case, 1985)¹⁴ The Gnostic influence found throughout the *Fama* indicates that the awakening is C.R.'s personal revelation, or attainment, of self-knowledge. In short, Damcar means that the knowledge of Christ is within the esoteric Self and not in exoteric Jerusalem. "[Christ] is the perfect man and the true spiritual self of every individual. Christ is the I AM... ...the embodiment of all divine ideas." (Fillmore, 1995. p. 150-151)¹⁵

The Red Sea and Egypt

This stage of his training complete, Brother C.R. goes over the Red Sea and abides a short time in Egypt. He notes the plants and creatures and then moves right along to Fez. This portion of the journey has some very penetrating symbolism. The Red Sea represents "race belief" and a fixed sea of universal thought that is part of how we relate to our Universe. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ It symbolizes the effect our upbringing and culture have on our ability to relate to life and interact with people as well as ideas. It can also be extended to include the impact such concepts as Jungian archetypes, societal pressures, childhood, and past experiences in general have on who we are today. In essence, he comes to terms with his personal "World."

The journey into Egypt is a voyage into the realm of darkness, ignorance, and obscurity as well as the subjective and subconscious mind. Egypt represents everything that makes us who we are. At some point, we all travel there, put it in its proper place by integrating it, return from thence, and move on. Notably, he traverses the Red Sea *backwards* into Egypt. I say backwards because usually we want to go the other way... away from ignorance, bondage, and symbolic darkness. After all, Moses didn't run pell mell *into* the lands of Pharaoh. If I remember rightly, he'd pretty much worn out his welcome and was looking for a new place to call home.

Metaphorically, Brother C.R. must reach down into himself to deal with the unknown and unconscious aspects that make up the foundations of who he is and deal with them. (Case, 1985)¹⁶ He's moved beyond the exoteric and into the esoteric, psychological, and magical aspects of his journey. The brevity of the passage says, by implication, that staying in Egypt is undesirable because it is easy to become enslaved and enamored by what it represents. We cannot progress if we choose to live in the bondage of our past, our upbringing, and the hidden aspects of who we are. The lyrics of Springsteen's *Glory Days* come to mind.

From the Fama - Fez

Every year the Arabians and Affricans 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, Physic and

Magic (for in those are they of Fez most skilful) were amended; as there is now adays 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 of 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 of 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 it self; but all the rest is spotted with a thousand erroneous conceits.

The final paragraph in the preceding citation clearly ties this tale to Gnostic ideas of the Universe. The duality present in that which is good and that which is of the devil is significant. The word choice in the descriptions of good and evil run parallel with Gnostic concepts of the Demiurge (a.k.a. the bad guy) and the true God (the good guy and ultimate Creator of the Universe who has, for all intents and purposes, taken up a less demanding hobby). Good is clarity and harmony with the Divine. Evil is a corruption and flawed implementation of the Divine Will that manifests as strife, darkness, and error. This passage links C.R.'s journey with the Gnostic worldview and their concept of self-realization.

During this journey, he navigates his subconscious and sails over the “*whole Mediterranean Sea*” to Fez. This sea is the Universal Mind, it is the unexpressed and all potential. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ This reference to the Universal Mind foreshadows the Qabalistic studies which soon follow. To approach the idea of the Universal Mind, it helps to think of it in the context of Kether. It is the Crown of the Qabalistic Tree of Life and first principle of all manifestation in the Universe. Kether is the Monad, the Essence, and it is the beginning and the end, for all that emanates from Kether returns to Kether. (Cicero, 1995)¹⁷

Fez closes one chapter and opens another in Brother C.R.'s travels and Brother C.R. has made an important transition in his journey. When he returns from the quest for esoteric knowledge, he needs the metaphysical framework Fez provides so that he can put his internal knowledge to exoteric use in the land of science and men. To assist the transition, he becomes acquainted with the Elementals, Cabala, and Magic. These sciences are not pure in Fez, but he knows enough to be aware of these shortcomings and gets the most out of the subject matter.

Like many things alluded to in the *Fama*, these subjects are exoteric and esoteric. Exoterically, these subjects were considered science in that time period. Esoterically, they

represent the construction of the symbol systems necessary to come to grips with the philosophical and intellectual vagaries of occult practice. Furthermore, it may indicate that Brother C.R. has moved well beyond traditional exoteric religion and rounded out his understanding of the esoteric and hidden meaning of the subject matter. He merges the disparate facets of his education into a composite whole by constructing a symbolic framework for understanding and working with his universe. It is apparent he has mastered his knowledge of the occult language and arts because he is learned enough to take what is valid and leave the rest.

Let's take a look at each of the subjects he studied to gain a better understanding of himself. In addition to the modern and traditional interpretation of the Elements and Elementals, they can also be considered symbolic of man's make up. Fortune indicates that there are four aspects to our metaphysical constitution: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, and Spiritual. (Fortune, 200) ¹⁸ Modern occultists could justifiably link these qualities to Earth, Water, Air, and Fire, respectively.

The Qabalah, again per Fortune, is a "System of Correspondences" that allows the student to work with things unseen. (Fortune, 2000) ¹⁹ In essence, this system helps the occultist work with complex ideas and information in a manner that linear words and language are unsuited for. It's a tool for expressing and manipulating unseen ideas.

I think perhaps the final subject, Magic, is meant to reference the art of Theurgy, not Thaumaturgy. This may be the impetus behind the statement that the Magia at Fez had diluted their art with religion. Theurgic magic has become bastardized by faith. Perhaps it has also been polluted by the interpolation of Thaumaturgic practices as well. His magic is the magic of self-improvement.

From the Fama - Spain

After two years Brother R.C. departed the City Fez, and sailed with many costly things into Spain, hoping well, 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, shewing unto them the Errors of our Arts, and how they might be corrected, and from whence they should gather the true Inditia 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 shewed 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 acknowledg their many years Errors, to which they were accustomed, and wherewith they had gained them enough: Who so loveth unquietness, let him be reformed.

The same Song was also sang to him by other Nations, the which moved him the more (because it happened to him contrary to his expectation,) being then ready 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 onely middle Point, and Centrum, and (as it is usual among the Arabians) it should onely serve to the wise and learned for 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, laboring to be delivered of them; and did bring forth painful, worthy men, who brake with all force through Darkness and Barbarism, and left us who succeeded to follow them: and assuredly they have been the uppermost point in Trygono igneo, whose flame now should be more and more brighter, and shall undoubtedly give to the World the last Light.

With his education complete, Brother R.C. returns to the real world. His first stop is Spain. Spain might mean that there is no obvious reward for choosing the occult path. Or any path, for that matter. There are no ultimate answers, only the finite choices of a human being.

The inversion of his initials indicates a change has happened at this stage of the journey. At its simplest, it indicates that he is now back in the mundane world and wants to apply what he has learned. He finds out the hard way that folks are not ready and everywhere he goes, everyone has the same reaction. The Gnostic symbolism in the phrase “*he knew would direct them, like a Globe, or Circle, to the onely middle Point, and Centrum, and (as it is usual among the Arabians) it should onely serve to the wise and learned for a Rule*” highlights the root cause of his problem: Most folks don’t get it and it takes him a while to come to terms with this.

As knowledgeable and as willing as he is to share what he knows, the underlying message is that you can’t teach this stuff. It has to be experienced. Even if your average person has an experience like R.C.’s, to understand it they have to be willing and open. Notably, R.C. doesn’t chastise or get angry (it is amusing that the authors of the *Fama* get a bit pissy about it), he moves on and returns home to Germany. It is clear that his education leaves him feeling that the world of men is wanting in some way. There is a brief interlude in the *Fama* that seems to say, in sum, that Brother R.C. isn’t the only one who has these problems.

From the Fama - Interlude

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 peaceably to confer with others of his Knowledg and Understanding he had of Nature. And therefore in his writing he rather mocked these busie bodies, and doth not shew 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 subtil vexation, then 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.

From the Fama - Home

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, then all vain glory and pomp.

Nevertheless he builded a fitting and neat inhabitation, in the 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 ayd and help of others, although he himself was painful, lusty, and unwearisom, he undertook, with some few adjoynd with him, to attempt the same: wherefore he desired to that end, to have out of his first Cloyster (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 knowledg in the Arts, then at that time many others had, he did binde 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 sillable and word.

After this manner began the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross; first, by four persons onely, and by them was made the Magical Language and writing, with a large Dictionary, which we yet dayly use to Gods praise and glory, and do finde great wisdom therein; they made also the first part of the Book M: but in respect that the labor was too heavy, and the unspeakable concourse of the sick hindred 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 fathers brothers son, brother B. a skilful Painter, G. and P.D. their Secretary, all Germains except J.A. so in all they were eight in number, all batchelors and of vowed virginity, by those was collected a book or volumn of all that which man can desire, wish, or hope for.

When Brother C.R. returns home, he sets up shop without fanfare. Note the inversion of the letters. This signpost indicates that he is again inwardly focused. When the *Fama* says he builds his house, it means he sets up the temple within himself. Per Case, he reviews what he has learned to date, meditates on what he knows, and cultivates his spiritual side. This pause is necessary for him to deepen his understanding of what he knows. (Case, 1985)²⁰ He also esteems heaven *and* men. In other words, he has reconciled his soul and body with his concept of a divine mind. He has also reconciled his science with his Gnostic experience of religion. This creates a dynamic balance in him that attracts “the people.” People mean thoughts, (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ therefore his mind and heart are turned towards the spiritual aspects of his existence. On a more mundane level, like attracts like, so it is quite possible that people sympathetic to his task begin to make his acquaintance.

After the pause for reflection, he is ready for the next stage and gathers three other Brothers to him. As noted previously, brethren means the senses. This makes perfect sense (no pun intended) when we consider that he instructs them, holds them to secrecy, and makes sure they make a record of what they know. He wants them to be accurate so that he can properly understand his experiences. It is quite possible that he now comprehends his world in the context of his Hermetic training. This is noteworthy because it highlights the impact our training (whether Hermetic or from some other school of thought) has on how we perceive things.

There is a lot of symbolism in the names of the first three brothers: G.V., J.A., and J.O. Case indicates that G.V. means the center or middle. Due to the fact that the Latin alphabet does not contain the letter “J,” he justifiably translates J.A. and J.O. as I.A and I.O. To him, I.A. means *Fiat Lux* or “let there be light,” and I.O. means foundation or basis. (Case, 1985)²¹ If Brother G.V. is linked to the Qabalistic Middle Pillar, the attainment of which is an important Qabalistic goal, then this indicates that being centered is important to the next phase of Brother R.C.’s development. Brother I.A. indicates that inspiration, or perhaps illumination, is also necessary. Brother I.O. provides the foundation. In essence, the next phase requires a foundation built on discipline and right thinking.

Once the brethren are gathered, or under proper control, Brother R.C. sets up the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross. The meaning of the rose and the cross is important. Alchemically, the rose means regeneration and love. The Cross represents two aspects of thought in the sense mind. The perpendicular bar is the inner, or spiritual, current and the horizontal bar is the material, or outer current, and represents human limitation. The center is the I AM (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ and the I AM is the point where all aspects of Self and World meet, meld, are reconciled, and regenerated in the rose of compassion.

Brother C.R. and the boys set about writing down their knowledge. Unfortunately, they are continually interrupted by the sick of the world. This may represent the difficulties Brother C.R. has moving forward because of his own human nature, how difficult this path can be, the challenges inherent in elucidating these kinds of experiences, and how hard it is to practice in the real world. Self Realization is a tough business, and it doesn’t come overnight... even if you are the best of the best. Here is a fellow who has been well trained in the arts, who knows where he wants to go, and still has difficulty with who he is. We should note the passage that states Brother C.R. is painful, lusty, and unwearisome... it’s as if the manuscript says he is quite human and, in spite of this, he decides to move onward with his reformation of Self.

The world keeps pulling at C.R., even though he tries to maintain his inward focus. To make things easier, he calls a few more brethren to help him: they are fellows named R.C, B., G., and P.D. and they are virgins. This means that they, as representatives of the senses, are tuned to spiritual and not material input. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ The addition of four more brothers implies that Brother C.R. realizes a different approach is in order. Case indicates that Brother B. means initiative, G. prudence, and P.D. is action and imagination. R.C. stands for compassion. The first three might be an allusion to the occult dictum “To know, to dare, to Will, and to be silent.” R.C. might indicate that the key to make this whole setup work is compassion. Furthermore, these brethren symbolically represent the agreement (it’s up in a moment) put forth in the *Fama*.

Note that this other Brother R.C. is “*his deceased fathers brothers son.*” This is definitely a Gnostic allusion to the fact that these brothers are representatives of C.R.’s Self. This brother in particular is an allusion to God, the father, his brother the demiurge, and dad’s son, the messiah, sent to help fix things up. In essence, this man represents the Gnostic knowledge of Self. This self-knowledge is integral to C.R.’s continued progression.

From the Fama - The Rosicrucian Agreement

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 Worlds End, and also the world in her highest and last Age shall not attain to see any thing else; for our Rota takes her beginning from that day when God spake Fiat, and shall end when he shall speak Pereat; yet Gods Clock striketh every minute, where ours scarce striketh perfect hours. We also stedfastly beleieve, 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 shewed 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 every one 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, then 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 at the house S. Spiritus, or to write the cause of his absence. 4. Every Brother should look out for a worthy person, who after his discease 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 Cousen 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 with what 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 hath poured out here and there through the World. Every one 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.

These tenets are practical and symbolic. The distinct exoteric and esoteric meanings compliment each other. To cure the sick for free means, on an internal level, that it is the healing of Self that is necessary to continue on the Path. Externally, healing others removes the distractions caused by being “ill” so they are given enough time to figure out things for themselves. Whether internal or external, a propensity for healing demonstrates a capacity for compassion.

Not being constrained to wear a uniform means that the members are free to take on the social, philosophic, and religious attributes of their surroundings. To the average person, this may seem like outright hypocrisy. To the mind of a Hermeticist, Rosicrucian, or Gnostic, it was nothing of the sort. The mention of an Axiomata in the preceding paragraphs implies a set of Universal rules that can be applied anywhere. This means the application of Rosicrucian philosophy does not need to be tied to one belief system because it (the Axiomata) is all encompassing. Gnosticism was (and is) practiced by people from very diverse social, political, and religious backgrounds. Rosicrucian doctrine was set within the framework of Hermeticism and Christianity, but the underlying tenets of Rosicrucianism should be able stand the test of time, even when the “Rosicrucian” vestments are removed and we are left with the core Axiomata.

Furthermore, there are many reasons why a low profile is desirable. First, by eschewing identifiable markers we don’t force others to deal with our belief system. We also remove the tendency people have to impute motivations and agendas to people different from themselves. We also enforce upon ourselves a certain humility that comes from removing the mechanism by which we egotistically identify ourselves with philosophical or religious doctrines. We are not what we believe.

Many modern occult systems suggest that the practitioner review their day, every day, to find ways to improve their practice. Meeting once a year indicates that we should always take time to review what we’ve done and improve ourselves so that we can be more effective in the future. If RC should be the seal, it might be a hint that these folks are one and the same person... or that knowledge of Self via the Gnostic experience is the true mark of the members. Finding a worthy successor indicates that, at some point, we must share what we’ve learned.

Secrecy for 100 years denotes that they were at great pains to avoid the problems that attend centralized and public organizations. These problems include the ego trips and bureaucracy that always seem to come about when you get a group of human beings together. There is an undercurrent of individuality in the *Fama* that says, “We’re doing things this way because, when it comes to Gnosis, it is the individual’s experience that counts. Organizations as entities aren’t up to the task.” This also highlights the importance of humility to this path. If we’re busy making sure we *look* the part, we can adversely impact our ability to *act* the part. Of course, in the words of ZZ Top: everybody’s crazy ‘bout a sharp dressed man.

From the Fama

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 dyed, 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 Leprosie. 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 every ones place was supplied with a fit successor; but this we wil confesse publicly by these presents to the honour of God, That what secret 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 shewn 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 freely, and without constraint and reward: also we do promise more gold then 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 godfathers gift.

Nobody gets out alive. The brothers begin to die. This is the literal interpretation. The other is that Brother C.R. continues to improve, and all aspects of himself are being transmuted into something more. In fact, he dies while the senses are doing their thing. This has a symbolic cant to it, the meaning of which becomes quite apparent in the discovery of the vault.

From the Fama - The Vault

After the death of I.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, then 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 onely what we have heard of the burial of R.C. but also made manifest publicly by the foresight, sufferance and commandement 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 sirnames, our meetings, or any thing 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 Narbonensi 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 scerecy, 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 brasse, 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 unto us. In this Table stuck a great naile somewhat strong, so that when he was with force drawn out, he took with him an indifferent big stone out of the thin wall, or plaistering of the hidden door, and so unlooked for uncovered the door; wherefore we did with joy and longing throw down the rest of the wall, and cleared the door, upon which that 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 first we would overlook our Rotam; but we refer our selves 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.

This section of the *Fama* is very complex. The alchemical, Qabalistic, Hermetic, and Gnostic allusions come at a fast and furious pace. My gut feeling is that the authors have outlined the entire structure of Rosicrucian thought in this section, but I want to focus on the more generic aspects of the material. Before continuing, notice that Brother R.C. dies, not Brother C.R. If R.C. symbolizes the externally facing aspects of our protagonist, it is likely that the passage indicates the Gnostic dissolution of the ego into the universal I AM. This assumption is at odds with the “Father, Brother, Brother’s Son” symbolism recently propounded in the tale. However, the current context and the symbolism of the Vault seem to support the “external” interpretation.

The Vault is a blueprint for the symbolic framework that shapes our reality, both internal and external. In this case, the framework is Hermetic, Qabalistic, Alchemical, and Gnostic Christian. It is also what the ordered reality of an “initiate” might look like if it were externalized for inspection. An initiate from a different path, who uses very different sources for inspiration and instruction, might have a structure, or vault, that looks very different from this one; yet still be able to achieve “Gnosis.”

This vault represents, as Case states, the macrocosm and microcosm (Case, 1985)²² which the *Fama* presents as a single unit of external manifestation. The journey into the vault is inward and describes the path we can take to come to terms with our Self and the results of that journey. This is evident if we consider the investigating brethren as representative of our senses and that the vault is within us. It is the nexus, the only place, where the internal and external meet.

The journey into the vault starts, as many journeys do, with a door. In Hebrew, the letter Daleth is translated as door. Symbolically, it can mean physical existence and division, as well as reciprocity. (Cicero, 1995)²³. The brothers travel into the internal reality of Self when they open the door and cross the threshold. Once inside, they find a memorial table made of brass. The use of brass in the memorial table has links to the moment of inspiration when we are inspired to give up the lower for the higher, (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ and is characterized by the word “Eureka!” (Case, 1985)²⁴ Notably, Brother N.N. plans to transfer this stuff to a more fitting vault.

Another altar (or two) is found in subsequent investigations. In later instances, the word altar is specifically used. When we consider that brass symbolizes unyielding hardness, the use of the word table at this juncture implies that we're looking at a "proto" altar representative of all that is physical or mundane, and that there are some steps necessary to arrive at the point where our consciousness is changed by the Gnostic "Eureka."

Again, this is an allusion to transformation and, in fact, the vault may be a direct reference to the tomb where Christ lay for three days before being resurrected. The vault could also symbolize that area set aside for these types of works. Anyways, as he prepares for the move, he notices a nail in the table and pulls it out. In Hebrew, the letter Vav means nail. Per Cicero, it is the point that separates nothing into being. In keeping with the theme of transformation, it makes something pass from one nature to another. (Cicero, 1995)²³ This act transmutes the physical table into the spiritual altar.

Attached to the nail is a large stone that symbolizes the indwelling Christ. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ In other words, it is the truth of Gnosis that we have hidden from ourselves or set aside. The stone itself hides another door/threshold with the phrase "*After 120 years I will open*" written upon it. Case feels this is indicative of the symbolic amount of time it takes to achieve enlightenment and insight into the mysteries. (Case, 1985)²⁵ It alludes to the fact that just wanting to open the door isn't enough. We have to work at it before we can do so.

Before they open the door, the Rotam is consulted. I believe this is Latin (there are also Greek and Hebrew forms of the word). The root form is Rota or "wheel." The *Fama* doesn't say what Rotam is, why they consulted it, or what the results were. The term wheel could be indicative of the Zodiac, in which case, our Brothers did some astrological work before they continued. On the other hand, Case is of the opinion that this is the Tarot. (Case, 1985)²⁶Notably, in *Cabala Primer*, the word Tarot is used in an example of Temura (or anagrams) and Rota is one of its permutations. (Bernstein, 1984)²⁷A bit later in the tale, the Rota is again consulted in such a way that it gives them answers that they follow. Putting the technical details aside, we can assume they used some form of divination to double check whether they were on the right path or properly interpreted the meaning of what they found.

From the Fama

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 scituated in the upper part in the Center of the sieling; in the midst, in stead of a Tomb-stone, 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,

1. Nequaquam vacuum. 2. Legis Jugum. 3. Libertas Evangelij. 4. Dei gloria intacta.

The next day they open the door and enter into the tomb beyond. Boy howdy is that place fancy. A sun not the sun illuminates it, and that source got its light from the sun. This may allude to “As Above, So below,” and that the interior chamber is lit by an exterior conception of God. (Case, 1985)²⁸ Instead of a tombstone they find an altar. It represents willingness to give up the lower for the higher, or the successful transmutation of the animal to the divine and generative life. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹

On the altar is an inscription that reads, “*I have made this sepulcher as a single compendium of the universe.*” (Case, 1985)²² This is vindication that the vault is symbolic of our Universe. Next we find several inscriptions: “*Jesus is all things to me,*” which encloses four other inscriptions with figures associated with them: “*A Void, The Law, Liberty of the Gospels, Undefined Glory of God.*” (Case, 1985)²⁹ If Jesus is representative of the I AM, which is why he is “all things to me,” these Latin phrases mean that finding our Self is finding God. Knowing who we are is the ultimate goal because to know Self is to know God.

The key to that knowledge is found in the figures that accompany the four inscriptions enclosed by circles and encompassed by the larger circle of the I AM. These figures are ascribed to the four alchemical elements represented by the Lion, Bull, Man, and Eagle. (Case, 1985)³⁰ These may correspond to Fortune’s idea there are four aspects of man’s makeup: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, and Spiritual. (Fortune, 200)¹⁸ If we look at the alchemical meanings of the elements, we find support for this interpretation. Lion is courage and the primitive states in humans. Man is what needs to be changed. Bull is Reality, transmutation, and the spiritual man. Finally Eagle is spirit, sublimation, or the completion of the work. (Swanson, 2009)³¹ These four forms represent the elemental Kerubs, or fourfold powers that comprise the foundation of the manifest universe. (Caliban, 2008)³² Metaphorically, our entire experiential universe, everything we are, is contained within the encompassing Gnostic experience of the I AM.

From the Fama

This is all clear and bright, as also the seventh side 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 then all mens wit could have found out, praised be his holy name. This Vault we parted in three parts, the upper part or sieling, the wall or side, the gound 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 eys; but every side or wall is parted into ten squares, every one with their several figures and sentences, as they are truly shewed, and set forth Concentratum here in our book.

The bottom again is parted in the triangle, but because therein is described the power and 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 for a chest, wherein there lay diverse 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 other places were little bells, burning lamps, & 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 onely Vault be restored again.

In this tomb, there are lots of drawers with things in them that to relate to C.R.'s lifetime of experiences. They represent his studies of Paracelsus, his spiritual travel itinerary, and his Curriculum Vita. There are also mirrors, bells, lamps, artificial songs and whatnot. These are quite symbolic. I'm not sure what they mean, but I'll hazard the guess that these items are symbolic representations of the mental tools he used for his work.

Let's look at more aspects of the tomb. "Concentratum" may refer to the alchemical Salt of Nature. Salt makes up part of the trinity of substances involved in the Great Work, or achieving personal transformation. The other two are Sulfur and Mercury. Symbolically, the seven sides of the chamber may allude to the seven planets, the triangle above and the triangle below may be an allusion to the four alchemical elements. The upside down triangle symbolizes Water. The upside right triangle denotes Fire. When they are overlaid to form the six-pointed star, they also create the symbols for Air and Earth.

From the Fama

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 the Ornaments and Attires; in his hand he held a parchment book, called I. the which next to 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 revelationibus subtilissimis imaginationibus, indefessis laboribus ad coelestia, atque humana mysteria; arcanave admissus postquam suam (quam Arabico, & Africano itineribus Collegerat) plusquam regiam, atque imperatoriam Gazam suo seculo nondum convenientem, posteritati eruendam custo divisisset et jam suarum Artium, ut et nominis, fides acconjunctissimos heredes instituisset, mundum minutum omnibus motibus magno illi respondentem fabricasset hocque tandem preteritarum, praesentium, et 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 et 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,

1. Fra: I.A. Fr.C.H. electione Fraternitatis caput. 2. Fr: G.V. M.P.C. 3. Fra: R.C. Iunior haeres S. spiritus. 4. Fra: B.M. P.A. Pictor et Architectus. 5. Fr: G.G. M.P.I. Cabalista.

Secundi Circuli.

1. Fra: P.A. Successor, Fr: I.O. Mathematicus. 2. 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 reviviscimus.

They find Brother C.R.'s body. It hasn't disintegrated and it holds a parchment called I. This is a direct reference to the Hebrew letter Yod and means "hand." (Methinks the authors have made a Qabalistic pun.) Yod "is the image of potential manifestation, spiritual duration, and of the eternity of time." (Cicero, 1995. p. 75)³³ At the end of this parchment is the Latin summation of Brother C.R.'s life. In essence the parchment means that he has achieved immortality (of the Gnostic variety) and it is the proof that Brother C.R. has done what he set out to do. Find, know, and understand Self.

From the Fama - Post Vault

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 layd in Earth, and perhaps likewise hidden: we also hope that this our Example will stir up others more diligently to enquire 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 practice and physick, are yet known, and praised among very old folks; so might perhaps our Gaza be enlarged, or at least be better cleared.

Concerning Minitum Mundum, we found it kept in another little Altar, truly more finer than can be imagined by any understanding man; but we will leave him undescribed, untill we shal truly be answered upon this our true hearted Famam; 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 in stead of household care by the praise-worthy 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 wil now be a general reformation, both of divine and humane things, according to our desire, and the expectation of others: for it=s 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, which shall give their names, may joyn 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 worlds labor, and not walk so blindly in the knowledge of the wonderful 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 now adays cleansed and voyd of all swerving people, Hereticks, and false Prophets,) in certain and noted Countries maintained, defended and propagated: Also we use two Sacraments, as they are instituted with all Forms and Ceremonies of the first renewed 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 shal permit or hinder us: For our God is not blinde, as the Heathens Fortuna, but is the Churches Ornament, and the honor 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 concurreth together, and make a Sphere or Globe, whose total parts are equidistant from the Center, as hereof more at large and more plain shal 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 now adays men of discretion do hold the transmutation of Mettals 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 honored, which could make great store of Gold, and in abundance, the which with unpremeditate prayers, they hope to attain of the alknowing God, and searcher of all hearts: we therefore do by these presents publickly testifie, That the true Philosophers are far of another minde, 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 R.C.C. Phy: aureum 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 testifie that under the name of Chymia many books and pictures are set forth in Contumeliam gloriae Dei, as we wil name them in their due season, and wil give to the pure-hearted a Catalogue, or Register of them: And we pray all learned men to take heed of these kinde of Books; for the enemy never resteth, but soweth his weeds, til a stronger one doth root it out. So according to the wil and meaning of Fra: C.R.C. we his brethren request again all the learned in Europe, who shal 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 minde, either Cummunicate consilio, or singulatim by Print.

And although at this time we make no mention either of our names, or meetings, yet nevertheless every ones opinion shal assuredly come to our hands, in what language so ever it be; nor any body shal fail, who so gives but his name to speak with some of us, either by word of mouth, or else if there be some lett in writing. And this we say for a truth, That whosoever shall earnestly, and from his heart, bear affection unto us, it shal be beneficial to him in goods, body and soul; but he that is false-hearted, or onely greedy of riches, the same first of all shal not be able in any manner of wise to hurt us, but bring him to utter ruine 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 Jehovah.

After another consultation of the Rota, and the acquisition of a few more books, the Brothers reseal the vault and depart. The *Fama's* final paragraphs appear to be a long-winded way of saying that the whole intent of the document is about Self Realization. Phrases like “*treasures that can never fail or be wasted,*” “[not walking blind] *in the knowledge of the wonderful works of God,*” and “*no man (except God alone) can make it common, nor any unworthy person is able to bereave us of it,*” intimates that the end result is personal in nature. The fact that they rail against the alchemical charlatans of the time, who try to make gold out of lead, leads us to suspect that the authors feel alchemy proper happens within.

They are at pains to note that their philosophy is not new and the path has been trod before. This assertion is supported by the symbolism of the names they drop: Adam means consciousness, Moses draws out or develops consciousness, Solomon is a state of consciousness achieved when the soul is unified with wisdom and love, Abraham is the power of the mind to reproduce its ideas in unlimited expression, and Enoch is a new state of thought or understanding. (Fillmore, 1995)⁹ All of these concepts have Theurgic and Gnostic connotations. I get to use the term Gnostic because they explicitly state that truth as female. This is in line with the Gnostic concept of Wisdom as the divine feminine, Sophia.

My Two Cents

One side effect of the Manifestoes is a belief, that continues to this day, in the existence of an external and autonomous Invisible College of enlightened beings. The Order may exist, but I

believe the truth of the matter can be found in the last paragraph of the *Fama*. If the Rosicrucian Brotherhood is omnipresent enough to know every time someone is “ready to join,” and omniscient enough to be aware of the applicants intent, no matter how it is communicated (internal, external, or by some other method), then the only fool proof means by which this result can be achieved is if the Brotherhood is inside our heads and hearts. The Brotherhood of the Rose Cross and its “Invisible College” exist internally, waiting to be discovered. Only we know when we are ready to make the expedition.

In the *Fama*, there is no indication that there was a rigid, hierarchical system of instruction by initiation. I must point out that the second manifesto *does* make reference to a graded system. Furthermore, the occult schools and institutions at the time used graded systems. Therefore, it is possible that initiation into the mysteries is assumed or implied throughout the document. Yet, if there was such a practice, it was a means to an end. Joining an Order is not required for us to achieve a realization of Self. It was a point that was missed by a lot of folks who founded an occult body for instruction and is still missed by some contemporary proponents of Rosicrucian thought and teaching.

There are also a few observations I’d like to make about the tenets and organization of the Brotherhood. They had their agreement, they met once a year, they picked a successor, and that was it. If a practitioner interprets the tenets in a literal sense, it’s useful, shows foresight and compassion. There is a lot that can be learned using that approach and spiritual benefits can still be had. Yet, there is more to the story.

The *Fama* describes several esoteric paths important to achieving the Rosicrucian ideal of personal self-realization. They include the path of science and reason, religion and spirituality, and the Gnosis that unites them into a comprehensive whole. Perhaps, the intended message of Christian Rosenkruetz, the *Fama*, and the Rosicrucians is this: Gnosis leads to a profound sense of compassion and peace that can be shared through our actions and not our words. This is the message our inner Self is trying to communicate... should we take the time to listen and hear with our heads and our hearts.

On a different note, though the *Fama* uses material heavily Christian in content, “No hablo Christianity” didn’t exactly go over well in 16th century Europe. Because Rosicrucians wore the clothes of the country in which they lived, it implied that the teachings were not supposed to be limited to one faith. It is significant that the *Fama* never indicated that Rosicrucians were constrained to convey their teachings via their chosen framework of Hermetic and Alchemical symbolism. Also noteworthy is the pains the *Fama* takes to let the reader know that their methods are not new.

Finally, the dense symbolism of the *Fama* leaves much open to interpretation. The storyline suggests that we start our path in faith and when we get an education, we start to ask questions. If we look for the answers within ourselves, we start upon the path of self-realization. This realization is a form of personal gnosis leading to a sense of personal salvation that transcends words. The disciple Thomas said it best: “*Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over the All.*” (Churton, 2005) ³⁴

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