

A CONFIDENT, YET ELUSIVE MASONIC ROSICRUCIAN
Our Most Worthy Frater, His Imperial Highness, Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis, K.T., 33^o, and IX^o
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Masonic Rosicrucianism in the United States owes a debt of gratitude to a gentleman who literally fell into Masonic circles by sheer happenstance; and who breathed new life into the Rosicrucian Society initially founded by the monk, Father Christian Rosenkreutz. That gentleman was a "man among men," and a "prince among princes." He was dignified, yet uncommonly friendly -- and confident, although markedly elusive. He was our Illustrious Brother and Most Worthy Frater, His Imperial Highness, Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis.

Very little is known about Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis. He claimed he was born in December 1840 on the island of Chios, or Scio, just off Greece. A good authoritative history was written by Bro. Andreas C. Rizopoulous, who states that among the early Masons in Greece was a Mikes Rhodocanakis. In the year 1868, Masons in Greece were desperately searching for good, qualified leadership. Mikes Rhodocanakis mentioned that he had a cousin, who was a prominent prince living in Manchester, England. According to the Rizopoulous account, the Greek Masons assumed that this prince would most definitely be a Freemason and best suited to take the helm of Masonry in Greece. They were shocked to discover that Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis wasn't then a Mason, nor was he interested in fraternal activities. It is unknown what happened next, but he did have a change-of-heart. Through his contacts, he approached the Grand Lodge of Scotland and on 18 October 1869 he was Initiated, Passed, and Raised in St. Andrew Lodge No. 48 in Edinburgh, Scotland. The next day he was Exalted as a Royal Arch Mason, and on October 20th he became a Knight Templar by receiving the Order of the Temple. Just over a month later on November 29th, he became a member of the Royal Order of Scotland. Prince Rhodocanakis remained in England most of the next year, and on September 14, 1871, departed for Greece via a route taking him across mainland Europe. In July of 1872, he was elected Grand Master of Masons in Greece. Two days later, he helped establish The Supreme Council, 33^o of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Greece with himself being installed as its Sovereign Grand Commander. Prince Rhodocanakis rose through the ranks of Freemasonry with lightning speed. This was met by a great deal of awe among the Brethren, but also with a tinge of skepticism by a few people who questioned his credentials, his sincerity, and his purposes.

Regardless of how he rose to prominence, Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis was looked upon with respect and asked for counsel and advice by many Masons worldwide. The well-known Canadian Mason, William James Bury McLeod Moore, K.T. and 33^o, sought insight into the Rosicrucian Society. By then, H.I.H. Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis had already received the IX^o, and headed the Rosicrucian Society in Greece. With the Prince's permission, the Canadian Rosicrucian Society was chartered from the Society in Greece. Several years later, the Rosicrucian Society in the United States was chartered following this lineage; although, other previous attempts to introduce it into America had started, then sputtered out.

The mutual friendships of W.J.B. McLeod Moore, Albert Pike, and Prince Rhodocanakis were a triple-header of distinction in fraternal leadership circles. All three were Knights Templar. All three were 33^o Masons in the Scottish Rite, and all three received the IX^o of Masonic Rosicrucianism. Prince Rhodocanakis had studied the Rituals and literature of the Rosicrucian Society in England, which was falling into a sad state of decline and decay. In his opinion, the Society had been crumbling from within due to people who wanted pompous titles without assuming the responsibilities traditionally encompassed by the Society. Prince Rhodocanakis described what he found in England as so full of "nonsense" that he discarded much of what he saw. He wanted to restore the literary origins of the Society and return it to a gentleman's circle of learning...so that wider studies could be dispersed in diverse areas such as philosophy, medicine, and culture.



I believe that a postal letter from Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis to Albert Pike written in 1880 helps clarify the intended "theme" of Masonic Rosicrucianism. It appears in its entirety as follows:

Athens, 14 July 1880

My dear Brother,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your fraternal letter to me dated 12 June. We have translated in Greek nearly all the rituals of the 1st to 32 degree which you so kindly presented to our Library as well as that of the 33rd which was given to us in W. by Bro.: Webber, and if we ever print them you may be sure that we shall not forget to send you a few copies of each, as a token of gratitude.

Will you do me the favor to send me enclosed in a letter, one or two copies of the Key of the alphabet of the pass words, &c., mentioned in the rituals?

When I was in London in 1871 I was created an Honorary Magus of the Rosicrucian Society of England whose founder was the late Bro.: Little, and whose Honorary President the Earl of Bectire, with powers to establish a Supreme Lodge of that Society for the Kingdom of Greece. On my arrival here I established one. I announced the fact to London, and I was acknowledged in due course. A few years later I nominated our friend Colonel MacLeod Moore an Honorary Member of this Supreme College & a Magus IX^o, and granted him a warrant to establish a Supreme Council in Canada; this he has done.

There is not the slightest doubt he has the right to nominate any one he likes to the rank of Magus and to send warrants to create Supreme Colleges in Kingdoms and Republics where such do not exist. You are as legally established as he was established by myself, and myself by the Supreme Authority in London. I call it "Supreme Authority" by courtesy, as such authority does not exist, and as each National College being actually independent is at liberty to adopt its own regulations and to change the rituals.

For myself I found the rituals in use so full of nonsense that I returned them, and use none whatever. I have tried to give to that Society a sort of literary form and to connect it as nearly as possible with Hermeticism. You are aware that the Rosicrucian Order of which we are Supreme Magi pretends to represent the older fraternity of the Rose-Croix which flourished about the first fifteen years of the seventeenth century. If you could yourself write rituals for the various degrees of Rosicrucianism-- Zelator, Theoreticus, Practicus, Philosophus, Adeptus Junior, Adeptus Major, Adeptus Exemptus, Magister Templi, Magus -- having as basis the old ceremonies of that Order, the present order would owe a debt of great gratitude to you. Bro.: John Yarker, a very learned and ill-used Mason, and a personal and dear friend of Colonel Moore and myself knows better than anybody else everything relating to this order, and would be of great assistance to you if you were to write to him to "Withington near Mennsester" where he resides.

The Jewel of a Supreme Magus is as follows: "An ebony cross, with golden roses at its extremities, and the jewel of the Rosie Cross in the center (gold enameled white with the Rosie Cross in the center). It is surmounted by a crown of gold for the Supreme Magus alone, and the jewel is worn around the neck suspended by a crimson velvet ribbon."

Provincial Colleges have the same power like the provincial Grand Lodges in Blue Masonry and as the latter are under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge, so the former are under that of a Supreme College, therefore cannot do anything without its sanction.

I repeat to say that by the powers granted to you by our friend Colonel MacLeod Moore, you can lawfully establish the Supreme College of the United States, and by this letter I beg to nominate you an Honorary Supreme Magus of this Supreme College, and at the same time its Grand Representative near the Supreme College of the United States. I shall be most happy and honored to represent you also myself at this Supreme College. From what I wrote to you above you will see that the mode of establishing a Supreme College in a kingdom or republic is similar to



that of establishing a Supreme Council 33 degree and as a Supreme Council is entirely independent, as a Supreme College is.

I personally recommend you to establish the Supreme College for the United States of America, and to regulate the ceremonials and rituals of the order, which were concocted by Bro.: Little and are worthless.

For myself I shall be delighted, and I doubt not Colonel MacLeod Moore will agree with me, to acknowledge you as Supreme Authority of the Order, which as I learn is in a very precarious and nearly in a state of decomposition in London. There are no fundamental regulations of this Order; there is no general head of the Order. Each degree ought to have its own Ritual, and the degrees as I have said are nine. Our only rituals, if I am not mistaken, are written by the late Bro.: Little, the "founder" of the Order.

And so much for Rosicrucianism. Masonry, you will be delighted to hear, progresses quietly but steadily in Greece, and we propose establishing a Rose-Croix Chapter in Lamia the moment that town is given to us.

Yours very faithfully and fraternally

Rhodocanakis, IX^o

General the Hon. Albert Pike, IX^o
Supreme Magus of the Sup.: College of the
Rosicrucian Society in the U.S., &
Hon.: Sup.: Magus of Greece

Prince Demetrius Rhodocanakis

