

Origins of the Society

The Old Charges of Freemasonry

(1) The Operative Craft

"There exists a collection of documents which has been called up as evidence both for the operative and non-operative origins of Freemasonry. Described by Anderson as the Gothic Constitutions, and now known collectively as the **Old Charges**, some 127 versions have been traced of which 113 are still in existence....All have a common form:

- a. an opening prayer
- b. a legendary history of the mason craft tracing it from biblical origins to its establishment in England
- c. a code of regulations for Masters, Fellows and Apprentices covering both craft practices and morals
- d. arrangement for large-scale 'territorial' assemblies at which attendance was obligatory
- e. procedures for the trial and punishment of offenders
- f. admission procedures 'for new men that were never charged before', including an oath of fidelity."

"Historically, the Old Charges fall into three groups. The first comprises the two earliest versions, the Regius MS of c.1390 and the Cook MS of c.1420...The second, and largest, group begins with the Grand Lodge No. 1 MS, dated 25 December 1583, and covers all the versions datable before the formation of the premier Grand Lodge in 1717. The third group comprises manuscript and printed versions produced after 1717, the majority of which appear to have been produced as antiquarian curiosities."

- John Hamill, *The Craft, A History of English Freemasonry*

The Wood manuscript, written, in 1610 "traces the history of the Order from two pillars that were found after Noah's Flood, none made of a marble that would not burn with fire, the other made of a substance known in Masonic legends as Laterus, which would not dissolve, sink or drown in any water. One of these pillars was found and upon it were inscribed the secrets of the sciences from which the Sumerians developed a moral code that passed to the Egyptians through the Sumerian Abraham and his wife Sarah. The script goes on to describe Euclid teaching geometry to the Egyptians, from whom the Israelites took it to Jerusalem, which resulted in the building of King Solomon's Temple."

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

"A record of the society written in the reign of Edward IV, said to have been in the possession of the famous **Elias Ashmole**, founder of the Museum at Oxford, and which was unfortunately destroyed, with other papers on the subject of Masonry, at the Revolution, gives the following account of the state of Masonry at this period:

"That though the ancient records of the brotherhood in England were many of them destroyed, or lost, in the wars of the Saxons and Danes, yet king Athelitane, (the grandson of King Alfred the Great, a mighty architect,) the first anointed king of England, and who translated the Holy Bible into the Saxon tongue, (AD 930) when he had brought the land into rest and peace, built many great works, and encouraged many Mason from France, who were appointed overseers thereof, and brought with them the charges and regulations of the lodges, preserved since the Roman times; who also prevailed with the king to improve the constitution of the English lodges according to the foreign model, and to increase the wages of working Masons."

- William Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry* (1804)

Preston's accounts of the history of Masonry in England, beginning with the Druids and Romans, are based on the mythical history included in Anderson's *Constitutions* (1773) and his own 1776 Appendix.

"In the west of England there is a magnificent chain of cathedrals without parallel elsewhere: Exeter, Wells, Gloucester, Worcestershire and Hereford, as well as many abbeys and castles, on which building was carried out almost continuously during the five centuries before A.D. 1500."

The Regius MS and the Cooke MS, based on a lost 1360 manuscript, are the only pre-Reformation versions of the Old Charges still extant. Both "say that Athelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great gave charges to masons for he was the King of Wessex before he became King of All England [c.895-939], and he is reputed to have been the founder in 932 of the monastic house which was the fore-runner of the cathedral at Exeter."

According to the Cooke MS, Athalstan's youngest son "'loved well the science of Geometry' and he became a mason himself. He, in turn, gave charges to masons 'as it is now in England'. Moreover he obtained a patent from the king that they should 'make assembly when they saw reasonable time to come together'."

- Bro. J. R. Clarke, "The Old Charges (A New Look at the Oldest of Them)"

"During the reign of Henry II, the Grand Master of the Knights Templars superintended the Masons, and employed them in building their Temple in Fleet-street, A.D. 1155. Masonry continued under the patronage of this Order till the year 1199, when John succeeded his brother Richard in the crown of England."

- William Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry* (1804)

"The term *freemason* appears as early as 1375 in the records of the city of London. It referred to working masons who were permitted to travel the country at a time when the feudal system shackled most peasants closely to the land. Unlike the members of other crafts of the time - smiths or tanners for example - the masons gathered in large groups to work on majestic, glorious projects, moving from one finished castle or cathedral to the planning and building of the next. For mutual protection, education, and training, the masons bound themselves together into a local lodge - the building, put up at a construction site, where workmen could eat and rest. Eventually, a lodge came to signify a group of masons based in a particular locality."

- "Freemasons; Mortar and Mysticism", *Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects*

"At the beginning of the reign of Henry VI, in 1425, a ban was placed on holding them [annual assemblies of masons] on the ground that they contravened the Statutes of Labourers. The masons protested that they were as loyal and law-abiding as other trades and objected to being singled out for attack. Condor (*The Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons*, p.77) observes that 'we do not hear of this Act being put into force' and he gives high legal opinion that it was repealed in 1562. It may be a coincidence but it was about this time that the earliest extant post-reformation versions of the Old Charges appeared."

- Bro. J. R. Clarke, "The Old Charges (A New Look at the Oldest of Them)"

"A record in the reign of Edward IV runs thus:

"The company of Masons, being otherwise termed Free-Masons, of auncient standing and good reckonings, by means of affable and kind meetyns dyverse tymes, and as a lovinge brotherhode use to doe, did frequent this mutual assembly in the tyme of Henry VI in the twelfth yeare of his most gracious reign, A.D. 1434'."

- William Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry* (1804)

"It has been demonstrated that freemason - in an operative context - is a contraction of 'freestone mason'....The earliest printed use so far traced comes in *The Pilgrimage of Perfection* - usually attributed to William Bonde - printed in 1536 by Wynkyn de Worde."

- John Hamill, *The Craft, A History of English Freemasonry*

"The freemason setteth his pretyss first long tyme to learn to hewe stones and whan he can do that perfectly he admytteth him to be a freemason and choseth hym as a conynge man to be master of the Craft."

- *The Pilgrimage of Perfection*

"Guilds of mason were common, and can be found emerging in Scotland (where guilds were generally known as incorporations) in the late Middle Ages."

- David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons*

"...The Masons were countenanced and protected in Scotland by King James I. After his return from captivity, he became the patron of the learned, and a zealous encourager of Masonry. The Scottish records relate, that he honored the lodges with his royal presence; that he settled a yearly revenue of four pounds Scots, (an English noble,) to be paid by every Master-Mason in Scotland, to a Grand Master, chosen by the Grand Lodge, and approved by the crown, one nobly born, or an eminent clergyman, who had his deputies in cities and counties, and every new brother at entrance paid him also a fee. His office empowered him to regulate in the fraternity what should not come under the cognizance of law-courts."

- William Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry* (1804)

"In Scotland such lodges [established for long-term site building activity], under burgh control, can be traced in Aberdeen and Dundee in the late fifteenth and early sixteen centuries. But they appear to have declined or disappeared entirely shortly before or after the Reformation of 1560 brought a new protestant church to Scotland."

"The legacy of the Medieval masons obviously contains much that is later found in freemasonry; the mythical history of the craft, the identification of masonry with mathematics; organization in 'lodges'; secret signs and words; and rituals of initiation."

- David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons*

(2) A Brother to Pirates and Corsairs

Concerning stonemasons in the Middle Ages, "their vocabulary and most likely their ability for abstract thought must have been very limited indeed. Travel for all but the most highly skilled master masons was a rare event so secret signs, grips and passwords would not be of much value; end even if they did travel from one building construction to another why would they need secret means of recognition?"

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

"A final check at Oxford's Bodleian, one of the great libraries of the world, and I finally felt absolutely secure in stating that Freemasonry did not evolve from the medieval guilds of stonemasons in Britain because it would appear that there were no medieval guilds of stonemasons in Britain."

"The French-language roots of the lost words of Masonry indicate the strong possibility that the society was in existence in the first half of the fourteenth century..."

- John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood*

Masonic expressions that Robinson said were derived from French language roots include:

Tyler: *tailleur*, "one who cuts"

Cowan: *couenne*, "ignoramus" or "bumpkins"

"From the affair of Jephthah, an Ephraimite was termed a cowan. In Egypt, *cohen* was the title of a priest or prince, and a term of honor. Bryant, speaking of the harpies, says, they were priests of the sun; and, as *cohen* was the name of a dog as well as a priest, they are termed by Apollonius 'the dogs of Jove'. Now, St. John cautions the Christian brethren, that 'without are dogs', cowans or listeners (Rev. 22:15), and St. Paul exhorts the Christians to 'beware of dogs, because they are evil workers' (Phil. 3:2). Now, a dog, or evil worker, is the masonic cowan."

- *Historical Landmarks*, Vol 1. p. 349

Due guard (ID sign): *geste du garde*, "a protective gesture"

Lewis (son of a Mason): *levees*, "sprouts" or "scions"

Abiff: *biffer*, "to strike out or eliminate"

(*Hiram a Biffe*, "Hiram who was eliminated")

Jube: *jube*, "rood screen" - a place of penance or punishment

(*venir a Jube*, "to get one's just desserts")

Intrant (Entered Apprentice): *entrant*

The surviving members of the Knights Templars in England would have had to flee or hide to escape persecution and death.

"...We can find no fourteenth century precedent for any organization that consistently referred to fellow members as brothers [frere Macon], except for the various religious orders, which, of course, included the Knights of the Temple."

"An old charge of Masonry says that if a brother comes to you, give him 'work' for two weeks, then give him some money and direct him to the next lodge. Why the assumption that he will need money? Because he is running, and hiding. What he got was not the allegorical 'work', but actual lodging."

- John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood*

"To all poor and distressed Masons, wherever dispersed over the face of Earth and Water, wishing them a speedy relief from all their sufferings, and a safe return to their native country; should they so desire it."

- "The Tyler's Toast"

"All through the oaths and the Old Charges we see emerging a mutual aid and protection society, protecting men who could die if caught."

- John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood*

"You have come to us bound, half-naked, and defenseless. You have no money with which to feed and lodge yourself, no armor to ward off the blows of your enemies, no weapons with which to defend yourself."

"Take comfort from the fact that all of your brothers are sworn to help you. If you are naked, we will clothe you. If you are hungry, we will feed you. We will shelter and protect you from your enemies. We will keep your secrets. Your call for help will never go unanswered."

- Masonic initiation

Another Old Charge "says that a visitor brother is not to go 'into the town' unless accompanied by a local brother who can 'witness' for him (i.e., vouch for him to the local authorities, who had the right to arrest strangers of unknown business in the town)."

"...In the initiation of the Master Mason of the third degree...he asks that his body be cut in two and his bowels burned to ashes should he break his oath of secrecy. Such a penalty would seem totally out of line for a broken oath taken by a stone cutting guild member, but would not have seemed to much to a man whose betrayal would mean days and weeks of torment with whips and chains and red-hot irons, with the ultimate risk of being burned alive at the stake."

"There is no record of the seizure of eighteen Templar ships from their naval base at La Rochelle on the French coast, or of any Templar ships anchored in the Thames or at other seaports in Britain....Since many of the Templar ships were galleys, they were ideally suited for piracy, because becalmed ships were always easy prey for those that did not depend upon the wind."

"In the lecture that sums up the initiation of a new Master Mason, the newly admitted candidate is told that this degree 'will make you a brother to pirates and corsairs.' That statement makes no sense whatever in the context of a society descended from medieval stonemasons."

"When the Templars processed around their circular churches they had only one way to move: in a circle, just as today's Masons process in their 'circumambulation' of the lodge."

- John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood*

"We can now be certain, without any shadow of doubt, that the starting place for Freemasonry was the construction of Rosslyn Chapel in the mid-fifteenth century; later historical developments confirm this view

because the St Clair family of Rosslyn became the hereditary Grand Masters of the Crafts and Guilds and Orders of Scotland, and later held the post of the Master of Masons of Scotland until the late 1700s."

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

William St Clair designed and built Rosslyn Chapel using the plans of Solomon's Temple, and incorporating many Templar and Masonic motifs. Knight and Lomas speculate that the Chapel also contained a copy of the vaults at Solomon's Temple and its hidden treasure.

"William St Clair had an obvious problem with security; the masons building his scroll shrine had to know the layout of the underground vault network and they knew that this strange building was to house something of great value.

"William St Clair was a brilliant and talented man and we believe that he devised the First Degree of Craft Masonry and the Mark Mason Degree to give his operative masons a code of conduct and an involvement in the secret, without telling them the great secret of living resurrection which was reserved for speculative Masons. It is a matter of record that he had two grades of stonemason on site; the 10 pounds-a-year standard masons (or apprentices) and the 40 pounds-a-year 'mark masons' who were honored by the possession of a personal mark in the continental fashion."

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

Origins of Modern Freemasonry

(1) The Acception

"King James VI of Scotland (also later James I of England) was the only child of Mary Queen of Scots and the first king to rule both England and Scotland. He was also the first king known to be a Freemason, being initiated into the Lodge of Scots and Perth in 1601 at the age of thirty five."

"He made a leading Mason by the name of William Schaw his General Warden of the Craft and instructed him to improve the entire structure of Masonry. Schaw started this major project on 28 December 1598 when he issued 'The statutes and ordinances to be observed by all the master maissouns within this realme,' signing himself as 'the General Warden of the said craft'."

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

"The man who more than anyone else deserves the title of creator of modern Feemasonry was **William Schaw**. The younger son of a laird (landowner) with close connections with the court, Schaw developed a strong interest in architecture and in 1583 was appointed master of works by King James VI of Scotland."

- David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons*

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"As general warden and master of works Schaw issued two codes of statutes, in 1598 and 1599. In these he laid down regulations for the organization and practice of the mason craft through a system of 'lodges'." "At first sight it might seem that his statutes are solely concerned with the organization and regulation of the working lives of stonemasons....He was doing much more, reviving and developing Medieval masonic mythology and rituals in a Renaissance atmosphere."

"Scotland's early freemasons, it would appear, probably kept specific religious practices out of their lodges as to do otherwise would have been to confront the church with an attack on its monopoly of religion but as a later date the morality without religious worship of the lodges made freemasonry attractive to those developing tolerant or deistic attitudes."

- David Stevenson, *The First Freemasons*

Sir Francis Bacon, who became Solicitor-General under fellow Freemason James I of England, was a champion of inductive reasoning and has been described as "the father of modern science".

"It is highly likely that Brother Bacon was the driving force behind the styling of the new second degree introduced by his close colleague William Schaw."

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

"In Scotland there is a wealth of evidence for the existence of operative lodges organized on a geographical basis and backed up by statute law. From the early 1600s there are also many documented examples of the introduction of non-operatives into Scottish operative lodges. There is not, however, any evidence that these non-operative members in any way altered the nature or workings of Scottish operative lodges until very late in the seventeenth century, by which time accepted Masonry was well established in England. All the evidence suggests that **accepted Masonry emerged in England** and spread from there to Scotland."

"The legend of the *Commacine Masters*...stated that the masons of the Como area of Northern Italy were so renowned and had such recondite secrets to impart to their operatives that they were formed into an Order by a -non-existent- Papal Bull and ordered to travel Europe sharing their skills and 'mystery'. Evidence of their actual existence is singularly lacking. The traditions and records of the German *Steinmezen* and French *Compagnonage* were diligently searched for traces of a speculative element, but none was found. The evidence comes back all the time to the appearance of non-operative masonry in England in the seventeenth century."

- John Hamill, *The Craft, A History of English Freemasonry*

"By the seventeenth century, as the number and stature of masons grew, some lodges had begun to admit honorary members who were not stoneworkers. The London Masons' Company founded the **Acception**, a parallel organization for that purpose, in 1619. It took in as 'accepted Masons' men who did not belong to the company but who were willing to pay double the initiation fee."

- "Freemasons; Mortar and Mysticism", *Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects*

"...Elias Ashmole was one of the first recorded inductees into the Freemasons, but the actual first recorded induction was Dr. Robert Moray in Edinburgh in 1641. Both Ashmole and Moray were founding members of the British Royal Society."

- Gerry Rose, "The Venetian Takeover of England and Its Creation of Freemasonry"

Ashmole was an admirer of the Knights Templars. Even after their trial, the Templars were

" a noble Order, no less famous for martial achievements in the east, than their wealthy possessions in the west...Which gave occasion to many sober men to judge, that their wealth was their greatest crime."

- Elias Ashmole, *Institutions, Laws and Ceremonies of the most noble Order of the Garter* (1672)

"Masonry became so fashionable that as the seventeenth century progressed the 'acceptance' (the collective term for non-stonemasons) became the majority in the masonic Lodges. For example, in 1670, the Aberdeen Lodge had thirty-nine 'accepted' members while only ten remained 'operative' masons."

In England, "one thing united a majority of politically conscious people at this time: the need to preserve the gain of

the Civil War of 1642-51 - the limitation of the power of the King."

"Much was eaten much was drunk, and much was discussed in the privacy of masonic meeting places (usually taverns) after the rather dry formal doings in Lodge were over. The 'better' the Lodge - in the sense of social class - the 'better' the conversation and the more lavish and expensive the entertainment....The sights of its prime movers were already set on a movement underpinning a type of society admirably suited to its purposes: a stable society with limited social mobility in which a secret inner 'Old Boy' association could provide an environment where considerable benefit could be gained by members who knew how to 'play the masonic organ'"

- Stephen Knight, *The Brotherhood*

"A Mason's life's the life for me,
With joy we meet each other,
We pass our time with mirth and glee,
And hail each friendly brother:
In lodge no party-feuds are seen,
But careful we in this agree,
To banish care or spleen.
The Master's call, we one and all
With pleasure soon obey;
With heart and hand we ready stand,
Our duty still to pay.
But when the glass goes round,
Then mirth and glee about,
We're all happy to a man;
We laugh a little, we drink a little,
We work a little, we play a little."

....

"Th' Almighty said, 'Let there be light,'
Effulgent rays appearing.
Dispell'd the gloom, the glory bright
To this new world was cheering;
But unto Masonry alone,
Another light, so clear and bright,
In mystic rays then shone;
From east to west it spread so fast,
That, Faith and Hope unfurl'd,
We hail with joy sweet Charity,
The darling of the world.
Then while the toast goes round,
Then mirth and glee about,
Let's be happy to a man;
We'll laugh a little, we'll drink a little,
We'll work a little, and play a little."

- from J. Bisset, "Song XXX" in William Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry* (1804)

(2) The Invisible College

"We can be sure that the Royal society germinated from the hothouse of thinking that was released by [Bacon's](#) definition of the Second Degree of Freemasonry well before people such as Ashmole and Wilkins pierced it all back together after the traumas of the Civil War."

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

"We date the formation [of the British Royal Society] earlier than was previously thought. There was a series of meetings in England in 1640. This is an important year because it was the beginning of the Long Parliament. Comenius and Samuel Hartlib were involved. Comenius was originally from Bohemia, and was

in the Palatinate during the fateful Rosecrucian years, along with the Englishman Samuel Hartlib, with whom he was in close contact. With the defeat of the Palatinate they both, through different routes, end up in England. When the Long Parliament started, there was another outburst of ecstatic literature [following the dissemination of Rosecrucian pamphlets]. One piece written by Hartlib in 1640, "A Description of the Famous Kingdom of Macaria," is a utopian work addressed to the attention of the Long Parliament. A year later, Comenius wrote 'The Way of Light'. They call for an 'Invisible College', which is a Rosicrucian code name."

"Now the plot thickens. In 1645, a meeting takes place for a discussion of the natural sciences. Present at the meeting are Mr. Theodore Haak from the Palatinate and Dr. John Wilkins, who at the time was the chaplain to the elector of Palatine. Wilkins was the man behind the Oxford meetings which become, in 1660, the British Royal Society. Another founder of the Royal Society was Robert Boyle, who in letters in 1646, refers to, again, an invisible college. John Wilkins writes a book in 1648 called *Mathematical Magic*, in which he explicitly mentions the Rosy Cross and pays homage to occultists Robert Fludd and John Dee.

"The key to the actual Rosicrucian tradition in the British Royal Society is Elias Ashmole. He was unabashedly a Rosicrucian and in 1654 wrote a letter to ask the 'Rosicrucians to allow him to join their fraternity'. His scientific works were a defense of John Dee's work, in particular Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphicas*, and the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* of 1652. This is a compilation of all the alchemical writings by English authors. In the opening of this work he praises a mythical event in which a brother of the Rosy Cross cures the Earl of Norfolk of leprosy.

"Ashmole was one of the official founding members of the British Royal Society. The other major, explicitly Rosicrucian figure was Isaac Newton. He had copies of both the 'Fama' and the 'Confessio' in his possession, and the book compiled by Ashmole, *The Theatrum*, was Newton's bible. Also...Newton had a series of papers on the book of Daniel calculating the end times."

"Historian Frances Yates, in her book *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, in a chapter entitled 'Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry', quotes one De Quincey, who states, 'Freemasonry is neither more nor less than Rosicrucianism as modified by those who transplanted it in England, whence it was re-exported to the other countries of Europe'. De Quincey states that Robert Fludd was the person most responsible for bringing Rosicrucianism to England and giving it its new name. What is fascinating is that Elias Ashmole was one of the first recorded inductees into the Freemasons, but the actual first recorded induction was Dr. Robert Moray in Edinburgh in 1641. Both Ashmole and Moray were founding members of the **British Royal Society**."

- Gerry Rose, "The Venetian Takeover of England and Its Creation of Freemasonry"

"Men of science in London, Oxford, and Cambridge met in secret in what has been termed an 'invisible college', which now appears to have existed in secret Masonic lodges in those areas. Their first secret meeting was held in 1645, just three years after the death of Galileo. By 1660, the group felt secure enough in the apparently Protestant reign of Charles II to petition the crown for a royal charter, which was granted in 1662. The name they chose was The Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge..."

- John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood*

"While there are many stories about the ancient origins of the Freemasons, here is an announcement for one of their meetings in 1676: 'To give notice that the Modern Green-ribboned Cabal, together with the ancient brotherhood of the Rosy Cross: the Hermetic Adepts and the company of Accepted Masons....' It is interesting to note how clear the tradition is."

- Gerry Rose, "The Venetian Takeover of England and Its Creation of Freemasonry"

"When Freemasonry came public in 1717...it appeared that the Royal Society was virtually a Masonic subsidiary, with almost every member and every founding member of the Royal Society a Freemason."

- John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood*

(3) The New Grand Lodge System

"The new Grand Lodge system established at the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse in 1717 consisted at first of only one level (degree) of initiation. Within five years of the Lodge's founding, two additional degrees were added so that the system consisted of three steps: **Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason**. These steps are commonly called the '**Blue Degrees**' because the color blue is symbolically important in them."

- William Bramley, *The Gods of Eden*

"We believe that the current content of the three degrees of Craft Freemasonry was already present in just two degrees prior to Schaw's reorganization that inserted an extra level of speculative masonry in between Entered Apprentice and Master Mason (which was originally known as the Master's Part). This new degree was introduced and designated the Fellow Craft, derived we think from the fact that these masons were not workers in stone but workers in the 'fellow craft' of speculative masonry. We are now sure that this degree was a development of the Mark Mason degree (and not the other way around as most Masons believe)."

- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

The "Scottish operative lodges began in the seventeenth century to admit non-operative members as *accepted or gentleman* masons and that by the early eighteenth century in some lodges the accepted or gentleman masons had gained the ascendancy: those lodges became, in turn speculative lodges, whilst others continued their purely operative nature. The speculative lodges eventually combined to form the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736."

- John Hamill, *The Craft, A History of English Freemasonry*

"The 'craft' of Freemasonry was one of the more extraordinary manifestations of the Age of Reason, typical of its time not only because it stood for rationalism, deism, and benevolence, but also because of the ambiguity which turned one side of its affairs from rationality to mystery. It was in one way an emanation of that most British of institutions, the club. It took shape during the first three decades of the eighteenth century, and reflected the tolerance and the confidence of Hanoverian England. Its ideology, founded on the metaphors of the architecture of the universe and the building of the Temple, was deist and non-confessional. The Freemason obliged himself to submit to the civil power, whose benevolent nature was assumed; this optimism was typical of British Whig self-assurance. The Mason asserted a non-clerical ethos, and a middlebrow and commonsensical attitude to life. He claimed to be instructed and enlightened, but he did not set up to be learned; this distinguished his society from those of the contemporary 'academies'."

- Peter Partner, *The Murdered Magicians*

"Toward the end of the 1730s, there were lodges in Belgium, Russia, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland. But it seemed to have a special appeal in France, partly because of the rage then current there for all things British. In 1735, there five Masonic lodges in Paris; by 1742, the number was twenty-two. Some forty-five years later, on the eve of the French Revolution, there were perhaps 100,000 Masons in France."

- *Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects*

"By 1730 when the Roman Catholic Duke of Norfolk was installed (prior to the first papal condemnation of Freemasonry in 1738), there had been nine Grand Masters, six of them nobles. The first royal Grand Master was the Duke of Cumberland, younger son of George II, who was installed in 1782, with an Acting Grand Master, the Earl of Effingham as his proxy. In 1787 both the Prince of Wales (the future George IV) and his brother William (the future William IV) were initiated. The patronage by the Royal Family of the new secret society was thenceforth assured. Queen Elizabeth II is the present Grand Patroness."

- Stephen Knight, *The Brotherhood*