

The origin of Freemasonry is forever lost in antiquity. To get at a plausible and convincing story of that origin we must treat each and every point and institution of the Craft as a separate piece in a jigsaw puzzle; and then place them together to form a perfect picture.

It can be granted that every race and people had its religion, forms, customs and traditions. It is immaterial whether they shared them with others or not. But nowhere in history can we find any one people who could have been the authors of what is found in Masonry until the eighth century. But in southern Spain, in this age we find a nation composed of many elements. There were Greeks and Syrians whose people had once belonged to the communion of the Greek Orthodox Church. There were Arabians whose forbears had been sun or fire worshippers, some had been followers of the Jewish religion. There were those of Coptic and Greek descent whose ancestors had belonged to the Coptic or Ethiopian Christian Church. There were the mixed races of North Africa whose fathers had been Roman Catholics. Jews were numerous. And beside all these were the former Gothic inhabitants and the original people of Spain with its mixture of Roman and Carthaginian blood. This ~~mixed~~ mixture of nations worshipped one God and conformed to the ~~Heathen~~ Mahometan faith.

Who can say definitely that masonic lodges were formed among these Saracens of Spain? But when we consider that ~~so~~ there are masonic institutions that trace back to Jewish traditions, the forms of sun worshippers and a custom of the Ethiopian Church, such an idea sounds ~~plausible~~ plausible.

When or where the Saracens first produced their peculiar style of architecture I cannot say. This was the tower or minaret usually attached to their mosques. The purpose of them was for prayer. The devout person climbed the long flights of steps and kneeling at the top offered up his adorations to Deity. The Church towers of Christians church in France and England in the eleventh century, perhaps earlier were close copies of these Saracen minarets. And Christian ~~artist~~ architects carried the idea still further when they ~~were~~ topped the tower with a lofty spire.

The best sample of this ~~form~~ Saracenic architecture I can give off hand is the tower of Ramleh on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa. The tower bears the date 718 A.H. which as we reckon time is 1310 A.D. It is a square tower one hundred and twenty feet high and has no resemblance to the slim minarets of to day. The windows are numerous and of different sizes but all have the pointed arch. The corners are strengthened by buttresses running much of the way up. It looks like the tower of some old church in England; but it was not built by Christians, for ~~an~~ an Arabian author assures us that it was built by a sultan of Egypt in 1310.

The Moorish order of architecture was developed in Spain and North Africa after the Mahometan conquest. It featured the pointed arch and was a branch of the older so called Saracenic order, which may have originated from any of the older orders, such as those of Arabia, Persia or even Babylonia.

While Freemasonry may be traced back to the

priestcrafts of remote antiquity who were both builders and students of science, it will be quite sufficient if we can show reason that the order existed among the Saracen conquerors of Spain, ~~for~~ who were the heirs and possessors of the collected science of the world. They became the almost ~~the~~ sole possessors of chemistry, medicine, astronomy, algebra, arithmetic. They were versed in geometry and architecture. They made globes terrestrial and celestial. They knew the use of these globes, the system of world and the preliminary law of nature. They had inherited the numerals and knew how to use them to advantage. And while they may not have been the inventors, they knew how to make gun powder and pendulum clocks.

They understood magic, conjuring, alchemy, could create new arts or inventions when the need arose, and had the art of putting up a superior mortar which is now lost. Without the aid of the aid of Spanish masons and their initiates, the great cathedrals ~~of~~ and abbeys of Europe could never have been built.

The Saracens of Spain had a word which meant mortar. They called it "therment", and in the European countries where they first entered some variant of this word is still used. These countries were Spain, Portugal, Italy, France and England. The word was not introduced by them into Germany as that country was visited by the French initiates of the original Spanish Spanish masons ^{who} spoke a different language, and are of a later date.

Abracek or abrac was a word used by English Freemasons in the reign of Henry the Sixth. It is an Arab word and means to bend the knee.

or bow the head. Presumably this word entered England from Spain.

In some old Masonic lodges of to day, they have a large box, chest, trunk or shrine, call it what you will. But they habitually call it "the ark." They seldom use the word ark except in reference to this box. If you ask them why they use this term, all they can answer, is ~~"they were so called."~~

~~"they were so called."~~ "our older brethren who have passed away did so call it."

To day this Ark generally sets in an ante room, but where ever it is kept it is always used as a catch-all for lodge property. But at one time it was much more than this. In fact although not regarded so, it is one of the ancient landmarks of the order. Much can be said about it. This box or ark was the ~~original~~ ancient and original altar of Masonry. On it was placed Alcoran or the Bible or the Jewish sacred scripture along with the square and compasses. When the ancient lodge was not in session these articles were placed with in the ark. This custom was derived from the Ethiopia Christian Church. They had in all their churches such an ark made to represent the Ark of the Covenant and in which they kept their sacred books.

The ancient Freemasons placed the square and compasses in such an arrangement as to resemble a certain old Jewish cabalistic amulet design, known as "the seal of Solomon." Herodotus tells us that in Egypt the temples of the Sun had three distinct altars.

The Sun worshippers of Arabia had the same three altars where they sacrificed at stated times

in the day. We have not been told the particular hours of the day when the Arabians who practised Sabianism worshipped or sacrificed to the Sun. But as their temples contained three altars we might suggest that it was at sunrise, meridian height and sunset. It seems reasonable to believe that whatever lodges of Free masons were formed among the Saracens or Moors of Spain, also had these three altars of Sabianism, on which fire was placed during the lodge session. This perpetual fire could easily be represented by three lighted Arabian lamps burning olive oil placed on the three altars.

Sabi the mythical son of Seth and alleged founder of Arabian sun worship is only found in Arab tradition.

The Bible tells the story of the start of religion somewhat differently. "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enoch: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Four generations later we are told more of this primitive religion and of a man called Enoch. It doesn't tell us that he was born on the 25th of December. But no doubt like Osiris, Mithras and Christ, that was his birth day.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Whether this means that Enoch was killed by men and offered up as a sacrifice to the Sun, or just simply died, is quite immaterial. It is a beautiful way of saying it, and is direct proof that the writer of that passage believed in the immortality of the soul.

There are two institutions in modern Free-masonry that are landmarks of great antiquity, namely the sprig of green foliage and the ballot box. These could easily have been known to the Moslem conquerors of Spain, as we are justified in saying that they were customs that Lycurgus found among the priests of Egypt. To day masons drop into the grave of a departed brother a sprig of cedar, or some green foliage. It is supposed to represent a green sprig from the Shittim wood tree. The Ark of the Covenant ~~and the Tabernacle~~ was built of this wood, and it was also used where wood was needed in building the Tabernacle. The shittim is a variety of acacia of which there are many kinds over the world. Probably the priests of Egypt used sprigs of the shittim, but Lycurgus in introducing the custom into Sparta used olive leaves. Plutarch who tells us of this custom is not quite clear as to who were supposed to drop these olive leaves. But we might suppose it was the duty of the fifteen or twenty congenial intimates of the deceased, who sat and dined with him at the public table, their public table, and who ~~at all~~ had all passed the scrutiny of the ballot box to entitle them to eat at that particular table. Lycurgus had introduced the custom into Sparta that the men should dine in public, some fifteen or twenty seated at each table. To get to some particular table the applicant had to be balloted on and be acceptable to all. Each one at the table crumbled up some bread, and moistened it with water to make a round

ball, and placed ^{it} in a bowl or cup that was passed around. If the little balls when examined were all found to be round then the candidate was admitted and allowed to eat at that table without further ceremony. But if some one at the table before dropping his ball had flattened it between thumb and fore finger, then the applicant was flattened or rejected, and had to go home and eat with his women folks or stay at the table where he formerly ate.

As the Moslem Arabians had behind them the traditions of sun worshippers, it would not be strange if they celebrated two particular days. These would be the day when the sun reached its greatest height and the day when it was at its lowest. Modern masons still celebrate these two days as the feasts of their ~~two~~ patron saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. But it should be plain to any one that this idea of patron saints is a most decided innovation in masonry.

When the Moslem Freemasons entered France Italy and England and engaged in building where the devastations of war and the ruthless hand of ignorance had crushed out and destroyed the arts, they took in Christian initiates. So that in time all lodges in these countries were composed ~~solely of Christian~~ Craftsmen mostly of Christian Craftsmen. It was then that it was necessary to account for their two holidays, by adopting the two feasts of the Church that would best serve them. Their origin was forgotten by the ~~public~~ ~~and~~ general public and had to ^{BE} guarded as their chief secret to avoid

persecution and mob violence. But it is doubtful if the Church ever lost the true story of the origin of Freemasonry. At least they always appear to have suspected it. In the sixteenth century and even in the ~~fourteenth~~^{fourteenth} fifteenth century they moved mightily to suppress the order, forgetful of the magnificent abbeys and cathedrals that humble and forgotten members of the Craft had reared.

It may be that in the archives of the Vatican there are documents that bear on the true origin of Freemasonry. Apparently it was such documents proving their true origin that were burnt by some over zealous brethren several centuries ago at London, to keep the matter from the publica.

I cannot see eye to eye with the brothers. The ~~ancestors~~ remote ancestors of these over zealous craftsmen may have climbed trees and swung by their tails, but I fail to see why it should cause any great scandal.

It was the Roman craftsman who first introduced the art of building with stone into Britain. Bede finished his ~~his~~ history in 731, and to tell of what these builders accomplished in what is now England, we cannot do better than quote a short line from this venerable author: "As the cities, temples, bridges and paved roads there made testify to this day."

But although there are many who claim that Freemasonry sprang from a sort of Trade union existing among these Roman builders, there are no clues found in the among the forms and customs of Freemasonry to lead to that conclusion. That Freemasonry was founded by men who were

not Christians in religion can be readily granted. But where is the evidence that they were Roman craftsmen. However, as the building of the churches, cathedrals and abbeys is so ~~of~~ bound up with the true story of Free masonry, we might consider a few words on the very earliest religious buildings built for Christian use in Great Britain and Ireland.

In the first place churches must have been very few and far between in Britain before the year 325, when Constantine after having murdered his wife and ~~of~~ son, established Christianity over the Roman Empire. We have no evidence that any had been so far erected or that Christian gatherings were any more than a sort of cottage prayer meeting, where a few devout followers of Christ gathered together on a Saturday to exhort each other to continue in the faith.

St Alban the first British Christian martyr, beheaded in 303 was not even a Christian. He was simply a decent, honest fair minded man trying his humble best to protect a persecuted sect.

He had absolutely no knowledge of Christian doctrine dogma and forms; he had not received Christian baptism and came to his death ~~by~~ under false pretensions, trying to pass hims impersonate a Christian priest, whom he was hiding in his own house and whose robes he had borrowed.

His confession of faith, made just before his death might have been made by any one following the Jewish religion. ~~Albanus Allectus esse religio.~~

He was executed near the city of Verulamium, now called St Albans. And here was erected ~~the~~ some years later the first Christian Church in the British Isles, of which we have any account. Bede tells of it thus:-

"The blessed Alban suffered death on the twenty second day of June, near the city of Verulam, where afterwards, when peaceable Christian times were restored, a ~~new~~ church of wonderful workmanship, and suitable to his martyrdom, was erected. In which place there ceases not to this day the cure of sick persons, and the frequent working of wonders." Several writers of masonic history state that Alban was an operative mason, but all fail or neglect to quote their authority.

Among the early Christians of Britain there seems to have been a remarkable scarcity of saints. To get their first saint, Alban, they had to go outside the pale of the Church. For their second great saint they had to go outside Britain into Gaul and adopt Saint Martin who had been Bishop of Tours and died in 397. He had come into Gaul at a time when it was quite safe to do so, and established and organized the Roman Church, where Saint Denis and a host of martyrs had suffered a cruel death for their belief. Martin became the patron saint of publicans and tavern keepers and we might add, to bring it up to date, Government appointed vendors as well. For no one needs patronage more than our vendors.

It was during the latter years of Roman occupation that a church was erected at Canterbury and dedicated to the said Saint Martin. Bede does not describe it, but from the fact that stood for centuries, it was probably of well constructed masonry. After the conquest of Kent by Hengest, St Martin's church was not used for Christian worship ~~until~~ until Bishop Luidhard brought the Princess Bertha to England as

the wife of King Ethelbert. ~~These two were the~~ Here the first French Bishop preached to a congregation of one and held services. Shortly after when Augustine brought his ~~mission~~ monks into Kent, the mission used St Martin's for their early services. One reason that the knowledge of so few church buildings among the Britons is handed down, we glean from Bede.

He says that the Britons usually built their churches of wood. One was even built of brush.

The first church erected in what is now Scotland was built by St Ninian in 397 at Withern in Galloway an old division of Scotland. It also was dedicated to Saint Martin.

In the time of Bede Galloway was a part of Northumbria. The people of the district were southern Picts and until recent times spoke the Pictish or Manx language, which was a kind of Gaelic. Ninian had been the first missionary among these people. But in 420 they got fed up on him for some reason and chased him out. He then went to Ireland where he built and founded the monastery of Glonconnor.

This was some years before the ministry of St. Patrick. Ninian was a native of North Wales.

He appears to have had the Roman art of building. From his organization appears to have sprung the Culdee monks and the Scotch Builders.

Bede writes of him:- For the southern Picts had embraced the truth, by the preaching of Ninias, a most reverend bishop and holy man of the British nation, who had been regularly instructed at Rome, in the faith and mysteries of the truth; whose episcopal see named after St Martin the bishop, and famous for a stately church (wherein he and many other saints rest in the body),

is still in existence among the English nation. The place belongs to the Province of the Bernicians and is generally called the White house House, because he there built a church of stone, which was not usual among the Britons."

Giraldus who ~~wrote~~ recruited for the third crusade, says that in ancient times there were three fine churches in the city of Chester.
~~But we do not know the exact date of the building.~~
~~Also it will be seen that the first stone was~~
~~erected by the Britons.~~

After the Anglo Saxons received Christianity, they certainly built some of their churches of wood. In 627 King Edwin built the Church of St Peter at York of timber. This was so that he would have a church to be baptised in. He then gave directions to build at York "a larger and nobler church of stone." This building was not finished until after his death. His bishop Paulinus also built a wooden church at Campodonum which was burned by Cadwalla king of Strath-Clyde, who for two years made himself master of England.

After England had managed for some centuries to build with unskilled workmen we find that in the reigns of Edward the Elder, Athelstan and Edgar they brought in skilled craftsmen to carry on their public works. The earliest instance of this seems to be the building of the new minster at Winchester which was dedicated in 903. Edward and his sister the fighting lady of Mercia continued to build up and repair the ravages of the Danes, so far as city fortifications were concerned.

Athelstan ~~was~~ reigned from 925 to 941. He was terrible to his enemies in war, but it is not recorded that he did much for public building. It is possible that the people of England were craving more pretentious residences, but we have no direct evidence on this. Still there is a persistant tradition that the Free masons had a general assembly in this king's reign and that he granted them a charter.

It was not until the reign of Edgar 959-975, that the churchmen began to seriously consider rebuilding all the churches and monasteries that had been burnt by the Danes. And it seems certain that in this work foreign crafts men were used. These men or some of them were not Christians for an Anglo Saxon poet calls them heathens and resents their presence in the country. In writing about King Edgar, this poet sings:-

"too much however, that foreign tastes
he loved too much and heathen modes
into this land he brought too fast;
outlandish men hither enticed;
and to this earth attracted crowds of
vicious men."

This certainly refers to Edgar bringing into England Moslem craftsmen to rebuild and adorn the churches and abbeys. For Edgar had to do much for the Church having committed an almost unpardonable sin. He had broken into a convent and carried off a young lady who was an inmate. Some of the churchmen were doubtful if he could ever be forgiven. But Dunstan was more hopeful and thought it might be arranged. The penance placed on Edgar for this crime against religion and decency

was that for seven years of his reign he should wear no earthly crown. Dunstan considered that this would be quite sufficient to permit the king to wear a heavenly crown.

While he was still subject to this penance, Edgar enticed his friend Ethelwold into a forest, where he murdered him with his own hand. After which he made the widow, Elfrida, his wife and queen. As the offense was quite trivial, we might presume that Dunstan imposed but a light penance on the royal sinner.

However Edgar ruled all England in peace and security and good order. He being the chief criminal of the kingdom, was therefore fully qualified to suppress crime in others. That he brought in many skilled craftsmen ^{OF} various arts is no mere guess, but a fact generally known to history.

One writer refers to it thus:-

"The useful arts received a great impulse during this reign from the great encouragement given by Edgar to ingenious and industrious foreigners to settle among his subjects."

There is an old masonic tradition that Edwin was Grand Master of the order in the reign of Athelstan. But we don't know who this Edwin was, or what he built. No authentic Grand Master shows up in England until the Norman conquest. He was the ~~anti~~ architect Gundulph, born in the diocese of Rouen about 1024, died March 8th 1108. He was a Norman prelate initiated into the secrets and mysteries of Freemasonry.

In 1059, he became a monk in the famous abbey of Bec, where he became the friend of Anselm and Lanfranc. In England, these friends had him appointed Bishop of Rochester on March 19th 1077. He was the architect of the

cathedral of Rochester, also a castle at Rochester,
also St Leonard's Tower, and a nunnery at
Malling and the White Tower which is part of
the Tower of London.

It was nearly a century before another Grand Master arose whom we can name. This was Peter of Colechurch. He was not a very important person in the Church for he was only the humble chaplain of Colechurch, simply a mass priest. But he was both an architect and engineer. His great work was the building of the first London stone bridge, which took thirty three years ~~on~~ to build and was not finished until shortly after his death. It was commenced in 1176 and finished in 1209, the grandest piece of engineering that England had so far seen.

he commenced to build. One shows the front of the chapel, one shows the interior of the upper chapel and one shows the crypt in which the Grand Master hoped to be buried, no doubt with masonic honors. There is another drawing extant ~~of~~ a part of the bridge when completed, but before wooden houses were built on it.

Studying these draughts you must admit that the Grand Master was a real Master Mason and that architecture had advanced greatly since the time of Edgar and Dunstan. You will remember that the upper room where Dunstan performed his great miracle was supported by wooden beams and was not upheld by masonry and stone arches.

It was in the thirteenth century in the reign of Edward the first, that certain prelates of the Church began to realize that the Freemasons were a secret order ~~as~~ and confederacy as well as trade union, banded together for the purposes of mutual support and protection. Even ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~concocting~~ ^{the} ~~were~~ ^{the} ~~prelates~~, in the monasteries were monks who were members and even masters of the Craft. They disapproved. Hence was passed in that reign eight statutes against what was called Champerty or such banding together. These laws while not mentioning Freemasonry, certainly prohibited them from forming lodges. Nothing came of it, and in 1425 the English Parliament enacted a law prohibiting Freemasons from holding their assemblies. Henry the Sixth called a number of the leading members of the craft and asked them what this Freemasonry might be. His questions with the answers were all recorded, and ~~the~~ are still extant.

The king favorably impressed by the answers was himself made a mason.

From the answers it appears that the Freemasons of that time had their traditions, and that those traditions went back to Pythagoras, whom they claimed founded the order in southern Italy.

They said nothing whatever about it having come into England out of Moslem Spain, which was perhaps just as well. For to make such a statement in that age, would only be to damn it over all Christian Europe.

This masonic tradition does not interfere at all with the theory expressed in this article. For southern Italy and Alexandria were both Greek colonies and the Saracens conquered Alexandria before marching across North Africa and entering Spain.

While there were Freemasons who entered monasteries and became monks we have no evidence that ~~there~~ there were monks who became Freemasons. While any Christian might enter a monastery and become a member of that brotherhood, many of these monks would find themselves barred from entering Freemasonry. In northern France, the percentage of monks who were not eligible for Freemasonry was large. In England during the Saxon times there were many who for the same reason could not be taken into the masonic order. There were monks who went into Spain, studied and acquired Arabian science. But there is no evidence that they became architects or were initiated into the mysteries of Freemasonry.

As some might say that Freemasonry might have sprung from men who were Arian Christians, let us consider the subject, for they would have some reason for their claim. Arius while the great

exponent is certainly not the originator of this so called heresy. For it existed before the birth of Arius and in spite of persecution and censure is to day more prevalent over the world than ever it was.

When a pastor holds his services, he does not seem to realize that many of his flock who never even heard the name of Arius are firm believers in his doctrine.

Arius was born in Libya or Alexandria about 256 A.D., and died suddenly at Constantinople in 336 A.D. We have no evidence that he was poisoned. His chief ministry was at Alexandria. Here he preached his doctrine until condemned as a heretic by a Provincial Synod in 321. Again he was condemned at the council of Nice in 325. The Church at this time had no authority either from God or the Emperor to burn him at the stake. But they passed sentence of excommunication making it as unpleasant as they could for him in this world, and fixing it so that there was no possible chance of the poor man ever entering heaven. Arius did boldly preach, denying the miraculous birth and divinity of Christ, but he had strong doubts. In fact he didn't believe it at all. Most of the early Christian missionaries who came first into Gaul had the same doubts and beliefs as Arius, And when the Church of Rome counts the early martyrs of Gaul as Saints, they are honoring the memory of heretics who have slipped into heaven in spite of them.

We can accept as authentic that Church buildings as we understand them were erected in Britain after the Edict of Constantine in 325. But if Bede is correct such buildings ~~were~~ had been used for Christian worship before the persecution of 303.

We will quote his words : - " When the storm of persecution ceased, the faithful Christians, who during the time of danger, had hidden themselves in wood and deserts, and secret caves, appeared in public, rebuilt the churches which had been levelled with the ground ; founded, erected, and finished the temples of the holy martyrs " etc. But he cannot tell us what particular saint these primitive churches were dedicated to, which leaves us under the impression that they were not dedicated to any one. If they were dedicated to some holy man ~~why~~ why were they not when rebuilt rededicated to the same saint. The only explanation I can think of is that the Arian heresy had entered Britain from Gaul well before the persecution and that Arians didn't dedicate their ~~the~~ churches.

Bede claims that Arianism did not enter Britain until the time of Constantine, but it looks as if this heresy was generally taught ~~their~~ there a few years earlier, and was only wiped out by the persecution of 303.

After describing the death of St Alban, Bede writes : - " At the same time suffered Aaron and Julius, citizens of Chester, and many more of both sexes in several places; who when they had endured sundry torments, and their limbs had been torn after an unheard of manner, yielded their souls up, to enjoy in the heavenly city a reward for the sufferings which they had passed through."

Father Bede, ~~Hon~~ Venerable Sir, you are treading on dangerous ground. You are attempting to usher into heaven a mixed band among whom there may well be many Arians, the most dangerous and pernicious of heretics whose future portion is Hell. For they deny the fundamentals and essentials of Christian

dogma. Or do you believe that a dead heretic is a good heretic. From your own writings we learn that Amphibalus who is supposed to have taught Alban did not instruct him in the doctrine of the Trinity and the miraculous birth and divinity of Christ. The last words of Alban as you quote them show this.

You further assert that Alban was cleansed and regenerated by the shedding of his own blood, which is rank heresy. Fortunately you have departed from this life, and cannot be brought before any Church Council to answer for impious belief. your impious belief.

Of the three ancient British Churches of Chester, one was dedicated to St Aaron, one to St Julius, while the third was probably dedicated to St Amphibalus who is said to have been a native of Chester. So we know that there were at least ~~six~~ ancient churches in Great Britain. ~~of which~~ six of which we know were dedicated to saints dating 303 or much later.

Seven ~~and~~
The first Christians who came to Britain in 156 or earlier had no knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine first appears in the writings of Tertullian who became a Christian in 192, and the doctrine itself was not adopted generally until general church councils were held; and the earliest of these was in 325. At that time Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire and these former pagans began to introduce their former ideas into the new religion. In some of their churches built in the fourth century they represented the Trinity by the statues of three men.