



Who were or are the Rosicrucian's

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By Michael Freedman

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross or the Rosicrucian Fraternity has been a very potent occult myth for nearly 400 years. There might or might not have been an actual historical occult of Fraternity founded in the 14th century by Christian Rosenkreutz. Despite the uncertainty of its origins, the Rosicrucian myth, like all great myths, has provided a powerful and effective mould that has shaped the magical work of many occultists since the Fraternity's possible existence first became public at the beginning of the 17th century.

The Rosicrucian myth arose as a result of two historical elements:

[1] A political conspiracy, not uncovered until the mid-20th century

[2] A set of three documents known collectively as the Rosicrucian Manifestos, published between 1614 and 1616

Although there is little or no historical evidence, it is possible that it was actually a group of magicians who inspired the conspiracy and Rosicrucian manifestos.

A Conspiracy led by Dr John Dee

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, there was a serious attempt to put a Protestant and hermetically [i.e., esoterically] inclined Prince on the throne of the Holy Roman Empire.

This Europe wide conspiracy was master minded by Dr John Dee, a spymaster for Elizabeth I of England. The conspiracy was fostered through booksellers and publishers across Europe. Evidence for this is fully discussed in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* by Frances Yates [1972], and *The Rosicrucian's*, Christopher McIntosh [1987].

In 1613, after prolonged negotiations, King James' daughter was married to Frederick V, head of the alliance of German Protestant Princes. In 1619, he accepted the throne of Bohemia. The conspirators saw Frederick as the one who would achieve their aims of uniting Europe under an enlightened hermetically inspired Emperor. Then, the whole thing collapsed. Frederick and Elizabeth were driven from Bohemia after six months, and the Thirty Years War between Protestant and Catholic Princes began, which devastated Germany and destroyed any hope of a united Europe for more than 300 years.

The dates of these various events are important as they dovetail with the dates of the releases of Rosicrucian Manifestos.

The Manifestos

In 1614 just after Frederick and Elizabeth were married, there was published anonymously a German text that had been circulating in manuscript

form in Europe since about 1610. It was called Fama Fraternitas or The Declaration of the Worthy Order of the Rosy Cross. There followed, also anonymously, in 1615 the Confessio Fraternitatis and in 1616, The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz.

The manifestos spoke of an occult fraternity that had been founded by Christian Rosenkreutz in the 14th century, after learning wisdom during a journey to the East. The members of the order travelled around healing the sick and acquiring and spreading knowledge. They always worked anonymously. When C.R. died, his burial place was kept secret. The burial vault had recently been rediscovered by the Fraternity, and this discovery heralds the dawn of a New Age.

The manifestos created an enormous interest throughout Europe. Hundreds of people spent time and money trying to contact the Brotherhood. We now know that the probable author or co-author of these documents was Johann Valentine Andreae it is now believed that the publishers and booksellers who printed and distributed them in the early 17th century were involved with him in the Protestant conspiracy. The manifestos were planned to foster a popular movement that would complement political negotiations that would inaugurate a New Age.

When the conspiracy failed with the expulsion of Frederick from Prague, the conspirators apparently withdrew into silence. As a result, none of those who responded to the Rosicrucian Manifestos received any reply. But the Rosicrucian fervour did not die out then, nor has the legend of the brethren of the Rosy Cross ever laid down and died since.

**For we be brethren of the Rosy Cross
We have the Mason Word and second sight
Things for to come we see aright
- Muses Threnody, 1648.**

The succeeding centuries have seen dozens of Orders spring up all claiming to be the true Rosicrucians. Even the most worthy of them cannot substantiate their Claims to direct descent from the Brotherhood said to have been founded by Christian Rosenkreutz.

As with every magical order, you must judge them on their merits and what they have to offer now, not on a past which might or might not be historically accurate.

Laws of the True Rosicrucians

It might be best to test how truly Rosicrucian any magical order is by the 'Laws of the True Rosicrucians' published by the alchemist and magician Michael Maier shortly before his death in 1622.

- Everyone member of the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross (F.R.C.) who travels must work as a healer and cure without fee.
- The members of the F.R.C do not wear distinctive clothing, but suit themselves according to the customs of whatever country in which they reside.
- Each member of the F.R.C shall be present on the day of the year on which they meet together, or else signify by letter the true cause of absence.
- Each member of the F.R.C. shall choose a fit person to be his successor after his death.
- The word R.C. shall be their seal, character or cognisance.
- No member of the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross shall claim to be a member.

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