

M.B.

ANTWORT ODER SENDTBRIEF AN DIE VON GOTT ERLEUCHTE
BRUDERSCHAFFT VOM ROSEN CREUTZ. AUFF IHRE FAMAM
UND CONFESION DER FRATERNITET

ANSWER OR OPEN LETTER TO THE
BY GOD ENLIGHTENED FRATERNITY OF THE ROSE CROSS.
ON THEIR FAMA AND CONFESSIO OF THE FRATERNITY

1615

translation:

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SOURCE

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PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR

In 1614, 1615 and 1616 the renowned works *Fama Fraternitatis*¹, *Confessio Fraternitatis*² and the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreuz. Anno 1459* appeared in Germany. These writings referred to the existence of the Rosicrucian Order in Europe and were succeeded by a declaration that was attached to the walls of Paris in 1623. Its contents were as follows.

"We, the representatives of the Highest Council of the Rose Cross reside visibly and invisibly in this city, at the grace of the Most High, to the heart of which the righteous turn. Without books or signs we speak, and this we learn to others as well, in all the languages of the countries where we want to stay, to liberate the human beings, our equals, from deadly errors.

If ever someone wants to meet us out of sheer curiosity, he will never make contact with us. However, when his will urges him to have himself registered in the file of our Fraternity, then we, who can see through thoughts, shall show him that we truly keep our promises. Thus we do not state the location where we reside in this city, because the thoughts added to the genuine will of the reader will enable him to get to know us, and us to get to know him."

Afterwards many writings have seen the light, pro and contra the Rosicrucians. The present work, the *Antwort oder Sendtschreiben*, is one of the documents which are written in favour of the Order as to tone and contents. As the title indicates, the author remains anonymous insofar that only

¹ 'Fama fraternitatis Roseae Crucis oder Die Bruderschaft des Ordens der Rosenkreuzer', Cassel, 1614.

² 'Confession oder Bekandnusz, der Societet und Brüderschafft R.C. An die Gelehrten Europae', Cassel, 1615.

initials are given, although with all these works it is unclear whether the initials deal with a true personal name.

The author indicates that he has hastily tried to obtain a copy of the Fama Fraternitatis when he heard about it. With that it seems to be obvious that he himself was not a member of the Order, even when elsewhere he talks about “our Order” and “my Brothers”.

There are indications in the work that the author is a rich man. He refers to the Frankfurter Messe and says, that he is not interested in the offered treasures of the Rosicrucians, because he does not need those because of his “art” and other circumstances. In relation to his offer, made furtheron, to share with the Brothers his knowledge regarding the philosophical and “metallically” performed sciences, it might also be about an alchemist here.

The grammar in this work certainly is not impeccable. The build of several passages is malfunctioning, and also the interpunction is not all right, through which certain sentence meanings are difficult to clarify.

The text is characterized by many references to God. This does not say, that the Rosicrucians constituted a denomination or religious grouping. Many adherents of the thoughts of the Rosicrucians have from their own accord uttered their respect for the Order, while using Christian symbolism, of which by the way the work of the Rosicrucians themselves is not void, and which also may very well have been the cause of it.

In what way then does the Christian mysticism distinguish itself from the non-Christian mysticism? With the Christian form it is about a striving to become one with the image of Christ, be it as a personified deity, or as the archetypical rendering of the

principle that gives light to our consciousness (the influx of the Holy Spirit). The Rosicrucians follow a completely different path. In contradistinction to the Christian mystics they form freethinkers, who follow the path of the ancient esoteric schools of Egypt and Greece - with their meditative inclination and investigation of the laws of nature -, rather than a lyrical path such as many Christian mystics have walked it.

The similarity of certain Christian terms between both groupings may give confusion. From the criticism towards the pope, uttered by the Rosicrucians in some of their ancient documents, it does appear at any rate that they gave a much more direct interpretation of the original values of Christianity than the corrupt popes who aimed at worldly power, and in their function had already very much deviated from everything that would be human, worthy and characteristic for a substitute of Christ. For the Church was full of evils and unrelenting political machinations.

The frame in which the author of the present work outlines his attachment to the Order, must be seen in the light of the spirit of the time in which he wrote his appeal. This short work is one of a series of apologies which in the first half of the 17th century were published in Germany. Most of them are characterized by a similar beginning. Thus amongst others were published:

- ‘Sendtschreiben oder einfeltige Antwort an die hocherleuchte Brüderschafft desz hochlößlichen Ordens desz Rosen Creußes auff die von ihnen ausgefertigte Famam und Confessionem der Fraternitet’ (Open letter or uncomplicated answer to the highly enlightened Fraternity of the highly laudable Order of the Rose Cross to its published Fama and Confessio of the Fraternity), C.H.C., 1615;

- ‘Einfältige und kurze Antwort über die ausgegangene Fama und Confession’ (Uncomplicated and short reply to the published Fama and Confessio), Philippo à Gabella, 1617;
- ‘Ein wolgemeyntes Antwortschreiben an die hochwürdigen und weitberühmten Herrn Brüder desz hoch-preiszlichen Rosencreuß-Ordens’ (A well-meant reply letter to the highly worthy and widely famous gentlemen Brothers of the highly estimable Rosicrucian Order), S.V.S.P., 1619.
- ‘Antwort oder Sendschreiben an die von Gott erleuchte Brüderschafft vom Rosenkreuß: auff ihre Famam und Confession der Fraternitet’ (Answer or Letter to the by God enlightened Fraternity of the Rose Cross: to the Fama and Confessio of its Fraternity.), I.M.O.H.C. & S., 1630;
- ‘Sende-brieff an die von Gott hocheleuchtete und begabte der Natur verständige sehr vortreffliche Hn. Hn. des Decemvirats der Fraternität des so genanten Rosen-Creußes’ (Open letter to the ten very excellent gentlemen, very enlightened and gifted by God, skilled in nature, of the Fraternity of the so-called Rose Cross), I.N.J. 1705;
- ‘Sendschreiben an die glorwürdige Brüderschafft des hochlöblichen Ordens vom Rosen-Kreuß’ (Open letter to the glorious Fraternity of the very laudable Order of the Rose Cross), Anonymus, 1615.
- ‘Gründtlicher Bericht von dem Vorhaben, Gelegenheit und Inhalt der löblichen Bruderschaft deß Rosen Creußes’ (Thorough message about the plan, the

opportunity and contents of the laudable Fraternity of the Rose Cross), E.D.F.O.C.R., 1 6 1 7.

My translations of these works are downloadable at www.archive.org, search for: ruud muschter.

There are more similarities between these works. Many of them have an author who is indicated by three initials. Also the way in which the Order is described is rather similar, and also many phrasings in the texts are in agreement, so that one may wonder whether there was a combined pact between the adherents or members of the Order to publish these apologies.

There also existed several aggressive writings against the Rosicrucians, often from a Christian angle. And this whereas (or perhaps because) the Rosicrucians in certain writings made use of the notion God, without being a religious organization. Their attacks on the pope will have contributed to this criticism. Nonetheless it must be emphasized that the Rosicrucians were and are a mystical organization, and not a denomination or religious organization.

That the times have changed is proven by a gratulation by pope John XXIII to the then Emperor of our Order A.M.O.R.C., dr. Ralph Lewis, drafted on calligraphed paper with ornaments and a photograph of the pope.

The text of the present work has no page numbers. In this Dutch translation I have used an enumeration of my own.

Ruud Muschter³

³ Member of the Grand Council of the A.M.O.R.C. (Jurisdiction of the Dutch-speaking countries) from March 21st 1988 to March 21st 2010.

THE COVER

Answer
or
open letter / to the
by God enlightened Fra-
ternity of the Rose Cross.
On their Fama and Confessio of the
Fraternity



Printed in Amsterdam
in the year 1615.

Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd. Answer or open letter
to the by God enlightened
Fraternity of the Rose Cross.

On their Fama and Confessio of the Fraternity.

Brothers, chosen in Christ Jesus by God the almighty: To you my heartily greeting and adjudging of both temporary and eternal well-being be wished and sent for.

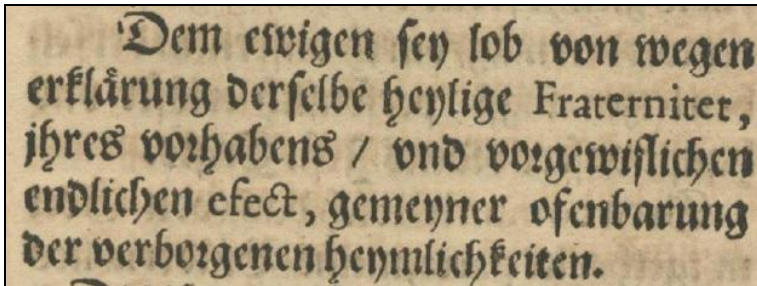
After at the end of this month of August your treaty about the Call of the Fraternity⁴ has come into in my hands⁵, translated into Nether-German, I rushedly decided to obtain the true High-German copy (printed in Frankfurt); finally found it to my desire with the translator; read its contents with exceptional joy and attention, as well as great astonishment; and ultimately found myself compelled and instigated to answer, but not in the manner I had liked to. For the present short time does not allow me to. After our (here residing) merchants already have given their journey to the Frankfurter Messe a beginning, I have nonetheless adopted the will to hastily further that which is now before us⁶, and to not omit it, for the sake and pleasure of my Brothers, who are no longer interested now in the superfluous

⁴ “De fame fraternitatis”.

⁵ Compare the remarkably similar preamble in a later work, as follows: “Brothers in Jesus Christ, elected by God the Almighty. To you be my heartfelt greeting. I wish and affirm that you be granted both temporary and eternal well-being. After I had laid my hands on your small writing in the year 1629, namely the Fama Fraternitatis - the contents of which I have read with extraordinary joy and attention and have considered with christian understanding”, etc. See Antwort oder Sendschreiben an die von Gott erleuchte Brüderschafft vom Rosenkreutz: auff ihre Famam und Confession der Fraternitet (Answer or Letter to the by God enlightened Fraternity of the Rose Cross: to the Fama and Confessio of its Fraternity), I.M.O.H.C. & S., 1630.

⁶ “diss gegenwertige”.

or eloquent writing, but who rather through the impetus of the Holy Spirit want to mark the sheep of Christ, your equals, to whom (besides you) the notion⁷ of the true voice of our only Shepherd (of the Alhigh) has been imparted, the reason of which has been duly explained in the Fama.



Dem ewigen sey lob von wegen
erklärung derselbe heylige Fraternitet,
ihres vorhabens / vnd vorgewislichen
endlichen efect, gemeyner ofenbarung
der verborgenen heymlichkeiten.

My astonishment now (beloved Brothers) is not, as it might seem to many, present because of your multiple treasures, but - and especially - because of the extremely enlightened, holy and true theological magic which I find in the Fama through several secretive⁸ sparks of explanation (of now shortly commencing future events) which is known to you very consciously and for so many years, and also has been kept secret.

To the Eternal One be praise for the disclosure⁹ of mentioned holy Fraternity, its intention, its foreseeing eventual result and total revelation of the hidden secrets.

This is the commencement of this desirable era¹⁰, in which with everlasting desire I hoped to live, whilst¹¹ I saw that the main

⁷ “erkantnus”; also ‘knowledge’.

⁸ “etliche”.

⁹ “erklärung”.

¹⁰ “Seculo”.

¹¹ “diewenl”; also: ‘because’.

part of the end of times worked out, and began to hasten to the point of departure¹² as the result of which the devilish king¹³ or the head of the animal already has completed its course, and the seventh now (in successive range) also reigns, and only has a small time of existence; having to omit the eighth and final opportunity (to bring to effect its atrocities).

It is the same one who was, and is not, and goes to perdition, in order that after the demise¹⁴ the preparation of a paradisaical joy may be revealed (to the by God elected and other steadfast ones), through our (in that final fear) personal Redeemer and head of our Order Jesus Christ.

I gladly communicate the (by God imparted)¹⁵ part¹⁶ to my Brothers. I do not read it because of the eagle's feather¹⁷, such as the before mentioned Brothers of my own heart still do for a while¹⁸, nor with as a point of view (which also in the Fama would be refuted with evidence) that you would be unaware of it, but on the basis of the eagerness desired by you (may it be

¹² "principium".

¹³ "der fersteberg Konig". Presumably comparable with: "Wenn die Christen mit dem teufel oder fersenbeiszer nicht im kampf sind, so ist kein gut zeichen, denn es bedeut, das der fersenbeiszer friede und seinen willen hat" (When the Christians are not in combat with the devil or snake, this is no good sign, for it means that the snake has peace and got his way), Luther, 6, 541b.

¹⁴ "nach dem garauß".

¹⁵ Here the work lacks a brace.

¹⁶ "parta".

¹⁷ Compare: "Wenn man ein adlersfeder zu andern federn legen thut, so friszt sie der ein ganzen hauf" (If one places an eagle's feather with other feathers, it refreshes the whole stack), B. Ringwald, 329.

¹⁸ Possibly the author means, that at the time of the appearance of the Fama, this work still stood out, and that the outside world next would become accustomed to the new vision.

akin to you to reveal it to me)¹⁹ in accordance with your Confessio on the 68th page.²⁰

My desire to communicate with such ones (the by God elected ones), is or takes place not at all because of the presented²¹ goods of which I (the Eternal One be thanked) am not in the least lacking anything on account of my art and other good circumstances. As you yourself may experience in due course, in your own circle²², which I do not doubt in the least for certain reasons, that you render the (at both sides) desiring minds a useful delight.

Both reasons for my short or scarce writing, are now the inducement to offer it to you so boldly, in the notion of our conformity in many sciences, of which the origin (the conforming magical signs) is that of the indirect and ultimate Apocalypse from the Holy Bible. I have ascertained myself of this, as according to the rule of your disclosure and revelation it is estimated that they will become yours.²³

Of the knowledge that I furthermore bear about many and distinctive notions²⁴ of philosophical and metallicallly perform-

¹⁹ Here as well a brace is lacking.

²⁰ Unclear. Consultation of a random Latin edition demonstrates, that it contained a mere 22 pages, and an evenly randomly chosen German version has 47 pages.

²¹ Read: the goods of which the Fama indicates that they can be obtained.

²² “durch engene kundschafft”.

²³ Translation uncertain, also due to the defective syntax. “Apocalipsa” in the work is followed by a point. Then follows the sentence (beginning with a lower case letter): “welches mich zu gleych vorgewisert zu sein / dar nach regel euwer Revelation und ofenbarung sich schetzt euwer zu werden”.

²⁴ “erkanntnussen”. Probably also the ‘results’ of these sciences are intended.

ed sciences, it is unnecessary to report here, as in due course I shall adequately give you evidence and clarification regarding all of them.²⁵ Whether I am now granted by God the appropriate²⁶ eyes of the eagle, will (doubtlessly) through this be adequately known to my Brothers.

Remain recommended to the Alhigh in grace and protection, and do not be lead astray in the least by the scarce theography, which has other aims.

Vale²⁷.

At Amsterdam, September 4th 1615.

M.B., who is heartily devoted to you.

²⁵ This obvious offer of science can be seen as a reaction to the appeal from the Fama, aimed at all the scientists of Europe. Also compare: "The sixth duty. For the very laudable Fraternity not to conceal any secret that is related to its terrain." See Von obristbrüderliche Wahl, Macht und Gewalt bestätigter Eingang zur ersten Classe des preißwürdigsten Ordens vom goldenen Rosen-Kreutze (The elevation - confirmed by the highest fraternal choice, power and vigour - to the First Degree of the laudable Order of the golden Rose Cross), Cap. II, Further explanation of the seven oath points, §. 8, Johann Joachim Christoph Bode, 1788.

²⁶ "zimliche".

²⁷ Be strong.