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# A masonic alphabet

**A is for Antient.** This spelling, common enough in Scotland and Ireland, comes down to us from a revisor of James Anderson's 1723 *Constitutions of Freemasons*, John Noorthouck, who in 1784 changed Anderson's spelling of ancient to antient throughout the text, perhaps in imitation of the Antient Grand Lodge of England's constitutions, *Ahiman Rezon*. This Grand Lodge—properly styled the Grand Lodge of England according to the Old Institutions—was not particularly consistent in their own spelling, with frequent occurrences of ancient suggesting that the usage was often at the whim of either printers or individual authors.

This spelling has been inconsistently applied in our own jurisdiction since its founding, with Master Mason's certificates spelt Ancient and our Annual Proceedings title pages—until the early 1990s—spelt Antient. While antient has

been purged from most usages, to this day the Canadian Work Installation found in our *Forms and Ceremonies* refers to the Antient Charges.

**B is for Broken Column.** Widely used as a symbol of mortality since ancient times, it is not referred to in our rituals. The introduction and history of what has been termed the Monument to the Master Builder should be of interest to all students of masonic symbolism. While Jeremy L. Cross (1783-1861) is often credited with devising this grouping of symbols incorporating a broken column, weeping maiden, Father Time, urn and acacia, they clearly predated his writings. The first suggestion of a monument for Hiram is thought to have been presented in Thomas Johnson's *A Brief History of Freemasonry* in 1782. It represented a *Design for a Monument, in Honor of a Great Artist*, which showed an urn on the top and above was



This portrait of the Rev. Dr. James Anderson (1680-1739), compiler of the first Book of Constitutions, appeared in Arthur Edward Waite's *New Encyclopædia of Freemasonry* in 1921. Bonus points for anyone who knows what is wrong with this portrait.

a square and compasses, and below the urn was a *Bible*, square and compasses, intertwined with laurel.

**C is for colour.** The predominant colour of the Craft is sky-blue, said to denote durability, beneficence and charity. It is also said to signify eternity and immortality. In blazonry it signifies chastity, loyalty and fidelity. While early freemasons simply wore a white apron, often highly and individually illustrated, by 1731 the Grand Lodge of England had adopted blue for its Grand Lodge officers' regalia.

Some masonic scholars have proposed the theory that the colour of the Grand Lodge officers clothing was adopted from the ribbon of the Most Noble Order of the Garter; and that of the Grand Stewards' regalia from the Most Honourable Order of the Bath. The Scottish Grand Lodge undoubtedly copied the green ribbon of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, and the Grand Lodge of Ireland anticipated the formation of the Most Illustrious Order of St. Patrick in

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**A masonic alphabet**  
from page one

1788 by selecting sky-blue. This is, of course, supposition.

Albert G. Mackey (1807-1881) developed the idea that blue was anciently sacred among the Druids as the symbol of truth; that the Egyptians esteemed blue as a sacred colour, painting the body of Amun, the principal god of their theogony, light blue; and that the ancient Babylonians clothed their idols in blue. There is a widespread tendency in Freemasonry to extend the limits of true speculative research and to exaggerate symbolical values.

**D is for Dermott and Desaguliers.** Elected the third Grand Master of England in 1719, the Rev. Dr. John Theophilus Desaguliers (1683-1744) was a zealous collector of early masonic manuscripts. Although attributed to Dr. James Anderson (1680-1739), the *General Regulations* found in the first edition of the *Constitutions* were compiled under his supervision. The inventor of the planetarium, his reputation as a lecturer on experimental philosophy obtained for him a Fellowship in the English Royal Society.

Laurence Dermott (1720-1791) was the second Grand Secretary and later Deputy Grand Master of the Antient Grand Lodge of England. He published the constitutions of this Grand Lodge under the title of *Ahiman Rezon* in 1756.



W Bro. Palmer Cox

**E is for Euclid** who founded a school of mathematics at Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy I Soter (c. 300 BCE). He compiled the thirteen books of the *Elements* from the earlier works of Hippocrates of Chios, Theætetus and others. From Book I of the *Elements* we take his 47th proposition: in right-angled triangles the square on the side subtending the right angle is equal to the squares on the sides containing the right angle.

Euclid plays a key rôle in the early legend of masonic history, appearing as a central character in a manuscript originally titled *Hic incipiunt constitutiones artis gemetriæ secundum Euclydem* but better known as the *Regius Poem*, because it lay in the library of King George II for many years, or the *Halliwel Manuscript*, because it was discovered and translated by a non-mason, James O. Halliwel in 1840. This poem, dating to 1390, contains the lines:

*On thys maner, thro good  
wytte of gemetry,  
Bygan furst the craft of  
masonry:  
The derk Eudyde on thys wyse  
hyt fonde,  
Thys craft of gemetry yn Egypte  
londe.*

The Past Master, one of whose chief duties it is to test the working tools, and who is supposed to have arrived at a complete skill in Freemasonry, wears a depiction of this proof as part of his distinguishing jewel.

**F is for flaming sword.** In modern times the implement used by the Tyler is a sword of the ordinary form. In former times the Tyler's sword was wavy in shape, in allusion to the flaming sword which was placed at the east of the garden of Eden, "which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." It was, of course, without a scabbard, because the Tyler's sword should ever be drawn and ready for the defense of his post.

**G is for the golden mean.**

Found in much post-Hellenic architecture, the ratio of the lengths of the two sides is equal to the ratio of the longer side to the sum of the two sides. Or  $a/b = b/a+b = a+b/a+2b = a+2b/2a+3b = 2a+3b/3a+5b$  etc. If a square is added to the long side of a golden rectangle, a larger golden rectangle is formed. This ratio forms the foundation of the Fibonacci series of numbers 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144..., where each number is formed by adding the previous two numbers. The Fibonacci series can be found in nature, from the natural branching of rivers and lightning, to the spiral of our galaxy.

The geometric proportions of the pentagram are those of the Golden Section, *aurio sectio* or golden mean, giving further meaning to the inclusion of the pentagram in masonic regalia such as the collar jewel of our Deputy Grand Master.

Some masonic writers have suggested that this formula, like Euclid's 47th proposition, was part of the secrets of a master stone mason.

**H is for Hermetic Art**, named after Hermes Trismegistos, the Greek name for the Egyptian god Thoth, once considered to be the inventor of writing. By the early Christian period, Hermes Trismegistos was believed to have been a celebrated Egyptian legislator, priest and philosopher. The old manuscripts which contain the Legend of the Craft ascribe to Hermes Trismegistos the invention of everything known to the human intellect. This belief is widely found in mediæval writings such as the *Polycronycon*, written by the monk Ranulf Higden (1280-1364), and is not unique. Alchemy, reputed to have been invented by Hermes Trismegistos, was titled the Hermetic Science. In a literary or poetical sense Freemasonry has been termed Hermetic

insofar as it promotes the study and knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences.

**I is for Inquisition.** This severe tribunal, established by Pope Gregory IX in 1231 exists today as the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. While many freemasons met their death at the hands of the Catholic Inquisition, three names stand out.

Hippolyto Joseph Da Costa is remembered for his persecution by the Inquisition and his subsequent rescue by English brethren "who got him under the protection of the British flag." He published a narrative of his persecution in 1811.

John Coustos moved to Lisbon In 1743 where he was a founding member and Master of a lodge. He was shortly thereafter arrested and subsequently tortured on nine occasions over a two month period by the Inquisition. Sentenced to work at the galleys for four years, he was released in October 1744 upon the demand of the British minister, reaching England in December of that year. An account of his captivity was published in 1756.

Founder of Egyptian Freemasonry in 1777, the self-styled Allesandro, Comte de Cagliostro was arrested in Rome by the Catholic Inquisition on 27 December, 1789, convicted of forming societies and conventicles of Freemasonry and sentenced to death. This was commuted to perpetual imprisonment—four years later he died in the dungeons of St. Leo castle.

**J is for Jachin and Boaz**, an early exposition of the ritual, published in London in 1762 and widely reprinted. While many unauthorized expositions have been published since the revival of Freemasonry in 1717, there are perhaps thirty-four noteworthy ones. Several of them enjoyed unofficial popularity with freemasons whose jurisdictions declined to publish a written ritual and it

editor@freemasonry.bcy.ca

can be seen that they were not intended to expose the Craft to ridicule but simply to assist the brethren.

### **K is for Knights Templar.**

Many myths have grown up around this order. It is not true, for example, that the Templars were found guilty as charged in 1312; Pope Clement v actually declared the charges not proven, but dissolved the order because it had been brought into so much disrepute that it could not continue to operate. The Templars were not monks. The Templars were not particularly secretive—no more so than other religious orders of their period. They were not particularly wealthy. By the early fourteenth century they were genuinely short of money because of losses in the Holy Land and a fall in pious donations to all religious orders in western Europe. Although the Templars did have ships to carry personnel, pilgrims and supplies across the Mediterranean it appears that they did not have more than four galleys (warships) and few other ships, and if they needed more they hired them. They certainly could not spare ships to indulge in world exploration.

**L is for Landmarks.** First mentioned—but not defined—in Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723, the landmarks of Freemasonry are those aspects of our fraternity without which the order would not be recognized as Freemasonry. Albert G. Mackey, author of both an encyclopædia and seven volume history of Freemasonry, listed twenty-five landmarks in an article published in the *American Quarterly Review* in October of 1858. Some jurisdictions have formally adopted a shorter list while another list of fifty-four has been widely reprinted since its writing in 1889. This jurisdiction, although raising the question in recent years, has yet to formally adopt a definition of the landmarks. Given that the first requisite of

a landmark is that it must have existed from "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," there are few of our customs and practices that would satisfy the definition and some might say that it would be best not to attempt to define the indefinable.

**M is for the Master's Word,** first referred to on 13 October 1637, in *A Relation Of Proceedings Concerning The Affairs Of The Kirk Of Scotland From August 1637 To July 1638*, by the Earl of Rothes.

Henry Adamson, in *The Muses Threnodie*, recorded: *For we be brethren of the Rosie Cross;*

*We have the Mason Word and second sight,  
Things for to come we can foretell aright.*

**N is for Noachidæ,** the descendants of Noah. A term applied to freemasons by Dr. Anderson in 1738, derived from one early legend of the Craft which placed Noah as the founder of Freemasonry. Supplanted by the Hiram Legend, the various myths and legends involving Noah were incorporated into several side or additional degrees.

**O is for Old Charges,** those documents that have come down to us from the fourteenth century and afterwards in which are incorporated the traditional history, the legends and the rules and regulations of Freemasonry. They are called variously "Ancient Manuscripts," "Ancient Constitutions," "Legend of the Craft," "Gothic Manuscripts," "Old Records," etc. They range in estimated date from 1390 until the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and a few of them are specimens of beautiful Gothic script. The largest number of them are in the keeping of the British Museum; the Masonic library of West Yorkshire, England, has in custody the second largest number. *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, vol. xxxi lists

ninety-eight, including invaluable data as to when and where these manuscripts have been reproduced.

**P is for Pythagoras** (c. 580-500 BCE) whose theorem for right triangles was probably developed by later followers of his philosophical school. Pythagoras is noted for forbidding the use of beans to his disciples—not the use of beans as food, but the use of beans for political elections. Public officials being elected by beans cast by voters into a helmet, Pythagoras was advising his disciples not to seek office.

**Q is for Quatuor Coronati Lodge No 2076.** The annually published proceedings of the premier research lodge in the world, *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, (AQC) constitute one of the largest collections of masonic research available. The lodge's first Master was Sir Charles Warren (1840-1927) who is remembered for leading an expedition for the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1867 and for being Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police during the Jack the Ripper murders. This has led to much idle speculation on the part of anti-masons, and not a few movies.

**R is for the Rule of Three.** An anonymous Elizabethan saying, c. 1570, tells us:

*Multiplication is vexation,  
Division is bad,  
The Rule of Three doth puzzle me,  
And practice drives me mad*

The Rule of Three, in this sense, is a reference to geometry, while practice refers to rote learning. Plato saw in the number three the character of the Supreme Being. The Pythagoreans called it perfect harmony. In Freemasonry the list of threes: degrees, principal officers, lights, ruffians and the like, is extensive.

**S is for square.** A metal square was unearthed in Ireland in 1830, during excavation for the foundations of Baal's Bridge which leads to Limerick City,

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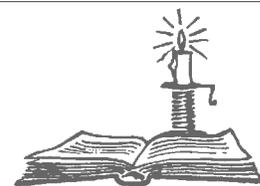
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inscribed with: "I will strive to live with love and care; Upon the level by the square 1507." The import of this discovery is a topic of some heated debate.

**T is for Transition Theory**, which says that working lodges of stone masons lost membership and political clout with the decline in cathedral building and that they began to accept members who were not operative stone masons. As there are absolutely no records of this in England, this theory has been widely discredited. In Scotland, where evidence exists for this theory, it has enjoyed greater acceptance.

There have been ten theories about our origins expounded in the pages of AQC over the years. They range from Eric Ward's Original Birth theory which sees 'Accepted Masonry', evidenced by the inner circle of the London Company of Masons, as a new movement which emerged in seventeenth century England free from and independent of the trade, to Frederick W. Seal-Coon's suggestion that seventeenth century lodges were a cover for conspiratorial meetings of Royalists who were identified by secret signs using a masonic theme as the natural product of a burgeoning interest in archæology and architecture. Theories involving Rosicrucians, monasteries and the Royal Society have also been proposed; none proven.

**U is for Uniformity.** At the constitution of the United Grand Lodge of England on 27 December, 1813, there was founded a Lodge of Reconciliation to establish a uniformity of working between the lodges. Although the lodge was dissolved in 1816, there has never been a full uniformity of work in England although that of the Emulation Lodge of Instruction is most generally favoured.

**V is for Volume of Sacred Law** for which this jurisdiction has no definition beyond that found in *Aims and*

*Relationships of the Craft.* In the early 1700s the book that rested on a pedestal in front of the lodge Master was a copy of Anderson's *Constitutions*. It was not until 1760 that the Grand Lodge of England formally endorsed the use of a Volume of Sacred Law, declaring the *Bible* to be a Great Light.

**W is for Workings.** Four rituals are worked in this jurisdiction: British Columbian Canadian Work, as derived from that compiled by Provincial Grand Master, RW Bro. Simon McGillivray in 1823 and worked in the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario; British Columbian "Ancient" Work, as derived from that the "Ancient" or "Athol" Lodges, by way of the Americans, Thomas Webb and Ralph P. Lester (sometimes called the New York or American Work); Australian Work, as adopted in 1906 from the ritual created in 1888 by the Grand Lodge of New South Wales from the rituals of England, Scotland and Ireland; and Emulation Work, as derived from that worked by Emulation Lodge of Improvement at Freemason's Hall, London. Lodges chartered before 1954 and using the Canadian Work will have their own unique quality.

**X is for Xerophagists.** When Pope Clement XII issued his bull on 24 April, 1738 forbidding the practice of Freemasonry by Roman Catholics, many Italian freemasons continued to meet under the name of Xerophagists. A compound of two Greek words signifying eaters of dry food, the implication was that they abstained from drinking wine, which would make them perhaps the first recorded temperance society.

**Y is for Year of Light** or *Anno Lucis*, the traditional dating system for Freemasonry whereby 4000 is added to the common date. While today we use AL as an abbreviation for *Anno Lucis*, when first used it



## GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY OCTOBER, 2003

Fri 3	District No. 12	Tsimpsean No. 58	Prince Rupert.
Sat 4	District No. 4N	Tweedsmuir No. 152	Burns Lake
Sat 1	Board of General Purposes		Williams Lake
Sat 11	District No. 4S	Centre No. 113	Williams Lake
Wed 15-17	Western Canada Conference		Canmore, Alberta
Sat 18	District No. 8	Columbia No. 38	Invermere
Fri 24	Scottish Rite	Consistory	Vancouver
Thu 30	District No. 25	Ancient Light No. 88	Ladner

stood for one of the Latin phrases meaning "in the Year of Masonry" probably *Anno Latomorum*. Where did the dating system come from? In 1642, Dr. John Lightfoot wrote that man was created at 9:00 am, and in 1644, he wrote that the world was created on Sunday, September 12, 3928. In 1650, the Irish Archbishop, James Ussher (1581-1656), published his computations that the world was created on Sunday, October 23, 4004, beginning at sunset of the 22nd. Both these dates are widely misquoted with Ussher often credited with determining creation at 9:00 am.

**Z is for Zend Avesta**, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism said to have been destroyed when Alexander conquered Persia but reassembled under the Sasanian kings in the third to seventh centuries CE. Albert Pike (1809-1891) wrote *Indo-Aryan Faith and Doctrine as Contained in the Zend-Avesta*, a work completed in 1874, but unfortunately not transcribed and published until 1924 when much of his research had been superseded.

## Lodge notes

The First Dale Dickson Memorial Golf Event was held on Sunday, 14 September, 2003 when there was unavailing of a

special large wall plaque giving recognition to the "Dale Dickson Masonic Family" which will be permanently displayed in the Dale Dickson Room at the lodge. RW Bro. Dale Dickson, a member of **Kamloops Lodge No. 10**, Kamloops, was active throughout the masonic family and is fondly remembered by the brethren of District 3.

Sponsored and organized by **Rainbow Lodge No. 180**, Port Hardy, this year's Filomi Days Kids' Fishing Derby saw fifty-five children participating. The members of the lodge and members of Eastern Star Polaris Chapter No. 98 ably assisted while many local businesses donated prizes and helped promote this popular community event. This year's parade included W Bro. Norman Cole's boat and "Vice Admiral" Hardy, AKA Bro. Stewart Shipley, who has been appointed by the District of Port Hardy as the official reception officer for visiting dignitaries and tourists.

On 4 October, 2003 **Tweedsmuir Lodge No. 152**, Burn's Lake, in conjunction with the Grand Master's Official visit to District 4N, will be celebrating their fiftieth anniversary. Members wishing to attend the banquet are asked to contact either W Bro. David Hall at [dhall@ngis.ca](mailto:dhall@ngis.ca) or W Bro. Brian Marsh at [cbmarsh1@telus.net](mailto:cbmarsh1@telus.net).