

## Chapter 2: Freemasonry: A very brief overview of its history to the year 1823

Before we can even approach any understanding of how Greek thought, history and mythology became embedded into Freemasonic ritual, we need to have some understanding of Freemasonry's history – its own background. This understanding will provide us with a context within which the sequence of events leading to the inclusion of such a profound body of *ancient Greek* tradition into our Ritual will be able to be demonstrated in a very natural, logical process of evolution.

Admittedly, one of the most frustrating aspects of understanding modern Freemasonry is coming to terms with its *beginnings*. There appear to be so many intelligent theories relating to this issue and yet they all seem to conflict, each with the other. For an organisation that has been so influential in western society for the better part of 300 years, its origins are infuriatingly obtuse.

Did Freemasonry originate as a re-engineered/re-invented arm of the Roman Catholic Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple (Knights Templar) – an Order which in October 2007 was absolved by the Vatican of the charges of heresy laid against it in the 14<sup>th</sup> century? Did Freemasonry originate through a development of mediaeval stone-masons guilds? Did Freemasonry originate as an off-shoot of the Royal Society? Did Freemasonry originate in Scotland, or was it France, or was it England?

A year or two ago, I had delivered a presentation on an aspect of the research that I had done on this book at a metropolitan lodge meeting, here in Adelaide. The presentation was concerned with aspects of *Emulation Ritual*. As previously stated, *Emulation Ritual* is (...with only minor variations), the ritual used in South Australia and the Northern Territory since 1884 and is one that was developed *in England* and approved for use in the year 1816. After the meeting, a thoughtful and well-meaning Scottish brother, approached and reproached me for a fault that (in his view) I shared in common with other Grand Lodge Lecturers of the jurisdiction. The fault that we all shared was the belief that Freemasonry originated in England. He emphasised with great passion, voice and heartfelt conviction that it didn't. It originated in Scotland. He left me in little doubt of his understanding of the matter (or for that matter) – how important these aspects of history really are to brothers in this jurisdiction.

Regarding Freemasonry's true origins, there is a distinction that will help us if we draw it. It is between two distinct *models* of Freemasonry.

The first model is a *proto*-Freemasonry that records prove existed in Scotland as early as the late-1500's. By *proto*-Freemasonry, I mean a first stage of the organisation. In this first stage there may be elements we can recognise even today, but usually at a very surface level. In every respect of the term, this type of Freemasonry was nothing more than a primitive fore-runner of what exists today.

The second model is what we can call (with some ease and accuracy) by the term *modern* Freemasonry. This we can pin point as having a commencement date of June 24, 1717. The elements that form this type of Freemasonry (whether they be one, two or three hundred years old) are easily recognisable in the ritual and rubrics practiced today.

Although we do not easily recognize in the Old Charges anything of an esoteric nature, we may regard them as a link between operative and speculative masonry. That does not mean that they contain a working basis for today's ritual; they do not, but undoubtedly our present traditions and ritual reflect many of the ideas and perpetuate many of the words and phrases of the old writings.

*Bernard E. Jones, The Freemasons' Guide and Compendium, Chap 5, pg 80*

## The Influence of Plato's Republic on Freemasonry and Masonic Ritual.

Drawing a line in the sand between these two disparate models of Freemasonry is vital to any intelligent discussion of the origins of Freemasonry. It is vital because from the evidence that we have at hand, each model had a different *purpose* in existing at the time. Very importantly - the purpose of *proto*-Freemasonry was based on a religious and philosophic model that was vastly different to its more modern descendant.

### Proto-Freemasonry

Over the past hundred years or so, there has been considerable Freemasonic research that has been applied to a group of documents known collectively as the *Old Charges*. As a group, these historical documents point to *circumstantial evidence* that Freemasonry (as we know it now), had its antecedents in the guilds of mediaeval stone masons. It is those masons who performed rituals based on the actual and physical craft (or trade) of stone-masonry in the formative mediaeval and late-renaissance period that we refer to by the term *operative masons*. They also used the Old Charges as a guide in living their lives.

Modern Freemasonic scholarship points to (roughly) six “families” of documents that make up the canon of the Old Charges. The dates of authorship of these families of manuscripts range from over a 300 year period – from about 1390 to about 1680.

The two earliest documents are the *Regius Poem* (c 1390) and the *Matthew Cooke Manuscripts* (c 1450).

The distinctive feature of both of these manuscripts is that by default of the historical period in which they were written, they were *Roman Catholic* in *religious and philosophical* outlook. This is a facet that is too often ignored or over-looked by some Freemasonic historians. Understanding this very simple point is crucial if we are to understand why it was that from the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the philosophic model proposed by Plato was consciously adapted to suit the Freemasonic model we recognise today...*but more of that later*.

The Regius Poem lays great stress on the mason leading a moral life and respecting the chastity of his Master's and Fellow's wife and daughter... The Charges forbade masters to take on work which they were unable to complete... On the question of apprenticeship they laid down that the period should not be less than seven years, that the boy must be free from bondage, come of honest parents and be whole of limb...

Bernard E. Jones,  
*The Freemasons Guide and Compendium* Chap 5, pg 85

Returning to the Regius Manuscript, it is composed of 15 *articles* with 15 *points*. With few exceptions, the *sentiments* appearing in the original articles and points appear within the body of the First and Third Degree Charges and the First and Third Degree Obligations of *Emulation-based* Ritual.

One significant feature of the Regius Poem is that while it does specify a *code of conduct* expected of a mason and this code of conduct is in many respects similar to what modern Freemasons are accustomed to, it does *not* mention King Solomon in any context whatsoever.

Our experience of life usually confirms that things occur (by and large) in an evolutionary manner. We know that any level of sophistication usually occurs *after* a more primitive, a more basic level. The development of proto-Freemasonry follows an identical evolutionary path.

Approximately 60 years after the Regius Poem was composed, another document known as the Matthew Cooke Manuscript was composed. The title “Matthew Cooke” refers to the person (a Freemason) who first published this document in 1861, not to its author. The Manuscript begins with a prayer and moves on to discuss the seven liberal arts and sciences. Here, the Manuscript explains that the seven liberal arts and sciences were preserved by a descendant of Cain named Lamech.

## The Influence of Plato's Republic on Freemasonry and Masonic Ritual.

According to this Manuscript, Lamech inscribed all the knowledge of humankind on two pillars – one was made of stone while the other was made of another substance. The supposition was that should the world be destroyed by fire or water, one or the other pillar could be expected to survive. As a result of its survival, human life and human development would continue *through evolutionary advances in knowledge*. Without their survival, human knowledge and advancement would be expected to *regress*.

story of the two pillars told in the Matthew Cooke Manuscript is *not* identical with the story of the two pillars that we have in our present Ritual.

In the Matthew Cooke Manuscript, the story relates to a *Jewish tradition* that is re-told by a Jewish priest/Roman historian named Josephus in a work known as *The Antiquities of the Jews*. This work was originally written for Greek-speaking Jews in the first century of the Christian era.

Already with what we have discussed so far, we can trace an evolutionary lineage to our present Ritual by noting the following similarities:

- The story contained in the proto-ritual (as well as Modern Freemasonry), refers to *two pillars*.
- Both sets of pillars have *Jewish tradition* as their basis.
- The function of both sets of pillars is to *preserve knowledge*. In modern Freemasonic Ritual, the knowledge that the pillars contain are the “constitutional rolls of Freemasonry”...or Freemasonry’s ancient heritage.

The Manuscript also mentions the following:

- A craftsman in metals whose name was *Tubalcain*
- The importance of the science of *geometry*
- That craftsmen ought to call each other *Fellow*
- That the most expert craftsman ought to be called the *Master*
- That the Master should be supported by *Wardens*
- A brief mention of King Solomon and the building of his Temple
- A brief mention of King *Hiram* of Tyre (*who is not mentioned by name*)
- A very brief mention of someone who we would associate with Hiram Abif (...he is not mentioned by name but only as “son of the King of Tyre”).
- A “Book of Charges” for the conduct of masons.
- Mention of a Greek geometrician named Euclid.
- The original 15 articles and 15 points appearing in the *Regius Manuscript* are reduced to 9 articles and 9 points.

So at this early phase of what we can call proto-Freemasonry, there were two important documents that give circumstantial evidence to the development of features that are recognised in Masonic lodges throughout the world. Both these documents are English in origin. Both these documents point to the emergence of a philosophic code of conduct referred to as *Charges*, a system of education based on the *liberal arts and sciences*, an emphasis given to the science of *geometry* and a lodge structure incorporating *Fellows*, *Master Masons*, *Wardens* and *Masters of Lodges*. There

is also reference to characters common to our present Ritual such as *Tubalcain*, *King Solomon*, *Hiram-King of Tyre* and (possibly) *Hiram Abif*. Lastly we have an allusion to two pillars whose purpose is *symbolically* to preserve *knowledge* from natural elements of cosmic destruction.

### What about the Scottish Connection?

There is still significant debate regarding the argument as to whether Freemasonry emerged *from* Scotland and filtered into England (or vice versa).

Those in favour of the theory of Freemasonry emerging *out of Scotland* often cite a Knights Templar connection. Arguably the best expressed proponent of this argument is that of Baigent and Leigh's *The Temple and the Lodge*. In this work, the authors explain how (while preparing a BBC documentary on the Knights Templar), they began to investigate graveyards in northern Scotland to discover on tombstones, evidence of Knight Templar motifs. The tombstones that they found were dated after 1307 when the Order was suppressed by Vatican edict. This tended to indicate that remnants of the Order had migrated to Scotland from France to escape persecution at the hands of Philip IV (1268-1314), King of France. The reason for the choice of Scotland was a very logical one. Robert the Bruce as leader of Scots had recently been excommunicated from the See of Rome. As leader of Scots, his ex-communication effectively meant Scotland's ex-communication. By migrating to Scotland, the Templars were free of the grasp of Rome's hand.

However, the logic (as strong as it is) is not their most compelling argument. This lies in the changes that appear in the Templar tombstones in northern Scotland, over time. As the years passed, the tombstones (still in evidence today), bore witness to a strange, gradual change. The tombstones (without dispute – *Templar*), began to incorporate more and more Freemasonic motifs...motifs which are clearly understandable to any Freemason living today.

The change in tombstone motifs strongly suggested a re-invention of the Order of the Poor Knights of the Temple (Knights Templar) into the *Order of Freemasons*. The tombstones were only an indication of reinvention of the Order into a Freemasonic identity. The true evidence was the range of motifs that appear on Rosslyn Chapel. These are motifs that are rich in Freemasonic symbolism.

Their conclusion is simple – the Knights Templar did evolve into Freemasons.

Even those with a minimalist knowledge of the Knights Templar will appreciate the width and breadth of *symbolism* that characterised their Order. Anyone opening one of thousands of websites connected with the Knights Templar will discover the importance that symbolism played - in their rituals, their dress and their spirituality.

What if the Knights Templar-Freemasonic connection with Rosslyn Chapel is wrong; what if it is misguided?

Assuming that the Knights Templar did migrate to Scotland; assuming that they did reinvent themselves as proto-Freemasons; assuming that they did hold lodge meetings... with all these assumptions, the one thing that we could expect to find is evidence of their symbolism in the "*masonic*" documents that we have from that period...and we *do* have a range of Scottish "*masonic*" documents from that period. The documents in question relate to the operative masonic craft. The

No less than twenty Scots operative lodges are recorded to have been at work before 1700, but not one of them was *known* to have a symbolic working at that time.

*Bernard E. Jones*  
*The Freemasons Guide and Compendium* Chap 9, pg 124

problem is that these documents are wholly lacking in any symbolic or philosophical content. In this regard, the evidence is conspicuous by its absence.

Tracing the exact origin of Freemasonry to Scotland is not an easy feat, despite protests to the contrary.

These Scottish “masonic” documents extend back to 1475. In that year the Seal of Cause incorporated the “Masons and Wrights”. Over a hundred years later - in 1598 and 1599 respectively - two pieces of legislation known as the *Schaw Statutes* regulated the way that masons were to conduct their *operative* craft. They also authorised the Lodge of Kilwinning to supervise *operative lodges* in West Scotland. As Bernard E. Jones (one of the most respected Freemasonic scholars) has emphasised – while these documents do exist, there is nothing in them to suggest anything either esoteric or of the philosophical nature that modern Freemasonry is imbued with. The lodge network in Scotland at this time appears to have been stamped with a character that was totally dissimilar to the lodges operating south of Hadrian’s Wall – the lodges that had their own Charges and the beginnings of their own legends and myths.

So, the evidence that is at hand is strongly suggestive that while lodge networks were developing in Scotland and England during the mediaeval period, Scottish lodges were developing in terms of regulatory processes governing the operation of the physical labour (*operative dimension*) of stone-masonry. This is in sharp contrast to the English experience which was characterised by the development of a *personal code of conduct* for stonemasons to live by. The code of conduct also extended to their professional dealings and they were expressed in the language of the day as “charges”. Charges are *instructions for living* and they were often illustrated by adopting ancient legends and myths and giving them a dramatic, fresh, current-affairs-type vitality.

Already within this *proto*-Freemasonic development of a code of conduct known as *Charges*, were germinating the kernels of a philosophy of leadership. But at this time, the philosophy of leadership was still somewhat shadowy, still indistinct, still waiting to be expressed in clearer language and symbols. It was almost waiting for something to happen.

The echoes of that *something* were already being heard in the distant clamouring of thunder that would foreshadow the coming of the Reformation.

### The Reformation

Until the English Reformation under Henry VIII (1491-1547), the official religious outlook in the British Isles was predominantly Roman Catholic. Since Augustine of Hippo’s conversion, Roman Catholic theology had been imbued with Platonic thought, but during the 300 year period prior to the Reformation, Roman Catholic theology had taken on one very distinctive feature. It had adapted its theology to the philosophy of a Greek who had at one time been a *student* of Plato’s. This Greek’s name was Aristotle and the way his teachings were adopted (and adapted) as the basis of mediaeval Roman Catholic theology is now referred to by the term *Scholastic Movement*.

The most important advocate of this trend toward Aristotle was a Dominican prior known as Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274). His *Summa Theologica* (or *Summary of Theology*) was the vehicle

### A German philosopher on Plato’s influence in Christian theology...

...But the struggle against Plato, or –to put it more clearly...the struggle against thousands of years of Christian-ecclesiastical pressure (for Christianity is Platonism for the “common people”), has created a splendid tension of spirit in Europe such as the earth has never seen...

*Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, Preface, pg 4*

that gave the most cogent expression of the melding of Aristotelian thought into Roman Catholic theology.

For the purpose of this discussion, it will serve no satisfactory purpose to broaden the investigation into this issue any further, other than to keep in mind that the force with which the Protestant revolution developed was not just about a protest connected with the selling of *indulgences*, nor was it solely about the dispute as to whether salvation is achieved by good works alone or by the action of God's grace.

The Protestant Movement's first flush of major success was under the leadership of a Roman Catholic Augustinian monk and academic named Martin Luther (1483-1546). The Movement's "protest" was fundamentally a sharp reaction *against* the results of the practice of the previous 300 years in adopting and adapting Aristotle's philosophy into Roman Catholic theology.

Here is something to consider...If there is anything that marks the philosophic tendency of Protestantism, it is the wholesale *rejection of Aristotle's philosophy* and the *re-adoption of Plato's philosophy* into the body of Protestant thinking.

We can re-state the principle in another way to give it greater clarity. While Roman Catholicism (during the mediaeval period) adopted Aristotle's philosophy in the formulation of its theology, the Protestant movement worked in the *opposite direction*. It consciously re-adopted Plato's philosophy as the basis of Protestant theology.

Does this process show any evidence in a Freemasonic context? Without a doubt!

The one difference is that in a Freemasonic context, this process continued in response to *political*, rather than religious tensions. More specifically, the process continued in response to tensions between the Scots and the English regarding the right of one man - King James II (1633-1701) - to rule over England *and* Scotland. Because he was the *second* king of England to be named James but the *seventh* King of Scotland by that name, his title is usually represented as James II/VII).

A Protestant by birth, James II/VII converted to Roman Catholicism in about the year 1668. This conversion managed to escalate from an expression of personal spirituality into an international crisis, enveloping a number of European courts in the cataclysm that ensued. By the time that all these international tensions had been resolved, no Roman Catholic was permitted to become monarch of England and no monarch of England was ever permitted to marry a Roman Catholic.

In its own way, James' conversion was also the catalyst underpinning the dramatic reinvention that Freemasonry took upon itself in the early 1700's.

### The Jacobean and Hanoverian Eras

The intricacies of the political manoeuvrings in the 150 years following the English Reformation can be gleaned from any reliable sourcebook of English history. The aspect which is of particular interest to Freemasonic history relates to James II/VII of England and the aftermath of his conversion to Roman Catholicism.

When James' conversion was exposed, his brother King Charles II opposed it publicly and made certain that James' children were brought up as Protestants. Human nature is rarely as predictable as we sometimes give it credit for. In this instance, who would have foreseen that Charles

Luther began with an attack on scholastic theology and its philosophical footings in Aristotle, which attracted about as much public interest as any other exercise in academic revisionism.

*Patrick Collinson, The Reformation, Chap 4, pp 45-46*

II - on his deathbed in 1685- would himself have converted to the Roman Catholic faith? It is not difficult to see that the overall situation was thorny from a few perspectives. Tensions were high between followers of the Church of England as well as those outside of it. Having said this, even the Church of England was not without its own "protestant" element. There were groups within the church that objected strongly that the established Church of England had *not gone far enough* in distancing itself from Roman Catholicism. These groups, each with their own specific "protest/s" were collectively known as "Dissenters" and of this group, possibly one of the most famous was that of the *Puritan movement*.

One of the points that most Dissenting factions held in common was their objection to the structure in the established Church of England of using *bishops*. From their viewpoint, the institution of bishops was *too close* to the Roman Catholic paradigm. There were even many areas in Scotland that opposed the institution of bishops. In these instances their objection was politically motivated and as religion and politics are too often handmaidens of one another, they saw bishops as an unwanted extension of the English political hand in Scottish affairs.

Throughout this period, Roman Catholics were liable to punishment for opposing the established Church of England but that was not the end of it... The established Church of England applied the same punishment against its own Dissenters. In this environment, James II/VII swam against the current by issuing what was known as the *Declaration of Indulgence* in 1687. This Declaration offered all his subjects freedom of conscience in expressing their religious beliefs. The Declaration paved the way for Roman Catholics to worship as Roman Catholics, Dissenters as Dissenters and followers of the established Church of England as Anglicans – without fear or bias.

This controversial legislation, (as well as other measures that James II/VII instituted) - placed him in direct opposition to some wealthy and politically connected Protestants. For them, the only route left to explore was to architect a plan for his removal as King of England. This they achieved by offering the Throne of England to James II/VII's *son-in-law* – a Dutchman and a Protestant known as William of Orange (1650-1702). When James II/VII escaped to France in December 1688, this "escape" was treated as his official "abdication". In the fall of dominoes that followed, the throne became William's who reigned as William III in England and William II in Scotland from 1689. Dying in 1702 he reigned for 21 years.

As tense as these times were for the English, they were only worsened by an ever growing tension between the Scots and the English on the matter of the *conspiracy* by which William III came by his throne. Many Scots, (while opposing Roman Catholicism and everything it represented), had *greater opposition* to how the English had conspired to remove James II/VII. James II/VII was their rightful King of Scotland.

As painful as this wound was to them, the salt that the English had consciously and deliberately applied to it was equally distasteful. The English had offered the throne to a person who was not even born in the British Isles.

They had offered it to a *Dutchman* – and *this* particular Dutchman was avidly opposed to the French. His opposition posed one additional difficulty. As the French were allies of the Scots, the Scots were determined to demonstrate their loyalty to their French allies. In this convoluted political and religious environment, it is more than probable that many Scots (loyal to James II/VII) used the extensive lines of communication available in the existing network of *operative* lodges throughout the land, to plan for the rightful return of their Scottish Stuart King - James II/VII. The next project (in order of priority) was the deposition of the *Dutch outsider* - King William III/II.

In a broader context, Scottish supporters of James II/VII who were known as *Jacobites* (from the Latin *Jacobus* meaning James), were interested in restoring the Throne to descendants of the Stuart *Dynasty* (of whom James II/VII) was a representative). Again by way of extension, the *Jacobite*

## The Influence of Plato's Republic on Freemasonry and Masonic Ritual.

*Cause* (as it became known), was for some Highland clans, (...not all that surprisingly) not just about religion. Their motivation was *also* political. The Jacobite Cause became their call to arms against a Presbyterian clan known as the Campbells of Argyll whose power-play was the acquisition of territories belonging to other clans in the Scottish highlands.

To say that the politics of the time were fluid, confused and not restricted to specific territories or specific cultural or language boundaries is an understatement.

It was at this point in political events that now the tongue of a blue flame appeared.

In 1701, James II/VII died and his son – James Francis Edward Stuart (1688-1766) was immediately recognised as James III of England and James VIII of Scotland by a number of European courts including the Papal court itself. These courts (had incidentally), all been politically aligned in *not recognising* William III/II as the rightful and lawful successor to James II/VII.

James Francis Edward Stuart – a Roman Catholic, was seen as the proudest hope of the heightened renewal of the Jacobite Cause.

Here was the central problem – in the same year as his birth, legislation had been passed prohibiting a Roman Catholic from accessing the Throne. As a result, the Throne passed to Anne (William III/II's *sister-in law*). She was eligible by right of being his closest living relation *and* as having been raised as a Protestant.

One of the most striking political accomplishments of her reign was the Act of Union (1707), whereby England and Scotland were joined together as Great Britain. When she died childless in 1714, the Throne passed to Anne's second *cousin* who was known by the title of Elector of Hanover. He was a Protestant and *this time around* – a German. His name was George Louis (1660-1727) and in 1714 was crowned as King George I of Great Britain.

The following year saw the beginning of a number of successive battles in the name of the Jacobite Cause that continued until 1746 with the defeat of the Scots at the Battle of Culloden. After this battle, the Jacobite Cause lost its heady momentum and went into subsequent decline.

The purpose of this overview of Scottish/English history following the Protestant revolution is to lay the groundwork for the events that occurred shortly after. These events changed the way that Freemasonry would - from that time onwards - be recognised. One of the most significant changes occurred only two years *after* the First Jacobite Rebellion of 1715.

It was the founding of the Premier Grand Lodge of England on June 24, 1717.

In some respects, the events leading to the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge of England can be seen as a very thoughtful, astute, political manoeuvre of its own. Employing a modern outlook, we could even say that from a marketing perspective, it was a very *savvy* manoeuvre. It was a manoeuvre that used a *Scottish Presbyterian* minister (who was also a Freemason) to *rewrite* his own native Scottish Freemasonic history on instructions from his own English Freemasonic superiors. With *conscious intent*, the version of Freemasonic history that he wrote distanced itself away from the Scottish/Roman Catholic/Jacobite Cause and aligned itself wholeheartedly with the Protestant/German/House of Hanover.

The man behind all this was someone who in Freemasonic history appears to play “second fiddle” to the real “players” behind the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge of England - but in time history may re-appraise his leading-edge contribution to the Order.

His name was the Reverend Dr. James Anderson.

**Dr James Anderson: The Scottish architect of an *English* Freemasonic Origin**



This one man was instrumental in re-writing early Freemasonic history (and for very political reasons), setting down a modern set of Constitutions governing the Order and putting in place the *beginnings* of modern Freemasonic ritual (based along *Greek* historical, mythological and philosophical lines).

The reason he put all these things in place was to achieve one goal and one alone - the alignment of the new ideals of a revived Freemasonry with those of the new Hanoverian era.

He was born about the year 1680 and at the age of 30 in 1710,

he was ordained a minister in the Presbyterian Church. Nine years later he became actively involved in a heated debate regarding the stand that the Presbyterians under his authority ought to take on the application of the *First Article of The Articles of Religion* of the Church of England. When we look over his life, this close, heated, association with the debate in 1719 may have been the one factor that helped him to form in his mind the template of the *Charges of a Freemason* that formed part of his First Edition of *Constitutions* published in 1723.

There are some similarities between the Charges of a Freemason and the Anglican Articles of Religion that are more than *just coincidental*...

If we compare the *General Heads* of Anderson's *Charges* with the *Articles of Religion* that can be found in an Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, one very evident feature is the distinctive formatting of each of the headings that begins... "Of ... etc". The 39 Anglican *Articles of Religion* and 5 of the 6 *General Heads* of the Charges of a Freemason, each commence with the identical stylistic format.

Secondly, *Article XXXVII* deals with matters related to the *Civil Magistrate*. Curiously, General Head II

Pre-1688 Freemasonry in Scotland and England was ostensibly a Jacobite institution. But the post- 1717 English variety of Anderson and his friends was essentially Hanoverian...

Laurence Gardner, *The Shadow of Solomon*, pg 37.

Having stated that the pre-1688 records of Freemasonry had been lost, Anderson set down a schedule of regulations concerning lodge appointments and activities...though from where he obtained them in that particular form is unknown. In 1738 however, Anderson produced a revised set of Constitutions in which his (or someone's) imagination, concocted a detailed history of English Freemasonry, which had supposedly begun with an assembly of stonemasons convened in York by a Prince Edwin in 926.

Laurence Gardner, *The Shadow of Solomon*, pg 28

### Regarding Pythagoras...

The several writers that have mentioned this philosopher ...have convinced me fully that Freemasonry is very nearly allied to the old Pythagorean discipline...For instance, upon the admission of a disciple, he was bound by solemn oaths to conceal the Mysteries from the vulgar and uninitiated.

Anderson. Defence of Masonry, quoted in Wright, *England's Masonic Pioneers*, pp 93-94

Compare this with SA & NT Craft Ritual ...

Their philosophers, unwilling to expose their mysteries to vulgar eyes, couched their systems of learning and polity under signs and hieroglyphical figures, which were communicated to their chief priests or Magi alone, who were bound by solemn oath to conceal them. The system of Pythagoras was based on a similar principle...

13<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2004

of the *Charges of a Freemason* deals similarly with the *Civil Magistrate*.

It is also easy to notice that the language and style of both the *Anglican Articles of Religion* and the *Charges of a Freemason* share a similar tone and religious quality of wording. In these instances, by deliberating *cloning* the style, language and tone of the *Anglican Articles of Religion*, Anderson was stamping modern Freemasonry as having a direct association with the *established* Church of England of that time. He was overtly distancing Freemasonry with any possible suggestive associations with any subversive brand of Scottish/ Roman Catholic/ Jacobite society.

In 1730 – just 13 years after the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge of England, an expose of Freemasonry was published under the title of *Masonry Dissected*. It was written by Samuel Pritchard. Anderson published a response to Pritchard's expose and called it, *Defence of Masonry*. In his pamphlet of 1730, he explained that there were three degrees practiced in modern Freemasonry and that each lodge was governed by a "Master and two Wardens".

There is another story in Virgil that stands in nearer relation to the case of H. and the accident by which he is said to have been discovered....after Troy was taken, the Thracian (Polymnester), for the sake of money, killed the young prince and privately buried him. Aeneas, coming into that country and accidentally plucking up a shrub that was near him on the side of the hill, discovered the murdered body of Polydorus.

Anderson, *Defence of Masonry* – quoted in Wright, *England's Masonic Pioneers*, pg 95

More than any other document of that time that is available to us today, Anderson's pamphlet resounds with material that is common within *Emulation Ritual*.

It is also evident that Anderson was very well acquainted with the works of Greek and Roman classicists – authors who were (and are still) renowned for their interpretation of Greek history and mythology.

Back in 1730, in his *Defence of Masonry*, Anderson explained the significance of the newly developed Hiram legend by reference to the Greek historian Herodotus, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was arguably the most striking Roman achievement at converting Greek mythological characters into a Roman cultural environment.

In 1738, Anderson published the Second Edition of *Constitutions* and in this work he elaborated a history of Freemasonry that extended well beyond that of the original Old Charges. Anderson went even one better – he included in his list of pre-1717 Grand Masters the Roman Catholic Cardinal Wolsey, Moses and even the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. The one singular feature of his 1738 version of *Constitutions* is that in its colourful (though highly imaginative) embroidery of Freemasonic *pseudo-history* it wholly neglected any Scottish influence in the development of Freemasonic history, tracing its *English* ancestry back into Biblical times.

There is however, one other very prominent matter that Anderson was connected with that became a pivotal point of Freemasonic history.

In the First edition of his *Charges of a Freemason* (1723), within the General Head – *Concerning God and Religion*, appears the following line:

*But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the Centre of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.*

As innocuous as this paragraph seems to our modern eyes and ears, at that precise moment in time, it had the effect of polarising the Freemasonic fraternity. This one paragraph changed the intrinsic substance of what had been *proto*-Freemasonry and brought it up to step in keeping with the times. What this one simple paragraph did was alter the age-old Freemasonic definition of "brother"; it *broadened* its definition to a point that severed any ties that might have remained with proto-Freemasonry. It did more than just suggest a new definition of "brother" – it redefined it unambiguously to include not only Christians (who were the original members of proto-Freemasonry), but men of *any religion* who value truth and honour.

The year 1723 marked possibly the most distinctive year in its history to that date. It had re-engineered itself, cast off any identity with Roman Catholicism that still may have remained and travelled even beyond the limits of Protestantism to view men of all religions – equally. Where once, there was a divide between men of different religions – a divide that expressed itself in various forms of prejudice - Freemasonry took a very enlightened view of religious faith and acknowledged that there were no grounds to discriminate between one man and another on the basis of his religious leaning.

To understand more fully the implications of this one paragraph, an accurate analogy might be to imagine the response from Freemasons world-wide if the wording of each Constitution and set of Regulations were changed to permit *women* (who acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being) to join the ranks of *regular* Freemasonry. The wide variety of responses and the gamut of emotions that we might expect to be expressed are no different to the responses that were associated with redefining the term "brother" to include men of religions (*other than the Christian faith*), back in 1723.

In 1751, only 28 years after the doors of Freemasonry were opened to men of faiths other than Christian - a new Grand Lodge was formed directly in opposition to the Premier Grand Lodge. Not surprisingly, chief among the list of the new Grand Lodge's complaints against the Premier Grand Lodge was its 1723 re-definition of "brother" to include men of non-Christian faiths.

### The "Modern" and "Ancient" Grand Lodges

The new Grand Lodge that was formed in 1751 referred to itself as the "*Ancient*" Grand Lodge and referred (*with a snide tone*) to the Premier Grand Lodge of 1717 as the "*Modern*" Grand Lodge. They did this on the grounds that they saw themselves as upholding the ancient and *orthodox* traditions of Freemasonry, as opposed to the Premier Grand Lodge, who had "modernised" Freemasonry along *heterodox* lines.

#### Regarding the sprig of acacia...

We are told that the sprig of cassia was placed by the Brethren at the head of Hiram's grave: which refers to the old custom of those Eastern countries of embalming the dead...in preparing the head and drying up the brains as Herodotus more plainly explains.

*Anderson, Defence of Masonry – quoted in Wright, England's Masonic Pioneers,  
pg 95*

The mystical school of Masonic history was inaugurated at the beginning of the last century by James Anderson D.D... since he first promulgated its theories in the "Book of Constitutions", which he published in 1723 by order of the Grand Lodge.

Unfortunately for the interests of truth, Anderson was of a very imaginative turn of mind and instead of writing an authentic history of Freemasonry, he accepted and incorporated into his narrative all the myths and legends which he found in the manuscript records of operative Masons.

*Introduction from The Perfect Ceremonies of Craft Masonry as taught in the Unions Emulation Lodge of Improvement for M.Ms. Privately printed for A. Lewis, London, 1884, pp viii-ix*

As important as Anderson's influence had been to the Premier Grand Lodge, the Ancient Grand Lodge of 1751 had its own "powerhouse" in the person of Laurence Dermott.

Dermott was born in Ireland in 1720. At the age of 20, he was initiated and six years later was installed as Master of Dublin Lodge in 1746. Two years later, he settled in England, taking up the position of Secretary of the Ancient Grand Lodge for a period of 19 years – from 1752-1771. Dermott wrote a work that draws comparisons to Anderson's Constitutions, but has the very odd title of *Ahimon Rezon*. It is unclear what the title actually means, but it is believed to mean something *distantly and vaguely approximating* "help to a brother" in the Hebrew language.

Relations between the "Modern" and "Ancient" Grand Lodge were strained to say the least. Outside of the hostility that opening membership to men of non-Christian faith had brought, there were many other contentious issues and most of these related to the way that Ritual was interpreted and performed. To ensure that a brother from the opposing Grand Lodge might not enter their lodge meetings to view their Ritual, modes of recognition (such as pass grips and passwords) were even changed.

The point that the Ancients were emphatic about was that the Moderns' ritual was exactly that – *modern* – in the sense of *liberal*!! It departed significantly from the ancient, orthodox traditions.

In order to negotiate an amicable settlement to the disputes that had been dividing Freemasonry for the previous 50-odd years, the "Moderns" Grand Lodge authorised the formation of a lodge with *one special*

*purpose* only – the settlement of the disputes between the Moderns and Ancient Grand Lodges. This lodge – known as the *Lodge of Promulgation*, was formed in 1809 and it conducted negotiations on each aspect of dispute until 1813. In December of that year, a document known as the *Articles of Union* was signed by the royal Grand Masters of both the *Moderns* Grand Lodge and the *Ancients* Grand Lodge. With the execution of this instrument, both opposing Grand Lodges were amalgamated as the *United Grand Lodge of England*.

### **1813 to 1823: The Development of *Emulation Ritual***

Following the execution of the Articles of Union, the first priority became the development of a Ritual that would incorporate all those elements taken from the workings of the Moderns and Ancient Grand Lodges that had been agreed to under the terms of the unification of both Grand Lodges.

This was a delicate project requiring men of vision, a superior understanding of Freemasonry, a keen sense of diplomacy and high level negotiation skill. To supervise this project, another *special lodge* of this elite group of Freemasons was formed. It was known as the *Lodge of Reconciliation* and as its name suggests, its primary purpose was the rationalisation or reconciliation of the various

## The Influence of Plato's Republic on Freemasonry and Masonic Ritual.

rituals practiced to that point in time. Because ritual in 1813 was not permitted to be printed, it was taught by one medium only - word of mouth. We all know the difficulties that word of mouth transmission can produce – problems relating to *what* is said, *how* it is interpreted and *what* is remembered...among others.

In any event, three years later in 1816, the result of this collaboration was the official approval of what became known as *Emulation Ritual* - the Ritual practiced in the jurisdiction of South Australia and Northern Territory. In order to ensure that the highest standard of Ritual (using Emulation as its base) was practiced, the *Emulation Lodge of Improvement* was formed in 1823.

At the core of this Ritual rests the finest expression of Platonic philosophy, as well as the finest expression of Greek mythology. It was purposely designed this way to articulate a specific message – a specific meaning. Its message and meaning are resonating with pertinence in our lives today.

Our task now is to understand why it was that *so many aspects* of ancient Greek culture were incorporated into Emulation Ritual.

Once we can understand the reasons influencing this aspect, we will then spend some time examining those specific aspects of Greek philosophy, history and mythology that appear in our Ritual, in far greater detail.