

LEGENDS? For Freemasons, legends are extremely important, especially when it comes to the practice of the rites, rituals and mysteries of the craft. King Solomon's Temple is most important because we see it as the prime example of divine architecture. Links with ancient Egypt are also claimed and seen in many architectural renditions, depictions and decorations (a strong influence in European culture in the XVI and XVII centuries). Clear parallels between the legend of Hiram Abiff and the much older one of Isis and Osiris can be made without much difficulty, thus solidifying the conviction of Egyptian influence. Greek legend as well, plays an important role, not surprisingly since mathematics and more specifically geometry is another prevalent Masonic theme.

THE LEGEND OF THE PILLARS: Pillars play a conspicuous part in Masonic ceremonies; the two "named" pillars-Boaz and Jachin-especially. According to the legend, the original pillars were erected at the entrance to King Solomon's Temple, Boaz on the left and Jachin on the right of the porch way. Their purpose, it has been claimed, was to give divine legitimacy to the ruling dynasty (similar pillars may be seen at the entrance of all Egyptian temples, different shapes and diverse heights all supposed to have strong religious meaning and influence).

Jachin means "for God will establish", while Boaz is a composite of two words: "bo" meaning "in Him" and "az" meaning strength. The pillars were then a testament to the power and might of God. These pillars were cast in bronze; it is likely that they stood about 10 ft (ritual places these dimensions in the 40 ft. range). They were hollow-the theory that they were used to house documents and archives has long been discounted-and adorned with capitals in the shape of huge bowls measuring about 7 ft. deep-possibly designed to contain oil that was lit during special functions. The globes were a XVIII century addition because the notion of terrestrial globes during the Middle Ages was condemned by the Church as heretic as they maintained that the known world was flat, the center being Rome and that the sun revolved while the world remained still.

THE OLD CHARGES. The manuscripts and other documents collectively known as the Old Charges are also an important feature of the legendary traditions of Freemasonry. Masons regard knowledge of their contents as essential for an understanding of Masonic constitutional law and practice.

The Old Charges all originated in England. The earliest, the Regius Manuscript and the Cook Manuscript, date from around 1390 and 1420 respectively. It is likely that the Cook Manuscript is the more authentic, since internal evidence suggests that a practicing Mason wrote it. The bulk of the documents date from the late 16th and early 18th centuries. Historians have queried the authenticity of later documents often regarded as antiquarian curiosities. The Regius is in Verse, the others in prose; apart from this difference, they all have a more or less identical form. They start with an opening Prayer, followed by a detailed historical account, tracing the origins of Freemasonry to the days before the Flood and

Regius Manuscript →

Hic incipiunt constitutiones
artis geometrie secundum Euclidem
W hose wol bove wel. rede and loke
he may fynde. wythe yn olde boke
Of grete lordys. and eke ladyysse
yat hade many chyldryn. y fere y wyse
And hade no centys. to fynde hem wyth
No by yn coltre. ny felde ny fyeth
A counsel to god. pey coltre hem take
Wd auyne. for yese chyldryn sake
hoth yow myeth best. lede here lyfe
Wt oute grete desese. care and stryfe
And most for ye multiplyde. y was conyngt
Of here chyldryn. aft here yndy e
sende yenne. aft grete clerkye
Wd techyn hem yenne. gode werl. s

charting its growth and spread through the ages until its establishment in England during Saxon times.

This is followed by a code of regulations for Master Masons, Fellow Crafts and Entered Apprentices, covering craft practices and morals, arrangements for large-scale assemblies procedures for the trial and punishment of offenders and admissions procedures for “new men that were never charged before”, including an oath of loyalty.

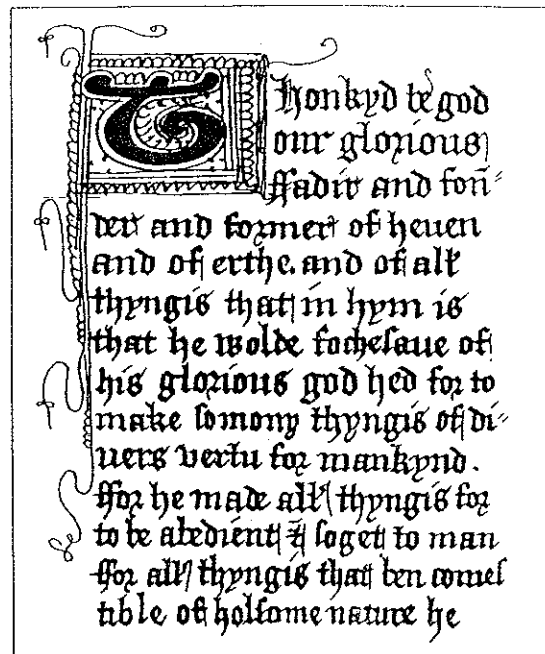
The William Watson manuscript may be considered a very important document but some historians question authenticity and applicability since they consider its publishing date of 1687 “too recent” to be considered par to the Regis and the Cook Manuscripts.

Cook Manuscript

ENOCH:



How, when, why and where Freemasonry originated is a legend in its own right. It can be traced back, according to some, to the time of Enoch, the seventh of the Hebrew patriarchs of the Old Testament and the great-grandfather of Noah. He is said to have initiated and promoted a Craft in which the eternal truths of Freemasonry were revealed through emblems, symbols, mystics, mysteries and legends.



NOVEMBER NOTABLES

- 1667 Born. Bro. Jonathan Swift, prolific author (Gullivers Travels, etc.)
- 1694 Born. Bro. Jean F. Voltaire, renown French writer and philosopher.
- 1814 Born. Bro. Adolphe Sa, inventor of the saxophone.
- 1835 Born. Bro. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn fame.
- 1861 Born. Bro. J. Naismith, inventor of the game of baseball.
- 1869 Born. Bro. Will Rodgers, Hollywood movie star.
- 1973 Died. Bro. Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th U.S. President.

On The Square (by an unknown poet)

It matters not whate'er your lot or what your task may be
 One duty there remains for you, one duty stands for me
 Be you a doctor skilled and wise, or do your work for wage
 A laborer upon the street, an artist on the stage;
 One glory still awaits you, one honor that is fair
 To have men say as you pass by:
 "That Fellow's on the Square"

The Inside Sentinel - Editor

