

KANSAS COLLEGE

Light from the Heartland

Societas Rosicruciana
in Civitatibus Foederatis

A Quarterly Newsletter

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From the Secretary's Desk

Fraters,

It is my pleasure to present the first quarterly newsletter of the Kansas College — a modest publication, offered in the hope that it may inform, edify, and strengthen the bonds of our fraternity between our convocations.

In this issue you will find, besides the Chief Adept's announcement of elevations, two offerings. First, the beginning of a recurring article on spiritual practice: an explanation and step-by-step guide to the Middle Pillar exercise, a Golden Dawn meditation on the central column of the Tree of Life whose symbolism will be familiar to every Frater. And second, two reprints from the pages of *Ad Lucem*: William G. Peacher's account of the Matier Royal Provincial College — the first Masonic Rosicrucian College in the United States — and Frater David Wilkinson's "The Square and Compass, Rose and Cross," from *Ad Lucem* XV (2008), examining the old and much-debated question of the Rosicrucian–Masonic connection.

For this first issue I have relied on reprinted articles; my hope for issues to come is that they will carry articles written by our own Fraters. I welcome your contributions — papers, book notices, historical notes, and items of College news. Please send them to the Secretary.

Gary Strout Secretary, Kansas College Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis

Announcements

High Council Session — registration now open. The 2026 SRICF High Council Session convenes in Lewisville this November, and registration is now open on the SRICF web page. Fraters will find meal and event registration at sricf.org — see "High Council Meal & Event Registration Links" (https://sricf.org/high-council-meal-event-registration-links/). The 2026 registration form for payment by check is available now (online card payment is coming soon); completed forms with checks are mailed to: SRICF High Council, P.O. Box 85, Ellettsville, IN 47429-0085.

Frater Wayne Rollf, 9th Grade, Chief Adept of the Kansas College, announces the following elevations at the upcoming High Council Session in Lewisville in November:

- Frater Gary Strout to 9th Grade
- Frater H. Wayne Rector to 9th Grade
- Frater Jack Ellis to 8th Grade
- Frater Brian Kremer to 8th Grade



Kansas Fraters at the Triennial

Many Fraters of the Kansas College recently journeyed to Washington, D.C., to represent Kansas at the Triennial Meeting of the General Grand Chapter and the General Grand Council.

The College congratulates Frater Patrick Carr, elected General Grand Scribe, and Frater Gary Strout, appointed Ambassador to the State of Kansas.



Fraters of the Kansas College at the Triennial Meeting of the General Grand Chapter and General Grand Council, Washington, D.C.

Spiritual Practice: The Middle Pillar Exercise

In each issue of this newsletter, the Secretary will offer a spiritual practice for the Fraters' private devotions. An honest word first: the exercise below is not part of the SRICF ritual system, and no College paper teaches it. It comes to us from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, made widely known by Israel Regardie (1907–1985) in his 1938 book The Middle Pillar. *It is offered here because the ground it walks is ground our own rituals already consecrate: the balanced Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life, and the ascent from Yesod toward the light of Tiphareth.*

What it is

The Middle Pillar is a standing meditation. The practitioner visualizes a column of divine light descending through five centers arranged along the body's midline — the Middle Pillar of the Qabalistic Tree of Life — vibrating a Hebrew Divine Name at each center, then circulates the gathered light around the body. Regardie presented it as a bridge between ceremonial magic and psychology: a way of equilibrating the personality by consciously aligning oneself with the archetypal forces of the Tree, and of strengthening what the Golden Dawn called the "sphere of sensation," the aura.

The resonance with our own symbolism is genuine. The Zelator certificate exposition of our sister Society (SRIA) names the three Pillars — Mercy, Severity (or Justice), and Mildness, the middle — with Malkuth, Yesod, and Tiphareth upon the Middle Pillar; and the Adeptus Minor ritual describes the Philosophus "returned to Yesod on the middle pillar," looking upward toward Tiphareth, "the Christ-centre," with the hidden Sephira of Daath beyond. Our College study guide, *The Seven Steps of Wisdom* (Maryland College), likewise maps the First Order grades to Malkuth, Yesod, Hod, and Netzach, and the Adept grades to Tiphareth, Geburah, and Chesed. The Frater who practices this exercise is therefore borrowing a Golden Dawn working — but walking, in contemplation, the same central column our grades ascend.

The practice, step by step

Work in a quiet place, standing with feet together, traditionally facing east. Breathe slowly and rhythmically throughout. (In the full Golden Dawn sequence the exercise is bracketed by the Qabalistic Cross and the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram; it may also stand alone.)

1. Kether — the Crown. Visualize a sphere of brilliant white light just above the head, and feel a beam of light descend into the crown. Vibrate the Divine Name **EHEIEH** (*Eh-heh-yeh*, "I Am") four times, feeling the name resonate through the sphere.

2. Daath — the Throat. Let the light descend and form a sphere at the throat, visualized in lavender or grey. Vibrate **YHVH ELOHIM** (*Yeh-hoh-voh Eh-loh-heem*) four times.

3. Tiphareth — the Heart. Let the light descend to the center of the chest (the heart or solar plexus), a sphere of gold. Vibrate **YHVH ELOAH VE-DAATH** (*Yeh-hoh-voh Eh-loh-ah veh-Dah-aht*) four times. This is the seat of equilibrium and balance.

4. Yesod — the Foundation. Let the light descend to the pelvic center, a sphere of violet. Vibrate **SHADDAI EL CHAI** (*Shah-dai El Khai*, "Almighty Living God") four times.

5. Malkuth — the Kingdom. Let the light descend to the feet, a sphere beneath and including the feet, traditionally visualized in russet, olive, citrine, and black (or simply brown). Vibrate **ADONAI HA-ARETZ** (*Ah-doh-nai hah-Ah-retz*, "Lord of Earth") four times.

Now see the Middle Pillar complete: a shaft of light running from crown to feet through the center of the body.

6. The Circulation of the Light. Using the rhythmic breath, circulate the light, each circulation performed several times:

- *Side to side:* exhaling, see the light descend the **left** side of the body from Kether to Malkuth; inhaling, see it rise up the **right** side back to Kether.
- *Front to back:* the light descends from Kether down the front of the body to Malkuth, then rises up the back to Kether.
- *The shower:* visualize a fountain of light rising up through the center of the body from Malkuth to Kether, then cascading down *outside* the body like a shower of light, re-entering at the feet.
- *The ascending spiral (optional):* see the light rise in a ribbon spiraling around the outside of the body from Malkuth to Kether.

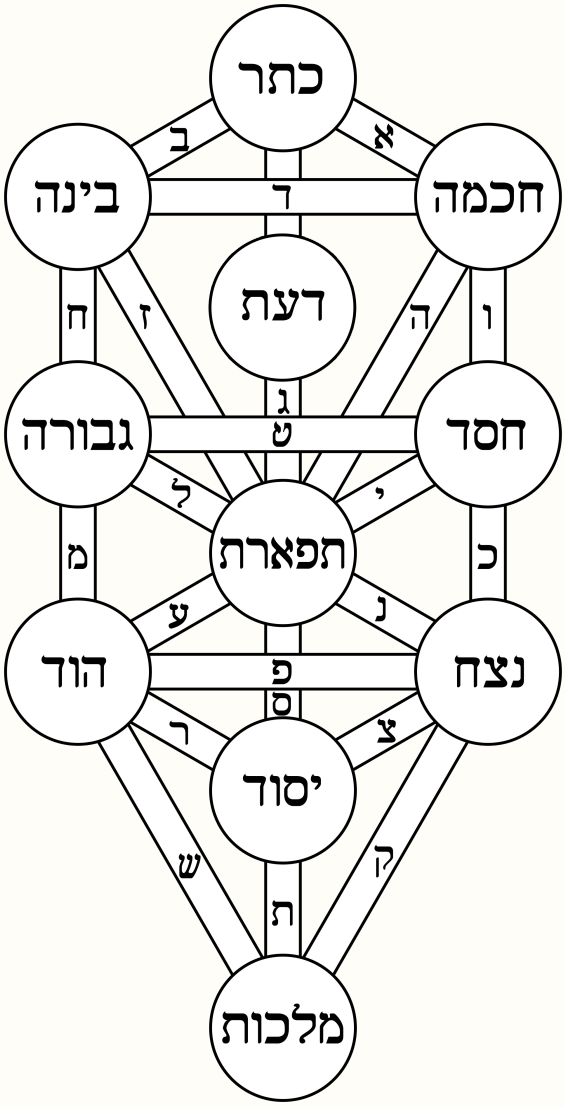
7. Closing. Rest in the image of the complete Pillar and the circulating light as long as you wish. To close, gather some of the energy back into the Tiphareth center — the seat of equilibrium and balance. In the full sequence, close with a banishing and the Qabalistic Cross.

Practice gently and regularly rather than forcefully; ten to fifteen minutes daily is ample. As with all such work, the aim is balance — the Middle Pillar between Mercy and Severity, Mildness between the extremes.

— *G. S.*

Sources

- Israel Regardie, *The Middle Pillar: The Balance Between Mind and Magic*, ed. Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero, 3rd ed. (Llewellyn, 2004; 1st ed. 1938). Full text via Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/IsraelRegardie-TheMiddlePillar-EditedAndAnnotatedWithNewMaterialBy/IsraelRegardie-TheMiddlePillar-EditedAndAnnotatedWithNewMaterialByChicCiceroSandraTabathaCicero-2004_djvu.txt
- "Encyclopedia: Middle Pillar Exercise," Llewellyn Worldwide: https://www.llewellyn.com/encyclopedia/article/26326
- SRIA Zelator Certificate Explanation and Adeptus Minor ritual, via Internet Archive ("S.R.I.A. Material"): https://archive.org/stream/SRIA-Material/Zelator/Zelator%20Cert%20Explanation_djvu.txt and https://archive.org/stream/SRIA-Material/SRIA%20Degrees/Adeptus%20Minor_djvu.txt
- *The Seven Steps of Wisdom* (Maryland College, SRICF): https://mdsricf.org/Study%20Guide%20-%20Seven%20Steps%20of%20Wisdom.pdf



The Tree of Life: the ten sephiroth joined by the twenty-two paths (after Athanasius Kircher, Oedipus Aegyptiacus, 1652)

Matier Royal Provincial College: The First Masonic Rosicrucian College in the United States

Reprinted from Ad Lucem *II (1990), pp. 1–5, the annual journal of the High Council, Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis.*

William G. Peacher, M.D., IX°, Supreme Magus

The main purpose of this report has been to research all known information regarding the first known Masonic Rosicrucian College in the United States as well as the career of Dr. Jonathan John French who not only contributed so very much in establishing this College but did so much in another appendant Order, The Red Cross of Constantine. He was, therefore, the first Chief Adept of the new College (1878), the first Sovereign of St. Johns Conclave, RCC (1872) both in Chicago, and the first Grand Sovereign (1872) of what was to become the Empire of the West and subsequently the United Imperial Council. French also became Grand Recorder (1874-1879), and served also as Grand Master of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters (1877).

Unfortunately, this Rosicrucian College did not survive for more than a year due to French's untimely death in 1879. Fortunately, however, there have been two Colleges subsequently organized in Chicago both named Illinois College. The first was active from 12-11-1934 to 12-19-1940 and the second was warranted on 9-26-1974 and continues to be quite active.

In respect to both the first Rosicrucian College and Dr. French, Voorhis, Walker and Glad have collected and summarized the available pertinent information which I have reviewed thoroughly. All primary sources of data have been investigated including the libraries of the House of the Temple, A. & A.S.R., S.M.J., Edward A. Glad at the United Grand Imperial Council, R.C.C., Grand Lodge of Scotland, United Grand Lodges of England, S.R.I.A. and S.T.R.S. as well as my own extensive collection. This was done, of course, in my effort to find perhaps some new useful material of importance and the results of this extensive investigation has prompted this report.

I would like to quote initially the history of Illinois College given in Voorhis "The History of Masonic Rosicrucianism" which was included in each of his three volumes, "The first S.R.I.S. College was constituted on October 24, 1873: Metropolitan or the East of Scotland College, the first charter issued was in May 1878 to Jonathan John French of Illinois, U.S.A., but there is no record that it was formed."

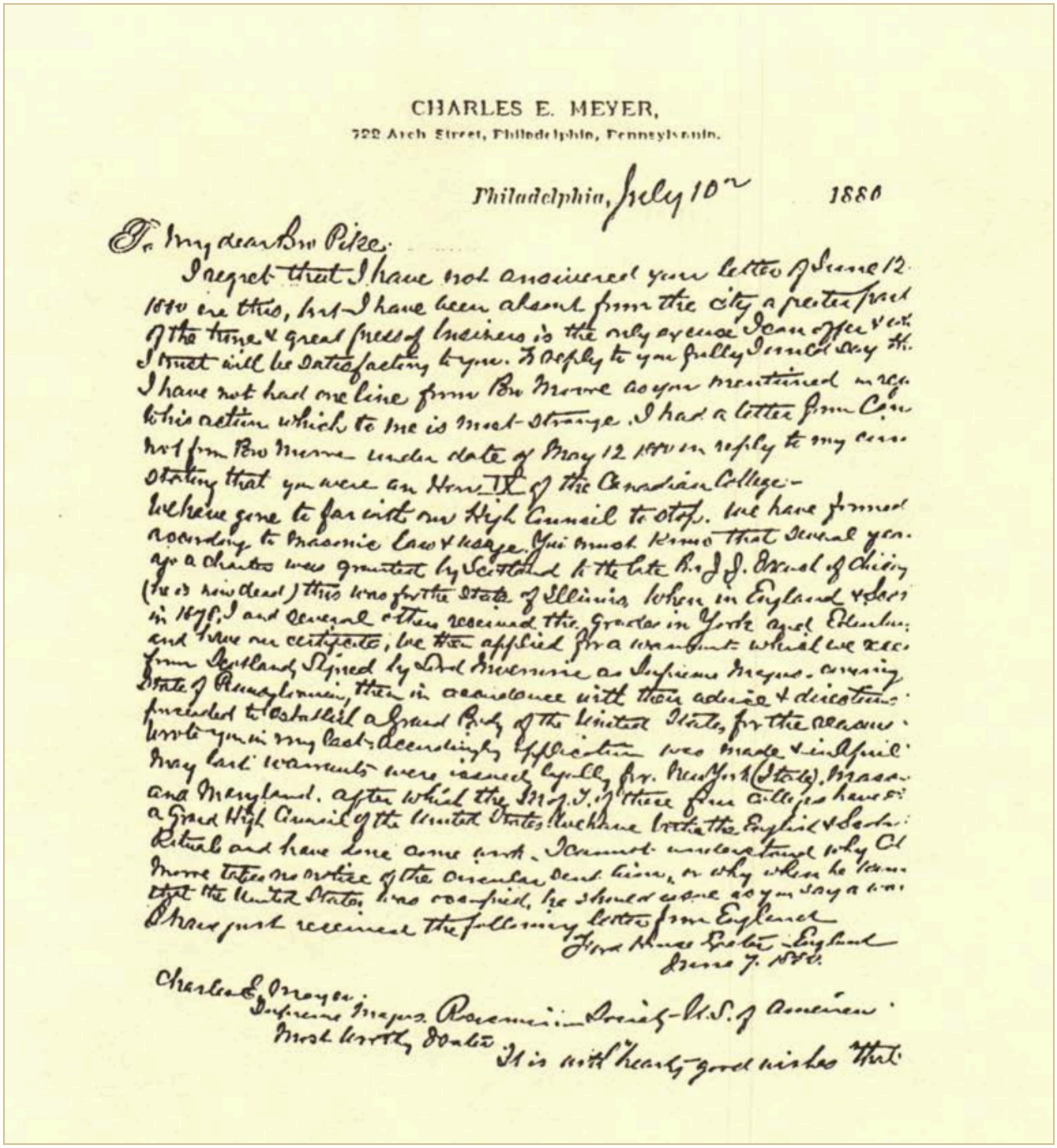
"The first reference concerning the Matier Royal Provincial College was found in a letter from M.W. Charles F. Meyer, first Supreme Magus of the Society in the United States to Albert Pike, Washington, D.C. dated July 10, 1880. Nothing was known concerning this College in America." The above letter is quoted in part "You must know that several years ago a charter was granted by Scotland to the late Bro. J.J. French of Chicago - This was for the State of Illinois."

M.W. Frater J. Mason Allan, Supreme Magus, S.R.I.S., 1931-1961 wrote to Voorhis in answer to his inquiry on August 24, 1933 "We have only this month received an old chartulary which contains as a first charter entry one in favor of Jonathan John French, Magister Templi, VII°, (Veritas vis Amicitiae) Honorary 9°, of Scotland, which gave him authority to open and hold a College for the state of Illinois. The copy, however is incomplete in two respects, 1) While it was granted in the month of May 1878, that day of the month has not been entered and 2) the names of the Magi who origined the charter has not been entered." Voorhis then stated "There is nothing known concerning the outcome of the J.J. French - Illinois College."

I was particularly anxious to see this old chartulary that Mason discovered in 1933 but after a number of trips to Scotland from 1987 to 1990 carefully searching the archives on each occasion, sadly it could not be located.

In that Voorhis had not included the complete letter from Charles Meyer to Albert Pike dated July 10, 1880, as quoted from above, I wrote to Mrs. Inge Baum, Librarian, House of the Temple, A. & A.S.R., 33°, S.M.J. to see if the original letter was still in existence. Ill. Reynold J. Matthews, 33°, replied in the affirmative on June 14, 1988. Unfortunately, Pike's letter of June 12, 1880 to which Meyer referred to could not be found. Both Mathews letter to me and Meyer's letter to Pike are given below in full for historical purposes.

> June 14, 1988
>
> William G. Peacher, M.D., IX°
> Supreme Magus
> The High Council
> Societas Rosicruciana
> In Civitatibus Foederatus
> 6152 Hawarden Drive
> Riverside, CA 92506
>
> Dear Brother Peacher:
>
> Having succeeded Ill. Bro. Aemil Pouler, 33°, G.C., with respect to the Archives of the Supreme Council 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, USA, Mrs. Baum referred your request concerning an 1880 letter to Ill. Bro. Albert Pike to me.
>
> I have indeed found the letter from Charles E. Meyer to Ill. Bro. Albert Pike dated July 10th, 1880, a copy of which is enclosed. For your information, the serial numbers 54 and 55 on the letter are part of Bro. Meyer's original stationery and are not of a Supreme Council origin. Unfortunately, I cannot find Ill. Bro. Pike's letter of June 12, 1880, to which Bro. Meyer refers.
>
> It was a pleasure to be able to accommodate your request.
>
> Sincerely and fraternally,
> Ill. Reynold J. Matthews, 33°
>
> Encl: (1) Copy of Charles E. Meyer letter of July 10, 1880 to Ill. Bro. Albert Pike



CHARLES E. MEYER,
722 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia, July 10th 1880

To My dear Bro Pike.

I regret that I have not answered your letter of June 12 1880 ere this, but I have been absent from the city a portion of the time & great press of business is the only excuse I can offer & which I trust will be satisfactory to you. To reply to you fully I could say that I have not had one line from Bro Moore as you mentioned in reference to his action which to me is most strange. I had a letter from Comr Hart from Bro Moore under date of May 12 1880 in reply to my com stating that you were an Hon IX of the Canadian College — We have gone to far with our High Council to stop. We have formed according to Masonic Law & usage. You must know that several years ago a charter was granted by Scotland to the late Bro J. J. Wood of Chicago (he is now dead) this was for the state of Illinois when in England & Scotland in 1874 I and several others received the Grades in York and Edenburgh and have our certificate, we then applied for a warrant which we received from Scotland Signed by Lord Inverurie as Supreme Magus. covering State of Pennsylvania, then in accordance with their advice & directions proceeded to Establish a Grand Body of the United States, for the reasons I wrote you in my last. Accordingly application was made & in April May last warrants were issued by Lord Inverurie (Scotland) for New York (State), Massachusetts and Maryland. after which the M.P.G.M. of these four Colleges have formed a Grand High Council of the United States. We have both the England & Scotland Rituals and have long since past. I cannot understand why Comr Moore takes no notice of the circular sent him, or why when he knows that the United States has complied, he should ask us to say a word. I have just received the following letter from England

Grand Lodge England
June 7. 1880

Charles E. Meyer.
Supreme Magus Rosicrucian Society U.S. of America.
Most Worthy Sir

It is with hearty good wishes that

Facsimile of Charles E. Meyer's July 10, 1880 letter to Albert Pike, from the archives of the House of the Temple

It has been my custom to visit Chicago anually since 1986 during the first weekend of December to attend annual meetings of Illinois College, S.R.I.C.F., Simon Peter Tabernacle No. XXII and St. Johns Conclave, R.C.C. I also spend all day at the office of the United Imperial Council, R.C.C. through the courtesy of G. Wilbur Bell, Grand Recorder for the express purpose of obtaining masonic historical reference material from the Edward A. Glad Library for my reports as Chairman of Masonic Education and Service. During my trip in 1988, I came across a most significant and valuable historical letter which not only confirmed that this Rosicrucian College was active in Chicago, Illinois but gave its name "Matier Royal Provincial College" and its membership was limited to thirty-six. Additional data in this letter will serve further for future masonic historical research with particular reference to a Grand College of Rites that French had organized. This letter is reprinted here in full.

> GRAND IMPERIAL COUNCIL
> State of Illinois
>
> Chicago, 17th March, 1879
>
> Sir John O. Dominis 33° Elect,
> Governor of Oahu, Hawaiian Kingdom.
>
> Execellent Sir and Dear Frater:
>
> It gives me great pleasure to enclose you these slight tokens of regard from the Grand Imperial Council of Illinois, which we beg you to accept, and with it our high esteem for you personally, and appreciation for your long and eminent services in the cause of Masonry.
>
> In conferring this Rank upon you, we are aware that it may be impracticable at present to introduce the Rite into your Kingdom, which it would give us great pleasure to do, yet it is our desire to have a Representative, should it please His Majesty., the King, where the star of Masonry has been shining for many years.
>
> It gives me pleasure also to have appointed you a Grand Cross of the Order of Red Cross of Rome and Constantine, which is the Honorary Decoration of the Order.
>
> I have also the honor to beg you to accept an Honorary Membership in the "Matier Royal Provincial College" of the Rosicrucian Society of the United States, which holds a Charter from the Grand High Council of Scotland, and which is the only College in the United States. The membership of my Illinois College is limited strictly to 36, which confers the VII°. The two highest grades are at present conferred only in Europe.
>
> A Provincial Grand Lodge of the Royal Order of Scotland was recently established in Washington, D.C. with its membership strictly limited to about 150 Knights. Ill. Frater Albert Pike is Prov. Grand Master, I obtained the orders in Canada before the organization of the Prov. G.L. in Washington.
>
> I have established a Grand College of Rites, embracing a number of Foreign Rites and Degrees never before conferred in this country, and to any of which you and His Majesty, the King, will be welcome.
>
> May it please His Majesty to accept our fraternal regards. I have the honor to be, My Dear Sir and Frater.
>
> Yours faithfully and fraternally,
>
> J.J. FRENCH, M.D. 32° IX°
> Grand Recorder and Chief Int. Gen'l. Ills.
> H.R.M. and R.S.Y.C.S., Royal Order
> of Scotland, P. Grand Master G.C. of R.
> and S.M. Illinois, etc.
>
> Chicago

French named his college after Charles Fitzgerald Matier, the first Supreme Magus of S.R.I.S. who served in 1876. His masonic biography was given in considerable detail in Greensill's history of S.R.I.A. published in 1987 on the occasion of its 120th anniversary. Matier distinguished himself in all branches of masonry for many years culminating in being elected as Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons in 1889 a post he held until his death in 1914.

In reviewing the Archives if S.R.I.S. I found that the Supreme Magus who granted Dr. French's charter was Lord Inverurie who succeeded his father as the Earl of Kincore in 1880. He served in this capacity from 1877-1893. The Senior Substitute Magus at that time was H.Y.D. Copland (1877-1882) and the Junior Substitute Magus was D. Murray Lyon (1877-1881).

Reprint

A note on the reprint. The article that follows is reproduced verbatim — spelling, punctuation, and endnotes preserved — from *Ad Lucem* XV (2008), pp. 57–86, the annual journal of the High Council, Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis.

David Wilkinson, "The Square and Compass, Rose and Cross: An Examination into the Rosicrucian-Masonic Connection," *Ad Lucem* XV (2008), 57–86.

AD LUCEM XV · 2008

The Square and Compass, Rose and Cross

An Examination into the Rosicrucian-Masonic Connection

DAVID WILKINSON

David Wilkinson is currently serving as Worshipful Master of Richmond Lodge #413, Augusta, Georgia.

When you first see the 18th degree title Knight Rose Croix, or hear its name spoken, three questions inevitably come to mind.

1) **Who were the Rose Croix, the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, or Rosicrucians?**

2) **Is Knight Rose Croix a Rosicrucian degree?**

3) **Is there a connection between Pre-Grand Lodge Freemasonry and the original Rosicrucians?**

I think you'll inspire a lively debate on any of the three questions you ask a brother Mason, and two out of three with the man on the street; provided he has watched the History channel, read one or more of the peculiar conspiracy theories currently so popular with the masses, or perhaps heard a rather odd sermon one Sunday.

Who were the Rosicrucians? All that can ever be known for certain about the Rosicrucians is contained within two small works once circulated throughout Europe.[1] The first was released in manuscript form in 1610, under the title translated into English as, *Fama Fraternitatis of the Meritorious Order of the Rosy Cross addressed to the Learned in General and the Governors of Europe.*[2] Even prior to the Fama's actual printing at Cassel in 1614 attempts were already underway to contact the Rosicrucian Order. The second work was published in 1615 at Frankfurt-am-Main and translated as *The Confessio Fraternitatis* or *The Confession of the Rosicrucian Fraternity addressed to the Learned of Europe.*[3] The year 1615 also marks the publication by Johann Valentine Andreae's *The Chymical Marriage of Christian Rosenkreutz*, which the author hoped to pawn off on a hungry public hankering after Rosicrucian material.[4] The two Rosicrucian Manifestos list the founder of the Order as 'C.R.C.' but Andreae's work actually names the Order's founder as Christian Rosenkreutz. The confusion caused by this pseudo-Rosicrucian work extends to this very day, causing researchers to still occasionally mistakenly name the Order's founder as one Christian Rosenkreutz[5]

It was also in 1615 that the trail grew suddenly cold and all contact with the Order was lost. In the words of Mr. Spock, "there are but two

possibilities; they are unable to respond, they are unwilling to respond."[6] In either case the result was the same.

"As the people became infatuated with the idea of becoming Rosicrucians, and no real society of Adepts could be found, they organized Rosicrucian societies without any real Adepts, and thus a great many so-called Rosicrucian societies came into existence."[7]

After the manifestos, *Fama Fraternitatis* and *The Confessio Fraternitatis* became public domain, they formed the basis of a sort of 'Internet Rosicrucian Blog', an internet of pamphlets and books, extremely complicated symbolic drawings, emblematic charts, and patents. The retorts and apologies of numerous authors mixed together; some profound, some unsound, in the laboratory of public opinion. The words of Magus and madness were blended together in the Crucible of Urban Legend. It is this form of Rosicrucianism, the one created in the public gossip, that the preacher should defame and the thoughtful Freemason may disregard out of hand.

But who were the real Rosicrucians, the authors of the two original Manifestos, those of whom all others were mere imitations; for to have an imitation it naturally follows that there must be an original?

As one might imagine, upon entering this world at the frontiers of documented Masonic history, each fact has been carefully weighed by two apposing schools of thought. The first is the 'Romantic school' known for being more sensational, more willing to connect the dots, and thus more popular with the masses. The second is the 'Authentic school' which is more scholarly, demonstrating restraint by sticking to the facts, and often perceived by even the Masons themselves as boring. As usual, the truth lies somewhere in between.

Following the 'Romantic School' for a moment, we return to the letters C.R.C. mentioned earlier. Remember in Andrea's *Chymical Marriage*, C.R.C. refers to the founder of the Order—one Christian Rosenkreutz. However "C.R.C. did not designate an *individual*, but *the Order* of the Rosy Cross...for it suggests that there was a Christian branch of a brotherhood which originally was purely and exclusively Jewish; and C.R.C. was the hypothetical man who had Christianised that Order, and so had become the founder of the branch, which thereafter was to become known as the *Christian Rosy Cross.*"[8] "Rosicrucianism is only Kabbalism in a Christian garb."[9] "*It came about in this manner that the Kabbalah was Christianised.*"[10] Kabbalah, it will be remembered, is the "overall designation for Jewish mysticism."[11]

"To accomplish this object much of its literature had been translated from the Hebrew into the Latin tongue. In 1552 the *Sepher Jetzirah*[12] became

widely known by being printed in Latin in Paris."[13]

"Unquestionably, much was lost during the period of transition; pure Kabbalism was hard to master for those who had no knowledge of Hebrew; and for that reason when the Christian theosophists began to dabble in it, it underwent a distortion; some things were not at all clear to them."[14]

Once more the point is that a traditional teaching was taken over, was informed with another meaning, adapted to another purpose, and in this sense transmuted."[15] "In the Rosy Cross we have Kabbalism under a new name, in a new dress, transformed."[16]

Is Knight Rose Croix a Rosicrucian Degree? Fifty years ago the answer would have been a resounding *No!* "Until recently, any suggestion that the Rose-Croix degree might have owed part of its development to Rosicrucianism would have been unpopular."[17]

The history of "the degree began with a document known as the *Charter of Arras.* The story is that the degree was first given to Jacobite masons in a charter from the Stuart Pretenders about 1745 at a meeting of a Chapter held in the town of Arras in France."[18] Some versions of this degree are called Rose-Croix of Heredom, Knight of the Pelican and Eagle.[19]

The name Heredom or Heredon offers us another clue to the degrees 'checkered' past. "The name of Heredon is added to the other qualities because of the place where the knights took their origin which is so called. At Heredon, there is an old castle on a mountain, situated between the west and the north of Scotland, 60 miles from Edinburgh, seat of the Grand Master of Ecossais masons."[20]

"The name Harodim has been traced to Kilwinning in Scotland in the form of *Heredom.* And it is note-worthy that the Brethren of the Rosy Cross also spoke of a *Mount Heredom.*"[21] Heredom ""was usually defined as meaning 'the Mount of Jehovah' and 'the Mount of Initiation'- that is to say, the top, the summit, the climax.""[22] Suddenly we're not talking about a physical mountain anymore, either in Scotland or Israel. We are now talking about a spiritual ascent of a symbolic mountain instead.

'*Harodim*' means ""the Rulers', the men who legislated for the lower ranks of Masons in the Craft Lodge.""[23] It is they, by virtue of being Past Masters of their respective Operative Craft lodges who were granted the Speculative Past Masters degree of its day. "It therefore brings us in contact with the original Speculative Science of 'Our Ancient Brethren' the Kabbalists."[24]

Still, even with all this mystification, the 'Authentic school' compels us to note this is a degree with a firm history rooted in this world, a firmer history than perhaps several of the other degrees in the Rite. The Rose-Croix degree was probably completed in 1765 by a Frenchman named Jean-Baptiste Willermoz.[25] The "Rose-Croix degree seems to have originated from one that was mainly of German origin and associated with the Rite of Strict Observance which, in its turn, was influenced by Rosicrucianism."[26]

At least one Rosicrucian flavored argument based upon the ritual would seem to be in order.

> The whole arrangement of the Rose-Croix Grade, its clothing,
> its jewel, its entire mise-en-scène, the chambers in which it is
> worked, are reminiscent of the older order. The three points are
> in crude correspondence with the Hermetic working in Alchemy-
> blackness, death and finally resurrection into the red or perfect
> state...I could carry these intimations much further...exhibiting
> parallels drawn from Rosicrucian and Hermetic texts on the Cu-
> bical Stone, the seven mystical circles, the Rose of Sharon, the
> Lily of the Valley, the Eagle....the bond of kinship lies upon the
> surface and those that have eyes can scarcely fail to see it.[27]

So is it or isn't it? The 18th degree as practiced by the Supreme Council of England and Wales is decidedly Christian,[28] and they state "the 18° is a Christian degree which has used some Rosicrucian symbolism to illustrate its Christian message."[29]

The 1783 *Francken Manuscript,* which is the basis for our modern 18th degree states; "All the bretheren that are admitted are to be Christians."[30] Our 18th degree in the Southern Jurisdiction of the U.S. has become de-Christianized, thus following the example of the Craft degrees. The Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction has chosen not to require of its candidates a personal declaration of their Christian faith in order to receive it.[31]

Yeah, yeah, but is it or isn't it a Rosicrucian degree? I would have to say, it is not so much a Rosicrucian degree as one that incorporates Rosicrucian elements to reveal its message; a message which may vary slightly depending upon the Supreme Council working it. But remember, it is not the pedigree of any Masonic degree that matters. It is the degree to which you can assimilate the lessons of that or any other degree propounded by sight and sound.

Is there a connection between Pre-Grand Lodge Freemasonry and the original Rosicrucians? As stated above, it is useless to use the 18th degree to determine any direct connection between Freemasonry and the original Rosicrucians. At best, one can see some use being made of the more uplifting elements in the 'Rosicrucian Blog' of symbolism, forged over the

hundred and fifty year period between 1615 and 1765, but that's about it; and besides with a creation date of 1765 for the 18th degree, we can hardly hope to find any actual connections with an Order apparently silent by then for one hundred-fifty years, but that does not prove that a connection never existed between the two orders.

A search of history must be made. As ripples in a pond emanate out from the place of the water's first disturbance, so must our search be guided by the timing of the Manifestos' first appearance upon the stage of history. We must note any elements of sympathetic vibration which their publication may have caused within our own order. Only then will we have any hope of discovering a connection between Freemasonry and the original Rosicrucians. Search must be made in Masonic sources for any connections between the two orders beginning in 1610 and then moving forward until any connection is discovered.

As the ripples in time begin to emanate out from our targeted historical events; two clear incidents in Masonic history resonate with our original search.

The first are three key lines from Henry Adamson's *The Muses Threnodie* published in Edinburgh in 1638.[32] This quote also happens to hold the distinction of being the first printed reference to the Masons Word.

> For we be brethren of the Rosie Cross;
> We have the Mason Word and the second sight,
> Things for to come we can foretell aright;[33]

"In his poem, he hints that the word had connections with the brothers of the Rosy Cross, in other words the Rosicrucians."[34] This would seem to indicate, at least in the public's mind, a connection between the two orders. "Here the Masons are linked with the Rosicrucians, both of whom are reputed to have the 'Word' and, with it, a mysterious ability to foretell the future."[35]

The second occurs in 1676, still forty years before the creation of the Grand Lodge, "on 10 October, *Poor Robin's Intelligence* carried a 'Divertisement' which contained the earliest known printed reference to the Accepted Masons, which was very obviously a skit parodying various groups which its author insinuated were in some way connected."[36]

> These are to give notice, that the Modern Green-ribbon'd Caball,
> together with the Ancient Brother-hood of the Rosy-Cross; the
> Hermetick Adepti, and the Company of Accepted Masons, intend

> all to Dine together on the 31 of November next, at the Flying-
> Bull in Wind-Mill-Crown-Street; having already given order
> for great store of Black-Swan Pies, Poach'd Phoenixes Eggs,
> Haunches of Unicorns, & c....[37]

"Now, if the 'Company' here mentioned is...the London Company of Masons, as appears to be the case,"[38] we have established not only a distinct connection between the Rosicrucians and the Accepted Masons in print, but in the mind of the general public of the time as well.

As seen earlier, witnessed by the variations in spelling of the word 'Heredom', the Freemasons of this period may have hidden mysteries in plain sight by having various meanings for similar terms. Any words with multiple meanings would have been even further veiled from the modern Masonic scholar by the fact that the spelling and meanings of words can change over time.

Consider the word 'Acception'; it has become obsolete, and its meaning is not quite understood now. It is somewhat ambiguous, for it means 'Reception,' but it referred more to the things *received* by the Candidate than to the admission of the Candidate himself. As a matter of fact, 'Acception' "was simply an English rendering of the Hebrew word *Kabbalah,* which means 'Reception.'""[39] The Kabbalist, the Jewish Mystic in the guise of the "Modern Green-ribbon'd Caball,"[40] are also on the list of associates of the Rosicrucians and the Accepted Masons in the 'Divertisement' from *Poor Robin's Intelligence.*

The term 'Accepted Mason', as used today, looking back on that period; referred to "those who came into the Fraternity as honorary members...it distinguished the gentlemen or non-operative members from the operative or Free Masons."[41] Based on Coil's definition, we might describe them as 'Speculative Masons' within the London Company at a time when operative masonry was on the decline and speculative masonry was on the incline.

"The phrase 'acception of persons' occurs hundreds of times in the English language down to 1700 when it was replaced by *accepting* or *acceptance.*"[42] "In 1631, there is an entry of the Clerk for his expenses in traveling to a meeting where Masons were to be *accepted.* In after years, a number of entries relate to the *accepçon* or the payment of money to join the *accepçon.* It is fairly certain that the *accepçon* was in the nature of a lodge separate from, but whose finances were controlled by the Company."[43]

If there ever was a connection between the pre-Grand Lodge Freemasons and the original Rosicrucians, the clue lies with the word 'Acception'. The word 'Acception' transports the Mason back to a pre-Grand

Lodge world. Instead of our present three degrees R.F. Gould tells us; there “were two classes of English Freemasons, Apprentices, and Masters or Fellows…One, the Apprentice part; the other the Masters’ part. The former comprising the degrees of E.A., and F.C.; and the latter that of M.M.-as we now have them.””[44] Harry Carr, using more modern English, says virtually the same thing.

Whatever the reasons for the changes, the facts are clear beyond doubt. The two-degree system in practice until c. 1725, “Enter’d Apprentice” and “Master or Fellow-Craft”, became three, E.A., F.C., Master’s Part(or M.M.). The new F.C. ceremony was composed of materials formerly part of the E.A. degree, but with some contemporary expansions; the Master’s Part was the old second degree promoted into third place.”[45]

The creation of the new Fellowcraft Degree “had been achieved by splitting of the original E.A. ceremony into two degrees, E.A. and F.C., and the addition of new material (Middle Chamber, letter G etc.) to the F.C. portion. If any part of this new three-degree system is to be called ‘new’, that must apply to the contents of the new *second* degree.””[46]

We have on record beginning in 1638, evidence of this two tiered system of Masonic initiation. Nicholas Stone served as "Upper Warden of the London Company…and he proceeded to the Chair as Master…remaining in that office for two consecutive years (1632-1633; 1633-34).""[47] Then, within the Company's accounts we have the following notation:

> Pd wch the accompt [accountant], layd out wch was more than he
> received of them wch were taken into the Accepcon. whereof xs
> [10 shillings] is to be paid by Mr. [Nicholas] Stone, Mr. [Edmund]
> Kinsman Mr. [John] Smith Mr. [William] Millis, Mr. [John] Col-
> les.[48]

Matthew Scanlan has done a great service in furthering Masonic research. Starting with the groundwork of such giants in the field as Conder,[49] Knoop and Jones, he has determined that of the "accepted" Masons listed above, "all were members of the London Company of Freemasons and all were active craftsmen" at the time they were taken into the Acception."[50]

Therefore, Coils definition of 'Accepted Masons' being "those who came into the Fraternity as honorary members" is an example of a definition that has changed over time, or another masonic term with multiple meanings. Coil cites a rare, out of print work by Conder to bolster his position; but in 1896 Conder seems to have changed his views after further research.

> In addition to the ordinary Freeman and Liveryman of this Com-
> pany there were those members who are termed in the books the
> "Accepted Masons," and this particular body was known as the
> "Accepcon," i.e., the Acception…This…was the Inner Frater-
> nity of Speculative Masons who formed the Masons' Company
> Lodge and that the members of this Inner body were known as
> "Accepted Masons."[51]

Of course Coil, like a lot of other Masonic scholars, could simply have been wrong. For the term 'accepted mason' to have originally referred to honorary members only, would be like someone getting a four year degree from Harvard University and, after receiving his diploma, turning around and paying someone to get an honorary degree on the same subject from the same institution. Why would someone do that? Answer–they wouldn't!

Moving on, the day did come when an honorary mason actually became an 'accepted mason'. The man generally given that honor is Elias Ashmole, perhaps best known as a founding member of the Royal Society and Windsor Herald. He served "in the Royalist Army as Comptroller of Ordnance in the Fort of Worcester""[52] for Charles the 1st. At one point during the engagement, Ashmole happened upon the vandalizing of Litchfield's Close Cathedral.

> Worcester fell ten days after Lichfield Close was surrendered to Parliamentary forces (July 14, 1646)… Parliamentarian forces were in the process of completing the demolition of the many ancient artworks both within and without the cathedral…There were plans afoot to reduce the cathedral to rubble. The cathedral records…were being destroyed wholesale, and in the flames Ashmole could see hundreds of years of English history going up in smoke, never to be recovered. Nevertheless, he did succeed in saving some of the cathedral's library-books from the hands of the Parliamentarian vandals. Having saved what he could, there followed a curious interlude in Elias Ashmole's life.[53]

After the surrender, he was granted safe passage to his father-in-law's estate in Cheshire. Less than three months later, his diary records the following:

> 1646, Oct: 16. 4:30 PM. I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire, with Col: Henry Mainwaring of Karnicham in

> Cheshire. The names of those that were then of the Lodge, Mr. Rich Penket Warden, Mr: James Collier, Mr: Rich. Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, Rich: Ellam & Hugh Brewer.[54]

This entry proves he was not the first gentleman or non-operative granted admission into the order in England; "from what little is known of the membership of the lodge there were clearly other non-craftsmen who already belonged to it, and therefore this meeting must represent a tradition that pre-dates 1646.""[55]

Years later, his diary records his receiving what was then the second and final degree of Free Masonry in March of 1682:

> March 10th. About 5 p.m. I received a summons to appear at a Lodge to be held next day at Masons Hall London. March 11th. Accordingly I went and about noon were admitted into the Fellowship of Free Masons; Sir William Wilson Knight, Capt Rich Borthwick, Mr Will Woodman, Mr Wm Gray, Mr Samuel Taylor and Mr William Wise. I was the Senior Fellow among them it (being 35 years since I was admitted). There were present beside myself the Fellows after named. Mr Thos Wise Master of the Masons Company this present year, Mr Thomas Shorthose, Mr Thomas Shadbolt-Wainsford Esqre Mr John Thompson and Mr William Stanton. We all dyned at the Halfe Moone Taverne in Cheapside, at a noble dinner prepared at the charge of the New-accepted Masons.[56]

Conder reports "that with the exception of two candidates, viz., Sir William Wilson and Capt. R. Borthwick, all those mentioned by Ashmole as forming the Lodge were members of the Mason's Company.""[57]

Not much is known about the Acception. "It would appear that the candidate was vouched for by two or more members and a certain amount of discretion was used before someone was accepted as a brother. Furthermore, the Acception seemed to involve some kind of meeting, followed by an extremely costly dinner paid for those who had been 'accepted.'""[58]

There is strong evidence, using the London Company records. to put the Acception's earliest confirmed activity at 1620,[59] Based on Ashmole's diary, the dates of activity for the Acception were between 1620 and 1682.

"Ashmole quite unequivocally associates the 'Fellowship of Free Masons' with a 'Lodge' meeting at the home of the London Mason's Company. He then identified the newly admitted members as 'the New-accepted

Masons.'"""[60] It does not seem much of a stretch to assume the term 'Accepted Masons' may have originally meant those who had been taken into the 'Acception', and are implied in *Poor Robins' Intelligence* by the term 'the Company of Accepted Masons'.

We appear to be at an impasse. There is very little information on the Acception to begin with, and no direct links between the two Orders. Neither am I the first person to look for one. When in doubt, most have sought the next best thing, to find a suspected Rosicrucian that was also a Free Mason; who they could prove infused the teachings of the former into the latter. We however, are not seeking to move forward to the date of 1717, but backwards to the date of 1615, and Ashmole came into the Acception near its end not its beginning. We have traced the Acception, and thus the Freemasons, back to 1620, so we are making progress in our search. We will now borrow a page out of my predecessors' play book and look for someone belonging to both Orders.

Elias Ashmole is, of course, the best candidate for dual membership, so let's take a better look at him. In 1652, Ashmole's work *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* was published, exhibiting a profound knowledge of Alchemy. A year later his diary tells us his spiritual master William Backhouse (who thought he was dying) had passed on to Ashmole the secret of 'the true matter of the Philosopher's Stone.' He was a great admirer of John Dee, the Court Astrologer of Queen Elizabeth I, considered the most brilliant mind of his time, known for his mastery of mathematics, Hermetic lore, and spiritual Alchemy. Ashmole was also a founding member of the Royal Society, and is known to have transcribed in his own hand a copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis* to which he had affixed a fervent petition to join the Order."[61]

R.F. Gould and his fellow adherents of the 'Authentic school' have pointed out the apparent lack of interest Elias Ashmole had shown in Freemasonry, thus eliminating him as a viable contact between the two Orders; citing the full 35 years in between the two references to the Craft in his personal diary. A closer look at Ashmole however, allows us to neutralize much of this argument. He kept a cipher diary between 1645 and 1649, and the oft-printed record was apparently based on the brief cipher note: - '4:30 afternoon I was made a Free Mason'…Only from 1679 onward may the entries in the so-called diary be regarded as records of contemporary events."[62] In regards to his apparent lack of interest, we have three documented examples to the contrary.

Perhaps the most interesting of these appears in 1663 soon

after the Royal Society was founded. Ashmole, as one of its first Fellows, drew a design for a coat of arms for the Society…It shows, in the upper half of the shield, an outstretched right hand, of which the thumb and forefinger lightly hold the string of a plumbline, while the 'bob' hangs down almost into the lower point of the shield. The theme is, of course, derived from Amos VII, 7, 8…To this day the Amos quotation…forms one of the 'recognized' Bible-openings in Masonic Lodges… the design certainly shows that Ashmole…was thinking upon Masonic lines even when not engaged in strictly Masonic occupations…Another clue to Ashmole's concern with elements in Masonic thought and symbolism seems to be embodied in the frontispiece to his book, *Fasciculus Chemicus*, 1650…This panel is framed on the left and right by margins each containing the design of a pillar almost completely covered with symbols. That on the left seems to be intended to represent the 'Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences'…There is nearly no end to the Masonic symbolism contained in this frontispiece…directly linked to the 'Three Lesser Lights' representing the Sun, Moon and Master of the Lodge, and they appear among the constant symbols mentioned in Masonic ritual from c. 1724 onwards."[63]

In the 1747 *Biographica Britannica* Dr. John Campbell indicated Ashmole was collecting "materials for a History of Freemasonry, and said that this collection existed amongst Ashmole's manuscripts in 1687. Those papers have unfortunately disappeared without a trace,…""[64]

Let's look at the evidence shall we; we know Elias Ashmole fought on the side of the Royalist that lost to the Parliamentarian forces in 1645. We know he had "devised codes used for carrying messages between royalist headquarters in Oxford and the Litchfield garrison" while in the Royalist Army[65] It is also recorded that in 1646 he succeeded in saving some of the Close Cathedral's library-books from Parliamentarian vandals. Shortly thereafter in 1646, he was first initiated into Freemasonry and in 1682 he was taken into the Acception. We also know that Ashmole kept a Cipher diary between 1645 and 1649.

Perhaps witnessing the fall of the Royalists forces, the rise of Cromwell and the return to power of the Stuarts in the space of just a few years could explain why Ashmole had felt obliged to continue to write in cipher for several years after the fall of the Royalists. It could also explain why he did not write contemporary diary entries till 1679. Oliver Cromwell, initially

Parliament's leading general during the conflict, afterwards ruled England from 1653 to 1658."[66] Also during this period there were three wars: one with Ireland in 1649, one with the Scots in 1650 to 51, and still another with the Dutch in 1652 to 53."[67] During much of this time there was a lull in the frequency of recorded acceptions, but with the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660, the activities of the Acception within the London Company had resumed."[68] Other factors would be the great plague in 1665 and the great fire in 1666. Both decimated the city of London and each affected the building trade."[69] In short, there are very logical reasons for the lack of documented Masonic interest on Ashmole's part; and that lack of evidence may prove absolutely nothing.

There is also very little evidence of the lodge where Ashmole was made a Free Mason except that it was at Warrington in Lancashire, and that comes from Ashmole himself. The closest thing we have to validation is the highly prized word of a non-mason, one Dr. Robert Plot.

Plot was a naturalist, an antiquary, a secretary of the Royal Society, and the first keeper of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. His usefulness to the Craft however, is generally considered to be the following often cited quote from his 1686 work entitled *The Natural History of Staffordshire*."[70] In chapter eight, he gives an account of 'Free-masons' in the moorlands of Staffordshire:

> To these add the Customs relating to the Country, whereof they
> have one, of admitting Men into the Society of Free-masons, that
> in the moorlands of this Country seems to be of greater request,
> than anywhere else, though I find the Custom spread more or less
> all over the Nation; for here I find persons of the most eminent
> quality, that did not disdain to be of this Fellowship.[71]

"Plot's references to Free-masons operating in the Staffordshire moorlands makes much sense when one considers that the entire area had until the Reformation been dominated by three Cistercian monasteries built and maintained by freemasons: Croxden, Dieulacres, and Abby Hulton. Furthermore, we know that freemasons (the trade) were indeed active in the Staffordshire moorlands during Ashmole's lifetime.""[72]

Many of the pre-Reformation worksites for Stonemasons were tied to the church. Often for generations while constructing cathedrals and monasteries, monk and mason would work side by side setting stones, while more senior and learned monks supervised or acted as architects for the project. The early rules of conduct were drafted by monks or at least approved by

them. It is also extremely likely that "some of the surviving masonic documents from those times, the Old Charges, were written by them. Indeed it is probable that monks read them at the acception of craftsmen as very few operative stonemasons in those days could read or write."[73]

"Copies of the 'Old Charges', which it is generally accepted were used by those speculative masons, can be shown going back at least to the 1580s, suggesting that speculative Masonry, as such, may go back as far as that date also."[74] "The earliest known manuscripts are…the original of the *Melrose* No. 1 MS. which reputedly dates from 1581" and "the *Grand Lodge* No. 1 MS…which is dated 1583."[75] "The *Grand Lodge* MS. No. 1 in particular does indicate religious and possible monastic influence in its invocation and does imply the need for secrecy."[76] "So here, in the *Grand Lodge MS.*, is a document which relates to a group or movement in the 1580s which is known from the later use of similar documents to have developed into what is now known as speculative Masonry."[77] Parliament declared Henry VIII 'the Supreme Head on earth of the English Church' in 1534, four years later the monasteries were sacked.[78] This was "followed by the disendowment of the religious fraternities in 1547."[79] Ninety-nine years later the first initiation in the modern sense of the word occurred with the 'making' of Elias Ashmole a freemason at Warrington."[80]

Bro. C. N. Batham's theory "is that within the English monasteries there were inner *sancta*, with membership restricted to senior and learned brethren, in which time-honored rites were practiced; that on the dissolution of the monasteries… survived as secret cells until late in the sixteenth or early in the seventeenth century. Then, in more favorable conditions, they emerged, expanded and gradually evolved into the form of speculative Freemasonry known to us today."[81]

One of the puzzles for those who see early Freemasonry as a Guild organization of operative stone masons exclusively, is the attraction of men into its ranks such as Elias Ashmole. "That question would be answered if…seventeenth-century Freemasonry was the result of cells of intellectuals emerging from the religious fraternities of the previous century. Once they were initiated it would have been natural for them to have introduced into the ceremonies mysticism, and the philosophy of such movements as the Rosicrucians."[82]

Bro. Bernard Jones put it quite succinctly fifty years ago.

> Within the mason craft…was a quasi-religious body that only just managed to survive the Reformation and the ensuing century and so provide a real but dimly perceived link between the medieval
>
> operative and the modern speculative. Straight from operative to speculative in English masonry might be to us a difficult journey, but from operative *via* a fraternity hidden away at the very heart of the craft and merging in the days of the Renaissance into an early form of modern symbolic masonry-yes, that is a sequence not only natural, but perfectly credible.[83]

"The oldest of the English instances–the Accepcon–is first heard of in 1631; not as a new thing truly, but how long it was in existence before this we do not know." "The traditions and moral teachings of the Old Fellowship of Masons…were practiced and preserved by successive generations of the Members of the Company, until a period when they were able to impart them to a new order of accepted brethren."[84] "If we take the lodges at Warrington and Chester, and perhaps York, with the Acception in London, as being permanent organizations–and, very naturally, everyone has hitherto done so-then the origin of this type must be put back into the seventeenth century."[85]

There are, of course, several logistical problems inherent in these theories. "Bro. Batham's 'inner *sancta*' would have had to survive for some fifty years, until the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and then undergone a total and well disguised transformation. This seems a tall order for monks already 'senior' by 1547 and with obvious recruiting problems."[86]

Neville Cryer smoothed over some of the rough edges to these theories by bringing them to the center of the road:[87]

> What this material therefore suggests…is that the monks were dispersed, were looked after, but were not likely to have created 'cells' on their own. Of their continuing 'traditions', sacred knowledge and, in part, of the monastic library 'pickings' which they appear to have taken with them into their new abodes there is no doubt. Of their past connections with operative masons in their monastic houses there is also no doubt….there are three lines at least that need still more examination…The first is that a surprisingly large number of these monks married as soon as Edward VI came to the throne and many married dispossessed nuns. Their progeny were largely educated by their parents… Secondly, the lesser monks who became vicars, or chaplains to the new country gentry, were able to communicate with a class of society…the new influx of life and knowledge which we call the 'Renaissance'. The discussions that took place…might well have stimulated the first forms of symbolic speculation…Thirdly we have to turn to the new owners of the old 'monastic' properties-families like the…Bacons …Is it mere coincidence that the father of Francis Bacon (who so played with the whole idea of Solomon's Temple in his writings) was for much of his early life a senior official of that very Court of Augmentations which acted as the Government's 'Pension Board' for the dispossessed monks, nuns and their eventual dependants.

I think a simpler explanation might also be put forward. St. Benedict developed the monastic system; his Regula Santa, or Holy Rule "interpreted and adapted to medieval times the way of life of the Essene Brotherhoods."[88] Flavius Josephus records; "the Essenes…disdain marriage for themselves, but adopt the children of others at a tender age in order to instruct them; they regard them as belonging to them by kinship, and condition them to conform to their own customs."[89]

Based on the information before us, I think we can shed new light on several fronts all at once. If the Freemasons were tied to the last bastions of the monastic orders in Ashmole's lifetime; it makes complete sense why his saving of a few of their records from the parliamentary vandals at Litchfield's Close Cathedral would result in his initiation three months later.

We can now turn our attention to the two original Rosicrucian documents; the *Fama Fraternitatis* and *The Confessio Fraternitatis* to see what light we can glean from our present convention. The fourth of six rules all Rosicrucians were to live by was that; "Every Brother should look about for a worthy person who, after his decease, might succeed him."[90] Like the Essenes, C.R.C.'s first entrance into the Order was at the tender age of five where he was placed into a cloister. He was instructed in Greek and Latin and apprenticed to a brother P.A.L. He left Western Europe and traveled toward the East, where he acquired his knowledge.

C.R.C. then returned to Europe and indoctrinated brothers out of his original cloister;[91] literally 'traveling from West to East and back again.' His knowledge was deposited, as he himself had been at a young age, in a monastic setting. The Rosicrucians' corpus of knowledge, like the Freemasons', could very likely both have been hidden away behind monastic walls for safe keeping.

Another point of contact which puzzled me for many years was also brought to light by this study. The sixth of the six rules Rosicrucians lived by was; "the fraternity should remain secret one hundred years."[92] Why

would the Order agree to remain dormant for one hundred years before activating? In 1538, the English monasteries were sacked. By 1547, this was followed by the disendowment of the religious fraternities, then almost one hundred years later the initiation of Elias Ashmole occured.

Of course, *The Confessio Fraternitatis* uses different dates but you get the idea. C.R.C. was born in 1378; he died 106 years later in 1484.[93] If we add 100 years to 1484, corresponding to the allotted time of the Order's dormancy, we get 1584. You would think the date 1614, when the *Fama Fraternitatis* was first published in Cassel, would be the date set to end the dormancy of the Order; but it's not. Even more significant, ninety-nine years later is the date of "the *Grand Lodge* No. 1 MS...which is dated 1583."[94] It seems likely, perceiving the winds of change, C.R.C. chose to wait out the approaching storm of the Protestant Revelation. In 1614, when the *Fama Fraternitatis* was first published, most of Europe was experiencing an uneasy peace. The Rosicrucians may have thought it an auspicious time to activate the Order. Unfortunately, by the time of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 which marked the end of the Thirty Years War,[95] the Rosicrucians on the continent of Europe were probably decimated, leaving only the English branch of the Order to survive.

The final point of contact between the two Orders is the hidden vault of C.R.C. in the Fama,[96] and the body of Noah lying prone upon the floor of the Ark in the now famous *Graham manuscript*. There is some dispute whether to date this manuscript 1672 or 1726.[97] In either case, it predates the first written exposure of the Hiramic version of the story by at least four years. It also contains the substitute word, the five points of Fellowship,[98] and the Christian elements inherent in pre-Grand Lodge Masonry.

It was the opening of C.R.C.'s "tomb that led to the disclosure to the world of the secrets of Rosicrucianism. The same theme appears in the *Graham* MS when the sons of Noah try unsuccessfully to raise their father from the dead: 'to try if they could find anything about him for to Lead them to the...secret which this famieous preacher had for I hope all will allow that all things needful for the new world was in the ark with Noah'. This legend may have formed part of masonic ceremonial, but it did not last. As we know, in 1730 *Masonry Dissected* gives the present Third Degree legend for the first time. In all three stories is the basic story the same. The link between these hermetic themes is there; it may be weak, but it is too strong to be dismissed."[99]

There is a reason most histories of Freemasonry begin with the establishment of Grand Lodge in 1717. A veil seems to cover everything before that date, like the gossamer threads of a half remembered dream still clinging

to one upon waking.

"That the Mason's Hall Lodge had ceased to exist before the revival of Freemasonry in 1717, is clear from the silence of Anderson in the Constitutions elaborated by him in 1738."[100]

"All the 17th century lodges, e.g. London (Acception), Warrington and Chester, of which we have any knowledge seem to have disappeared by 1717 and, of the four old lodges which came together to establish the premier Grand Lodge of London and Westminster, there is no acceptable record of their being directly descended from those earlier ones. Thus, there can be no doubt that in the second decade of the 18th century, there was a revival, but only of the movement which had begun in the previous century."[101]

Records indicate James Anderson was not ordered to write the first printed book of Constitutions until the fall of 1721. A task which he did complete in 1723; but he was not present for any Grand Lodge meetings between St. John's Day of 1724 and 1731. In 1734, the 'New Book of Constitutions' (1738 ed.) was commissioned, which contains "the only connected history of the Grand Lodge of England, for the first six years of its existence (1717-1723)," but it "was compiled by Dr. James Anderson at a time when troubles crowded thickly upon him, and very shortly before his death." Events are cited years after their occurrence, often via second hand knowledge, making Anderson's Constitutions in need of confirmation at almost every turn. To make matters worse, Anderson's accounts refer to times preceding the extant records of the Grand Lodge itself. Needless to say, an accurate account of this period must be sought elsewhere.[102]

For our purposes, this fascinating time of transition at the birth of the Grand Lodge can best be expounded upon by reviewing the masonic career of one man, the Rev. William Stukeley, M.D. He was admitted to the Royal Society by no less a character than Sir Isaac Newton, with whom he afterwards remained on quite friendly terms. The following year after his induction into the Royal Society, he became a doctor of medicine, eventually climbing to the post 'Censor of the College of Physicians'.

"In 1729 he forsook medicine for divinity, and was privately ordained...by Archbishop Wake." He was the Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries for some years, having assisted in its revival; and authored several books, including two on the Druids. By the time of his death, he was rector of his parish; and yet "from his proficiency in Druidic studies, was often spoken of by his intimate friends as the Arch Druid of the Age."[103]

The following quotes pulled; first from his 'Autobiography', next from his 'Diary', and finally from his 'Common-Place Book' assured him an honored place in the Masonic History books.[104]

Autobiography

> His curiosity led him to be initiated into the mysterys of Masonry, suspecting it to be the remains of the mysteries of the antients, when with difficulty a number sufficient was to be found in all London. After this it became a public fashion not only spred over Brittain & Ireland, but all Europe.

Diary

> Jan. 6, 1721. I was made a Freemason at the Salutation Tav., Tavistock Street, with Mr Collins, Capt. Rowe, who made the famous diving Engine.
> 27 Dec. We met at the Fountain Ta. Strand & by consent of Grand Mr. present, Dr. Beal constituted a new Lodge there, where I was chose Mr

Common-Place Book. W. Stukeley

> I was the first person made a freemason in London for many years. We had great difficulty to find members enough to perform the ceremony. Immediately after that it took a run, & ran it self out of breath thro' the folly of the members.
> June, 1726, being sadly plagu'd with the gout, I retired to Grantham, thinking by country exercise to get the better of it. Here I set up a lodg of freemasons, wh lasted all the time I lived there.

"The admission of Stukeley may be regarded as having taken place while the old (or original) laws of the society remained in force...called the 'old Gothic Constitutions' in the narratives of Dr. Anderson (1738)."[105] "Four years before his admission into the Craft, Freemasonry put on its modern attire, and when he went out of it, the Old System may have said to have been practically supplanted by the New."[106]

In January 1721, therefore, the spirit of toleration which now breathes in the Mason's Creed, had no existence, and the profession of Christianity...was required of every candidate for initiation. Also, No. XIII. of the General Regulations, forbidding the working of the 2nd, or as it is has since become, the 3rd degree, had not been enacted."

It must be remembered "what we now call the 3rd degree, existed before the era of Grand Lodges, but that having passed through a decline its symbols had become corrupted and their meaning forgotten," then what was

to become 'the Master's Part' came into existence; the dating of which can not be confirmed till 1723.

> "To what extent the 'Master's Part' was *worked* in Stukeley's time, there are no means of determining. Ashmole's *Diary* records on March 11th 1682, that he was the 'Senior Fellow' at a Lodge held in Masons' Hall, London. This *may* and I think *does* mean, that he had acquired the higher *step* as well as *grade*."[107]

If I am reading Gould, and other authorities like him correctly, the logical assumption is that Nicholas Stone and Elias Ashmole both received the legitimate Pre-Grand Lodge Master's Degree, held at the time by the Acception. When the Mason's Hall in London, and with it the Acception itself, went dark shortly after Ashmole's initiation in 1682; then the half remembered degree became what was then described as 'the Master's Part'. It was this same 'Master's Part' which was dramatized for and conferred upon Dr. Stukeley.

The question then becomes, who *was* raised in the Acception's Master's Degree; was it Noah of the *Graham Manuscript*, or Hiram of the 1730 *Masonry Dissected*, or perhaps even a character we know nothing about?

Either way, the Master's Part did exist in 1723. This conclusion is fortified by the language of Old Regulation XIII. (1723), forbidding (in effect) the working of the 'Master's Part' in private Lodges—a prohibition, which must, indeed, have been utterly devoid of meaning, unless there was in existence at the time (1723) a 'Master's Part' to be worked?"[108]

Dr. Stukeley states, "His curiosity led him to be initiated into the mysterys of Masonry, suspecting it to be the remains of the mysterys of the antients, and it is highly probable that a similar 'curiosity' was experienced by Ashmole, and satisfied in the same way.""[109] It seems clear the doctor was a true student of history, and as such, was of the opinion that within Freemasonry lay the remnants of the Ancient Mysteries. It also seems clear that someone, possibly within Grand Lodge, desired to grant his wish, perhaps equally curious as to his opinions on the ritual once he became privy to the inner secrets of the Fraternity.

Regardless, by consent of the Grand Master present, Dr. Beal[110] constituted a new Lodge there, where Stukeley was chosen Master. Stukeley became the candidate for the 'Master's Part', despite the fact they "had great difficulty to find members enough to perform the ceremony," because he "was the first person made a freemason in London for many years" and it was with "difficulty a number sufficient was to be found in all London" sufficiently knowledgeable to perform the 'Master's Part.[111]

This statement may seem odd until we remember that the custom around

this time had become one of creating a mason on sight, and "one mason unaided, could and often did make another." "The 'difficulty' however, in finding a sufficiency of brethren to constitute the *dramatis personae* in working the 'Master's Part' may well have been, and probably was, a real one.""[112] In all probably, it also served the dual purpose of valuable research to Grand Lodge in its development of the new Masters Degree.

Just as Stukeley's admission into Freemasonry granted us insight into the times, so too, did his exit. His statement, "immediately after that it took a run & ran itself out of breath thro' the folly of the members" indicates the doctor's strong disapproval. A break with the authority of Grand Lodge is indicated, probably because of one or more of the following reasons.

The Grand Lodge, using the Constitutions of Anderson, "introduced three striking innovations. It abolished Christianity as the religion of Masonry, forbid the working of the 'Master's Part' in private Lodges, and arbitrarily imposed on the English Craft the use of two compound words—Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft—which had no previous existence in its terminology.

Against these deviations from established usage the brethren rebelled, and the more earnestly, because it gradually became apparent that the Grand Lodge, designed at first as a governing body for London and Westminster, was slowly but surely extending its authority over the whole country.""[113]

From 1726 until the doctor retired to Grantham in 1730, until his ultimate removal to Stamford, he tells us, "Here I set up a lodg of freemasons, wh lasted all the time I lived there." This lodge did not appear on Grand Lodge rolls, probably indicating the doctor's, as well as the Lodge's, open rebellion against Grand Lodge, but not with Masonry itself."[114] This tendency was to expand, providing the seeds which ultimately became the Grand Lodge of the Antients years later.

In a sense, one could say modern Freemasonry actually did begin with the establishment of Grand Lodge; because "of the four old lodges which came together to establish the premier Grand Lodge...there is no acceptable record of their being directly descended from those earlier ones.""[115] By 1717, all the 17th century lodges had disappeared, giving Grand Lodge the opportunity to remake the Order into what ultimately became a world wide organization.

"Could it be that there was a ritualistic form of Accepted Freemasonry prior to 1717 that was unpalatable to those who wished to '*revive*' the movement in the 1720s?""[116] "It has been observed 'that a great part of the labor of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him,' the first care of the builder of a new system being to demolish the fabrics

which are standing.""[117]

It may not be entirely the fault of Grand Lodge, but the result is the same. A single instance, I think will show the pattern that leads to our present lack of evidence. The account is recorded for us in the 1738 edition of Anderson's Constitution.

> This Year, at some private Lodges, several very valuable Manuscripts (for they had nothing yet in print) concerning the Fraternity, their Lodges, Regulations, Charges, Secrets, and Usages (particularly one writ by Mr. Nicholas Stone the Warden of Inigo Jones) were too hastily burnt by some scrupulous Brothers, that those Papers might not fall into strange hands."[118]

Years later, while researching the origins of Freemasonry and its symbols; Albert Pike was amazed at the sheer lack of evidence pertaining to the early Fraternity, "much of which is perhaps so completely lost, that it may never be discovered. We doubt if we yet know the meaning of some of the simplest things: and we are sure that very little is correctly explained in the Blue Lodge.""[119]

Gould, while summing up his research on this problem in his exhaustive *History of Freemasonry*, was forced to concede a single piece of evidence not yet found, could reverse all known evidence to the contrary. "Many of my conclusions, I doubt not, will be disputed, and many more may be overturned by a more thorough investigation. It is quite possible that, buried in the dust of long-forgotten works of Hermetic learning, or enshrined amidst the masses of manuscripts contained in our great collections, there may still exist the materials for a far more perfect, if indeed, not a complete elucidation of this dark portion of our annuls...It is impossible not to stumble in the midst of intense darkness; and in the course of my explorations I have but too often found, not only the cave to be too dark, but that the guides are blind.""[120]

Now, with all the facts before us, we can try to attempt to answer the question, Is there a connection between Pre-Grand Lodge Freemasonry and the original Rosicrucians? We know "those who were genuine Rosicrucians and those who developed speculative Masonry had a similar foundation of Christian mysticism and thus a mutual sympathy.""[121] "There is an admitted influence dating from about the fourth decade of the 18th century""[122] on the masons by the Rosicrucians clearly visible in the High degrees, but that influence consisted primarily of 'the Rosicrucian Blog' of symbolism forged over the hundred and fifty year period between 1615 and 1765, and

not to the original Rosicrucians who authored the *Fama Fraternitatis* and *The Confessio Fraternitatis*.

It seems passing strange that some of our greatest treasures are the works of our critics, but until the 'magic bullet' is found to answer all of Masonry's questions, they will have to suffice. We have already met one. I didn't introduce him to you as such, but if there had been even a hint of oddity or impropriety he'd have shouted it from the rooftops.

"In 1686, a Doctor Plot published *The Natural History of Staffordshire* in which he refers to Freemasonry, showing his dislike of it for some unexplained reason. He is reputed to have been unusually credulous so we may be sure that, if there had been anything hermetic about the Craft, he would have recorded it. In fact, he does not mention Rosicrucianism or the occult.""[123] "He reproduces many statements from the old legendary history, and has no difficulty in riddling them. But what he does *not* do, although he writes no later than forty years after the 'making' of Ashmole to whom he was well known, is to declare (as he would readily have done had the facts pointed that way) that freemasonry was nothing more than a Rosicrucian stunt.""[124]

The fact that no Hermetic, Alchemical, or Rosicrucian references have been found in the earliest Masonic Charges makes any viable connection between the two Orders prior to the 1740s unlikely. It appears the "Masonic ritual of today developed from a stream of thought not dissimilar to that of the Rosicrucians but different in its immediate origin, claiming a mythical link with philosophical and esoteric channels...from the continent.""[125]

I must confess, it is a humbling experience to start off trying to prove a theory only in the end to disprove it to one's self. Still and yet in the process, I may have discovered the clues which may lead someone else to a definitive answer as to the origin of the Masonic Fraternity.

Just as Freemasonry sought to legitimize its own research by introducing the 'Authentic school' under the Mastership of Robert F. Gould; the Hebrew Kabbalists did likewise under the tutelage of Gershom Scholem, Professor of Jewish Mysticism at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Unwittingly this Master of Speculative Kabbalah may have not only traced the historic origins of the Rosicrucians, but also brought to light the origins of Speculative Freemasonry as well.

> From the late 15th century onward, in certain Christian circles of a mystical and theosophical persuasion a movement began to evolve with the object of harmonizing kabbalistic doctrines with Christianity, and above all, of demonstrating that the true hidden

> meaning of the teachings of the Kabbalah points in a Christian direction...Christian speculation about the Kabbalah...was pursued in close connection with the new horizons opened up by the Renaissance in general. These...circles believed that they had discovered in the Kabbalah an original divine revelation to mankind that had been lost and would now be restored, and with the aid of which it was possible not only to understand the teachings of Pythagoras, Plato, and the Orphics, all of whom they greatly admired, but also the secrets of the Catholic faith. The founder of this Christian school of Kabbalah was the renowned...Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), who had a considerable portion of kabbalistic literature translated for him into Latin."[126]

> "Several Christian Kabbalists of the 16th century made a considerable effort to master the sources of the Kabbalah more deeply, both in Hebrew and in Latin translations prepared for them, thus widening the basis for their attempts to discover common ground between the Kabbalah and Christianity. Among the most prominent of these figures were Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo (1465-1532)...and the Franciscan Francesco Giorgio of Venice (1460-1541), the author of two...widely read books, *De Harmonia Mundi* (1525) and *Problemata* (1536), in which the Kabbalah assumed a central place and manuscript material from the Zohar was used extensively for the first time in a Christian work.""[127]

While we are offering up candidates for authors who may have inspired the mystic monks of old; to contemplate, to emulate, and ultimately secretly infuse their teachings into the Order; one final name comes to mind. He was a mystic thinker and well versed in Jewish sources; "the renowned Frenchman Guillaume Postel (1510-1581), one of the outstanding personalities of the Renaissance. Postel translated the Zohar and the *Sefer Yezirah* into Latin even before they had been printed in the original.""[128]

It is my theory that an unknown group of monks in England found comfort in the Latin translations of the Kabbalah or one or more authors of the Christian Kabbalah. It touched their hearts and nurtured them in their faith. They in turn nurtured it and passed it on to the Operative and Speculative Masons with whom they worked on many of their building projects. The Old Charges of the 1580s were written by them. The monks, the only ones who could read and write, were probably the Lodge's earliest secretaries and read the Charges at the acception of craftsmen, mainly operative stonemasons largely illiterate.

It was this group of concepts based on the Christian Kabbalah that the

Acception revealed at the initiations of Nicholas Stone and Elias Ashmole. Grand Lodge subsequently removed these same Christian elements and thereby distorted the original teachings, hopelessly confounding their message and leading to the present confusion.

It is important to remember that not all Christian Kabbalah is Rosicrucian in nature. This fact may have been lost on R. F. Gould, Albert Pike, and other notable masonic scholars. Most of the research being done between 1860 and 1950 in Masonic circles seemed to have blurred these two groups together.

Well intentioned or not, people like Eliphas Levi, Arthur Edward Waite, Paul Foster Case, F. de P. Castells, and William Wynn Westcott seem to have all contributed to the problem. Pike and Gould both reacted to the scholarship of the times, sometimes with the former embracing it and the latter reviling against it. The scholarship of both may have been much improved if it had been widely known that Rosicrucianism was merely a single school within Christian Kabbalah.

If the true source of Masonry is ever found, it is likely to be one or more followers of Christian Kabbalah or derived from the Kabbalah itself. Indeed our best chance of 'more light' may be to research the works of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo, Franciscan Francesco Giorgio of Venice, and Guillaume Postel, among others."[129]

"As early as the late 16th century, a pronounced trend had emerged toward the permeation of Christian Kabbalah with Alchemical symbolism""[130]

which is not present in the early Masonic Charges; so later followers of this school probably had no influence on the unknown Masonic founders. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata* would have probably been too late to affect pre-Grand Lodge Masonry, but is known to figure in later masonic work."[131]

In closing, I must say, after spending any time researching Masonry I am confronted by men far greater than I, whom I can only quote and poorly that; at the end of the day, one must agree with Brother Gould, "I feel myself to be rather the fingerpost pointing the way to others, than I a guide.""[132]

(Endnotes)

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35 Carr, p. 220.

36 Matthew D.J. Scanlan 18°, "The Mystery of the Acception, 1630-1723: A Fatal Flaw" *Heredom*, vol. 11, (Washington D.C.: Scottish Rite Research Society, 2003), p. 67.

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103 Gould, pp. 127-128.

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117 Robert Freke Gould, *The History of Freemasonry Its Antiquities, Symbols, Constitutions, Customs ect. Derived from Official Sources throughout the World. Volume II*, (New York: John C. Yorston & Co. Publishers, 1885), p. 126.

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119 Albert Pike, *Legenda of the Lodge of Perfection*, Southern Jurisdiction, *U.S.A.*, (1956), p. 32.

120 Robert Freke Gould, *The History of Freemasonry. Volume II*, 1885. p. 263.

121 Jackson, 116. (AQC 97:116).

122 Jackson, 128. (AQC 97:128).

123 Jackson, 127. (AQC97:127).

124 Jones, *Freemason's Guide and Compendium*, 2005. p. 106.

125 Bro. Jean Heineman's rebuttal (AQC 106:41)

126 Scholem, Gershom, *Kabbalah*, (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., 1974), pp. 196-197.

127 Scholem, pp. 198-199.

128 Scholem, 199.

129 Scholem, pp. 199-202. While we are already name dropping the Grand-daddy of them all may be John Scotus Erigena, best categorized as a follower of Christian Neoplatonism. His work was condemned in 1225 by Pope Honorius III and his book's removal from the monastic libraries may have caused some monks at that time to start being not entirely open to Rome about all their works and interests. (See Gershom Scholem's *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton University Press, 1990. pp. 375, 313, 314, 422-423, 440-441.)

130 Scholem, p. 200.

131 *Æsch* Mezareph is cited by Bro. Albert Pike on pages 798 & 799 of *Morals & Dogma*; and was only extant in Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata* during Pike's lifetime. – (Gershom Scholem's *Kabbalah*, p. 417) cited above.

132 Robert Freke Gould, *The History of Freemasonry. Volume II*, (1883), p. 263.

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