

AD FONTES

**A new Message
of the most laudable Brotherhood
of the Rosy Cross
1614 - 2014**

Colophon

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Content

	Preface	7
I	The four pillars of eternal wisdom	9
II	The four human states	15
III	The four pillars of the <i>Fama Fraternitatis</i>	21
	◦ The first pillar: the Johannine line of original Christianity	22
	◦ The second pillar: the Arab line	26
	◦ The third pillar: the line of Paracelsus	32
	◦ The fourth pillar: the line of Hermes	35
	◦ The compendium	41
IV	A visit to Tübingen	47
	◦ The kingdom of the Holy Spirit	57
	◦ A circle of brothers or ‘conspirators’?	61
V	‘Eberhard, der im Bart’ (Eberhard with the Beard)	67
VI	Eberhard’s ideal: the three spiritual centres	75
	◦ From Tübingen to Italy	77
VII	The five languages of the <i>Fama Fraternitatis</i>	85

Fama Fraternitatis

Oder

Antdeckung
der Bruderschaft

des löblichen Ordens des
Rosenkreuzes/
Wenden der

CONFESSIO

Oder

Bekantnus derselben Fraternitet,
an alle Gelehrte vnd Häupter in
Europa geschrieben.

Nach etlichen Responsionen von H.
Baselmeyern vnd anderen gelehrten Leu-
ten auff die Fama gestellt.



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Hünefeldt. Im Jahr / 1617.

Preface

Now that we commemorate the memorable year 1614, the year in which the first manifesto, the *Fama Fraternitatis* of the laudable Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross was published, we believe it is appropriate to make some pillars visible, on which this brotherhood based its calling and mission. These pillars support a building that has an invisible shape, and is nevertheless luminous of Spirit and Love. Its gates preserve the imperishable good, true and beautiful, safe in the heart of God. And because ‘the good and certain is always in harmony with itself’ (*Fama*), it is reflected forever in the heart of the human being who truly seeks God.

The pillars are the pillars of the ancient art of construction, the pure alchemy that separates and connects again, and brings healing as its result. Securely founded, they are in Christ – and Christ in the faithful hearts of those who in the past emanated the message into the world, our friends and brothers of the Order of the Rosy Cross.

To them, we send our respect and our greeting. To the reader, we now extend a prayer for his well-being. To every pilgrim, striving on the path, we wish a safe homecoming in the wide halls of the *domus sancti spiritus*.

Lectorium Rosicrucianum
Haarlem, The Netherlands, 2014



The four pillars of eternal wisdom

The *eternal wisdom*, our brotherhood teaches, is supported by four pillars. Four pillars support the house of the eternal stream of the Sophia that, since Adam's fall, accompanies Ahasuerus – that is the human being on his eternal quest.

Four streams of holy life values accompany this person; like living water, they compel him to enter the young, still pure field of development of humanity.

‘And a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.’

The four rivers express a power in the eternal wisdom and have a certain meaning. And the legend continues speaking about a ‘golden land, where the gold is good’, and here the precious sardonyx is mentioned, that is the stone of wisdom.

Four pillars support the eternal wisdom. The first pillar is the unfathomable depth of the Unknowable One, the beginning of which is lost in a Nothingness, an Abyss, in a non being. There, in this ‘pure light of the emptiness’, the traces of our origin are also lost, and our sparks slip by as thoughts of God, into one indi-

visible non being which is, simultaneously, eternal
– and sole reality.

The ancients called it Brahman, or Dao. It is the *Abba*, the Father- Mother of the first Christians, the Amon-Ra of ancient Egypt – and the cosmic, heavenly man, full of Light, Love and Life comes forth from this divine eye of eternity, as divine thoughts, – *ex Deo nascimur*.

The second pillar is the indescribable joy, as of a merciful exaltation of our being that it is possible to fathom this exalted, incomprehensible, yet knowable Nothingness, the groundless eye of eternity because it gives itself away: in Light, in the spirit of the Light Spark. It is neither a power of the head, nor of the heart, but it generates the inner Light in an intuitive unity. And what is it that steps to the fore in this Light? It is what is knowable, what is never separated from ‘the depths of wisdom’ as the Psalmist says: the son, Adonai, the generated Light in the eternal creation. It is Christ, if it concerns the human being. What appears, are the properties of the Light, radiant sparks, the thoughts of God, emanating, but never separated from the Father-Mother, which eternally perfect themselves. Just as the first pillar generates the unknowable Logos, and the second pillar eternal Spirit in eternal

matter – just as Adonai and Christ, which manifest the divine creation as Light from Light – the third pillar of the eternal Sophia accomplishes the deep understanding of the same principle in the human being. The human duality is the most exalted miracle of creation, deeper than the knowledge of the angels and archangels. It grants the wave of human life its specific place in the universe.. It is the body, this rather weak and fallible vehicle that is the most holy, although it is transient. There is no initiation outside the body; it exists thanks to the body and it is with an absolutely conscious body that we partake of a higher consciousness, of the community of the liberated ones, and of the immortal life.

However, understand the third pillar of eternal wisdom as it wants to be understood: not through the body. No one who knows separates what is perishable from what is imperishable – the sage links them most intimately. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, as Paul teaches. Thus we lose everything mortal... *in Jesu morimur*, going up into the properties of the kingdom. In this way, the kingdom becomes nearer as to its properties: self-denial and neighbourly love. It is only with these properties of the Light that we ultimately remove the veil from the

face of the inner human being. We see the other one as ourselves, just as the Logos sees himself, through us, in continuous development.

And see what the consciousness perceives and the inner ear notices... There we hear the notes of an incomparably clear melody, scintillating with luminous energy. There the immortal ones, the exalted guardians, stand at the borders of time. Their Light is beckoning us. They grant us the *traditio* as the fourth pillar, the eternal transfer; they beckon us, they awaken us; they overwhelm the Light Spark of the Spirit with Love, imperishable nourishment and bread, and make us inexpressibly happy with the wine of the Spirit. And in this exaltation, far from the senses, the beneficial warmth of an inner sun awakens a spirit of love as a reaction. ‘Once, while I was meditating on the essential things and my mind elevated itself, my bodily senses fell into slumber, as may happen to someone who, after excessive feeding or as a result of great bodily fatigue, is overtaken by a deep sleep. It seemed to me that I saw a mighty being of indefinite stature, who called me by my name and said: ‘What do you wish to hear and see and what do you long to learn and to know in your Spirit-Soul?’ I spoke: ‘Who

art thou?’ And I heard in answer: ‘I am Pymander, the Spirit-Soul, the Being who exists out of itself. I know your desire and I am with you everywhere.’ I said: ‘I desire to be instructed in the essential things, to understand their nature and to know God. Oh, how I long to understand.’ (Hermes)

And through this spirit of love that increasingly becomes ours, we revive: *per Spiritum Sanctum reviviscimus.*

II

The four human states

Just as the true wisdom of these four pillars is eternally preserved and put at our disposal, it distinguishes four stages in the human being that appears. The eternal wisdom states there are four stages or modes of striving life. They are the following: the ordinary, the special, the lonely and the perfect state. Three of them may be started and finished in this life; with the fourth one, a human being can make a start here, thanks to the second pillar, and through God's grace, but it cannot be completed here, because it will be continued forever in a heavenly development.

From one century to the next, one birth after another, the Light Spark and its soul spend their time in the state of the ordinary human being. They experience one development after the next, one round after another, and life and death alternate like day and night. Not a second of it is lost or meaningless, and every tear that is shed fills the lake, indeed the sea of the heart to a fullness that makes it heave a sigh.

This is the moment when the ordinary birth passes into the special state. See how man will excel, and how he pursues goals outside himself! He pursues perfection, and being excellent and exalted above others which will constitute the aim of just as many countless lives. Life after life, a human being turns his never-ending need for life fulfilment into striving and personal development. One peak after the next follows and inevitably a decrease occurs, when the vital energy declines again. And one century after the next, the experience becomes more eccentric, until a new fullness of experience fills the whole human respiration field. He virtually seems to suffocate in the splendour that prevents him from inhaling inwardly the smells of a new morn due to the brilliance of the tin metal, obstructing his view on the bright clarity of the day.

The third state is called: the lonely one. Consider this human being: he is a part of the whole, a member of a community, a child in a family, a mother or a father in a social network, but he is accompanied by an inner loneliness that will not go away. No one can neutralise it, no hand or kiss can still the gnawing homesickness other than for a brief moment, until ultimately a breach occurs, an opening. When the flame of life burns a bit less

intensely, a bit less concentrated on its own self, a certain resignation characterises the keynote of existence. In the days of loneliness, when the first beginning of what the eternal wisdom understands by love, called *caritas* in the language of the ancient tradition, glimmers at the top of the consciousness, then the moment has come that the perfect state begins.

A bona fide teacher notices this; he or she will find a community and there will be a brotherhood, Ahasuerus comes into contact with the *traditio*, and look again, the eternal wisdom shows itself on his or her path. Light falls on the Light Spark, and the soul, as if by a sidereal shock, awakes from its slumber. Yes, there is a beginning: Love is communicated. A long road begins – but did it not know a much earlier beginning? Has there ever been a time when the Light Spark, and its companion, the soul, did not, in extreme moments, suggest direction, comfort and guidance again to man in his aeons of seeking?

And with what does the perfect state begin? What characterizes the human being who, on the eve of the harvest of a complete earth-humanity, would like to give shape to his neighbourly love, to his self-denial and to his willingness to help?

In his despair, every striving person at times will have posed the question: 'How could I ever be so foolish as to assume that there would be another nature order? Has it not always been said that there are nature and Spirit?' For this is how the world initially presents itself to us. Does not a vast field of development underlie the visible side of nature that we know, which has different densities, different speeds, different, more fully fledged radiation values, offering exponentially greater opportunities? The glorious, yet lengthy discovery of this firmament, these sparkling stars of a new heaven, begins by seeing the unhappiness and the deep human depression, of current humanity, with the selfless desire to be able to do something about it. It begins with a wide open heart that, irradiated by love of humanity, devotes itself to an idea, a concept, an order according to high spiritual principles, according to the order that prevailed before the angel with the flaming sword denied Adam access to it. It is an order which can be restored. It is this sidereal fire, that permeates in the universal panacea of the Brothers of the Rosy Cross.

The *Fama Fraternitatis* is embedded in this universal remedy. Behind its words, a cosmic, sidereal fire is burning. To the extent that the reader has broken

through to the fourth state, he will feel an energy behind the manifestoes, a spiritual drive and a healing atmosphere approaching him, the sidereal fire of the Rosicrucians, with which they want to affect the delusion and illusion of the world, to heal people and to restore the original nature in the microcosm. It is the kind of Light that continues to work and will not abandon us. We recognise the aspiration underlying it, and derive joy from it. We experience an unceasing striving, and want to be part of it. We intuit the enormous erudition, on which the Fama is based and we want to be ennobled to share this knowledge, in order to be able to penetrate what is behind this manifesto of the true Christian state.

III

The four pillars of the *Fama Fraternitatis*

From the first moment that the *Fama Fraternitatis* appeared in 1614, a quest began for the origin of this highly intriguing writing. There were only a few who recognised that this call drew directly from the source of eternal wisdom. Few recognised the multiple sources that were underlying it, and even fewer understood its enormous aura and expressiveness. Its origin has been sought in true Christianity and with the Cathars, in Arabia Felix, with the pantheists, in the Renaissance, Campanella, Boccalini, with the humanists and with Paracelsus and Hermes, but none of these has pointed his finger in the right direction. Jan van Rijckenborgh points out that the idea underlying this pure mystery story is universal and of all times. It harkens back to the distant past, to the first days when the history of humanity in our earthly field began to emerge. Increasingly, the legendary story of a symbolic Christian Rosenkreuz has accompanied humanity as an exalted part of the eternal wisdom that God gave Adam at his fall, as the *Fama Fraternitatis* says.

And the figures from Tübingen, who we now know were Tobias Hess (1568-1614) and his circle, reacting at ‘their appointed day’ to the current radiation values of the *Fraternitas universalis* of their time, in their own unique way were instrumental in the publishing of this eternal truth. And now seventy-five years ago, on the occasion of the publication of his commentaries to this text, J. van Rijckenborgh wrote: ‘It is with great joy and deep gratitude that I acquit myself of the task of editing my commentaries on the *Fama Fraternitatis RC*, before the end of the first half of 1939. The time has come to open this veiled spiritual testament of the Rosycrucian Brotherhood. [...]’ And he added that the symbol of this holy, exalted order would soon rise up as a monument of unparalleled and immaculate beauty, namely the universal Christianity of the Rosicrucians.

The first pillar: the Johannine line of original Christianity

In studies of the sources, which the brothers and sisters of the modern Rosy Cross undertake, also in the spiritual field, it is time and again demonstrated that the truth as it emerges amongst the people who always propagate the ever new impulse of the brotherhood, the true history, is more excellent and

breathtaking than the most beautiful fantasy.

A major source may be found in universal Christianity, and this is why those cannot be wrong, who claim that the origin is to be found with the Cathars, who since John and Mary, had already preserved the apostolic line of the secret tradition intact. It is not unreasonable when Maurice Magre, in his *Magiciens et Illuminés* (1930), associates Christian Rosenkreuz with an ancient German family that embraced the even older teachings of the Cathars.

And also in the 1950s, the guardian of the ancient Cathar mysteries, Antonin Gadal, referred to the long Johannine line of primordial Christianity which reached Southern French Occitania from Constantinople via Northern Italy and Spain: “Throughout the ages, the mysteries of the Light preserve and envelop the one origin of everything, the origin of the world, that of God, that of Christianity, and that of man. This is why it is also said that Christ himself performs his work of salvation in a ‘luminous cloud’ and when he has made the divine throne to be deeply rooted, we see, right through all tangled growths, three major streams arise:

- the traditional Jewish stream of Peter, which later becomes Rome;

- the dogmatic Greek stream of Paul, who stimulated thought;
- and the oriental, platonic and mystical stream of John, who has preserved the line of the Gnosis.

To this latter original stream, the stream of the beginning, the Knights Templar, the Rosicrucians and the Pyrenean Cathars, the founders of the ‘temple of the Spirit’ of the Universal Brotherhood committed themselves. Via the apostle John, ‘the friend of the Saviour’ and his Gospel, ‘the pearl of the Bible’, they were of the highest gnostic generation!

The Gnosis! Gnostic thought – ‘the spirit that breatheth where he will’, like the wind in space – had paved the way for Marc of Memphis, who was filled with profound wisdom. In the year 350 AD, he had taught the whole of Spain. His disciple Priscillian brought the temple of the spirit, the church of love, to Gaul (ancient France), and to the northern European countries. Through the irresistibility of this movement, also England and Switzerland heard about this high wisdom. In 385, Priscillian was captured and was – as the first heretic who suffered the death penalty – beheaded in Trier, Germany. At the end of the eighth century, Felix of Urgell (before 781-818) who, after many other disciples of

Priscillian, had become bishop of Andorra and the Sabarthez, followed the same way and in the year 800, he was also captured in Aachen.’

This so called Christian experience found its way to the Rhineland, to the *Gottesfreunde* where it was transformed and became an almost mystical experience in Eckart and Tauler. Jan van Ruusbroec wrote *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage* in those same years. It is striking how the holy word, one sentence from the Christian Gospel of Matthew bears fruit here: ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ [Matth. 25: 6] By ‘seeing’, the apostle teaches us contemplation, beholding, observing. The ‘bridegroom’ is the Son, the Light of the world, Christ, filling our brotherhood with salvation. ‘Going out’ is the life of aspiration and revolution that characterises the perfect, never-ending state, with which we begin. And in the ‘encounter’ we experience the glorious result of Love: God and man merge into a glorious new creature: the God-man. It is not surprising that one of our kindred spirits exclaimed: ‘It is the book of the wedding that a good, holy forest priest in Brabant wrote, Jan van Ruusbroec, and that he sent to us, friends of God, here in the *Oberland*, in the Holy Year 1350!’ Via Ruusbroec, the devout life and thinking of the *Gottesfreunde* reached

the brothers of the Modern Devotion and for over a century they kept burning the same torch in society. At the end of the fifteenth century, Tübingen became a centre of the Modern Devotion as well. The *Theologia Deutsch* is another pillar of hermetic-Christian thought that rejoiced the authors in Tübingen, just as it initially refreshed Luther. And the *Four Books of True Christianity* by Johannes Arndt, published in the years 1605-1610, finally brought this knowledge within walking distance of Tobias Hess and the special friends who participated in his circle.

The second pillar: the Arab line

However, in the same way we should face those who point out that Arabia and Christian Rosy Cross are not as widely separated as it sometimes seems, because was it not during his pilgrimage that the founder of our brotherhood visited Fez in Morocco, and was deeply impressed? Fez is home to the oldest university in the world that was established in 859, at the same time as the Karaouine Mosque. In the medina (the bazaar) of Fez el Bari, we also find the Medersa el Sahrij from 1321, where the scholars met annually. It is a masterpiece of fourteenth-century carvings, with a beautifully carved stone fountain

in the middle of its courtyard. In this ancient royal city the alchemy of Gabir ben Hayan was taught, the magic and astrology of Ali-ash-Shabramallishi, and also the esoteric teachings of the Koran which, since the days of the Umayyads (665-741), were carefully passed down there.

In the *Fama Fraternitatis*, we read about these meetings: ‘It is really humiliating for us to learn that these Wise Men, so remote from each other, were not only of one opinion, despising all contentious writings, but also willing and ready to reveal their secrets in full confidence.’

The text speaks about the principles that were kept in a private circle, where an inquisitive young man, Christian Rosenkreuz, – a German ‘from an impoverished noble family’ – became acquainted with the secrets of the Brethren of Purity, the *Ikhwân al-Safâ*, a community that originated in Basra, Iraq around the ninth century. They were Neoplatonic philosophers, but also skilled craftsmen, who interpreted the Koran philosophically. Their purity concerned life and thought, and being and acting. They studied the wisdom of numbers and tried to fathom everything numerically; they immersed themselves in ‘the divine Plato’ and the ancient Greek philosophers. Their thinking tried to attain Pythagorean clarity, in

which nothing was accepted and nothing was left out.

It seems that the *Fama Fraternitatis* of these Brethren of Purity chose as their form the matrix, after which Christian Rosenkreuz shaped his Brotherhood.

This applies to both the content of their teachings as well as to the rules with which the Brotherhood complied. The *Ikbwân al-Safâ* formed a mystical-philosophical order that stemmed from the spiritual theology of the Koran, not unlike the teachings of the Sufis of Rumi. There were certainly points of difference, but in many of their teachings they perfectly agreed with each other. It was anyway a very heterogeneous community that easily accepted different explanations of the same concept.

Splendid is the way in which they introduce the concept of '*minutus mundus*' or microcosm, the small world, which is man:

'When God saw the magnificence of the universe and the ephemeral nature of human life, he saw that it was impossible for man to fathom all the wonders that he had created in the short time of a lifespan. For that reason he created a small universe, a microcosm, which he gave to every man. And because man would carry this little universe in his heart he could, despite the brevity of his life, be able to expe-

rience the wonder of it all.’

How closely does the meaning of these lines approach the first lines of the Fama:

‘Seeing that the only wise and merciful God in these latter days has poured out His mercy and goodness over mankind so richly that we thereby attain more and more to the perfect knowledge of His Son and of nature, we may justly boast of the happy time wherein He has not only made us discover that half of the world which was heretofore unknown and hidden, but has also made manifest unto us many wonderful and never heretofore seen works and creatures of Nature, and moreover has raised highly enlightened men of noble spirit who have partly restored the degenerate and imperfect arts, so that ultimately man might understand his own nobility and worth, and why he is called microcosm, and how far his knowledge of Nature extends.’

And did the *Fama Fraternitatis* not keep an intriguing gem in the legendary tomb of its founder? We read about this small world in the Fama: ‘As regards the *minutus mundus*, we found it preserved in another small altar and it was finer than even one gifted with insight could imagine. But we shall not depict it until people have responded in faith to this our upright Fama.’ What else can this ‘reply in confidence’ be

than a striving heart? What else can this ‘other small altar’ be than the centre of the own small world, this group of atoms of luminous ethers, which are grouped around this one, indivisible divine ray of Light, this principle of eternity, of which it is the mirror?

The perfection of the souls through many births also occupied an important place in the teachings of the Brotherhood of the Pure. They write: ‘God has not directly created the world, but from Him comes forth the *first cause*, the subtle intelligence that recognises itself as possibility, and God, the ever unknowable, as necessary.’ From this issue the multitude and the many creatures, and in each of them ultimately the true thinking, the intelligence, the enlightener of the souls will exist. From one sphere to the next, the development runs through the ten spheres, inhaling and exhaling. Eternal creation: *God – cosmos – human being!* – it is finest hermeticism within Islam.

Closely related to this are the ideas of Ibn Sina (980-1037), known in the West as Avicenna – although they have been thought before by the priests of ancient Egypt. God does not create the world directly, but through an intermediary, a *demi-ourgos* (a Greek word that literally means ‘craftsman’). In

the hidden teachings of the Koran, they are the angels and archangels.

The brothers of the *Ikhwân al-Safâ* had venues in many greater cities, where they combined 'learning' with 'living' in seclusion and where they could share their insights. They carefully considered if they could help each other. The rules of their order are of a remarkable familiarity. We notice some of the rules of the order of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross almost literally in the summarised wisdom of the Brethren of Purity. None of the brothers had to wear distinctive cloths; during his life, each of them would appoint a person to succeed him; they led a chaste, dignified life and healed the sick, free of charge. These are four of the six rules that Christian Rosenkreuz mentioned for the members of his brotherhood. In the narrative of the Fama, Christian Rosenkreuz further explains with regard to these 'elementary inhabitants', referring to the inhabitants of Fez, that 'he nevertheless knew very well how to avail himself of them, and found a still better basis for his faith, which did now entirely agree with the whole cosmic harmony and which was wonderfully embodied in all ages. From this one can conclude that, just as in every kernel a complete tree or fruit is contained, likewise the great world is

contained in one small human being, whose religion, politics, health, members, nature, words and works are in harmony with God, heaven and earth, in one sound and one melody. [...] Thus, if one were to examine all persons on earth, one would find that what is Good en Certain is always in harmony with itself, but all the rest is soiled by many thousands of erroneous opinions.'

The third pillar: the line of Paracelsus

However, those who refer to the importance of Paracelsus (1493-1541), also have a right of speech here, namely a special right, because the Hohenheimer is the only one who is mentioned by name in the *Fama Fraternitatis* (namely in two places!): 'Theophrastus. Although not a member of our Brotherhood he had diligently read the Book M, whereby his sharp insight was exalted. But the presumption of the learned and the know-alls also hampered this man so much in his progress (for he was never able to speak peacefully with others about his conceptions regarding nature), that he ridiculed these opiated men in his writings rather than express himself fully. Yet he had undoubtedly found the forenamed harmony [of the whole world] and would no doubt have imparted it to the learned if

they had proved to be more worthy of a higher Art than of subtle derision.’

Elsewhere it is sometimes said that Theophrastus – his name means ‘he who explains God’ – was not a member of the brotherhood, solely because of the fact that he bore the whole brotherhood in his being.

The second place where he is referred to is when the burial temple of CRC is opened, and the brothers, apart from other writings, find a *vocabulary*, an explanatory dictionary. And how it does explain the Word! ‘What do you look at the stone temples as if they were God? Look at Him in his creation and His works! Or, if you want to perceive Him directly in created nature, ponder the letters of his Word. Carry these letters in your heart, thus you will also see God in the Temple, that is, in the heart of man. Because that is the only Temple, in which God can be seen. But we can only be like a Temple, when Christ is in us. And He will come through our obedience and love for God. The Head (of mankind) never commanded to build temples in stone. Solomon, being a man of this earth, built a temple, as he was ordered to do, as a feast for the eyes. But we are of a new birth and do only see what is spiritual and heavenly.’

Paracelsus proclaims a spiritual view on the function and value of the mind. He teaches a new medicine, which is based on individual and direct experience as the basis for healing, and he proclaims his own way of thinking that was much broader than the ideas of contemporary scientific thinking. He says that someone, who only argues using words and does not ground himself on his own work and experience, has already lost the debate both in theology as well as in medicine.

This is the thinking of the Fama. And it comes even closer, if we read Paracelsus' motto that he gives to one of his own writings. Every single letter of it is true for the *Fama Fraternitatis*: 'Let everyone read in such a way that he harvests more than what is being said. Seeds are sown in a field; of which some grow. I put down the seed for you, herbs and grasses become green in the haymaking time, and the corn ripens. This seed I put down for you, so you can reap the best vine. And this be entrusted to God!' What else is Paracelsus than the seed, and would the Fama then not be the first, but certainly the most profound harvest? The writings of Paracelsus have been very important for the effect of the hermetica in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and this was very well known; not without reason, he was

therefore called ‘Trismegistus Germanicus’.

The fourth pillar: the line of Hermes

This is why we should also give those researchers their due who say that the Rosicrucians of the Fama were *hermetici*, followers of the teachings of Hermes, the thrice great one. They have the greatest rights – if anywhere, then the much maligned hermetic worldview and the hermetic science found shelter in the house of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual building that the circle of the first Rosicrucians was able to erect.

In this context, we should notice from the outset that they were not followers, but true adepts. They were people who mastered the highest rules of this science. For, how far did not their science, their knowledge, their judgment and their love extend into nature? They knew the secret of individual existence, the combined effect of wondrous forces and possibilities which, as a faithful reflection of the macrocosm, together form the microcosm. They poured their worldview and the *summa scientia* of their knowledge as a scintillating idea, into a *compendium*. And this ‘summary’ receives a tomb, into which it is buried, in which it must die, and from which it will arise, more beautiful than ever before

and more incorruptible. The hermetic teachings of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross unveil the secrets of the microcosm; they show us the image and likeness as a prototype of the higher human being. And in this way, they supply evidence of the words from Genesis: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' This is the mystery of Christian Rosenkreuz.

Let us once again ascertain that this science is not new – even the story is not! Hermes is the source, and it is a source that was rediscovered in the fifteenth century, to which we will come back later. May it now suffice to refer to the striking similarity between the legend of Hermes' tomb and the core of the story around the burial vault of Christian Rosenkreuz that more resembles a temple than a grey and sombre grave. The discovery of the tomb of Hermes Trismegistus is the same legendary story as that of CRC. Authors in antiquity attributed it to Sarah, Abraham's wife, as well as to Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), or Apollonius of Tyana (1st century AD). By the way, the discovery of a mysterious tomb in which manuscripts or objects are hidden, is a topic that occurs more often in this intellectual environment.

Apollonius of Tyana relates that he found an old man sitting on a throne in the tomb of Hermes, holding an emerald table. The text of the famous *Tabula Smaragdina* or Emerald Table was inscribed on it. In front of the man was also a book of the secrets of the creation of all beings and the knowledge of the cause of all things. The tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz, found 120 years after his demise, contains similar valuable manuscripts: the book T and the book M, and as we already saw, the *vocabularium* of Theophrastus as the most important one, in addition to which were his *itinerarium* (the travel book) and *vita* (the biography), ‘from which the content of our Fama has been’, as they said, ‘largely derived’.

The people whom the authors of the *Fama Fraternitatis* wanted to reach (initially this was, after all, meant for a select few), would have had no problem understanding the countless references and metaphors in these myths. In the seventeenth-century pansophic environment of hermetically skilled people in which they lived, it was Paracelsus, Oswald Crollius (ca. 1560-1608), Valentinus Weigel (1533-1588), Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605) with his extraordinarily artistic book *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom*, and many others, who formed the signposts

of the teachings of Hermes. Their main theme is the same as we could read earlier in Paracelsus: 'A man will not be able to understand the universe, unless his mind is born again, unless his motives are pure and true, unless his mind is full of simplicity and free of sophistry and love of display, and unless his mind is able to reflect the high reasoning in which God has written 'the Character of Nature'. This character remains unaltered, as well as above, at and under the earth. It prevails in macrocosm as well as in microcosm. Man immediately recognizes and learns to read this characteristic feature, when the spirit teaches him. And the spirit is there, as soon as there is aspiration, and friendship, and altruistic love.'

In the same vein Weigel writes for instance: 'We must be born twice. Once from our father and mother in this visible world, and the second time from Christ in heaven. Exactly in the same manner as a man cannot enter natural life without a natural creation or birth, we will not be able without rebirth to enter the supernatural of heavens.'

These people, and many others, are 'very enlightened *ingenia*' [men of noble spirit] who have very partially restored the degenerate and imperfect arts...? (Fama). The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross spoke

of this spirit. It was a concentration; it formed a clear new focal point of this knowledge, and emanated the values of this hermetic experience of God – cosmos – man into society.

The lines that were engraved on the emerald table of Hermes Trismegistus, constitute the creed of alchemy in the ancient Mediterranean world, and via the Arab links we talked about earlier, also that of later Western alchemy. In this context, it is useful to understand that hardly any distinction is made in the sixteenth century between ‘secret’ and ‘ordinary’ science. In those days, astronomy was closely interwoven with astrology, and chemistry with alchemy. There is much that we cannot explain. This resulted in another ‘science’ that was able to explain the invisible correspondences between the different disciplines: Magia, the science of invisible, yet not less real effects and forces.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, we see a huge leap forward of the empirical sciences. This was a development, with which Tobias Hess, as the author of the *Fama* wholeheartedly cooperated, but which he and his group did not want to explore further at the expense of their insight into human nature. This human nature needs guidance, if it is

not to 'degenerate'. And this guidance is symbolised by Christ, particularly as understood and explained by Arndt and by Thomas à Kempis in *The Imitation of Christ*. This is why it was engraved in the bronze plaque on the altar in the burial temple of Christian Rosenkreuz: 'Jesus is everything to me.'

The authors of the *Fama Fraternitatis* had a threefold aim. Firstly, reflection on the new and groundbreaking scientific research; secondly, conscious restoration of the hermetic philosophy that is based on the notion 'God – cosmos – man' and on the concept of 'as above, so below'; and thirdly, practising a mode of life that seeks the liberation of the soul which, by Christ's guidance need not be a heavy burden for the human being. '*Des Christen Herz auf Rosen geht, wenn's mitten underm Kreuze steht.*' (A Christian's heart on roses goes when it is right below the cross).

What they tried to realise is a 'reformation' of the Reformation which Luther and his followers with so much zeal had initiated, but which had, in their eyes, one hundred years later stalled. If the relationship of God – cosmos – man can be restored, and man becomes aware of his original nobility, 'Jesus would be everything' for everyone. Armed with this insight, the new golden age that was

imminent – the third era, the era of the Holy Spirit – could then be expected with confidence and with an uninhibited mind.

The compendium

Thus we ascertain that the Fama itself is the ‘compendium’: ‘While living, I made this compendium of the Universe my tomb.’ This concerns the unity of the *philosophia perennis*, the eternal wisdom that has accompanied humanity since ancient Egyptian times. In Greek thought, this blossoms to unprecedented beauty, and from the Arab world it assimilates the transcendental, pure magic. It continues to bear the Johannine line of original Christianity via Byzantium, Spain and Occitania, in which the Florence of Ficino and the De Medici’s enters into an unlikely radiant marriage with the ancient hermetic teachings, thus appearing in the German lands during what we call the northern Renaissance.

There, in a southern German town, under the skilled hands of ‘the doctor of Tübingen’, Tobias Hess, the described lines merged again, or rather: ‘the degenerate, imperfect arts were partially restored unto the healing of the human race.’ We can ascertain that the Fama is a document of

modest size; it contains less than six thousand words. Its language, its *vocabulary* requires serious and devoted study in order to penetrate its mystery, because it would be published ‘in five languages’. Certainly, it concerns a knowledge that is diverse – but the Word that radiates behind it is *unity* in every expression of life.

In light of the foregoing, it is not surprising that a great visionary like Rudolf Steiner expressed these aspects and this new unity in the way he looked at the mystery of Christian Rosenkreuz. Before his mind’s eye the following image unfolded: at a young age, CRC was admitted into a monastery that Steiner calls a college of twelve sages. Each of these twelve people represented a stream of wisdom, and with the knowledge that they brought, the *eternal wisdom* of ancient times and that of their own time, they fill the inquisitive mind of this young man. The first circle of brothers let this knowledge mature to a new form in Christian Rosenkreuz, and in and through a rebirth, it crystallises to a conscious level, to which the modern human being, the future human being can relate. The result is that this man, which we now are, with the commitment and the power of his reason, with the glow of his aspiration

and the drive of his love of people can approach the contours of eternal wisdom at a mature, adequate level again.

This is the essence of the journey of Christian Rosenkreuz, from which he compiled his *itinerarium*, his travel book. His journeys took him right through the world, known at the time, the countries and regions around the Mediterranean. Christian Rosenkreuz is a prototype, as such he points ahead to a future, in which religion disappears and is replaced by a conscious inner worship, and in which contemplation is replaced by beholding, and beholding by grasping the intuition of the soul. This concerns a human being, in whom a higher reason is ignited that may reflect the whole universe. The idea, the compendium was given to what is perishable, the old human being, and died: *in Christo morimur*. It was buried in a burial vault that became a temple, the birthplace of the incorruptible human being. It is a lasting, reliable compendium, a 'self-maintaining guideline'. Or as the Fama expresses it: 'Everything was done to the end that, if the whole Order of the Brotherhood were to become extinct, it could be restored again through this one unique vault.' Against this background, it is not surprising that J. van Rijckenborgh expresses it as follows:

‘So the wisdom of the Rose and the Cross, as the synthesis of Christ, can never be perceived and understood until regeneration comes into our life.’ He adds that in the reality of current society all wisdom has disappeared for us. No trace of the Brotherhood of the Light remains for us, and yet it is buried in our innermost depth. ‘It is this treasure that the Fama seeks to show us’, he concludes.

IV

A visit to Tübingen

The story of the origin of the manifestoes of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross has often been described and discussed from many angles. People like Will-Erich Peuckert, John Montgomery, Carlos Gilly, Roland Edighoffer and Christopher McIntosh have studied the history of the origin deeply, and this is not the place to repeat their findings. Above we have already given a short sketch of the smells and colours, and the wide vistas of the landscape that has produced this attractive yet enigmatic fruit.

Each of the scholars mentioned has added a deepening from his own particular perspective. Peuckert describes the pansophic environment and the intellectual climate of the first twenty, thirty years of the seventeenth century as if he was present there. None of the people he mentions in his book *Die Rosenkreuzer* (The Rosicrucians) had any problem recognising the backgrounds from which the Fama spoke. Montgomery demonstrated in every sentence, almost against his better judgment, that Andreae was in the first place an evangelical preacher, and that his relationship

with the Rosicrucians was at best a youthful lapse. Edighoffer offers a history of ideas and a description of the time that relies on the archetypes and the symbols of C.G. Jung. Christopher McIntosh presents a clear explanation of the genesis. And stimulated by the tireless initiatives emanating from the research department of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Carlos Gilly brought to the surface, in a study spanning many years into the period of 1604–1614, all the relevant events and largely forgotten publications that now form the *conditio sine qua non* underlying a correct understanding of the context in which the Rosicrucian impulse from the seventeenth century could be expressed. In addition, in 1998, together with Pleun van der Kooij, from the manuscripts and first editions of the original Fama he reconstructed a text version approaching very closely the original and added a very readable explanation, so that it is as if the original manuscript of the Fama is available to us again.

With regard to this genesis, in 1612 Duke August von Anhalt drew attention to the small town of Tübingen, nicely situated on the Neckar, in the South German state of Baden-Württemberg. ‘Please inquire with the doctor in Tübingen’, he wrote to his trusted

bookseller when, after the Fama, he also wanted to read a copy of the Confessio. Names like those of Andreae's dear friend and former minister, Johann Vischer, and Abraham Hölzl belonged to this genesis as well. Abraham Hölzl was also a friend of Andreae, and Johann Vischer was a mentor of both. By 1608, Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654) was one of the last to join this group. In 1612 (at a time that Hess had fallen ill already) Andreae introduced his lifelong friend Wilhelm von Wense (1586-1641) to this group of kindred spirits. 'For this purpose, he invited from his first monastery three of his brethren, to whom he felt particularly close, and who, moreover, appreciated the Arts more than was generally the case at that time, namely Brother G.V., Brother I.A. and Brother I.O. [...] In this manner, the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross initially began with only four persons.' (Fama) The enthusiastic religious feeling of this group of friends fuelled this genesis and the high expectations of the new science drove them to examine themselves as to how they might accomplish the complete reformation of the religious, scientific and social life of their time.

In the first decade of the seventeenth century, however, the most important man in that circle was Tobias Hess. He was then in his forties. All those

aspects we discussed earlier, converged, as it were, on him again. This man was truly an *uomo universale*, though a northern one. Hess was a living concordance of the holy word. He was patient; he had to raise thirteen children and his wife was a Xantippe. In the municipal archives of Tübingen there is a court ruling that orders him to ensure that his wife solved a street dispute with neighbours. In the marriage register of the same town, he incidentally was the only (!) one amongst thousands of entries of whom it was written that he *had* to marry, because the first small Hess was on the way.

In the street where he lived, he arranged for a second home to the one in which his family lived, in order to have peace for his study, his medicine, his visits and his books. He was tolerant as Christ, he had the wisdom of pure law, the humaneness of Erasmus, the mathematical knowledge of Johannes Stöffler, the universal unpretentiousness of Ficino and he mastered the classical medicine of both Galen (130-200) as well as the new medicine of Paracelsus. The hermetic knowledge of the preceding two centuries was found to be concentrated in him as if through a burning glass.

The lawyer, Christoph Besold (1577-1638), who had a somewhat different approach, nevertheless occu-

pies a special place within the circle of Tobias Hess. Besold was one of the greatest lawyers of his time. Brilliant as he was, he wrote, among other things, a devastating *dissertatio* about the fundamental injustice and illegality of witch trials; when Kepler's mother was accused of witchcraft, he took her defence upon himself. With his sharp intellect, he was a fearless champion of free thought, although later under pressure of the Jesuits, he converted to Catholicism. With the writing of the Fama he was not connected, as previously assumed, as he based himself on the suspicion 'JVA' to be the author. Which was close, but not right, as we shall see.

Published together with the Fama, and preceding it, was a translation of the *Allgemeine und Generalreformation der ganzen weiten Welt* (General Reformation of the whole wide World). We hear that Wilhelm Bidembach, closely related to the circle around Hess, was responsible for the translation. This text from an Italian work by Trajano Boccalini, *Ragguagli di Parnaso* (News from the Parnassus), was still hot in 1614: in Italy it was only printed for the first time in 1612. Yet another work came from the warm renaissance regions of Italy to the north: Tomasso Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, the 'City of the Sun', which appeared in

1602. How inspiring this work was for the circle in Tübingen! This writing – although it stemmed from a member of the Dominican order – is permeated by a Cabalistic sphere, and the friends could not have wished a better blueprint for the reformation of the bogged down reformation of Luther, in a Christian-hermetic sense. Later on, in 1619, the *Civitas Solis* inspired Johann Valentin Andreae to write his *Reipublicae Christiano-politanae Descriptio*. At the head of the solar city, Campanella sees a king-priest; a king because he has absolutely overcome and subjugated matter, and a priest because he can link the new light of a spiritual atmosphere with an ideal society, guided by high reason. Metaphysician is his name, and he unites *potentia* (power), *sapientia* (wisdom, knowledge) and *amor* (love, bond). The way in which he rules and teaches is based on only one book, the book *Sapientia* that ‘is read to the people in the manner of the Pythagoreans’. Tomasso Campanella constructed his Neoplatonic city on the basis of the tree of life, the *ets ha chaim* of the Cabbala. It would take too long at this point to work out the wondrously wise construction of this projected ideal society, but there is reason to contemplate how Metaphysicus sees its foundations before him. His inner power rests on four pillars, four principles:

grace, the law, success and fame; his knowledge includes Gnosis, wisdom and reason, but the love that rules everything is nevertheless the foundation, the basis *and* the mystery of the *civitas solis*. Bidembach, Vischer, Hölzl, Andreae, Hess... Even though there were age differences, they were friends. Even though there was no membership, no association statute, there was a brotherhood – in spirit. Most of them were as professor or student associated with Tübingen University, or with the Evangelical Stift. In the hospitable house of Tobias Hess, they were at home, at different times, in varying combinations. It was a loose association, not a society of registered members, because the times were restless, and age and destiny were too diverse for this. However, Andreae, who ardently worshipped Tobias Hess, sighs about them, his friends near and far, and he wrote about this as follows:

‘Let us follow our own rules under Christ, in this riotous time. Let us be eccentrics in righteousness, in the midst of such a dump of thugs. Let us be dreamers in the area of the higher life, in these materialistic times. [Hess was seen as an eccentric, a ‘utopist’ and a ‘dreamer’]. Let us love one another as he did, and let us, after the rejection of the finery of titles and the pride of honorary offices, call

each other ‘brothers’ (what are you smiling, Momus [devil]?). Let us together take an oath of servitude to Christ, in contempt of the world, based on mutual trust and a friendly fellowship with each other, and let us be residents, not of the realm of Utopia, but of that of Christ – even though by the age of the world this realm virtually is invisible here. So we have lived and God is our witness that our life was full of simplicity (even though you will be torn by anger, Satan!), innocence and true intentions. If I could hope one more time for such a friend, I would give all the riches of the world.’

These thoughts of Andreae characterise the atmosphere in which, before 1610, the manifestoes of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross were published. There, Christ, Hermes, Plato, Cabbala and Arabic Magia were, like in an alchemical process, reborn on a higher level, sealed and sent into the world again: ‘For what Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras and others have recognised to be correct, and in which Enoch, Abraham, Moses and Solomon have turned the scale, especially when it is in conformity with the great miracle book, the Bible – all comes together and forms a sphere or globe of which all parts are equidistant from the centre. Further and more detailed particulars will be given in Christian parables.’ (Fama)

And indeed, it seems as if all known knowledge merges as in a synthesis into something that was more beautiful than the separate parts together. These people were inspired – ‘dreamers’ they were called and this was not meant as a compliment, though it was true: they were kindred spirits, they lived around the corner from each other, their friendship was noble and in their aspiration a new impulse developed, a great Light that arose over Europe. ‘Because Europe is pregnant and will give birth to a strong child, that will need a great godfather gift’, as the *Fama* itself puts it. The result of their diligence, the idea that man is a microcosm that belongs to ‘the other, unknown half of the world’ (*Fama*) and the idea that there is hope for violated humanity, made thousands of European hearts beat faster. Among this circle of friends, around 1608, the first copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, ‘A message of the Brotherhood of the most laudable Order of the Rosy Cross’ was conceived and largely written by Tobias Hess. He had not only made a profound study of ‘the wondrous book, the Bible’, but also of Paracelsus, the physician who ‘like a meteor had drawn a trace of light through Europe’. In the thinking and actions of Tobias Hess, in everything he undertook, Paracelsus, this famous and infamous physician – the

founder of modern chemistry and medicine – occupied the central place. In the 1590s, Hess becomes acquainted with Oswald Crollius, another renowned follower of Paracelsus, in 1594 and 1595 living in nearby Bebenhausen. There Hess, while visiting Crollius together with his best friend Johann Stoffel from his hometown Nürnberg, met with people like Samuel Eisenmenger Jr. and Ulrich Bollinger, a Latin teacher. To all probability it was there that Hess met Johann Andreae's father Johannes. They all came together in order to master the *theoria* and the *practica*, the thinking of Paracelsus and the preparing of his remedies. Crollius trusted Tobias Hess so much that he could ask him to take with him a treatise like the *Dialogue between nature and the son of philosophy* (by Aegidius de Vadis) to a friend. And in the *Fama*, Hess introduces ideas and paragraphs taken from Crollius. Paracelsus, after all, was the one who stated: 'The knowledge of everything is the result of experience, of the deed and of research, of the works of the truth – because knowledge results from experience.' Indeed, one's own research was the ladder to the divine. Completely in the spirit of Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), one of the radiant pioneers of Italian Renaissance. His treatise on human dignity described it as follows: 'As a free and sovereign artist,

you should as it were be your own sculptor and portray yourself in the form of your choice. You may degenerate into the lower forms of an animal, but you can, by your own volition, also be reborn in the higher forms that are divine.’

That was an incentive they certainly took to heart, and the dangers that lurk in such a statement, those of human pride and unbridled ambition, were extinguished in their minds with the gentle Christianity of Johannes Arndt or the meditations of Thomas à Kempis, and by deeply penetrating the spirit of the Holy Scriptures.

The kingdom of the Holy Spirit

The considerations of Joachim di Fiore were also studied, because the Bible study of Tobias Hess resulted in a vision on the genesis of humanity, in which three major periods can be distinguished. These periods derive from ‘the flaming triangle’ of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the origin of which should be sought with a Sicilian scholar and monk from the twelfth century. He was a kind man, modest and of honest piety. Joachim di Fiore or Gioacchino di Fiore was born in the twelfth century in Celico, a small village in Calabria, at the time of the kingdom of Sicily. His father Joachim became a respected

notary public and an adviser of the Archbishop of Palermo, and of Margaretha of Navarra, who ruled Sicily as regent on behalf of the young William II. Joachim, a dedicated seeker of the divine and of the kingdom of the Holy Spirit, unfolded a completely new way of looking at how the history of humanity developed. He saw a division of human evolution in the earlier mentioned three periods. In the first period, that of the Father, the Old Testament controlled humanity. Man then lived as to the flesh. It was the time of 'lay people and married people' who adhered like slaves to the statutes and regulations of the law. It was the period between Abraham and Christ, and according to Joachim di Fiore, this period of the Father lasted forty-two generations. When Christ was born, the second period began. Once again, a period of forty-two generations started, which now had a fixed number of 30 years each. Now humanity is bound to the New Testament, slavery has been abolished and the human being is a childish obedient child. They were guided by the church, and their lives went up and down, fluctuating between flesh and spirit. And because people were like this, so were the Church and its prelates.

Forty-two generations of an average of 30 years

from the beginning of our era, ended in the year 1260. This would, according to Joachim di Fiore, be the year that the era of the Holy Spirit begins. Then the church would be purely spiritual, and people would be completely free. No longer would sacraments or priests be needed. Striving men of Spirit, *viri spirituales*, full of longing, would reach a spiritual insight, an *intelligentia spiritualis*. And the servants who were still there would be holy people who preached the everlasting gospel, according to the words of John in chapter 14 of his *Revelation*: ‘Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim.’ [Rev. 14: 6]

It is not surprising that this man was severely criticised, particularly by Thomas Aquinas, the astute scholar. This hopeful image of a third period (that, although situated in time, should rather be seen in a spiritual perspective) soon was denied and undermined by for example Thomas Aquinas, as a result of which Di Fiore became suspected of heresy. However, the line, the golden chain of eternal wisdom that links all those striving for and seeking the Spirit, always finds new exponents, new focal points, in people and groups of people who want to go together. Dante Alighieri was the kind of person who was moved by Joachim’s vision, and who saw

the *reformatio mundi*, the reformation of the world, with the same spiritual eyes. Such a reformation would always concern church and state, but it mainly concerned a change of heart, of the mentality, and on this basis, state, church and the human being would mature and result in new, beneficial fruits. Dante considered Joachim's prophecy a nonviolent change, approaching on the wings of doves the heart and morality. In his *Divina Commedia*, he made room for the gentle man in the solar heaven of paradise, the blissful place from the true teachers of the faith: 'Here, by my side, abbot Joachim, the Calabrian, radiates, endowed with prophetic gifts.'

Tobias Hess was a man who considered things spiritually, while also hoping for a golden age that might perhaps break through in his time. On the basis of his own calculations, 400 years after Joachim di Fiore, and the calculations of his friend and example Simon Studion, Hess reached the conclusion that there would be a new opportunity around the year 1620 for this third period, that of the Holy Spirit. And a reflection of this was given as a promise to the *Fama Fraternitatis*. The plan of the supernature will unfold, according to the Fama of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, in three stages that are summarised by

the motto: 'Born of God – Died in Jesus – Reborn through the Holy Spirit.'

Circle of brothers or 'conspirators'?

In many places, not the least of the thinkers say that Christian Rosenkreuz should be seen as an example, a spiritual guideline for the modern human being, who is capable of analysis *and* self-examination.

However, when we look at the circumstances of the genesis more deeply and let the sources speak for themselves, we will see that this mental *imago*, Christian Rosenkreuz, has been exemplified and embodied many times, and it is hard to believe that this received rather scant attention and had been previously overlooked for so long, but more of this later.

The complete first circle of friends from the South German town was closely linked with Tübingen University, and with the Evangelical Stift, the theological education centre for prospective ministers. During the first seventy years of its unruly existence, this university had played a decisive role prior to Luther's reformation, and certainly after. The free spirit of the university, brought on by the humanists, the Platonists, and the first reformers was curtailed by Andreae's grandfather in rules and dogma's. Jakob Andreae had been important in settling down the

turmoil, caused by the Reformation, through the *Formula Concordiae*, which was meant to promote unity among the reformed churches. In 1577, between eight and nine thousand Lutheran theologians endorsed this document. It turned the Lutheran church into a rigid stronghold that left little room for free thinking. But spirit cannot be suppressed. Particularly in the town of Tübingen, that we are now visiting, soon this spirit stirred again, always seeking freedom and ‘blowing where it wills’.

At the time of Tobias Hess, the rumour had already circulated that a ‘fantastic league, an association of conspirators and a dark, conspiratorial society’ existed around the ‘lawyer and follower of Paracelsus’, Tobias Hess. In this respect, the (unpublished) diaries of Martin Crusius, who lived a few houses down the street opposite Hess, might reveal new information about the fascinating period before 1608. Crusius, a Latin language teacher, knew the Andreae brothers from his lectures about Cicero, which they attended.

However, Johann Valentin Andreae, who absolutely belonged to this ‘league’, experienced the same episode completely differently. He wrote: ‘I spent those years (as a tutor) at the Truchsessen (major-

domo) von Höfingen family, where I struck up an intimate bond of love with Tobias Hess, the former pastor Vischer and the Austrian knight Abraham Hölzl.’ And we will not be surprised to find the same characteristics back in the points of departure of this group of friends that time and again return in the thinkers about the eternal wisdom: ‘Always acknowledging the presence of the spirit in all human affairs; to withhold judgment, to belittle the world; to probe and examine nature and to continuously heed the sophistry of the flesh.’

Already from the year 1560 onwards the very same themes that occur in Tobias Hess’ circle, are being discussed on an academic level, for example with Samuel Hayland Sr. The group probably knew each other from their private meetings at Hayland’s. As a professor of theology at the Evangelical Stift, the latter could not openly propagate free thought, certainly not after grandfather Jakob Andreae had fixed the Lutheran evangelical message in rigid dogmas. However, together with people like pastor Vischer, Samuel Hafenreffer, Simon Studion and Tobias Hess, Hayland studied in private ‘the symbolic philosophy of Pythagoras and the wisdom of the Cabbala’ as Reuchlin explains it in his two books on the Cabbala, *De verbo mirifico* (1494) and *De arte*

cabalistica (1517). But also Marsilio Ficino and his hermetic teachings were the subject of their discussions, as well as ‘the third period of the Holy Spirit’ of Joachim di Fiore.

The renowned mathematician, Michael Maestlin, worked at the university, but, though not a member of Hess’ circle, he nevertheless was a cautious supporter of Kepler and Copernicus. His successor, Wilhelm Schickhardt, who together with Andreae studied at the Evangelical Stift – later became a great orientalist, Cabbalist. Schickhardt was the inventor of the first calculator, he was also a mathematician, cartographer and astronomer. From his student days on, he remained a lifelong friend of Johann Valentin, and the latter held him in high esteem.

These people studied the great nature, the cosmos, like the Book M, in which they were able to ‘read the exalted plan of God’. They saw the newly-discovered movements of the planets around the sun as just as many ‘proofs of the heavenly harmonies, which demonstrated God’s brilliant design of the universe’, as Kepler, friend and fellow theology student (!) at Tübingen University put it.

This glow of striving for what is higher, learning in the training school of eternity, in which ‘God’s finger wrote the character of nature’; this atmosphere

of warm friendship, which even receives the qualification 'love', the ordinary humaneness which is helpful, combined with a clear mind and the diligence to penetrate the deeper layers of the human being; here, too, these are the properties again that enable the miracle of a completely new impulse. As friends, they drove each other to great efforts and inspiration. They charged and quenched their inner being with the inspired contemplation and texts of the great spiritual figures which they studied. They gave new words and powerful concepts to old, but pure ideas, which, after all, are never lost in the eternal wisdom. These words wanted to, yes, had to be written – and then there was at a certain moment, what could not be thought: the magic of an unprecedented energy that built a bridge and accomplished a link with the spheres of the consciousness of the original life. Then there is communication, then is manifested 'this third period of the Holy Spirit', the realm of the Holy Spirit – as it is always there, when these basic principles are found in human beings – and they were able to build a new 'house of the Holy Spirit', in the spiritual realm. And while this house was a spiritual fortress, a haven and a sanctuary, from the first years of the seventeenth century the hopeful gifts of regeneration flowed into society again.

V

‘Eberhard, der im Bart’ (Eberhard with the Beard)

The atmosphere of this thinking was generally strongly promoted by the history of the university, particularly by the spirit of its founder, Eberhard im Bart (1445-1496), by the Evangelical Stift for future clergymen and ministers, and the College of Nobility, an education for future rulers and governors. Who was this Eberhard with the Beard, named by a friend ‘the Good’, and what is his importance in our research *ad fontes*, into the sources of the Fama? He was the son of the Duke of Württemberg. His father, Ludwig I, died in 1450, when he was five years old, after which his mother married in 1452 with Archduke Albrecht VI of Austria, the brother of Emperor Friedrich III of the Holy Roman Empire. When his brother, Ludwig II, also died at the age of eighteen, he succeeded him, fourteen years old, in 1459, as Eberhard V, Count of Württemberg-Urach. 1459... the same year in which the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz* is situated. After a period of wild adventures, he undertook a journey to the Holy Land, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem

in 1468, at the age of twenty-two. He travelled in the company of a member of the Bombast of Hohenheim family, near Tübingen, the later grandfather of Paracelsus. This journey left a deep impression on him – and it must have been there that he experienced a conversion not unlike Saul, who was struck by a great Light on the road to Damascus, which turned him upside-down completely.

The overtones of the atmosphere in the country, where the events around the Resurrected One occurred, might very well have opened him to the idea of God-in-man: Christ in us. He made an inner vow, which he underlined by from then on growing a beard. From Jerusalem, he brought back a branch of a mayflower, which grew into a large tree, in the shade of which in later years he liked to sit and let himself be read to from *Antiquitates Judaica* (Jewish Antiquities) by Flavius Josephus. The same mayflower still thrives in Tübingen. The return journey took him through Italy. There, Eberhard scented possibly a whiff of the new, electrically charged atmosphere of something, which in the year 1468 was still in swaddling clothes: the great, new inner challenge to modern man, the *uomo universale*. On a second journey to Italy, in 1482, this understanding deepened, and in Eberhard this excitement scintillated. It was in this atmosphere that he recog-

nised man as a creation of God, the human being as a microcosm: God – cosmos – man. People talked there about the image of the cosmic human being, created in ‘His image and likeness’. Just like Pico della Mirandola some years later, he realised that the human being himself should shape his inner life, his rational comprehension and the environment, the society in which he lived. In his young, vigorous mind, the contours of a bold and audacious ideal were formed. They received colour and beauty in the spring glow of a youthful, awakening Italy that experienced the blissful exaltation of the beauty of life on earth, as expressed in gardens, architecture, sculpture and painting. Where sensitive painters like Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, and later Botticelli worked – painters, artists who translated brilliant ideas of the equally brilliant cosmic human being in scenes from revived Greek and Roman antiquity. Italian scholars combined the budding turmoil of a new life and the new abstract thinking with the power and tranquillity of exalted inspiration. But let us return to the year 1468. Back in Württemberg, Eberhard bade farewell to his old life. In 1474, he married Barbara Gonzaga, the daughter of the fabulously wealthy Marquis Luigi III of North Italian Mantua. Barbara had received her education

in Mantua, at one of the leading Italian humanist centres, and was a lady, 'who could compete with the most beautiful in Italy'. After the church ceremony in Mantua, he travelled back to Württemberg and gave a wedding party attended by 14,000 guests. The guests would certainly not have gone thirsty: the reports indicate that 150,000 litres of wine flowed during the celebrations, which lasted for weeks. Barbara Gonzaga and Eberhard conceived a little daughter, who, however, did not live longer than six months.

What Eberhard had seen in Italy, the lustrous beauty, the forms, the institutions, the thinking and the human progress, he saw as his ideal for the environment, for the care and responsibility with which he was charged. This, we can read as well in the motto that he chose after his journey to Jerusalem: 'Attempto' – 'I dare, I strive'. In the town of Tübingen, he wanted to establish a centre of learning and change, of which there were already a few in Germany, and of which he had seen examples in the grammar schools and universities in Italy. He envisaged a community of erudition through which church and society would be reformed, which could educate young people and promote the general wellbeing of his people in an atmosphere of spiritual progress.

Do we not see here the first outlines of the ‘realm of the Holy Spirit’ which 120 years later (and 400 years after Di Fiore) inspired the circle around Tobias Hess, so that they spoke of a ‘House of the Holy Spirit’?

Eberhard almost completely succeeded in the realisation of his ideal. All of it came near; he inspired people of flesh and blood; it was zeal, aspiration, friendship and human dignity, and it was brought closer with unbridled effort. It was a reality that was more fantastic than the wildest imagination. It was Eberhard’s merit that he shaped it.

On a summer’s day in July 1477, Eberhard, this very special figure, now thirty-one years old, officially proclaims his intention to found a university with the ideal of learning, living and intense religious striving in mind. In the *Stiftungsurkunde*, the founding document of that year, he wrote:

‘In the good opinion, to help dig the Well of Life, from which insatiable comforting and healing wisdom may be drawn unto all corners of the world to relinquish the perishable fire of human irrationality and blindness, further to the pleasure of God, and to the comfort of the whole of humanity, to help and to empower against the enemies of Faith, and finally to praise, revere and benefit the rule

of Württemberg, also to prevent external damage, that my people suffered so far, we have chosen and ordered to establish and found a common high school and university in our city of Tübingen.’ One is tempted to wonder whether there is a certain gratitude involved for Eberhards educators and guardians, who raise and support him after his father suddenly dies. A thankfulness which may even extend further, to God, certainly. But also ‘to his illustrious queen and mistress, our mother’, as he puts it so eloquently in the foundation charter of the university. And certainly his gratitude will include Rudolf von Ehingen, who after his father’s death receives him at the chateau of Tübingen. His son Georg, 17 years older than Eberhard, becomes a dear friend and lifelong counselor. This Georg von Ehingen, diplomat and great traveler is literally a hero. Georg survives Eberhard and, after the latter passes away, takes care of the Württemberg government affairs, until the legitimate heir Ulrich comes of age.

We mentioned in the words of Eberhard, that for the realization of his ideal the support of his mother, Mechtild of the Palatinate, has been decisive. In earlier years, she already was of considerable importance for the establishment of the university

of Freiburg, which she made financially possible by selling church property. After the early death of her husband, Mechtild lived at the Neckar Court in Rottenburg, near Tübingen. As a patron, she erected a 'Court of the Muses' there, where poets and thinkers competed in the spirit of the singers of the Wartburg. The knightly court literature flourished there, welcoming the atmosphere of the young humanist renaissance, Georg von Eningen was among them. Her men set out to find the grave of Wolfram von Eschenbach, which they suspected was somewhere around Tübingen.

VI

Eberhard's ideal: the three spiritual centres

What is the importance of all this in the light of the Fama, we may wonder? In this context, it is good to know that throughout the Holy Roman Empire, no count had ever founded a university before – that was church business. At the young Tübingen university, it were initially Catholic canons, whom Eberhard appointed as professors. But for his people the church is no longer the example it should have been, and Eberhard wants the simple Christianity from the days of its origin to permeate in his time, in his country and his people.

Soon, quite a different atmosphere came into the university, because the young Eberhard began to attract distinguished professors – from Italy, France and Basle, thus boosting the young university's good name. Precursors of Luther's reformation, like the 'Brethren of the Common Life', had for quite some time in the Netherlands led a reformed life of study, contemplation and pure religious understanding. When Eberhard in 1484 succeeded in appointing the most important brother of the Modern Devotion,

Gabriel Biel, at his young university, its fame rose to unprecedented levels. And in 1490, the glow of the lawyer, Martinus Prenninger, who during his years in Florence became an esteemed member of Marsilio Ficino's Academia and remained one of his intimates, made the university even more renowned.

A century before the time of Luther's reformation, the movement of the Brethren of the Common Life stood for personal sanctification of life, in all simplicity, and also in all modesty. The simple life, in the heart of Christ, and their own heart in Christ, sustained by practical wisdom, was their ideal – hoping to counter the coarsening of morals in this way and to be able to exercise a good influence on society. We see that the activities of the members were centred on the care for the young students and the improvement of the living conditions of the population. With them, Eberhard intends to make the new atmosphere tangible, through aspiration and friendship, through dedication and deepening, to perceive a perspective on life that surpassed the merely material. A perspective of life of spiritual freedom, that he wants to give to new sections of the population, the new bourgeoisie, which emerges in the northerly renaissance.

From Tübingen to Italy

Fourteen years before his death, in February 1482, Eberhard travelled to Italy again. This time, his goal was to visit Pope Sixtus IV. In his entourage, the friends of his closest circle travelled with him: Johannes Vergenhans, cofounder and first chancellor of his university, Peter Jakobi von Arlun, a classicist, Gabriel Biel, professor of theology, and as secretary and interpreter, his young friend, the then 26-year-old Johannes Reuchlin, the later Cabbalist and defender of Jewish wisdom. The latter proposed to Eberhard to visit Duke Lorenzo de' Medici, 'il Magnifico', in Florence on the way to Rome. He writes in a letter to Pope Leo X (Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici):

‘So I traveled with his Highness Eberhard the Good, in my time Duke of Swabia [Württemberg], as his secretary to Italy and arrived in Florence on March 21, 1482. When I had brought to the Duke’s mind the high nobility of the family de’ Medici – what I really could do with truth – he wished very much to meet with this man (your father). When Lorenzo – I do not know by whose mediation – had learned thereof, he took the stranger very kindly by the hand and led us all through his palace, where he showed its various sights: firstly, the masterfully built stables, then the arsenal, stuffed with all the weapons of war, then the

individual chambers, which were graced with precious carpets, magnificent wall hangings, and at the top of the house a roof garden with trees: the garden of the Hesperides, and their golden apples. When I praised his library sky-high, your father replied very friendly – as it was the manner of this very benign man – he had a greater treasure in his children (*liberi*) than in his books (*libri*).’

However, the goal of this journey was Rome, and there Eberhard received one of the most important awards that was possible in the society of those days: the papal golden rose. Recipients of this award, marking an ancient tradition dating back to the days before Charlemagne, were persons and authorities honoured for their excellent work for society. Contemporaries of Eberhard, who received the same honour, were all of royal descent; among them were Emperor Frederick III and Empress Eleonora in 1452, Charles VII of France in 1457, James III of Scotland in 1486 and Isabella I, Queen of Spain in 1493. Eberhard was the only count to whom this honour was conferred, as he was also the first ruler in Germany to be bestowed with the honours of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

How excellent Eberhard’s university had become in such a short time, is also apparent from the testimony

that Marsilio Ficino gave in a letter to Reuchlin in 1491, in which he wrote that ‘students who come from Tübingen to the Italian academies, know just as much as others that leave it’. And Ficino also dedicated his book *De comparatione Solis ad Deum* (Comparison between the Sun and God) to Eberhard, with the following dedication:

‘Our Martinus Uranius [that is Prenninger], which is the heavenly, and who actually spends his time with the contemplation of heavenly things, did in a long conversation with me convince me that amongst all German princes you are undisputable that which is the sun among the stars. To your high dignity, and to meet my desire, I herewith send you – as the German sun – a Platonic and Dionysian sun, which transfers by its bright light my uncommon love for you.’

On the first page of this beautiful manuscript on parchment that is now in the Württemberg Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart, the dedication to Eberhard is displayed and we see Eberhard’s emblem, the palm tree, with its motto that meanwhile has also become the motto of his university: ‘Attempto’ – ‘I dare’, ‘I venture’.

But he ventured even more. From the moment that Eberhard became acquainted with the spirit of Ficino’s Academia in Careggi in the 1480s and, moreover,

came into contact with Ficino, both in writing as well as personally, his desire was also ignited to found something similarly beautiful in his Tübingen. In 1492, he founded the Stift [abbey] of St. Peter on the 'Einsiedel' near Tübingen, where he owned a small hunting castle. This Stift was intended to be a monastery, a home and an academy of 36 brothers, from all positions (!): twelve members of the nobility, twelve citizens and twelve members of the clergy. The leader of this circle was Gabriel Biel. Eberhard himself became one of the twelve members of the nobility. Here the modern form of religion, the human ideal of the Renaissance and the hermetic wealth of ideas from Florence merged into a new brotherhood, and were the new values turned into a living practice. Indeed, the Academy of Florence, that loosely connected group of learned friends who sought the regularity and order of the 'divine Plato', reawakened by Ficino, who radiated the masterly solar atmosphere, as the brotherly, altruistic Love of Christ over their society, was Eberhard's example. They formed the model for the pillars of the reformation of life, learning and religion, to which Eberhard devoted his life. It is in this spirit, that he founded three important institutes in Württemberg:

- the university in Tübingen ‘for both divine as well as temporary knowledge’;
- the monastery in Urach for the Brothers of the Common Life (the Modern Devotion) as a purely religious centre;
- the Stift of St. Peter on the Einsiedel that linked everything, lifted it into practice and made it part of the society.

It will be obvious that without the spirit of this university, the *alma mater*, Luther’s reformation would have been unthinkable. It was not without reason, that Luther initially was even called a ‘Bielist’. Gabriel Biel brought the new doctrine, the synthesis of Italy and Holland, of humanism and Devotion Moderna. One of the early students of Biel in Tübingen is Johann von Staupitz. In the year 1502, Frederick the Wise invites Staupitz from Tübingen to Wittenberg, to become a founding rector of the new university of that town. On his turn, Staupitz is considered as the discoverer and supporter of Luther, whom he entrusted with the teachings of Gabriel Biel. Via Staupitz it is, that Luther comes to Wittenberg University, and later follows Staupitz as rector thereof. Luther and Staupitz remained lifelong friends, although Staupitz, while living the life, never converted to the new reli-

gion.

And also many other learned men of the Tübingen University wanted to support this new initiative, which is why 'Wittenberg' soon was considered to be a branch of the University of Tübingen. In 1518, another famous mind travels from Tübingen to Wittenberg. His name is Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), a student who received his training at the Börse in Tübingen, and achieves the degree of magister, before being appointed in Wittenberg. He later went on to become Luther's right hand.

The first lecture he gives in Wittenberg, is entitled: 'Ad Fontes'. In it, he presents his intended curriculum set. His lecture ends with an appeal to his young audience (among whom Luther): 'Have the courage to gain insight! Give diligence in Latin, make sure you learn Greek, remember: For some time, there are men at work, upon who you can look as an example and encouragement. Already here and there is budding a revival in Germany, the country is beginning to become tender and milder friendship spreads among a people, which was formerly haggard by the barbarism of education. Come, let's go to work!'

It would take too long to describe his extraordinarily noble and modest character, but he is introduced here to point out that his life, his spirit, his combination

of learning, Christian modesty and a devoted life is another example of the noble character that was to be reflected in the Tübingen circle, a hundred years later, in which the *Fama Fraternitatis* originated.

If the reader, while in Tübingen, would take the trouble to visit the Stiftkirche, and particularly the choir, between the carved marble slabs, then he would certainly be able to sense what we try to describe here. There we find the noble effigy of Duke Eberhard im Bart, in full regalia, who died in 1496. The stones may be perhaps cold and lifeless, but the sculptor managed to give the face a timeless lustre, as if Eberhard in his mind's eye is contemplating the actual reality of the abundance of ideals, he sowed the seeds of during his lifetime. A lifetime which only spanned 51 years. It is not hard to imagine that this radiant image of the founder of their *alma mater*, apart from all other layers that the Fama contains, was able to inspire the friends from Tübingen. This spiritual signature, an image of the higher human being, purely devoted to God – part of modern living, adventurous, open, contemplative, studious and untroubled – is the way of life that they saw before them. And this is a fascinating thought.

VII

The five languages of the Fama Fraternitatis

At the end of the text of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, we find the following quote:

‘Thus, according to the intention of our Father C.R.C., we, his Brothers, again request all learned men in Europe who shall read this our Fama (which is sent forth in five languages) as well as the Latin Confessio, to consider this our offer; to investigate their Arts as exactly and carefully as possible; to examine the present time with all diligence, and after having done so, to make their way of thinking known to us, either as a common conclusion or as an individual one, in writing or in print. Although we make no mention neither of ourselves nor of our meetings, yet nevertheless everyone’s conclusion will assuredly reach us, no matter in what language it may be.’

This fragment, apart from the beautiful style in which it was written, is a striking example of the stratification of the humanity document which is

the *Fama Fraternitatis*. A few parts catch the eye. The story speaks of five languages, of an answer of the readers (their ‘considerations’), of their Arts, of the present time, and of the certainty that their conclusion will reach the fraternity.

Nowadays, the Fama is certainly available in more than five languages. Those translations however were never published by our brotherhood, with a possible exception for the Dutch translation that appeared already in print in 1615. Nor was it the intention to do so. The reference to the five languages concerns something else.

First, there is the German language, the native tongue in which the reader assimilates the data. In the seventeenth century, although everyone could read them, in order to understand what you read, one needed a bit more training than merely being able to read. It contained so many references!

There is an obvious pleasure in the way the text was written. The benevolent reader of our time should not forget that this text was meant for their own circle of friends, as a compendium of their thinking, and would only be sent – as copies, in manuscript form – to a second group, of which they knew that its members would be able to comprehend the text. Although their efforts were seriously meant, it was

the pleasure of the author(s) to clothe this extraordinary story in such a way that those who shared the same intellectual background, would be able to guess the numerous references to events, trains of thought and people, so that there was a reminder and a memoir, as a spiritual monument that linked them. One example is the journey of CRC. In the spring of 1454, the aforementioned Georg von Ehingen, being an enterprising young lad, travelled to the Holy Land. Subsequently, he wanted to continue from Jerusalem to Babylon. However, on his journey, an encounter with Arab merchants became disastrous for him and he was taken hostage. He had to use the last of his travel money to ransom himself from captivity. He had just enough to reach Alexandria in Egypt, but during a stopover in Cyprus his companion died, an event that shook him so much that he fell ill. In October 1456 he was back in Germany. He left again, this time to Spain and Portugal, and in Ceuta, on the African shore of the Strait of Gibraltar, he fought against the Moors. In a heroic duel he beat the strongest man in their army, upon which the Arabs withdrew. From there he visited the ancient royal city of Fez. His travelogue, which was published around 1600, was widely read and quite popular in Tübingen at the time.

Or let's have a look at the burial temple from the Fama, which refers to a similar legend of Hermes. Or we could look at Christian Rosenkreuz himself, who seems to share at least some of the characteristics and traits with Eberhard im Bart. It is a feast of recognition for those who tried – and still try – to unveil the references. This is the first language, the *lingua germanica*; a 'message to the benevolent reader', the first step as a basic attitude that is needed to make a start. It is the desire to understand who or what CRC is or was, where the mystery behind this man stems from, and to understand everything that can be perceived, everything that can be followed. The second language is the language of magic, the *Magia*. This *lingua magica* concerns the discovery that whichever way you look at it and whatever you get back, refers to a big secret, connected with the Fama. A secret knowledge is hidden behind it, which is initially hard to put our finger on. It is a knowledge that makes many people uncomfortable and that even makes them put the Fama aside in annoyance – or worse. Or they tell you with shaking head that it is an unlikely, confused and messy fairy tale, but nothing is less true. A pure, radiant structure underlies it. It requires first of all 'a general reformation of the whole (small) world' in order to penetrate it. The

whole sensory apparatus, the human life system should adapt to the 'Call', but by hearing the call this change has already been initiated.

The third language is the original language of humanity, the language of the middle. We call it the *lingua caritatis*, the language of love, the language of the heart. The Fama would like to be a manual for this universal love. This is already expressed by the first lines of its preamble: 'We, the Brethren of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, bestow our greeting, our love and our prayer upon each and everyone who reads this, our Fama, with Christian intent.'

He who is able to open the *compendium*, this 'small altar, and it was finer than even a gifted man could imagine', learns to control this language of the Deity of the Light, puts his small altar in order, and increases the streams of life, the true substance of the Light, in his small world. He rediscovers the garden of Eden and an angel opens the passage: 'A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and there it divided.' [Gen. 2:10]

'But we shall not depict it until people have responded in faith to this our upright Fama.' Well, this answer is no different than the radiant presence, the joyful service to humanity. It is in our own envi-

ronment, very nearby, that this language of love is expressed. J. van Rijckenborgh writes about this: ‘Its sentences are not composed of mutilated concepts and false notions, but of a great magic that radiates in dazzling glory; to read this language, to be able to read it, means to live it, to experience its magic.’

These are ‘the considerations’ for which the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross yearns as an answer; thus the person who wants to approach the *domus sancti spiritus* considers ‘this, our offer’ in the right way.

The fourth language is the *lingua animae*, the language of the living soul. However, let us, before learning further languages of the eternal wisdom, first worry about the answer that the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross so definitively promises to us. It states, both in the Fama as well as elsewhere, that ‘if anyone wants to meet us, just out of curiosity, he will never come in touch with us. Whosoever though will go with us earnestly and whole-heartedly wants to register in the enrolments of our Brotherhood, we, who judge the thoughts, will show him that we truly fulfil our promises. And so we will not reveal our residence in this city, as the thoughts of the reader, along with his sincere wish, will make him known to us, and us to him.’

Throughout the ages, the Rosicrucians have worked

with power, with universal spirit power. As soon as the language of the centre belongs to our new powers on our way to the super nature, our true realm of life, the 'small world' will be reformed as to the original matrix, the pure and unassailable image that the *Elohim* gave to the foundations of our being. The first gifts from them are peace and balance. 'Then it is certain, and not subject to any speculation, that the energies of the new field of consciousness will reach us – and that we will partake of the same field that currently, in 2014 and the years ahead, is completely charged with the one universal spirit power that in 1614 irradiated our brotherhood. 'In addition, everyone who gives us his name can be sure that he will come into contact with one of us, either verbally, or, if there be some difficulty, in writing. And this we can declare with certainty that whosoever will go with us earnestly and whole-heartedly will enjoy the fruits thereof as to matter, body and soul.'

Not what we think or cherish of hidden ideas and desires is decisive, but rather what is essential, seen as to the whole of human nature. That is the unfailing answer of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, unchanging and always equal to itself. It heals us of our indecision and brokenness, of our homesickness and of our shortcomings.

Then the brotherhood teaches us its fourth language, the *lingua animae*, that completely coincides with new power and energy, emanating from the ‘small altar’. It is the language of the intuitive high reason, in which the movements of the spirit are expressed. J. van Rijckenborgh says about this:

‘In the eyes of the brothers and sisters who have reached this phase of development we perceive a deep light, a wonderful clarity, a tremendous homesick longing, for their eyes have beheld the mystery, which they themselves have reconstructed in accordance with the requirements of the Christ-hierophants. [...] They must build, they must become freemasons, they must demonstrate their dream-language in the form of an edifice, constructed through the dynamism of their heads, hearts and hands.’

This is the fourth language of the Rosy Cross; the dynamism of building, carving the fiery, burning characters of the Gospel by the deed, enabled to do so by Him, who is in all ages.

It is a long road that the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross walks with the diligent student of the eternal wisdom. And on this long road, it is that, at a certain moment, the fifth language will unveil its secret hieroglyphs. We, who like the legendary Ahasuerus,

that is, the man on his eternal quest, came into contact with the *traditio*, leapt up and embarked on a diligent study of the true *humaniora*, the ‘beautiful sciences that adorn the human being, like linguistics, history and physics, the preliminary studies in which the youth is usually taught first’, as the ancients said.

The languages form a fivefold fullness; there are five languages. The fifth language is the *lingua spiritus*, the language of the spirit. It has its own grammar, which is written with the ink of the *philosophia perennis*, the quill of freedom. The spirit that leads us wherever he will, because ‘he breatheth where he will’, beyond the limits of what is mortal – the spirit that then has become ours.

Illustrations

Cover 'Attempto Palm'. Mural on the ceiling in the tower of the castle at Bad Urach. After his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Count Eberhard im Bart made the choice for the palm as a symbol of his dignity and chose as his motto: 'Attempto' ('I strive, I venture')

Page 6 Title page of the *Fama Fraternitatis* in the Danzig edition, in which the *Confessio* appeared for the first time. The publication is identical with the Kassel edition. Both were printed in 1615. Danzig, Andrea Hünefeldt, 1615

Page 8 Commemoration medal of Eberhard. Museum der Universität Tübingen MUT. The register reads: 'Eberhard prim. dux in Wirtemberg, 1494. Obit 1496'; Eberhard, first Duke of Württemberg, 1494. Deceased 1496

Page 14 Eberhard enlarged his coat of arms after his appointment as Duke in 1494. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, 1495

Page 20 Title page in: Oswald Crollius, *Basilica Chymica oder Alchymistisch königlich Klejnod etc.* 1560-1609, with the portraits of Hermes, Geber, Morienes, Bacon, Lullius and Paracelsus. Franckfurt: Bey Gottfried Tampa Chen, 1629.

Roy G. Neville Historical Chemical Library, Chemical Heritage Foundation, London, UK

Page 46 *Fidel, solang das Blut sich rührt.* 'Dedicated, as long as the blood runs.' Watercolour on an index page with the five Protestant university towns. Württemberg (copy), 1760

Page 66 Count Eberhard, coloured pen drawing from 1550 by Nicolaus Ochsenbach. It is included in the archive book with the foundation letters of the Abbey of St. Peter at Einsiedel. State Library Württemberg, Stuttgart

Page 74 The Abbey of St. Peter at Einsiedel, by Nikolaus Ochsenbach, 1585 In: Harald Schukraft: *Kleine Geschichte des Hauses Württemberg* (A short history of the House of Württemberg). Tübingen, 2006. Württemberg State Library, Stuttgart

Page 84 Title page of *De Comparatione Solis ad Deum*, dedicated to Eberhard im Bart and written in 1492 by Marsilio Ficino. Handwritten document in the Württemberg State Library, Stuttgart