

# THE SCOTTISH RITE RITUAL MONITOR AND GUIDE

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*The pen and ink watercolored illustrations preceding each Degree depicting signs of the Scottish Rite degrees from the 4th to 32nd, circa 1815, are courtesy of the Supreme Council of the Netherlands in The Hague. Artist unknown.*

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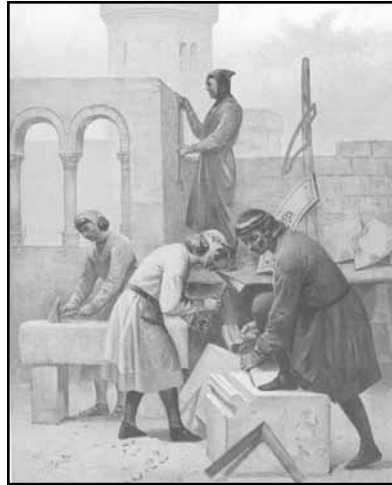
## A BRIEF HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY AND THE ORIGINS OF THE SCOTTISH RITE

### Early Masonic origins

The search for Freemasonry's origins has resulted in two schools of thought: (1) the "authentic school," which, relying on the discipline of historical research, advocates a "transition theory" back to the operative stonemasons of Scotland and England, and (2) the "romantic school," which believes that Masonic legends, symbolism, and circumstantial evidence point to a number of other possible origins. Among the most popular "romantic" notions of origin are Solomon's Temple, the Tower of Babel, the medieval Knights Templar, the Hermeticists and/or Rosicrucians, the Essenes (a Jewish sect which existed about two millennia ago), the ancient Egyptians, and any number of the ancient mystery religions and/or schools.<sup>1</sup>

The authentic school readily admits that Freemasonry's symbols and legends *borrow* from a wide range of traditions, but historians are quick to note that this eclecticism should not obscure the society's true origins. Rather, there is compelling, overwhelming, and substantive evidence that the Masonic lodge, including its private ceremonies of admission, was a byproduct of the operative stonemasons by the late sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest known use of the word "Fremason" appears in a September 8, 1325 entry in the Calendar of Coroners' Rolls of the City of London. Sadly, the entry is not flattering! It there states that "Nicholas le Fremason" abetted the felony escape of cer-



**Operative Masons of the Tenth Century.** From Robert I. Clegg, ed., *Mackey's Revised History of Freemasonry* (1921)

1. Recent offerings from the "romantic school" assert that the Hiram legend originated with the murder of an Egyptian pharaoh, while another claims that the shroud of Turin bears the image of Jacques De Molay, last of the Grand Masters of Knights Templar, who was worshipped as a "second messiah" by certain Freemasons. Historians reject both notions as fiction.

2. David Murray Lyon, *History of the Lodge in Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel), No. 1. Embracing an Account of the Rise and Progress of Freemasonry in Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1873; reprint ed.: Gresham Publishing Co., 1900); David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century 1590-1710* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons: Scotland's Early Lodges and Their Members* (Aberdeen University Press, 1988).



tain prisoners.<sup>3</sup> In 1332 it again appears in the surname of “John le Fremassoun.”<sup>4</sup> Another early use appears in an August 9, 1376, entry in the city of London “letter-book H,” where two men are listed as “fremasons” by trade.<sup>5</sup> The original use of the word in all its forms, “free mason,” “free-mason,” and ultimately “freemason,” likely derives from one of two sources. The most substantive evidence supports the view that it referred to hewers and setters of *freestone*, “a fine-grained homogenous sandstone capable of being tooled equally in any direction.”<sup>6</sup> A medieval “master freestone mason” was said to differ from “rough masons, which do make only walls.”<sup>7</sup> This suggests that the word *free-stone-mason* was contracted to *free-mason*.

In 1349 the masons all come under the general term of *caementarii*. This, it may be observed, had been a common name for them in much earlier times; and in 1334 the architect of Salisbury spire is called in a formal document, indifferently *caementarius* and *lathomus*.

In 1350 the wages of a “master freestone mason” are fixed at *4d.* a day, of other masons at *3d.*, and of their servants at  $1\frac{1}{2}d.$  The “servant” of this statute would be analogous to (for instance) the modern plumber’s “mate.” The phrase *mestre mason de franche pere* [master mason of free stone] is most significant for the probable origin of the term *freemason*.<sup>8</sup>

In 1383 the English religious reformer and Bible translator John Wyclif stated that “fre masons ... only hewe stone,” while others did the “legging” [laying].<sup>9</sup> A 1396 building contract also distinguished between “lathomos vocatos ffre Ma-

3. Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Coroners Rolls of the City of London A.D. 1300-1325* (London: Richard Clay and Sons, Ltd., 1913), pp. 130–31.

4. P. H. Reaney, Richard Middlewood Wilson, *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 177, 1228. In 1480 we read of the handiwork (de opera manuali) of Benedict Crosse, also known as “Benet le Fremason.” See John Harvey, *English Mediaeval Architects: A Biographical Dictionary Down to 1550, Including Master Masons, Carpenters, Carvers, Building Contractors, and Others Responsible for Design* (London: Batsford, 1954), pp. 31, 79. The term “le fremason” continued in use and appeared in a much later record from the time of Henry VIII, which states that on June 25, 1544, Robert Sylvester was to be “chief ‘le fremason’ of all chief messages, houses and buildings...” James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, eds., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* (London: Mackey and Co., 1903), Vol. 19, Pt. 1, p. 642.

5. Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-books, Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall. Letter-Book H. Circa A.D. 1375-1399* (London: John Edward Francis, 1907). A transcript appears online at [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33459](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33459), however, the underlying text of the blotted entry is omitted. See also W. J. Williams, “The Use of the Word ‘Freemason’ Before 1717,” *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 48 (1935), pp. 141–42.

6. James Geikie, *Structural and Field Geology* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1905), p. 60.

7. From Sir Thomas Elyot’s Latin dictionary (1538), as cited in G.G. Coulton, *Art and the Reformation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Co., 1928), p. 183.

8. G. G. Coulton, *Art and the Reformation* (1928), p. 181.

9. “The Grete Sentence of Curs Expounded,” in Thomas Arnold, *Select English Works of John Wyclif* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), vol. 3, p. 333.



**Early Freemasons.** This August 9, 1376 entry in “Letter Book H” of the city of London presents one of the earliest uses of the word “fremasons.” The entry, which included two names (Thomas Wreck and John Lesnes), was blotted and scratched out, and the names were added with others at the end of the page, where they are now listed as “masons.” It is believed that the registrar did not know the difference between the terms. —Photo from *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, vol. 41 (1928)

ceons” (stone workers called free masons) and “lathomos vocatos ligiers” (stone workers called layers).<sup>10</sup>

However, the competing etymological theory suggests that privilege, rather than skill, was responsible for the name:

A man admitted to the privileged position of a master in a trade guild, or of a burgess in a town, was made ‘free’ of the guild or town, becoming a ‘freeman’ in the sense of being free to enjoy certain rights, and from that to calling a fully qualified master mason a *freeman mason* or a *freemason* is only a small step.<sup>11</sup>

The craft of these operative freemasons is principally known from the “Old Charges” or “Gothic Consstitutions,” a collection of about 127 known documents entailing the mason’s code of conduct, his regulations, and a traditional or mythical history.<sup>12</sup> The two earliest known copies of these constitutions are the *Regius Ms* (ca. 1410) and the *Cooke Ms* (ca. 1420).<sup>13</sup> All of the oldest known copies of the Old Charges are of English origin.

10. Robert Freke Gould, *The History of Freemasonry* 4 vols. (London: Thomas C. Jack, 1882–85) vol. 2, p. 308.

11. Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry* (1988), p. 11. Emphasis added.

12. See Wallace McLeod, *The Old Gothic Constitutions* (Bloomington, Ill.: Masonic Book Club, 1985).

13. Douglas Knoop, G. P. Jones, and D. Hamer, *The Two Earliest Masonic MSS* (Manchester University Press, 1938) and Andrew Prescott, “The Regius and Cooke Manuscripts: Some New Contexts,” in *Collected Studies in the History of Freemasonry, 2000–2003* (University of Sheffield, 2003)

### The Schaw Statutes, and the early lodge

It is believed that King James III of Scotland's elevation of Robert Cochrane in the early 1470s increased respect among gentleman for the profession of masonry. Cochrane, who was the king's "master mason," and presumed architect of the great hall of Stirling Castle, represents "the first authentic instance in which a Scottish master mason is accorded a prominent place in history."<sup>14</sup> Cochrane, who was master mason to the Scottish crown, was named Earl of Mar by the King, who also granted him "a substantial pension."<sup>15</sup> Be that as it may, there is direct evidence that the Scottish lodges, which were established by royal decree, subsequently developed into social organizations providing mutual benefit to the early members.

William Schaw, appointed "Maister of Wark" for life by James VI (also known as James I, king of England), in 1583, played a significant role in the early development of Freemasonry. His issue of the first and second "Schaw Statutes" in Scotland in 1598 and 1599 introduced many concepts which continue today.<sup>16</sup> His statutes were founded on the Old Charges and together they formed the basis of government for modern Masonic Grand Lodges. In early days a lodge (*lodg, luge*, etc.) was a temporary structure, erected near the operative masons' building site, where they could rest and refresh themselves from the day's labors. The Schaw Statutes enlarged the idea of the lodge into something far greater, as it expanded to encompass a broader territorial jurisdiction. Schaw's statutes also defined a hierarchy of "wardenis, dekynis, and maisteris in all thingis concerning thair craft." Lodges were to be presided over by a "generall Wardene," while William Schaw himself presided over all the Masonic lodges in his country, as grand masters do throughout most of the world today. It is important to note that both before and after the institution of the lodge system masons continued as members of the incorporated trade guilds. Lodges operated in parallel to, and sometimes in competition with, these incorporations.

A careful reading of the Schaw Statutes also reveals that there were originally only two classes of masons, i.e., "prenteiss" and "fellowe of craft." Admittance to the lodge was not a right afforded to all masons; rather, admission to this fellowship was a privilege which was conferred by a ceremonial induction. Initiation to the society included (1) a prayer, (2) a description of the seven liberal arts or sci-

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14. William Dick, *The Art of Masonry in Britain* (London: Offices of the Stone Trades Journal, 1904), p. 87.

15. Robert Scott Mylne, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland and their Works* (Edinburgh: Scott & Ferguson and Burness & Company, 1893), p. 4.

16. Interest in the Schaw Statutes has increased with the publication of Robert L. D. Cooper, *The Rosslyn Hoax? Viewing Rosslyn Chapel from a New Perspective* (London: Lewis, 2006). Cooper's book demonstrates that fictional works, such as *The Da Vinci Code*, as well as recent offerings from the 'Romantic School' are founded in fantasy and have hijacked the true history of Scotland in the process.

ences, (3) the recital of the Craft's traditional "history," (4) a reading from the Old Charges, (5) the administration of an oath or obligation of secrecy, and (6) the communication of the "Mason Word"—a term embodying the sum of the private modes of recognition (i.e., the catechism, words, grips and signs).<sup>17</sup> The earliest evidence for the Mason Word dates to 1630,<sup>18</sup> and it was viewed by non-Masons with suspicion. The ability of Masons to communicate by nonverbal means was regarded as mysterious power and may have contributed to rumors of Freemasonry's ties to esotericism.<sup>19</sup> However, some writers have correctly noted the second Schaw Statute's promotion of an "esoteric" method of learning. It ordained that "ye warden of ye lug of Kilwynning ... tak tryall of ye airt of memorie and science yrof." The "art of memory" is a mental exercise employing abstract images and architectural features to create a mental map which assisted memory.<sup>20</sup>

### **Non-operative "Masons" and the early two-degree system**

At the same time the lodge system was developing in Scotland the London Mason Company became active in England. There is evidence that as early as 1630 some masons within the London Mason Company underwent an exclusive privilege of being admitted to "the Accepccion," although the precise meaning of the term is not clear. However, additional support suggests that "the Accepccion" represented an initiation into some type of group which embraced both operative masons and non-craftsmen.<sup>21</sup> Thus, a combination of the terms "free-stone mason" and "accepted mason" may be the origin of the phrase "Free and Accepted Mason."

By the early 1640s we can identify non-craftsmen who were ceremonially admitted into the lodge and became non-operative "masons." Sir Robert Moray was the first known non-operative "gentleman mason," having been admitted to the Lodge of Edinburgh on May 20, 1641. The precise reason such persons were admitted is not known, although they may have been patrons, or persons of influence whose friendship may have been beneficial. More notable was the initiation of Elias Ashmole, the English antiquarian and herald, on October 16, 1646. The initiation of such non-operative gentlemen, and the conferral of the Mason Word, is

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17. Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, *The Scottish Mason and the Mason Word* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939).

18. Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry* (1988), p. 136.

19. In an oft-cited passage, Henry Adamson's *The Muses' Threnodie* (1638) connected Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry and the occult arts: "For what we do presage is riot in grosse, for we are brethren of the Rosie Crosse; We have the Mason Word and second sight, Things for to come we can foretell aright." No contemporary evidence suggests that Freemasons themselves claimed occult abilities.

20. Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964); Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966)

21. R. F. Gould, *The Concise History of Freemasonry* (London: Gale & Polden, 1903), p. 185. Matthew D. Scanlan, "The Mystery of the Acception, 1630–1723," in *Heredom* 11 (Washington, D.C.: Scottish Rite Research Society, 2003), pp. 55–112.

the *sine qua non* of what we now call Speculative Freemasonry.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Speculative Freemasonry arose when the Mason Word ceased to have a purely practical, *operative*, use, and became a secret of purely symbolic value to “gentlemen masons.”<sup>23</sup>

Although information is scarce, a few surviving documents from this era may reveal something of the nature of primitive Masonic ritual. Our earliest description, recorded in the *Edinburgh Register House Ms* (1696), includes a brief ceremony and a simple catechism used to identify members. Remarkably, it includes many features still familiar to Masons today. The *Edinburgh Register House Ms* (1696), is not believed to have been an exposé, but was probably used as an *aide-mémoire*. Thus, it may preserve an authentic catechism used by early Freemasons. However, early Freemasonry was quite different from that known today. At this early period there were only two levels of membership: Entered Apprentice and Fellow-craft (fellow-of-the-craft). In early documents, when we read of a “master mason or fellow craft,” only one rank is indicated. Master Masons were senior Fellow Crafts who held the building contracts; this is the reason why the highest secrets were imparted upon the points of *fellow-ship*, not *apprentice-ship* or *master-ship*.<sup>24</sup>

► ***The Entered Apprentice’s Initiation.*** In the earliest known description of Masonic ritual we read that the candidate was first placed upon his knees and subjected to “a great many ceremonies to frighten him.” He then put his right hand upon a Bible and was told he would be sworn to secrecy, with the sun and the present company called as witnesses, and with a threat of damnation and death. He then took the following obligation:

By god himself and you shall answer to god when you shall stand nakd before him, at the great day, you shall not reveal any pairt of what you shall hear or see at this time whither by word nor write nor put it in wryte at any time nor draw it with the point of a sword, or any other instrument upon

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22. The earliest use of the term “speculative” appears in 1757. See Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, *The Genesis of Freemasonry. An Account of the Rise and Development of Freemasonry in its Operative, Accepted, and Early Speculative Phases* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1947), p. 131.

23. Albert Pike noted, “Ashmole did not desire social intercourse with common stone-hammerers or building masons. He could not have cared for their pipes and ale, or have felt any interest in what concerned their trade. There was *some* sufficient motive....” For Pike, early Masonic lodges were likely a meeting place for persons interested in Hermeticism and esotericism. See Arturo de Hoyos, ed., *Albert Pike’s Esoterika: The Symbolism of the Blue Degrees of Freemasonry* (Washington, D. C.: Scottish Rite Research Society, 2005, 2008).

24. “Every fellow could become a master-mason, provided he had sufficient skill and the luck to find an employer [to give him a building contract.] “But, suppose he did obtain a contract, what occurred then? Unless the contract was very small, he employed some of his fellows, and was ‘called Master’ by them ‘all the time they wrought with him,’ as many versions of the Constitutions tell us; and if the work was large is it deniable that he also *built a lodge and became Master of a Lodge?*” W. H. Upton, *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 11 (1898), p. 76. However, it should be noted that some foreign rituals now do refer to the “points of Mastership.”

the snow or sand, nor shall you speak of it but with an entered mason, so help you god.

Although brief, it is important to note rudimentary elements which are familiar to us today:

- (1) The oath begins by invoking the presence of God;
- (2) The phrase “when you shall stand nak[e]d before him” may suggest why later rituals prepare the candidate in a peculiar manner;
- (3) The candidate swore he would neither write nor draw the secrets in any manner. This statement is the ancestor of the familiar “write, indite, print, paint,” etc.
- (4) The candidate swore to keep the secret among Masons, and
- (5) The oath ends with “so help you God.”

The candidate was then removed from the room by the youngest Mason, frightened again with “1000 ridiculous postures and grimaces,” and was taught a sign known as the due guard, the posture, and the words of entry. Upon returning he bowed, made the sign, blessed them in God’s name, and delivered the words of entry. He expressed his desire to serve his Masters, under the penalty of having his throat cut and being buried, when he repeated the sign, drawing his hand across his throat. Finally, all the Masons whispered “the word” amongst themselves, beginning with the youngest, until it reached the Master Mason, who himself gave it to the new Entered Apprentice.

► *The Fellow Craft’s Initiation.* The Entered Apprentices left the room and the candidate was placed upon his knees and repeated the oath. He then exited with the “youngest mason” and learned the “postures and signs of fellowship.” Returning, he made “the masters sign,” and repeated the word of entry, omitting one item. The members then whispered the word amongst themselves as before, and the new Fellow Craft advanced and placed himself in the proper position to receive the word. He then whispered a greeting to eldest Mason, and was given the word and grip.

Because of the importance of this document, it is here reproduced in full:

[*Edinburgh Register House Ms (1696)*] <sup>25</sup>

SOME QUESTIONES THAT MASONS USE TO PUT TO THOSE WHO HAVE YE  
WORD BEFORE THEY WILL ACKNOWLEDGE THEM

Quest. 1. Are you a mason. Answer yes

Q: 2. How shall I know it? Ans: you shall know it in time and place convenient.

25. “Edinburgh Register House Ms, 1696,” in Douglas Knoop, G. P. Jones and Douglas Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* 2d ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), p. 31–34.

Remark the forsd answer is only to be made when there is company present who are not masons But if there be no such company by, you should answer by signes tokens and other points of my entrie

Q: 3. What is the first point? Ans: Tell me the first point ile tell you the second, The first is to heill and conceall, second, under no less pain, which is then cutting of your throat, For you most make that sign, when you say that

Q: 4 Where wes you entered? An: At the honourable lodge.

Q 5 What makes a true and perfect lodge? An: seven masters, five entered apprentices, A dayes Journey from a burroughs town without bark of dog or crow of cock

Q: 6 Does no less make a true and perfect lodge, An: yes five masons and three entered apprentices &c.

Q 7 Does no less. An: The more the merrier the fewer the better chear

Q 8 What is the name of your lodge An: Kilwinning.

Q 9 How stands your lodge An east and west as the temple of jerusalem.

Q 10 Where wes the first lodge. An: in the porch of Solomons Temple

Q: 11. Are there any lights in your lodge An yes three the north east. s w, and eastern passage The one denotes the maste<sup>r</sup> mason, the other the warden The third the setter croft.

Q: 12 Are there any jewells in your lodge An Yes three, Perpend Esler a Square pavement and a broad ovall.

Q 13 where shall I find the key of your lodge, yes [? = Ans] Three foot and an half from the lodge door under a perpend esler, and a green divot. But under the lap of my liver where all my secrets of my heart lie.

Q: 14 Which is the key of your lodge. An: a weel hung tongue.

Q 15 where lies the key. Ans: In the bone box.

After the masons have examined you by all or some of these Questions and that you have answered them exactly and mad the signes, they will acknowledge you, but not a master mason or fellow croft but only as as [? = an] apprentice, soe they will say I see you have been in the Kitchine but I know not if you have been in the hall, Ans I have been in the hall as weel as in the kitchine.

Quest 1 Are you a fellow craft Ans yes.

Quest 2 How many points of the fellowship are ther Ans fyve viz foot to foot Knee to Kn[ee] Heart to Heart, Hand to Hand and ear to ear. Then make the sign of fellowship and shake hand and you will be acknowledged a true mason. The words are in the I of the Kings Ch 7, v, 21, and in 2 chr: ch 3 verse last.

#### THE FORME OF GIVING THE MASON WORD

Imprimis you are to take the person to take the word upon his knees and after a great many ceremonies to frighten him you make him take up the bible and laying his right hand on it you are to conjure him, to sec[r]ecie, By threatning that if [he] shall break his oath the sun in the firmament will be a witness agst him and all the company then present, which will be an occasion of his damnation and that likewise the masons will be sure to murder him, Then after he hes promised secrecie They give him the oath a[s] follows

By god himself and you shall answer to god when you shall stand nakd before him, at the great day, you shall not reveal any pairt of what you shall hear or see at this time whither by word nor write nor put it in wryte at any time nor draw it with the point of a sword, or any other instrument upon the snow or sand, nor shall you speak of it but with an entered mason, so help you god.

After he hes taken the oath he is removed out of the company, with the youngest mason, where after he is sufficiently frighted with 1000 ridiculous postures and grimaces, He is to learn from the sd mason the manner of making his due guard whis [? = which] is the signe and the postures and words of his entrie which are as follows

ffirst when he enters again into the company he must make a ridiculous bow, then the signe and say God bless the honourable company. Then putting off his hat after a very foolish manner only to be demonstrated then (as the rest of the signes are likewise) he sayes the words of his entrie which are as follows

Here come I the youngest and last entered apprentice As I am sworn by God and S' Jhon by the Square and compass, and common judge to attend my masters service at the honourable lodge, from munday in the morning till saturday at night and to keep the Keyes therof, under no less pain then haveing my tongue cut out under my chin and of being buried, within the flood mark where no man shall know, then he makes the sign again with drawing his hand under his chin alongst his throat which denotes that it be cut out in caise he break his word.

Then all the mason present whisper amongst themselves the word beginning at the youngest till it come to the master mason who gives the word to the entered apprentice.

Now it is to be remarked that all the signes and words as yet spoken of are only what belong to the entered apprentice, But to be a master mason or fellow craft there is more to be done which after follows.

ffirst all the prentices are to be removed out of the company and none suffered to stay but masters.

Then he who is to be admitted a member of fellowship is putt again to his knees, and gets the oat[h] administrated to him of new afterwards he must go out of the company with the youngest mason to learn the postures and signes of fellowship, then comeing in again, He makes the masters sign, and sayes the same words of entrie as the app[rent]ice did only leaving out the com[m]on Judge then the masons whisper the word among themselves beginning at the youngest as formerly afterwards the youngest mason must advance and put himself into the posture he is to receive the word and sayes to the eldest mason in whispering

The worthy masters and honourable company greet you weel, greet you weel, greeet I you weel.

Then the master gives him the word and gripes his hand after the masons way, which is all that is to be done to make him a perfect mason

[*Endorsement*]

Some Questiones Anent the mason word 1696



It is important to note that there is still much to be learned about the origins of Masonry. Although Scotland played an indubitable and vital role in the formation of Speculative Masonry, there remain enigmas to be solved on the English side. For example, the Old Charges predate Scottish Masonic traditions by 200 years. How did they develop, and under what circumstances? We do not yet know.

### **Speculative Masonry and the birth of the “high degrees”**

On June 24, 1717, four London lodges<sup>26</sup> assembled at the Goose and Gridiron Ale House and institutionalized non-operative Freemasonry when they established the Grand Lodge of England and elected its first Grand Master. The original record, if there was one, cannot be found, but was reconstructed and published by Rev. James Anderson in his *New Book of Constitutions* (1738):

Accordingly on St *John Baptist's* Day, in the 3rd year of King GEORGE I. A.D. 1717, the ASSEMBLY and *Feast of the Free and accepted Masons* was held at the foresaid *Goose and Gridiron* Alehouse.

Before Dinner, the *oldest Master* Mason (now the *Master of a Lodge*) in the Chair, proposed a List of proper Candidates; and the Brethren by a majority of Hands elected Mr. ANTHONY SAYER, Gentleman, *Grand Master of Masons....*<sup>27</sup>

It should be recalled that when the premiere Grand Lodge was formed there were still only two degrees: Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft. As seen earlier in the *Edinburgh Register House Ms* (1696) the “points of fellowship” were a reference to the Fellow Craft, who received two words taken from 1 Kings 7:21 and 2 Chronicles 3:17. Yet other early documents include hints of a separate higher honor bestowed even before the creation of the Grand Lodge. It included a unique word which given to the Masters (senior Fellow Crafts), and was associated with the ritual embrace:

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26. The original four lodges were (1) At the Goose and Gridiron Ale-house in St. Paul's Churchyard; (2) At the Crown Ale-house in Parker's Lane near Drury Lane; (3) At the Apple-Tree Tavern in Charles Street, Covent Garden; (4) At the Rummer and Grapes Tavern in Channel Row, Westminster.

27. James Anderson, *The New Book of Constitutions of the Antient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons* (London: Cæsar Ward and Richard Chandler, 1738), pp. 109–10. This was the title given to the second edition of Anderson's famous work, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (London: William Hunter, 1723).

<i>Sloane Ms 3329</i> (ca. 1700) <sup>28</sup>	<i>Trinity College Dublin Ms</i> (1711) <sup>29</sup>
<p>Another they haue [have] called the mast<sup>ers</sup> word And is Mahabyn which is always divided into two words and Standing close With their Breasts to each other the inside of Each others right Ankle Joynts the mast<sup>ers</sup> grip by their right hands and the top of their Left hand fingers thrust [? thrust] close on y<sup>e</sup> small of each others Backbone and in that posture they Stand till they whisper in each others eares y<sup>e</sup> one Maha- the other replies Byn.</p>	<p>The Masters sign is back bone, and the word matchpin. The fellow craftsman's sign is knuckles, &amp; sinues y<sup>e</sup> word Jachquin. The Entered prentice's sign is sinues, the word Boaz or its hollow. Squeeze the Master by y<sup>e</sup> back bone, put your knee between his &amp; say Matchpin. Squeeze the fellow craftsman in knuckles, &amp; sinues &amp; say Jachquin[.] squeezes the enterprentice in sinues, &amp; say boaz, or its hollow.</p>

The *Sloane Ms 3329* also describes the “Master’s grip” given with the embrace:

[T]heir Masters gripe is grasping their right hands in each other placing their four finger’s nails hard upon the Carpus or end of others wrists and the thumb nailes thrust hard directly between the second Joynt of the thumb and the third Joynt of the first ffinger but some say the mast<sup>ers</sup> grip is the same I last described only each of their middle fffingers must reach an inch or three barly corns Length higher to touch upon a vein y<sup>t</sup> comes from the heart.

A remarkable transformation occurred a few years later when a separation of the ritual esotery of the senior Fellow Craft’s *honor* was used to help create the first “high degree”—the Master Mason’s Degree.

“By November, 1725, there was in existence a new degree, a degree intermediate between the Acceptance and the Master’s Part, and it was known as the Fellow-Craft.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, we also read of the earliest known conferral of this new high degree, just eight years after the formation of the premiere Grand Lodge when, on May 12, 1725, Brother Charles Cotton received the Master Mason’s Degree.<sup>31</sup>

The identity of the authors of the new ritual is not known, nor precisely how the transformation occurred. However, we may compare the creation of the Master Mason’s Degree with that of the “virtual” Past Master’s Degree (now part of American York Rite Masonry), which developed from the private installation of a Master of a Craft Lodge. Also called the “Installed Master” Degree (or ceremoni-

28. “Sloane Ms 3329, ca. 1700,” in Douglas Knoop, G. P. Jones and Douglas Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* 2d ed. (Manchester University Press, 1963), pp. 45–49.

29. “Trinity College, Dublin, Ms, 1711,” in Douglas Knoop, G. P. Jones and Douglas Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* 2d ed. (Manchester University Press, 1963), pp. 69–70.

30. Lionel Vibert, “The Evolution of the Second Degree” (1926), in, *The Collected Prestonian Lectures. Volume One 1925–1960* (London: Lewis Masonic, 1984), pp. 47–61.

31. Charles Cotton was made a Mason on December 22, 1724, later passed a Fellow Craft (date unspecified), and on May 12, 1725, he and Papillon Ball “Were regularly passed Masters.” R. F. Gould, “Philo-Musicæ et Architecturæ Societas Apollini. [A Review.]” in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 16 (1903), pp. 112–28.

al), it is still performed in many jurisdictions. As a part of the ceremony the (Past) Master is “regularly seated” (installed) in a particular manner and given certain “secrets of the chair.” Obviously, since relatively few Masons have the honor of presiding over a lodge, these secrets are withheld from many. However, the honor became a prerequisite to receiving the Royal Arch Degree.<sup>32</sup> To accommodate this requirement, the installation ceremony and its secrets were transformed into a “virtual” Past Master’s Degree. Similarly, the secrets associated with the honor of being a “Master Mason” (senior Fellow Craft) may have been converted and transformed into the Master Mason’s Degree.

### Noachite and Hiramic Masonry

Following the great London fire of 1666 a call was made for craftsmen to help rebuild the city, and it is likely that during the reconstruction masons mutually shared their legends and traditions. We do not know what legend, if any, was originally connected with the senior Fellow Craft’s honor or the Master Mason’s Degree. But early manuscripts hint of an oral tradition which likely evolved into the legend of the Third Degree. Two distinct but related versions of this tradition survive. According to a legend preserved in the *Graham Ms* (1726), the Biblical Patriarch Noah died in possession of a valuable secret which his three sons desired. They repaired to his grave and unsuccessfully attempted to retrieve it by raising the corpse, first by grips, and then by a ritual embrace resembling the points of fellowship. Unable to obtain the secret, they adopted a substitute:

[W]e have it by tradition and still some refferance to scripture cause shem ham and Japheth ffor to go to their father noahs grave for to try if they could find anything about him ffor to Lead them to the vertuable secret which this famieous preacher had for I hop all will allow that all things needfull for the new world was in the ark with noah Now these 3 men had allready agreed that if they did not ffind the very thing it self that the first thing that they found was to be to them as a secret they not Douting but did most firmly be Leive that God was able and would allso prove willing through their faith prayer and obedience for to cause what they did find for to prove as vertuable to them as if they had received the secret at ffirst from God himself at its head spring so came to the Grave finding nothing save the dead body all most consumed away takeing a greip at a ffinger it came away so from Joynt to Joynt so to the wrest so to

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32. The Royal Arch Degree, which may have originated around 1740, was described as “an organisd body of men who have passed the chair...” Fifield D’Assigny, *A Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the cause of the Present Decay of Free-Masonry in the Kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin: 1744; reprint ed., Bloomington, Ill.: Masonic Book Club, 1974), p. 44. A few years later, Laurence Dermott, secretary of the Antients Grand Lodge of England, wrote of the “miscarriage” of “all those who think themselves Royal Arch Masons, without passing the Chair in regular Form.” See his *Ahiman Rezon: or A Help to a Brother* (London: 1756; reprint ed., Bloomington, Ill.: Masonic Book Club, 1975), p. 48.

the Elbow so they R Reared up the dead body and suported it setting ffoot to ffoot knee to knee Breast to breast Cheeck to cheeck and hand to back and cryed out help o ffather as if they had said o father of heaven help us now for our Earthly ffather cannot so Laid down the dead body again and not knowing what to do—so one said here is yet marow in this bone and the second said but a dry bone and the third said it stinketh so they agreed for to give it a name as is known to free masonry to this day...<sup>33</sup>

A trace of this legend and primitive tradition may have been alluded to in Rev. Anderson's *Constitutions* (1723), which states that "the *great Ark ... tho' of Wood*, was certainly fabricated by *Geometry*, and according to the Rules of *Masonry*." It adds, "NOAH and his three Sons, JAPHET, SHEM, and HAM, all *Masons true*, brought with them over the *Flood*, the Traditions and Arts of the *Ante-diluvians...*"<sup>34</sup> Anderson's *New Book of Constitutions* (1738) further stated that a Mason was to be "a true Noachida," and referred to Noah and his sons as "these Masons, or four Grand officers." However this may be, "Antediluvian Masonry" (Masonry before the flood) became the subject of a mock advertisement printed in 1726, the same year in which the *Graham Manuscript* was written. The advertisement served as a mock announcement to alert Masons that "Innovations have lately been introduced by the Doctor" (Dr. John T. Desaguliers), who was elected Grand Master of the premiere Grand Lodge in 1719. The details of the advertisement suggest that the legend of Noah was being retired, and that the legend of Hiram Abif had been recently introduced in its place.

ANTEDILUVIAN MASONRY [1726].<sup>35</sup>

This is to give Notice,

*To all Masons who have been made after the Antediluvian manner.*

That there will be a Lodge held at the Ship Tavern in Bishopsgate Street tomorrow the 24th of this instant June, being the feast of St. John the Baptist, the Forerunner of — who laid the first parallel Line — there not being Brethren enough assembled the last year to make a true and perfect Lodge.

There will be several Lectures on Ancient Masonry, particularly on the Signification of the Letter G. and how and after what Manner the Antediluvian Mason form'd their Lodges, shewing what Innovations have lately been introduced by the Doctor and some other of the Moderns, with their Tape, Jacks, Moveable Letters, Blazing Stars, &c., to the great Indignity of the Mop and Pail.

33. "The Graham Manuscript, 1726," in Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* (1963), pp. 92–93.

34. Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (1723), p. 3.

35. "Antediluvian Masonry," in Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *Early Masonic Pamphlets* (Manchester University Press, 1945) pp. 193–94.

There will likewise be a Lecture giving a particular Description of the Temple of Solomon, shewing which way Fellow Crafts got into the Middle Chamber to receive their Wages, and proving without lettering or giving the first and second, that the two Pillars of the Porch were not cast in the Vale of Jehosaphat but elsewhere; and that neither the Honorary, Apollonian, or Free and Accepted Masons know anything of the matter; with the whole History of the Widow's Son killed by the Blow of a Beetle, afterwards found three Foot East, three Foot West, and three Foot perpendicular, and the necessity there is for a Master to well understand the Rule of Three.

Lastly; there will be an Oration in the Henlean stile, on the Antiquity of Signs, Tokens, Points, Gripes, Knuckles, Wrists, Right-hands, bare-bended knees, naked left Breast, Bibles, Compasses, Squares, Yellow Jackets, Blue Breeches, Mosaick Pavements, dented Ashlers, broached Turnels, Jewels, moveable and immovable, bow-bound Boxes, oblong-Squares, cassia, and mossy Graves, delivered neither sitting nor standing naked nor cloathed, but in due Form, concluding with a genuine Account of Penalties, Throats, Tongues, Hearts, Sands, Cables, Shoars, Tides, Bodies burnt, Ashes, Winds, solemn Obligations, &c.

N.B.—The Wax Chandler near Pall Mall will provide three great Lights and a Gorgomon to keep off the Cowin and Eves-droppers.

By Order of the Fraternity

Lewis Giblin, M.B.N.

The Eulogium on Masonry will not be deferred on any account.

The allusion to “the whole History of the Widow’s Son killed by the Blow of a Beetle,” who was later found in a “mossy grave,” resembles the account of Hiram Abif found in Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected* (1730). Prichard’s account, which provided the earliest known description of the Master Mason’s Degree, stated that Hiram was killed by the blow of a “Setting Beadle,” and that he was buried in a grave covered with “green Moss and Turf.”<sup>36</sup>

### The death of the builder

The earliest descriptions of Masonic ritual may include veiled references to the Noachite or Hiramic legends. A green grave is alluded to in the *Edinburgh Register House Ms* (1696), which stated that one may “find the key of your lodge ... Three foot and an half from the lodge door under a perpend esler, and a green divot.” A “perpend esler” is a *perpendicular ashlar* (an upright stone), while a “divot” is a *piece of square turf* or *sod*. It further explained that the key is a “weel [well] hung tongue” which lies

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36. The complete text of *Masonry Dissected* is reproduced in Arturo de Hoyos, ed., *Albert Pike’s Esoterika: The Symbolism of the Blue Degrees of Freemasonry* (Washington, D.C.: Scottish Rite Research Society, 2005, 2008), pp. 344–67.

within “the bone box” (the skull). Thus, the key lies in a green grave marked with an upright stone. The *Dumfries No. 4 Ms* (ca. 1710) differs by stating that the master lies in a “stone trough” (? a burial vault): “Q[.] where layes y<sup>e</sup> master[?] A[.] in a stone trough under y<sup>e</sup> west window looking to y<sup>e</sup> east....”<sup>37</sup> It is also interesting to note that the *Dumfries No. 4 Ms* ends with a bit of quaint poetry which mentions a “caput mortuu[m] [death’s head] ... to mind you of mortality.” These early hints are tantalizing, but they are only vague allusions at best; and since they appear without an explicit context, they would not be understood by a non-Mason.

Although the details of the Hiramic legend did not appear until Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected* (1730), circumstantial evidence was strong enough to convince the analytical mind of Robert F. Gould, dean of the “Authentic School” of Masonic research, of the antiquity of the legend. In 1889 Gould wrote to Albert Pike, “Now I am clearly of opinion that a similar ignorance prevailed in 1717-30, and for this reason reject as untenable, the theory that the ceremonial of 1730 [i.e., Prichard’s account of the raising] was introduced into Masonry *after* 1717.”<sup>38</sup>

Support for the antiquity of the legend may be found in a parallel examination of early accounts of the ritual. Although we cannot be certain whose grave is referenced in the earliest account, its description remained sufficiently consistent to suggest the existence of a (Noachite?) ceremony which eluded report for some time, and emerged as the Hiramic legend by 1730.



***The Raising of the Master*** by Guercino [Giovanni Francesco Barbieri], 1591–1666. Elements of this painting share an affinity with the Noachite and Hiramic legends, which Albert Pike and Robert F. Gould believed was older than the founding of the premiere Grand Lodge in 1717. The original painting is in possession of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland. —Photo from J.S.M. Ward, *The Sign Language of the Mysteries* 2 vols.(1928).

37. “Dumfries No. 4 Ms, ca. 1710,” in Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* (1963), p. 66.

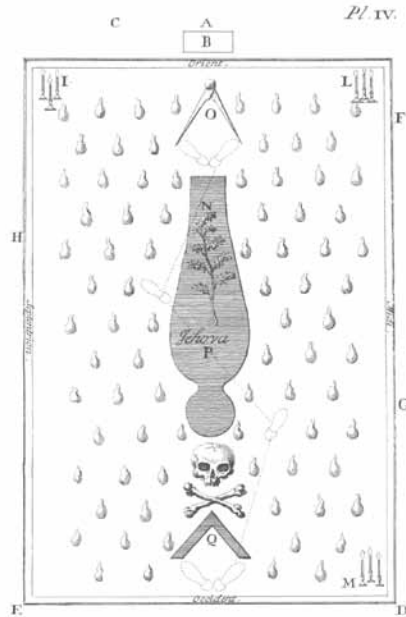
38. Robert F. Gould, October 26, 1889, to Albert Pike. Original in the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., Washington, D.C. Quoted in Arturo de Hoyos, ed., *Albert Pike’s Esoterika: The Symbolism of the Blue Degrees of Freemasonry* (Washington, DC: Scottish Rite Research Society, 2005, 2008), p. xxxvi.

THE SCOTTISH RITE RITUAL MONITOR AND GUIDE

<i>Edinburgh Register House Ms</i> (1696)	<i>A Mason's Examination</i> (1723)	<i>Antediluvian Masonry.</i> (1726)	<i>Prichard's Masonry Dissected</i> (1730)
Three foot and an half from the lodge door under a perpendicular, and a green divot	two Foot and a half, under a Green Turf, and one Square. <sup>38</sup>	three Foot East, three Foot West, and three Foot perpendicular ... mossy Graves.	6 Foot East, 6 Foot West, and 6 Foot perpendicular, and his Covering was green moss and Turf.

In addition to these suggestive descriptions, the *Edinburgh Register House Ms* also makes the cryptic statement that the candidate was “frightened” by certain ceremonies. Could these have included the discovery of a corpse or grave?

A Hiramic legend may have been in use by 1723, as his prominence was emphasized in Rev. Anderson’s *Constitutions* which referred to “HIRAM, or HURAM, the most accomplish’d Mason on Earth,” as well as “the inspired HIRAM ABIFF [who] was *Master of Work.*” Although the first edition of the *Constitutions* omits any reference to Hiram’s death, the second edition (1738) mentioned “the sudden Death of their dear Master HIRAM ABBIF, whom they decently interr’d in the Lodge near the Temple, according to ancient Usage.” If the premiere Grand Lodge expressed any preference for the Hiramic legend over that of Noah, it may have favored ritual uniformity as well as stronger ties to Solomon’s Temple, the most sacred building project in the Bible. Be that as it may, the Noachite legend succumbed to the legend of Hiram Abif, and commonalities were merged into the version which was presented in *Masonry Dissected*:



“Plan of the Lodge for the Reception of a Master” From *L’Ordre des Franc-Maçons Trahi* (1745). This diagram helps us understand the meaning of passing “from the square to the compasses,” as well as the purpose of the Master’s steps—each of which was fraught with peril. The former word of a Master Mason and a sprig of acacia adorn the grave, which is surrounded by tears.

39. “A Mason’s Examination, 1723,” in Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* (1963), p. 74.

Ex. How was *Hiram* raised?

R. As all other Masons are, when they receive the Master's Word.

Ex. How is that?

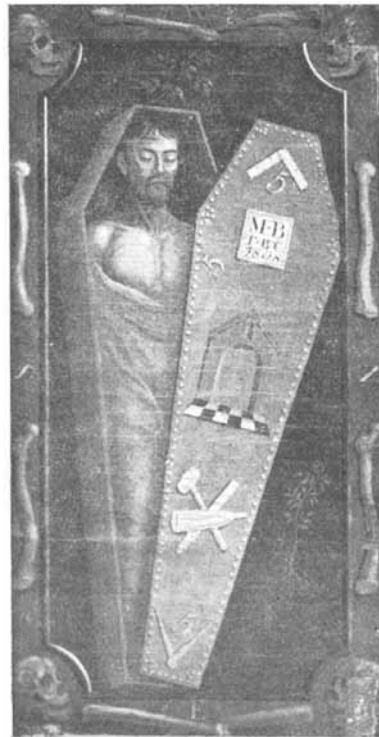
R. By the Five Points of Fellowship.

Ex. What are they? Hand to Hand <sup>1</sup>, Foot to Foot <sup>2</sup>, Cheek to Cheek <sup>3</sup>, Knee to Knee <sup>4</sup>, and Hand in Back <sup>5</sup>.

N.B. *When Hiram was taken up, they took him by the Fore-fingers, and the Skin came off, which is called the Slip; the spreading the Right Hand and placing the middle Finger to the Wrist, clasping the Fore-finger and the Fourth to the Sides of the Wrist; is called the Gripe, and the Sign is placing the Thumb of the Right Hand to the Left Breast, extending the Fingers.*

It should also be noted that both Noah and Hiram are mentioned in the Old Charges, which also included additional material that likely inspired the legends of other “high degrees.” The second oldest of these, the *Cook Ms* (ca. 1420), includes the first Masonic allusion to Hiram, stating: “And the son of the king of Tyre was his master mason.”

**A tracing board for the Third Degree,** painted by John Cole in 1808, and used by the Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity, No. 261, Taunton, England. Compared with the illustration on the previous page, we can see that the square and compasses occupy the same relative positions, although the ruffian's tools adorn the coffin, as do a depiction of the sanctum sanctorum, and hints at the secrets of a Master Mason. The three numerals '5' represent fifteen Fellowcrafts mentioned in the Hiram legend. A sprig of acacia lies beside the coffin, and emblems of mortality adorn the scene. —From *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 75 (1962).



### The lodge, the mop, and the pail

In early days Freemasons did not own private lodge buildings as we do today. Our early Brethren assembled in any convenient room where they could privately meet to work—quite often above taverns (the social halls of the day), or in private residences. Any furniture was removed, exposing the floorboards, and a dia-



gram of the “lodge” was then drawn on the ground using chalk or charcoal.<sup>40</sup> The lodge was a drawing (a type of tracing-board) displaying the working tools, and other necessary items. Members stood around its border during initiations, and while the symbols were explained. At the conclusion of the meeting the youngest Entered Apprentice used a mop and pail to clean up the floor.

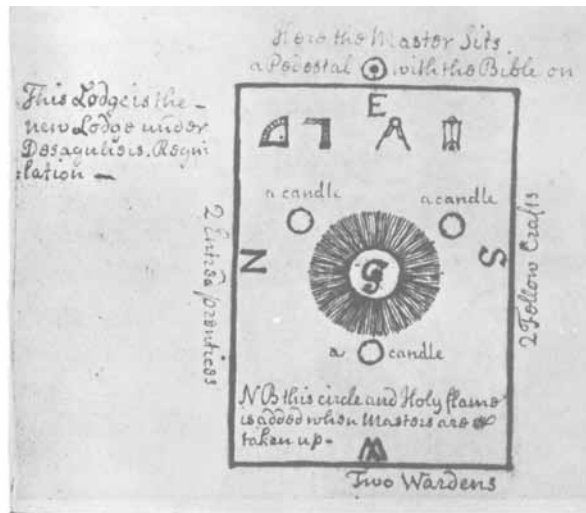


**William Hogarth's *Night*** (1738) depicts the miseries of London life in the early days of the Grand Lodge of England. A Master of the lodge, wearing his jewel and apron, is accompanied by a Tyler, who carries a lamp and sword. On the extreme right is a figure, with his back turned, holding up a mop, which was used to wash the floor of the lodge after the meeting. —Collection of the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.

The mock advertisement, *Antediluvian Masonry* (1726), mentioned some of the “innovations” introduced by the premiere Grand Lodge, including “Tape, Jacks, Moveable Letters, Blazing Stars, &c., to the great Indignity of the Mop and Pail.” The lodge was no longer just drawn upon a floor; physical objects were added, as well as new symbols. A description and drawing of this “new Lodge under Desaguliers Regulation” appeared in *A Dialogue Between Simon and Philip* (ca. 1740), an early Masonic exposé:

40. This may help explain why chalk, charcoal, and clay are alluded to in many Craft rituals today.

The Sun, The Moon and the Master Is three large candles in large wooden Candlesticks carv'd in all the Orders and plac'd in a Triangular form upon the Lodge. The Lodge's as Contra is commonly made, with white tape nail'd to the Floor round as you see the letters E for East and S for South &c. are made of thin Silver or Tin very thin, And likewise the letter G at the top in the now constituted Lodge's is a Quadrant, a Square, a pair of Compasses and Plum line placed at the top of the Lodge. The Officers of the Lodge stand upright in their proper places with their Right foot making a Square upon their Left their left hand hanging down in a perpendicular line their right hand upon their left Breast making a Square with their Fingers and Thumb, with their white Aprons on, And Gloves stich't on their right side. This is the Posture and great sign that will fetch any Mason from the top of a House, and is call'd the Posture of a MASON.<sup>41</sup>



**“The new Lodge under Desaguliers Regulation.”** From *A Dialogue Between Simon and Philip* (ca. 1740). —Photo from *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 57 (1946)

Twenty years later *The Three Distinct Knocks* (1760), another exposé, included a diagram of the lodge, explaining that it is “generally done with Chalk, or Charcoal on the Floor,” while the mop and pail were needed to “wash it out.” It added that “some Lodges use Tape and little Nails to form the same Thing.”<sup>42</sup> The figure of the lodge only remained upon the floor until the candidate received his obligation, “Then a Table is put in the Place where this Figure was,

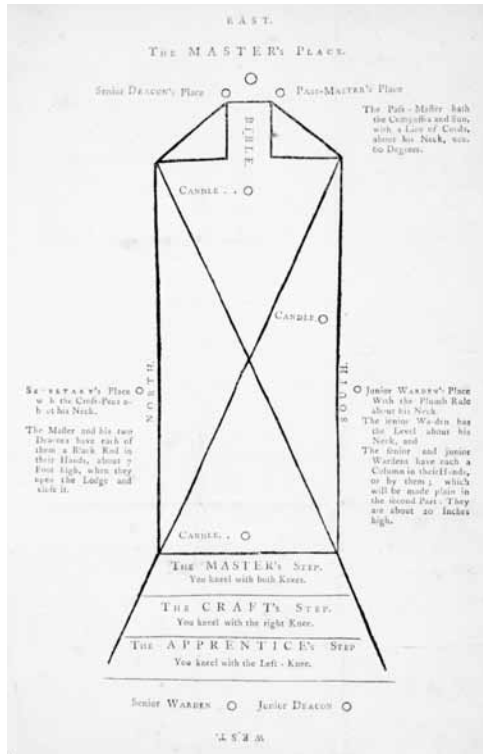
41. “Dialogue Between Simon and Philip, ca. 1740,” in Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* (1963), pp. 175-81. Knoop and Jones made a more detailed study which appears in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 57 (1949), pp. 3-21. The illustration appears between pages 10 and 11.

42. *The Three Distinct Knocks, Or the Door of the Most Antient Free-Masonry* (London: H. Srjeant, 1760), pp. 9-10.

and they all sit around it; but every Man sitteth in the same Place as he stood before the Figure was washed out, viz the Master in the East, the Senior Warden in the West &c.” Two years later, *Jachin and Boaz* (1762) confirmed that the drawing on the floor, made with chalk and charcoal, was “the most antient Custom.” It further noted that “the New-made Mason ... must take a Mop from a Pail of Water, and wash it out. In some Lodges they use red Tape and Nails to form it, which prevents any Mark or Stain on the Floor, as with Chalk.”<sup>43</sup>

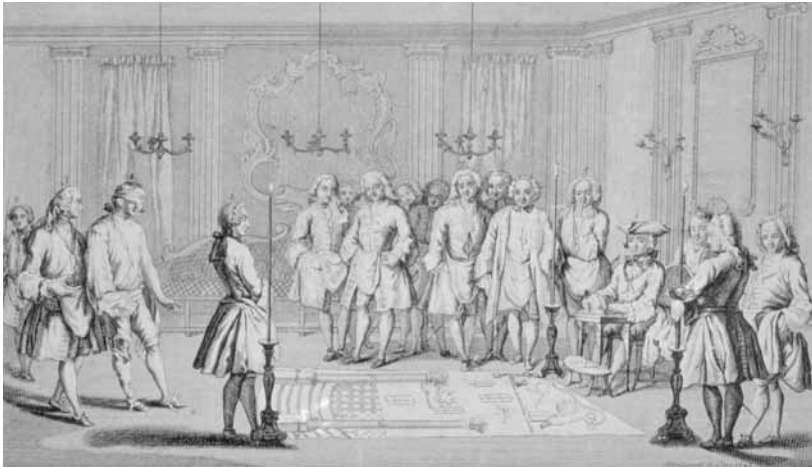
In time the design ceased to be applied directly to the floor, and was sketched or painted upon canvas or other cloth; and eventually, it was woven into carpets. The portable design permitted the quick formation of the lodge, around which the Brethren continued to assemble, as seen in the early French engraving below and right.

The early catechisms and exposés help us to understand how Freemasonry evolved, as well as why there are ritual differences today. Some jurisdictions have retained older practices while others modernized and harmonized them. For example, early Freemasons also held lodge meetings around a table. The candidate was introduced and conducted around the backs of the members during his initiation. At the appropriate time, a tracing board could be laid on the table to represent the degree which was being worked, and its symbols could be explained. This arrangement explains an artifact retained by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, but not seen elsewhere in the United States. During the initiation ceremony the three principal officers leave their stations and stand around the altar in their proper positions. The candidate is then conducted around the body of the open Lodge and behind the officers’ backs, *as if they were seated at a table*.

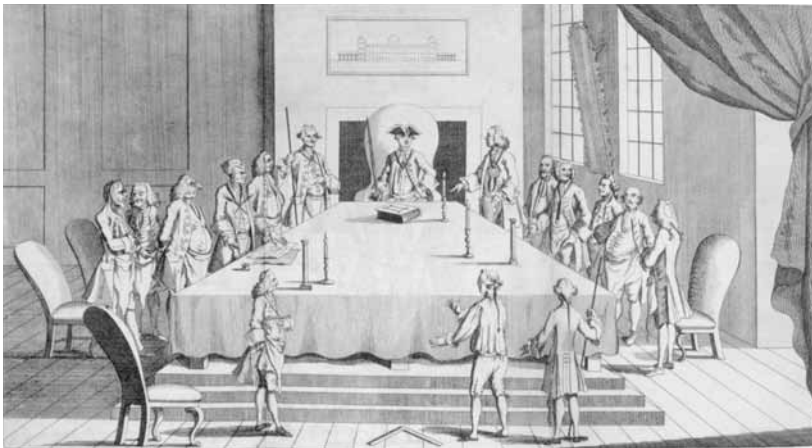


A drawing of “the lodge” from *The Three Distinct Knocks* (1760). As soon as the obligation had been taken this figure was washed out, and a table was put in its place.

43. *Jachin and Boaz; Or, and Authentic Key to the Door of Free-Masonry* (London: W. Nicholl, 1762), between pages 8 and 9.



***Assembly of Freemasons for the Reception of the Apprentice*** (1745). Prior to the existence of private lodge buildings the necessary symbols were depicted on cloth which was placed on the floor of a convenient room. Officers and members assembled around its border to constitute the lodge. These drawings are the ancestors of tracing-boards. —Collection of the author



***The Ceremony of Making a Free-Mason from Hiram; or The Grand Master-Key to the Door of Both Antient and Modern Free-Masonry*** 2d ed. (London, 1766). With the officers and members assembled at a table, the candidate was circumambulated around their backs. The form of modern lodge rooms was influenced by this arrangement. Notice how the three steps before the table, the candles, and the small pillars, correspond closely to the diagram from *The Three Distinct Knocks* (1760). —Collection of the author

### Significant words and passwords

We previously saw that the “Mason Word” was a term embodying the sum of the private modes of recognition (the catechism, words, grips and signs). The earliest descriptions of ritual indicated that the words “Boaz” and “Jachin,” the names of the pillars at Solomon’s Temple, were among the chief modes of recognition. However, the *Sloane Ms 3329* (ca. 1700) assigned a new word to the Masters (senior Fellow Crafts). Beginning in the Eighteenth Century this new word appears in several permutations:

<i>Maha-Byn</i>	( <i>Sloane Ms</i> , c.1700)
<i>Matchpin</i>	( <i>Trinity College, Dublin Ms</i> , 1711)
<i>Maughbin</i>	( <i>A Mason’s Examination</i> , 1723)
<i>Magboe and boe</i>	( <i>The Whole Institutions of Free-Masons Opened</i> , 1725)
<i>Machbenah</i>	( <i>Masonry Dissected</i> , 1730)
<i>Mag Binach</i>	(John Coustos to the Portuguese Inquisition, 1743)
<i>Macbenac</i>	( <i>Catechisme des Franc-Maçons</i> , 1744)
<i>Mak-benak</i>	( <i>L’Ordre des Franc-Maçons Trahi</i> , 1745)
<i>Mahhabone</i>	( <i>Three Distinct Knocks</i> , 1760)
<i>Mahhabone or Macbenack</i>	( <i>Jachin and Boaz</i> , 1762)
<i>Mahhabone or Macbenac</i>	( <i>Shibboleth</i> , 1765)

The original word, as well as its meaning (if it had one), is lost. However, *The Whole Institutions of Free-Masons Opened* stated that “*Magboe and Boe* signifies Marrow in the Bone.”<sup>44</sup> The attentive reader may recall that the phrase “marrow in this bone” also appeared in the *Graham Ms* (1726), and the avid reader may note that one hundred years later William Morgan’s exposé, *Illustrations of Masonry by One of the Fraternity* (1826), asserted that the substitute for the Master’s word “signifies marrow in the bone.”<sup>45</sup> Although it is not connected to any unique word, it is interesting to note that the Grand Lodges of New Hampshire and Texas use the phrase “strength in the sinew and marrow in the bone.”<sup>46</sup> However, the exposé *Three Distinct Knocks* (1760) provided an entirely different meaning. It asserted that “Mahhabone ... signifies rotten, or decayed almost to the Bone.” It is possible that, acting as a memory device, the sound of this “word” suggested the several “bone” interpretations.

Among the interpretations offered by other rituals are “the death of the builder” and “the builder is smitten.” Interestingly, “Machbenah,” the fifth word in the

44. “The Whole Institutions of Free-Masons Opened (1725),” in Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* (1963), p. 88.

45. Morgan’s exposure appears in full in Arturo de Hoyos, *Light on Masonry: The History and Rituals of America’s Most Important Masonic Exposé* (Washington, D.C.: Scottish Rite Research Society, 2008), pp. 233–306.

46. This is reminiscent of Proverbs 3:5-8, which says that trust in the Lord “shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”

above list, is a Hebrew name found in 1 Chronicles 2:49, which was defined in the *Barker Bible* (1580) as meaning “the smiting of the builder.” Further interpretations of these words include “the flesh falls from the bones,” “the corpse is rotten,” and “he lives in the son.”<sup>47</sup> Albert Pike divided the word into two Hebrew words, “*Makh-ba*, [which means] covering, concealment, hiding place,” and “*Nakah*, [which means] struck, smitten, wounded, struck down, killed”; hence, “מַחְבֵּאת הַמְּרוּצֵחַ, *Makhbenak*, the place of concealment of the murdered one; i.e. the place where the body of the murdered one was hidden.”<sup>48</sup>

The earliest ritual use of passwords is found in the French exposé *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi et Le Secret des Mopses Révélé* [The Order of the Free Masons Betrayed and the Secret of the Mopses Revealed] (1745). It explained that their introduction was a guard against the imposition of bogus “Brethren”:

Q. What is the *Password* of an Apprentice?

A. Tubalcain.

Q. That of the Fellow?

A. Schibboleth.

Q. And that of the Master?

A. *R[e]ply*. of *M[aster]*. Giblim.

These three Passwords are scarcely used except in France, & at Frankfurt on Main. They are in the nature of *Watchwords*, introduced as a surer safeguard [when dealing] with Brethren whom they do not know....<sup>49</sup>

As with other aspects of the ritual, the grips (tokens), symbolic penalties and obligations also evolved. Descriptions of the grips differ, and originally, there may have been just one symbolic penalty. The *Edinburgh Register House Ms* (1696) stated that the “The first [point] is to heill and conceall, second under no less pain, which is then cutting your throat, For you must make that sign when you say that.” When *The Mystery of Free-Masonry* was published in 1730, we find *one obligation which included three separate penalties*. They were divided by the time *Three Distinct Knocks* (1760) appeared, which gives three separate obligations (one for each degree), each with its own penalty.

Numerous other examples of ritual divergence and evolution could be cited.

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47. The original importance and significance of the word is not known. Yet *The Whole Institutions of Free-Masons Opened* (1725) provides the first suggestion that it may have been a substitute, stating that “the primitive Word” was “I am, and *Johovah* is the answer to it.” This hints at a tradition resembling later forms of the Master Mason Degree, as well as that which evolved into the Royal Arch Degree.

48. Albert Pike, *The Book of the Words* (1879; reprint ed., Washington, D.C.: Scottish Rite Research Society, 1999), p. 92.

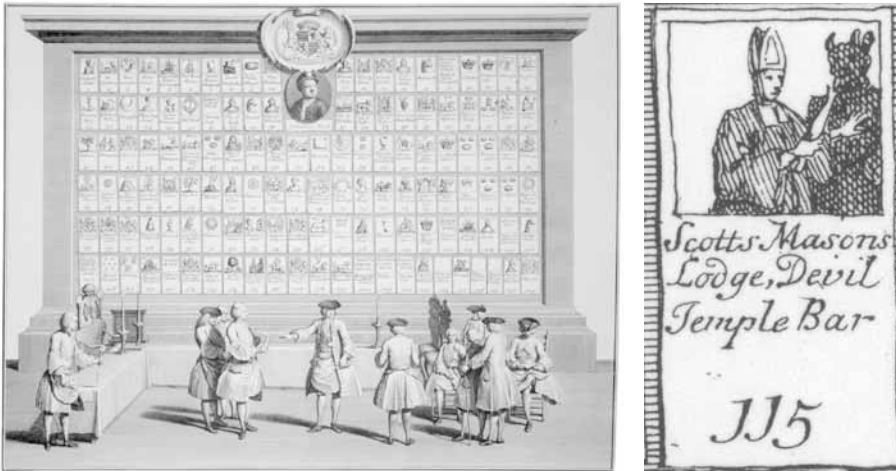
49 Harry Carr, ed., *The Early French Exposures 1737–1751* (London: Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, 1971), p. 267.

An interesting example can be seen when considering the representatives of the “Lesser Lights.” Recall that *A Dialogue Between Simon and Philip* (ca. 1740) mentioned “large wooden Candlesticks carv’d in all the Orders.” Today, Masonic rites continue to require three lights, but they differ greatly in appearance. Some are mere candlesticks or “burning tapers”; others are small candlesticks resembling miniature pillars; and yet others are large, ornate pillars each formed to resemble one of the Orders of Architecture, with each bearing a candle (or light) on top. Finally, some lodges simply use modern electric lights which are set in a triangular form, or extend from a three-armed candelabrum.

### The High Degrees and “Scotch Masons’ Lodges”

When we consider the creation of the Master Mason’s Degree, the first “high degree” added to Craft Masonry, it is a remarkable fact that high degree Masonry is virtually as old as Speculative Freemasonry itself. Other high degrees also followed quickly on the footsteps of the Master Mason’s Degree. As early as 1733 a reference to a “Scotch Masons’ Lodge” appeared in a manuscript list of lodges by Dr. Richard Rawlinson,<sup>50</sup> and the following year it was again mentioned in a printed list of Masonic Bodies.

The early designations “Scotts,” “Scotch,” and “Scottish” refer to a *type* of Masonry practiced, rather than referring to native Scotsmen. Thus, we read that



**Scotts Masons Lodge, No. 115**, which met at the Devil (Tavern), Temple Bar, London, first appeared as “Scotch Masons’ Lodge” in Dr. Richard Rawlinson’s 1733 manuscript list of lodges. It continued to appear in engraved lists of lodges, like that seen above, until 1736. —Details of “Les Free-Massons” from Bernard Picart, *Cerérimones et costumes religieuses de tous les peuple du monde* (1735). — Collection of the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.

50. See *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 1 (1886–88), p. 167.

from 1733–40 the “Scotch Master Masons” Degree was being conferred on “normal” Master Masons. For instance, on July 18, 1740, at the Lodge at the Rummer, Bristol, it was “Order’d & agreed That Bro. Tomson & Bro. Watts & any other member of this L[odge]. that are already Master Masons may be made Scotch Master...”<sup>51</sup> By 1734–35 additional degrees were invented, two of which were the “Excellent Mason” and “Grand Mason.” These early “Scotts” (or Scottish) Degrees are ancestors of the Scottish Rite in both name and tradition, and represent a type of Masonry almost as old as the Master Mason’s Degree. The tradition of “Scotts” (or Scottish) Masonry is the second oldest type of high degree Masonry known, even surpassing the antiquity of the Royal Arch Degree.<sup>52</sup>

**French *haut grades* Masonry:**

**Stephen Morin and the Order of the Royal Secret**

If the high degrees originated in Britain they flourished in France. In 1732 an English Lodge, appropriately named *Loge L’Anglaise*, was founded in Bordeaux, France. This Lodge was later chartered by the English Modern Grand Lodge and still exists today. An early offshoot of *Loge L’Anglaise* was the *Loge la Française* which, as the name implies, was French. The latter Lodge had a penchant for the so-called *hauts grades* (high degrees), then coming into vogue, and it founded *Loge Parfaite Harmonie* in 1743. Étienne (Stephen) Morin, who would become important in the history of high degree Masonry, was among the founders of *Loge Parfaite Harmonie*.

The book *Le Parfait Maçon*, published in 1744, has particular relevance to the development of high degree Freemasonry. In a section on the “Secret of the Scottish Masons” (*Secret des maçons ecossaise*) it introduces another direct ancestor of the high degrees, whose theme remains the basis for the Scottish Rite’s 15° Knight of the East, and 16° Prince of Jerusalem:

It is said among the Masons, that there are still several degrees above that of the masters, of which I have just spoken; some say there are six in all, & others go up to seven. Those called *Escossais* [*Scottish*] *Masons* claim that they form the fourth grade. As this Masonry, different from the others in many ways, is beginning to become known in France, the Public will not be annoyed if I relate what I have read about it ... which seems to give the *Escossais* a degree of superiority above the Apprentices, Fellows, & ordinary Masters.

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51. Eric Ward, “Early Masters’ Lodges and their Relation to Degrees,” *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 75 (1962), p. 131.

52. On Scots Masonry and the early high degrees see J. Fairbairn Smith, “A Commentary. D’Assigny’s Enquiry—Serious, Impartial” in Fifield D’Assigny, *A Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the Cause of the Present Decay of Free-Masonry in the Kingdom of Ireland* (Bloomington, IL: Masonic Book Club, 1974); Alain Bernheim, “Did Early ‘High’ or Écossais Degrees Originate in France?” in *Heredom* 5 (1996), pp. 87–113.



Instead of weeping over the ruin of the temple of Solomon, as their brethren do, the *Escossais* are concerned with rebuilding it.

Everyone knows that after seventy years of captivity in Babylon, the Great Cyrus permitted the Israelites to rebuild the temple & the City of Jerusalem; that Zerubabel, of the House of David, was appointed by him [Cyrus] the Chief & leader of that people for their return to the Holy City; that the first stone of the temple was laid during the reign of Cyrus, but that it was not completed until the sixth year of that of Darius, King of the Persians.

It is from this great event that the *Escossais* derive the epoch of their institution, & although they are later than the other Masons by several centuries, they consider themselves of a superior grade.<sup>53</sup>

At this early period the French Masonic strongholds were in Bordeaux and Paris. On August 27, 1761, the French Grand Lodge at Paris (the Grand and Sovereign Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem), acting with a body of the superior degrees (the Council of the Emperors of the East and West, Sovereign Écossais Mother Lodge), issued a patent to Morin as a Grand Inspector, “authorizing and empowering him to establish perfect and sublime Masonry in all parts of the world.”

Around 1763 Morin created and promulgated a Masonic rite of twenty-five degrees which he called the “Order of the Royal Secret” or “Order of Prince of the Royal Secret” (sometimes mistakenly called the “Rite of Perfection”). This Order included many of the most popular degrees worked at the time. Although it was once commonly believed that the Council of the Emperors of the East and West created the Order of the Royal Secret, recent research suggests that Morin was personally responsible for its organization.<sup>54</sup> There is also compelling evidence that, to bolster his authority, he created and backdated documents known as the *Constitutions and Regulations of 1762*—an act that was not discovered for over 220 years.

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53. The complete text of *Le Parfait Maçon* is translated in Harry Carr, *The Early French Exposures 1737–1751* (London: Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, 1971), pp. 157–200.

54. For arguments favoring the view that Morin forged his authority, see Alain Bernheim, “Une découverte étonnante concernant les Constitutions de 1762,” *Renaissance Traditionnelle* No. 59 (July 1984), pp. 161–97; A. C. F. Jackson, “The Authorship of the 1762 Constitutions of the Ancient and Accepted Rite,” *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 79 (1984), pp. 176–91. A. C. F. Jackson, *Rose Croix: A History of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales* rev. & enl. (London: Lewis Masonic, 1980, 1987), pp. 46–54. For the opposite view see Jean-Pierre Lassalle, “From the Constitutions and Regulations of 1762 to the Grand Constitutions of 1786,” in *Heredom* 2 (1993), pp. 57–88.

**The Degrees of Stephen Morin's  
"Order of the Royal Secret"<sup>55</sup>**

- 4° Secret Master
- 5° Perfect Master
- 6° Perfect M[aste]r by Curiosity, or Intimate Secretary
- 7° Provost & Judge, or Irish Master
- 8° Intendant of the Buildings, or M[aste]r in Israel[.] Many French Lodges, called this degree, Scotch M[aste]r of the three J. J. J.
- 9° Chapter of Master Elected of Nine
- 10° Illustrious Elected of 15
- 11° A chapter called Sublime Knights Elected
- 12° Grand Master Architect
- 13° Royal Arch
- 14° Perfection[.] The Ultimate of Symbolic Masonry
- 15° Council of Kn[igh]ts of the East or Sword
- 16° Grand Council of the Illustrious & most valiant Princes of Jerusalem
- 17° Knights of the East & West
- 18° Knights of the white Eagle or Pelican, known by the name of perfect Mason, or knight of the Rose Cross
- 19° Sublime Scotch Masonry, Called by the name of Gr[an]d Pontif
- 20° Venerable gr[an]d M[aste]r of all Symbolic lodges, Sovereign princes of masonry, or M[aste]r *ad vitam*
- 21° Prussian Kn[igh]t or Noachite, In Two Degrees—otherwise Called, The Masonic Key
- 22° Knights of the Royal Ax—or the Gr[an]d Patriarchs By the Name of Princes of Libanon
- 23° The Key of Masonry[.] Philosophical Lodge of the Kn[igh]ts of Eagle, or Sun
- 24° Chapter of Grand Inspector of Lodges, Grand Elected Knights of *Kadoch*, Now by the Title of Knights of the white & black Eagle
- 25° The Royal Secret, or the knights of St Andrews, and the Faithful guardians of the Sacred Treasure

About 1763 Morin introduced the Order of the Royal Secret to Kingston, Jamaica, and by 1764 high degrees were brought to North American soil, when they were established in New Orleans, Louisiana. About this time Morin empowered an enthusiastic Dutch Mason, Henry Andrew Francken, to establish Masonic Bodies throughout the New World, including the United States. Francken soon

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55. The titles are here taken from the 1783 *Francken Manuscript*. Other documents may include minor differences.

sailed to New York, and in 1767 he began to confer the high degrees in Albany. Fortunately, he also transcribed several manuscript copies of the rituals of the Order of the Royal Secret, some of which survive today. These copies are known as the *Francken Manuscripts*.<sup>56</sup>

On December 6, 1768, Francken appointed Moses Michael Hays (or Hayes), of Dutch parentage, a Deputy Inspector General of the Rite, for the West Indies and North America. The Hays patent granted authority to confer all the Degrees of Morin's Order of the Royal Secret.

The following year Francken returned to Jamaica, and by 1780 Hays immigrated to Newport, Rhode Island. In 1781, Hays traveled to Philadelphia where he met with eight Brethren whom he appointed Deputy Inspectors General over given American States, with the exception of Samuel Myers who presided over the Leeward Islands in the West Indies (French Polynesia) in the Caribbean. Bar-end Moses Spitzer, one of the Deputy Inspectors General, lived in Charleston from 1770 to 1781 and moved to Philadelphia where he was appointed Deputy for Georgia and, after traveling briefly abroad, returned to Charleston by 1788. On April 2, 1795, Spitzer appointed the Irish-born John Mitchell, then living in Charleston, a Deputy Inspector General of the Order of the Royal Secret. Colonel Mitchell had served as Deputy Quartermaster General of the Continental Army, and was an acquaintance of George Washington.

### **Birth of the Scottish Rite: Charleston, May 31, 1801**

On May 24, 1801, John Mitchell created the Reverend Frederick Dalcho (a Prussian, born in London) a Deputy Inspector General of the Order of the Royal Secret, and one week later, on May 31, "the Supreme Council of the 33d Degree for the United States of America, was opened ... agreeably to the Grand Constitutions" in Charleston, South Carolina, with Col. Mitchell and Rev. Dalcho presiding. The Supreme Council was a superior system to Morin's Order of the Royal Secret; it administered thirty-three degrees, including all twenty-five of Morin's rite.

The traditional authority of the Supreme Council stems from the "Grand Constitution of the 33d degree" (also *Grand Constitutions of 1786*), ostensibly ratified by Frederick II ("the Great"), King of Prussia.<sup>57</sup> The earliest known copy dates from about 1801–02, and is written in Rev. Dalcho's hand. Its eighteen articles are preceded by the title "Constitution, Statutes, Regulations &c. for the Gov-

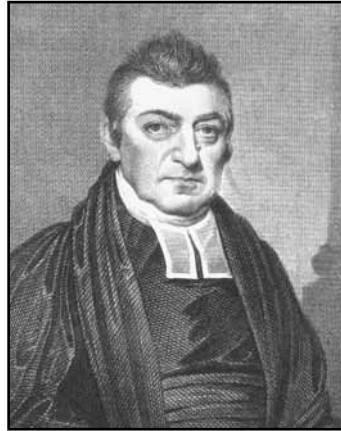
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56. The most complete copy is the 1783 *Francken Ms*, owned by the Supreme Council, 33°, N.M.J.

57. For copies of these documents see Albert Pike, *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. The Constitutions and Regulations of 1762. Statutes and Regulations of Perfection, and Other Degrees. Vera Instituta Secreta et Fundamenta Ordinis of 1786. The Secret Constitutions of the 33d Degree* (New York: Masonic Publishing Co., A.M. 5632 [1872]; New Edition Printed by J. J. Little, &c., 5664 [1904]; reprint ed. Np., n.d.)



**Col. John Mitchell**, once Deputy Quartermaster General of the Revolutionary Army, was the first Grand Commander of the Supreme Council. —Collection of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.



**Rev. Frederick Dalcho** was the first Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Supreme Council. His Thirty-third Degree patent is earliest known. —Collection of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.

ernment of the Supreme Council of Inspectors General of the 33<sup>rd</sup> and for the Government of all Councils under their Jurisdiction.”<sup>58</sup> The *Circular throughout two Hemispheres*, or “1802 Manifesto” (the first printed document issued by the Supreme Council), also asserted that Frederick the Great instigated its creation:

On the 1st of May, 5786 [1786], the Grand Constitution of the 33d degree, called the Supreme Council of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, was finally ratified by his Majesty the King of Prussia, who as Grand Commander of the order of Prince of the Royal Secret, possessed the Sovereign Masonic power over all the Craft. In the new Constitution this high Power was conferred on a Supreme Council of nine Brethren in each Nation, who possess all the Masonic prerogatives in their own district, that this majesty individually possessed; *and are Sovereigns of Masonry*.

The involvement of Frederick II, King of Prussia, was repeated in the “History” which was delivered in the original Thirty-third Degree ritual:

The Most Puissant Grand Sovereign—Grand Master Commander in Chief—Sovereign of Sovereigns of the degree of Prince of the Royal Secret, was our Illustrious brother, Frederick the 2:<sup>nd</sup> King of Prussia. He established this degree, in concert with our brother, his Serene Highness, Louis of Bour-

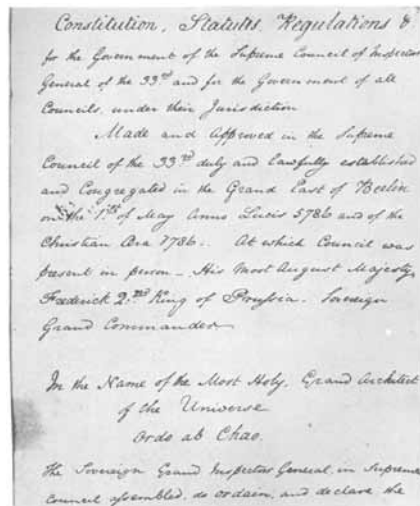
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58. A complete photographic facsimile appears in James D. Carter, ed., R. Baker Harris, *History of the Supreme Council, 33° (Mother Council of the World) Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. 1801–1861* (Washington, D.C.: The Supreme Council, 33°), pp. 337–46.

bon, Prince of the Blood Royal of France, and other Illustrious characters, who had received the degrees of K.H. and prince of the Royal Secret....

This new Degree he called “Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, or Supreme Council of the 33<sup>rd</sup>”<sup>59</sup>

Like Morin’s *Constitutions and Regulations of 1762*, many modern Masonic historians view the *Grand Constitutions of 1786* as “traditional” rather than historical documents. After a detailed investigation into its possible origins, Albert Pike accepted the tradition regarding the king’s involvement, and his reputed role in the creation of the Supreme Council, even though there was no direct evidence that he did so. Pike did correctly argue, however, that whatever the origin, the formal adoption of any law forms a legal basis for government. Modern opinion agrees with the latter, and maintains that, at a minimum, the stories regarding the origins of the Constitutions of 1762 and 1786 are akin to the legends preserved in the Old Charges, providing a traditional environment for the degrees, just as the Biblical account of King Solomon’s Temple forms the symbolic setting for Craft Freemasonry’s origins.



**Frederick the Great** (initiated in 1738), “Protector of Masons in the Grand National Mother Lodge of the Three Globes,” was the reputed authority behind the *Grand Constitutions of 1786*. —Photo, Wikipedia Commons

The earliest known copies of the “Constitution, Statutes, Regulations” or *Grand Constitutions of 1786*, are in the handwriting of Rev. Frederick Dalcho (ca. 1801–02). —Collection of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.

59. “33<sup>rd</sup> Degree Called, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, or Supreme Council of the 33<sup>rd</sup>” [folios 20r, 22r]. Unpublished manuscript in the handwriting of Frederick Dalcho, ca. 1801–02, with emendations made ca. 1804. Copy in the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., Washington, D.C.

### Scope and authority of the early Supreme Council

The “Supreme Council at Charleston,” as it was sometimes called, was the first Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree in world. It continues to exist today as the Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, and its see remains in Charleston, although its residence was moved to Washington, D.C., about 1870, and it now sits at the House of the Temple. As the premiere Supreme Council it naturally exercised authority over the entire country, and Col. Mitchell was referred to as “Grand Commander in the U[nited]. States of America,”<sup>60</sup> as well as “President of the Supreme Council of Masons of the United States.”<sup>61</sup> As we shall see later on, a little more than a decade later the Supreme Council at Charleston would create a second Supreme Council in the United States.

In its early days the Supreme Council issued “warrants of Constitution” to create Sublime Grand Lodges of Perfection (which administered the 4°-14°), and Grand Councils of Princes of Jerusalem (administering the 15°-16°), but it did not involve itself directly in their government or administration. The Supreme Council only exercised direct control above the 17° Knight of the East and West. This was explained in the *Circular throughout two Hemispheres* as well as Dalcho’s manuscript copy of the *Grand Constitutions of 1786*:

[Article] 6<sup>th</sup>

The power of the Supreme Council does not interfere with any degree below the 17<sup>th</sup> or Knights of the East and West. But every Council and Lodge of Perfect Masons are hereby required to acknowledge them in quality of inspectors General, and to receive them with the high honors ~~due them~~ to which they are entitled.

This limitation was repeated in the original manuscript ritual of the Thirty-third Degree:

The King on the first of May 5786, formed and established the 33:<sup>rd</sup> Degree to give some elucidations of the K.H.—

The King was ~~also~~ conscious, that agreeably [sic] to the common course of human ~~events~~ <sup>nature</sup>, he could not live many years; & he conceived and executed the glorious design of investing the Sovereign Masonic power which he held, as Sovereign Grand Commander of the order of Prince of the Royal Secret—in a Council of Grand Inspectors General—that they might, after his decease, regulate, agreeably [sic] to the Constitution and Statutes which he then formed, the government of the Craft in every degree, from the 17:<sup>th</sup> or Knights of the East & West inclusive, leaving the control over the symbolic Lodge—the Grand, Ineffable and Sublime Lodge of Perfect Masons, and the

60. See the *Circular throughout two Hemispheres*, Appendix 1.

61. Frederick Dalcho, *An Oration Delivered in the Sublime Grand Lodge, in Charleston, South-Carolina, on the 23d of September, 5801* (Charleston, S.C.: T. B. Bowen, [1801]), p. [ii]; reprinted in *Orations of the Illustrious Brother Frederick Dalcho Esqr. M.D.* (Dublin: John King Westmoreland, 1808)

Knights of the East or sword—to the Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem, whom he conceived to be justly entitled to that Honor and power.<sup>62</sup>

According to the *Circular throughout two Hemispheres*, at the time of the Supreme Council's creation, the 30°, 31°, and 32° collectively constituted the Degree of "Prince of the Royal Secret, Prince of Masons." This means that only fifteen degrees were under direct control of the Supreme Council. The government of the entire system, from the 4° Secret Master, to the 32° Royal Secret inclusive, was not assumed until after the revival of American Freemasonry in the 1840s, following the "Morgan Affair."<sup>63</sup> Although not previously exercised, the authority to govern the entire system resided with the officers of the Supreme Council, who were "Sovereigns of Masonry," and "possessed the Sovereign Masonic power over all the Craft."

The high degrees were often referred to as the Ineffable and Sublime (or Superior) Degrees. In the earliest days of the Scottish Rite the high degrees were only conferred on Past Masters, or virtual Past Masters, of Blue Lodges. Frederick Dalcho's 4° Secret Master ritual (dated 1801), noted, "The Blue Past Master or Candidate, must be examined in the Antechamber (by the Master of Ceremonies) in his three first degrees, and in the secrets of the Chair"; and the *Circular throughout two Hemispheres* explained that Sublime Masons "communicate the secrets of the Chair to such applicants who have not already received it, previous to their initiation into the Sublime Lodge, but they are at the same time informed that it does not give them rank as Past Masters in the Grand Lodge." A similar requirement exists in the American York Rite, where candidates become virtual Past Masters prior to receiving the degree of Royal Arch Mason.

In 1804 Alexandre-Auguste de Grasse-Tilly, a member of the Supreme Council at Charleston, organized a Supreme Council for France. In an agreement made that year between this newly-created Supreme Council and the Grand Orient of France (which operated as a Grand Lodge), the title "Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite" (Rite Ecossais Ancient et Accepté) was used for the first time. Beginning with the administration of Grand Commander Albert Pike in 1859, the name came into general use in the Southern Jurisdiction.

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62. "33<sup>rd</sup> Degree Called, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, or Supreme Council of the 33:<sup>rd</sup>" [folios 21v-22r]. Unpublished manuscript in the handwriting of Frederick Dalcho, ca. 1801-02, with emendations made ca. 1804. Copy in the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., Washington, D.C.

63. In 1826 William Morgan, of New York, disappeared after boasting of his intent to expose Freemasonry's initiation rites. Declared "murdered by the Masons," American society turned anti-Masonic, a sentiment which lasted until ca. 1842. During the "Morgan affair" most Masonic organizations ceased to function, although officers of the Supreme Council continued to meet privately and occasionally conferred the Scottish Rite Degrees. When American Masonry began to reemerge, the Supreme Council rebuilt the infrastructure of high grade Masonry, and exercised more direct control over the entire system, from 4°-32°. For a modern, readable account of the Morgan affair, see Stephen Dafoe, *Morgan: The Scandal that Shook Freemasonry* (New Orleans: Cornerstone Book Pub., 2009).

### The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction—

**Ratified May 21, 1815; Unified May 15, 1867**

Dalcho's copy of the *Constitutions of 1786* permitted "one Council of this Degree, in each Nation or Kingdom in Europe—[and] two in the United States of America, as remote from each other as possible."<sup>64</sup> As a result, the Supreme Council at Charleston created several Supreme Councils around the world, including a second Supreme Council in the United States, which was established between 1813 and 1815, and later reorganized in 1867.

On May 1, 1813, Emanuel De La Motta, 33°, Treasurer General of the Supreme Council at Charleston, initiated J. J. J. Gourgas and Sampson Simson into the Thirty-third Degree.<sup>65</sup> Then, on August 5, De La Motta, acting as Grand Commander in a "special sitting," initiated four others and "The Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree for the Northern Masonic District and Jurisdiction" was organized, with New York Governor (and later Vice President) Daniel D. Tompkins as Grand Commander. On May 21, 1814, this Supreme Council reopened and proceeded to "nominate, elect, appoint, install and proclaim, in due, legal and ample form" the elected officers "as forming the *second* Grand and Supreme Council..." Finally, the charter of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (written January 7, 1815 in Gourgas's hand) added, "We think the *Ratification* ought to be dated 21<sup>st</sup> day May 5815."<sup>66</sup>

The reason for the creation of the Supreme Council, 33°, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (NMJ), was to combat a bogus "Supreme Council" previously created by Joseph Cerneau, a French Mason living in New York City. Prior to immigrating to

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64. Alterations to Dalcho's copy of the *Constitutions of 1786* reveal that it was copied from an earlier draft. It is possible that the original version (which no longer exists) allowed only one Supreme Council per nation or kingdom, as is stated in the *Circular throughout two hemispheres*: "In the new Constitution this high Power was conferred on a Supreme Council of nine Brethren in each Nation..."

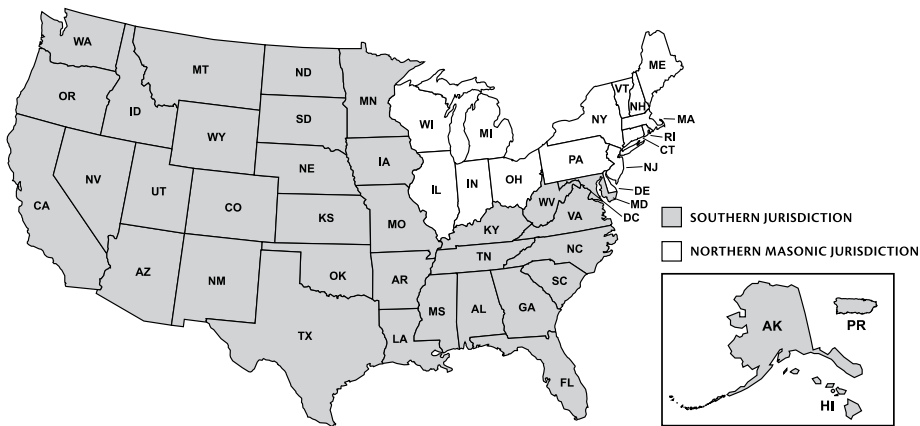
65. J. J. J. Gourgas, and others of his Council, may have irregularly received the 33° as early as 1809, and their initiation into the 33° by Emanuel De La Motta may have been an attempt to "heal" them. In a letter dated January 26, 1830, Gourgas admitted to Holbrook that he had received "The history of the 33d[.] Secret Consit<sup>ns</sup> &c." from France and Kingston, Jamaica. The *Secret Constitutions* were a confidential document delivered *only* to people who had received the 33°. Each recipient of this document signed an oath swearing to keep it secret from anyone who had not received the 33°. This may explain why, years earlier, in a January 17, 1814 letter written by Gourgas, he asked De La Motta, "We should be glad to know what your ideas are *at present* respecting our Recognition in the 33d by your Supreme Council at Charleston, as it would be a very desirable thing to bring it about as soon as possible on account of the peculiar Situation at this Grand East of New York." The letter was signed by Sampson Simson, John G. Tardy, Richard Riker, and J. J. J. Gourgas, *none of them signing as a 33°*, but only as Knights Kadosh, Princes of the Royal Secret, and Deputy Inspectors General, *all titles of the Order of the Royal Secret*.

66. For the documents cited see Charles S. Lobingier, *The Supreme Council, 33°, Mother Council of the World, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.* (Louisville, Ky: The Standard Printing Co., 1931), pp. 60–68. The actual charter, with Gourgas's ratification note, is in the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.



the United States, Cerneau had received a patent for the Order of the Royal Secret, which authorized him to confer the highest degree (25°, Prince of the Royal Secret) on one Mason a year, although it limited his authority to the northern part of Cuba. However, after moving to the United States, he created several Masonic organizations, including a “Supreme Council” in 1813, which was bold enough to imitate the name and seal of the Supreme Council at Charleston. The group was discovered by De La Motta, who was in New York at the time. De La Motta met with Cerneau and asked for proof of his Masonic credentials, but was rebuffed. Cerneau’s members included many prominent regular Masons, who were deceived and continued to believe in their cause. Following an investigation, Cerneau’s activities were denounced as irregular and unlawful, and he was expelled from Freemasonry by the Supreme Council at Charleston.<sup>67</sup> Cerneau’s group denied Charleston’s authority over the Scottish Rite Degrees, and even had the temerity to deny the existence of the Supreme Council at Charleston. In a long and interesting history the regular Scottish Rite Masons in New York continued to battle against Cerneauism, with occasional defections on both sides, until the two bodies reconciled on May 15, 1867, in what is now known as the “Union of 1867.” This resulted in the formation of the current Supreme Council, 33°, NMJ.<sup>68</sup>

In 1827 a territorial agreement was reached between the Supreme Council at Charleston and the Supreme Council, 33°, NMJ, and, at the quarterly meeting of



**The division between the Northern Masonic and Southern Jurisdictions.** The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction comprises fifteen states in the Northeastern United States, the remaining thirty-five belong to the Mother Supreme Council.

67. As “Sovereigns of Masonry,” the Supreme Council believed it had the authority to expel Cerneau from “every or any lawful degree or Masonic Society.” Whatever powers it then possessed, it could not have lawfully expelled him from his Blue Lodge.

68. Arturo de Hoyos, “The Union of 1867,” *Heredom* 7 (1995), pp. 7-45.

the latter in June the agreement was unanimously accepted and confirmed. Four months later, on October 31, 1827, the Supreme Council, 33°, NMJ issued a “Balustre” (official communication), naming the states over which it would preside. Later, by consent of the Supreme Council at Charleston, Delaware was added to the list. The territory of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction was fixed as comprising the fifteen States north of the Mason-Dixon Line and east of the Mississippi river.<sup>69</sup> The Southern Jurisdiction occupies the remaining thirty-five States, the District of Columbia, and the American territories and dependencies. As the premiere Supreme Council, it is sometimes referred to as the “Mother Council of the World.” This is the Body to which we belong.

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69. The selected geographical boundaries may also have reflected ideological differences between the Northern and Southern States, which became progressively more defined until the Civil War.