

The Regius Manuscript

1: Foundation of Masonry

Hic incipiunt constituciones artis gemetrie secundum Euclydem.	Here begin the constitutions of the art of Geometry according to Euclid.
Whose wol bothe wel rede and loke, He may fynde wryte yn olde boke Of grete lordys and eke ladyysse, That had many chyldryn y-fere, y-wisse; And hade no rentys to fynde hem wyth, Nowther yn towne, ny felde, ny fryth: A counsel togeder they cowthe hem take;	Whoever will both well read and look He may find written in old book Of great lords and also ladies, That had many children together, certainly; And had no income to keep them with, Neither in town nor field nor enclosed wood; A council together they could them take,
To ordeyne for these chyldryn sake, How they myzth best lede here lyfe Withoute fret desese, care and stryge; And most for the multytude that was comynge Of here chyldryn after here zyndynge. (They) sende thenne after grete clerkys, To techyn hem thenne gode werkys;	To ordain for these children's sake, How they might best lead their life Without great disease, care and strife; And most for the multitude that was coming Of the children after them. They sent then after great clerks, To teach them then good works;
And pray we hem, for our Lordys sake, To oure chyldryn sum werke to make, That they myzth gete here lynnge therby, Bothe wel and onestlyche, ful sycurly. Yn that tyme, throzgh good gemetry, Thys onest craft of good masonry	And pray we them, for our Lord's sake. To our children some work to make, That they might get their living thereby, Both well and honestly full securely. In that time, through good geometry, This honest craft of good masonry

<p>Wes ordeynt and made yn thys manere, Y-cownterfetyd of thys clerkys y-fere; At these lordys prayers they cownter- fetyd gemetry,</p>	<p>Was ordained and made in this manner, Counterfeited of these clerks together; At these lord's prayers they counter- feited geometry,</p>
<p>And zaf hyt the name of masonry, For the moste oneste craft of alle. These lordys chyldryn therto dede falle, To lurne of hym the craft of gemetry, The wheche he made ful curysly;</p>	<p>And gave it the name of masonry, For the most honest craft of all. These lords' children thereto did fall, To learn of him the craft of geometry, The which he made full curiously;</p>
<p>Throzgh fadrys prayers and modrys also, Thys onest craft he putte hem to. He that lerned best, and were of oneste, And passud hys felows yn curyste; Zef yn that craft he dede hym passe, He schulde have more worschepe then the lasse. Thys frete clerkys name was clept Euclide, Hys name hyt spradde ful wondur wyde. Zet thys grete clerke more ordeynt he To hym that was herre yn thys degre, That he schulde teche the synplyst of (wytte) Yn that onest craft to be parfytte; And so uchon schulle techyn othur, And love togeder as syster and brothur.</p>	<p>Through fathers' prayers and mothers' also, This honest craft he put them to. He learned best, and was of honesty, And passed his fellows in curiosity, If in that craft he did him pass, He should have more worship than the less, This great clerk's name was Euclid, His name it spread full wonder wide. Yet this great clerk ordained he To him that was higher in this degree, That he should teach the simplest of wit In that honest craft to be perfect; And so each one shall teach the other, And love together as sister and brother.</p>
<p>Forthermore zet that ordeynt he, Mayster y-called so schulde he be;</p>	<p>Furthermore yet that ordained he, Master called so should he be;</p>

<p>So that he were most y-worschepede, Thenne schulde he be so y-clepede:</p>	<p>So that he were most worshipped, Then should he be so called;</p>
<p>But mason schulde never won other calle, Withynne the craft amongus hem alle, Ny soget, ny servant, my dere brother, Thazht he be not so perfyte as ys another; Uchon sculle calle other felows by cuthe, For cause they come of ladyes burthe.</p>	<p>But masons should never one another call, Within the craft amongst them all, Neither subject nor servant, my dear brother, Though he be not so perfect as is another; Each shall call other fellows by friendship, Because they come of ladies' birth.</p>
<p>On thys maner, throz good wytte of gemetry, Bygan furst the craft of masonry: The clerk Euclide on thys wyse hyt fonde, Thys craft of gemetry yn Egypte londe.</p>	<p>On this manner, through good wit of geometry, Began first the craft of masonry; The clerk Euclid on this wise it found, This craft of geometry in Egypt land.</p>
<p>Yn Egypte he tawzhte hyt ful wyde, Yn dyvers londe on every syde; Mony erys afterwarde, y understonde, Zer that the craft com ynto thys londe,</p>	<p>In Egypt he taught it full wide, In divers lands on every side; Many years afterwards, I understand, Ere that the craft came into this land.</p>