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The Thracian Culture and the Mysteries.

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2005
BY BROS. JELIAZKO ANDREEV AND KENT JOHANSEN

In the late summer of 1977, Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 were launched on what was initially to be a four-year mission to Jupiter and Saturn. Voyager 2 lifted off the pad from Cape Canaveral, Florida on 20 August 1977, with Voyager 1 following on a faster trajectory on 5 September 1977.

Flying aboard Voyagers 1 and 2 are identical "golden" records, carrying the story of Earth far into deep space. The 12-inch, gold-plated copper discs contain greetings in 60 languages, samples of music from different cultures and eras, and natural and human-made sounds from Earth. They also contain electronic information that an advanced technological civilization could convert into diagrams and photographs.

The Bulgarian folk song "Izlel e Delyu Haidoutin," one of the records on the golden disk, is the cosmic hit still flying in deep space on VOYAGER U.S. spacecrafts.

**We are sending messages to the future.
Are we receiving the messages sent to us from the past?**

"And yes, the aloe cactus and Indian maize, or corn as Americans call it, were both New World plants that were supposedly unknown outside that continent until well into the sixteenth century.

"I stared across at Robert as the inescapable conclusion hit me. Even if Columbus had found these plants on his first brief voyage, Rosslyn Chapel had been completed six years previously, and therefore the carvings of the maize and the aloe cactus were created when Christopher Columbus was still a schoolboy. Someone else had traveled to America and brought back plants long before Columbus is supposed to have discovered the New World. And the proof is present in a Templar/Masonic building!..."

The Hiram Key, Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, pb 1997, pp.103-04.

On a some 2,500 year-old necklace recently discovered in Europe, one of the ornaments is maize. Did Europe know about corn all those years ago? Where was this necklace found?

The Thracians, who were they and when did they live?

The historical boundaries of Thrace have varied. To the ancient Greeks it was that part of the Balkans between the Danube River to the north and the Aegean Sea to the south, being bounded on the east by the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara and on the west by the mountains east of the Vardar River. The Roman province of Thrace was somewhat smaller, having the same eastern maritime limits and being bounded on the north by the Balkan Mountains; the Roman province extended west only to the Néstos River. Since Roman times, Greek Macedonia to the west has been separated from Greek Thrace by the Néstos. Modern Thrace is bounded by the Néstos River to the west, the Rhodope Mountains to the north, and the Maritsa River to the east and corresponds to the southern part of Bulgaria, the Greek province of Thrace, and European Turkey, including the Gallipoli Peninsula. About one-fourth of Thrace lies in Turkey, about one-tenth in Greece, and the remainder in Bulgaria.

"From the third to the seventh century the population of Thrace was altered greatly by repeated Gothic, Visigothic, and Slavic invasions and immigrations. In the seventh century the Bulgarian state was founded, and Byzantium consequently lost all Thrace north of the Balkan Mountains to the Bulgarians."

Encyclopædia Britannica, 2003

Archæological information, some of possible masonic importance

In the summer of 2004 near the village of Shipka, in the so-called Valley of Thracian Kings, archæologists discovered a 2,400 year-old golden mask that was likely made for a Thracian monarch's funeral.

Rogozen treasure

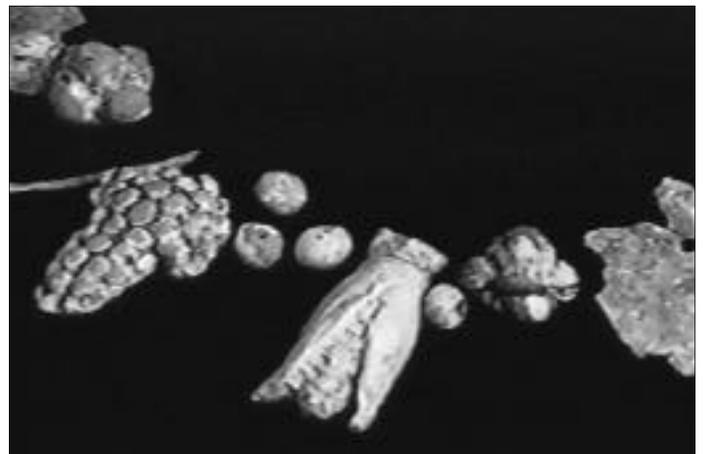
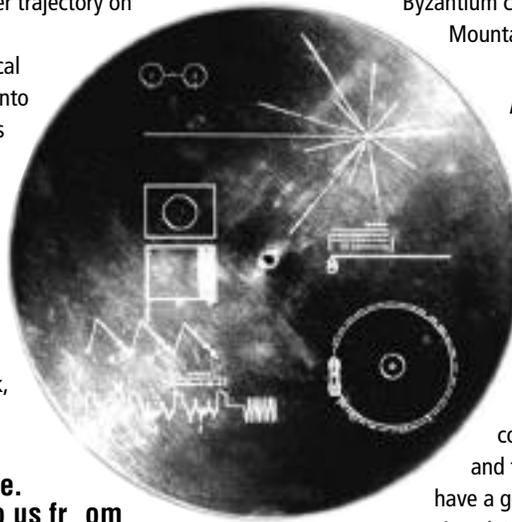
The Rogozen treasure, called the find of the century, was discovered in 1986. The treasure consists of a hundred and eight phials, fifty-four jugs and three goblets. All the objects are silver and some have a golden gilt. Their total weight is twenty kilograms.

A variety of motifs and decorative elements makes the Rogozen Treasure an invaluable source of information for the fifth and fourth centuries, BCE.

Vulchitrun Treasure

The Vulchitrun Treasure consists of thirteen vessels — a large, deep vessel with two handles, one big and three small cups with one handle each, two big and five smaller discs. All items are made of solid gold, the total weight is 12.425 kg. The vessels were used in cult ceremonies. This treasure is the most remarkable example of the art of the Later Bronze Age in Thracia (XIII-XII c. BCE).

At the end of December 1974 another treasure, dated from the first half of the fourth century BCE, came to light at Borovo. It consists of a luxurious five-vessel drinking set. Three of them are rhytons ending in the protomes of a horse, a bull, and a sphinx. The fourth is a large two-handled



c. 2,500 year-old Thracian necklace. Note depiction of maize.

bowl in the centre of which a deer attacked by a griffin is depicted in relief. The fifth is a richly ornamented silver jugglet, with two bands in relief depicting scenes connected with the cult of Dionysus. On the upper frieze the god is tearing animals to pieces, and chasing satyrs or being chased by them. We can see Dionysus with Ariadne, standing out in a poetic dream. On the lower part the god marries Ariadne, who unbinds her belt. The treasure bears an inscription in Greek letters with the name of the Thracian King Kotys I, who ruled the Odryssean Kingdom from 383 to 359 BCE, and that of the craftsman, Etbeos.

The Kosmatka Tomb – Kasanlak

The tomb probably dates back from the times of the dynasty founded by Seutus III and includes a 13 metre (40 foot) corridor leading to three rooms, one of them a huge granite block hollowed out to form a death chamber, its floor strewn with more than seventy gold, silver, bronze and clay objects. Inside one of the rooms the team found a golden crown of oak leaves and acorns, the first such object found in a Thracian temple.

Varna Chalcolithic Necropolis

The Varna Chalcolithic Necropolis, which experts qualify as “the world's oldest gold” and a trace of “Europe's most ancient civilization”, was a sensational discovery. In 294 graves were discovered more than 3,000 golden objects dating back 6,000 years.

The rich variety of funeral utensils going along with the dead is best illustrated by two of the symbolic graves, No 4 and No 36. In grave No 4 have been found two unique vessels where, typical for the time, decoration of strongly stylized geometrical symbols is fulfilled in golden paint.

Many more discoveries were made, and are going to be made. You can see additional information on:

<http://www.kroraina.com/thracia/starosel.html>
<http://www.vacationsbulgaria.com/DDKe/treas.T.htm>
http://www.motoroads.com/why_bul_treasures.html
http://www.thrace.0catch.com/alexandrovo_tomb.htm

The Thracian culture and the Mysteries

The “gravesites” presently being excavated in Bulgaria were built by the Thracian culture. The Thracians were, in art and beliefs, very close to the Greeks. I think it will be a surprise to most of the brethren of Celtic heritage, that a lot of the Celtic ideas were parallel to the Thracian ideas. The two cultures inhabited the same area at the time (up to 300 BCE) and a lot of Thracian artefacts are found in Britain and Scandinavia.

One example is the Gundestrup Cauldron, which was made in Bulgaria and transported to Denmark, where it sat for probably a century next to a wade or river crossing, which was a main passageway with lots of traffic. It is made of solid silver and is about 75 cm in diameter. The cauldron was considered so holy that nobody dared steal it. From the archaeological evidence, the grass simply grew over the cauldron and covered it.

The decorations would be of interest to freemasons. The lid-piece, of which the wooden parts have disappeared, shows a big bull, a man accompanied by a dog and a lion. The reason for the dog is that the constellation Orion has the dog, Canis Major, at his feet.

Notice that this lid depicts three of the four banners in the Royal Arch! Just like the Craft lodge has three pillars and not four – the one in the north is missing. Quite simply because that pillar is invisible, hidden behind the North Pole when the other three are visible.



Gundestrup Cauldron

The pillars or the banners are the four cardinal points of the zodiac, corresponding to the ancient solstice and equinox points.

Notice that Taurus is over Orion's left shoulder and he is holding a long object in his left hand, which today is Eridanus or the river Styx.

One of the inner plaques shows Cernunnos (a Celtic deity often depicted with antlers). Notice how he has a bull over his left shoulder and a long object in his left hand. Eridanus is here a snake.

The initiation into the Orphic mysteries included eating the raw flesh of a bull and ever thereafter being a vegetarian. More about this later.

When this myth had traveled with the continental Celts to Britain, the explanation becomes that Donn Cooley, the great bull of Gaulish/Ulster kingship, was the Celtic cultural symbol of the annual life-death-resurrection Year-King. This deified bull of tribal fertility, after defeating the



This depicts the Slaying of the Bull, also a core element in the Greek Mystery schools. Notice the repetition of the several animals. Man, dog at his feet, bull and lion. This is core mythology of the Dionysian and Orphic rites, which the Thracian culture practiced.

bull of Goddess Mæve (in struggle that parallels and echos that of Esus/Cu Chulainn), himself ritually slain. The triple rendering of this deed emphasizes its importance, and a second depiction of this ultimate sacrificial offering appears as a panel mounted on the cauldron's bottom. Same picture, different names.



A resurrection scene?

A resurrection scene is also available, should you choose to interpret it thus. A row of bent warriors approaches a deity, who dips them in Dagda's cauldron – where after they ride, resurrected, away on horses. Good as new.

Or it is Esus/Cu Chulainn's epic battle. On top Maeve's ally Froech and three riders try to jump the Hero's felled tree obstacle; next Froech with his warriors and trumpeteers march warlike against Esus/Cu Chulainn; finally the Hero wrestles with Froech and drowns him as predicted. Notice the dog at his feet, which of course is what equates the figure with Cu Chulainn.



This fine fellow may be the continental Celtic god Taranis, meaning Thunder.

He is rolling his wheel across the sky to make the thunder. *Or*, this refers to one of the key secrets of the Orphic mysteries, where you "step off the wheel" and confess that you are a son of the Stars. Notice the horned helmet. Those are found in the Thracian culture. Never among the Vikings.

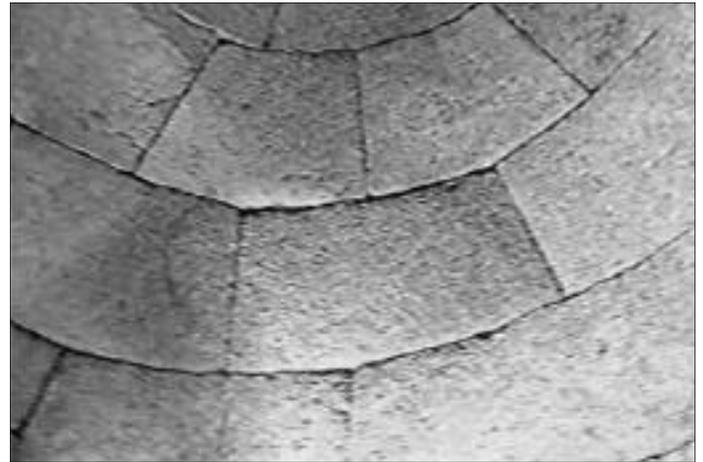
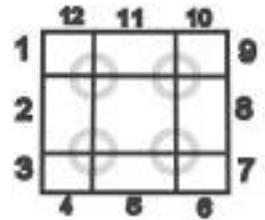
I think I have hereby made my point, that much of Celtic folklore has roots in the Thracian myths. In this cauldron, which I repeat is made in Bulgaria, by the Thracian, we find either core myths of the Celtic *or* the Orphic mysteries *or* some even more ancient astro-theological reference to Orion. This is why the British scientists claim that everything that they research about this period in time ends up pointing to Bulgaria.

The outside of the cauldron is an ancient zodiac, consisting of eight constellations. This happens to be two pr. quadrant of the sky instead of the three we now know. The Templars liked to construct the centres of their churches with eight arches along the sides of the centre core. Later twelve became more common, mostly in the shape where four columns carry nine vaults, which makes twelve sides of the vaults become the outside perimeter. This symbolism was shared by the Cistercians. Saint

Bernhard of Citeaux, who was one of the big admirers and supporters of the Templars, funded this order.

The Templar churches were round. They often had four pillars inside, and most often a row of eight, ten or twelve pillars along the circumference. In the centre was a pillar or a raised stone, representing the world axis.

This shape has a strange echo in a certain underground vault, familiar to many freemasons of the "higher" degrees.



Strangely enough, this is exactly the shape of the Bulgarian "tombs" which are now being discovered in the thousands all over Bulgaria.

Personally, I like the fact that a centre stone is found in the vaults. This stone is found in almost every single chapter room of the Cistercian order and the Templars. It is known that initiates in these two orders knelt on this stone.



These tombs were not just tombs. The doors were constructed to be locked from the inside, and the rooms were probably used to initiate people into the Mysteries.

It is widely accepted that the Thracians invented the Orphic mysteries. Maybe also the Dionysian mysteries – and possibly all of the mysteries. We know nothing from the Thracians themselves. We do not know the Thracian name for Orpheus, Dionysus, Persephone, Demeter — or any of the other gods. Only the Greek names are known to have survived.

That is — unless of course the names were something like Taranis, Cu Chulainn, or Esus.

The Mysteries

The Greek and Thracian cultures excelled in something called the Mysteries. We have probably all heard that these Mysteries relate in some way to Freemasonry through Plato and so on. The fact is that we know very little about what the core rites of these Mysteries consisted of.

Let us follow the initiates at the Elysian mysteries to the town of Eleusis on September 19th, the date on which the rites took place. This date is close to the autumn equinox, the first day of Autumn (20-23 September).

After purifying rites at Athens, the candidates marched to the town of Eleusis with many rites on the way. The road itself was sacred, and rites held at many holy sites on the way were meant to prepare the candidates for the initiation. They arrived at Eleusis by torchlight late in the evening, when a midnight revel under the stars was held on the Rharian plain. Aristophanes describes this in glowing terms. Dances were held to the honour of Demeter near the Unsmiling Rock and The Well of Callichoros, where the desolate mother sat when she first came to Eleusis. Like Demeter, the fasting, wearied candidates rested here in the middle of where the myth happened.

After this lengthy preparation, the candidates were finally led to the Telesterion or Hall of Initiation. The road leads over two bridges. At the second bridge, they had to give a password. The Telesterion was closed to all except the initiated and all events there were shrouded in the densest mystery.

The initiated had to take an obligation never to divulge any secrets entrusted to them. This the candidates took very seriously. A record of an event exists, when Aeschylus got in trouble enacting this in one of his plays. The audience realized he was betraying certain secrets of the Eleusinian mysteries, arose in fury and attacked Aeschylus, who only saved his life by fleeing to the altar of Dionysus. The mob respected this holy site. Later, he was brought to trial before the Aeropagus (a council of initiated). More examples of trials exist. It suffices to say, that the vows were kept and that betrayal could be lethal. For this reason, we know practically nothing about what happened at the Telesterion except for a few hints and references.

It is known that the core of the mysteries dealt with Demeter's search for her daughter Persephone in Hades. Homer has written a hymn describing the myth, but not the Mysteries.

Persephone, "giver of goodly crops" was stolen by Pluto and abducted to Hades, where she was to be his bride. Zeus knew and seemed okay with this. Her mother, Demeter, frenzied with grief, rushed about the Earth for nine days, torch in hand, fasting and searching. By the aforementioned well, she was welcomed by the daughters of Celeus, who took her to their father's house for refreshment. She stayed there for a while. In her anger against Zeus, she denied the earth the crops so no offerings were made for the gods. In this way she negotiated with Pluto that Persephone was allowed to return to her. Persephone returned from Hades, crossing the stream of water named Styx, carrying an ear of corn signifying plenty – the crops of the next year.

During her stay in Hades, she had however eaten six pomegranate seeds, so she was forced to return to Hades for a portion of each year. Demeter allowed the crops to grow again and instituted in memory of the event the Eleusinian rites.

According to Hippolytus, the revelation at the heart of the ritual was the display of "the mighty and wonderful and most perfect mystery — a harvested ear of corn — in silence."

This is commemorated in the zodiac as *Coma Berenices*, the Ear of Corn, which the constellation Virgo is carrying in the south. See tracing board.

This myth was enacted to the initiates, who sat at four long rows of benches along each side of the Telesterion. We are however missing a part of it that symbolizes the return of summer with a holy rebirth. The initiate was most likely portraying this reborn, being at this occasion born from the Earthly, human sphere to the heavenly spiritual realm. This is hinted in the text "those initiated into the mysteries" and in many other places.

I approached the confines of Death, and, having trodden on the threshold of Proserpina [Persephone], returned, having been carried through all the elements, to the depths of midnight I saw the sun glittering with a splendid light, together with the infernal and supernal gods, and to these divinities approaching, I paid the tribute of devout adoration.

Apuleyus— *The Golden Ass*, p. xi

Plutarch wrote about his initiation: When a man dies he is like those who are initiated into the Mysteries. Our whole life is a journey by torturous ways without outlet. At the moment of quitting it, come terrors, shuddering fear, amazement. Then a light that moves to meet you, pure meadows that receive you, songs and dances and holy apparitions.

The early Christian fathers, who disapproved of the rites, claimed that the torches were put out and the hierophant and the priestess had sex. There is nothing in the original texts that really hint at this.

Then there might have been an instructional part of the mysteries. Again, almost no trace of the actual content is known. It is universally agreed in all the texts, that initiation into the mysteries had a profound effect on the ethics and morals of the initiates. This may be related to the last known part of the ritual.

The Telesterion had an adjacent room, the anactoron. It was guarded heavily, and there is at least one example of an Epicurean who was killed for trying to satisfy his curiosity by entering the room unauthorized. In the anactoron, a number of sacred objects were kept. Only the hierophant had access to it. During the initiation ritual, the door to the anactoron was opened, and the hierophant emerged from the door, carrying these sacred objects for all to see. Behind him was a bright light.

Think for a moment about this: Even to the contemporary Chinese (300 BCE), the square was a symbol of morality and justice. Could it have been the Working Tools, which were presented here??

Already in these Eleusinian mysteries there was an element of rebirth. Tertullian says that the initiates used the word "palingenesia", rebirth, about their personal experience of the rites. In the later Dionysian and Orphic mysteries, we have more traces of this, more personal rebirth.

Dionysus is of course the god of wine. He was the son of Zeus and Semele, a princess of Thebes. He was twice born. Hera kills him, or she has the Titans kill, dismember and eat him. Athena saves his heart, which Zeus eats and Dionysus is reborn (through Semele).

The Dionysian mysteries were primitive, elemental and orgiastic. Lots of drinking and other, not normally religious, activities were performed and enacted.

For unknown reasons, this wild and uncontrolled behaviour changed radically when the quite similar myth was enacted in the Orphic mysteries. These mysteries were very ethical and philosophic in nature and encouraged vegetarianism, virtues and piety. Some hold that Orpheus was an actual person. He was Thracian.

According to legend, Orpheus founded these mysteries and was the author of the sacred poems from which the Orphic doctrines were drawn. The rites were based on the myth of Dionysus Zagreus, the son of Zeus and Persephone. When Zeus proposed to make Zagreus the ruler of the universe, the Titans were so enraged that they dismembered the boy and devoured him. Athena saved Zagreus' heart and gave it to Zeus, who thereupon swallowed the heart (from which was born the second Dionysus

Zagreus) and destroyed the Titans with lightning. From the ashes of the Titans sprang the human race, which were part divine (Dionysus) and part evil (Titan). This double aspect of human nature, the Dionysian and the Titanic, is essential to the understanding of Orphism. The Orphics affirmed the divine origin of the soul, but it was through initiation into the Orphic Mysteries and through the process of transmigration that the soul could be liberated from its Titanic inheritance and could achieve eternal blessedness. Orphism stressed a strict standard of ethical and moral conduct. Initiates purified themselves and adopted ascetic practices (*e.g.*, abstinence from eating animal flesh) for the purpose of purging evil and cultivating the Dionysian side of the human character.

A lot of variations of this myth exist. Some say he was the son of Calliope and Apollo – or his father was Oeagrus, a Thracian river god. Most interestingly, some variations of the myth say he was torn to pieces by the women of Thrace – for refusing to tell them the secrets of the mysteries.

When Orpheus' wife, Eurydice was killed by the bite of a serpent, he went down to the underworld to bring her back. His songs were so beautiful that Hades finally agreed to allow Eurydice to return to the world of the living. However, Orpheus had to meet one condition: he must not look back as he was conducting her to the surface. Just before the pair reached the upper world, Orpheus looked back, and Eurydice slipped back into the netherworld once again.



Orpheus was inconsolable at this second loss of his wife. He spurned the company of women and kept apart from ordinary human activities. A group of Ciconian Mænads, female devotees of Dionysus, came upon him one day as he sat singing beneath a tree. They attacked him, throwing rocks, branches, and anything else that came to hand. However, Orpheus' music was so beautiful that it

charmed even inanimate objects, and the missiles refused to strike him. Finally, the Mænads' attacked him with their own hands, and tore him to pieces. Orpheus' head floated down the river, still singing, and came to rest on the isle of Lesbos. Some myths say that his head prophesized until stopped by Apollo.

This "talking head" has many strange echoes. Achilles for instance means "lipless", which only makes sense when you know that in his temple a skull, which was said to prophesize, was worshipped. Again similar is Bran the Blessed of the Celts. Odin's advisor, Mimer was yet another talking head. Also Caput 58 or Caput M or Baphomet of the Templars – right down to the Jolly Roger flag of the pirates (in the beginning *a.k.a.* Templars), probably depicting Hiram Abif who was buried in a too short grave, wherefore the ruffians had to cut his legs off (dismembering again!). Let me *en-passent* throw out the questions: Did Salome ask to have John the Baptist killed – or did she simply ask for his head? All Thracians were dismembered into three pieces before they were buried. In your mind, repeat the penal signs of first and third degree. As for the second degree: remember how Dionysus-Zagreus was reborn from his heart, which was torn from his body.

On a tablet from 300 BCE, Italy, is found the Orphic "password" to get into heaven:

*I am a child of Earth and of Starry Heaven;
But my race is of Heaven.*

It was the Orphic goal to cease the endless rebirths, to cut oneself loose of the material world. Or as a hymn from the Campagno tablets say:
"I have flown out of the sorrowful weary Wheel; I have passed with eager feet to the Circle desired."

The place from where no master mason can materially err.

The core of the Orphic mysteries, the duality of human nature, echoes in the Bogomil, Cathar and Gnostic beliefs. That the material world held you captive and that an insight would set you free: Gnosis. The Orphic initiates were taught to not drink of the well Lethe (forgetfulness) that was located to the left of the House of Hades. Upon death, you would know everything. If you drank of Lethe, you would forget and be reborn into material world.



What the Orphic did with the idea of transmigration was to moralize it into a cycle of purgations intended to free the soul from bodily taint and leave it in the end a pure heavenly essence. According to Pindar, the soul had to undergo three such periods of purification in as many different incarnations before the process would be complete. Only those who "thrice had been courageous in keeping their souls pure from all deeds of wrong" could pass by the highway of Zeus into the tower of Cronus where the ocean breezes blow around the Islands of the Blest.

Hermes Trice Great. Thrice Illustrious Master? Tomb of Transgression? This part of the lecture could continue for much longer.

But even then, there is a limit to what we know. We have *no* information about something as simple as the Thracian names of these deities.

Seeing how closely related the Celtic and Thracian cultures are, this information would undoubtedly shed new light on the history of most of us here present.

This information may not be lost at all. It has waited, untouched, for over 2,300 years on the high hills and in the deep valleys of Bulgaria.

Let me finish with mentioning that Dionysus-Zagreus was known as "The Hunter".

In Celtic folklore Orion (a constellation visible in winter) was Herne the Hunter. Circling the pole star and thus the World Tree.

'There is an old tale goes, that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter time at still midnight,
Walk around about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle;
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner.'

'The Merry Wives of Windsor': William Shakespeare
The oak Herne walks around is of course the Axis Mundi, the centre

stone or the pillar in the middle of the Thracian “tombs” and the Templar Churches. The World Tree is clearly depicted by the Apprentice Pillar in Roslyn Chapel – characterized in the Norse manner by placing Heidrun the goat at the top and the worm Nidhogg at its roots.

He was first Cernunnos of the Celts, then Cern and Hern – Herne. He was the Green Man seen in Roslyn Chapel and the protector of Robin Hood in a recent movie. He is at the very centre of the Celtic myth.

And he was a Thracian.

Celts should want to know what is in those graves in Bulgaria.

Starossel (Old Village) “Star: StaRossel: Rosselyn”?

On 8 December 1949, while digging for brick-making near the town of Panagyurishte in Sredna Gora mountain of central Bulgaria, a team of workmen came upon what was obviously an important treasure. When finally unearthed, it was found to consist of a phial and eight rhytons, one shaped like an amphora and the others like heads of women or animals.



Detail of one of the golden rhytons from the Panagyurishte treasure: said to represent the inner guard asking for a password.

Dated to the turn of the fourth and third century BCE, the find was sensational, not only for its weight in gold — over six kilograms — but also for the originality of its forms.

Some fifty years later, and nearby, teams of Bulgarian archæologists made phenomenal discoveries in the summer of 2000. One of the major discoveries was the grave of what is believed to be a Thracian ruler. The



Nine steps leading to the shrine on the high hill.

site, at the village of Starossel near Plovdiv in southern Bulgaria, has been dated from the fourth or fifth century BCE. The two-chamber “grave”, found at the top of a hill, is approached by a nine-step staircase and a corridor. It is surrounded by a wall made out of some 4,000 stone blocks and was hidden under a twenty metre high mound of earth. Within, archæologists found a magnificent trove of relics, including a large gold funerary wreath, other gold jewelry, bronze shields, helmets and swords, and two sets of silver decorations for horses. The grave and its surroundings are also thought to have been an important religious site for Thracians.

A second site, approached by three steps, was found in a low valley at the base of the hill. The door to the hill-top site is noteworthy for having worn grooves into its sill. If this was a tomb, why have these doors have been opened so many times? Perhaps it was a shrine, rather than a tomb or grave.

With the shrine on the high hill having a nine-step entrance and the low valley shrine having a three-step approach, we might expect to find two intervening shrines—which prior excavation had discovered. Were they approached by five and seven steps? Unfortunately the evidence has been destroyed and we will never be sure.

Nine, seven, five and three

“The number nine was celebrated among all the ancient sages, including Pythagoras, and is called the Sublime Number because by its nature and religion are said to be exalted, it being 3 x 3 and alluding to the three Great Kingdoms of Nature on the one hand, and to the Divine Trinity on the other.

“Every material extension, every circular one, has for its representative sign the number nine, which possesses the property of reproducing itself incessantly and entire in every multiplication; in fact, the entire numeral alphabet is but a series of nines:

$$\begin{array}{cccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 9 & 8 & 7 & 6 & 5 \\ \hline 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \end{array}$$

“When multiplied by any number, the numerals in the product are always expressed in nines, or are divisible by nine:

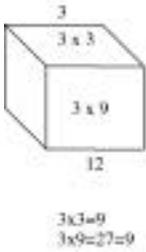
$$\begin{array}{cccccccccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 \\ 9 & 18 & 27 & 36 & 45 & 54 & 63 & 72 & 81 & 90 \end{array}$$

“Squared, cubed, or multiplied by any number, the result is 9:

$$9 \times 9 = 81 \quad 9 \times 81 = 729 = 18 \times 9 \quad 9 \times 729 = 6561 = 18 \times 9$$

$$9 \times 2 = 18 \quad 18 \times 18 = 324 = 9 \quad 9 \times 3 = 27 \quad 27 \times 27 = 729 = 18 \times 9$$

In Freemasonry it is the number of the Cube and also of the Circle:



Light from the Sanctuary of the Royal Arch,
Charles A. Snodgrass. 1951, p. 177

“Three is the number of the Craft lodge [recalling the three steps to the lower shrine]. Three constitute a Master Mason’s Lodge. Nine, or 3 x 3, is the number of the Royal Arch. Nine constitute a Chapter, and in the Council we have 3 x 9 or 27, which forms the Cube and comprehends the whole of Ancient Craft Masonry.”

Ibid , p.179

“The Threes and Fives, the Sevens and Nines of ancient architecture, speaking in each appearance with a symbolism that told of hidden truth, are for us mere numbers, significant only as they form steps on which we may tread or stories in which we may live.”

Ibid , p.180

The Forty-seventh proposition and the Sacred Numbers of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite

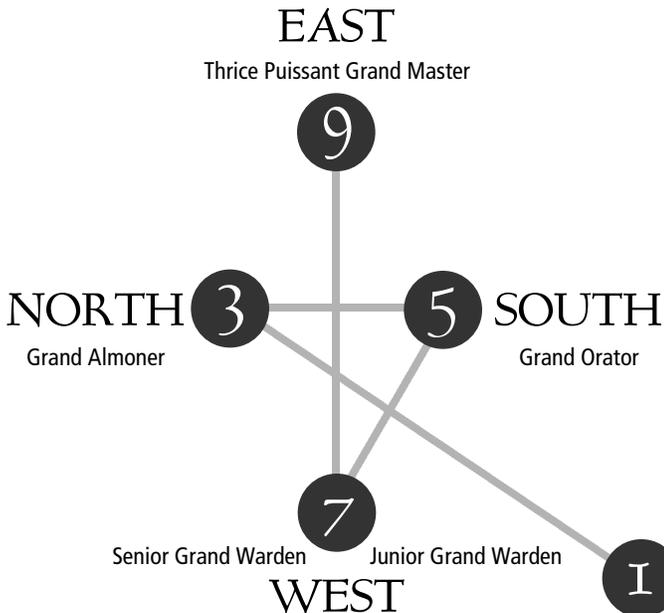
The Forty-seventh proposition is older than Pythagoras. It is this; “In every right angled triangle, the sum of the squares of the base and perpendicular is equal to the square of the hypotenuse.”

The square of a number is the product of that number, multiplied by itself. Thus, 4 is the square of 2, and 9 is the square of 3. The first ten numbers are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Their squares are: 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, 64, 81, 100. The differences between each square and the number which proceeds it is: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19.

We have now arrived at the sacred numbers of: 3, 5, 7, 9, also significant numbers in Freemasonry.

In the Lodge of Perfection, we open and close our activities with a battery of 3, 5 and 7 and 3 times 3, or 9, expressing the sacred numbers.

Our sacred numbers are represented in each Lodge of Perfection by the lights so positioned in the west with the SGW and the JGW, in the north with the Grand Almoner, in the south with the Grand Orator and in the east with the TPGM.

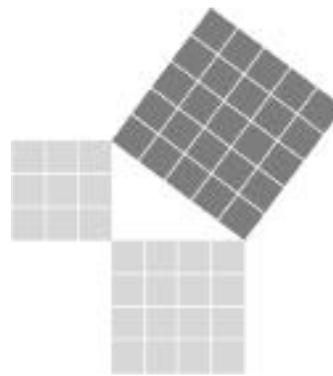


Detail of mural on the dome of the Alexandrov tomb depicting a horseman spearing a boar.

Conclusion

The Alexandrovo Tomb

The tomb was discovered by accident on 17 December 2000 at the bottom of a four metre deep ditch dug by an earth-moving machine . It had



been plundered and part of the murals damaged. Built of enormous ashlar, the tomb consists of two rooms — a rectangular entryway and a round chamber with a two metre high dome cover. Starting about one metre above ground level, both rooms are covered with murals: men, (some fully armed warriors), animals, plants and geometric motifs. The figure of a horseman

spearing a boar, occupies a central place on the dome of the tomb. The pictures are painted in red, blue, yellow, and black, but the predominant colour is that of brick red.

Ovcharov says that excavations at both the Starosel and Perperek sites have been held back by a lack of money.

A note from Vassil Karlovovski: There are/were murals in the dromos or whatever it is (the rectangular room), but they have largely fallen off the walls. It is to be seen whether they could be restored some day. The concern was (according to what I read in the press) that the treasure hunters or anybody else ‘walking’ around in the tomb could have trampled on the remains. Also, it was suggested in the press that the aim of the treasure hunters was to cut the murals in several pieces and to sell them abroad. There had been rumours that this was the fate of several other unresearched tombs.

There is a very real concern that we are losing our past through the carelessness of opportunistic treasure hunters and the haste of archaeologists, working without proper resources, accidentally destroying important historical sites.

Are we receiving the mysteries from the past? Do we care to receive them? There are secrets buried here. Will we lose them before they can be revealed?

If you are interested to find more about the discoveries and mysteries of the Thracians you can email <jeko@jjcanada.com>.



*The following papers, not received by press time, can be found on our Grand Lodge website
<http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/Writings/vgm_day23.html>*

The historical Hiram, King of Tyre

BY R.W. BRO. IAN THOMPSON

Secrets and Mysteries - An Introduction for the Entered Apprentice

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2005
BY W. BRO. MICHAEL YULE

Today's paper is intended to provide a short introduction for an Entered Apprentice into what exactly it is that I believe Freemasonry is all about, although I am hoping that there may be a snippet or two in here that will be of interest to more senior brethren as well. Before starting, I will add my customary disclaimer that the ideas presented herein are those of the author, and do not in any way indicate that these ideas are the official views of this Grand Jurisdiction, the Lodge of Education and Research, or any other freemason in either body. Freemasonry is intended to be, among other things, an intellectual journey, and the ideas and proposals contained in this paper are intended to give the contemplative among you additional food for thought, and are my thoughts in their entirety.

As many of us remember, the first steps into Freemasonry are filled with both anticipation and apprehension, largely because there is a feeling that somehow things will be different after the initiation but that *how* it will be different is unknown, and how this will be achieved is also unknown.

It is this sense of the unknown, this 'mystery' that is one of the keys to the experience. The dictionary defines 'mystery' as a profound secret, something wholly unknown or kept cautiously concealed and therefore exciting curiosity or wonder, something that has not been or cannot be explained. How this relates to the EA degree is the basis of this paper.

Freemasonry is a philosophical descendant of the Mystery traditions such as those of Eleusis, Dionysus, and Orpheus. There are many, both within the Craft and without, that would discount any attempt to link Freemasonry with these ancient roots. And no doubt they are right insofar as their arguments typically revolve around the formation of lodges and direct linkages of ritual wording, symbology, movement within the lodge, lodge hierarchy, *etc.* But these critics are missing the point entirely, and are in fact making the argument that because the various Christian churches do not conduct their rituals in exactly the same way that Jesus and the apostles did, that there is no linkage between them, which is of course incorrect. I might additionally add that these arguments often are given by those that tend towards the view that Freemasonry is nothing more than a charitable organization – dedicated to assisting others less fortunate – and while no doubt this is a worthy reason for a brotherhood to exist, and as we know freemasons are very active in such endeavours, it is clear to me that we could quite capably raise money, assist others, and contribute to the relief of the poor and distressed without any of the ritual trappings that are undertaken each time a lodge is convened and each time a degree is conferred, as do our friends in various other organizations whose names no doubt will occur readily to you.

As we all know, Freemasonry is not a religion, and in fact is accepting of all who profess only a belief in a Supreme Deity, however they choose to define him or her. I include the feminine divine here at the risk of being the first ever to do so within this space, as most of our cultural traditions tend to view the supremacy of a single male deity, and yet there have been many and still are, to whom creation is a feminine trait not a male one. Patriarchal attitudes have taken hold of the west for the most part however, and so virtually all reference in mainstream religious thought

is to a male deity. I might also add at this point however that most esoteric traditions of even patriarchal religious systems include a female counterpart to the male Creator. In esoteric Judaism, called *Qabbalah*, this creatrix is the Shekinah, whose presence figures in several masonic degrees in Concordant bodies for instance. Even within the bounds of traditional Catholic Christianity the adoration of Mary Mother of Jesus has aspects of the traditional Goddess worship of many cultures prior to the ascension of the male warrior deity originally worshiped primarily by cultures from the north and east of Europe. In any event, some lodges also require that candidates state that they believe that the Great Architect of the Universe will punish evil and reward good, as well as that he or she has revealed his or her will in a Volume of Sacred Lw, but I personally consider these as late aberrations in the masonic tradition and discount their validity to the Craft. Neither of these questions are consistent with the avowed intention of the Craft to accept as initiates those who profess a belief in Deity, as they go well beyond this requirement and assume to some degree a Judeo-Christian background, or at least a written rather than an oral tradition in the candidates' belief system, not to mention a punishment tradition that is inconsistent with some beliefs.

Anyone who is interested in the traditions of matriarchal deities is well advised to read "The White Goddess" by Robert Graves.

In any event, since the Eleusinian Mysteries have been extinct as an organized event for tens of centuries, it may not be immediately clear how the statement can be made that there is any connection between the conferral of a masonic degree and the rites performed in Greece at Eleusis so long ago. The answer is partly in the work that we do and what we know about the work that they did, but more importantly it is in the results that each strived for.

Before going much further, let's explore a little what the Eleusinian Mysteries were all about. Eleusis is (or rather was) a town about 20km from Athens above the bay of Eleusis, and was founded about 2000BCE. The rites of the religion of Demeter were carried out there until the rise of Christianity – this is known by the successive erection of temples on the site throughout Roman times, and in the time of Solon (died 559BCE) these rites were established as one of the most important Athenian festivals. The temples were destroyed by the Goths around 400CE when the rites were proscribed by Theodosius.

The fundamental background to the rites of Eleusis revolve around the story of Demeter and Persephone. Demeter, also called Ceres (where we get the word 'cereal') was the goddess responsible for agriculture – the life and death cycle played out each year when the seed sown in the ground at the end of the year rises again in the spring with new life. Persephone, also called 'Kore', her daughter, as those of you who remember your Greek religious stories, was abducted and raped by Hades the god of the kingdom of death and became his wife. Demeter searched all over the world for her daughter and eventually arrived at Eleusis. There she was welcomed by (the stories differ here between authors) a poor woman who welcomed her into her home, not knowing that she was a goddess. In thanks for the hospitality she was shown, Demeter contrived to make the woman's son immortal – she fed him with nectar and ambrosia, the food of the gods,

and one night, to complete the transition to immortality she brought the boy to the hearth fire and was about to immolate him when the woman of the house awoke. Seeing her son about to be thrust into the flames, she screamed, at which point the goddess revealed herself and admonished the woman that had she not interrupted, the boy would have been made immortal. In consolation however, Demeter offered to teach the inhabitants of the town her secrets if they would build a temple to her.

In the meantime, the daughter was still missing, and after the temple had been built Demeter secreted herself there and in her sorrow vowed that she would not allow any seed to grow until Persephone had been found. Eventually word came to her of what had happened to her daughter, and she negotiated with Zeus to obtain her release from her marriage to Hades. Zeus decreed that she could return unless in her time in the world of the dead she had eaten anything. Since Persephone had eaten six seeds of the pomegranate while she was with Hades she was doomed to stay there for six months of the year, and could return to the living world for the other six. The seeds of the earth, then, are reborn and grow when Persephone returns, and they die again when she returns to the land of the dead.

The end of the agricultural year, when the plants are dying, is symbolized by the sorrow of Demeter as she knows that her daughter will be leaving her and returning to the dead lands for the next six months. On Persephone's release in the spring, the plants come back to life as Demeter's happiness is restored with the return of her daughter.

There are parallels here to various other festivals in a variety of religious systems – for instance Christianity. The rising of the Christ in the spring, renewed and reborn at Easter is an obvious analogy. This is especially so when one considers the root of the word 'Easter' – which is 'oestre', an Anglo-Saxon goddess who symbolized the rebirth of the day at dawn and the rebirth of life in the spring. As a possibly interesting aside, this word, oestre, is also related to fertility in mammals, as it describes being in heat, or in rut. No wonder the egg is an Easter symbol. The death of an old life, and the rebirth into a new one through a ritual drama is a fundamental part of most major religious systems today as well – an example is baptism in the Christian church. It may not be immediately apparent to the new Entered Apprentice how this relates to the initiatory experience that he underwent, however the parallels are there for the contemplative. Other parts of other dramas will doubtless occur to the more senior brethren as being parallel in intent. For the Entered Apprentice who experienced the Ancient Work I would suggest reviewing the challenges given by the Junior Warden, the Senior Warden, and the Worshipful Master after the first perambulation around the lodge and the answers given by the Senior Deacon, while the candidate is still hoodwinked, for some evidence. Other parallels will hopefully become clear in a few minutes. While we don't know the exact rituals that were practiced at Eleusis we can certainly do some evocative imagining.

The archæologist George Mylonas directed the final excavations of Eleusis, which was the site of the Mysteries for two thousand years. During that time multitudes of women and men from all over the world of the ancient Greeks participated in these rites, and, if we can believe the poets, playwrights, and philosophers, drew great strength from them. Pindar wrote: "Blessed is he who has seen these things before he goeth beneath the hollow earth; for he understandeth the end of mortal life, and the beginning (of a new life) given of G-d" (from 'The Odes of Pindar'). Cicero, Sophocles, and Aristotle likewise extolled the Mysteries in their plays and other writings. Greek and Roman political figures such as Pericles, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, and Julian considered their experiences there moving and joyful. And some of the most profound passages in the plays of Aeschylus were considered so close to the essence of the Mysteries that the

playwright came under the scrutiny of Athenian law until it was proved that he had never been initiated, and therefore could not have revealed the Mysteries in his works.

Mylonas expressed his frustration with the lack of information he had been able to gather in a life dedicated to finding the true Eleusis at the end of his book *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* – he concludes:

For years, since my early youth, I have tried to find out what the facts were. Hope against hope was spent against the lack of monumental evidence; the belief that inscriptions would be found on which the Hierophants had recorded their ritual and its meaning has faded completely; the discovery of a subterranean room filled with the archives of the cult, which dominated my being in my days of youth, is proved an unattainable dream, since neither subterranean rooms nor archives for the cult exist at Eleusis...

Eleusis has puzzled scholars for centuries. Much has been discovered about the preparatory and public celebrations, the preliminary processions and purifications, the Demeter-Kore myth cycle, and the nature of certain processions and lesser rites. Many psychologists such as Carl Jung and other scholars have created a large storehouse of intuitions and speculations. Many would now agree that a profound religious experience must have occurred, repeated year after year, a psychic reality that succeeded again and again.

At one level, I think, all Mystery traditions involve processes of growth and regeneration, confrontations with birth, death, the source of life, and the relationship of human beings to the cosmos. It can be considered that rituals are really the re-enactment of a spiritual drama, allowing the participant to enter into the drama of life itself, of joining with his god or goddess in an achievement of unity so that growth, the true purpose of ritual, is achieved.

Above and beyond the murky area of historical and geographical connections of Freemasonry and Mystery traditions such as those of Demeter and Persephone, the philosophical connections are real. What little we know of the Mysteries seems to indicate that these rites emphasized (as the Craft, at its best, does today) experience as opposed to dogma, and metaphor and myth as opposed to doctrine. Both the Mysteries and Freemasonry emphasize initiatory processes that lead to a widening of perceptions. Neither emphasizes theology, belief, or the written word. In both, participants expect to lead normal lives in the world, as well as attain spiritual enrichment.

Aidan Kelly, a writer on various Mystery traditions, writes:

The Great Mysteries of Eleusis were, in large part, archetypal of the Mystery religions. According to Karl Kerényi, when Athens annexed Eleusis about 600 BCE and made its Mysteries the state religion of Attica, the Athenians passed a law to protect the secrets of the Mysteries. This law, however, distinguished two types of secrets, the "Lower" and the "Higher". The "Lower secrets" were those that could be told to another person by word, gesture, or whatever; these were called "*ta aporrheta*, the forbidden", and the law applied only to them – hence their name. Why didn't the law apply to the "Higher secrets"? The latter were called "*ta arrheta*, the ineffable", and it was recognized in the law itself that these secrets could not be communicated except by the Mysteries themselves, hence they needed no protection by a mere law.

It is the process, and the experience, not the secrets, that are the mystery of the Mysteries. And so it is with the mysteries in Freemasonry.

A mystery can't be told or even easily shown someone, while a secret can be told to just about anyone and they can tell it to somebody else. And it will be the same secret. And yet there are an amazing number

of people, even freemasons that seem to believe that the two terms are synonymous. The frustrating thing about the Mysteries for new freemasons, and those that think about it at all after they are more experienced, is that they cannot be taught, they must be experienced. In fact, telling most people the surface-seeming substance or "secrets" can blind them to the depth of the real Mysteries, the great sea of the unteachable. If it were as easy as telling to introduce someone to the Mysteries, then those who have perceived them would simply tell, and all people would become wise and aware. But when people try to tell, the things that are said are either understandable but not true or true but not understandable. It is because the experience of the initiation is the key, and not the written word of the ritual, that it is so important for a Freemason to attend degrees, the same degrees, over and over and over again. And to participate in them – for by becoming a part of the ritual a freemason becomes immersed in the Mystery and has the opportunity once again to add a little more to his knowledge of the unknowable.

It will be clear from a study of the EA degree that the primary lesson is secrecy, and this is developed primarily in the obligation, where the candidate is bound by oath not to reveal any of the secrets of Freemasonry unlawfully. The commonest interpretation of this is that the words, grips, and signs that are revealed to the candidate are not to be disclosed to those that have not been initiated. This interpretation is fully consistent with the Athenian Law against revealing the "Lower secrets" of Eleusis – as these physical things are the "Lower secrets" of Freemasonry. The "Higher secrets" are the ritual itself – all those things that happen that are considered the mundane trappings of the ritual but which are, in fact, the true essence of the initiation. And the implication is that it does not matter whether or not the ritual is published to others, as it has been by any number of people, as they cannot possibly derive any benefit from it unless it is performed for them as it is in a consecrated lodge of freemasons.

For those of you listening who assist in the conferral of degrees this point must be strongly emphasized. The ritual is the Mystery. This is why it needs to be performed as expertly as possible, with the proper frame of mind of all involved. The setting, the words, the ritual clothing – all are intended to create in the candidate the set of requirements that will allow for a transcendent experience. This ritual space is consecrated by the opening ceremonies and invocation of Deity, whose symbols are placed on the altar to ensure that Deity is present to witness the obligation of the candidate. Different symbols are placed for each Deity that is professed by the candidate. I am, of course, referring to the Volume of Sacred Law. The reason that atheists are not permitted initiation is not so much that the obligation would be void insofar as no oath is binding if sworn to a Deity in whom one has no belief, but rather because that Deity must be present at the obligation in order for the candidate to ascend towards him or her as a result of the ritual.

Of course there is another component to make the initiation successful, and that is the candidate. The candidate must be ready to accept the initiation in the correct spirit for it to be successful. He, as well as the ritual space, must also be clean, both spiritually and physically, and this is no doubt the reason that he must pray with the lodge at his first entrance, and why the answer to the question "Where were you first prepared to be a freemason?" is "In my heart". The candidate's ability to make the initiation successful and derive a benefit from it is also why there is a visit to his home by three members of the lodge prior to his application being balloted on. Therefore it is necessary that the Committee of Investigation be thorough and attentive to any detail that would make the candidate unable to appreciate the ritual that is to be performed.

What must be remembered is that the Entered Apprentice degree is

simply an initiation, to prepare the candidate to receive higher mysteries. The mysteries of Freemasonry, as in Eleusis, are a process, and each step is intended to prepare the candidate for the one to follow. So, in the Entered Apprentice degree we have the spiritual rebirth and dedication to Deity that is necessary for the understanding of those things yet to come. This is illustrated in part by the entrance into the lodge proper, as into the world, from the womb represented by the preparation room and the prayer and obligation representing the dedication to Deity. The lectures are, for the most part, a description utilizing Judeo-Christian mythology of the processes, myth, and ritual that had been undergone during the drama. This does not in any way invalidate their application to other myth systems, and in fact one of the lessons that the astute Entered Apprentice will perceive is that the interpretation of the symbols can be done in other myth systems as well and if properly understood will result in the same lesson being learned.

As an example, at his first entrance to the Lodge, the Entered Apprentice is received on the point of a sharp instrument (a sword, or a spear) at his naked left breast, which to those Christians among us will be immediately evocative of the piercing by the centurion Longinus of the left breast of Jesus while he was on the cross, before he entered his new life in the otherworld. The parallels to entering the lodge are obvious. This does not invalidate the reasoning given by the Senior Deacon, that this was to be a reminder to your conscience should you ever presume to reveal the secrets of Freemasonry unlawfully, and in fact it more deeply impresses the idea that the sharp instrument can be used as an instrument of torture to the flesh. In fact, this sharp instrument, if seen as a spear, can also be that which heals, insofar as while the candidate and brother does remember the injunction and it affects his life in the intended fashion, it can be said to have healed him. This is evocative of yet another tradition, in which the hero Achilles wounds Telephus with his spear in a skirmish on his way to the Trojan war, and only by application of the spear again to Telephus is he able to be healed.

The hoodwink blinds the candidate, and while it is true that it would be possible to remove him from the lodge without him ever having seen even the form thereof as a result of it being imposed on him, I prefer to think that it is rather a veil than a blindfold, and represents the darkness with which a candidate approaches the truth, represented by the symbols of his Deity on the altar, and after having been consecrated to that Deity the veil is lifted and he is able to see for the first time. It must be the first time, because he has been born into the lodge, as was previously discussed. This veil is also the Abyss that stands between the *Supernal Sephirot* and those below that represent the sensual world in the *Qabbalah*, and has the same meaning.

To summarize before ending, it is clear to the author that Freemasonry is a vastly older tradition than most recognize. The issue of whether there is a written pedigree with lodge minutes is irrelevant. What matters is what we do in the lodge, and what we do is ritual. Ritual that is intended in its initiatory aspects to allow a freemason to come closer to his divinity, and to be able to feel, if not to intellectualize, that process. With no doctrine and no dogma, the rituals of Freemasonry come closer to those of the initiatory traditions of the Eleusinians and others than to any other set of rituals, and it is this simple fact, this acknowledgement of the divine with many faces that allows those who are ready to truly experience the masonic tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

I would like to end this little talk with a quote, attributed to Hermes Trimegistus: "Then only will you see it, when you cannot speak of it, for the knowledge of it is deep silence and suppression of all the senses." And that pretty much says it all.

New Things Learned : An Overview of the Centre for Research into Freemasonry

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2005
BY BRO. KENNETH LITTLE

In 1976 a book was published in England entitled *Religions and Voluntary Organizations in Crisis*. It is a study of the social life of the town of Reading between 1890 and 1914. As he was doing his research, author Stephen Yeo lamented that the contributions of Freemasonry to his study were not available for inclusion. In his own words he describes how, "[...] a Congregationalist minister in the 1960's, showing me the photographs of deacons, etc., on the wall of the vestry of his chapel, told me that I could not really understand late 19th century chapel life without knowing about the Masons. The Vicars of St. Mary's and St. Giles at different dates before 1914 were both high in the local Masonic hierarchy." Wanting to make his study complete and therefore more acceptable as history, Yeo went to the local Masonic Hall but was not allowed to examine the records.

At about the same time that Yeo was studying social life in Reading, another scholar was studying another aspect of early British and European development; the Enlightenment – that time of renewal during the period roughly between the middle of the 17th and 18th centuries. In this case the scholar was Professor Margaret Jacob from the University of California at Berkeley. Her research resulted in a book published in 1981 entitled *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*.

I will quote from a critique of Jacob's book by a man I will introduce to you in a few minutes. He writes, "[...] the importance of Professor Jacob's achievement cannot be overstated. The Enlightenment is one of the most important of the various cultural strands which make up modern Freemasonry. Professor Jacob has put Freemasonry back at the heart of the Enlightenment, and has helped Freemasons understand their Enlightenment inheritance. However, the most sobering aspect of Professor Jacob's study is hidden away in the introduction [...]. When Professor Jacob started her research, the Library and Museum of the United Grand Lodge of England, the most important collection of Masonic books in the world, was closed to non-masons and she was not permitted to use its collections. She was forced instead to use the (also remarkable) library of the Grand East of the Netherlands, but this means that her book does not take account of some relevant materials in London, such as transcripts of minutes of the Old King's Arms Lodge, No. 28, describing the Newtonian lectures and demonstrations held by the lodge. [...] it seems tragic that Professor Jacob was ever denied access to this collection [...]."

As an aside—you may read an essay by Dr. Jacob entitled *The Clandestine Universe of the Early 18th Century*, from which you will get a clear idea of what some of our masonic ancestors had to do to get their enlightenment ideas out to those who were interested in such things, and about the dangers they faced.

Dr. Jacob has become another of an ever-lengthening line of pure historians — as opposed to masonic historians — who have given impetus to an idea proposed publicly by Dr. John M. Roberts, a distinguished Oxford historian. In 1969 Roberts published an article in the *English Historical Review*, entitled "Freemasonry: the Possibilities of a Neglected Topic." Roberts' thesis was that Freemasonry was one of the social movements of British origin which has had the biggest international impact, but which has also largely been ignored by scholars of History in Britain. There are

some good reasons for this. In contrast, Freemasonry in France and Holland has been well investigated, as it has also in the United States of America. For decades Professor Roberts had encouraged his fellow historians to take a scholarly look at the contributions made by Freemasonry to western civilization, particularly to the cultural life of Great Britain.

Dr. Roberts may be known by many of you as the author of the book *Mythology of the Secret Societies*. He died about 18 months ago, but had probably received some satisfaction in seeing historians finally taking English Freemasonry seriously and Freemasonry finally taking pure historians seriously..

Since I wrote that last section I received an article dated 1929 in which the writer, W. Bro. Gilbert W. Daynes, encouraged masonic researchers to do just what Roberts wanted pure researchers to do forty years later. The important thing here is that Daynes' exhortation to action remained within the confines of the Craft and its own researchers.

There are two more introductory things I must tell you. The first is that, because of the neglect of Freemasonry by scholars of pure history, the public field of masonic exposition has been dominated by anti-masonic writers, and by masonic antiquarians who have kept most of their work to the investigation of details of ritual or hidden spiritual meaning in the rituals or on some kind of masonic beginnings or on bureaucratic administration development. The second is that masonic researchers have already done some research into the contributions of the Craft to western civilization, and have published their work but within the confines of the Craft. English Freemasonry has been hiding its light under a bushel.

Some even earlier brethren saw the need to expose Freemasonry to the world for the good of the world. Brother Sir Walter Besant became one of the nine co-founders of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, in the late nineteenth century. Besant apparently was not personally enthusiastic about rites and ceremonies, but his feelings went beyond those things to see Freemasonry as a great potential force for social and religious improvement in the world at large. His desire was that Quatuor Coronati would be an instrument for bringing better understanding of the origins of Freemasonry. He wanted to expose Freemasonry to the world for what he perceived to be the good of the world. Unfortunately, the masonic historical record of the past hundred years is replete with articles that deal, for the greatest part, as many have stated before I did, with the same slim evidence of origins. We have had some pretty exciting books come our way in the past decade or so, which have been full of speculation, but short on fact, short on references, short on bibliography. We keep hearing the same stories, over and over. It has become the story of gnawing the same bone, and it has been equated with the old argument about who wrote the Shakespeare plays, Shakespeare or Bacon? These arguments on origins can be taken only so far before they lose their impact. In the final analysis it wouldn't make a whit of difference, since, for example, in the case of the Shakespeare controversy, the plays would still retain their uniqueness and, in the case of Freemasonry, whatever our origins we will still have to work with what we have, our own uniqueness. We, as researchers, for the most part have missed the point of letting the rest of the world know what we are about, and it has taken the very public work of a few scholarly

individuals to have the doors to masonic history opened wide for pure research. There is hope that our Craft will be able soon to stand up in public with its very important, and eminently honourable social history, to take its deserved accolades. It has been a long time coming. Let there be light. The bushel basket is being taken off. The light is beginning to shine. But where? And what is the light that is beginning to shine? The light is from new things learned, old things explained, a better understanding of the philosophy of Freemasonry, and an exciting expectation that at some future time the whole panoply of the history of modern Freemasonry will be open for all to see; and the light is coming from Great Britain, home of the two Grand Lodges that have given charters to the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon. Someone finally heard Roberts' plea.

Some time prior to the year 2000 a group of responsible freemasons in Great Britain apparently got thinking about what could be the best way to bring Freemasonry's contributions to western civilization to the public. It was decided to establish a research centre in a prestigious British university. There actually has been masonic research happening in British universities, but this has been on an individual basis by scholars working on subjects related to Freemasonry. The information that follows has come from a talk given in November 2002, at Lodge Chimera No. 160, in Arezzo, Italy, delivered by W. Bro. John Wade, who is a member of the Sheffield Masonic Study Circle. I have also used a talk presented to the United Grand Lodge of England in September of 2004 by Professor Dr. Andrew Prescott, who is Director of the Centre for Research into Freemasonry and the person whose critique of Jacob's work I presented to you earlier. I have also used snippets of information from numerous other reliable sources, and have cited them for your later reference.

The Centre for Research into Freemasonry was established by the University of Sheffield in the academic session 2000-2001. Sheffield is in the top ten of British universities and ranks number five in the category of research. The Centre for Research into Freemasonry has become a part of the University's Humanities Research Institute which has a research partnership arrangement with other world institutions, including Simon Fraser University. There may be some implications here for us local freemasons as researchers. I am certainly going to look into it as I begin my Masters degree programme in September at Simon Fraser University. On a personal note I want my Masters thesis paper to include a large amount of masonic research in the context of the Enlightenment period of history and the works of Alexander Pope.

The Sheffield-based Centre was originally funded by the United Grand Lodge of England, the Province of Yorkshire West Riding, and Lord Northampton, who had recently been appointed Pro Grand Master of the UGLE. These three sources provided £250,000 over three years. Since 2003 the Supreme Grand Chapter has joined with the United Grand Lodge to continue the funding. Although Freemasonry provides funding for the Centre, wise heads amongst the leadership have dictated that there will be no masonic involvement in either appointments to the staff or in the research agenda of the Centre. In my opinion this will help eliminate possible pro-masonic bias in reading the records. The funding is administered by a specially established trust which includes a representative from Freemasonry and of the university, as well as other independent members.

W. Bro. Wade, in his speech in Italy, said this; "One of the reasons why historians neglect Freemasonry is the lack of good critical bibliographies and guides to research resources." Since he spoke those words the Centre has developed a number of bibliographies including a bibliography of histories of Craft Freemasonry, the Royal Arch and additional degrees, for all English counties and major towns, and a bibliography of the works of the so-called 'Sheffield School' of masonic

historians associated with Douglas Knoop. Douglas Knoop was a former Professor of Economics at the University and a Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, who in the 1940s published some of the most influential studies of Freemasonry so far produced. If you check out the Centre's website you will now find some of those bibliographies there.

W. Bro. Wade also noted, "The Craft is perceived by many non-masonic scholars and, indeed, by many of its own scholars, as being obsessed by its origins. I think this is very understandable, but it must not be allowed to stifle the very important work which needs to be done on so many aspects of Freemasonry."

As I have stated, most of the work of masonic scholars has remained within the confines of the Craft, and the researchers have, according to Wade, "failed to relate their research to broader intellectual themes, thereby diminishing the academic value of their researches to historians." You can see this if you log on to any website of a lodge or organization of education and research. The research published on those websites is almost exclusively masonic-centred with rarely any references to outside events which the research subject may have either positively or negatively impacted.

In answer to the previous neglectful situation, the aim of the Centre is to put masonic study squarely into the academic community of historical research in Britain. The research agenda of the Centre is appraised and assessed by an advisory committee of distinguished academics from both Sheffield University and other academic institutions.

In Bro. Wade's words: "The Centre will

- Demonstrate the richness of the resources that are available
- Provide bibliographies and guides to manuscript resources
- Look at the modern history of the institution
- Build links with continental and American scholars
- Above all, relate the research to mainstream academic themes.

Since its inauguration on 5 March 2001, the Centre has successfully run an active programme of lectures, seminars, and conferences, and has developed its own large scale research projects. Abstracts of papers presented at conferences are available on the Centre's website. You can also access *Lane's Masonic Records*, a directory which lists all the UGLE lodges which have ever existed, with their names, numbers, meeting places, and other details. It has taken the work of three years to get all the material documented and collated to the state where it can be properly used. That work continues.

The man chosen to be the first Director of the Centre of Research into Freemasonry at the University of Sheffield is Dr. Andrew Prescott. Dr. Prescott studied history at the University of London and earned his PhD through a study of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. He became a curator in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Library from 1979-2000 and planned and supervised the move of the Manuscript Collections from the British Museum building to the Library's new premises at St. Pancras. He is one of the country's leading experts on the application of new technologies to humanities research. He currently serves on advisory panels for the Mediæval Records Publication Working Party, National Archives, JISC Images Working Party, Manuscripts Working party of the Consortium for European Research Libraries, and the Publications Committee, Institute of Historical Research, University of London. This is the man who is leading the research into our brotherhood. He is not a freemason.

Dr. Prescott's output over the past three years has been outstanding from the point of quantity and quality of work. The bulk of his time has been in active research, exploring the collections of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry with a focus on membership records and the information they offer about social networks. From this research has come a great deal of other interesting information. He has discovered the word

“freemason” in the record of a prison escape of one Nicholas le Freemason in 1325. The previous earliest record of the word was in 1376. He found the Parliamentary Debates around the *Unlawful Societies Act* of 1799 to be “electrifying” in his words; in particular “the dramatic speech of the Duke of Athol, which effectively saved freemasonry from being outlawed.” His study of newsreel film from the twentieth century has resulted in an essay delivered to a conference organized by the Free University of Brussels, the Cornerstone Society, and the Canonbury Masonic Research Centre in 2003. The essay is entitled *A Body Without a Soul? The Philosophical Outlook of British Freemasonry 1700-2000*. You can read it in pdf form on the Centre’s website.

In the past four years Dr. Prescott had delivered over sixty talks and presentations to showcase the Institute and new research. His audiences have included local masonic lodges, as well as large international scholarly conferences. His first presentation was to a conference at the British Library which had an audience of about 300 scholars from all over the world. In his own words, “I [have been] very stuck by the enormous interest taken by all these scholars in the potential for Freemasonry as a subject of research, and by their enthusiasm for the objects I showed them.[...] scholars who hear something about the history of Freemasonry for the first time are immediately struck by the many interesting aspects which the subject presents. The talks and papers are now gradually being published, not only in the existing masonic journals, [...] but also in specialist scholarly journals. I am also working on drawing these essays together into a book, whose working title is ‘Tales from Great Queen Street’.” As you do your own research for either personal edification or for composition purposes you will find most of these articles and essays on the Centre’s webpage as well as on webpages like Canonbury, Cornerstone, Freemasonry Today, and others.

Now that the Centre for Research into Freemasonry is ‘off the ground,’ so to speak, with funding resourced, research projects underway, and writing being completed and presented, it has become time to think more closely about the future. As the Centre is a part of the Humanities Research Institute of the University, its next phase will be to organize teaching activities at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In his address to the Grand Lodge in September of 2004, Dr. Prescott said this; “Teaching is not a major focus of the work of the Centre as present, but nevertheless I have three postgraduate students at present working on M.Phil degrees, which they hope to upgrade to PhD, and others will be enrolled shortly. A particularly exciting recent development has been the establishment of two studentships which will pay the fees of two postgraduate students. These studentships have been generously funded by the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy and by *Freemasonry Today*. While working with postgraduate students is extremely stimulating, I have found particularly satisfying my occasional work with undergraduates. Among the interesting exercises we have undertaken with some students from the School of Architecture which focused on an old masonic hall, and some work with media studies students from Salford and Newcastle who were making student films about Freemasonry.”

Plans to 2009 are exciting, according to Dr. Prescott. A major aim is to work with the History Department to develop an MA in Historical Research with special modules on the history of Freemasonry. MA students in the History Department will be able to follow a series of modules which will allow them to focus on the history of Freemasonry. This will be the first course of its sort anywhere in the world. It will eventually be made available to students in other parts of the world, using the Internet and other tools. Short courses leading to diplomas will also be developed, including a course on *Writing a Lodge History*. Contributors to those courses will be the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Quatuor Coronati

Lodge, and the Canonbury Masonic Research Centre. Dr. Prescott is aiming to have the first courses ready for this next scholastic year, meaning 2005, likely September.

By the end of 2005 the Humanities Research Institute will be moving to a new space in the heart of the University’s campus. Dr. Prescott notes that this move will give a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to give the Centre a physical presence and to give concrete expression to the vision that research into Freemasonry should play a pivotal role in humanities research at Sheffield. Plans are underway for a building that would house a lecture theatre, seminar room, a library, and a space for visiting masonic scholars. What exactly will masonic scholars be researching?

First of all, there will be pure historical data. Freemasonry’s records have much to say on royalty, politicians, and governments in Britain. Many of the English Grand Masters since 1782 have been members of the royal family, but the significance of this has never been fully investigated. Freemasonry is one of the British institutions in which the aristocracy still holds sway, and the role of the aristocracy in British Freemasonry provides a fruitful area for study for scholars interested in the decline and fall of the British aristocracy.

The history of the New Welcome Lodge No. 5139, in 1929, should provide some interesting details about the frequent blackballing of Labour Party activists before that time.

The masonic archive should be able to provide some important details about the lives of famous person who were freemasons, such as Lord Brougham, who was apparently in his cups when he underwent initiation, passing, and raising on the same day during a visit to the Hebrides.

Maybe that’s where the Americans got the idea! There are some interesting relationships which were formed between commoner and aristocracy which should be investigated, if only to try to discover what were contributing factors; was one factor simply the commonality of Freemasonry?

One of the most important contributions of Freemasonry to western society has been its organizational protocols, which have been the blueprints for many of today’s governments. After all, although in Britain Grand Masters were normally of the aristocracy, yet at the lodge level, anyone could become a Master, thus, theoretically, effectively eliminating class distinctions. Lodge governance is really a form of republicanism.

There is room for study and research on Freemasonry and public and private space. Just as an example, researcher Hugh Urban has used the insights of theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu to consider ways in which the closed space and secrecy of the lodge meeting facilitated the elaboration of social power and hierarchy in the late nineteenth century America. Changes in spatial relationships within the lodge meeting could reflect wider social changes.

There is much information of, and research to be done on, Gender issues, masculinity, and emancipation, as well as much study and research to be done on race, empire, and nationality. All of these issues have been impacted by Freemasonry. Let me again paraphrase Dr. Prescott from his article *The Study of Freemasonry as a New Academic Discipline*; [The study of] race is a further area where research into Freemasonry offers exciting possibilities. The best-known illustration of this is Prince Hall Freemasonry, which has been seen by scholars [as helping to] define and nurture a black middle class in America, although one scholar emphasizes the contradictions between the universalist ideology of Freemasonry and the separate segregated character of Prince Hall Freemasonry.

English Pro Grand Master Lord Carnarvon said, “Where the flag goes, there goes Freemasonry to consolidate the Empire.” In was in the mixed race lodge that a social venue was presented in which colonizer and

colonized were able to mix. Bro. Rudyard Kipling wrote, "[...] there ain't such things as infidels among the brethren black and brown," about his lodge in Lahore. And Freemasonry has been implicated in the formation of national identity. In Britain, for example, Freemasonry was an expression of the Hanoverian settlement, while in France it was one of the forces behind the development of modern French republicanism. While the study of Freemasonry can contribute a great deal to intellectual concerns, it has also helped fashion new intellectual agendas.

What about Freemasonry at this present date in history? There appears to be a kind of quickening in the anti-masonic sphere of interest, and this is another subject for study and research. Dr. Prescott has found what he calls, 'hints that, whatever the upshot, reactions to Freemasonry [in our present and future] will be of new significance, especially in light of the events of 11 September 2001. Although the attack gave rise to a well-documented wave of antisemitism, it also has given rise to a new anti-masonry. Hear this; "Within days of the attacks in New York, website postings attributed the attacks to the Illuminati, [drawing] parallels between the twin towers and the masonic columns Jachin and Boaz, and used spurious numerology to suggest masonic involvement in the attacks. More significant for the long-term is the way in which attacks on Freemasonry form part of the extreme Muslim denunciation of western values. There has been a long history of Arab groups circulating the discredited libels of the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. In recent years, however, some Muslims, drawing on western anti-masonic literature, have linked Freemasonry with the figure of Dajjal, the anti-christ. These ideas were first developed in 1987 by the Egyptian writer, Sa'id Ayyub. In Britain, a key figure in elaborating and popularizing these ideas has been David Musa Pidcock, a Sheffield machinery consultant who became a Muslim in 1975 and is the leader of the Islamic Party of Britain. The idea that freemasons worship Dajjal has become widespread in Muslim communities in England and elsewhere. In recent months, Islamic websites have carried enthusiastic reviews of an audio-tape called *Shadows*, produced by a London company, Hallaqah Media, which argues that freemasons created the new world order and are the servants of Dajjal.

In 2002 a lodge in Turkey was bombed by extremists, while in December, 2004 the al jazeera news network carried a lengthy editorial entitled "The Turkish Experiment with Westernization" in which Freemasonry was soundly implicated in so-called cultural slavery. In the recent elections in the Ukraine a move was afoot to ban Freemasonry and to jail freemasons for up to ten years. In Africa for the past two months there has been a dispute by Christian extremists in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya about certain masonic symbols as images in a church in Nairobi. These include a handshake, door knocking, a single strand of rose, Jacob's ladder, compass, a protractor, a square, and a chequered floor. The government actually sent police to stop a planned attack on the church.

That brings us to our present day and should give impetus to our thoughts about where Freemasonry is going, and what we can do about it. We need to educate ourselves better. In my opinion, we need to get back to the form of the ancient lodges where the main reason for lodge meetings was the education that was being given. The small item of masonic education must become the large item. Having educated ourselves, we must then seek to educate others. This is what the United Grand Lodge of England has begun with its sponsorship of the Centre for Research into Freemasonry. Keep your eye on the website, brothers. Keep up with the material coming out, and, when the time comes, enroll in the courses they will offer. In the meantime, expand your study and research to relate your masonic material to outside interdisciplinary themes. Bring the world's history into the lodge and take Freemasonry's history out to the

world, even on our local level. As Dr. Prescott has stated, "If we are at the beginnings of a struggle to protect and restate the secular values of the Enlightenment, it is inevitable that the study of Freemasonry, so much bound up with the creations of those values, will become of new relevance."

Post Script: It would probably be good, and honourable, for you to get permission to copy when you want to download an article from any websites you intend to use. There is usually a contact address somewhere on the site. You need only ask for permission to copy a specific article, or you may want a kind of blanket permission so as to be able to use future articles without having to go through the permission protocol each time. You will find that masonic copyright owners are normally very generous with their material when replying to their fellows. But other sites can be generous also. I have obtained permission to copy an article from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, from Dr. Margaret Jacob, from the Cornerstone Society, the Philalethes Society, Pietre Stones, Canonbury, and of course the Centre for Research into Freemasonry. I have had replies directly from Dr. Prescott, and from Dr. Jacob. I usually ask for permission to make the copy into a booklet for my personal use and for distribution as a single personal copy for the use by brothers.

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