

statements which have been made, it might seem to have been connected with the elder Freemasonry. Nicolai's account of this matter is as follows:—

"After the death of Cromwell and the deposition of his son, the government of England fell into the hands of a violent but weak and disunited faction. In such hands, as every patriot saw, the government could not be durable; and the sole means for delivering the country was to restore the kingly authority. But in this there was the greatest difficulty; for the principal officers of the army in England, though otherwise in disagreement with each other, were yet unanimous in their hostility to the king. Under these circumstances the eyes of all parties were turned upon the English army in Scotland, at that time under the command of Monk, who was privately well affected to the Royal cause; and the secret society of the king's friends in London, who placed all their hopes on him, saw the necessity in such a critical period of going warily and mysteriously to work. It strengthened their sense of this necessity—that one of their own members, Sir Richard Willis, became suspected of treachery; and therefore out of the bosom of their 'secret conclave' (the masonic master's degree) they resolved to form a still narrower conclave to whom the Scotch—i.e., the most secret—affairs should be confided. They chose new symbols adapted to their own extremely critical situation. These symbols imported that, in the business of this interior conclave, wisdom—obedience—courage—self-sacrifice—and moderation were necessary. Their motto was—*Wisdom above thee*. For greater security they altered their signs, and reminded each other in their tottering condition not to stumble and—*break the arm*."

I do not deny that there is much plausibility in this hypothesis of Nicolai's: but upon examination it will

appear that it is all pure delusion, without any basis of historical truth.

1. Its validity rests upon the previous assumption that the interpretation of the master's degree, as connected with the political interests of the Stuarts, between the death of Charles I. and the restoration of his son, is correct: it is therefore a *petitio principii*; and what is the value of the *principium*, we have already seen.

2. Of any participation on the part of a secret society of Freemasons in the counsels and expedition of General Monk—history tells us absolutely nothing. Even Skinner preserves a profound silence on this head. Now, if the facts were so, to suppose that this accurate biographer should not have known it—is absurd: and, knowing it, that he should designedly suppress a fact so curious and so honourable to the Freemasons amongst the Royal party—is inexplicable.

3. Nicolai himself maintains, and even proves, that Monk was not himself a Freemason. In what way then could the society gain any influence over his measures? My sagacious friend justly applauds the politic mistrust of Monk (who would not confide his intentions even to his own brother), his secrecy, and the mysterious wisdom of his conduct; and in the very same breath he describes him as surrendering himself to the guidance of a society with which he was not even connected as a member. How is all this to be reconciled?

Undoubtedly there existed at that time in London a secret party of Royalists—known in history under the name of the Secret Conclave; but we are acquainted with its members, and there were but some few Freemasons amongst them. Nicolai alleges the testimony of Ramsay—"that the restoration of Charles II. to the English throne was first concerted in a society of Freemasons, because

General Monk was a member of it." But in this assertion of Ramsay's there is at any rate one manifest untruth on Nicolai's own showing; for Monk, according to Nicolai, was not a Freemason. The man who begins by such an error in his premises must naturally err in his conclusions.*

4. The Scotch degree—nay, the very name of Scotch masonry—does not once come forward in the elder Freemasonry throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, as it must inevitably have done if it had borne any relation to the restoration of Charles II. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the Scotch degree was known even in Scotland or in England before the third decennium of the eighteenth century.

But how then did this degree arise? What is its meaning and object? The answer to these questions does not belong to this place. It is enough on the present occasion to have shown how it did *not* arise, and what were *not* its meaning and object. I am here treating of the origin and history of the elder and legitimate masonry, not of an indecent pretender who crept at a later period into the order,

* Andrew Michael Ramsay was a Scotchman by birth, but lived chiefly in France, where he became a Catholic, and is well known as the author of "The Travels of Cyrus," and other works. His dissertation on the Freemasons contains the old legend that Freemasonry dated its origin from a guild of working masons, who resided during the crusades in the Holy Land for the purpose of rebuilding the Christian churches destroyed by the Saracens, and were afterwards summoned by a king of England to his dominions. As tutor to the two sons of the Pretender, for whose use he wrote "The Travels of Cyrus," Ramsay is a distinguished person in the history of the later Freemasonry. Of all that part of its history which lay half-a-century before his own time, he was, however, very ill-informed. On this he gives us nothing but the cant of the later English lodges, who had lost the kernel in the shell—the original essence and object of masonry in its form—as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century.

and, by the side of the Lion—the Pelican—and the Dove, introduced the Ape and the Fox.

V. The Freemasons are not derived from the order or the Knights Templars:—

No hypothesis upon the origin and primitive tendency of the Freemasons has obtained more credit in modern times than this—That they were derived from the order of Knights Templars, so cruelly persecuted and ruined under Pope Clement V. and Philip the Fair of France, and had no other secret purpose on their first appearance than the re-establishment of that injured order. So much influence has this opinion had in France that in the first half of the eighteenth century it led to the amalgamation of the external forms and ritual of the Templars with those of the Freemasons; and some of the higher degrees of French masonry have undoubtedly proceeded from this amalgamation. In Germany it was Lessing, who, if not first, yet chiefly, gave to the learned world an interest in this hypothesis by some allusions to it scattered through his masterly dialogues for Freemasons. With many it became a favourite hypothesis; for it assigned an honourable origin to the Masonic order, and flattered the vanity of its members. The Templars were one of the most celebrated knightly orders during the crusades: their whole Institution, Acts, and Tragical Fate are attractive to the feelings and the fancy: how natural, therefore, it was that the modern masons should seize with enthusiasm upon the conjectures thrown out by Lessing. Some modern English writers have also adopted this mode of explaining the origin of Freemasonry; not so much on the authority of any historical documents, as because they found in the French lodges degrees which had a manifest reference to the Templar institutions, and which they naturally attributed to the

elder Freemasonry, being ignorant that they had been purposely introduced at a later period to serve an hypothesis: in fact, the French degrees had been originally derived from the hypothesis; and now the hypothesis was in turn derived from the French degrees. If in all this there were any word of truth, it would follow that I had written this whole book of 418 pages to no purpose: and what a shocking thing would that be! Knowing therefore the importance to myself of this question, it may be presumed that I have examined it not negligently, before I ventured to bring forward my own deduction of the Freemasons from the Rosicrucians. This is not the place for a full critique upon all the idle prattle about the Templars and the Freemasons: but an impartial review of the arguments for and against the Templar hypothesis may reasonably be demanded of me as a negative attestation of my own hypothesis. In doing this I must presume in my reader a general acquaintance with the constitution and history of the Templars, which it will be very easy for any one not already in possession of it to gain.

1. It is alleged that the masonic mystical allegory represented nothing else in its capital features than the persecution and overthrow of the Templars, especially the dreadful death of the innocent Grand-Master, James Burg de Mollay. Some knights, together with Aumont, it is said, made their escape in the dress of masons to Scotland; and, for the sake of disguise, exercised the trade of masons. This was the reason that they adopted symbols from that trade; and, to avoid detection, gave them the semblance of moral purposes. They called themselves *Franc Maçons*, as well in memory of the Templars who in Palestine were always called Francs by the Saracens, as with a view to distinguish themselves from the common working masons. The Temple

of Solomon, which they professed to build, together with all the masonic attributes, pointed collectively to the grand purpose of the society—the restoration of the Templar order. At first the society was confined to the descendants of its founders: but within the last 150 years the Scotch masters have communicated their hereditary right to others in order to extend their own power; and from this period, it is said, begins the *public* history of Freemasonry. See “The Use and Abuse of Freemasonry, by Captain George Smith, Inspector of the Royal Military School at Woolwich, etc., etc., London 1783.” See also, “Scotch Masonry compared with the three Vows of the Order, and with the Mystery of the Knights Templars: from the French of Nicholas de Bonneville.”

Such is the legend, which is afterwards supported by the general analogy between the ritual and external characteristics of both orders. The *three* degrees of masonry (the holy masonic number) are compared with the triple office of general amongst the Templars. The masonic dress is alleged to be copied from that of the Templars. The signs of Freemasonry are the same with those used in Palestine by the Templars. The rites of initiation, as practised on the admission of a novice, especially on admission to the master's degree, and the symbolic object of this very degree, are all connected with the persecution of the Templars, with the trial of the knights, and the execution of the Grand-Master. To this Grand-Master (*James Burg*) the letters I and B, which no longer mean Jachin and Boaz, are said to point. Even the holiest masonic name of Hiram has no other allusion than to the murdered Grand-Master of the Templars. With regard to these analogies in general, it may be sufficient to say that some of them are accidental—some very forced and far-sought—and some

altogether fictitious. Thus, for instance, it is said that the name *Franc Magon* was chosen in allusion to the connection of the Templars with Palestine. And thus we are required to believe that the eldest Freemasons of Great Britain styled themselves at first Frank Masons: as if this had any warrant from history: or, supposing even that it had, as if a name adopted on such a ground could ever have been dropped. The simple fact is—that the French were the people who first introduced the seeming allusion to Franks by translating the English name *Freemason* into *Franc Magon*; which they did because the word *libre* would not so easily blend into composition with the word *Maçon*. So also the late Mr. Von Born, having occasion to express the word Freemasons in Latin, rendered it *Franco-murarii*. Not to detain the reader, however, with a separate examination of each particular allegation, I will content myself with observing that the capital mythus of the masonic master's degree tallies but in one-half with the execution of the Grand-Master of the Templars, or even of the Sub-Prior of Montfaucon (Charles de Monte Carmel). The Grand-Master was indeed murdered, as the Grand-Master of the Freemasons is described to have been; but not, as the latter, by treacherous journeymen: moreover, the latter rose from the grave, still lives, and triumphs; which will hardly be said of James Burg de Mollay. Two arguments, however, remain to be noticed, both out of respect to the literary eminence of those who have alleged them, and also because they seem intrinsically of some weight.

2. The English word *masonry*. This word, or (as it ought in that case to be written) the word *masonry*, is derived, according to Lessing, from the Anglo-Saxon word *massoney*—a secret commensal society; which last word again comes from *mase*, a table. Such table societies and

compotuses were very common amongst our forefathers—especially amongst the princes and knights of the middle ages; the weightiest affairs where there transacted, and peculiar buildings were appropriated to their use. In particular, the *masonies* of the Knights Templars were highly celebrated in the thirteenth century. One of them was still subsisting in London at the end of the seventeenth century—at which period, according to Lessing, the public history of the Freemasons first commences. This society had its house of meeting near St. Paul's Cathedral, which was then rebuilding. Sir Christopher Wren, the architect, was one of its members. For thirty years, during the building of the cathedral, he continued to frequent it. From this circumstance the people, who had forgotten the true meaning of the word *massoney*, took it for a society of architects with whom Sir Christopher consulted on any difficulties which arose in the progress of the work. This mistake Wren turned to account. He had formerly assisted in planning a society which should make speculative truths more useful for purposes of common life. The very converse of this idea now occurred to him—viz., the idea of a society which should raise itself from the praxis of civil life to speculation. "In the former," thought he, "would be examined all that was useful amongst the true; in this, all that is true amongst the useful. How if I should make some principles of the *masonry* exoteric? How if I should disguise that which cannot be made exoteric under the hieroglyphics and symbols of *masonry*, as the people pronounce the word; and extend this masonry into a Freemasonry, in which all may take a share?" In this way, according to Lessing, did Wren scheme; and in this way did Freemasonry arise. Afterwards, however, from a conversation which he had with Nicolai, it appears that

Lessing had thus far changed his first opinion (as given in the *Ernst und Falk*) that he no longer supposed Sir Christopher simply to have modified a *massoney*, or society of Knights Templars, which had subsisted secretly for many centuries, and to have translated their doctrines into an exoteric shape, but rather to have himself first established such *massoney*—upon some basis of analogy, however, with the elder *massoneys*.

To an attentive examiner of this conjecture of Lessing's, it will appear that it rests entirely upon the presumed identity of meaning between the word *massoney* and the word *masonry* (or masonry as it afterwards became, according to the allegation, through a popular mistake of the meaning). But the very meaning and etymology ascribed to *massoney*—(viz., a secret club or *compotus*, from *mase*, a table)—are open to much doubt. Nicolai, a friend of Lessing's, professes as little to know any authority for such an explanation as myself, and is disposed to derive the word *massoney* from *massonya*, which in the Latin of the middle ages meant first a club (*clava*, in French *massue*): secondly, a key (*clavis*), and a secret society (a club). For my part I think both the etymologies false. *Massoney* is doubtless originally the same word with *maison* and *magione*; and the primitive etymon of all three words is clearly the Latin word *mansio*, in the sense of the middle ages. It means simply a residence or place of abode, and was naturally applied to the dwelling-house of the Templars. Their meetings were held in *mansiones Templariorum*—i.e., in the *massoney* of the Templars. On the suppression of the order, their buildings still remained, and preserved the names of temples, templar mansions, etc., just as at this day we find many *convents* in Hanover, though they are no longer occupied by monks or nuns; and in Italy there are

even yet churches to be found which are denominated *de la Mason*, which Paciaudi properly explains by *della Magione*—these churches having been attached to the dwellings of the Knights Templars. It is therefore very possible that a Templar *massoney* may have subsisted in London, in the neighbourhood of St. Paul's Church, up to the end of the seventeenth century. Some notice of such a fact Lessing perhaps stumbled on in the course of his reading. He mistook the building for a secret society of Templars that still retained a traditional knowledge of the principles peculiar to the ancient order of Knights Templars; next he found that Sir Christopher Wren had been a frequenter of this *massoney*. He therefore was a Knight Templar, but he was also an architect; and by him the Templar doctrines had been moulded into a symbolic conformity with his own art, and had been fitted for diffusion among the people. Such is the way in which a learned hypothesis arises; and on this particular hypothesis may be pronounced what Lessing said of many an older one—Dust! and nothing but dust! In conclusion, I may add what Nicolai has already observed, that Lessing was wholly misinformed as to the history and chronology of Freemasonry. So far from arising out of the ashes of the Templar traditions at the end of the seventeenth century, we have seen that it was fully matured in the forty-sixth year of that century, and therefore long before the rebuilding of St. Paul's. In fact, Sir Christopher Wren was himself elected Deputy Grand-Master of the Freemasons in 1666: and in less than twenty years after (viz. in 1685) he became Grand-Master.

3. *Baphomet*.—But, says Mr. Nicolai, the Templars had a secret, and the Freemasons have a secret; and the secrets agree in this, that no uninitiated person has succeeded in discovering either. Does not this imply some connection

originally between the two orders; more especially if it can be shown that the two secrets are identical? Sorry I am, my venerable friend, to answer—No. Sorry I am, in your old days, to be under the necessity of knocking on the head a darling hypothesis of yours, which has cost you, I doubt not, much labour of study and research—much thought—and, I fear also, many many pounds of candles. But it is my duty to do so; and indeed, considering Mr. Nicolai's old age and his great merits in regard to German literature, it would be my duty to show him no mercy, but to lash him with the utmost severity for his rotten hypothesis—if my time would allow it. But to come to business. The Templars, says old Nicolai, had a secret. They had so; but what was it? According to Nicolai it consisted in the denial of the Trinity, and in a scheme of natural religion opposed to the dominant Popish Catholicism. Hence it was that the Templars sought to make themselves independent of the other Catholic clergy; the novices were required to abjure the divinity of Christ, and even to spit upon a crucifix, and trample it under foot. Their Anti-Trinitarianism Mr. Nicolai ascribes to their connection with the Saracens, who always made the doctrine of the Trinity a matter of reproach to the Franks. He supposes that, during periods of truce in captivity, many Templars had, by communication with learned Mohammedans, become enlightened to the errors and the tyranny of Popery; but at the same time strengthening their convictions of the falsehood of Mahometanism, they had retained nothing of their religious doctrines but Monotheism. These heterodoxies, however, under the existing power of the hierarchy and the universal superstition then prevalent, they had the strongest reasons for communicating to none but those who were admitted into the highest degree of their order—and to them only

symbolically. From these data, which may be received as tolerably probable and conformable to the depositions of the witnesses on the trial of the Templars, old Mr. Nicolai flatters himself that he can unriddle the mystery of mysteries—viz., Baphomet (Baffomet, Baphemet, or Baffometus); which was the main symbol of the Knights Templars in the highest degrees. This Baphomet was a figure representing a human bust, but sometimes of monstrous and caricature appearance, which symbolised the highest object of the Templars; and therefore upon the meaning of Baphomet hinges the explanation of the great Templar mystery.

First, then, Mr. Nicolai tells us what Baphomet was *not*. It was not Mohammed. According to the genius of the Arabic language out of Mohammed might be made Mahomet or Bahomet, but not Baphomet. In some Latin historians about the period of the Crusades, Bahomet is certainly used for Mahomet, and in one writer perhaps Baphomet (viz., in the *Epistola Anselmi de Ribodimonte ad Manassem Archiepiscopum Remensem*, of the year 1099, in Dachery's *Spicilegium*, tom. ii. p. 431,—“Sequenti die aurorâ apparente altis vocibus *Baphomet* invocaverunt; et nos Deum nostrum in cordibus nostris deprecantes impetum fecimus in eos, et de muris civitatis omnes expulimus.”) Nicolai, supposing that the cry of the Saracens was in this case addressed to their own prophet, concludes that *Baphomet* is an error of the press for *Bahomet*, and that this is put for *Mahomet*. But it is possible that *Baphomet* may be the true reading: for it may not have been used in devotion for Mahomet, but scoffingly as the known watchword of the Templars. But it contradicts the whole history of the Templars—to suppose that they had introduced into their order the worship of an image of Mahomet. In fact, from all the records of their trial and persecution, it results that no such charge was

brought against them by their enemies. And, moreover, Mahometanism itself rejects all worship of images.

Secondly, not being Mahomet, what *was* it? It was, says Mr. Nicolai, Βαφη μητδς, *i.e.*, as he interprets it, the word *Baphomet* meant the *baptism of wisdom*; and the image so called represented God the universal Father—*i.e.*, expressed the *unity* of the Divine Being. By using this sign therefore, under this name, which portook much of a Gnostic and Cabbalistic spirit, the Templars indicated their dedication to the truths of natural religion.

Now, in answer to this learned conceit of Mr. Nicolai's, I would wish to ask him—

First, in an age so barbarous as that of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when not to be able to read or write was no disgrace how came a body of rude warriors like the Templars to descend into the depths of Gnosticism?

Secondly, if by the image called Baphomet they meant to represent the unity of God, how came they to designate it by a name which expresses no attribute of the deity, but simply a mystical ceremony amongst themselves (*viz.*, the baptism of wisdom)?

Thirdly, I will put a home question to Mr. Nicolai: and let him parry it if he can: How many heads had Baphomet? His own conscience will reply—Two. Indeed, a whole length of Baphomet is recorded which had also four feet; but, supposing these to be disputed, Mr. Nicolai can never dispute away the two heads. Now, what sort of a symbol would a two-headed image have been for the expression of unity of being? Answer me that, Mr. Nicolai. Surely the rudest skulls of the twelfth century could have expressed their meaning better.

Having thus upset my learned brother's hypothesis, I now come forward with my own. Through the illumination

which some of the Templars gained in the East as to the relations in which they stood to the Pope and Romish church, but still more perhaps from the suggestions of their own great power and wealth opposed to so rapacious and potent a supremacy, there gradually arose a separate Templar interest no less hostile to the Pope and clergy of Rome than to Mahomet. To this separate interest they adapted an appropriate scheme of theology; but neither the one nor the other could be communicated with safety except to their own superior members: and thus it became a mystery of the order. Now this mystery was symbolically expressed by a two-headed figure of *Baphomet*: *i.e.*, of the Pope and Mahomet together. So long as the Templars continued orthodox, the watchword of their undivided hostility was *Mahomet*: but as soon as the Pope became an object of jealousy and hatred to them, they devised a new watchword which should covertly express their double-headed enmity by intertwisting the name of the Pope with that of Mahomet.* This they effected by cutting off the two first letters of *Mahomet*, and substituting *Bap* or *Pap*—the first syllable of *Papa*. Thus arose the compound word *Baphomet*; and hence it was that the image of Baphomet was figured with two heads, and was otherwise monstrous in appearance. When a Templar was initiated into the highest degree of the order, he was shown this image of Baphomet, and received a girdle with certain ceremonies which referred to that figure. At sight of this figure in the general chapters of the order, the knights expressed their independence of the church and the church creed, by

* Those who are acquainted with the German Protestant writers about the epoch of the Reformation, will remember the many fanciful combinations extracted from the names *Pabst* (Pope) and *Mahomet* by all manner of dislocations and inversions of their component letters.

testifying their abhorrence of the crucifix, and by worshipping the sole God of heaven and earth. Hence they called a newly-initiated member a "friend of God, who could now speak with God if he chose"—i.e., without the intermediation of the Pope and the church. Upon this explanation of Baphomet, it becomes sufficiently plain why the secret was looked upon as so inviolable that even upon the rack it could not be extorted from them. By such a confession the order would have exposed itself to a still more cruel persecution, and a more inevitable destruction. On the other hand, upon Mr. Nicolai's explanation, it is difficult to conceive why, under such extremities, the accused should not have confessed the truth. In all probability the court of Rome had good information of the secret tendency of the Templar doctrines; and hence, no doubt, it was Pope Clement V. proceeded so furiously against them.

Now then I come to my conclusion, which is this: If the Knights Templars had no other secret than one relating to a *political* interest which placed them in opposition to the Pope and the claims of the Roman Catholic clergy on the one hand, and to Mahomet on the other—then it is impossible that there can have been any affinity or resemblance whatsoever between them and the Freemasons; for the Freemasons have never in any age troubled themselves about either Mahomet or the Pope. Popery* and Mahometanism are alike indifferent to the Freemasons, and always have been. And in general the object of the Freemasons is not political. Finally, it is in the highest degree probable that the secret of the Knights Templars

* In rejecting Roman Catholic candidates for admission into their order—the reader must remember that the Freemasons objected to them not as Roman Catholics, but as persons of intolerant principles.
—Translator.

perished with their order: for it is making too heavy a demand on our credulity—to suppose that a secret society never once coming within the light of history can have propagated itself through a period of four centuries—i.e., from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, in which century it has been shown that Freemasonry first arose.

