

Description of the Cooke MS.

from *The Old Charges of British Freemasons* by William James Hughan, London 1895

We rest on firm ground, masonically, in respect to this, the smallest, handsomest and oldest version of the “Old Charges” extant. It is the “Additional MS. 23,198” preserved in the British Museum, and is duly described in the Catalogue of accessions to our National Library, 1875, (page 841).

The entry (folio 1) made by Sir Frederick Madden, as Keeper of the MSS., is to the effect that it was Purchased of Mrs Caroline *Baker*, 14th Oct., 1859. There are also other modern notes on the folios 1 to 3, but of no importance; the MS. beginning on folio 4, and ending on folio 38. There are thus, 78 pages visible, the version being written on one side only of each leaf. There are forty leaves in all, of vellum (the first and last of which are pasted on the two covers respectively) measuring fully 4¼ inches by rather over 3¼ inches; the oak covers originally having had clasps, the ends of which still remain.

Herr Findel made a singular mistake as to this ancient MS. by styling it the “Cooke-Baker document”. Mr. Matthew Cooke having brought out a reproduction in 1861 (after whom it was named by Masonic students), and Dr. Rawlinson having stated about 1730 that he had seen One of these rolls in the possession of Mr. *Baker* (X2); led the German Masonic Historian to look upon these two MSS. as one and the same. It was a *roll* however, not a *book*, that was in possession of “the Carpenter in Moorfields” early last century, about which nothing has since transpired, and as to Mrs. Caroline Baker we are in like ignorance.

Mr. Cooke’s transcript is fairly well done, as also his modernized reproduction, but the most unfortunate rendering of lines 140-1 And in policronico a cronycle *p’uyd* as *printed*, instead of *preuyd* or *proved*, led most of us astray as to the period of the transcription of the

original, until a careful examination of the text by Mr. Speth revealed the right word.

The Polycronicon was not *Imprinted* and set in forme after a little embellishment by Caxton, until **1482** but the compilation in Latin by Ralph Higden (based, it is believed, upon extracts from numerous old Chronicles, by Roger, Monk of St. Werberg, Chester — Blades' Caxton, 1882), was circulated in Manuscript considerably more than a hundred years earlier, and Trevisa's translation was made in 1387. Some of the Masonic traditions (with variations) are to be found in this old work.

POLICRONICON, (Liber secundus)

Therfor bookes that they had made by greet traueyl and studye he closed hem in two grete pilers made of marble and of brente tile. In a pyler of marbel for water, and in a pyler of tyle for fyre. For it should be saued by that manner to helpe of mankynde me seyth that the piler of stone escaped the flode.

And they toke her conselle to gedyr, & by alle here witte they seyde that were ij maner of stonn of suche vertu that the one wolde neuer brenne, & that stone is callyd marbylle, & that other stoun that wolde not synke in water, & that stone is namyd lacerus, and so they deuysyd to wryte alle the Sciens that they had ffounde in this ij stonys." (lines 262-272)

Mr. Edward A. Bond, late principal Librarian, stated (when Keeper of the MSS., 1869,) that the "Cooke MS." was of the middle or latter part of the fifteenth century, but rather inclined to the first half of that century. This appears to be a safe estimate, the calligraphy apparently being about 1450, or possibly slightly earlier.

As Mr. Spencer's volume of 1861 is still in print, it will not be necessary to refer at length to the character and contents of this Manuscript, which in consequence of its date, and being the oldest bona fide copy of the "Old Charges" in existence, is of exceptional value and importance. The "Commentary" on the document by Mr. G.W. Speth, is exceedingly well done, on quite original lines, and ably describes and discusses the chief features of the text; other experts have also written most interestingly and helpfully on the subject, their various papers being enshrined in the *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*.

The MS. begins with an Invocation, or Introduction, which differs from the later versions generally, excepting the "William Watson" (a younger relative), and reads as follows

Thonkyd be god our glorious ffadir, and
founder and former of heuen and of erthe,
and of alle thyngis that in hym is, that he
wolde fochesaue of his glorious god hed for
to make so many thyngis of diuers vertu for
mankind. ffor he made alle thyngis for to be
abedient & soget [subject] to man.

The Seven Sciences are duly recorded, termed fre in hem selfe, the narrative being founded on the bybille and in othur stories; Herodotus, the Policronicon, with the Histories named Beda, De Imagine mundi & Isodorus ethomolegiarum, Methodius episcopus & martins. Then Noah's flood is mentioned in the account of Adam and his descendants; the preservation of the sciences they had discovered, by writing them on the two stones (which stones were subsequently found by Pythagoras and Hermes), are carefully detailed with other events, such as the building of the Tower of Babel and Nimrod's assistance of Ashur, who was a worthy lord of Shinar (Speth's rendering), and built the city of Nineveh when the crafte of masonry was fyrst preferryd & charged hit for a sciens.

Elders that were bi for us of masons [before our times] had these chargys wryten to hem as we haue now in owre chargys of the story of Euclidnis.

Euclid's method of employing and sustaining the superabundant population is described at length, and his Charge is cited, after which the experience of the children of isrl in Egypt and the londe of hihest and is now callyd ierlem, with the spread of the Science of Geometry to France under Carolus secundus that ys to sey Charles the secunde are briefly described.

And sonne after that come Seynt Ad habelle into Englonde, and he conuerted Seynt Albon to cristendome. And Seynt Albon lovyd welle masons and he yaf hem first here charges and maners first in Englonde. And he ordeyned conuenient to pay for their trauaile. And after that was a worthy Kynge in Englonde that was callyd Athelstone, and his yongest sone lovyd welle the sciens of Gemetry, and he wist welle that hand craft had the practyke of the sciens of Gemetry so welle as Masons, wherefore he drew hym to conselle and lernyd practyke of that sciens to his speculatyf ffor of speculatyf he was a master and he yaf hem charges and names as hit is now vysd in Englonde and in othere countres.

This youngest son of the King [*Edwin*] purchased a free patent of the King for the Masons to hold an Assembly, and take counselle of the whiche charges, manors & semble *as is write and taught in the booke of oure charges* wher for I leue hit at this tyme. This brings the narrative down to line 642, the most of which is reproduced in the "William Watson" of later date; only that the junior MS. gives prominence to the improvement in wages secured by St. Albans for the Craftsmen, who also got them charges and manners as St. Amphabell had taught him, & they doe but a little differ from ye charges yt be used at this time, and calls "Edwine" by name (*the King's Son*), as well as records the Assembly at York.

Line 643 evidently introduces another MS., so that the "Cooke" document really gives the chief portions of two versions, the second of which, as Mr. Speth first pointed out, is really the older of the two. The same excellent author suggests that the second MS. is neither more nor

less than the Boke of Chargys' itself to which the transcriber alludes in the premier part.

And further than this, it is undoubtedly the purest, least altered copy of these Constitutions that has at present come down to us, and therefore the most valuable; far exceeding in intrinsic value the metrical version of it preserved to us in the Regius MS. No. 17 A1, because less altered by poetical license. With *two exceptions*, I believe it to be in all probability, the exact counterpart of the first and original 'Constitution'. *These are* first the outer garb of language, which between, say the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, altered very considerably; and secondly, it is possible that the original version began with King Athelstan, and that the legend of Euclid represents the first of a long series of embellishments applied throughout the ages to the laws of the Craft.

In Mr. Speth's opinion, the "Matthew Cooke MS." taken as a whole, consists of a Commentary, preceding a version of the "Old Charges"; the former being incorporated with the Book itself by later transcribers.

I am not willing to give such a subordinate position to the first portion, which was probably as much derived from a separate copy of the "Old Charges" as the second, and possibly older part, only from a later compilation. It seems clear that the second MS. copied by the same scribe (early in the fifteenth century), was from an original document written some years prior to the first that was also reproduced by him; but I think it likely that there were two (or possibly more) independent versions circulating at that period, one older than the other, and that the copyist of what is known as the "Cooke MS." gave the chief portions of these documents.

It will be seen that the "William Watson" begins to differ from the "Cooke MS." soon after the 600th line of the latter is reached, and yet both before and after the recital of the Athelstan and Edwin legends, the continuity of the

former document is well preserved, each division doing its part towards making up a complete and homogeneous version.

The older portion of the "Cooke MS." (line 643), commences with the Euclid tradition, which appears to be cited to form a preface to the Regulations agreed to for the Masons by King Athelstan and his Council. In the previous clauses it is stated that the free patent obtained from this Sovereign provided that they *might* hold an assembly at what time they thought reasonable, whereas in those following from line 643, it is ordered that they should congregate *once a year, or every three years* as they deemed desirable. The reference to *York* as the first city selected for these Annuals is not met with until the sixteenth century MSS. are reached, neither is the mileage specified for obligatory attendance at such gatherings before that period.

There are nine "Articles" and as many "Points" framed on similar lines to those found in the ordinary versions, each Brother of the Craft being enjoined to *hele* the counsellors of his fellows in logge and in chambre, &c., so as to duly discharge their duties as members of their particular Fraternity. The agreement as to these Regulations, between the "Regius" and the "Cooke", as well as (substantially) the later versions is remarkable, and proves how desirous the members were to preserve the earliest laws intact, allowance being made for changes in phraseology, habits and circumstances. How much and how long these Laws were operative or accepted as the actual Regulations for the government of the Craft during the period covered from the twelfth to the end of the seventeenth century, are matters requiring most careful consideration and elucidation; for as the years rolled onward, the Laws, ["Articles and Points"] gradually became quite as much of traditional import as the legendary history, and of just as little practical utility, save as moral guides on which to base the later Constitutions of the Fraternity. Ultimately, the "Old Charges" from beginning to end became obsolete, and were only preserved as objects of curiosity, copied to exhibit the ancient customs, and accepted simply as containing Regulations of the Brotherhood, when mainly, if not exclusively, operative. So long as the Fraternity lasts

they should be revered, studied and followed in spirit as far as possible. In this view the nearer we get to the original form or version of the "Old Charges", the better we shall be able to appreciate and estimate the value of all later varieties.

The great importance of the "Cooke" versions is therefore established, including all transcripts of the same Family, especially the invaluable "William Watson" scroll. The opinion held for sometime by Dr. Begemann that the "Cooke" text has served in part as a prototype for the ordinary versions of the old Constitutions, which have come down to us from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is abundantly confirmed by discoveries made during the present decade. But no cautious student would give the preference to the "Cooke MS." simply because it is the senior of the numerous versions, seeing that a later transcript may be truer to the original and more complete. The chief two members of this Family are about equally balanced as to their textual value, but if either be the superior, the preference should be awarded to the "William Watson" version, because of its transparent unity, the "Cooke MS." not being consistent and uniform throughout.

From line 901 to 960 the Manuscript refers to the necessity of attendance at the Congregation by the Master and ye felawes, when duly warned; the Schereffe of ye countre or the mayer of ye cyte, or alderman of ye towne in wyche the congregation ys holde being empowered to help the Master against Rebels, &c.. New men were to be charged as to their duty to the Craft, to be trewe to the Kynge of Englonde and to the reme and that kepe wt all thr myght and alle the articles a for sayd. Penalties were to follow anyone who was disobedient, even to forswere his masonri and schale no more vse his Craft. The Sheriff was to imprison those who continued contumacious and take all his godys in to ye Kyngs hond. The concluding words Amen so mote hit be are after the manner of the "Regius MS."

These lines 901-60 were apparently familiar to Dr. Anderson, who quoted from them, or others such, in his "Constitutions" of 1723, and stated they were from another Manuscript more ancient " than the Record of

Free Masons written in the Reign of King Edward IV, from which he had been making liberal extracts, and which referred to the approval of King Henry VI and the Lords of his honourable *Council* (page 38). Though not ipsissima verba as the "Cooke MS.", the excerpts are so little garbled that their origin may be accurately determined. With the Doctor's love of variety, similar extracts, only modified and differently arranged, are given in the 2nd edition (1738), as under the Reign of Edward III., (p.71).

From the Diary of the Rev. William Stukeley, *M.D.*, (*Surtees' Society*, 1880-5), who was initiated in London, January 6th, 1721, we read, under June 24th of that year,

The Masons had a dinner at Stationers' Hall, present, Duke of Montague, Ld. Herbert, Ld. Stanhope, Sir And. Fountain, &c. Dr. Desaguliers pronounced an oration. The Gd. Mr., Mr. Pain, produce'd *an old MS. of the Constitutions*, which he got in the West of England, 500 years old.

The Editor of these *Stukeley's Diaries and Letters* (the Rev. W.C. Lukis), found amongst some old papers of Dr. Stukeley's a tracing of part of the first and last pages of a Vellum MS., which was there and then exhibited (A.D. 1721), and were evidently partial facsimiles of the "Cooke MS.", so that there is no reason to doubt Dr. Anderson's familiarity with this celebrated MS. of Mr. George Payne's. The latter gentleman first compiled the *General Regulations* when he was Grand Master, A.D. 1720, (which are printed in Anderson's *Constitutions*, 1723 — pp.58- 74), and doubtless afforded the author every assistance, as he was order'd to digest the *old Gothic Constitutions* in a new and better method.

Reproduced in 1861 by the Editor, Matthew Cooke, in his *History and Articles of Masonry*, (London, Richard Spencer), in simulated facsimile. Also Vol. II. *Masonic Reprints* of the Q.C. Lodge, 1890, in full facsimile with transcript, a modernized version and Commentary by Mr. G.W. Speth, the Editor. Likewise 100 copies in facsimile, and bound in exact imitation of the precious original.

Transcript of the Cooke MS.

Thanked be *God our glorious Father and Founder* and Former of Heaven and of earth, and of all things that in them is, that He would vouchsafe of His glorious Godhead to make so many things of divers virtue for mankind. For He made all *worldly* things to be obedient and subject to man; *for* all things that be comestible of wholesome nature, He ordained it for man's sustenance. And also He bath given to man wits and *cunning* of divers *Sciences* and Crafts, by which we may *work* in this world to get our living to make divers things to God's pleasure, and also for our ease and profit. Which things if I should rehearse them, it were too long to tell and to write: wherefore I will leave.

But I shall show *and tell some: that is to say*, how and in what wise the Science of Geometry first began, and who were the founders thereof, and of other Crafts more, as it is noted in the Bible and in other stories.

How and in what manner this worthy Science of Geometry *first* began, I will tell you, as I said before. You shall understand that there be Seven Liberal Sciences, by which seven *Sciences* all Sciences and Crafts in the world were first found. And *in especial*, for *it* is the cause of all, *that is to say the Science of Geometry — of all others that are*.

Which Seven Sciences be called thus — As for the first, *that* is called the *Foundation* of Science: his name is Grammar ; he teacheth a man rightfully to *speak* and to *write* truly.

The second is Rhetoric, and he teacheth a man to speak formably and fair.

The third is Dialectic, *and that Science* teacheth a man to discern the truth from the false, and *most* commonly it is called the Art of Sophistry.

The fourth is called Arithmetic, which teacheth a man the Craft of numbers, for to reckon and to make counts of all *manner* of things.

The fifth is Geometry, which teacheth a man *all the* metes and measures, ponderations *or* weights, of all, *manner* of Crafts.

The sixth is Music, that teacheth a man the Craft of song, *in notes* of voice and organ, trump[et] and harp, and of all others pertaining to them.

The seventh is Astronomy, that teacheth man to *know* the *course* of the sun, and of the moon, and of *all* other *stars and planets* of heaven.

Our intent is principally to treat of the first foundation of the worthy Science of Geometry, and who were the founders thereof. As I said before, there be Seven Liberal Sciences — that is to say, seven Sciences or Crafts that be free in themselves — which seven live *only* by *one*, *that is* Geometry. And Geometry is as much to say, “the measure of the earth”. Et sic dicitur: a ‘geo’, graece, quod est ‘terra’, latine, et ‘metron’ quod est ‘mensura’: unde Geometria — i.e. ‘mensura terrae vel terrarum’. That is to say, in English, that Geometry is as I said *derived from* ‘geo’, *that is* in Greek ‘earth’, and ‘metron’ that is to say, ‘measure’. And thus is this name Geometry compounded, and is *translated*, “the measure of the earth”.

Marvel ye not that I said that all Sciences *live* only by the Science of Geometry. For there is no artificial nor hand craft that is wrought by man’s hand, but it is wrought by Geometry. And a notable cause: for if a man work with his hands, he worketh with some manner of tool: and there is no instrument of material things in this world, but it comes from the *nature* of earth, and to earth it will *turn* again. And there is no instrument, that is to say, a tool to work with, but it hath some proportion, *either* more or less and proportion is measure, and the tool *or the instrument* earth, and Geometry is *defined as* “the measure of the earth”. Wherefore I may say that *men live all* by Geometry, for all men *here* in this world live by the labour of their hands.

Many more *proofs* I *would* tell you *why* Geometry is the Science that *all* reasonable men live by *but* I leave it at this time, for the long process of writing. And now I will proceed further on my matter. Ye shall understand that among all the Crafts of the world, of *man's* Craft, Masonry hath the most notability and most part of this Science Geometry, as it is noted and said *as well* in histories, *and* in the Bible, and in the *Master of Stories*, and in *Poly-chronicon*, a *chronicle* approved, and in the story that is named Bede, *De Imagine Mundi*, and Isidore's *Etymo- logiarum*, and Methodius, Bishop and Martyr.

And others, *many more*, said that *Masonry is principally of Geometry*, as *methinks* it may well be said for it was *the first that was found*, as it is noted in the Bible in the first Book of Genesis, *in the fourth chapter*. And also *all the Doctors aforesaid agree thereto*, and some of them say *it more openly and plainly*, right as it says in the Bible, Genesis.

Adam's line lineal sons descending down the seventh *generation from Adam*, before Noah's Flood there was a man *that was called* Lamech: which had two wives, the one *named* Adah, and the other Zillah. By the first wife that *was called* Adah, he got two sons: the one was named Jabal, and the other *named* Jubal. The elder son Jabal was the first *man* that ever found Geometry *and* Masonry, and *he made houses*, and *is named in the Bible* "Pater habitantium in tentonis atque pastorum" — that is to say, *the father of men dwelling in tents, that is dwelling houses*. And *he was Cain's Master Mason* and governor of all his works, when he made the City of Enoch — that was the first City that ever was made, and that made Cain, Adam's son. And gave *it* to his own son, and called it *the City of Enoch*, and now it is called Ephraim. And there was *the Science of Geometry and* Masonry first *employed* and contrived for a Science and for a Craft. And so we may say that it was the first cause and foundation of all *Crafts and Sciences*. And also this man Jabal was called "Pater Pastorum". And as the Master of Stories saith, and Bede, *De Imagine Mundi*, *Polychronicon*, and others say, he was the first that ever made *partition* of land, that every man might know his own ground and labour thereon as his own; and *also* be

parted flocks of sheep, so that every man might know his own sheep and so we may say that he was the first founder of that Science.

And his brother Jubal (*or Tabal*) was *the first* founder of Music *and* song, as Pythagoras said in *Polychronicon*, and the same saith Isidore in his *Etymologiarum*, in the sixth book *there* he saith that he was the first founder of Music and song, and of organ and of trump[et] and he found that Science by the sound *and* ponderation of his brother's hammers, *and* that was Tubal Cain.

Truly, as the Bible says in the *same* chapter — that *is to say, the fourth* — of Genesis, Lamech begat on his other wife, that *was called* Zillah, a son and a daughter, *the names of them were called* Tubal Cain — that was the son — and his daughter's *name* Naamah. And as the *Polychronicon* says, some men *did* say that she was *another man's* wife — whether it be so or no, we affirm it not. *Ye shall understand that* this son Tubal Cain was the *first* founder of Smith's Craft, and of the other Crafts of metal, that is to say, of iron *and* of brass, of gold and silver, as *sonic* Doctors say. And his sister Naamah was *first founder* of Weaver's Craft: for before that time there was no cloth woven, but *then* they did spin yarn and knit it and made them such clothing as they could. But that woman Naamah found the Craft of weaving, and therefore it was called Woman's Craft.

And these *three* brethren *aforesaid* had knowledge *before* that God would take vengeance for sin, either by fire or water and they had great care how they might do to save the Sciences that they *had there* found, and *they took* their counsel together and by all their wits they said that *there* were two manner of stones of such virtue that the one would never burn, and that stone is *called* Marble, and *another* stone that *would* not sink in water, and that stone is named *Laterus*. And so they *planned* to write all the Sciences that they had found in these two stones, so *that if* God should take vengeance by fire, *then* the Marble stone should not burn and if God sent vengeance by water, that *then* the other should not drown. And so they *prayed* their elder brother Jabal that *he* would make two Pillars of these two stones, that is to say *of* Marble and *of* Laterus, and that he would write in

the two Pillars all the Sciences and Crafts that *they all* had found, and so he did: and therefore we may say that he was the *most cunning* in Science, for he first began and performed the *last* end before Noah's Flood. Kindly knowing of that vengeance that God would send, whether it should be by fire or by water — the brethren *knew* it not by a manner of prophecy — they *knew* that God would *send* one thereof and therefore they wrote their Sciences in the two Pillars of stone: and some men say that they wrote in *the stones* all the Seven Sciences.

And as they *had* in their mind that a vengeance *would* come, so it was that God *sent it by water*; for there came such a flood that all the world was drowned, and all men were dead therein, save eight persons, and that was Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives of which three sons all the world came of. And their names were *named* in this manner — Shem, Ham and Japhet. And this flood was called Noah's Flood, for he and his children were saved, *and no more*.

And after this flood, many years, as the Chronicles tell these two Pillars were found; and, as *Polychronicon* says, a great clerk that *men* called Pythagoras found *the* one, and Hermes the Philosopher found *the* other and they taught forth the Sciences that they found therein written.

Every Chronicle and *story*, and many other clerks, and the Bible, in *principal witness* of the making of the Tower of Babylon and it is written in the Bible, Genesis, chap. ten, how that Ham, Noah's son, *gat Nimrod*; and he waxed a mighty man upon the earth, and he was a strong man like unto a giant and he was a great King, and *in* the beginning of his *reign and kingdom* he was *the* true *King* of Babylon and *Erech and Accad wid Calneh*, and the Land of Shinar. And this same *Nimrod* began the Tower of Babylon and he taught to his workmen the Craft of Masonry and *he* had with him many Masons, more than forty thousand. And he loved *them* and cherished them well and it is written in *Polychronicon*, and in the *Master of Stories*, and in other stories more, and a *part of this* witnesses *the Bible*, in the *same* tenth chapter, where he says that Asshur was *near akin* to *Nimrod's seed*, out of the Land of Shinar. And he built the

City of Niniveh and Plateas, and other more, *and thus* he says — De terra illa (de Senaar) egressus est Assur, & aedificavit Niniven, & plateas civitatis, & Chale. Resen quoque inter Niniven & Chale: (&) haec est civitas magna.

Reason would that we should *tell* openly how and in what manner the Charges of Masoncraft were first founded, and who gave first the name to it of Masonry. And you shall know well that it is *told and written* in *Polychronicon* and in Methodius, Episcopus & Martyrus, that Asshur, that was a worthy Lord of *Shinar*, sent to *Nimrod* the King to send him Masons and workmen of Craft that might help him to make his City *that he was purposed* to make *and finish*. And Nimrod sent him *thirty hundred* Masons and when they should go and send them forth, he called them before him and said *to them*,

Ye must go to my cousin Asshur, to help him to build *him* a city but look *that ye be well governed*. *And I shall give you* a Charge, *that it may be profitable both* for you and me. *When ye come to that Lord, look that ye be true to him, like as ye would be to me*, and truly do your labour and Craft, and take reasonable *for your reward there for* as ye may deserve. And *also* that ye love together as ye were brethren, and hold together truly and he that hath most cunning teach it to his *brother or fellow*. And look ye govern *yourselves well towards* your Lord, and amongst yourselves, so that I may have worship and thanks for *me* sending *you* and teaching *you* the Craft.

And they received the Charges of *the King* that was their Master and their Lord and went forth to Asshur. and built the City of Niniveh, in the country of Plateas, and other cities more that men call Calah and Resen, that is a great city between Calah and Niniveh. And in this manner the Craft of Masonry was first preferred and charged for a Science *and a Craft*.

Reason would that we should show you how and ni what manner the elders that were before *us* of Masons had these Charges written *to them as we have now in our Charges, of the story of Euclid, as we have seen them written* in Latin and in French *both and* how Euclid came to Geometry, *reason would* we should tell you, as it is

noted in the Bible and in other stories. In duodecimo capit. Genesis, he tells how Abraham came to the Land of Canaan, and *the* Lord appeared to him, and said “I shall give this land to *thee and to thy seed*”. But there fell a great hunger in that land, and Abraham took Sarah his wife with him and *went* into Egypt in pilgrimage, while the hunger *endured* he would abide there. And Abraham, as the *chronicle* says, was a wise man and a great clerk, and he *knew* all the Seven Sciences, and taught the Egyptians the Science of *Geometry*.

And this worthy clerk Euclid was his *scholar*, and learned of him *Masonry*, and he gave it first *the* name of Geometry, *albeit it was employed before it had the name of Geonzetry*. But it is said in Isidore’s *Etymologiarum*, in the *fifth* book, *that* Euclid was one of the *first* founders of Geometry, and he gave it name. For in his time there was a water in that land of Egypt that is called Nile, and it flowed so far into the land that men might not dwell therein. *Then this wordly clerk* Euclid taught them to make great walls and ditches to hold out the water and he by Geometry measured *out* the land and *parted* it into divers parts, and made every man to close his own part with walls and ditches. And then it became a plenteous country of all manner of fruit, and of young people, *both* of men and women, that there was so much people of young fruit that they *could* not well live. And the Lords of the country drew them together, and made a Council, how they might help their children that had no livelihood competent and able to *maintain* themselves and their children, for they *had* so many. And amongst them all in Council was this worthy clerk Euclid, and when he saw *that all they could not* bring about this matter, he said to them,

Will ye take *to me* your sons in governance,
and I shall teach them *in* such a Science that
they shall live thereby *gentleman like* under
condition *that* ye will be sworn to me to
perform the governance that I shall set you *to*
and them both.

And the King of the land and all the Lords by one assent agreed thereto. Reason would that every man would *agree to* that thing that *would be* profitable to *himself* and

they took their sons to Euclid to govern them at his own will, and he taught them the Craft of Masonry, and gave it the name of Geometry, because of the parting of the ground that he had taught the people in *the time of the* making of *the* walls and ditches aforesaid to close out the water. And Isidore says in his *Etymologiarum* that Euclid called the Craft Geometry: and this worthy clerk gave it name, and taught it the Lords' sons of the land that he had in his teaching.

And he gave them a Charge that they should call each other Fellow and no otherwise, because they were all of one Craft, and of *one* gentle birth born, and Lords' sons. And also he that was most cunning should be governor of the work, and should be called Master. And other Charges more that be written in the Book of Charges. And so they wrought with *the* Lords of the land, and made cities and towns, castles and temples and Lords' places, *and did live honestly and truly by the said Craft.*

When the Children of Israel dwelt in Egypt, they learned the Craft of Masonry. And afterwards they were driven out of Egypt, they came into the Land of Behest, *which now is called Jerusalem.* And *there* it was *employed* and the Charges *held and kept.* And at the making of Solomon's Temple that King David began — King David loved well Masons, and he gave them *Charges* right nigh as they are now. And at the making of *the* Temple *in Solomon's time*, as it is said in the Bible, in the III Book of Kings — in tertio Regum, capitulo quinto — Solomon had four score thousand Masons at his work and the King's son of Tyre was his Master Mason.

And in other chronicles it is said, and in old books of Masonry, that Solomon confirmed the Charges that David his father had given to Masons. And Solomon himself taught them their manners, *but* little differing from the manners that now are used.

And from thence this worthy Science was brought into France and into many other regions. *Some time* there was a worthy King in France that was *named* Carolus Secundus, that is to say, Charles the Second. And this Charles was elected King of France by the grace of God and by lineage *also* and *yet* some men say that he was

elected by fortune, which is false *and untrue*, as *appears* by the chronicles *plainly*, for he was of the King's blood royal. And this same King Charles was a Mason before he was King and after he was King, he loved *well* Masons, and cherished them, and gave them Charges and manners *of his device*, *whereof* some are yet used *at this present* in France. And he ordained that they should *have reasonable pay and and that they should* assemble once in the year, and *come and speak* together, *and to be ruled by Masters and Fellows* of all things as were amiss, *and the same to be received by Masters and Fellows*.

And soon after that came St. Adhabelle into England, and he converted St. Alban to Christendom. And St. Alban loved well Masons, and he gave them first their Charges and manners in England. And he ordained *suitable* to pay for their *work*.

And after that was a worthy King in England that was called Athelstan and his youngest son loved well the Science of Geometry. And he *knew* well that hand-craft had the practice of the Science of Geometry so well as Masons wherefore he drew him to counsel, and learned practice of that Science to his *speculative*, for of speculative he was a Master. And he loved well Masonry and Masons, and he became a Mason himself. And he gave them Charges and *manners*, as it is now used in England and in other countries, and he ordained that they should have reasonable pay. And purchased a free patent of the King that they should make an Assembly when they saw reasonable time, and come together to their Council of which Charges, manners and Assembly, as is written and taught in the Book of our Charges: wherefore I leave it at this time.

Good men, for this cause and this manner Masonry took first beginning. It befel some time that great Lords had not so great possessions that they might advance their free-begotten children, for they had so many. Therefore they took counsel how they might their children advance, and ordain them honestly to live. And sent after wise Masters of the worthy Science of Geometry, that they through their wisdom should ordain them some honest living. Then one of them, that had the name which was

called Euglet, that was most subtle and wise founder, ordained an Art and called it Masonry. And so with his Art honestly he taught the children of great Lords, by the prayer of the fathers and the free will of their children. Which, when they taught with high care, by a certain time they were not all alike able to *lean* of the foresaid Art. Wherefore the foresaid Master Euglet ordained they were passing of cunning should be passing honoured. And commanded to call the cunning Masters to *teach* the less cunning, *which Masters* were called Masters of nobility of wit and cunning of that Art. Nevertheless, commanded that they that were less of wit should not be called servants nor subjects, but Fellows, for nobility of their gentle blood. In this manner was the foresaid Art begun in the land of Egypt by the foresaid Master Euglet and so it went from land to land and from kingdom to kingdom.

After that, many years, in the time of King Athelstan, which was some time King of England, by his counsel and other great Lords of the land, by common assent, for great *defects found* among Masons, they ordained a certain rule amongst them, one time of the year, or in three years, as need were, to the King and great Lords of the land and all the *community*, from province to province and from *county* to county, Congregations should be *held* by Masters, of all Masters, Masons and Fellows in the foresaid Art.

And at such Congregations they that be made Masters should be examined of the Articles' after-written, and be *tested* whether they be able and cunning to be perfect *for* the Lords, them to serve, and to the honour of the foresaid Art. And moreover they should receive their Charge, that they should well and truly *spend* the goods of their Lords, as well the lowest as the highest; for they be their Lords for the time, of whom they take their pay for their service and for their *work*.

The first Article is this — that every Master of this Art should be wise and true to the Lord that he serveth, spending his goods truly as he would his own were spent. And not give more pay to no Mason than he *knows* he may deserve, *according to* the dearth of corn and victuals in the country, no favour *preventing* every man to be rewarded according to his work.

The second Article is this — that every Master of this Art should be warned before to come to *the* Congregation, that they come duly *unless* they may excused by some manner cause. But, nevertheless, if they be found rebel at such Congregation, or faulty in any manner harm of their Lords, and *scandal* of this Art, they should not be excused in no manner *except* peril of death; and though they be in peril of death, they shall *notify* the Master that is Principal of the gathering of his *sickness*.

The [third] Article is this — that no Master take no Apprentice for less term than seven years at the least because such as be within less term may not profitably come to his Art, nor able to serve truly his Lord to *receive* pay as a Mason should take.

The fourth Article is this — that no Master for no profit take no Apprentice to be *taught* that is born of bond blood; because his Lord to whom he is bound will take him, as he well may, from his Art, and lead him with him out of his Lodge or out of his place that he worketh in, for his Fellows peradventure would help him and *plead* for him, and thereof manslaughter might *occur*, that is forbidden. And also for another cause, of his Art — it took beginning of great Lords' children freely begotten, as it *has been* said before.

The fifth Article is this — that no Master give more to his Prentice in time of his prenticehood for no profit to be taken than he *knows* well he may deserve of the Lord that he serveth ; nor not so much that the Lord of the place that he is taught in may have some profit by his teaching.

The sixth Article is this — that no Master for *any* *advantage* nor profit take no Prentice to teach that is imperfect: that is to say having any maim *as a result of* which he may not truly work as he ought to do.

The seventh Article is this — that no Master be found *knowingly*, or help or procure to be maintainer and sustainer, any common nightwalker to rob, by which manner of nightwalking they may not fulfill their day's work and travail, through *this* condition their Fellows might be made wrath[ful].

The eighth Article is this — that if it befall that any Mason that is perfect and cunning come to seek work and find any imperfect and uncunning working, the Master of the place shall receive the perfect and do away the imperfect, to the profit of his Lord.

The ninth Article is this — that no Master shall supplant another; for it is said in the *Art of Masonry* that no man *can* make end so well of work begun by another, to the profit of his Lord, as he began it (for) to end it by his *designs*, or [one] to whom he showeth his designs.

These ordinances were made by divers Lords and Masters of divers provinces and divers Congregations of Masonry. And they are to the effect that who desireth to come to the state of the foresaid Art, it behoveth him first principally to love God and Holy Church and all Saints, and his Master, and his Fellows as his own Brethren.

The second Point — he must fulfill his day's work truly that he taketh for his pay.

The third — that he can hele the counsel of his Fellows in Lodge and in chamber, and in every place *wherein* Masons be.

The fourth Point — that he be not *false to* the foresaid Art, nor do no prejudice, nor *support any measures* against the Art, nor against none of the Art but he shall sustain it in all honour as much as he may.

The fifth Point — when he shall take his pay, that he take it meekly as the time is ordained by the Master to be done, and that he fulfill the *conditions of work* and of rest ordained and set by the Master.

The sixth Point — if any discord shall *arise* between him and his Fellows, he shall obey him meekly, and be *peaceable* at the bidding of his Master, or of the Warden of his Master in his Master's absence, *until* the holy day following, and that he *submit then* to the disposition of his Fellows, and not upon the workday, *to the hindering* of their work and profit of his Lord.

The seventh Point — that he *desire* not the wife nor the daughter of his Master nor of his Fellows, *except* it be in marriage, nor *keep* concubines, *in case of* discord that might befall amongst them.

The eighth Point — if it befall him to be Warden under his Master, that he be true *mediator* between his Master and his Fellows, and that he be busy in the absence of his Master, to the honour of his Master and profit to the Lord that he serveth.

The ninth Point — if he be wiser and *more subtle* than his Fellow working with him in his Lodge or in any other place, and he perceive that he should *waste* the stone that he works upon for *lack* of cunning, and can teach him and amend the stone, he shall inform him and help him, that the more love may increase among them, and that the work of the Lord be not lost.

[The Assembly]

When the Master and the Fellows before warned be come to such Congregation, if need be the Sheriff of the County, or the Mayor of the City, or Alderman of the Town in which the Congregation is held, shall be fellow and [as]sociate to the Master of the Congregation, *to assist* him against rebels, and *upholding* the rights of the Realm.

At the first beginning, new men that never were charged before be charged in this manner: that they should never be thieves nor thieves' maintainers, and that they should truly fulfill their day's work and travail for their pay that they shall *receive* from their Lord, and true accounts give to their Fellows in *matters* that *have* to be accounted of them to their, and them love as themselves. And they shall be true to the King of England, and to the Realm; and that they keep with all their might all the Articles aforesaid.

After that, it shall be enquired if any Master or Fellow that *was summoned* have broken any Article beforesaid; which if they have done, it shall be determined there.

Therefore it is to *be known* if any Master or Fellow that is warned before to come to such Congregation, and be rebel and will not come, or else have trespassed against any Article beforesaid, if it may be proved, he shall forswear his Masonry and shall no more use his Craft. Which if he presume to do, the Sheriff of the County in which he may be found working shall [im]prison him and take all his goods into the King's hand, until his grace be granted him and *made known*: for this cause principally, where these Congregations be ordained, that as well the lowest as the highest should be well and truly served in this Art beforesaid, throughout all the Kingdom of England.

Amen: So mote it be.