

**A Rosicrucian Ritual of the *Noble Knights of the Golden Cord*:
An early American expression of Freemasonry rediscovered**

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The Rosicrucian ritual presented in this paper was found in a collection of Masonic rites basically unknown to contemporary Freemasonry. The degrees are written in American English but research has indicated that they were most likely brought over to America from France in the late 1800's and translated - at least some of them.¹ But that might not be the earliest expression or the complete story - conclusions at this point are premature. The reason why this particular ritual was selected is because it contains very interesting elements that provide insights into early Rosicrucian ideas that found their way into Freemasonry. This ritual is also representative of the strong esoteric nature of most of the other rituals in this Masonic system. One encounters technical Hermetica² such as astrology and alchemy as well as exhortations on Kabbalah, the symbolism of numbers, Gothic architecture, geometry and even heraldry. Throughout the several rituals various historical personalities are pointed out to the candidate as important for personal study and Ramon Lull is specifically mentioned here. Another interesting and surprising part of this ritual is that the obligation is substantially the same Rosicrucian obligation reported and transcribed by Frederick Hockley (1808-1885) from the journal of Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom (1750-1805) who was initiated into the *Societas Roseae Crucis* by the Comte de Chazal on the island of Mauritius in 1794.³ It needs to be pointed out that this Masonic system was not intended to replace regular Freemasonry. The men working this rite were American masons affiliated in every way with mainstream Freemasonry including the fact that the candidate for this degree and others must already be a 32nd

degree AASR. And this brings up the question of how this collection of Masonic rituals was brought to light.

Many years ago as I was rummaging around an antiquarian bookstore I came upon an odd little hardback book that had neither title nor any designated author but was apparently filled with rituals of Freemasonry. At first it was not that strange because you can run across Masonic cipher books here and there yet this was not a cipher book and most intriguing was the fact that I did not recognize any of the rites. Being a member of several Masonic bodies and societies, my interest deepened. In addition to the rituals, the most prominent things about the book is a full page picture of an American Army General of the Civil War era, a few glossy pictures including that of a large red pentagram and other various emblems. There is also a listing of the ritual titles, explanations of diagrams not present in the book and a foldout with the title: “Chart of Freemasonry”.⁴

Upon further inspection I determined the book to be about a hundred years old, it contains what appears to be a completely unknown Masonic Rite of 34 degrees beyond the Craft degrees. Similar to the Scottish Rite the various rituals are separated under main headings like “lodge” and “chapter”. Also similar to the Scottish Rite there are rituals considered Rosicrucian. Whereas the AASR Rosicrucian Chapter is comprised of four rituals, this Chapter has three. The Chapter is titled “Prince Rose Croix Chapter” and lists them as: *Knight of the Black Eagle*, the *Noble Master of the Rosy Cross*, and *Prince Rose Croix, or Three Times Illustrious Rosy Cross Master Mason*. It is this last degree that I present here with comments on specific points that I feel are of interest to contemporary Freemasons.

The complete ritual is presented here as exactly as possible from the book. Where particular words are obviously left blank in the ritual as written, I have tried to fill them in when I felt confident about doing so. As seems to be the custom the author provides the first letter or two of each word. I will underline (or use asterisks for) the rest of the word to demonstrate where it is blank in the book and to assist in easier reading. There are some situations where I will just leave it blank but underlined. One other point: in the style of presentation I have chosen, instead of inserting my comments within the body of the ritual, I have decided to make copious use of endnotes in order to keep the flow of the

ritual intact. But reference by the reader to these endnotes is encouraged to glean the most from this Rosicrucian rite.

Synopsis of the Ritual

This ritual begins in traditional Masonic fashion with the candidate presenting himself and being challenged about his credentials to allow admission. Once successfully entered the candidate is then given more appropriate attire for his situation and status. There is then a circumambulation while instruction is given. After the circumambulation, the candidate is provided a glass of wine to drink for the purpose of fortification for future ordeals. When finished, he is led immediately to the altar for the obligation. As mentioned above, the sections of the obligation used by this Masonic group is, in part, verbatim to the obligation that Dr. Bacstrom took in his initiation into the *Societas Rosae Crucis* in 1794 except that it is shorter and obviously modified for a Masonic context. One striking point is that both obligations contain the odd claim that the Order split into two separate societies in 1490: the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons (120 years prior to the *Fama* and the *Confessio*) but have since reunited.⁵ Following the obligation the candidate is informed that the ancient Greek myth of the Argonauts and the Golden Fleece is really an alchemical treatise and then under the proclamation of “let us look for the wisdom of Paracelsus” the works of Ramon Lull, Arnau de Vilanova and Roger Bacon are pointed out. Following this, it is asked regarding the candidate: “Has he seen the Sun and Moon, the Green Dragon, and the Pelican? Has he watched the flight of the Black Eagle?” This is symbolism familiar with other Rosicrucian material and is often found in alchemical treatises.

At this point in the ceremony, a familiar symbol of Freemasonry is presented: Mount Heredom said to be “in Scotland, where there is a castle of the Rose Croix Knights ... where Hermes and Enoch were first initiated into the sacred science of Freemasonry.” But also the candidate is informed that: “... upon its top a phoenix is constantly burning itself and renewing itself; an eagle of white hovers over it in the heavens.” With further instruction the candidate is given a compass and a quarter circle and told: “ ... your knowledge symbolized by the circle will never be finished in this life.” The candidate is brought back to the altar and restored to light and: Providing

illumination from above the Altar is a flaming lamp fashioned as a salamander. “Upon the Altar is seen a large snake in a circle, biting his tail. In this circle are two interlaced triangles, one white and the other black. Standing in the midst of the interlaced triangles is a celestial globe.” He is crowned with a diadem symbolizing wisdom and learning. He is attired “... in a long robe of white, with the red cross and gold rose on the back.” As he is conducted around the temple he carries a torch in one hand and a compass in the other. The candidate is given further instruction including the measurements of the Temple from Ezekiel. After that the candidate is given a long lecture on astrological ideas, shown various charts regarding geometry, architecture, heraldry, Christian symbolism, magic and alchemy, including a chart of the pedigree of ancient Freemasonry. In addition, there is a lengthy explanation on the laying of the foundation stone at the Cathedral of Cologne in 1248. Following that there is a talk on the descent and ascent of the human spirit with an interesting twist on experiences between life and death. This particular material can be found in the writings of Eliphas Levi (1810-1875) and thus gives us a better idea when this ritual was constructed or new material added. The end of the ritual comes about as the candidate is again conducted to the altar to kneel and the *Prayer of the Salamanders* is invoked (which prayer is also found in Levi’s writings). In conclusion the candidate is then led to a different room and caused to sign the “Great Golden Book” where the final encouraging words are spoken to him ending with the magical word found on ancient amulets: ABRACADABRA.

The Rosicrucian Ritual

Sov Prince Rose Croix, or Three Times Illustrious Prince Rosy Cross M** M****

23° or 26°

No one can take this degree unless he is a Prince of the Royal Secret.⁶

Officers -- Grand Magus, Noble Conductor, Eminent Warden, Glorious Inner Guard,
Most Learned Instructor.

Noble Conductor (knocks) - *** ** * *

Glorious Inner Guard - *** ** * *

Glorious Inner Guard - Who dares interrupt the great work?

Noble Conductor - A Knight of the Black Eagle, a Free Mason of Solomon's temple.⁷

Glorious Inner Guard - You must wait and either be received by the Grand Magus or have your eyes poked out for venturing into this secret place.

Glorious Inner Guard - Most Wise Magus, there knocks without a Free Mason of Solomon's temple and a Knight of the Black Eagle, who prays to be permitted to help us in the Great Work.

Magus - Admit him, but not until he is clothed in the proper way.

Glorious Inner Guard (opening door) - The Magus delights to honor merit, but this Candidate for our mysteries is not properly clothed.

The Candidate is then caused to remove his coat and put (on) an old bag, with holes for the head and arms. His shoes are taken off and a cap of red put on his head, and in this dress, with his eyes hood winked, he is led into the Chapter. The Noble Conductor takes the Candidate by the arm, and says, as he leads him around the room once:

“Venerable and honorable sir, seeing that this will be ye first yeare of thy nativity, wee pray that thou mayst have from ye Most High God a most happy entrance into and departure from out of thy life, and because thou hast hitherto been with a good mind a constant searcher of holy philosophy. Well done!”

Eminent Warden (stepping forward) - My brother, proceed. Fear God, for thus thou mayst gaine heaven, for thus it must be. Get to thyself the most true knowledge, for it is God who hath found out every way; it is God alone who is circumference and center.⁸

The Eminent Warden retires to his seat in the west and the Most Learned Instructor steps forward from the south and places his arm on the shoulder of the Candidate and shakes him.

Most Learned Instructor - What wish ye?

Noble Conductor - In this place have I a desire to live.

Most Learned Instructor - Tis well. Wait and ye may be served before the time.

Grand Magus - My name is _____. I am he who knows; I am he who follows the Master. I have found the P ___ S ___ and have been comforted.

Eminent Warden - He who comes in here gives alms secretly, and the more he bestows the more rich he **becomes**.

Noble Conductor - I have ever since my birth tried to have this spirit in me.

Grand Magus - My brother, for our ordinances and rites we have two very long and fair galleries in the Temple of Rose Croix. In one of these we place patterns and samples of all manner of the more rare and excellent inventions; in the other we place statues of all the principal inventors. We have certain hymns and services which we say daily of laud and thanks to God for his marvelous works; also short forms of prayers imploring his aid and blessing for the illumination of our labors and the turning of them into good and holy uses.

Eminent Warden - God has covered me with a cloud to defend me.⁹

Grand Magus - Square was the wall and high, and well enclosed, and barred well, as our ancient brother has said. And now, brother, how are ye? Is your wall square and well enclosed, for we wish no babblers here.

Eminent Warden - I am a Master Mason !!!

Grand Magus - Enter then into this temple and may ye never leave it, but for ye house not made with hands eternal and glorious.

Noble Conductor - causes Candidate to sit on the floor and gives him a heavy wine to drink, saying: "Take this cup and drink, for you will need all your forces to undergo the dreadful tests to be given you."

The Candidate then arises and is conducted to the Altar, where the Grand Magus administers the following obligation:¹⁰

"I (N. or M.) do hereby promise, in the name of _____, the true and only God manifested in the Trinity, in the most solemn manner, faithfully to observe the following articles during the whole course of my life to hereby confirm by oath and by my proper signature hereunto annexed.

One of more of the worthy members of this august, most ancient and most learned society, the investigators of divine, spiritual and natural truth (which society, more than two centuries and a half ago, i.e., 1490), did separate themselves from the Free- Masons, but were again united in one spirit among themselves under the denomination of *Fratres Rose Crucis*, or Brethren of the Rosy Cross, i.e., the M ___ who believe in the grand

atonement made by Jesus Christ on the Rosy Cross, stained and marked with His blood for the redemption of spiritual manhood and spiritual natures), having thought me worthy in quality of a brother to partake of their sublime knowledge, do hereby engage in the most solemn manner --

1. That I will always, to the utmost of my power conduct myself as becomes a worthy member, with sobriety and piety, and to endeavor to prove myself grateful to the society for so distinguished a favor as I now receive, during the whole course of my natural life.

2. So that no harm may come to any of its members, I will never give the name of any one present at the meetings of the degree (order).

3. I do hereby promise that I will never publicly reveal the knowledge as given to me, but only impart parts of it to sober Masons who wish instruction, and that I will never reveal the way in which I have been received except to a new member.

4. I hereby promise that I will instruct, for the benefit of good men, before I depart this life, one person, or two, in our secret knowledge and initiate him or them in the same manner as I have been initiated and received. I will also ever remember and honor the following women, the only ones that ever belonged to our order, that is to say, Semiramis, Queen of Egypt; Meriam (sic), the prophetess; Peronella, wife of Flammel (sic), and lastly, Leona Constantia, Abbess of Clermont, who have been the possessors of the Great Work, consequently *Sorbres* (sic) *Roseal* (sic) *Crucis*.

5. I hereby declare that I intend, with the permission of God, to make a study of higher Masonry, and if possible forward the Great Work.

6. I do further promise that I will not abuse the power entrusted to me by appearing great and exalted to crush the liberty of mankind. I will, if possible, be kind to the children, give alms to the poor, comfort the aged, help the sick.

7. Should I travel either by sea or land and meet with any person who may call himself a Brother of the Rosy Cross, a dreamer, a king of fire, I will examine him as to whether he can give me a proper explanation of the universal fire of nature, and if I find him to give satisfactory answers, I will acknowledge him to be a brother of our ancient science.

Grand Magus - My brother, Chemistry, which in the first centuries of the Christian era had no practical application, consisted of a few vague and entirely speculative theories, and was confounded with physics, under the appellations of divine art, sacred art and sacred science, in the incoherent mass of transcendental propositions which made up high philosophy, afterwards called Free Masonry. The word Chemistry (*chymia* in Latin), used for the first time by Suidas, a lexicographer of the 10th century, at first meant an alloy of gold and silver. Suidas¹¹ mentions in this connection that the Emperor Diocletian, irritated by a revolt of the Egyptians against the laws of the Empire, had all their secret books of chemistry, committed to the flames, so as to punish them for their rebellion by preventing them from carrying on the lucrative businesses arising out of the melting and working of precious metals.

My brother, perhaps you do not know that the Golden Fleece with the Argonauts went in search of, was but an ancient papyrus in which was contained the secret for making gold!¹² May you ever search for the true gold of the Sun, and, in time, may you find it.

Noble Conductor - My brother, come; we have much to do, and it is late. Come, arise; let us look for the wisdom of Paracelsus.¹³

The Candidate is then conducted around the Chapter four times and the following is read: “One of the greatest Masters and one of the greatest men of our race was the monk, Raymond Lully¹⁴, born in Palma, in the island of Majorca, who, after a long and eventful life of wanderings and adventures, came to a tragic end, being stoned by the ignorant populace of Tunis in 1315. He coined six millions of false money for King Edward I of England, with which the English king was to undertake a fresh crusade, thus saving his life; otherwise he would have been burned as a sorcerer by the Inquisition. After Lully’s death the Free Masons whom he had initiated into his higher mysteries,¹⁵ formed a degree which they called the Dreamers, and which afterwards was known as the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross. Among the members of the Dreamers of prominence was Arnould de Villeneuve.¹⁶ Roger Bacon, in England, was another Master. The work of these great men and others like them has made it possible for us to be as advanced in Learning as we are. In 1488 the Dreamers called themselves by the name of Voarchodurnia.¹⁷

The Noble Conductor now halts with the Candidate before the Eminent Warden, in front of whom appears a vase containing fire.

Noble Conductor - Eminent Warden, all glory to you.

Eminent Warden - Who comes to disturb my sacred fire when I am at the Great Work?

Noble Conductor - A Free Mason who has passed the grades and wishes further instruction.

Eminent Warden - This is well. Has he seen the Sun and Moon, the Green Dragon and the Pelican? Has he watched the flight of the Black Eagle?¹⁸ Does he know the signs and has he been instructed in the sign of his birth?

Noble Conductor - He has.

Eminent Warden - (turning to Candidate) Sir, under what sign were you born?

Candidate gives sign.

Eminent Warden - When were you born?

Candidate - gives his birthday exactly, and if it is correct with the sign, the Eminent

Warden says: "It is well. You are learned in the sign of your birth and can pass my station. May the fire of wisdom go with you."

Noble Conductor - Come, my brother, let us away, for the night advances and we are far from home and the Great Work.

Candidate is then conducted out of room and upstairs.

Noble Conductor - We now stand upon Mt. Heredom, an ancient Mt. in the East, which has given its name to a hill in Scotland, where there is a castle of the Rose Croix Kts. Here we stand, where Hermes and Enoch were first initiated into the sacred science of Free Masonry.¹⁹

Incense is now burned before the candidate.

Noble Conductor - My brother, the mountain upon which you stand is sacred; upon its top a phoenix is constantly burning itself and renewing itself; an eagle of white hovers over it in the heavens.²⁰ (Placing a compass in the hands of the Candidate). This instrument is the symbol of learning. (Gives him the quarter circle.) Take this quarter circle and remember that your knowledge symbolized by the circle will never be finished in this life.

The Most Learned Instructor then advances and, taking the Candidate, leads him to the Altar, and says to the Noble Conductor “Bring the Candidate to Light.” The hood wink is removed. Upon the Altar is seen a large snake in a circle, biting his own tail. In this circle are two interlaced triangles, one white and the other black. Over the Altar a salamander, as a lamp burning. Standing in the midst of the interlaced triangles is a celestial globe.²¹ Most Learned Instructor - Behold the Grand Magus advancing from the East, holding in his hands the crown of wisdom and learning. Behold the sign! Hear the Word!

Grand Magus - My brother, I do not pretend to explain to you the symbols of this secret and holy order. You are to find them out for yourself. But the key I will give you now. In the ancient and very rare books on astrology and alchemy and magic, you will find our secrets. In them you will be told what is the meaning of the White Eagle and the Black Eagle; what is intended by the burning phoenix, the serpent biting its own tail, and the Rose Croix with the Golden Rose with which I now decorate you. Receive this diadem, oh, my brother, and may you ever, by your learning, wisdom and charity deserve the title of Prince Rose Croix. There are other explanations given to the symbols of this degree other than the truly secret ones. They are fully explained to you in the popular degree of the Emperor of the East and West known as Prince Rose Croix de Heredom, and Knight of the Eagle and Pelican. There is also a cavalier or political symbolism to this degree, but its ancient meaning can only be found by a student and man of learning after a long and extensive search.

Noble Conductor then conducts Candidate around the room. As he passes, each member arises and says: “All hail, oh Prince.” He is then taken out of the Chapter and dressed in a long robe of white, with the red cross and gold rose on the back. He re-enters the room with a torch in one hand and a compass in the other. In front of him marches two brothers, carrying censers swinging. Walking slowly, Amos is read and music heard. “Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth, seek Him that maketh the (seven) stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; the Lord is thy *** name.²² I lifted up my eyes again, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand, and I said, Whither goest thou?”²³

Noble Conductor - To measure Jerusalem and the Holy Empire and the Sacred Science.

Candidate stops at station of Grand Magus.

Grand Magus - Who is this who comes from the Temple with white garments dyed with the X? Why art thou white in thine apparel and yet a cross upon they garments like the color of him who treadeth in the wine press?

Noble Conductor - My lord, my garments are white because my spirit is pure and because my thoughts are holy and noble. White are my vestments because they symbolize silver, the second metal. Upon my back is the red cross with the rose upon it, to symbolize the Great Work of which we must not speak, and to teach us the holy and glorious name of God.

Grand Magus - My brother, your answer is good, and I hope that the Great Day will come to you, after much study and work, in which the truth of the Great Work will be made manifest to you.

All then form in twos behind the Candidate, carrying lights, and with music. The following is read:

“The length of the porch was twenty cubits and the breadth eleven cubits; he brought me by the steps whereby they went up to it; and there were pillars by the poasts (sic), one on this side and another on that side. Afterward he brought me to the temple and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side and six cubits broad on the other, which was the breadth of the tabernacle of God.”²⁴

“Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the East. And, behold, the glory of the great God came from the way of the East; and his voice was like a noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory.”²⁵

Then one in another room shall call out in a loud voice with the name of thunder:

“INRIYAHU - A*****.”

They now halt in front of the Altar, and the Most Learned Instructor, pointing to the treble board, says: My brother, the first six signs, or ascending signs, are represented by the celestial perpendicular or descending ray thus: |. The last six signs, or descending signs, are represented by the terrestrial ground line, or horizontal, or equatorial symbol or sigma, thus: --. The union of these (at the intersection of the rays at the junction or middle point) forms the cross, thus: +.

Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, and Virgo are the first six signs, and they collectively (in their annual succession) form the Macrocosmos of our ancient brethren. There succeeds the “turning point,” “balances,” or “nave” (navel) of the astronomical wheel represented by the sign *Libra*, which, be it remembered, was added by the imaginative (and therefore practically inventive) Greeks. The foregoing, up to *Libra* represent the “ascending signs,” or six of the spokes, so to speak, of the annual Zodiacal wheel, circling to the zenith or vortex. The last six signs of the Zodiac are called “descending signs,” and they are sinister autumnal, or changing in reverse monthly, spaces each of 30 degrees and again comprising six radii of this celestial or Ezekiel’s Wheel. The turning point is *Virgo-Scorpio*, which, until separated in the mythical interruption from without at the “junction point” between ascent and descent, were the same single sign. The latter half (or left wing) of this great Zodiacal army or host of heaven, drawn up in battle array, and headed by a figure we shall call the Archangel Michael. The Sun, at the center, or in the champion or conquering point, was called by our brother, the Rosicrucians of the 16th century and their ancestors, the Dreamers of old, the Abstract Microcosmos, in which Microcosm, or Little World, in opposition to the Macrocosm, or Great World, is to be found Mars, as produced in it from the operations above, and to be saved in the Great Sacrifice Crucifixion, the phenomena of the being Man taking place in the mythic return of the world.

The Noble Conductor now takes Candidate before the Eminent Warden.

Eminent Warden - Who is this, and what does he wish?

Noble Conductor - A Knight of the Black Eagle, who wishes more instruction in the Sacred Art.

Eminent Warden (pointing to Chart No. 1) - My brother, our ancient brethren united in Architecture (based on some glorious secrets of Geometry) all the learning recognized in their day, and united these various sciences in one grand symbolism whose key was Geometry, based on the Triangle, Circle and Square, which found themselves united in the Cross.²⁶ These sciences were Astrology, Music, Heraldry and Christian Symbolism, Magic (white), Alchemy and Geometry. These subdivisions of the sacred and royal art were real to them, and, if you will stop to think, are very real to us, for out of Astrology has come Astronomy. Symbolic Music has originated the splendid sacred music of the

Roman church. White Magic has given us many scientific discoveries which are the base of our modern science, which we, in this year of our Lord 1802,²⁷ are so proud of. Christian Symbolism and Heraldry have added to Art some of its most beautiful details. Alchemy is the foundation of Chemistry. To our ancient brethren we are indebted for Gothic Architecture, which could never have existed had it not been for the symbolical study of all these parts of the sacred science.

(Here are explained three Heraldic and Figurative Charts containing the ancient emblems and symbols of the degree, and a Chart or Pedigree of ancient Free Masonry.)²⁸

Grand Magus - My knightly and learned Prince, as you have already learned, our fraternity was the inventor and parent of what has wrongfully been styled Gothic Architecture. Our learned and pious brothers, all faithful Christians, followed the Christian knights and esquires to the Holy wars, there to build Christian churches and fortresses. On their return they introduced into Europe the architecture they had been conversant with in the East with great modifications. Our fraternity built the great Cathedral of Strasburg in the 13th century under Erwin de Steinbach,²⁹ and that of Cologne in 1225 under Maitre Gerard.

“Magistro Gerardo, lapicide, rectori fabric nostre propter meritoriae obsequie nobis facta unam aream latiore et majorem aliis prout ubi jacet, et comprehendat magnum domum lipi deam, quam idem. Majester Gerardus propriis edificavit sumptibus, duximus concedendum,” etc., so reads the charter -----

The foundation stone was laid on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption (August 14, 1248) by Archbishop Conrad, in the presence of the Emperor Frederick II, and a concourse of the nobility and ecclesiastics and burgesses of every grade. The foundation stone was deposited in the spot which was destined for the high altar, and where was temporarily erected a wooden cross.

After the preparatory prayers, the Archbishop proceeded, with the assistance of the Master of the Work, and by means of a chisel and mallet to engrave the figure of a cross on the four angles of the stone. In the interior of the stone, in an excavation made for the purpose, was deposited an account of the ceremony, some images of saints made in wax, some coins, and other objects which bore relation more or less to the epoch of

time in which the stone was laid. Afterward the bishop blessed the stone, sprinkled it with holy water and then delivered it to the workmen, who lowered it into the pit prepared for it. The Archbishop then descended, accompanied by several attendants, and after spreading some mortar with a trowel over the face of the stone, gave it a blow with a hammer, and placed a second stone upon the first. The Emperor, the Pope's Legate and several princes and nobles imitated the Archbishop, and the trowel and hammer passed from hand to hand until it came to the Master of the Work, while the choir chanted the 87th Psalm, beginning: "His foundation is in the holy mountains."

The Noble Conductor then takes the Candidate to the Grand Magus.

Grand Magus - Our ancient brethren said, "The spirit clothes itself to come down, and unclothes itself to go up." The life of intelligences is wholly ascensional. The child in the mother's womb lives a vegetative life, receiving its nourishment by means of a cord which is attached to it as a tree is attached to the earth and at the same time is nourished by its root. When the child passes from the vegetative to the instinctive or animal life, this cord is broken, and he can walk. When the child becomes a man he escapes from the bonds of instinct and can act as a reasonable being. When the man dies he is freed from those laws of gravitation which pinned him in life to the earth. When the soul has expiated its faults, it becomes strong enough to leave the exterior darkness of the terrestrial atmosphere, and to rise upward toward the Sun. then begins the eternal ascent of the holy ladder, for the eternity of the elect cannot be idle; they progress from virtue to virtue, from felicity to felicity, from triumph to triumph, from splendor to splendor. They see God as he is - that is everywhere presented in the infinite justice of natural law, in the rectitude which ever triumphs over all that may be chance, and in the infinite charity which is the true communion of the elect. ("")³⁰

Noble Conductor - My brother, we will go and ask of the Most Learned Instructor knowledge that he alone has the care of.

Grand Magus - Fare thee well!

Candidate is then conducted twice around the Chapter, during which time a mass is sung, with music. He is then conducted to the Most Learned Instructor.

Noble Conductor - *

Most Learned Instructor - Who is this?

Noble Conductor - A learned brother who wishes more instruction in our sacred science.

Most Learned Instructor - My brother, there are many things known to us from ancient time which are true, and yet not right for the people to know, which, if believed in, would undo the present r__s of the world, and if known and believed in by the vulgar, would make us the m___ of popular ignorance. I am about to tell you only a little of our knowledge so that you may understand the minds of the ancients and be more able to read their works and understand the Great Light in Masonry. Our ancient brethren said (“)³¹ that there are souls of three kinds - the daughters of Adam, the daughters of angels and the daughters of sin. There are also three kinds of spirits - imprisoned spirits, wandering spirits and free spirits. Souls are sent forth in couples; nevertheless there are some who are born widowed, and whose brides are held captive by Lilith and Naeman, the queens of the vampires. There are souls which have to expiate the celibate vows. Thus a man who renounces from infancy the love of woman, enslaves the bride who was destined for him, to the fiends of debauch. Souls grow and multiply their species in heaven as physical beings do on earth. Immaculate souls are the daughters of angels’ (powers) kisses. When the soul is separated from the body, it necessarily changes its environment since it changes its envelope. The individual falls into this final sleep and lapses into a species of dream before awaking on the other side of life. (“) So, my brother, fear not death, for as life is but the dream of the Almighty G___n of the Universe, so death is but the real and true life of the divinity. Go, then, my brother, out into the little world of man, symbolized by the glorious pentagram and the golden rose, and be of good courage, because you know from our ancient sages that you are surrounded by the greater world of God, symbolized by the interlaced triangle or by the Rose Croix.

The Noble Conductor then causes the Candidate to kneel at the Altar, and reads the following prayer:

“Immortal, everlasting, ineffable and uncreated father of all things, who art borne on the ever-rolling chariot of worlds revolving unceasingly; ruler of the eternal immensities, where the throne of thy power is established from the altitude of which thine insupportable eyes discern all things and thy holy and beautiful ears hear all things, listen to the children whom thou hast loved before the ages began. For thy golden, overwhelming, everlasting majesty (lordship) shines over the world and the starry

heavens; thou are exalted above them, O glittering fire! Thence thou illuminest and dost commune with thyself by thine own splendor, and there issues from thine essence inexhaustible streams of life to nourish thine infinite spirit which itself doth nourish all things and that is an unfailing storehouse of substance ever ready for generation. From thy spirit the three kings who surround thy throne derive their immemorial origin. O universal Father, grand G___n of the world, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, grant us thy wisdom which was granted to the wise Solomon, the king. Amen. Michael. Samael, Anael.”³²

(Michael is the King of the Sun and Lightning; Samael is King of Volcanos (sic); Anael is King of the Astral Light. These are three genii of fire.)

The Candidate is then conducted to a small room by the Noble Conductor and Most Learned Instructor, and is caused to sign the Great Golden Book. Then the Grand Magus enters and says:

“My learned and noble brother, this is the end of this degree. I congratulate you on your entrance into the Society of the Rose Croix. Should you ever wish to know more of our mysteries, there are other degrees where much that has been left off here can be explained to you. However, not every Rosy Cross Master Mason can obtain these most holy and secret orders. This degree is intended to awaken your interest in the real secrets of Hermetic Magic. If you have seen the key which has been symbolically presented to you to-night, you will, with time, hard study, the expenditure of money, and the wisdom given only by God, be able to unlock the glories and mysteries of our great fraternity.

A B R A C A D A B R A³³

I have finished. 365 ***

Concluding Remarks

As with the other rituals provided in this Masonic system, there is a deep esoteric current running through it from beginning to the end. Esoteric studies are not only hinted at but actively encouraged; in fact, it is a required pursuit in order to truly receive further light in Masonry. Not only are the rituals instructive in this matter but further evidence of this attitude can be seen in a letter to the brethren

inserted within the ritual book by Harmon Pumpelly Read, the second “Captain-General of the Noble Order of the Knights of the Golden Cord” which states:

“The theory of this Rite is that at the so-called Masonic revival, Masonry was at a very low ebb; that many things of real interest were laid aside, and that many interesting secrets were destroyed by the ignorant ‘gentleman masons’ who then ruled the ‘craft.’ This Rite holds that it is the duty of every member of the order to search for and recover everything that has to do with Gothic Freemasonry, namely: Magic, Architecture, the Faculty of Abrax³⁴, Astrology, Heraldry, the Science of Symbolism, the Science of Symbolic Geometry, the study of the Bible, the study of what is now known as Hypnotism, etc.”

This ritual is consistent with the rest of the Order’s material. Obviously this ritual focuses upon Rosicrucian and alchemical topics. Clearly astrology is given major emphasis but you will never find alchemy without its celestial counterpart. Along with the terrestrial and celestial presentations, Biblical visions of the spiritual Temple architecture were provided as well. A recurring theme of the process of birth was obvious from being told upon entering the Chapter that this was his nativity followed by the questions of the candidate’s birth sign, the laying of the foundation stone, the first stone, of the cathedral to the legendary location of the first masonic lodge. But there was much information given about the death process and experiences too. In some ways it seemed out of place and even a bit exotic but taken with the overall theme of renewal as with the phoenix upon Mt. Heredom constantly burning itself up but continually renewing itself we can understand its place here. Yet the underlying thread that runs from beginning to end is the spiritual fire that is ever present in the rite. We are constantly hearing terms such as: the universal fire of nature, the Sacred Fire, the King of Fire and the Fire of Wisdom. The candidate is brought to a vase containing fire, incense is burned before the candidate, when brought to light the salamander lamp is burning above the altar and then he carries a torch around the Chapter. Finally at the end of the ritual, the *Prayer of the Salamanders*

is uttered by the Grand Magus with acknowledgment of three spiritual powers that preside over three different realms of Fire.

Thus, I think it is possible to conjecture that a major theme of this rite is that as the soul moves through life and death it eventually, as stated in the ritual itself: "...begins the eternal ascent of the holy ladder, for the eternity of the elect cannot be idle; they progress from virtue to virtue, from felicity to felicity, from triumph to triumph, from splendor to splendor."

¹ I have reviewed this ritual and others of this Masonic Rite in a manuscript handwritten in French that clearly precedes the rituals in English of this small book.

² Roelof Van Den Broek, "Hermetic Literature I: Antiquity" in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), Vol.1, p.488.

³ Christopher McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology, and Rituals of an Esoteric Order* 3rd ed. (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1997), pp. 86-91. This obligation is reproduced by McIntosh here and he states that a copy of the original is possessed by R.A. Gilbert who has published it as a facsimile.

⁴ For a more complete explanation of how this Masonic group came to light see the author's articles: *The Noble Knights of the Golden Cord*, *Philaethes: The Journal of Masonic Research & Letters*, Vol 70, No. 4, Fall 2017. Also see: *A Lost Chapter in American Freemasonry*, *THE PLUMBLINE: The Quarterly Bulletin of The Scottish Rite Research Society*® Vol 24, No. 4, Winter 2017/2018.

⁵ The *Fama Fraternitatis* was published in Kassel in 1614. The *Confessio Fraternitatis* was published in 1615. These two documents are considered to be the foundational manifestos that introduce this society to the world. A third document, the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz* (or Chemical Wedding) published in 1615 is sometimes considered the third manifesto.

⁶ The *Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret* is the 32nd degree of the "Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry".

⁷ The degree: *Knight of the Black Eagle of the Secret Vault* is the opening degree of the *Prince Rose Croix Chapter*.

⁸ This is obviously a reference to the Masonic "point-within-a-circle".

⁹ It is likely that this is an allusion to Isaiah 4:5-6.

¹⁰ See footnote 3 above.

¹¹ The *Suda* or *Souda* is a 10th century Byzantine encyclopedia. It is conjectured that its author was named Suidas.

¹² For a complete treatment of this subject see: Antoine Faivre, *The Golden Fleece and Alchemy*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

¹³ Paracelsus (1493-1541) whose given name was Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim was held in the highest esteem by the early Rosicrucians. "Paracelsus was a dominant and controversial figure in sixteenth-century medicine, philosophy, and theology. Today he is celebrated as the first modern medical theorist, ... He saw the philosopher-physician as a guide in the realm of Nature, an explorer in the divine totality of the heavens, the earth, and man. His astrological, alchemical, and occult insights were rooted in the contemporary philosophy of Renaissance neo-Platonism, natural magic, and cabbalism." (Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Paracelsus: Essential Readings* (Kent: Crucible Press, 1990), p. 13.

¹⁴ Raymond Lully or Ramon Lull (1235-1316) is important to the study of the Art of Memory. Lull developed mental techniques to reach spiritual understandings later incorporated into the Renaissance hermetic-kabbalistic tradition. His system - the Lullian Art - developed it into much more than just an aid to the memory; his system is designed for the powers of the soul to learn to descend and ascend through the hierarchy of being. Later the Lullian Art was taken up and expanded by Giordano Bruno.

¹⁵ This is obviously one of those ahistorical statements that we find so often and so frustrating in researching Freemasonry.

¹⁶ Arnau de Vilanova (1240 -) "Vilanova was one of the most extraordinary figures of the Latin Middle Ages. ... He became a Master of medicine ... In his *Medicationis parabolae*, Arnau de Vilanova states that an effective remedy, a medicine, always proceeds from the Supreme Good. The doctor, ... uses a symbolic language to arrive at the *occulta* from the *sensibilia*. The goal of medicine, ... is to start from observation of the *sensibilia* in order to rise to the government of the Almighty; ..." Antoine Calvet, "Arnau de Vilanova" in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), Vol.1, p.102.

¹⁷ I have not been able to find any information about the Dreamers or Voarchodurnia.

¹⁸ These are all Rosicrucian and alchemical symbols.

¹⁹ This is of course the name of the symbolical mountain (the mountain of initiation) where the first lodge is said to have formed in Scotland. Therefore it is in line with the question just asked of the candidate regarding his birth sign. Hermes is the Greek god associated with the Roman god Mercury. But in this context Hermes usually refers to an ancient Egyptian philosopher-priest. "He was claimed by the alchemists as the founder of their art and is mentioned in the *Gothic Constitutions* in that context." Bruce Hunter, *Masonic Dictionary* (Richmond: Macoy Publishing, 1989), p. 42. Enoch is sometimes identified with Hermes and is considered one of the founders of the Fraternity. His name in Hebrew means "initiator" and he lived on earth 365 years before he ascended (we will see 365 again at the end of the ritual). The legend of Enoch also includes the construction of two pillars (brazen and stone) prior to the Deluge whereupon the ancient knowledge is inscribed to save that knowledge no matter what may come. (See Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 210 as well as Kenneth Mackenzie's *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, pp. 200-202.

²⁰ The phoenix and the white eagle are also symbols used in Alchemy and Rosicrucian treatises.

²¹ The serpent biting its tail has always been a symbol of eternity and well as continual transformation. The interlaced triangles, one black and the other white, as symbolized such things as the world of duality, contrasting forces, night and day, and so on. It is also called the "Seal of Solomon" and a sign of the Macrocosm. A similar configuration of the light and dark interlaced triangles surrounded by the circling serpent was used in the seals of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (1870) and the Theosophical Society (1875), both European esoteric societies that had major influence upon other such societies. The alchemical symbol of the salamander: "The hieroglyph of Fire, the Salamander is the symbol, at once, of Sulphur and of the Secret Fire. The Secret Fire, hidden under a saline aspect, is indispensable so that the prepared Matter, or Subject of the Philosophers, may fulfill its calling as a mother. Each form of generation seeks the aid of the proper agent. ..." Stanislas Klossowski De Rola, *The Golden Game: Alchemical Engravings of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), p. 101. Also see: Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* emblem 29 that shows a salamander within the fire and it is titled: "Like the salamander, the stone lives in the fire." It is said the salamander if controlled by the trident - see: Adam McLean, *The Book of Lambspring* (Glasgow: Hermetic Studies 5, 2000), figure X. The figure shows the alchemist seeming to hold the salamander in the fire by a trident. Also see Alexander Roob: "According to Paracelsus, the salamander lives in fire, but not in dark, material fire, but rather in the essential 'spirit fire of nature.'" Alexander Roob, *Alchemy and Mysticism* (London: Taschen, 1997) p. 488.

²² Amos, 5-8.

²³ Zechariah 2

²⁴ Ezekiel 40: 49 - 41:1

²⁵ Ezekiel 43:1

²⁶ I found it very suggestive that the Art of Ramon Lull mirrors geometry and astrology. I offer this quote: It is the combination of the mystic and the poet with the urge to 'demonstrate' the vision with algebraical letter-combinations on geometrical figures which is so curious in Lull. He goes below the appearances of the world of nature to its underlying structure, which for him is elemental astrology, and makes that the fundamental *exemplum* through which he calculates the metaphors and so demonstrates the moral and mystical truths. On its deepest metaphorical level, in its most secret application, the Art works out the structure of the universe in terms of the circle, the triangle, and the square." Frances A. Yates, *Lull and Bruno* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982). P. 55.

²⁷ It is interesting that this date (1802) is mentioned here. Some parts of this ritual are most likely some 50 years later as will be seen below so it is not clear whether the newer portions were added or grafted or if the date is just random.

²⁸ There is only one chart present in the ritual book: *The Chart of Freemasonry*. But the book provides a good description of the others. There is also an interesting footnote, which reads: "these heraldic and figurative charts, so-called, have been placed here, as they belong to the degree. But we are inclined to believe that they have been taken from much older documents, and that they have been put in their present form about 1860 or '58." It is hard to reconcile this with the previous note.

²⁹ "The Strasbourg masons under their Master Erwin founded their lodge in 1275 and the lodge was described as one 'of freed masonry according to the English fashion,' the phrase 'freed masonry' meaning that they had their own jurisdiction. This lodge soon became the master lodge of the Holy Roman Empire and its English links may help to account for the strong influence of English Gothic on German architecture in the fourteenth century." William Anderson, *The Rise of the Gothic* (New York: Dorset Press, 1985), p. 51.

³⁰ Everything within the quotations from after 'Our Ancient Brethren said,' to the end of the paragraph ending 'the true communion of the elect.' is a direct extraction from Eliphas Levi's (1810-1875) work. This particular paragraph can be found in Arthur Edward Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic: A Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Levi* (Secaucus, New Jersey: University Books, 1974), p. 157.

³¹ From this place where I inserted the quotation marks, for example: (") to the next insertion is also quoted from Eliphas Levi's works. Levi attributes the Hebrew book: *De Revolutionibus Animarum*. It is referenced here as above *The Mysteries of Magic*, p. 153.

³² This truncated prayer is again taken from Eliphas Levi and is called *The Prayer of the Salamanders*. It can also be found in its full form in Arthur Edward Waite's book on Levi: *The Mysteries of Magic*, p. 177.

³³ At the end of the ritual two more items remain where it is not clearly indicated how it is handled. The first is the 11-lettered magical utterance ABRACADABRA that I presume is spoken. Then the Grand Magus proclaims "I have finished" and it seems he follows that with speaking the numbers 365 and gives 3 knocks. The misuse and mockery of ABRACADABRA by modern stage magicians and Hollywood has done a real disservice to understanding its importance to the ancients. This much-maligned "word" has been around since the 2nd century. It was used in healing and protective talismans spelled in a triangular form. Quoting Eliphas Levi: "... the ancients made use, when evoking of mystical combinations of the Divine names. The magic triangle of Pagan theosophists is the celebrated ABRACADABRA, to which they attributed extraordinary virtues and it was represented thus:

A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
A

The combination of letters is a key of the Pentagram. The initial A is repeated five times and reproduced thirty times. The isolated A represents the unity of the first cause or of the intelligent, active agent. ..." A. E. Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic: A Digest of the Writings of Eliphas Levi*, p. 196.

The number 365 is, of course, the number of days in a solar year. The name ABRAXAS spelled in the ancient Greek letters/numbers will add up to 365 (as will the sun god MITHRAS). ABRACADABRA has been associated with the sun god ABRAXAS (and ABRAXAS has been associated with the Demiurge IAO) as well as considered symbolic of other spiritual meanings. Also see footnote 17 and the legends of Enoch.

³⁴ See: Valentia Straiton, *The Fraternity of the Builders* (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010). The "faculty of ABRAC" is related to several psychic powers such as second sight; also related to the Gnostic god Abraxas, the Cubic Stone, and even the magical word Abracadabra. In the personal drawings of General Read, the first American Captain-General of the *Golden Cord*, he sometimes illustrates himself in the form of Abraxas.

