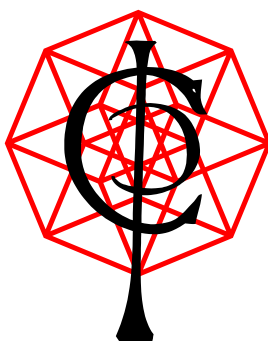


THE CRISIS IN FREEMASONRY

By a Past Grand Master
(Aleister Crowley)



Celephaïs Press

Ulthar - Sarkomand - Inquanok - Leeds

2018

[This was first published in *The English Review*, in August 1922. Crowley quoted from it at length in his *Confessions* (cap. 72 of the Symonds and Grant abridgement). Numbered endnotes are by the present editor.]

THE CRISIS IN FREEMASONRY*

By a Past Grand Master¹

THE conversation veered round to the subject of Freemasonry naturally enough. It was a perfect day for a final half round of golf; yet Ashford, plus 2, our captain, had gone up to town, excusing himself, with a certain brusque solemnity, on the ground that he had to attend Grand Lodge, of which he was, as books of reference attested, V.W.P. Pres. Brd. G. Pur.²

"Must of cost him over a thousand, one way and another," remarked a long lean sallow man in the corner, who looked as if he had spent most of his life in the tropics.

"Oh, then you are a Mason?" chirped our favourite club Wit, a cross between a magpie and a monkey.

"Try me and prove me," murmured the dark man, without stirring.

"I'm the 28th degree myself."

"Shake hands."

The Wit was rather embarrassed, but did not quite see how to refuse. He complied, rather awkwardly.

The long man grimly smiled.

There was a curious tension among the crowd. We all felt as if we were present at some mysterious event, and as if the lean campaigner had us all at his mercy.

* The author of this article wishes to emphasise the fact that he regards his brother English Craft Freemasons as constituting the most high-minded and worthy class of men in the country, and their friendly and charitable activities as most useful and laudable. The opinions set forth are purely speculative considerations advanced in the interests of the Craft, which are seriously threatened by recent developments in Masonic movements, particularly outside England.

Thompson, the Secretary, threw himself (in the name of us all) frankly on that engaging quality.

“Our friend,” he said slowly, “may belong to the 28th degree of the Ancient Order of Humbugs; but he isn’t a Mason at all.”

Johnstone rose to the occasion, and saved the situation by suggesting a general adjournment to the tee.

But I am convinced that I fozzled my approach to the third by undue pondering upon the sinister incident of the smoking-room.

It happens that I am a reader at the British Museum and spend a good deal of my spare time in that appalling library, that ordered chaos from which no cosmos can possibly arrive by any Fiat soever. However, I determined to find out as much as I could about Freemasonry from the “authorities.”

Alas!

Alas!!

It took me a very few hours to discover that Waite was as ignorant as he was pompous—and he was very very pompous.

I was nearly led away by Mackey, but discovered in time that his book was a system of deliberate falsification.

John Yarker was learned, accurate and sincere; but those very qualities made him too cautious to assert what was doubtful. And about Masonry nearly everything is doubtful.

It was hardly encouraging when one afternoon I found a smiling professorial face bending over my shoulder.³

“Studying Masonry, my young friend? I am the Grand Master of Germany, and I have studied it these forty years and more; and I know nothing whatever about it.”

He was kind enough, however, to help me considerably with my studies: and I am able to present a rudimentary Synoptic Table of the principle rites.

I can make no pretence to completeness, to historical

treatment—indeed, my main purpose is to show the utter impossibility of building a house even of stacked cards on such shifting sand as Masonic History.

I. Common to, and essential to, all Freemasonry soever: The Three “Craft” Degrees.

I.A. Swedenborgian Masonry: the 1°—4°, 2°—5°, and 3°—6° explaining the Three Craft Degrees respectively.

I.B. Martinism, the Sat Bhai, and similar systems, which attempt to replace the Three Craft Degrees.⁴

I.C. The First Three Degrees of O.T.O., which claim to restore the lost meaning of the Three Craft Degrees.⁵

I.D. “Clandestine” Masonry; this adjective is applied by any Mason to any other Mason with whom he is not officially allied; though the “Secrets,” Rituals, etc., may be identical. It is a question of jurisdiction; a sectarian squabble the rights and wrongs of which probably never existed, and are in any case lost in antiquity and confusion. The reason of this will appear later. Remember only that to a “just, lawful and regular” English Mason practically all European Masons are anathema maranatha.⁶

II. Degrees purporting to give further details with regard to the Second Degree.

II.A. Most of the degrees of the Scottish Rite of 33°, especially the 30°.⁷

II.B. Most of the degrees of the Rites of Memphis and Mizraim, of 97° and 90° respectively. These rites seem to have been mere collections of all known degrees—as a connoisseur might collect bric-à-brac. The 97° is honorary: “Grand Hierophant,” the supreme ruler of these (united) rites. Many 96°-

90°s exist; but they have never gone through the degrees. There is, however, a Reduced Rite of Memphis of 33° of which the 20° corresponds with the 33° of the Scottish Rite; this is recognised by the Grand Orient of France and other civilised countries.⁸

The 32° of a well-known Rite in America is sold for so many dollars, like canned pork. It even cadges for members. It is an association given overmuch to graft of the most specious kind. Only master "craftsmen" attain the 33°.⁹ It is a business, political, anti-Catholic hierarchy, tyrannical and treacherous. Its conduct has made the decent citizen fight shy of even the common Craft Freemason. This is the "Pike" rite, notoriously founded on the absurd forgery of a scoundrelly adventurer named Morin; its opponent, the Cerneace¹⁰ rite, has a legitimate title, from the Duke of Sussex; but its defeat has disgraced it, and its present members are little better than the others.

II.C. Various odd rites of little importance: Mark Mason, Royal Ark Mariner, etc.¹¹

II.D. The V°, VI°, VII°, VIII° and IX° of the O.T.O.

III. Degrees which claim to explain, or complete, the Unsolved Mystery of the Third Degree.

Of these the chief is the Royal Arch.

Unfortunately for the student, there are several kinds of Royal Arch degree, one leading out of the Third, the second at the end of a string of degrees so leading, the others dotted about the various rites in picturesque places.¹² This, by the way, is typical of the total confusion of the entire system; there ought to be a Necessary Order in Freemasonry, as there is in Nature. And there is; but the workmen have bungled.

III.A. The IV° and P.I. degrees of O.T.O., which carry on the true work of the III° to the end of philosophical possibility.¹³

III.B. The degrees (some of them) leading to Knight Templar and Knight of Malta; the York Rite so called is a mixture of these II and III.¹⁴

It is amusing to note that an English Freemason can be frightened into any folly by threatening to establish the York Rite; it is similar to that bogey of ecclesiastical dignitaries, Sarum.

The more I looked at my effort the more unsatisfactory did it appear. I have hardly touched upon the various bitterly opposed jurisdictions.

* * *

One anecdote may illustrate the situation.

I determined to become a Mason myself. I happened to know that the Chaplain of the British Embassy in Z— —¹⁵ was Past Provincial Grand Organist of a certain English town. He proposed me, found me a seconder, and I was duly initiated, passed, and raised.¹⁶ I was warmly welcomed by numerous English and American visitors to our Lodge; for Z— — is a very great city.

I returned to England some time later, after "passing the chair" in my Lodge, and, wishing to join the Royal Arch, called on its venerable secretary.

I presented my credentials. "O Thou Great Architect of the Universe!" the old man sobbed out in rage, "why dost Thou not wither this imprudent imposter with Thy fire from heaven? Sir, begone! You are not a Mason at all! As all the world knows, the people in Z— — are atheists, and live with other men's wives."

I thought this a little hard on my Reverend Father in God

my proposer; and I noted that, of course, every single English or American visitor to our Lodge in Z— — stood in peril of instant and irrevocable expulsion on detection. So I said nothing, but walked to another room in Freemasons' Hall over his head, and took my seat as a Past Master in one of the oldest and most eminent Lodges in London!

Kindly note, furthermore, that when each of those wicked Visitors returned to their own Lodges after their crime, they automatically excommunicated the whole thereof; and as visiting is very common, it may well be doubted whether, on their own showing, there is a single "just, lawful and regular Mason" left alive on the earth!¹⁷

The above anecdote is exactly true in every detail, and shows one side—one side only—of the morass into which the narrow formalism of the authorities has plunged the Craft.

* * *

Now the Craft is the ABC of Masonry: it would be utterly impossible to even suggest the welter of the other degrees. In England, till a few years ago, a man like the Duke of C— — did not dare to "recognise" or even to "tolerate" —

Himself!

He was the head of two divisions of Masonry which were not on speaking terms with each other.

Please do not request an excursion into the dreary realms of the higher degrees, which are, for the most part, more pontifically nonsensical than even the out-of-date and out-of-kind Craft Rituals, with their conflicting practices and vain formalities. Not one Mason—of any degree—in ten thousand has the slightest idea what the whole weary business is about.

Why then, in the name of King Solomon, should anyone become a Mason? What has that V. W. P. Pres. Brd. G. Pur. got for his thousands—to say nothing of the time he has devoted

to attending stupid banquets, and learning by heart the interminable outpourings of—oh yes! of whom?

The answer to this two-headed question is really simple enough.

We ought to cross off the pettier human motives first: love of vanity, of mystery, of display, of make-believe; but the average man in England becomes a Mason for as serious a reason as he becomes a Church member or a Theosophist; and the average man in usually most abominably disillusioned. (Of course, we must eliminate the political or politico-religious motives which are the rule in France and Italy, and their business correlatives in America, where the Christian elements of certain rituals have actually been removed so that Jews might become 33° Masons!)¹⁸

But back to our average man! He may join the Craft with some idea of fellowship, because it is a tradition in his family to do so, or because he hopes to find in the Secret of the Mysteries something which he does not find in any of the exoteric forms of religion.

How is it that the same Order satisfies—more or less—aspirations so diverse?

We are brought at last face to face with the fundamental problem of the Masonic historian—the Origin of the whole business.

Without any hesitation at all, one may confess that on this critical question nothing is certainly known. It is true, indeed, that the Craft Lodges in England were originally Hanoverian Clubs, as the Scottish Lodges were Jacobite Clubs, and the Egyptian Lodges of Cagliostro revolutionary Clubs.

But that no more explains the Origin of Freemasonry than the fact “Many Spaniards are Roman Catholics” explains why the priest says and does certain things rather than others in the Mass.

Now here is the tremendous question: we can admit all Mr. Yarker's contentions, and more, as to the connection of Masonic and quasi-Masonic Rites with the old customs of initiating people into the Trade Guilds; but why should such a matter be hedged about with so severe a wardenship, and why should the Central Sacrament partake of so awful and unearthly a character?

As Freemasonry has been "exposed" every few minutes for the last century or so, and as any layman can walk into a Masonic shop and buy the complete Rituals for a few pence, the only omissions being of no importance to our present point, it would be imbecile to pretend that the nature of the ceremonies of Craft Masonry is in any sense a "mystery."

There is therefore no reason for refraining from the plain statement that, to anyone who understands the rudiments of Symbolism, the Master's Degree is identical with the Mass. This is in fact the real reason for the Papal Anathema; for Freemasonry asserts that every man is himself the living, slain, and re-risen Christ in his own person.

It is true that not one Mason in 10,000 in England is aware of this fact; but he has only to remember his "raising" to realise the fundamental truth of the statement.

Well may Catholic and Freemason alike stand appalled at the stupendous blasphemy which is implied, as they ignorantly think, not knowing themselves of the stuff and substance of the Supreme Self, each for himself alike no less than Very God of Very God!

But suppose that the sublimity of this conception is accepted, the identity admitted: what sudden overwhelming billow from the past blasts their beatitude? What but the words with which Freud concludes *Totem and Taboo*: In the Beginning was the Deed!

For the "sacrifice of the Innocent" celebrated alike in Lodge and in Cathedral is this identical Murder of the Master by the

Fellow-Craftsmen, that is of the Father by his Sons, when the ape-system of the "Father-horde" was replaced by the tribal system which developed into the "military clan"!

As against all the above, it may be objected that Freemasonry actually poses the perennial problem: If a man die, shall he live again?

We can ignore antiquity, with a mere note that the impossibility of tracing the origin of the Rite makes it impossible to argue that any given jurisdiction is "lawful." As in other matters, the Rite in Might is the Rite in Right! The quarrels which disgrace Freemasonry are only distinguishable by superior pettiness from such questions as the validity of Anglican Orders.

And it may be added that at this of day it is abjectly ridiculous to continue the celebration of totemistic tomfoolery with such tetanic tabus!

The W.M. elect of a certain lodge not far from the birth-place of Daylight Saving used to learn his part by saying it over to his wife in bed. Reproached by brother Masons, he replied quite calmly that the Secret of Freemasonry was lost, and therefore he could not disclose it if he would!

But is the Secret lost?

Does not the insistence on so many senseless formalities lead us to surmise that the Secret may have been locked away not in the ostensible words, grips, signs, tokens, *et cetera*, which are for the most part self-stultifying, but in the essential structure of the Rite?

We can here merely refer to a rare and long since out of print volume, *The Canon*,¹⁹ which shows that the proportions of certain fabulous or imaginary structures testify to certain philosophical truths according to a symbolic system.

The truth is—to speak plainly—that the Secret was lost, and is found.

But those to whom it has been communicated, whatever their degree, are not in the least likely to spread it broadcast before undiscerning Masons.

Their condition is therefore, reasonably enough, that the whole unwieldy system of pompous and meaningless formalities, with their outworn and misunderstood verbiage, their sectarian accretions, and their manifold confusion, should be swept away entirely. It is better so than that Masonry should stumble into the open sewer of obsolescence, as it is doing now. While no two jurisdictions can agree to recognise or tolerate the existence of any third, while women are clamouring for admission on the one hand and men despairingly dropping it on the other, while clandestine lodges already almost outnumber the regular kind—what is worth saving?

What was ever worth saving in Masonry? What was the original idea of the institution as such? The Secret and its Preservation.

Even at this, the Secret pertains to the Past. It is part of the heritage of Humanity. But the Rites of Freemasonry are after all those of Osiris, of the Dying God; the Aeon of Horus, of the Crowned and Conquering Child, is come; it is His rites that we should celebrate, His that liveth and reigneth, and hath His abode in every human heart!

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Notes.

Martin Starr in an article in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* ("Aleister Crowley, Freemason," ACQ vol. 108, 1995), notes that the corrected page proofs of this article survive in the Yorke collection of the Warburg Institute, where it is titled "Are you a Mason?", "perhaps inspired by the contemporary silent film of the same name."

¹ Crowley's title of "Past Grand Master in the United States of America" was granted (probably ca. 1912 as it is alluded to on the title page of *The Ship*) by the infamous Masonic fraudster Matthew McBlain Thomson (Starr, *op. cit.*).

² Very Worshipful Past President of the Board of General Purposes.

³ Assuming this incident was not invented, this was probably Reuss.

⁴ The Sat B'hai was apparently founded ca. 1870 by an officer in an Anglo-Indian regiment as a quasi-Hindu, quasi-Masonic group designed to appeal to the British fascination for the exotic. It was described by Ellic Howe in an article in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* ("Fringe Masonry in England, 1870-1885," AQC vol. 85, 1972) as a "comic pseudo-Masonic balloon, which rose a few feet into the air, wobbled briefly and then quietly collapsed without the average member of the Craft knowing that the thing had ever existed" (it should be noted that Howe, sometime Master of *Quatuor Coronati*, wrote from a point of view of Masonic orthodoxy or 'regularity' and his writings are characterised by extreme hostility to 'fringe,' 'occult,' and 'esoteric' Masonic and quasi-Masonic groups). In 1902 Reuss obtained a Sat B'hai charter from Wynn Westcott, whence the order was listed in the "Manifesto of MMM" and Liber LII as one of those whose knowledge and wisdom were concentrated in the hands of initiates of O.T.O.

⁵ The I°-III° of O.T.O. in Crowley's British section (and the sections in other English-speaking countries which even prior to his proclaiming himself head of the order were either formally or effectively under his control) were at first basically stripped-down Masonic rituals in which the same signs & words were given (with one exception) and the III° legend of the murder of Hiram Abiff was included with minor changes. Over the course of successive revisions these were changed; Masonic symbolism was completely dropped, the III° legend replaced and a new set of signs and words adopted.

⁶ Crowley is exaggerating slightly, the main issue was that lodge no. 343 "Anglo-Saxon" in which he took the Craft degrees was under the *Grande Loge de France* which for some reason of which I am not aware was not recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England. The other main French Grand Lodge, the Grand Orient of France, was regarded as irregular by UGLE because it had dropped the religious belief requirement for membership. In 1913 a *Grande Loge Nationale Independente et Reguliere pour la France et les Colonies Françaises* was founded and shortly afterwards recognised by UGLE.

⁷ The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is apparently so called because it originated in France (as Etienne Morin's 25° rite, variously known as the Rite of Perfection, Rite of the Royal Secret or Council of Emperors of the East and West), claimed to be founded on a warrant from a Prussian prince (which Crowley accuses Morin of forging a few paragraphs along) and was established as the 33° rite in 1801 in Charleston, South Carolina, U.S.A. Seven degrees were added between Rose Croix (18°) and Royal Secret (25° in the old system, 32° in the new) and an administrative 33° added at the top (previously Inspector General had been an office rather than a degree in its own right).

⁸ It appears that in the late 19th century the Reduced Rite of Memphis or Antient and Primitive Rite was worked in England and regarded as acceptable by at least some English Masons; J. How's *Freemason's Manual* (3rd edition, 1881) for example contains a very favourable account of it. It was not, however, tolerated by the British or American Supreme Councils of the Ancient and Accepted Rite. The reduction to 33° (apparently due to Henry J. Seymour, head of the rite in the USA from about 1866) was perhaps motivated by a desire to compete with AASR (of which Seymour had been a member, under the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, until he was expelled for . . . well, probably for involvement in the Rite of Memphis), and led to a schism in the rite with a group under Calvin C. Burt breaking with Seymour and continuing with the 96° scheme. One modern version of the Memphis degree scheme has 99° with the 97° and 98° being some kind of intermediate trans-national chiefs and the 99° the world head. In the USA, jurisdiction over the Rite of Memphis is claimed by a body called the Grand College of Rites which was founded in the 1930s specifically to shut the Rite down.

⁹ The Ancient and Accepted Rite 33° as currently worked in the U.S.A. confers the 4°-32° on a group of candidates over the course of a few days, for each degree the candidates take an oath, hear a discourse and have the degree conferred by name. Full Rituals exist but are only worked as performance pieces or at most on one candidate out of the group. As worked in England, the degrees 4°-17° are conferred by name with a minimal ceremony on candidates who have been invited to Rose Croix (18°), which latter degree is worked in full for all candidates (in fact, the rite in England is widely informally known as "Rose Croix"). In the U.S.A. there are far more 32's in proportion to the number of Masons generally than in England, where 18's must have served as M.W.S. (chief officer) of their Chapter before they can be invited to the 30° (Kadosch; the 19-29° again being conferred by name), with numbers in 31°-33° strictly limited.

¹⁰ Probably an error for Cerneau, a rival version of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite 33°. In 1807 Joseph Cerneau, a 25° and Deputy Inspector General of the Morin rite, established a "Supreme Grand Consistory" in New York which later became a "Supreme Council 33°." This was not recognised by the Supreme Council, Southern Masonic Jurisdiction in Charleston (founded 1801), and hence

Cerneau's council and "Supreme Councils" deriving from it are regarded as illegitimate by Scottish Rite bodies deriving from or allied to the SMJ Supreme Council (*i.e.*, most of them), as well as most other Masonic historians. Cerneau's original council was eventually (1867) absorbed into the 'legitimate' (*i.e.* a vassal of the SMJ SC) Supreme Council, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (founded 1813), although derived Cerneau councils persisted into the early decades of the twentieth century C.E. After being kicked out of AASR by the English Supreme Council, John Yarker received the Cerneau 33° from Harry Seymour of New York (who had gotten hold of it after being kicked out of AASR by the NMJ Supreme Council), and in 1910 conferred the Cerneau 33° as well as the Memphis and Mizraim degrees on Crowley.

¹¹ "Mark and Ark" were originally separate but in English workings fell under the same governing body. There were originally two different Mark degrees, Mark Man and Mark Master, which later became amalgamated; the former was sometimes regarded as a pendant or side-degree to Fellow Craft. There are also some other inconsequential side-degrees with some variant on the "Mark" name, e.g. "Christian Mark." The reference in any case is to the custom of "Masons' marks" among mediæval operative masons by which individual stonecutters 'signed' their work. In the American "York Rite" (see *Duncan's Ritual*), Mark Master is the fourth degree, one of three between Master Mason and Royal Arch. "Royal Ark Mariner" is one of the sillier minor side degrees, based around the Hebrew legend of the Flood. There is a hostile account in Walton Hannah's *Christian by Degrees* and a version of the ritual appears in the anonymous *Textbook of Advanced Freemasonry* (1873); in the USA it is part of the "Allied Masonic Degrees."

¹² In English Freemasonry, the "Holy Royal Arch" is regarded, not as a fourth degree, but as "the Master Mason's degree completed" and the only degree qualification is Master Mason (it used to be a requirement that one had "passed the chair," *i.e.* received the non-degree pre-requisite to serving as the W.M. of a lodge, but this requirement was dropped either in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century). Its "non-degree" status is traceable to a political compromise around the "Union" of the "Ancient" and "Modern" factions in English Freemasonry in 1813. The "Moderns" (historically the older faction) regarded Masonry as complete in the three Craft degrees, the "Ancients" wanted to include all kinds of additional degrees.

In the American "York Rite" working (a nineteenth-century version of which is described in *Duncan's Ritual*), Royal Arch completes a series of three or four degrees following Master Mason (*Duncan's* has the intermediate degrees as Mark Master, Past Master and Most Excellent Master).

A similar scheme exists in Scottish (as opposed to "Scottish") Freemasonry where the R.A. is preceded by Mark and a degree called "Excellent Master" which latter includes a version of the "Passing the Veils" which forms a part of some Royal Arch versions.

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (following Morin's 25° rite) has a "Royal Arch of Enoch" or "Ninth Arch" as the 13°; versions of this also appear as the 13° of the Rite of Memphis and the 6° (Knight of the Sacred Arch) of the Antient and Primitive Rite.

In accordance with the Jewish legendary history which forms the backdrop for much Masonic ritual, these degrees may also be divided into "First Temple" and "Second Temple" degrees.

The former category includes the 13° of the Scottish Rite and its variants; one early version appears in the 1783 "Francken MS." (typeset published by Kessinger). Here the legend tells how masons clearing away some old ruins preparatory to the construction of outbuildings for Solomon's temple broke into an antediluvian subterranean vault composed of nine arches (that is, nine arched chambers one above the other), the remains of a temple erected by the patriarch Enoch. Within the ninth arch they found a triangular pillar bearing the name of God, which had of course been revealed to Enoch "who made himself to walk with God, and he was not, for God took him." This vault later collapsed on top of some opportunistic masons who had not been initiated into the secret of what holds an arch up (although the same probably goes for a number of writers or revisers of Royal Arch rituals), and, intending to loot the place, had crowbarred out the key-stones while attempting to widen the openings. Solomon subsequently had a secret vault constructed under his temple, likewise reached by passing through nine arches, in which he used to hold private meetings with his patron the King of Tyre and various high court officials, and in which various secrets of Masonry and treasures of the temple were placed for safe keeping.

The 14° which concludes the "Ineffable" or "Lodge of Perfection" First Temple degrees, continues the legend of this vault, and we are informed that thanks to a brave if suicidal defence by certain masons (who one assumes stuck around the temple as an 'honour guard,' or more seriously for occasional maintenance and repairs, for centuries after the actual building-work had finished) it survived undiscovered when the Temple was destroyed and Jerusalem sacked by the armies of Babylon.

The American "York Rite" Royal Arch and the English Holy Royal Arch both have a "Second Temple" setting, although significantly different in the details of the ritual. Royal Arch chapters (at least in the *Duncan's* working as well as some older English workings, such as that in the 1873 *Textbook of Advanced Masonry*) have nine officers, recalling the nine arches of the Lodge of Perfection degree. The legend here is of masons under Zerubbabel (governor of Judah, under a satrap of the King of Persia) and Jeshua or Joshua, then High Priest, who were rebuilding the Temple following the conquest of Babylon by the Persians and the return of the Jews from exile; the principal officers represent these two, and Haggai, a freelance agitator whose short book is essentially a polemic for the reconstruction of the temple. These Masons, while digging the ground on the

site of the first temple for the purpose of laying foundations, break into the Secret Vault and descend into it, recovering the Sacred and Mysterious Name of the True and Living God Most High, along with a scroll of the Torah and the various other anachronisms sealed up therein.

Waite (*Emblematic Freemasonry*, p. 93) and Hannah (*Darkness Visible*, p. 193) mention a First Temple Irish R.A. version based around the “discovery” of the “Book of the Law of Yahweh” during restoration work on the first Temple in the reign of Josiah.

In any case, the motif common to all these is the descent into the earth and the recovery thereby of sacred knowledge believed lost through some kind of catastrophe, suggesting the alchemical slogan *vista interiore terræ rectificando invenies occultum lapidem*.

While some esotericist interpretations of Masonic symbolism distinguish the first and second temples, the building of the first understood in ‘moral’ terms (*i.e.* the ordinary civic virtues inculcated in the Craft degrees) and the second as referring to the ‘spiritual’ personality of the initiate, the Royal Arch being indiscriminately assigned to either period while retaining the same motifs and symbolism makes this interpretation problematic, as for that matter does the fact that in the legends the second temple could only be built after the first was *destroyed*—the gold and silver looted (not by the Babylonians; the temple had been despoiled so many times prior to that by Kings of Judah who wanted to hire mercenaries or bribe invaders to go away that it seems highly unlikely that there was anything left worth stealing when Jerusalem was sacked), the bronze-work melted down, the wooden superstructure burned to ash and not one stone left standing upon another, suggesting the position attributed to Crowley by Kenneth Grant in *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* (p. 69, citing an unspecified letter to Karl Germer) that spiritual attainment is incompatible with bourgeois morality.

¹³ The IV° of O.T.O. as revised by Crowley is very loosely based on English versions of the Holy Royal Arch (some phrasing is almost verbatim from the Metropolitan working, for instance) and has largely dispensed with the “descent into the depths of the earth” motif noted above. The P.I. degree of O.T.O. takes its name from “Prince of Jerusalem,” a “Second Temple” degree of the Rite of Perfection / Scottish Rite system but instead of treating the destruction of the Temple as a calamity to be rectified zooms off in a perpendicular direction and might, if anything, be characterised as “anti-Masonic” (“Boaz broken, Jachin gone . . .”).

¹⁴ The American “York Rite” consists of three series of additional degrees; the first series or ‘Chapter’ comprises Mark Master, Past Master, Excellent Master and Royal Arch (current workings have dropped one of these, not sure which); the second series or ‘Council’ works the ‘Cryptic’ degrees of Royal Master, Select Master and Super-Excellent Master (these further develop the legend of

the Secret Vault); the third series or "Commandary" works three Christian chivalric degrees culminating in a Templar degree.

¹⁵ Paris. This was one Rev. James L. Bowley who had previously been a member of an Oxford Lodge under UGLE, (in 1892 he was Provincial Grand Organist of Oxfordshire), but resigned from it in 1899. (Starr, *op. cit.*)

¹⁶ This was in Lodge no. 343, "Anglo-Saxon" in Paris, an English-speaking lodge, probably working a perfectly "regular" English ritual, but under the *Grande Loge de France* which was not recognised by UGLE, and was hence regarded as "clandestine" by English Freemasons.

¹⁷ This is either a misunderstanding by Crowley or more likely a deliberately humorous *reductio ad absurdum* of the standard Masonic charge that one will not associate Masonically with any clandestinely made Mason (which in the eyes of UGLE included anyone initiated in a lodge under the *Grande Loge de France*).

¹⁸ As regards the "Scottish Rite": a few degrees, most significantly the 18° (Rose-Croix), contain more or less explicit Christian symbolism. Under the English Supreme Council (founded 1845 under a warrant from the US Supreme Council, NMJ) there is a requirement that the candidate for the 18° profess "the Trinitarian Christian faith." There is no such requirement in the American system, nor was there ever: the earliest known version of the 33° (published in *Ordo ab Chao*, Boston and New York: Poemandres Press, 1995) includes statements which indicate that Jews, and possibly adherents of other non-Christian religions, could take that degree, and *a fortiori* all the others.

Albert Pike, in his initial revisions of Rose-Croix and other degrees for the Southern Jurisdiction (see his *Magnum Opus*) may have deliberately minimised Christian references (the Rose+Cross in the Red Room has become a *crux ansata*, and *Iesus Nazareus Rex Iudaorum* is given only in passing in the lecture as one of several interpretations of the letters I.N.R.I.) but this appears to have been done on general principle as part of an attempt to make the rite as non-sectarian as the Craft degrees, rather than for purely opportunistic motives. Some degrees of the Antient and Primitive Rite (including "Knight of the Orient" which replaced Knight of the East and West, and Rose-Croix) were similarly re-written in an attempt to make them non-sectarian.

¹⁹ *The Canon: An Exposition of the Pagan Mystery as Perpetuated in the Cabala as the Rule of all Arts* [by William Stirling]; London, Elkin Matthews, 1897 (first edition published anonymously); reprinted London: Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation, 1974, 1981; York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1999.