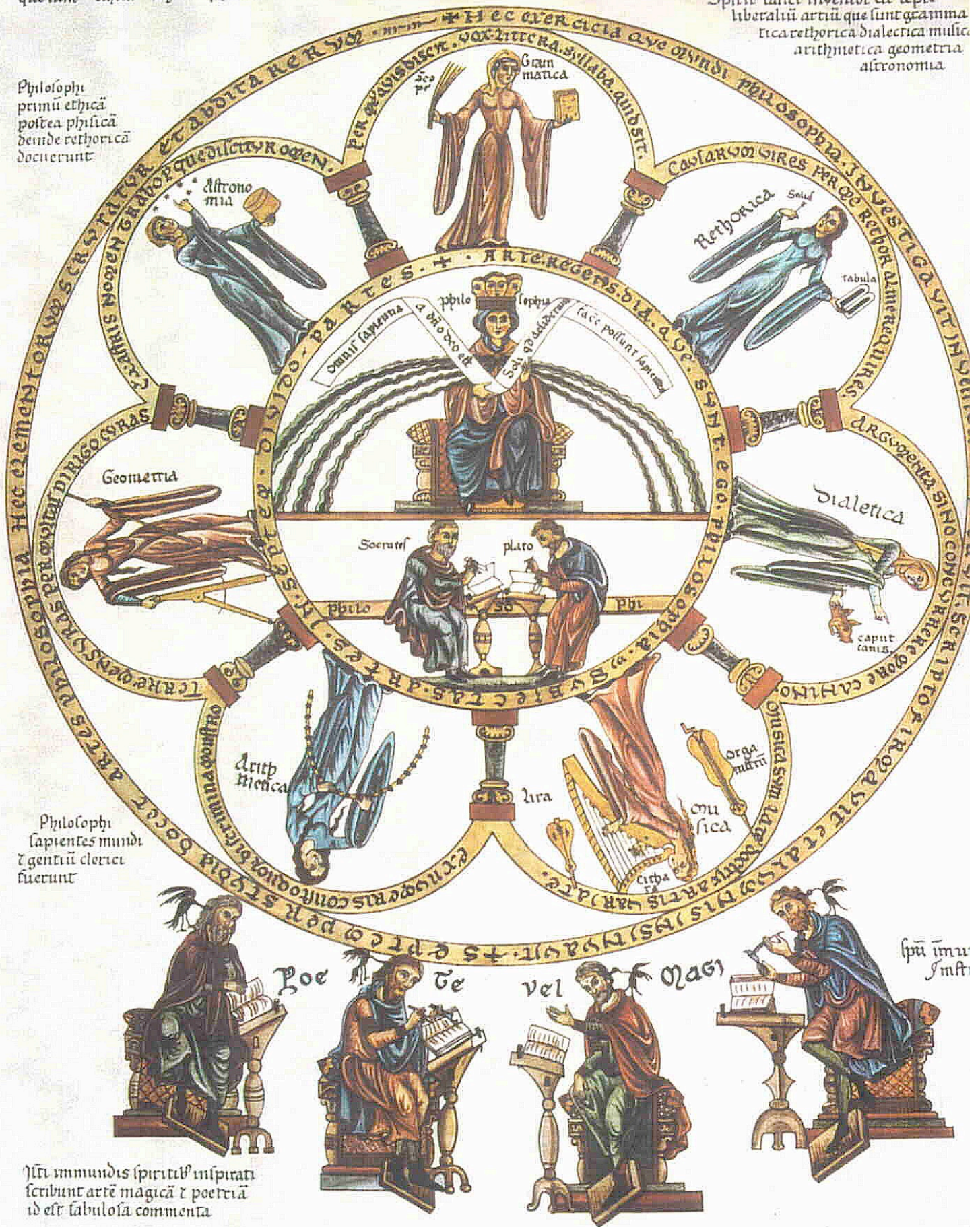


Philosophia dividitur in tres partes
que sunt ethica logica physica

Philosophi
primū ethicā
postea physica
deinde rethorica
docuerunt

Septē fontes sapientie fluunt de philoso-
phia que dicuntur liberales artes
Spiritus sanctus inventor est septē
liberalium artium que sunt gram-
matica rethorica dialectica musica
arithmetica geometria
astronomia



Philosophi
sapientes mundi
et gentium clerici
fuerunt

In immundis spiritibus inspirati
scribunt arte magica et poetica
id est fabulosa commenta

spiritus immundus
inspirat

The Craftsman's Charge (The Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences)

WM, RW The DDGM, officers, members and guests of Templum Fidelis Lodge;

For those who strive to look deeper than the black and white of the page they are memorizing, when disseminating our Ritual, we are faced with obscure Old Testament history, challenging symbology and arcane instruction. Such is the nature of allegory and such is the task before the Mason who chooses to meet the challenge of studying The Work.

Allow me to remind you of the experience of the new Fellowcraft.

In a degree that pulls stories and extracts from 500 years of the Old Testament there is a lot of time and geography for the Candidate to follow. From Moses leading his people out of Egypt and later coming down from the Mount in Exodus, Jephthah leading his Gileadites to battle and defend Israel in Judges, the details of building the first Temple at Jerusalem and Hiram presiding over the casting of the two Great Pillars in Kings I, the newly obligated Fellow Craft Mason is given a sweeping overview in early Old Testament teachings.

Finally, in the last charge of the degree, along with maintaining rules and regulations, guarding some cryptic ancient landmarks, encouraging industry and relieving necessities, the new Craftsman is exhorted to pursue “the study of the liberal arts, that valuable branch of education which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind”. [8] After a degree filled with lessons and stories of the VOTSL, the Final Charge moves entirely into the secular realm and asks the Candidate to turn his attentions to a classical education curriculum. It's a lot to take in, but fortunately, most of us get at least half a life time to figure it out.

The lessons and biblical history derived from the VOTSL are many and the reasons for why we base our ritual on it should be for every Freemason, abundant and obvious. However, where does this charge to study the liberal arts and sciences come from and what does it really mean? Is there a historical context for this? Why these specific subjects? This is the subject of my research and this paper.

Earlier in the degree, as part of the Senior Warden's lecture, we are given as a correlation to the seven (or more) steps leading up to the middle chamber, the seven liberal arts and sciences which are listed for us in order as; grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.

At the point when we are given the task to make the liberal arts our study, we have proven ourselves to be competent apprentices, trusted enough to be made Fellows of The Craft and given the secrets and signs of a Journey Man. We are now able to work under any Master and take our newly acquired knowledge to the figurative quarries and worksites to begin our labours.

These topics of study are not randomly placed in our ritual, nor are they loosely thrown together to form a haphazard curriculum. Not only have these areas of study been specifically chosen and written into our Ritual, but it is also critically important to note the order in which they are given to us. The reason for this is yet another example of the millennia old teachings that makes up our Ritual and the myriad of lessons contained therein for those who take the time to study it.

The liberal arts are loosely defined as academic subjects such as literature, philosophy, mathematics, social and physical sciences and distinctly separate areas of study from technical or the vocational subjects.

The origin of the word "*liberal*" in the term "*liberal arts and sciences*" (from the Latin *-liber* for "*free*") used in this context is meant to distinguish it from the trade guilds or anything involving manual labour which would have been the road to hoe for the lower classes and indentured men of medieval Europe. This is very much the same historical context of the word *free* as when we first bring the Candidate into the Lodge for the first time and demand to know if he is "*free by birth*".

As the American Oxford states the liberal arts "originally referring to the arts and sciences worthy of a free man. Later the word came to be related to general intellectual development rather than vocational training." [1]

In the modern sense of the term dating back to the 18th century, the liberal arts specifically include the study of art, literature, languages, philosophy, politics, history, mathematics, and science, so why are we given a set of subjects contrary to this accepted list.

With the wealth of newly discovered (or rediscovered) wisdom brought back from the middle east and the subsequent spread of learning shortly after the end of the first crusade in the mid 12th century, recognized universities began to sprout up around Europe. It was at this point that the liberal arts, as a recognized curriculum, were sanctioned by church and state ending a drought of secular study through all of the dark ages which lasted for over half a millennia from roughly 500 through to 1000 AD.

“The first European medieval institutions generally considered to be universities were established in Italy, France, and England in the late 11th and the 12th centuries for the study of arts, law, medicine, and theology. These universities evolved from much older schools and monasteries, and it is difficult to define the date at which they became true universities, although the lists of studia generalia (a list of recognized medieval universities) for higher education in Europe held by the Vatican are a useful guide.” [2]

“The word universitas originally applied only to the scholastic guild (or guilds)—that is, the corporation of students and masters—within the studium, and it was always modified, as universitas magistrorum, or universitas scholarium, or universitas magistrorum et scholarium. In the course of time, however, probably toward the latter part of the 14th century, the term began to be used by itself, with the exclusive meaning of a self-regulating community of teachers and scholars whose corporate existence had been recognized and sanctioned by civil or ecclesiastical authority.”[3]

In Medieval higher learning, the initial phases of study were made up of two steps; first the Trivium which was followed by the Quadrivium.

Trivium is latin for the *three ways* or the *three paths* and is made up of three specific subjects; Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic.

“Grammar is the mechanics of a language; logic (or dialectic) is the mechanics of thought and analysis; rhetoric is the use of language to instruct and persuade.

Sister Miriam Joseph described the three parts of the Trivium as:

“Logic is the art of thinking; grammar, the art of inventing symbols and combining them to express thought; and rhetoric, the art of communicating thought from one mind to another, the adaptation of language to circumstance.

Another description is:

Logic is concerned with the thing as-it-is-known,

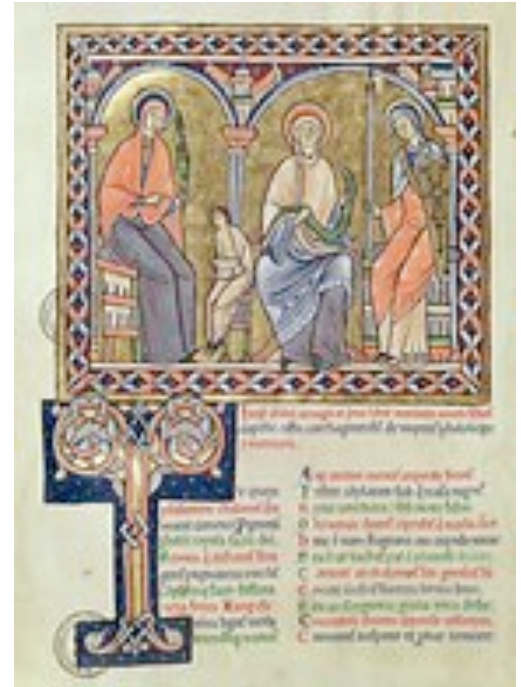
Grammar is concerned with the thing-as-it-is-symbolized, and

Rhetoric is concerned with the thing-as-it-is-communicated.” [4]

The study of logic, grammar and rhetoric, the trivium was considered preparatory for the quadrivium, which was made up of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

“The quadrivium comprised the four subjects, or arts, taught in medieval universities after the trivium. The word is Latin, meaning “the four ways” or “the four roads”: the completion of the liberal arts. The quadrivium consisted of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

The subject of music within the quadrivium was originally the classical subject of harmonics, in particular the study of the proportions between the music intervals created by the division of a monochord. A relationship to music as actually practiced was not part of this study, but the framework of classical harmonics



would substantially influence the content and structure of music theory as practiced both in European and Islamic cultures.

In modern applications of the liberal arts as curriculum in colleges or universities, the quadrivium may be considered as the study of number and its relationship to physical space or time: arithmetic was pure number, geometry was number in space, music number in time, and astronomy number in space and time.” [5]

After a 4 to 6 year period of study the trivium and quadrivium curriculum were completed and the student received his bachelor of arts. In very much the same way, this is still what happens today in modern universities. The bachelor of arts was necessary before going on to specialization in one of three areas, Theology, Medicine or Law. Of these, theology was considered the most auspicious.

In the areas of specialization, the next milestone was The Master’s degree. As the Trivium and Quadrivium were considered separate yet associated fields of study and individual milestones in their own right, the Master’s Degree was arguable the Third degree, which bears an obvious parallel to our Craft.

Once the student had completed the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, as the Fellowcraft is encouraged to do with the liberal arts, both are then able to work towards and attain their Masters degree. This would hold true for the operative Mason too who would be able to work as a journey man Mason once they had been given the secrets of a Fellow of The Craft and pursue their designation as a Master Mason.

This curriculum comprised of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* (now generally referred to as “classical education”) was established in the 5th century by a pagan legal scholar named Martianus Minneus Felix Capella from then Madaura in Roman occupied North Africa. Madaura is present day M’Daourouch, a municipality in Souk Ahras Province, Algeria, which is now a Roman Catholic titular see in the former Roman province of Numidia. [6]

Capella is important for several reasons historically and significant to the Masonic Ritual as well. It has been demonstrated that Capella established the *trivium* and *quadrivium* which we refer to as the “seven liberal arts and sciences” in our ritual. The writing he is most notable for “The Satyricon” was to have a huge impact on education for many centuries to come and I would postulate that it was influential on writings, one in particular, to be penned much later, and that the esoteric mystery schools, some perceived to be closely related to Freemasonry, revere as seminal.

On Capella:

“His career flourished some time during the fifth century: Martianus composed his one famous book, fundamental in the history of education, the history of rhetoric and the history of science between the sack of Rome by Alaric I (410), but apparently before the conquest of North Africa by the Vandals in 429.

This single curious encyclopedic work, *Satyricon*, or *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii et de septem Artibus liberalibus libri novem* (“On the Wedding of Philology and Mercury and of the Seven Liberal Arts, in nine books”), is an elaborate didactic allegory written in a mixture of prose and elaborately allusive verse, a mixture of forms in the manner of the Menippean satires of Varro.” [7] The *Satyricon*, not to be confused with the Latin book of poetry and prose of the same name written by Gaius Petronius.

“The style is wordy and involved, loaded with metaphor and bizarre expressions. The book was of stupendous importance in fixing the unchanging formulas of Academia from the Christianized Roman Empire of the fifth century until newly-available Arabic texts and the works of Aristotle became available in Western Europe in the twelfth century. These formulas included a medieval love for allegory (in particular personifications) as a means of presenting knowledge, and an attachment to the seven Liberal Arts. The book, which is thoroughly pagan in culture and makes no allusion to Christianity, continued to shape European education during the early medieval period and through the Carolingian renaissance.

Its frame story in the first two books relates the courtship and wedding of Mercury (intelligent or profitable pursuit), who has been refused by Wisdom, Divination and the Soul, with the maiden Philologia (learning, but literally “word-lore”) who is made immortal, under the protection of the gods, the Muses, the Cardinal Virtues and the Graces. The title refers to the allegorical union of the intellectually profitable pursuit (Mercury) of learning by way of the art of letters (Philology).

Among the wedding gifts are seven maids who will be Philologia’s slaves: they are the seven Liberal Arts: Grammar (an old woman with a knife for excising children’s grammatical errors), Dialectic, Rhetoric (a tall woman with a dress decorated with figures of speech and armed in a fashion to harm adversaries), Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy and (musical) Harmony.

The remaining seven books contain expositions of the seven liberal arts, representing the sum of human knowledge. Book 3 deals with grammar, book 4 with dialectics, book 5 with rhetoric, book 6 with geometry, book 7 with arithmetic, book 8 with astronomy, book 9 with music. These abstract discussions are linked on to the original allegory by the device of personifying each science as a courtier of Mercury and Philologia.

The work was a complete encyclopedia of the liberal culture of the time, and was in high repute during the Middle Ages as a school text. The eighth book describes a version of the geocentric model of astronomy in which Mercury and Venus

orbit the sun. This view of Capella’s was singled out for praise by Copernicus in Book I of his *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*.” [7]



Copernicus’ book first printed in 1543 in Nuremberg, is the seminal work on heliocentric theory and the masterpiece of astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543). The book offers an alternative model of the universe to the Ptolemaic system that had been universally accepted since antiquity. [10]

Copernicus, a true *Renaissance Man* in every sense of the term was only a part time astronomer in his free time. He was an economist, mathematician, governor, a military man and a doctor, but best remembered for his hobby as an astronomer.

As we know, the discovery and acceptance of the heliocentric nature of the solar system is monumental in the context and scope of the evolution of Man's understanding of his place in the universe and our relationship with the Divine.

This was of course a major blow to the authority of the ecclesiastic authority to suggest that the Earth and hence the Catholic Church, was not even the centre of the galaxy, never mind the centre of the universe. His book was condemned and by the church and the fact that he had credited and praised a lawyer from North Africa (who also happened to set the standard for the liberal arts and sciences) with having recorded this 1000 years earlier has largely gone unnoticed.

His successor, the Tuscan scientist Gallileo hailed as *The Father of Science*, would be excommunicated and imprisoned in his home for the rest of his life for pushing forward the *heliocentric* model, defying the Church and geocentric model accepted since the time of Aristotle. He would posthumously be vindicated, much to the efforts of scientists and collectives like *The Royal Society*, of which many of our Masonic Brethren were major forces.....but that is another story in Masonic history and lore.

Capella and The Satyricon formed a safe conduit and a capsule of sorts for the teachings of the ancient world to survive through the dark ages, perpetuated and copied by the scribes of Charlemagne during the Carolingian Renaissance of the 8th and 9th centuries, to last as the standard in liberal education well into the 12th century after the first Crusades when there came an influx of learning and culture into Europe with the armies, notably the Poor Knights of Christ also called the Templars, returning from the Holy Land.....but that is another story in Masonic history and lore. (Maybe more lore than history?)

It is noteworthy to mention that the Satyricon crosses the path of Freemasonry on another level and I referred to this earlier. It represents an allegorical style,

subject matter, and format of delivery that is very closely matched in the Rosicrucion Manifesto "*The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*" which first mysteriously appeared in Strasbourg, Germany in 1616. In it we see the same use of allegory and the same personification of elements and learning and their union through an allegorical wedding as we do in Capella's *Satyricon*. These devices are not unique to these two works, but the similarities are interesting and noteworthy.

"It is an allegoric romance (story) divided into Seven Days, or Seven Journeys, like Genesis, and tells us about the way Christian Rosenkreuz was invited to go to a wonderful castle full of miracles, in order to assist the Chymical Wedding of the king and the queen, that is, the husband and the bride.

This manifesto has been a source of inspiration for poets, alchemists (the word "chymical" is an old form of "chemical" and refers to alchemy – for which the 'Sacred Marriage' was the goal and dreamers, through the force of its initiation ritual with processions of tests, purifications, death, resurrection, and ascension and also by its symbolism found since the beginning with the invitation to Rosenkreutz to assist this Royal Wedding." [9]

As many of you may know, this book and the *The Fraternity of the Rosy Cross* or *The Rosicrucians* as they came to be referred to, were closely linked to Freemasonry in Germany and Central Europe in its earlier known organized forms towards the end of the Renaissance. The reality and basis for this perceived link has been the subject of much debate over the centuries and still continues today in the esoteric element of The Craft.....but that is another story in Masonic history and lore.

The Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences have endured as an intact curriculum of higher learning and objects that the greatest minds of humanity have studied along their quest for knowledge. It represents the conveyance of knowledge through out the ages. An incorruptible river of truth and enlightenment that has travelled through millennia, and has given forth a fountain of learning in every age since Christ for all to drink from. Do we not believe the same to be true of our ritual, or at the very least the essence that it conveys? Perhaps the awakening to

this parallel is the very reason why the Fellow Craft is directed to consider this subject?

The purpose of this paper was to examine the Charge made to the Fellowcraft Mason to consider the study of the liberal arts, what those are, where that list of subjects comes from, why it matters and what the historical context is for its inclusion in The Work.

If along the way we have discovered that any, even cursory, glance through human history reveals a crisscross of intersections with Masonic history and lore, than all the better to stoke our commitment to study the history of the Craft.

I am left with the profound impact of how, by just scratching the surface as we have done here, we witness how our Ritual, beyond its inseparable attachment to the VOTSL has a deep connection to the wisdom and secrets of the ages that are as relevant today as when they were first conceived by the Masters through out the history of Man.

GD.McDonald

December, 2008

Paper prepared for Templum Fidelis Meeting, December 13th, 2008.

Bath, On. Canada

References and edited portions “liberally” taken from:

[1] The Oxford American University

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_university

[3] Encyclopaedia Britannica: History of Education.

[4] The Trivium by Sister Miriam Joseph, C.S.C., Ph.D

[5] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadrivium>

[6] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%27Daourouch>

[7] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martianus_Capella

[8] The Work

[9] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chymical_Wedding_of_Christian_Rosenkreutz

[10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_revolutionibus_orbium_coelestium

Picture credits:

1) Cover-The seven liberal arts – Picture from the Hortus deliciarum of Herrad von Landsberg (12th century).

2) Page 5 print - Grammar, Dialect and Rhetoric from “Satyricon” by Martianus Capella, circa 1200 Giclee Poster Print by French School

3) Page 8 photo – title page of De revolutionibus orbium coelestium (book 6).