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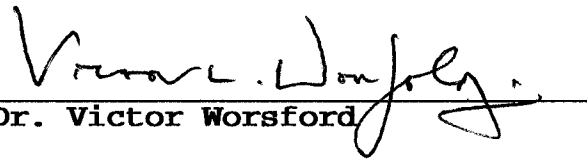
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ANDREW MICHAEL RAMSAY AND HIS MASONIC ORATION

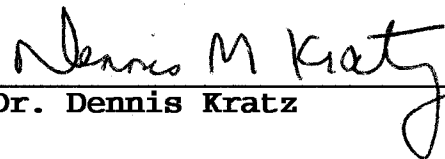
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ANDREW MICHAEL RAMSAY AND HIS MASONIC ORATION

by

LISA KAHLER, B.A.

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The University of Texas at Dallas
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
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ANDREW MICHAEL RAMSAY AND HIS MASONIC ORATION

Lisa Kahler
University of Texas at Dallas, 1992

Supervising Professor: David Channell

Andrew Michael Ramsay (1686?-1743) was a novelist, historian, religious philosopher and teacher; he was an excellent example of an educated and ambitious man of the eighteenth century. Yet Ramsay has been studied mainly for his contribution to Freemasonry, and his other accomplishments have been virtually ignored. In 1737, Ramsay wrote an oration for presentation to the Masonic Grand Lodge of France and the ideas within this speech changed the course of masonic history. These ideas created a whole new realm with the Order; and, consequently, caused a papal bull that excommunicated all Catholic Masons. This oration eclipsed all of Ramsay's other accomplishments. This thesis is an examination of both Ramsay and his famous oration. It is a biographical investigation of his intellectual, theological and political development. What influenced Ramsay to think the way he did? It is a discussion of the historical background, the themes

within the oration and the various interpretations of its critics. How and why did this oration change Freemasonry? It is also a detailed look at a brief history of both French and English Freemasonry. Why was the order so popular and why did Ramsay seek membership? These and other questions are answered in the quest to understand Andrew Michael Ramsay and his Masonic oration.

Introduction

Andrew Michael Ramsay (1686?-1743), novelist, historian, religious philosopher, and teacher, has been studied mainly for his contribution to Freemasonry. His accomplishments were significant, and he was an excellent example of an educated and ambitious man of the eighteenth century. He was a Scottish ex-patriot, yet he was welcomed home from France by the English government. He was a Roman Catholic and a Jacobite, but he was awarded an honorary degree from Oxford and made a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was tutor to the eldest son of James Stuart, the Old Pretender, and offered the same position by George II to tutor his son, the Duke of Cumberland. He wrote a biography of a disgraced Archbishop and thereby created a legend for the eighteenth century philosophes, yet as a historian he received scathing reviews on his topics. At different times of his life, he was a Presbyterian, a Roman Catholic, and a Freemason, but he remained a Quietist all his life. His life is a study of dichotomies.

Today, however, Ramsay is remembered primarily for an Oration he wrote for presentation to the Masonic Grand Lodge of France in 1737. With this Oration, he inadvertently changed the course of Masonic history. The ideas in this oration created a whole new realm within the order; and,

consequently, caused a Papal bull that excommunicated Catholic Masons. This Oration eclipsed all of Ramsay's other accomplishments.

But Ramsay's Masonic career was a small portion of both his life and all he accomplished. Ramsay was a theologian, a philosopher, and a well-read novelist. In no way was Freemasonry the most important aspect of his life. Yet, if Ramsay is remembered today at all, it is for this Masonic oration, his one contribution to Freemasonry.

This study focuses on the question: What was the motivation behind this oration? It is the point of this thesis to demonstrate that Ramsay's motivations must be seen from a perspective based on his life and experiences. This is an investigation of the oration and the common interpretations of Ramsay's intent.

This thesis will consist of three sections. The first section is an in-depth biography of Ramsay, concentrating mainly on his intellectual, theological and political development. The primary source for this section is G.D. Henderson's Chevalier Ramsay, the only biography of Ramsay written in English. Henderson was Regius Professor of Church History at the University of Aberdeen, and, although his interest in Ramsay and the Scottish Mystics of the North-east of Scotland instead of from a specific Masonic perspective, this is the most reliable source of information available.

The second section is an investigation of the history of freemasonry in England and France. In order to understand the consequences of Ramsay's oration, a comparison between the two countries' masonic philosophies is necessary. This section provides a historical overview explaining how and why Freemasonry became such a phenomenon in the eighteenth century. It is also an explanation of not only the myths of the Masonic allure, but also the important cultural and political aspects of the fraternity. It must be noted here that I have intentionally omitted any explanations regarding the history of Freemasonry in Scotland. Although there have been exciting recent historical discoveries with respect to the development of early Scottish Masonry, these do not affect Ramsay, or his oration.

The final section of the thesis is devoted to Ramsay's oration. It is a discussion of the historical background, the themes within the oration, and the various interpretations of nineteenth and twentieth century critics, especially with regard to Ramsay's intent. It is an explanation of the connections between Ramsay as Jacobite, Catholic, Quietist and Freemason, and a reconciliation of Ramsay's motives within the oration.

SECTION ONE : BIOGRAPHY OF ANDREW MICHAEL RAMSAY

There are conflicting opinions regarding Andrew Michael Ramsay's birth date and birthplace. Chambers' Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen lists the date as 1688. Herr Von Geusau, an acquaintance of Ramsay's in later life, claims Ramsay told him he was sixty years old in 1741, which would place his birth date in 1680-81.¹ The Anecdotes de la vie de Messire Andre Michel de Ramsay, a manuscript allegedly dictated by Ramsay, states he was born on June 9, 1686 in "Daire," Scotland.

Although the Anecdotes do contain many errors and are not considered entirely reliable, this date is considered Ramsay's actual birth date.² But Ramsay does not seem to have been born in Scotland, as the Anecdotes claim. His parents were probably Andrew and Susanna Ramsay of Ayr, Scotland. They left Scotland for Ireland in 1684, and did not return until the autumn of 1686. If Ramsay was indeed born in June of 1686, he was born in Ireland and not in Ayr. This would explain why there is no record of his birth in the Ayr Baptismal Records preserved from 1684.³

Ramsay's father was a baker by trade, and a Presbyterian. His mother was an Episcopalian. She was deeply interested in mysticism. She was also a disbeliever in Predestination, and she instilled this disbelief in Ramsay as well. "Young Andrew sided very definitely with his mother, who early

turned him against Calvinism; and the doctrine of predestination always remained his particular aversion."⁴ Ramsay was a pious child who would "shut himself up late in the evening in a half demolished Catholic church, where, in complete darkness, he prayed to God for two or three hours."⁵ By the age of nine, he was interested in learning, and, in particular, science.

Ramsay's parents intended him to be a Presbyterian minister: "It would seem that his parents, however differently they thought about certain matters, agreed in being so interested in religion as to desire their son should be a minister."⁶ He attended Ayr Grammar School and, around age fourteen, was sent to the University of Edinburgh. At fifteen, he was spending twelve hours at a time studying infinitesimal calculus.⁷ From the University of Edinburgh he went on to Glasgow University to study theology, but apparently lost interest and left before graduating. "No doubt his views on Calvinism would in themselves have proved a sufficient barrier, for he simply could not bear the doctrine of Predestination," and he was actually much more interested in deism; "He wanted to be a Christian, but he did not feel drawn to any of the sects."⁸ But deism did not provide him with any spiritual answers, and by nineteen, he seems to have been suffering a religious crisis.⁹

For the next two or three years, Ramsay investigated various religious ideas from Socinianism to extreme tolerance to Universal Scepticism. Finally he met a Scottish minister, probably a member of the Scots Mystics, who introduced him to the writings of Francois Fenelon and the other contemplative Catholic writers of the time. By 1708, he had become associated with George Garden and his circle of Scots Mystics.

George Garden was "a key figure in those circles interested in mysticism."¹⁰ He and his group were Episcopalians, as opposed to Calvinists, and Jacobites, devoted to the Quietist movement of Antonia Bourignon and Jeanne-Marie Guyon. They believed "all that was necessary was for the individual to cut himself off from all worldly thoughts and enter into complete and mystical union with God," thus avoiding the dogma and ritual of traditional religion.¹¹ Garden had been a minister of Aberdeen, but was dismissed in 1701 when he refused to accept Presbyterianism, and became a follower of Madame Bourignon. Although Presbyterianism had become the official religion of Scotland in 1690, Garden had remained an ardent Episcopalian. He was also a devoted Jacobite, and refused to recognize any king other than James Stuart.

The mystical beliefs of Garden and his group appealed to Ramsay for two reasons. First, "it differed little from his mother's 'piete de coeur' [piety of the heart]."¹² Second,

this group "turned with distaste from the prevailing forms of organized Christianity and sought satisfaction in mystical union with a loving God and worship of Him in spirit and in truth."¹³ Ramsay had initially turned to deism because of his aversion to "petty ecclesiastical disputes" and "hairsplitting theological" arguments within the different Christian sects.¹⁴ When deism proved unsatisfying, Quietism provided him an opportunity to worship God and to believe God had control over his soul, without the doctrines of the sects of traditional religions.

After leaving the University, Ramsay worked for Sir Thomas Hope of Craighall at Ceres, near Cupar in Fife. It is unclear exactly what this employment entailed, but Sir Thomas shared Ramsay's interest in the Garden group's ideas. Ramsay and Sir Thomas were introduced by Alexander Bayne, first Professor of Law at the University of Edinburgh. Bayne also introduced Ramsay to his next employer, the Earl of Wemyss, a Scottish peer in the House of Lords and Vice-Admiral of Scotland.

By early 1709, Ramsay had taken up residence with Wemyss' family at Thistleworth, near London, and was serving as tutor to the Earl's two sons. His duties were apparently non-restrictive. He found time to study mathematics with Fatio de Duilliers, Isaac Newton's Swiss disciple. Fatio introduced Ramsay to the Camisards, or French Prophets, but Ramsay found them too "doom-laden."¹⁵

Ramsay resigned his position with the Earl of Wemyss and left England in early spring of 1710. Gould and Coil contend he went to Flanders to serve with the Duke of Marlborough in the War of Spanish Succession.¹⁶ This is unlikely. The Jacobites did not support Marlborough, and there is no evidence Ramsay was ever involved in military activity.

Henderson claims Ramsay went immediately to Rhynsburg, Holland, to meet with Pierre Poiret.¹⁷ While still in England, Ramsay had corresponded with Poiret, and was familiar with Poiret's work from his Garden group days.

Poiret had trained for the French Protestant ministry, but had become very interested in mysticism instead. In 1676, he met Madame Bourignon and became her secretary, editing her books. When she died in 1680, he wrote two books of his own--one philosophical and one mystical. He continued studying mysticism, and began editing other mystics' books, including the works of Fenelon and Madame Guyon. Poiret's own books were particularly admired by Garden and his group. According to Lenman, it was Poiret's "efforts [as] a remarkable propagandist" which continued Madame Guyon's influence.¹⁸

Ramsay stayed with Poiret in Rhynsburg until the end of May 1710. Aside from religious discussions with Poiret, he spent his time there attending classes at the University of Leyden. He became acquainted with Herman Boerhaave, one of the most important scientists of his time, and heard his lectures on chemistry and physics.

Ramsay's intention upon leaving Rhynsburg was to go directly to Cambrai to consult with Archbishop Francois Fenelon. It is unclear if this visit was Poiret's suggestion, or if it had been Ramsay's original intention when he left England. Whatever the case, it proved impossible for him to go directly to Cambrai; he was detoured by the War of Spanish Succession. Again, there is no proof Ramsay was actually involved in the war. Henderson suggests he had passport problems and could not get through to Cambrai immediately.¹⁹ Ramsay did not arrive in Cambrai until August 1710.

Francois de Salignac de la Mothe-Fenelon was to prove the most influential person in Ramsay's life, and "as things turned out, few persons contributed more to the reputation of Fenelon than did Ramsay."²⁰ Ramsay's goal in consulting Fenelon was to find peace with God, and a final solution to his religious questions. He had read Fenelon's contemplative works and had discussed Fenelon's ideas with Poiret. He believed Fenelon could help him cure his spiritual ills, and apparently Fenelon did provide some answers. Ramsay became his secretary, and within six months of his arrival at Cambrai, he had converted to Catholicism.

Fenelon was born in 1651 to an aristocratic family "who traced their lineage as far back as the tenth century."²¹ He was educated by the Jesuits and became a priest at the Seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris. He was a friend and disciple of the powerful Jacques Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux and chief

advisor to Louis XIV, and it was Bossuet's influence that helped him both within the Church and politically. In 1689, he was named tutor to the Duc de Bourgogne, Louis XIV's eldest grandson. In 1693, he was elected to the French Academy. In 1694, he received the benefice of the Abbey of Saine-Valery-sur-Somme and its pension of fourteen thousand livres from Louis XIV²². On February 4, 1695, he was named Archbishop of Cambrai.

Although Fenelon was an Archbishop of the Catholic Church, he was also an advocate of Quietism. While still at seminary, Fenelon had been introduced to the mystical theologies of Jean-Jacques Olier and Louis Tronson.²³ As a young priest, he had been troubled by a crisis of faith: although he believed God existed, he found it difficult to feel anything toward God.

Fenelon met Madame Guyon in 1688 and "she was in a limited but important manner the catalyst that set in motion his exploration of the interior life."²⁴ She introduced him to her doctrine of Quietism. "It was a religion of mysticism, of 'pure love' as it would be called, that stressed the abandonment of the self to God through passive contemplation and the cultivation of inner spiritual resources."²⁵ She taught him that this passive contemplation, submission to God's action and grace, and withdrawal from worldly concerns achieved the perfect love of God.

At first, Fenelon was uninterested in Quietism. He knew "the conservative wing of the Church" considered it heresy "since it obviously tended toward a neglect of ritual and a rejection of [the doctrine of] works."²⁶ But by Easter of 1689, he had read her works and was "entranced with Madame Guyon's notion of the contemplative interior life."²⁷

Fenelon soon became enamored by this philosophy, and in 1693 encouraged Madame Guyon to submit her doctrine to Bossuet to "judge [its] orthodoxy."²⁸ By winter 1694, Bossuet still had made no decision. Fenelon encouraged Madame Guyon to petition for a hearing on the doctrine. A panel was created for the purpose that "true Quietism was to be separated from the false and the heretical."²⁹ These meetings were called the Issy Conferences, and the decision was reached that "Madame Guyon's doctrine tended--and dangerously so--to transcend certain basic truths," but Quietism was not condemned "outright."³⁰

This was not the end of Quietism, or Fenelon's involvement with it. In July 1696, Fenelon received a copy of Bossuet's manuscript Instruction on the States of Prayer, a scathing condemnation of both Madame Guyon and Quietism.³¹ In retaliation, Fenelon wrote Explanation of the Maximes of the Saints on the Interior Life, a defense of Quietism and "the book that was to be his undoing."³² Fenelon's Maximes was published a month before Bossuet's Instructions, and Bossuet

immediately declared "Fenelon's doctrine heretical" and told Louis XIV about Fenelon's affiliation with Madame Guyon.³³

"Fenelon's intention in writing the Maximes was not to defend Madame Guyon, but rather to formulate an apology for 'pure love'. Even before the Issy Conferences had begun, he felt that mysticism, even for those trained in theology, was a misunderstood, obscure doctrine. Many inexactitudes and misconceptions needed to be corrected; and to do so, Fenelon presented forty-five articles or points, each of which was divided and discussed under headings of 'true' and 'false.'"³⁴

In April 1607, Fenelon wrote a letter to Pope Innocent XII, explaining these reasons for writing Maximes and asking "not to be condemned until his work was judged."³⁵ Shortly afterwards. Louis XIV, with the help of Bossuet, wrote his own letter to the Pope, telling him "that the Maximes had been judged by a large number of French prelates and theologians and found dangerous to the faith."³⁶ This was purely a political move on the part of Louis XIV. Fenelon, in essence, had "gone over the head" of the King by writing directly to the Pope. Fenelon's actions had annoyed both Louis XIV and Bossuet, and they intended that Fenelon be punished.

Fenelon was exiled to Cambrai on August 1, 1697. The royal decree denied him access to Paris and the court of Louis XIV. Meanwhile, there was no answer from Rome. The Pope was taking his time in deciding if Fenelon's work was indeed heretical. He created a jury to read the Maximes "and report their finding to the cardinals of the Congregation of the Holy Office."³⁷ By January 1698, the jury had reached

only "a split-decision--five for and five against the Maximes."³⁸ The Pope added two additional cardinals to the commission. Still, there was no decision.

In the meantime, Bossuet and Fenelon had entered into a pamphlet war. In June 1698, Bossuet published his Report on Quietism. In August, Fenelon answered with Response to the Report on Quietism. Bossuet countered with Remarks on the Response of M. de Cambrai, which Fenelon answered with Response to the Remarks. These pamphlets accomplished nothing other than to make Bossuet and Fenelon "bitter enemies."³⁹ Bossuet persuaded Louis XIV "to exert all pressure possible on the Pope" to condemn Fenelon.⁴⁰ And, in January 1699, "almost as if he were forcing his demands upon Rome," Louis XIV took away Fenelon's pensions.⁴¹

In February 1699, the committee in Rome finally reached a decision, and in March the brief Cum alias was issued. It stated that the committee had found "twenty three of the thirty eight propositions from the Maximes were judged worthy of censure"; but it was a brief instead of a Papal bull, the word "heretical" was avoided, and "Fenelon's other writings on the subject of mysticism were not condemned."⁴²

"Although the papal brief used such adjectives as 'rash,' 'scandalous' and 'offensive' to describe the twenty-three propositions, the doctrine condemned can basically be reduced to two major points: (1) There are certain souls so submissive to God that if, in a state of tribulation, they were to believe that God had condemned them, they would sacrifice to Him, in an absolute manner, their salvation. (2) In this life there is a state of perfection in which there is no longer any reason to desire reward or to fear punishment.

The act of 'pure love' was not mentioned, but the sentence passed against the Maximes underscored Rome's disapproval of the preeminence given by Fenelon to the contemplative life as opposed to the meditative and to the disappropriation of virtues."⁴³

When Ramsay arrived in Cambrai in 1710, Fenelon was still in exile. Henderson contends that Fenelon had "accepted the papal sentence; but it cannot be suggested that his views showed any corresponding sign of modification, though, of course, he stayed out of public discussions."⁴⁴

I disagree with this contention. I believe by the time Ramsay arrived in Cambrai, Fenelon's views on Quietism had changed considerably. For example, in the Maximes:

"Fenelon seeks to demonstrate that 'pure love,' the essential element of his mystical doctrine, is not a contradiction of the Christian life, but rather its highest and most supreme expression. 'Pure love' is not, on the other hand, a perfection to which all souls can aspire. It is through God's grace that one can progressively achieve that desired mystic union, and no intervention except His is possible."⁴⁵

At the time he wrote the Maximes, Fenelon believed this idea of pure love could be achieved only through God's grace. There is no mention of intervention by the Catholic Church in order to attain this perfection.

But by the time Ramsay arrived in Cambrai, Fenelon had reconciled his pure love, or Quietist philosophy with the teachings of the Catholic Church, even though the Church had condemned the philosophy. Fenelon told Ramsay that "the Church had not condemned the doctrine of pure love in condemning my book"; Fenelon claimed it was "merely the

expressions in [the Maximes] were not proper dogmatical work."⁴⁶ Fenelon went on to explain this concept: "Pure love and humble faith are the whole of the Catholic religion," and the two articles of religion are "the love of the invisible God and obedience to his living oracle, the Church."⁴⁷

Fenelon attempted to justify his reconciliation between the two by saying: "Before we can be perfect Christians, we must be disappropriated of everything, even our ideas themselves. No religion but the Catholic teaches this evangelical poverty."⁴⁸

Fenelon's later Quietist beliefs also seemed to differ somewhat from those of Madame Bourignon, Poiret and Madame Guyon. Although Madame Bourignon and Madame Guyon were Catholics, neither ever encouraged their Protestant followers to convert in order to follow their doctrines of Quietism. If anything they discouraged this. Poiret felt that church affiliation was unimportant as long as one attempted to become a sincere Christian.⁴⁹

Why did Ramsay convert to Catholicism? He had just come from visiting Poiret, and no doubt he knew exactly how Poiret felt about Catholicism:

"The world needs a renovation of the Gospel spirit. This cannot be expected through the ministry of the organised Church, for the priests are the chief agents of corruption...to yield to Rome would be to condone the existing evil, abandon liberty, and to bind to practices that have no connection with the love of God, which is the essence of religion."⁵⁰

As a matter of fact, during his initial talks with Fenelon, Ramsay echoed these ideas as he "protests his

suspensions of all priests, many of whom he found more corrupt and ignorant than anyone else."⁵¹ Ramsay believed deism could be the "eternal, universal and immutable religion of love."⁵²

But Fenelon was a most persuasive man. Henderson describes him as a "good psychologist, whose treatment would be the result of a skillful diagnosis."⁵³ He had experience converting Protestants to Catholicism. As a young priest, he served as the Superior of the Congregation des Nouvelles Catholiques, an institution "for the instruction and rehabilitation of Protestant women recently converted to Catholicism."⁵⁴ And, Davis contends:

"Despite the eighteenth century view of Fenelon as an enlightened spirit, it must be remembered that he was, like Louis XIV and most of the Catholic majority, sternly convinced that [Protestants] were heretics; as such, he was strongly desirous of their conversion."⁵⁵

Apparently Fenelon's years as a Quietist did not diminish his love for converting Protestants. Davis cites letters Fenelon wrote "around 1708 to two Protestants who were in the process of being converted."⁵⁶ These letters are simply earlier versions of what he told Ramsay:

"Even the most enlightened people need to humble their minds to a visible authority...Religion, in fact, is only humility, and one must believe without understanding. It is, of course, the Catholic religion that can give the necessary lessons in humility. Protestantism encourages 'natural presumption,' whereas the converts' newfound faith will teach him to seek the kingdom of God within himself and to silence himself so that he might 'listen to the spirit of grace.'"⁵⁷

Ramsay was obviously confused about religion. After all, he had left England to visit Poiret and hear his views on religion; then, he had left Poiret and come to Cambrai to seek Fenelon's religious opinions. Perhaps, when Fenelon realized the depth of Ramsay's confusion, he deliberately set out to convert him to Catholicism.

"With great meekness and moderation," Fenelon provided answers to each of Ramsay's questions.⁵⁸ When Ramsay proposed the idea of "pure deism," and the concept that "God requires no other worship but the love of His infinite perfection," Fenelon replied "that for weak human nature abstracts are insufficient."⁵⁹

After his religious talks with Fenelon, Ramsay reached the conclusion "that a sober thinking deist must of necessity become a Christian, and that a Christian cannot reason philosophically without becoming a Catholic."⁶⁰

On the surface, Ramsay's reasoning seems convoluted: How can Catholicism and deism be reconciled? According to Henderson, for Ramsay, the answer was simple:

"In a sense Ramsay tried to have it both ways, for, although he remained formally within the Roman Church, he never abandoned the tolerant principles which emphasized the triviality of sectarian distinctions as compared with the tremendous importance of those elements in religion which were common to Christians."⁶¹

Ramsay remained a member of the Catholic Church for the rest of his life, although he was unorthodox in his beliefs. He never abandoned his deistic love of God or his Quietist philosophies. He remained tolerant of other sects and

maintained his "inward worship of God in spirit and in truth," and he never sacrificed his reason to the Catholic Church in order to accept Church teaching.⁶²

When Fenelon died in 1715, he left his books and papers to Ramsay. From this information, along with his own recollections, Ramsay wrote Life of Fenelon, published at the Hague in 1723. Henderson suggests perhaps Ramsay portrayed Fenelon as being much more tolerant than he actually was, and that Fenelon was in reality "much more of a churchman than Ramsay would have us suppose."⁶³ Ramsay took liberties in making Fenelon's ideas coincide with his own ideas, especially with regard to Quietism:

"This is that divine, internal quietude to which Monsieur de Camray endeavoured to attain which he was outwardly employed in accomplishing the duties of humanity, religion and his vocation. He dismissed as fast as they arose all useless ideas and disquieting desires to the end that he might preserve his soul pure and in peace, taken up with God alone, and unbusied with everything that was not of the divine appointment; always attentive to the voice of the sovereign reason in a perfect submission to the supreme will. This sacred void of heart and mind had brought him to such a Christian simplicity as made him despise his natural talents."⁶⁴

Andre Cherei, Ramsay's French biographer, claims it was Ramsay's portrayal of Fenelon that created Fenelon's reputation among the philosophes as a paragon of enlightened tolerance.⁶⁵ Cherei suggests that it was Ramsay's revisions, and improvements, of Fenelon's works that "had a large part in

forming public opinion with regard to Fenelon."⁶⁶ Ramsay's Life of Fenelon

"is propaganda for the cause, and very successful propaganda it must be admitted to have been, for Ramsay's Fenelon was to become the hero of enthusiastic individualism in French eighteenth century religion as contrasted with the sanity and prudences and formalism of ecclesiastical routine represented by the unimaginative Bossuet."⁶⁷

Ramsay left Cambrai in 1714 and went to Blois to serve as Madame Guyon's secretary. This was probably Fenelon's suggestion. There is no indication Fenelon forced Ramsay to leave Cambrai, nor does there seem to have been any disagreement between the two men. Apparently Madame Guyon needed an English-speaking secretary to handle her correspondence with people abroad. Since Ramsay was fluent in both French and English, and was well-versed in Madame Guyon's philosophies, he was perfect for the job. It was also a logical step for him to take. Although already a Catholic through Fenelon's influence, Ramsay was still very interested in Madame Guyon's Quietism. He quickly became her disciple and for the rest of his life "his thoughts and writings were coloured by her teachings."⁶⁸

Madame Guyon was an unadulterated Quietist. When Fenelon had allowed his Quietism to be moderated by the dogma of the Catholic Church, she allowed no such mitigation. This seems to be what appealed to Ramsay the most. Madame Guyon taught "worship of God in spirit and in truth, not necessarily in

words or with ritual assistance, but by turning to Him as our centre, and without concern for dogma."⁶⁹ According to Henderson, Ramsay's letters from this time place

"frequent stress upon worship in spirit and in truth, which meant to him something very different from the external worship offered by professing Christians through priests and church services and repetition of credal statements."⁷⁰

Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Motte-Guyon was born in 1648. Unfortunate events in her early life drove her to the religious life, and she came under the influence of Pere La Combe. Her early writings were common sense texts: clear, concise and instructive. But over a period of time, she developed some odd ideas and began to have, what she considered, mystical experiences. She became hysterical and neurotic, and the Archbishop of Paris committed her to a convent. She was released after a short time. By the time she met Fenelon in 1688, she was becoming well known for her Quietist ideas such as:

"At the base of her system is the belief that the soul, reconstructed in an interior fashion by God and transformed into Him, sees only God in everything. Her notion of divine immanence is founded on the ambiguous principle that God is in us more than we are ourselves. Once the soul strips away the will and the ego, it is God and God is the soul."⁷¹

When Bossuet and Pope Innocent XII condemned Fenelon and Madame Guyon, she was sent to the Bastille. She remained there for four or five years. When she was finally released, she moved to Blois. Her time in prison does not seem to have detracted from her earlier fame. Henderson tells us she

spent those days in Blois steadily writing letters of spiritual guidance to religious inquirers from England, Scotland and the Continent. The guidance she offered "was simple and affectionate, suitable to the individual case, devoid of exaggerated sentiments and the crude theology of other days, and showing true piety and much commonsense."⁷² Some of these letters were written to Ramsay's old friends within the Garden group. The group had remained together, and was now concentrated upon Madame Guyon, instead of Madame Bourignon.⁷³

Madame Guyon served as Ramsay's spiritual advisor. Her Quietism was more interior than Fenelon's, and this appealed to Ramsay. For him, Madame Guyon's attraction was the "essential religion" within her.⁷⁴ For example, this interior Quietism was manifested through prayer. Madame Guyon believed it was "a state, not an act; it is God within us who prays through His spirit. The unique rule governing this activity is the submission of human will to divine will."⁷⁵

It is difficult to explain Ramsay's religious philosophy, except to say his views were dualistic. Henderson accuses Ramsay of trying to have it both ways.⁷⁶ This is indeed the case. Ramsay remained loyal to the Catholic Church and Quietism. His loyalty to the Church was manifested by his "outward observances of religion which the Church required."⁷⁷ His loyalty to Quietism was evidenced by the fact that "what always continued to count most with him was the inward worship

of God in spirit and in truth, the religion which consisted in love of God for himself alone."⁷⁸

Henderson contends that Ramsay's loyalty to Quietism was a result of his introduction to the philosophy by Poiret, Fenelon and Guyon.⁷⁹ I disagree with this statement. As I have indicated, Fenelon's Quietism was different from that of both Poiret and Guyon. Fenelon believed salvation could be achieved only through intervention from the Church, and without a conversion to Catholicism, this salvation could not occur. Poiret and Guyon did not believe the Church served as an intermediary, nor that conversion was necessary. They believed the intimate knowledge of God by piety, prayer, the interior life and moral discipline was key to salvation. Ramsay's Quietist philosophy sided more with the views of Poiret and Guyon, rather than Fenelon.

Can Ramsay's dual loyalties be reconciled? I believe they can. Ramsay became a Catholic because of Fenelon's influence; and "apparently his restlessness responded to the voice of authority as it appealed to him from the lips of the wise and good and great Archbishop."⁸⁰ He remained a Catholic because it was convenient for him. France was a Catholic country, and Ramsay could never have achieved success in his career without being a Catholic. There could have been no opportunities open to him if he had been an open Quietist. This is especially the case because Quietism was considered heresy by both the Church and the French government. So,

although Ramsay remained a Catholic in the ritual sense, he was a Quietist at heart.

Ramsay left Madame Guyon and went to Paris around the end of 1716. The reason for this departure is unclear. He certainly remained in contact with her, and was probably with her when she died in 1717.⁸¹ Once in Paris, he became tutor to the son of a French aristocrat. Historians disagree on the family he served. According to Gould and Coil, he tutored the Duc de Chateau-Thierry.⁸² He did do this, but not until much later. Henderson claims his first appointment was with the de Sassenage family. This position was the most appropriate for Ramsay. The Comte de Sassenage was a Jacobite member of the Regent's Chamber. The Comtesse was the daughter of the Duc de Chevreuse, a disciple of Madame Guyon and a great friend and supporter of Fenelon.⁸³ With his Scottish background, Jacobite affiliations and experience with both Madame Guyon and Fenelon, Ramsay would have seemed an ideal candidate for the family.

It was an ideal position for Ramsay as well. He remained with the de Sassenage family until 1722. This was an important time in Ramsay's life for two primary reasons. First, as his responsibilities were light and he was treated as a member of the family, he was basically free to do as he pleased. He spent much of his time reading and writing, and this was the period in which he wrote his Life of Fenelon. Second, the de Sassenage family was very influential in Paris. Through his

association, he widened his circle of friends, and made many important contacts. He soon knew many people in Paris: the admirers of Fenelon and Madame Guyon, the "French friends of the Stuarts," and the exiled Jacobites from England and Scotland.⁸⁴ It was these Jacobites who were to prove the most important to Ramsay. Through their influence, Ramsay came to the notice of James Stuart.

Ramsay's Jacobite friends in Paris were an eclectic group, and there are four in particular who would prove the most important in the development of Ramsay's involvement with James Stuart. John Erskin, Earl of Mar, had served as James' Secretary of State after the failure of the rebellion of 1715. Lord Lansdowne, made a member of the peerage by Queen Anne, appeared in Paris in 1720 and "became quite a patron of Ramsay."⁸⁵ He, along with Mar, was instrumental in Ramsay's appointment as tutor to Charles Edward at the Stuart Court. Lewis Innes, Principal of the Scots College of Paris, had served as almoner at Stuart Court, but had returned to Paris in 1718. He remained in constant correspondence with James in Rome. And, the last of Ramsay's important friends was Thomas Southcott, an English Benedictine, who "was related to the English ducal house of Norfolk."⁸⁶ His monastery in Paris had a long affiliation with the Stuarts--the body of James II laid in state there in 1701--and Southcott, like Innes, was in frequent correspondence with James. According to Henderson, "both Southcott and Innes had a high regard for Ramsay, and

he is frequently mentioned in their letters, not only as a supporter of the Stuarts, but as a zealous friend of English Romanists."⁸⁷

It was Southcott who involved Ramsay in the plight of the British Romanists, an affair that earned the attention and admiration of James. In the fall of 1722, Robert Walpole and the English government declared the intent of imposing a tax on the British Catholics. Considering it undue persecution, these British Catholics were disquieted by the rumor that Walpole meant to seize two-thirds of their estates. This rumor reached the exiled British Catholics living in Paris, and Southcott and Ramsay enlisted in the cause. According to Henderson, it was Ramsay who went to Claude Fleury, then Bishop of Frejus, to plead their case.⁸⁸ Fleury involved the Regent, Phillipe d'Orleans, and his chief minister, Cardinal du Bois.

To placate Fleury and the exiled Catholics, du Bois agreed to dispatch a strong protest to the English government. He did do this and, consequently, the English ministers were worried; they did not want to chance incurring French disfavor. While the English ministers were deciding whether or not to rescind the tax plan, and continue their good relationship with France, another letter arrived from du Bois--in code--assuring them that France would take no action against them, regardless of what they decided.⁸⁹ Having nothing to fear

from the French government, English Parliament agreed to impose the tax.

In a letter from Southcott to James Stuart, Southcott explained the English justification was:

"out of compliment to the power imposed, they could desist from bringing in any bill for raising the two-thirds according to the register and only raise the sum of a hundred thousand pounds upon the Catholics in general."⁹⁰

Robert Walpole achieved two victories with this venture. First, he managed to placate the French court by his actions without actually making any concessions, and thus he ensured the continued alliance with France. Henderson argues Walpole probably only wanted one-hundred thousand pounds from the Catholics in the first place, and that he never had any intention of seizing two-thirds of their estates at all.⁹¹

Second, the probable intent behind this taxation scheme was to keep the British Catholics in line and dissuade them from causing a revolt. Apparently, the taxation plan was successful; the British Catholics caused no trouble.

Meanwhile, in France, Southcott and Ramsay were still pleading their case. Ramsay appealed again to Fleury. Eventually, the papal nuncio and Spanish ambassador were involved in the attempt to induce du Bois into making a stronger stance against any taxation at all on the British Catholics. Nothing further was done and the tax was imposed.

I mention this particular episode for several reasons. First, it demonstrates Ramsay's tenacity. By fearlessly involving both the papal nuncio and the Spanish ambassador in the attempt to force du Bois to keep his promise to help the British Catholics, Ramsay can be seen as a risk-taker.

Second, it validates Ramsay's contacts within the French court. Obviously, he knew Fleury, du Bois and the Regent well enough to feel comfortable petitioning them. Third, this event captured James Stuart's attention and admiration. In a letter to Southcott and Innes at this time, James recognizes Ramsay's "zealous endeavors" and remarks that his "zeal on this occasion is very commendable"; he also perceives Ramsay's "acquaintance with and access to the great people at court."⁹²

But this episode was not the first time James had heard mention of Ramsay. In fact, Ramsay may have met James as early as his days in Cambrai with Fenelon. Henderson cites two references about this alleged meeting:

"Emmanuel de Brogile, in his Fenelon a Cambrai, states without qualification that Ramsay was present during certain discussion on religion and political philosophy between James and Fenelon at Cambrai in 1709. Shield and Laing, in King over the Water, assert that on this occasion James 'was attended by the Chevalier Michael Andrew (sic) Ramsay,' and that at the conversations Ramsay was present."⁹³

These citations actually raise more questions than they answer, and this scenario may be apocryphal. Ramsay was still in England in 1709; he did not join Fenelon until August 1710. Henderson attributes this discrepancy in dates

to the unreliability of the Anecdotes, and the authors' assumptions, based on it, that Ramsay arrived in 1709 instead of 1710.⁹⁴

But Henderson does not address the other inconsistencies in these citations. First, James did indeed visit Fenelon in 1709. In a letter from Fenelon to the Duc de Beauvilliers, Fenelon admits he has seen "the king of England" on many occasions, and mentions what a "high opinion" he has of him.⁹⁵ This particular visit occurred before September 11, 1709, prior to James' participation in the battle of Malplaquet. James was again in Cambrai in May 1710.⁹⁶ Ramsay was not in attendance at either of these meetings.

Second, Ramsay did not receive the title of "Chevalier" until he was admitted into the Order of St. Lazarus in May 1723. Third, Ramsay did not add the middle name "Michael" until he received the Certificate of Nobility, also in May 1723. Ramsay added this middle name as "an added proof of gentility."⁹⁷

Finally, in the first letter mentioning Ramsay to James, dated December 16, 1720, Lord Lansdowne praises Ramsay's affiliation with Fenelon and his loyalty to the Stuarts.⁹⁸ If Ramsay had actually attended meetings between Fenelon and James, James would have already known Ramsay. Lansdowne's letter serves as an introduction, and not as a reminder the two had met at Cambrai. If Ramsay asked Lansdowne to write

on his behalf, as this letter infers, it seems logical he would have told Lansdowne the circumstances of their prior acquaintance. This does not seem to have been the case.

Whether or not they had met at Cambrai, apparently Ramsay had been corresponding with James as early as December 1720. The first letter mentioning Ramsay to James is the aforementioned one from Lansdowne on December 16, 1720. It is basically a letter introducing Ramsay as "a gentleman entirely attached to your majesty's service," and offering Ramsay's work--A Philosophical Essay on Civil Government--for James to read.⁹⁹ According to Davis, this essay "is presumably a development of James III's conversations with Fenelon."¹⁰⁰ James must have answered immediately, because Ramsay himself writes directly to James in a letter dated December 23, 1720. This apparently began a correspondence between Ramsay and James--but exactly how regular a correspondence is uncertain. Ramsay did send James a copy of the Essay, published in London in 1721, and James was of the opinion that Ramsay "seems to be a very ingenious man and to be a good scholar to his old master."¹⁰¹

Ramsay wrote a reply to James' acceptance. In this letter, undated and now housed at the Bodleian at Oxford, Ramsay makes it plain he is loyal to James as the rightful king of Great Britain:

"I have undertook only Sr this work to maintain your rights, and to endeavor to undeceive my country of their errors. Be pleased to accept it as a tribute of my loyalty, as a mark of my duty, and as an earnest of that

most profound respect, with which I have the honour to be,
Sr, your majesties most humble, most faithfull, and most
obediant servant and subject,
RAMSAY."¹⁰²

As this quote indicates, Ramsay was an open partisan of the Stuarts. In 1722, he wrote to James: "My greatest ambition as well as greatest happiness shall be to sacrifice all I am and all I have to your interests."¹⁰³

Not only was Ramsay corresponding directly with James, but his Jacobite friends in Paris were mentioning Ramsay in their letters as well. The first reference, as I have stated, was Lansdowne's letter of 1720. Mar makes a casual reference to Ramsay in a letter dated January 1722. In fact, this reference is so casual, it is obvious James was already acquainted with Ramsay. Southcott and Innes mention him frequently in their letters prior to the British Catholic episode of December 1722.

After this British Catholic episode, Ramsay once again had the opportunity to prove his usefulness to his friends. According to Henderson, John Law, the famous financier, had made a gift of shares to the Scots College. When Law was disgraced, the shares had been voided. Innes, as Principal of the college, was disturbed by this development. Ramsay went to Fleury, entreating him to persuade the Regent and Cardinal du Bois to restore the shares. They agreed, although the shares were reinstated at one-fourteenth their original value, and Innes was very grateful to Ramsay for his

intervention. He, of course, reported Ramsay's effort to James.¹⁰⁴

Ramsay's employment with the de Sassenage family ended in September 1722. He seems to have been unemployed "for the next year or so."¹⁰⁵ And, he spent his time involving himself in various efforts like aiding the British Catholics and the Scots College. He also edited several of Fenelon's works for publication, and negotiated the publication of his Life of Fenelon.

Meanwhile, his Jacobite friends were trying to find him employment, "and we hear from Southcott and others of various attempts to settle him under suitable patronage."¹⁰⁶ Apparently, they were unable to do this. Finally, they hit upon the idea of securing a pension for him, and they enlisted the help of James in this matter. James was more than happy to help, and made it clear he was "anxious to do what he could for Ramsay."¹⁰⁷

In theory, this pension scheme was simple. The idea was to obtain an ecclesiastical benefice for Southcott and to charge it with a pension for Ramsay. Southcott was Ramsay's friend, so he was considered trustworthy to pay.¹⁰⁸

The plan did work, but not to Ramsay's immediate benefit. James wrote the necessary letter to the Cardinal de Rohan, requesting the Abbey of St. Andre at Villeneuve-les-Avignon. But it was Alexander Pope who eventually obtained the Abbey

for Southcott. According to Henderson, Southcott had treated Pope at one time, curing him of depression. When Pope heard of Southcott's desire for this particular Abbey, he went to Horace and Robert Walpole. Horace was at the French court, "and the matter was immediately arranged."¹⁰⁹ Sadly, Southcott did not get the appointment until 1726.

When it became obvious there would be a delay in Southcott's appointment, another pension had to be found for Ramsay. The Abbey of Signy was agreed upon, and when the king designated the new Abbot on October 27, 1723, Ramsay received his pension of two thousand livres.¹¹⁰ This amount was smaller than anticipated and James complained to Fleury. Fleury answered "he was sorry about the amount, but that the Regent [Phillipe d'Orleans] had promised to supplement it when there was an opportunity."¹¹¹

In order to qualify for this pension, Ramsay had to be admitted to a religious Order. On May 20, 1723, he received the Cross of St. Lazarus, and became a member of the Order of St. Lazarus. He was then granted the title of Chevalier. Originally a Crusader Order, the Order of St. Lazarus:

"was founded in the fourth century in Palestine and erected hospitals for lepers...it was founded as a military and religious community, at the time of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Popes, princes and nobles endowed it with estates and privileges, but the Knights were driven from the Holy Land by the Saracens and, in 1291, migrated to France."¹¹²

Ramsay's acceptance into this particular Order is an indication of his importance in Paris. The Regent was Grand Master of the Order, and it may have been Ramsay's friendship with him that allowed this Scotsman such easy access into a historical French Order. This friendship must have been a strong one indeed. Ramsay was recognized in Paris circles as a partisan of the Stuarts, while the Regent was a Hanoverian supporter "whose alliance with England was meant to keep the Stuarts off the English throne."¹¹³

Through his affiliations with his noble Jacobite friends in Paris and his brothers in the Order of St. Lazarus, Ramsay soon came to realize how important a Certificate of Nobility would be to his social acceptability. He set out to prove his descendancy from a noble family. When he received his Cross of St. Lazarus, he petitioned James for this Certificate. He claimed he was descended from the house of the Earl of Dalhousie on his father's side, and the Duke of Mar, and Duke of Erskin on his mother's side of the family. The request was granted in May 1723. In 1728, he received a Diploma of Nobility from the Lord Lyon King of Arms at Edinburgh.¹¹⁴

Aside from his Masonic Oration of 1737, Ramsay is probably best known for his tenure as tutor to the eldest son of James Stuart. There are two common mistakes regarding Ramsay's time in Rome. First, he was not in attendance at court for

fifteen months, as it is commonly stated. He was only in residence from January through November 1724. Second, he did not tutor both sons of James Stuart. Henry, the future Cardinal, was born after Ramsay left court.

The suggestion of Ramsay as tutor to Charles Edward Stuart seems to have been made before Ramsay received his title, his Certificate of Nobility and his pension. The initial suggestion seems to have been Lansdowne's, but certainly Mar, Southcott and Innes all approved. The first we hear of it is in a letter from James, dated April 1723, in which he discusses the probability of Ramsay's impending arrival in Rome.¹¹⁵

But by October, James had changed his mind. He wrote to John Hay, his Secretary of State, expressing his doubt about Ramsay's suitability. Hay defended Ramsay; in his next three letters, he encouraged James to engage him. By November 3, 1723, James had changed his mind again. He had reconsidered, and wrote to Lansdowne: "My doubts about him are cleared."¹¹⁹ Ramsay was informed of the new decision on November 20, but oddly enough, he did not reply to James until December 29, "expressing his inviolable attachment and boundless respect."¹¹⁷ There is no explanation for this delay in Ramsay's response.

Ramsay and John Hay finally left Paris on January 3, 1724. They traveled by coach and reached the Stuart court in Rome three weeks later.

Ramsay remained in Rome until mid-November of 1724, and, for a number of reasons, this could not have been a happy time for him. First, the Prince was very young and Ramsay's time with him was limited. He served as more of a supervisor than an actual tutor to the boy. Second, the court at Rome was teeming with political intrigues. James had built a network of supporters--both in Rome and in Paris--and these men fought among themselves for his approval, each trying to undermine the others. Petty jealousies abounded. Third, James himself was insecure and indecisive, consistently unable to make a decision without constant advice.

The particular court intrigue that involved Ramsay began long before he actually arrived at court, and his presence in Rome simply exacerbated it. John Erskin, Earl of Mar, had become James' Secretary of State after the failure of the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. Prior to this, Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke had been his chief advisor and "was responsible for organizing James' expedition to Scotland in 1715; James evidently believed that he had betrayed the plans to his enemies."¹¹⁸ Mar was blamed for this failure as well, and for "mismanaging the campaign which began from his castle at Kildrummy."¹¹⁹ It seems no one was willing to lay the blame on James, whose hesitancy and ineffectiveness probably cost him the rebellion.

Mar left the Stuart court in 1719 because he was unable to work with James Murray, John Hay's brother-in-law. Hay became the next Secretary of State. Mar went first to Geneva, where he may have received a Hanoverian pension.¹²⁰ Next, he settled in Paris, where he was assigned to look after James' "interests."¹²¹ Many of the Jacobites considered Mar a traitor, but James refused to admonish or dismiss him.

Mar remained in James' favor until he:

"devised a scheme to be negotiated by France with Britain on behalf of the Stuarts. It contained many curious proposals, including Home Rule for Scotland and for Ireland and the loan of French troops for use in England, and Scots and Irish troops for use in France, and it looked more like a plan for French aggrandisement than a worthy Jacobite programme, and seemed calculated to rouse serious hostility in Britain against the cause."¹²²

This scheme caused serious repercussions. It began an ugly battle between Hay and Mar. It was the downfall of Mar's relationship with James, and, it affected Ramsay's chances at the Stuart court because Ramsay "was naturally of the Party of Mar, who had taken him under his protection and who had been instrumental in his appointment."¹²³

In Paris, Mar, Lansdowne and General Arthur Dillon formed a group called the "Trimvirate."¹²⁴ Their group was "favourable to Stuart interests, but hostile to Murray and his friends at Roman headquarters."¹²⁵ Mar had also made a serious enemy in Francois Atterbury, the exiled Bishop of Rochester. Atterbury claimed Mar had betrayed him to the British authorities, providing evidence intentionally against him. From Paris, Atterbury attempted to convince James that

Mar was indeed a traitor, and was not working in James' best interests.

Meanwhile in Rome, James' wife Clementina was unhappy. First, she did not like her son's Protestant attendants. Second, she despised John Hay and his wife. She sided with Mar against Hay at every opportunity. She also detested James Murray, who had more influence over James than anyone else.¹²⁶ Later, she accused James of having an affair with Mrs. Hay and, when James denied this and refused to discharge the Hays, she entered a convent.

Mar and Hay were on good terms until Hay found out about Mar's Jacobite scheme, and James' approval of it. Hay said Mar's plan was "an idle superficial appearance of love to his own country [which] was to have laid the foundation to the utter ruin of the King's cause."¹²⁷ By February 1724, James wrote to Mar referring to remarks Mar had made about Hay. In March, Mar wrote directly to Hay suggesting Hay and his wife leave court because of Clementina's hostility toward them, calling it "the only way to restore tranquillity and peace in your family."¹²⁸ In June 1724, Mar and Hay were no longer on speaking terms. By March 1725, Hay said Mar "has declared himself my mortall enemie."¹²⁹

Mar soon lost favor with James. At first, in the summer of 1724, James was still reluctant to think ill of Mar: "No step must be taken directly against the Duke of Mar." But soon he changed his mind, as usual, and put his allegiance

with Hay. Referring to Mar, he wrote: "I find myself indispensably engaged at present to let my Scots friends know that I have withdrawn my confidence entirely from him, as I shall be obliged to do from all who may be any ways influenced by him."¹³⁰

James' resolution continued, aided by reports from Atterbury in Paris. In August, Atterbury wrote that Mar, Lansdowne and Dillon "are more strictly united than ever and more determined in appearance to stick with one another, and will probably be more and more so till you shall please to act in such a decisive manner as shall scatter at once all their little arts and contrivances."¹³¹ By March 1725, James seems to have broken all connection with Mar.

Mar had been one of Ramsay's first Jacobite friends in Paris. Consequently, when Ramsay arrived at court, he had already sided with Mar. By April 1724, James was already suspicious of Ramsay. He wrote to Murray: "Ramsay is not to be anyways concerned in writings or politics; I know him well enough and shall be able to employ him according to his talents." In August, Ramsay had begun to seriously meddle in the situation between Mar and Hay, tactfully questioning Hay about a reconciliation and insinuating "that Hay was alienating James' favour from Mar."¹³² By October, Hay was actively wondering if Ramsay was sent by Mar and Lansdowne to spy on the activities at court.

At the end of October 1724, Ramsay asked permission to go to Paris to take care of some private business. At first James refused the request. Hay was now certain that Ramsay had ulterior motives in seeking the initial appointment at court; as usual, James was unsure. Finally, James agreed that Ramsay could go to Paris, and Ramsay left in the middle of November.

Ramsay seemed to believe that this trip to Paris was a vacation, and after he settled his affairs, he would return to Rome and his job. This was not the case. His departure had bruised James' ego, stirring up his insecurity, and Hay and Murray had finally convinced James that Ramsay had ulterior motives in taking the job at court. Ramsay was no longer welcome in Rome.

Ramsay reached Paris in early February 1725. There, he heard rumors that he had been discharged from court. Immediately, he wrote to James to defend his actions, explaining his loyalty belonged solely to James, and promising never to meddle again. In other words, he begged James to let him return to court.

But James was adamant that Ramsay would not return, no matter what he said. In March 1725, James wrote two letters concerning Ramsay.¹³³ In the first he said:

"Ramsay is an odd body. He exposed himself strangely here to myself and others on many different occasions, but as yet I will be charitable enough to think him a madd man."

In the second letter, James' language is even stronger:

"Ramsay has writ me a letter in the supposition of his return here, and a very odd impertinent one to Lord Inverness [Hay]. I told Kennedy just now (who is a great confident here) to write to Ramsay and tell him that I wondered that after all I had under his hand he should imagine that I could think of recalling him, that he might take his measures accordingly and that I would forbid Lord Inverness writing him. I had once a mind to have delayed as long as I could this declaration, but there is no mincing matters now, nor no other party to take but to have no more at all to do with some people."

These letters indicate, Ramsay had been seen as a traitor. He had sided with Mar in one of the little political intrigues of the Stuart court, instead of with James' favorite, Hay, and he was to be made to pay for his decision. Ramsay was certainly a naive meddler, but he was no "madd man."

Ramsay never lost hope in returning to the Stuart court. He wrote periodically just in case James had changed his mind. In 1727, he sent three hundred copies of a picture of Charles Edward to Holland for dispersion in England and wrote James, volunteering "to lay myself at your feet with a most humble offer of my service in having the honour to attend on your sacred person."¹³⁴ James was uninterested.

Eventually, relations between James and Ramsay warmed, and in 1742, Ramsay still referred to James as a "very clever, fine, jovial, agreeable, free-thinking man."¹³⁵

Ramsay's unfortunate dismissal from the Stuart court in Rome does not seem to have affected his marketability as a tutor. In 1725, he was offered the position of tutoring the

Duke of Cumberland, third, but second surviving, son of King George II of England. He refused on the basis of his religion and that he was "not suited to a place in a Protestant King's household."¹³⁶ This offer led Roberts to suggest Ramsay "was some sort of a double agent."¹³⁷ Cherel agrees with this suggestion of Ramsay as a "Hanoverian spy."¹³⁸ There is no indication Ramsay was any type of a spy, but it is interesting to note the King of England would attempt to employ an avowed Catholic and Jacobite to tutor his son.

Instead of accepting King George's offer, Ramsay gained a new Parisian patron. From 1725 to 1728, he lived at the residence of the Duc de Sully, Maximilien Henri de Bethune, and his wife, the daughter of Madame Guyon. There were no children to tutor, but the de Sullys loved Ramsay "dearly," and he was able to live with them on the income from his pension.¹³⁹

Ramsay was very busy at this time. He spent time with Fleury, now the power of the French government after the Regent's death in 1723. He saw his old Jacobite friends in Paris, and, he sided with the Duchess de Sully in her continuing defense of her mother.

This period of Ramsay's life is important for two particular reasons. First, Ramsay joined a club--the Club de l'Entresol, which one member compared to "an English Club."¹⁴⁰ Begun in 1724, the twenty members, "all men of standing

socially, politically, and intellectually," met each Saturday from five to eight.¹⁴¹ They spent an hour discussing current events, an hour in literary discussion, and an hour reading the papers of members. As a matter of fact, it was "here Ramsay read parts of his Travels of Cyrus, and latterly the corrections and improvements proposed for the edition of 1730."¹⁴² The Club was a free discussion society--or as much as one could be in Paris of the time--and they often had entertaining guests such as Montesquieu and Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke, a Newtonian deist, "brought with him a sophisticated understanding of the ideas of Locke and Newton" and virtually introduced the Newtonian Enlightenment to the Club."¹⁴³

Second, it was during this period that Ramsay published his novel, Travels of Cyrus. Cyrus was first published in 1727 in France, and an English translation was issued later the same year. It was an immediate best seller, and editions were published in Glasgow, Lisbon, Madrid, Naples and Leyden. It was translated into Spanish, Italian, Greek and German.

In this paper, I am not concerned with the text of this novel except for one particular aspect. Cyrus is the story of one man's trek through history and his encounters with the Ancient Theologians. According to Walker:

"In parts of certain episodes Ramsay is plainly using his ancient setting just as an allegory of contemporary philosophical debates...But on the whole Ramsay does believe that there are real resemblance and connexions between ancient and modern philosophical doctrines both good and bad...both those that keep to

the Ancient Theology, the philosophia perennis, and those which deviate from it, particularly in an atheistic direction."¹⁴⁴

Both Henderson and Walker agree Ramsay used Ralph Cudworth's True Intellectual System of the Universe to support these ideas. According to Henderson:

"The chief influence was probably the True Intellectual System of the Universe of Ralph Cudworth, the Cambridge Platonist, an exhaustive treatise against atheism illustrating the universality of the conception of One God and the presence of Trinitarian ideas in pre-Christian teaching, discussing not merely classical Greek and Roman writings, but the beliefs of Ancient Egyptians and Jewish Rabbis, Zoroaster and Hermes Trismegistus."¹⁴⁵

The ideas in this novel, and in the apologia A Discourse upon the Theology and Mythology of the Pagans printed at the end of the novel, clearly indicate Ramsay was a prime candidate for English Freemasonry. Anderson's "Charges of a Freemason" begin with the declaration: "A Mason is obliged, by his Tenure, to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious libertine." As these writings indicate, Ramsay was certainly neither an atheist nor an irreligious libertine. Although a Catholic, he maintained a certain level of tolerance for other religions--especially those of the Christian sects, but there is no indication he took issue with Judaism. He eagerly accepted the concept of esoteric wisdom travelling through the ages, fading from view at times, but always reappearing. He shared the whig view of support for a Monarchy, but opposition to absolutism.¹⁴⁶

Gould claims Ramsay went to England at the end of 1728 and was a guest of the Duke of Argyll at Inverary, Scotland.¹⁴⁷ Coil also contends he went in 1728, but adds that he stayed for eight years.¹⁴⁸ The Biographical Britannica of 1760 states that Ramsay went to England in 1725 and lived with the Duke of Argyll for nine or ten years. None of these contentions are true.

Ramsay probably went to England in April 1729. He was certainly in Paris in October 1728, and possibly still in France as late as early Spring of 1729.¹⁴⁹ There is no indication he knew the Duke of Argyll well enough to have received an invitation from him, or to have spent an extended time with his family. We know Ramsay was in Paris in 1725, living with the de Sully family and writing Travels of Cyrus. He did not stay in England for eight to ten years; he was back in France by 1731.

There are several reasons why Ramsay may have chosen to visit England. The most logical would appear to be his intention to arrange further editions of Cyrus. Another might have been to aid the British Catholics. In May 1728, Southcott wrote James that the British Catholics wanted Ramsay to come and speak to Walpole on their behalf. A third reason has also been suggested. Henderson wonders if perhaps Ramsay was considering moving back to England.¹⁵⁰ Many of the exiled Jacobites had quietly returned home with no adverse effects. Although not totally forgiving, the Hanoverian government

seemed to be forgetting. Ramsay must have found this idea impractical. He certainly could not chance losing his French and Jacobite pensions, and it was still a crime to be Catholic in England, although the persecution had lessened somewhat.

Whatever his reasons for going, Ramsay was busy and prosperous during his visit. He did arrange for further editions of Cyrus to be published in 1730. He had the opportunity to see both Montesquieu and Bolingbroke, whom he had first met in Paris at the Club l'Entresol. He also had the chance to visit several times with Samuel Clarke, whom he found to be "the finest reasoner" he had ever met.¹⁵¹

Ramsay's Jacobite background seemed to pose little problem for him in England. Although King George was in Hanover, he had provided Ramsay a safe-conduct so he could travel freely. At the time of his visit, the English were smitten with all things French. Ramsay had lived in France for years, and spoke the language like a native. He had written a best selling book and was known for his "avowed Toleratism" and his connection with Fenelon.¹⁵²

Ramsay was easily accepted into British society. In December 1729, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, the most prestigious of the philosophical societies. According to Jacob, it was no easy task to be elected:

"Candidates for membership in the Royal Society had to be proposed well in advance by three or more members, who wrote and publically displayed at meetings 'certificates' stating the reasons why a man should be voted in by the Fellows, each of whom possessed one vote."¹⁵³

Henderson claims the basis for Ramsay's election was his "philosophical and scientific gifts."¹⁵⁴ This is an interesting observation, especially when one considers the 1752 rejection by the Royal Society of Denis Diderot. Diderot was rejected because of his "reputation as a philosophical radical and materialist."¹⁵⁵

The following March and April were busy months for Ramsay. He became a member of the Gentleman's Literary Society at Oxford. He joined the Spalding Club, a gentleman's club associated with the Society of Antiquaries in London. The club met to discuss everything but politics, and its membership included men such as Gay, Pope and Newton. Both of these clubs included many Freemasons as members. On April 10, 1730, Ramsay received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law at Oxford. He was accepted with the vote of 85 to 17, but the minority was vocal indeed. They opposed him on the grounds of his Catholicism and his employment with James Stuart. He became the first Roman Catholic to receive an Oxford degree since the Reformation.

It was also during this visit to England that Ramsay probably became a Freemason. Coil claims he was initiated at the Horn Lodge in London on March 16, 1730. He cites as evidence a notice in the London Evening Post of March 17, 1730.¹⁵⁶ Henderson, on the other hand, believes Ramsay was already a Mason before he came to England. He does not

mention the newspaper article, and bases this contention on several other factors. First, Ramsay was acquainted with Charles Radclyff, Earl of Derwentwater, a Catholic Jacobite who probably started the first Masonic Lodge in Paris. He asserts that "possibly through their common interest in Jacobitism and Romanism, Derwentwater and Ramsay would find themselves fellow-members of Lodge St. Thomas."¹⁵⁷

Although Henderson cites no evidence of this relationship, he bases this assertion on Ramsay's easy acceptance within Masonic circles in England--especially within the Spalding Club and the Royal Society. He believes that if Ramsay was already a Mason prior to his visit, his membership would explain his ready acceptance into this particular circle of society.¹⁵⁸

I disagree with these contentions. Because there is no actual proof Ramsay was initiated in Paris, other than an acquaintance with Derwentwater, I believe he was not initiated until 1730. First, Freemasonry in France did not gain widespread success until Derwentwater became Grand Master in 1736. It did not really even become popular until 1732, when the Duc d'Aumont became the first French aristocrat to join.

Second, it may have been the English Mason that spurred Ramsay to join. Ramsay would have known many English Masons. After all, one quarter of the members of the Royal Society were Masons, and the Spalding Club had many of the same

members--plus many other Masons as members as well. Ramsay had made a point of joining several societies during his visit to England, the next logical step would have been for him to join a Masonic lodge. There is no reason why he would not have joined. He already agreed with the basic Masonic philosophies: tolerance in God, interest in learning, and the idea of ancient wisdom passed through the ages.

Finally, the case of Montesquieu must be addressed. There is a definite parallel between Ramsay and Montesquieu. Both Ramsay and Montesquieu had been introduced to the concept of an English club at the Club l'Entresol in Paris. Montesquieu and Ramsay were in England at the same time. Montesquieu was elected to the Royal Society shortly before Ramsay, and he was initiated in the Horn Lodge two months after Ramsay's own initiation.¹⁵⁹

Why would the English Masons initiate both Ramsay and Montesquieu? At the time of their visit, the English were charmed by everything French; it was a fad. It makes sense that the English Masons would readily accept them. They would certainly want two qualified, prominent Frenchmen as members. It would have added prestige to their organization.

Ramsay returned to France after he received his Oxford degree. The date of his actual return is uncertain, but by early 1731, he had gained a new patron and new employment.

This new patron was the Comte d'Evreux of the de Bouillon family. Ramsay was initially engaged to tutor the Comte's nephew, Godefroi Gerand, Duc de Chateau-Thierry. But the boy died in 1732, and Ramsay next became tutor to the Comte's grand-nephew, Godefroi Charles, the Prince of Turenne, son of Charles Godefroi, Duc de Bouillon.

It is possible to narrow the dates of the onset of Ramsay's employment with the de Bouillon family by his letters to James in Rome. On January 23, 1731, Ramsay wrote to Rome from Paris, complaining he had been removed from James' pension list. But when he wrote again on March 12, 1731, he had moved to Adresy, where he lived with the Duc de Chateau-Thierry. In the meantime, he had heard that although James "has always a very good opinion of you," his pension had been revoked due to a reduction of the pensioners.¹⁶⁰ Ramsay's pension was eventually reinstated the next year, apparently when a vacancy occurred.

The de Bouillon family was very prestigious. They had connections with the Jacobites and Fenelon, and claimed a connection with the Crusaders. The mother of Ramsay's charge was the sister of the Old Pretender's wife. The Cardinal de Bouillon had been a friend and supporter of Fenelon. But most important for our purposes is the family's relationship with Godfrey of Bouillon (1060?-1100).

Godfrey of Bouillon had been one of the most important of the early Crusaders, and was elected to rule Jerusalem as

Protector of the Holy Sepulcher. He was not an actual ancestor of the family, but was considered their totem.¹⁶¹ And, they used this connection to their advantage to gain wealth and prestige in France.

Ramsay spent his years with the de Bouillon family writing. In 1732, he published in London A Plan of Education for a Young Prince. It was reviewed in Fog's Weekly Journal on July 29 and August 5, 1732. It went through several editions, the last published as late as 1766.¹⁶² He applied as a candidate to the French Academy--just as Fenelon had--but was soundly rejected. He exchanged letters with Pere Louis Castel, an editor of the Journal or Memoires de Trevoux, a Jesuit scientific magazine. In 1732 and 1733, the Journal published a series of letters on gravity from Castel to Ramsay.¹⁶³

Ramsay took time off from his tutoring and writing in 1735, and proposed to Marie Nairne. He was 49 and she was 34. She was the daughter of Sir David Nairne, a Scottish Jacobite who served as under-secretary to James. Ramsay had known the Nairnes as early as 1722. By 1725, he had wanted to marry Francis, Marie's older sister. Nothing came of this proposed marriage, and Francis entered a convent.¹⁶⁴ In March 1735, Sir David Nairne wrote to James that Ramsay had reappeared in their lives and "resolves to show the same friendship for the youngest he designed formerly for the eldest."¹⁶⁵ Nairne requested James to award Ramsay the title

Knight and Baronet. James agreed on the condition the Duchess de Bouillon, his sister-in-law, would write and request it, so it would be "a special case and not a general precedent."¹⁶⁶ This was duly done and the warrant was dated March 23, 1735.

Ramsay and Marie Nairne were married in June 1735. Although the circumstances surrounding their courtship were peculiar, the marriage was a happy one. After Ramsay's death in 1743, Marie did more to perpetuate his name than anyone else in his lifetime.

Also in 1735, Ramsay published his Histoire du Vicomte de Turenne, Marechal General des armees du roy (1611-1675), a history of the famous family war hero. According to Henderson, "the book has formed the basis of all later study of Turenne."¹⁶⁷ It was published in English and French, with editions issued until 1774. Turenne was a French war hero: Voltaire called him "one of the greatest men we have ever had"; Montesquieu said "his life is a hymn to the glory of mankind"; and Pope called him the "god-like Turenne."¹⁶⁸

Ramsay used Turenne's own Memoires and the Memoires du Duc d'York (James II) in his research. According to Henderson, "the book sold well, but the general verdict was not enthusiastically complimentary."¹⁶⁹ The general complaint seemed to be that the writing was not up to the "dignity of the subject."¹⁷⁰ Henderson contends there are two reasons for this. First, Ramsay was not a military authority: "No

one who was so completely an outsider to army affairs could either himself appreciate, or help others to appreciate, the skill and genius of a great leader like Turenne."¹⁷¹ Second, Ramsay was subject to censorship from French authorities: "These were not changes recommended in the interest of scientific accuracy, but modifications demanded in order to avoid statements which were thought to be over-favourable to the de Bouillon family and prejudicial to the credit of members of the royal house."¹⁷²

Regardless of the reviews the book received, the de Bouillon family was not displeased with Ramsay's efforts. He and Marie substituted for the young Prince of Turenne's parents at the boy's public baptism in 1739. In 1741, the Duc de Bouillon promised to build Ramsay a house on his estate in Pontoise, even though Ramsay had been allowed to resign due to a serious illness. The house was begun in April 1741, and the Duc continued to support Ramsay until his death.

It was during his tenure with the de Bouillon family that "Ramsay found in the Masonic cause a further outlet for his characteristic ardour."¹⁷³ As I mentioned earlier, Ramsay was initiated in the Horn Lodge in March, 1730, during his visit to England. When he returned to France, he "derived great satisfaction from his newly found interest in Masonry and devoted himself to the Craft with his customary zeal and

enthusiasm."¹⁷⁴ Upon his return, he joined the St. Thomas Lodge in Paris. This lodge was also known as the Grand Master's Lodge.

In September 1734, there was a Masonic meeting at the residence of the Duchess of Portsmouth. A number of English Freemasons attended, including Montesquieu, and both Henderson and Batham contend Ramsay was probably also present.¹⁷⁵ By this time, Ramsay "was certainly becoming prominent in the movement" and was Grand Orator of the Order.¹⁷⁶

But it was the years 1736-1737 that Ramsay was most active in the Masons, and these are the "years of his famous oration."¹⁷⁷

There are actually two versions of Ramsay's Oration: the "Epernay" version, recently discovered in the Archives at Epernay, France, and the "Grand Lodge" version, intended for delivery at the Masonic Grand Lodge in Paris on March 21, 1737.¹⁷⁸ The "Grand Lodge" version of the Oration was the one that was circulated and subsequently published.

Ramsay's Oration is fairly innocuous. Intended for the initiates of the fraternity, Ramsay re-emphasized the importance of moral, Christian and heroic virtues, and the principles of science and enlightened minds. He suggested the fraternity unite to create a Universal Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences, omitting all references to theology and politics. He justified the existence of Masonic signs and

secrets, and reminded his audience of the Humanistic Masonic purposes. He encouraged the continued alliance between the French and English Masons, recognizing the importance of the English Masons' contribution to the Craft. Finally, he drew a correlation between the modern Freemasons and the Crusaders, implying a connection with the Templar Knights.

Ramsay's Oration, his motivation behind it, and its effect on French Freemasonry will be discussed in subsequent sections. At this point, it is important to recognize that this Oration was Ramsay's only contribution to Freemasonry. He submitted it for approval to Cardinal Fleury, First Minister of the Crown, as was necessary for all texts at the time. Batham tells us there is no record of Fleury's reply, but that it was "obviously unfavorable."¹⁷⁹ Ramsay wrote again to Fleury, and "put himself entirely in the hands of the Cardinal as to whether he should continue to attend" Masonic meetings.¹⁸⁰ Fleury replied "it is not the King's wish."¹⁸¹ There is no evidence Ramsay ever attended another Masonic function.

Ramsay spent his last years reading, writing and receiving visitors. One of his visitors was Von Geusau, a German tutor on tour with his pupil in 1741. Van Geusau spent considerable time with Ramsay and recorded their conversations. Henderson states these conversations can now only be found in A.F. Busching's Beytrage suder Lebensgueschiche den Kwurdiger Personen, published in 1783-1786.¹⁸²

I mention this particular visitor for two reasons. First Von Geusau tells of Ramsay's continuing interest in Freemasonry, particularly in the creation of a "universal Lexicon."¹⁸³ Ramsay apparently also thought well enough of Freemasonry to attempt to "convert" both Von Geusau and his pupil into the fraternity.¹⁸⁴ Second, some of Von Geusau's information is inaccurate. Henderson concedes this and mentions some of the common fallacies associated with Ramsay.¹⁸⁵ Obviously Gould and Coil relied on Von Geusau's misinformation when they wrote about Ramsay's service with Marlborough in the British Army and the mistaken amount of time Ramsay spent at the Stuart court.

Ramsay spent his last years at St. Germaine-en-Laye finishing his last book--his "great work," as he called it. But, although he did finish it, it was published posthumously in 1749. The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, Unfolded in Geometrical Order did not sell well, but it received good reviews. The Monthly Review of 1751, called it "one of the most remarkable books our age has produced, whether we consider the variety and singularity of the topics on which it treats or the methods in which they are handled."¹⁸⁶ It was praised by Jonathan Edwards, and Edward's biographer, Dr. A.V.G. Allen, calls the book "one of the most remarkable works of the eighteenth century."¹⁸⁷ David Hume considered it important enough to quote in his

Natural History of Religion (1757), and Hume calls Ramsay "an author of taste and imagination, who is surely no enemy of Christianity."¹⁸⁸

Ramsay's "great work" is a treatise on religion. It is not surprising that Ramsay would write a book on religion--after all, religion was probably Ramsay's greatest interest; he had been fascinated with it since childhood. But, according to Gould, this book "created considerable stir in Roman Catholic circles, as the author enunciated views at variance with the doctrines of that Church."¹⁹² And, Henderson states that there are no obvious Fenelon influences in this book--unlike Ramsay's other works:

"The spirit of the writer, however, is plainly that of one possessed by a firm belief in reason, the rationality of things, and the presence in all men alike of a divine spark of reason, a strong conviction as to the freedom of the will, and the power of the natural man to know and to achieve, and a deep faith in the love of God that will restore all things to perfection."¹⁹⁰

I believe this "great work" was Ramsay's public endorsement of Quietism; his final admission, that, above all else, he was a Quietist. This is evidenced by the fact he disputed the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and by his deliberate departure from Fenelon's ideas. Ramsay's "great work" was the culmination of his religious odyssey.

Andrew Michael Ramsay died at St. Germaine-en-laye on May 6, 1743.

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SECTION TWO: THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH FREEMASONRY

In order to understand the significance of Ramsay's Oration, and his subsequent contribution to Freemasonry, it is necessary to examine the history of Freemasonry. This is no easy task. Ramsay was not the first Mason to embellish the historical beginnings of Freemasonry, nor was he the most original. Early Masonic historians "claimed the Masonic membership for Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Solomon, Ptolemy, Julius Caesar, and Pythagoras."¹

According to John Hamill, traditionally, there have been two central approaches to Masonic history: the authentic approach, which is a "correlation of the teaching, allegory, and symbolism of the Craft with those of the various esoteric traditions."² This non-authentic school of thought and its belief that Freemasonry existed since the beginning of time is traditional to the Craft itself, but is generally recognized for what it is--"mumbo jumbo."³ In other words, Adam was probably not a Freemason.

On the other hand, the authentic approach is not quite as reliable as the name would suggest. Hamill accuses the historians of the authentic school of giving "the appearance of a search for evidence to fit a pre-conceived theory."⁴

This pre-conceived theory Hamill mentions is the common notion that eighteenth century Freemasonry evolved from operative masonic guilds. This Freemasonry was called

speculative or "public" Masonry, to differentiate it from operative--or actual working--Freemasonry.⁵ In The Craft: A History of English Freemasonry, Hamill makes it clear he disagrees with the evolution theory. But because this theory has yet to be sufficiently disproven, and because it is still accepted ideology of most Masonic historians, this is the historical background I will be discussing.

The operative masonic guilds were the forerunners of eighteenth century speculative Freemasonry, and were predominant in England until at least the seventeenth century. These guilds took shape in the fourteenth century as functional fraternities of stoneworkers. Stonemasons were in demand for the construction of Cathedrals, monasteries and castles. They were employed in large groups, and they were migratory--they had to find out what work was available and get there on their own. All masons belonged to a national assembly, but locally, they belonged to lodges. Because of their migratory existence, they lived on the building site. The word lodge "came to mean the center in which they planned their work, and thus became a collected word for a body of masons."⁶

The term "mason" dates back to the thirteenth century. It is found in a 1292 document referring to the construction of the chapel at Westminster Palace. "The word is of French origin and was brought to England by the Normans."⁷ The word "Freemason" first appeared in 1375 in a record of the

national assembly. It also appears in a 1396 document concerning the construction of Exeter Cathedral.⁸ It is unclear exactly what "Freemason" actually meant. It is thought to have been a term used to describe certain qualified masons--those able to work with Freestone, the soft type of stone used in carving and in detail work of arches and windows--as opposed to the "rough masons," who were merely qualified to shape rough stones into blocks and put them in walls.

Freemason may also have referred to the membership of a guild, implying "a free man under the control neither of a feudal overlord nor of a municipal corporation."⁹ It may also have meant the freedom to move from place to place in the course of building activities.

What we know of these guilds is to be found in early Masonic documents. These documents not only give us an insight into the workings of the guilds, but also provide connections between the guild system of the Middle Ages and eighteenth century speculative Freemasonry.

The masonic guild system was governed by the London Mason's Company, and the Regulations of 1356 explain the mechanics of the system. A man was required to serve a seven year apprenticeship before he could join the lodge and be considered "trained." He was then entered on the rolls of the lodge and was classified as an "entered apprentice." Seven years later, he attained the status of a "Fellow of the

Craft." The supervisor of a building project was a "Master Mason." He was qualified in the geometry--then considered one of the liberal arts--and kept the building accounts. The building design was the responsibility of the "Clerk of the Works." If the building was a church building such as a cathedral or a monastery, this man was a cleric. If the building was a castle or a hall, this man was a royal or feudal official. For example, Chaucer was a "Clerk of the Works" for King Richard II. The "Clerk of the Works" was always an educated man, but the Master Mason was the man in charge.¹⁰

Probably the most important of the early Masonic documents is the Regius Manuscript, or "Old Charges." Antiquarians have placed its date between 1350 and 1400, although most agree it was probably written in 1390. It was discovered in the British Museum in 1830 by Halliwell-Phillips, and it is sometimes called the Halliwell Poem. Although it had been cataloged as A Poem of Moral Duties in the British Museum, Halliwell-Phillips, a non-mason, recognized it as a Masonic document and published it in 1840.

This manuscript is an epic poem of 794 rhymed lines and eight sections, and was probably written by a priest or a monk with access to other Masonic documents.¹¹ It provided the fifteen Articles for the Craftsman and the fifteen Articles for the Master Mason. These Articles reveal the guilds

provided not only a fraternal meeting place for stonemasons, but also assured them of some basic rights under the medieval feudal system. They also indicate masonic teaching involved a specific philosophy and ethical code long before development of speculative Freemasonry.¹²

The first of the sections in the manuscript is titled 'Hic incipiunt constitutiones artis gemetrie secundum Euclide,¹³ or "Here begins the Constitutions of the Art of Geometry according to Euclid."¹⁴ This is of major significance with regard to the speculative Freemasons' devotion to geometry. According to Robinson, Geometry is

"the central theme of the entire Masonic order. It is with this science that man comprehends the Universe, the movements of the planets and the cycle of the seasons. Especially is geometry of use to man in the Masonic science of architecture and it is the basis for a Masonic designation of the Supreme Being as the Great Architect of the Universe."¹⁵

Other examples of early Masonic literature are more concerned with mythology and legends than lodge rules and regulations. There are two important guild legends to take into account when considering the eighteenth century Freemasonry: How Masonry is identified with Euclid and geometry; and, the legend of Hiram and Solomon's Temple.

According to Francis Yates, there were several accounts in these documents regarding the invention of geometry:

"One account maintains that geometry was discovered before the Flood; another states that Abraham taught the Egyptians geometry. In yet another version...geometry is said to have been invented by the Egyptians in order to cope with the inundations of the Nile. The invention is attributed to Thoth-Hermes, otherwise Hermes Trismegistus, who is identified with Euclid."¹⁶

In the Dowland Manuscript, written about 1530, it is Abraham himself who teaches Euclid about geometry. Euclid then taught this new science to others: "And thus was the science grounded there; and that worthy Master Euclid gave it the name of Geometry. And now it is called through all this land Masonry."¹⁷

From the variations of the mythology, it is clear there is no one truth regarding the actual development of either geometry or the Masonic myths.

There is a second legend that must be examined further. In these documents, crucial significance is attributed to the work of Hiram, the Master Mason of Solomon's Temple. According to this legend, Hiram was murdered because he refused to reveal Masonic secrets. He became a martyr to the Masonic cause and it is this martyrdom which "forms the theme of symbolic enactment in Masonic ritual."¹⁸ This particular legend is also very important in the history of the higher degrees of Freemasonry. In the guild system of the Middle

Ages, this association with Hiram's martyrdom was used as a threat to operative masons to ensure their "secrecy about trade practices and signs of recognition in whose defence the 'martyrs' were supposed to have died."¹⁹

These early Masonic documents are important for two specific reasons. First, "these documents are the source of some of the mythical history and the moral precepts of modern Freemasonry."²⁰ The legends regarding the invention of geometry and the history of Hiram reappear 300 years later in James Anderson's Constitution of Freemasonry. Anderson embellished these legends, but they are basically the same.

Second, the London Masons' Regulations of 1365 and the Regius Manuscript describe what life was like in a guild and what purpose the guild served to the men who belonged.

These operative lodges played many roles in the lives of their members. They were trade schools, providing apprentices the opportunity to become skilled craftsmen and Master Masons after seven years of "on-the-job" training. They performed the duties of a trade union by regulating relations between employers and employees.²¹ The lodges provided a forum for free speech at a time when public assembly was often denied, and because they were self-governing, they took place of a court system in mediating disputes.

But most important, the operative masons were privy to secrets. They knew trade secrets, "inheriting from antiquity

the higher mathematics as applied to building, and transmitting it to modern times."²² These secrets were actually their methods of work which they concealed from outsiders. They wanted to keep the limited amount of work in their hands. These secrets were also used to designate the true masons from impostors--"runaway serfs and other strangers from exchanging bondage of the feudal countryside for the relative freedom of the towns."²³ These secrets included passwords, signs known as the "Mason Word," and initiation ceremonies.²⁴ These secrets have their counterparts in eighteenth century speculative Freemasonry.

According to MacKenzie, the transition from operative masonry to speculative Freemasonry began in 1619 with the development of a parallel body within the London Masons' Company.²⁵ The body was called the "Acception," and allowed "Accepted Masons" or "Gentleman Masons" who did not belong to the company and were not masons by trade, to be "made" masons. These men paid excessive fees for this privilege, and built up the coffers of the company. This "Acception" seems to have been completely separate from the trade functions of the company.²⁶

Non-masons were also being admitted to operative lodges. Sir William Alexander, the Earl of Stirling, was admitted to the Edinburgh Lodge in 1634.²⁷ There is no indication another non-craftsman was admitted until 1641, when Sir Robert Moray,

Quartermaster-General of the Scottish Army, was initiated into the same lodge. In 1646, Elias Ashmole and Colonel Henry Mainwaring were admitted to the lodge at Warrington, Lancashire. Ashmole and Moray, both interested in alchemy and Hermetic ideas, were to become founding members of the Royal Society.

By 1670, many of the lodges in both England and Scotland were admitting "accepted masons" into their organization. In some cases, these accepted masons outnumbered the working masons. For example, the Aberdeen Lodge had a total of fifty-nine members. Of these members, seven were working masons, seven were tilers and carpenters, and the rest were noblemen, tradesmen and gentlemen.²⁸ According to Jacob, this acceptance of non-craftsmen into the lodges was probably due, in part, to economics. Money was needed to maintain lodges and finance new building ventures. In exchange for their funds, men were offered an opportunity to join an "ancient" society with a notable history.²⁹

Two books were written in 1686 that add insight into this growing trend of admitting accepted masons into operative lodges. Dr. Robert Plot, in his Natural History of Staffordshire, announced this new masonry was widespread.³⁰ The second book, John Aubrey's Natural History of Wiltshire, confirms Plot's declaration. Accepted masons were indeed known in several counties. Aubrey's book also contains an Addendum, which mentions the details of Sir Christopher

Wren's initiation in 1691. Wren's membership with the accepted masons has long been a bone of contention between Masonic historians. Hamill states this Addendum is the only record of Wren's membership, and that it is indeed written in Aubrey's own handwriting.³¹ Yet, Anderson, in his Constitutions of 1723, made no mention of Wren's membership. It is not until the 1738 version of the Constitutions, that Wren is listed as having joined the masons in 1663, and subsequently holding high Masonic offices. Ironically, Wren died in 1723 after the first edition of the Constitutions was published. Hamill suggests Anderson embellished Wren's Masonic connections because he "needed a major figure to bolster his claim that the formation of Grand Lodge in 1717 was a "revival" of Freemasonry."³²

With the widespread admittance of these accepted masons in the second half of the seventeenth century, these lodges began undergoing serious changes. Many of these accepted masons began their own non-operative lodges, and these non-operative lodges were the beginning of speculative Freemasonry. Although they shared the rituals and traditions of operative masonry, they wanted to partake of the "secret mathematical wisdom descended from Hermes."³³ This new masonry had "as its essence, a morality peculiar to itself, veiled in allegory and cloaked in traditional ritual and symbol. The trade secrets of the operative masons became the esoteric secrets of the speculative masons."³⁴

This idea of esoteric Masonic secrets is based on the philosophy of Pythagoras. This philosophy was divided into esoteric, that taught to a select few, and the exoteric, that taught everyone. The philosophy, when applied to Freemasonry, explains the basic tenets of the three-degree structure of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason. The members were divided into three degrees, dependant upon:

"the degree of their initiation to which they attained, as being either fully admitted into the [society], and invested with all the knowledge the master could communicate, or as merely [apprentices] enjoying the public instructions and awaiting the gradual reception of further knowledge."³⁵

There were two primary reasons why many men joined this early speculative Freemasonry, and they are both equally important. First, Freemasonry was a club, "that most British of institutions."³⁶ Not only did membership provide the opportunity to eat, drink and be merry, but it also provided social fellowship to men from various backgrounds. I believe this idea of Freemasonry as a men's club contributed a great deal toward the later appeal of the organization.

Second, Freemasonry claimed access to the wisdom of the ages. Jacob suggests one incentive provided by the lodges was the esoteric secrets of Hermetic lore.³⁷ The Hermetic tradition is a mixture of science and "mysticism that could easily lend itself to the worship of nature...and a dedication to the study of mathematics."³⁸ Hermeticism provided a "pantheistic and materialistic philosophy of nature," which appealed to the Masons' ideal of a non-sectarian Supreme

Being, a Great Architect of the Universe.³⁹ In early Masonic literature, the invention of geometry is attributed to Hermes. For the Freemason, geometry was the "most important science to architecture, and the only science by which one can measure and appreciate the Universe."⁴⁰ Simply by being a Freemason, one could claim "contact with a universal and ancient wisdom made manifest in the mathematical and architectural skills displayed" by the traditional working mason--who had believed geometry was the key to the universe.⁴¹

This Hermetic tradition would be replaced by the new Newtonian science in the early eighteenth century, yet the Hermetic ideals remained: religious toleration, esoteric thinking and intellectual inquiry.

According to Carter:

"The greatest secret and most important working tool of Craft-Masonry had been mathematics, particularly geometry; hence, its adherents were especially receptive to the philosophies of science, logic and reason which characterized the new thought. For Masons, it was a short step into Newtonian Mechanics, which expanded to include the expectation that a solution to the social, economic and political ills of Europe could be achieved when reason and common sense guided society in harmony with natural law."⁴²

Other non-masons continued to join these old operative lodges. By 1717, few working masons remained in the lodges. By the 1720's, the Grand Lodge had discouraged continued intercourse between speculative and operative masons.⁴³ Masonry had been transformed from operative guilds to a philosophical gentlemen's society.

In 1716, representatives from four London lodges met and decided to convene every year for an Annual Assembly and Feast. These four lodges were the Goose and Gridiron, the Crown, the Rummer and Grapes, and the Apple Tree Tavern. In June 1717, these lodges met again and formed the first Grand Lodge in the world. This Grand Lodge system was formed to unify the loosely connected individual lodges, and, initially, it was a local and merely symbolic entity. The first Grand Master, Anthony Sayer, was elected at that meeting.

For the first four years of its existence, members met once a year for the Annual Assembly and Feast, and to elect the symbolic Grand Master and Grand Wardens. There is no indication it was a regulatory committee or was concerned with lodges outside London.⁴⁴

But 1720-1721 was a turning point in the history of the Grand Lodge. First, Grand Master George Payne assembled the first Grand Lodge regulations. These were thirty-nine general regulations provided to govern the activities of the Grand Lodge.⁴⁵ Second, John, Duke of Montagu was encouraged to become the next Grand Master. He accepted, and with his appointment, came the notice of other lodges, creating an interest in the Grand Lodge. As a matter of interest, after Montagu's installation as Grand Master in 1721, all subsequent Grand Masters have been noblemen.

At this point, it is necessary to introduce two men who would change the history of Freemasonry forever: James Anderson, the "Father of Masonic History,"⁴⁶ and John (Jean) Theophilus Desaguliers, the "Father of Modern Speculative Freemasonry."⁴⁷ Anderson and Desaguliers influenced Freemasonry more than anyone either before or after them. Anderson provided the historical connection between the operative masonic guilds and the new speculative Freemasonry. Desaguliers led Freemasonry toward Newtonian science.

Anderson first appeared in Masonic history in 1721, when he was authorized by the Grand Lodge to "adapt the old constitutions to the times and to the new aims, and to impregnate them clearly with the spirit of Tolerance, which should be authoritative for the future work."⁴⁸

Prior to this commission, very little is known about Anderson. He was born about 1678 in Aberdeen, Scotland, the son of a glassworker. His father was a member of the Aberdeen Lodge. He was educated in Aberdeen, receiving a Master of Arts degree, and later becoming a Doctor of Divinity. He moved to London in 1710 to serve as minister to the Presbyterian church on Swallow Street in Piccadilly.

His Masonic history prior to 1721 is even cloudier. Coil suggests he was initiated at his father's lodge in Aberdeen,⁴⁹ but Lennhoff contends he did not become a Mason until he came to London in 1710, and was appointed "Chaplain

to the Masons."⁵⁰ There is no indication he was an active Mason before 1721.

Although commissioned by the Grand Lodge in 1721, Anderson's Book of Constitutions, commonly called the Constitutions of 1723, did not appear in printed form until 1723. The work was an attempt to edit the traditional operative masonic manuscripts and put the history, rites and rituals into cohesive order. According to Roberts, some of the rapid success of Freemasonry in the earlier eighteenth century can be attributed "to the efforts of Masons to put their history and rites into decent written order. This gave a new coherence and stability to Masonic doctrine."⁵¹ Anderson's Constitutions "soon came to be recognized as the basic document of the new Freemasonry."⁵²

The Constitutions of 1723 is divided into several sections. For our purposes, we are concerned with only two of these sections: the "History of Masonry or Geometry and Architecture," and the "Changes of a Freemason."

According to Schneider:

"The former is commonly ignored by writers on Freemasonry as being a purely fantastic chronicle...This narrative, beginning with the story of creation and biblical in its tone and language, while unmistakably founded on deistic-rationalistic principles, links scientific and technical, particularly geometrical and architectural, progress to what is clearly a wholly fictitious history of Masonry."⁵³

Anderson built an entire history and mythology on the Masonic allure. Beginning with God, the Great Architect of the Universe, Anderson traces Masonic history from Adam and

biblical history through Inigo Jones, and finally to the revival of Masonry with the first Grand Lodge of 1717. He emphasized that Masons had always known the esoteric secrets of the world.

Hamill defends Anderson in part. He contends Anderson "simply digested the old Gothic Constitutions," and produced "an apologia to give a relatively new institution an honourable descent."⁵⁴ Coil defends Anderson even more strongly, claiming the Grand Lodge had given Anderson little more than the old Gothic Constitutions to use as guidelines.⁵⁵ Coil states: "While that effort may now be considered to consist of nonsensical extravagances, it was not so at the time or for more than a century afterwards."⁵⁶

The second section of the Constitutions of 1723 is the "Charges of a Freemason" and "they have remained the core of English Masonry and the major source of Masonic ideology throughout the world."⁵⁷ Schneider refers to these charges as the "Magna Charta" [sic] of Freemasonry.⁵⁸ Anderson's charges were simply a "speculative paraphrase" of the thirty Articles of early Masonic documents.⁵⁹ Just as he studied these documents for their history, he also adapted their rules to fit speculative Freemasonry.

Historians have suggested Desaguliers had a hand in writing the Constitutions of 1723. This has never been

proven. But Anderson and Desaguliers did share common goals for Freemasonry:

"A strongly Protestant and latitudinarian religious vision that could be Anglican or conservatively Dissenting; a dedication to strong monarchy and the Hanoverian succession; a willingness to allow the state to control the church and thereby to maintain religious peace; a propensity for aristocratic fellowship and patronage; and...a strong commitment to Newtonian science."⁶⁰

Where early transitional Freemasons were attracted to the esoteric secrets of the Hermetic tradition, these Grand Lodge Masons were devoted to the ideas of Newtonian science. It has been said speculative Freemasonry was born of Newtonian science.⁶¹ Certainly, the Newtonians had great influence over the organization from its very beginning; one in four speculative Freemasons also belonged to the Royal Society.

It was Desaguliers' adherence to Newtonian science that influenced the growth of Freemasonry in that direction. Desaguliers served as Grand Master in 1719, and Deputy Grand Master in 1722-23 and 1726. He was "the one who gave Grand Lodge its spiritual countenance," and he was responsible for the introduction of aristocrats and intellectuals into the group.⁶²

Desaguliers was born in Rochelle, France in 1683. His father was a French Huguenot minister who fled to England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Desaguliers was brought up and educated in England, receiving a B.A. in 1710 and an M.A. in 1712 from Christ Church College, Oxford. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1714.

He took Clerical orders in the Church of England, and was appointed chaplain to the Earl of Carnarvon, later Duke of Chandos, in 1716. The Duke of Chandos became Grand Master of the English and Scottish lodges in 1737. In 1718, Desaguliers received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law from Oxford and, around the same time, became chaplain to Frederick, Prince of Wales, also later a Mason.⁶³

It is unclear when Desaguliers actually became a Freemason. Jacob claims it was probably around 1713 at the Rummer and Grapes Lodge.⁶⁴ Coil simply states that it is unknown where he was initiated, or even if he was a member prior to his election as Grand Master in 1719.⁶⁵ Lennhoff believes he was a member of the Apple Tree Lodge, but that the date of his actual initiation is unclear. He contends Desaguliers was not a part of the inaugural assembly of 1717 because "otherwise he would have gone to the top at once."⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that these two lodges mentioned in connection with Desaguliers' possible initiation are two of the first four lodges credited with creating the Grand Lodge.

From what we do know of Desaguliers' Masonic career, it is clear he was a powerful force within speculative Freemasonry. Aside from service as both Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master, he began the Benevolence Fund of the Grand Lodge, the first Masonic charity. He definitely wrote the preface to Anderson's Constitutions of 1723. In 1731, he went to the Hague to initiate the Duke of Lorraine, later

consort to Maria Theresa of Austria. In 1737, he initiated the first member of the English Royal Family, Frederick, Prince of Wales.⁶⁷ He remained an active member of the Grand Lodge until 1742, two years before his death.

But Desaguliers' greatest contribution to eighteenth century Freemasonry was his love of Newtonian science. Trained by John Keill at Oxford, he was quickly moved into the "circle of Newton's friends,"⁶⁸ and became a "close friend and zealous apostle of Sir Isaac."⁶⁹ As a member of the Royal Society, where he paid no dues, he served as curator of experiments. He also gave classes in Newtonian science where "he illustrated not mathematically, but mechanically, using machines or devices to demonstrate the basics of physics laws."⁷⁰

It was Desaguliers' ability to explain this new science in simplistic, mechanical terms that attracted men to Freemasonry. And, "Freemasonry, with its roots in the mechanical and artisan crafts, would naturally appeal to mechanically minded Newtonians like Desaguliers."⁷¹

According to Jacob:

"Under the guidance of Desaguliers and Anderson, Masonic lodges became places where gentlemen, whether lowly or titled, could receive a minimal instruction in mathematics, listen to lectures on the new science, or make up for what they did not know in science by participating in a movement that claimed to be descended from the earliest practitioners of applied mathematics--the masonic 'architects' who constructed the ancient temples, the medieval Cathedrals, and practiced the 'royal art' in the loyal service of generations of English kings."⁷²

The changes within Freemasonry, instigated by Anderson and Desaguliers, attracted widespread attention of other lodges. Suddenly, there was an enormous growth in membership. In 1722, twenty-four lodges belonged to the Grand Lodge. By 1725, provincial lodges were beginning to join. By 1735, the Grand Lodge claimed authority over all lodges in England. The cohesiveness had been achieved. And, by 1740, English Freemasonry was "an accepted and well known feature of English life."⁷³

What sort of men belonged to this English Freemasonry? Certainly Royalty and scientists were not the only members. The middle class was represented by men from all walks of life: bankers, lawyers, civil servants, pharmacists, and merchants. The intellectual world outside science was typified by men like Ephraim Chambers, author of Cyclopoedia, the first encyclopedia of the eighteenth century. Sir Robert Walpole was a member, as were Voltaire and Montesquieu. The clergy was represented by men like Anderson and Desaguliers.

What was the appeal? Why would such a diverse group of men seek membership?

I believe the appeal was two-fold. As I mentioned before, Freemasonry was first and foremost a club; it provided social fellowship. There, one could easily mingle with members outside one's own class. It was possible to make both personal and professional contacts among the members,

while sharing the festivity of feasting and music. Also, Freemasonry was a very popular club; everyone wanted to belong.

Second, the lodges provided a forum for a discussion on enlightenment topics. "Masonic rhetoric reflected...a new enlightened definition of the gentleman...he was now defined as a man of science."⁷⁴ Mason equated to gentleman, and all masons were brothers by initiation. Freemasonry was immensely respectable; its members were drawn from the wealthy middle class, the members of the Royal Society--the most prestigious of the philosophical societies--and the Peerage.

Freemasonry spread rapidly, first to Scotland and Ireland, then to the Continent. According to Hamill, there were three legitimate ways to establish a Masonic lodge abroad:

"by the issue of 'deputations of constitute lodges' as a result of the receipt of petition from local Masons; by the appointment of Provincial Grand Masters for territories abroad with authority to constitute new lodges, which were then to be registered with the Grand Lodge; and by the constituting of traveling lodges in regiments of the Army, permitting them to meet wherever the regiment was stationed."⁷⁵

The dates vary on the actual establishment of lodges in countries outside England. The first lodge in France may have begun in 1721 at Dunkirk, or in 1725 in Paris. By 1726, Masters were assigned for overseas lodges in port cities and colonies. The first Spanish lodge was established in either 1727 or 1729. Lodges were set up in Gibraltar and Fort William, Calcutta in 1728-1729. In 1730, there were lodges in the United States. Provincial Grand Lodges were even

established to serve these new lodges located far away from the Grand Lodge in England.

In Protestant countries, Freemasonry remained, for a time, much as it had been in England. In Catholic countries, primarily France, Freemasonry changed drastically. But France was the first country outside England that Freemasonry gained widespread success.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, the examination of Masonic history is no easy task. This is especially true regarding the investigation of the roots of early French Freemasonry. For example, historians do not even agree on where the first French lodge was organized, much less on who organized it, or when. There is some disagreement on whether French Freemasonry was a result of the French operative masonic guilds, like the evolution process in England, or if it began with the spread of Jacobites to France. Even the early relationship between the Grand Lodge of England and French Freemasonry is uncertain.⁷⁶

There are many similarities between the early craft guilds in England and their counterparts in France. The earliest guilds date back from the 12th century, and served the same basic purposes as the English guild system. It is interesting to note that in France, "though the craft guilds were approved, the fraternities developed abuses which led to their discredit and decrees were issued prohibiting or

regulating them in 1498, 1500, 1501, 1535, 1539 and 1625."⁷⁷ This was simply the beginning of the French prosecution of the Masons.

Probably the most important of these French operative guilds was Les Compagnons du Tour de France, also called the Compagnonnage. It was called the "Tour de France" because it was the workers' right to tour France and work--from Paris south and including all important cities. "Only the workmen of trades recognized as belonging to the association were permitted to make this circuit."⁷⁸ The tour was about 1500 miles and could take as long as four years to complete.

There were three societies within the Compagnonnage: the Sons of Solomon, which included the stonemasons and was the first of the societies; the Sons of Soubise, comprised of the carpenters, tilers and plasterers; and the Sons of Master Jacques, which consisted of a combination of other workers. The names of these societies came from the particular founder the group recognized. These founders "formed the three devoirs, or divisions, to which all the original trades in the Compagnonnage were affiliated."⁷⁹

Like the English operative guilds, the Compagnonnage were very secretive about their organization and its trade wisdom, and they:

"possessed several legends, the principal one being that of Master Jacques and possibly one about Hiram, the former being a French Mason, who, according to legend, went to Jerusalem to work on Solomon's Temple, undergoing severe travails in escaping from his enemies. Some of the

legends even appear to have some reference to the Knights Templar and Jacques de Molai [the martyred Grand Master of the Templars]."⁸⁰

It is interesting to note, that in the continuing tradition of French persecution of "secret societies," in 1655, the Doctors of the Sorbonne published a condemnation of the Compagnonnage because of its admittance of Huguenots into the fraternity.⁸¹ The French government was not more tolerant of the eighteenth century Freemasons than the Doctors of the Sorbonne were of the Compagnonnage.

The history of speculative French Freemasonry is very confusing. No records exist prior to 1740, and much of the information available is contradictory and merely hearsay.

One of the most interesting of the theories regarding the initial development of Freemasonry in France deals with King James II of England. Coil quotes both L'Abbe Clavel's Historie Pictoresque de la Franc-Maconnerie (1843) and Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy (1797) when discussing this hypothesis:

"Clavel states that Freemasonry was introduced into France by the Irish adherents of King James II of England after his abdication in 1688, and that the first lodge was opened at the Chateau, Saint Germaine, the residence of the exiled monarch. Robison, to whom Clavel referred, stated that, when James II and his supporters fled to France, 'they took Freemasonry with them to the Continent, where it was immediately received by the French and was cultivated with great zeal and in a manner suited to the tastes and habits of that highly polished people.'"⁸²

Although Coil calls this theory "obviously an anachronism as well as an invention,"⁸³ it is interesting to note that it has long been surmised Jacobites were indeed the first to

introduce Freemasonry into France. Certainly one of the first speculative lodges set up in France is attributed to Charles Radcliffe, Lord Derwentwater, an avid Jacobite, possibly as early as 1725.

There are five lodges commonly recognized as the earliest established in France: The Amite et Fraternite, established in 1721 at Dunkirk, although Coil claims it may or may not have existed, was not recognized by the Grand Lodge, and probably did not last long;⁸⁴ Lord Derwentwater's lodge, located in the Rue des Boucheries, called the St. Thomas, and chartered by the Grand Lodge in 1726; the Louis d'Argent, recognized as the "King's Head" by the Grand Lodge in 1729, and founded by Francois Lebreton, a Frenchman and a "great benefactor to the poor;"⁸⁵ the Sainte-Margeurite, founded the same year by an Englishman named Goustaud; and the fourth Paris lodge, the Loge de Bussy, established in the Rue de Bussy in 1732, and later renamed d'Aumont, after the first French aristocrat to belong, Duc d'Aumont.⁸⁶

There were many more lodges established after d'Aumont. Some were recognized by the Grand Lodge, and some were organized and then simply abandoned. Although Anderson's Constitutions of 1738 recognized only three lodges in France, we can be certain more existed. Certainly by 1736, when Lord Derwentwater was the Provincial Grand Master for France, Freemasonry had gained widespread success.

I believe this widespread success of Freemasonry in France can be attributed in part, to the social, political, and economic climate in France as opposed to England. When Freemasonry was introduced into France in the 1720's, France was facing serious economic and political trials. Louis XV had inherited massive debts from his great-grandfather, Louis XIV, and the country was in a serious state of poverty. This poverty was caused by a series of expensive wars, the extravagant lifestyle of Louis XIV and, in part, to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Edict of Nantes had ensured French Protestants equality with Catholics under French law. When it was revoked, the Huguenots fled France and the country lost 200,000 of its most industrious and prosperous citizens, thus creating yet another crisis in the already precarious economic system.

In 1726, Cardinal Andre Hercule de Fleury became tutor to Louis XV, and essentially began to rule France. Under his government, the country began to show signs of economic recovery and growth. But the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had given the Church a powerful upper hand, and it was Fleury's intention to make sure this remained the case. Fleury continued as the power behind the throne until his death in 1743.

During this time, France was an extreme autocracy. Assemblies were forbidden, and free speech and free thought were out of the question. According to Lennhoff:

"At a time when in England scientific theories were exercising the minds of the pioneers of progress, French society manifested its intellect chiefly in the salons by means of sparkling speeches, subtle wit, and clever repartee."⁸⁷

Though they may have been dilettantes, the French were well aware of what was happening in England, and they were caught up in Anglomania. They were impressed by two particular reformations made within England. First, the Hanoverian government was tolerant, and England lived peaceably under a Parliamentary Constitution. "It was a community in which differences of birth counted for somewhat less than in other European countries and in which a wide measure of legal equality was a reality."⁸⁸ Second, religious toleration was a reality under the passive Church of England. Although to be Catholic in England was still considered a crime, the persecution of the Catholics had lessened somewhat.

English ideas were fashionable in France, and Freemasonry was very, very popular in England. According to Duke Montagu's autobiography, "it became a public fashion" to be a Freemason, and it was very respectable indeed.⁸⁹ Only in England could an organization such as Freemasonry serve:

"as a social nexus that promoted specific cultural and ideological goals: stability under a strong, but constitutional monarchy, social nobility under aristocratic patronage, religious toleration, Baconian experimentalism and, of course, dedication to the cult of the new science."⁹⁰

As much as the French adored these new ideas of English Freemasonry, French Freemasonry quickly became something different from what it had been in England. Instead of the tolerant, middle class, science-oriented lodges of their English counterparts, early French lodges were established and led by Jacobite aristocrats living in exile, loyal to Catholicism and the Stuarts. Jacob explains this response: "As speculative Freemasonry emerged as a significant cultural institution after the Hanoverian Succession is it not conceivable that rival lodges were established in France by Jacobite aristocrats?"⁹¹

An excellent example of a Jacobite aristocrat with a hand in the development of both English and French Freemasonry is Philip, Duke of Wharton. John, Duke of Montagu was elected Grand Master of the newly formed Grand Lodge of England in 1721. He proved so popular a leader that he was asked to serve another year. But Wharton, "being ambitious to the chair," wanted to be Grand Master.⁹² He arranged a secret election at Stationer's Hall on June 24, 1722, and "despite there being no Grand Officers present, and the fact that Wharton had not been Master of a Lodge or properly nominated and proposed Grand Master, he was duly proclaimed and installed."⁹³ Of course, this caused a split among the Grand Lodge members, which was not mended until Montagu called a Grand Lodge meeting on January 17, 1723 to name Wharton the Grand Master. Wharton served until June 24, 1723.

Wharton was very busy during his tenure as Grand Master. He instigated the practice of Masonic parades, complete with musicians and Masons dressed in their ceremonial garb of leather aprons and symbolic emblems. This brought the Masons much attention, not all of it positive. These parades were caricatured in the press and "buffoons in London organized mock processions" to poke fun at the parades.⁹⁴ These parades were discontinued in 1747.⁹⁵ He also began the custom of laying the cornerstone for new public buildings, bridges and monuments. This practice was very popular and continued until the 1930's.⁹⁶

On the other hand, Wharton also attempted to use his position to "introduce politics into the lodges" and to endeavor "to draw individual lodges into the Jacobite camp."⁹⁷ This did not meet with much success in England. Through Jacob argues English Freemasonry was probably not as non-political as it was purported to be, it was lionized for its apolitical stance.⁹⁸ If there were politics within the Masonic lodges, they most certainly were not either Tory or Jacobite-the Whig leadership would have seen to that.

Wharton's reign as Grand Master ended June 24, 1723. There is no indication he remained an active member of the English Grand Lodge. He is alleged to have founded the Gormogons in 1724, a bizarre order thought to have been "a plot of the Jesuits or Roman Catholics in opposition to Freemasonry" and a "vehicle to further the interests of the

Stuarts."⁹⁹ This order did exist, but "accomplished nothing but attempt to ridicule Freemasonry."¹⁰⁰ Judging from Wharton's later activities, it is unlikely he would have intentionally attempted to harm the reputation of Freemasonry. We hear of Wharton at the Stuart court in Rome in 1724, where Ramsay met him. In 1728, Wharton reappeared in Spain, where he began a Masonic lodge of Englishmen living in Madrid. This was the first lodge in Spain. By this time, he was a Roman Catholic and an "agent of the Pretender."¹⁰¹ Both Roberts and Jacob suggest he served as the first, or one of the first, Grand Master of French Freemasonry.¹⁰² Batham is more certain. He contends Wharton was Grand Master, "probably being chosen, if not elected, in 1728 and continuing until his death in 1731."¹⁰³ Coil claims Wharton joined the Fransican Order before his death.¹⁰⁴ Wharton was the only man in Masonic history to serve as Grand Master to both the English and French Grand Lodges.

As we have seen, when English freemasonry finally evolved to speculative freemasonry, it "emerged as a uniquely Hanoverian social institution, an embodiment of the Newtonian Enlightenment and officially dedicated to the ideology of court Whiggery."¹⁰⁵ French freemasonry, on the other hand, could not at first decide where its loyalties lay. Roberts suggests there were two types of French freemasons: "Freemacons catoliques, royalists et jacobites' and 'Freemacons heretiques, apostats et republicains.'"¹⁰⁶

Roberts' quote is extremely important for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the schism within French freemasonry. The Jacobite sect looked to the Jacobite Grand Mastership, while the "republicans" followed the lead of the Grand Lodge of London. Ironically, the first three Grand Masters of the French Grand Lodge were Jacobites: Wharton 1728-1731, Lord James Hector MacLean 1731-1736, and Charles Radcliffe, Lord Derwentwater 1736-1738.¹⁰⁷ It was not until Derwentwater was elected in 1736 that members of both factions accepted one leader.

Second, this quote is attributed to Ramsay, cited in Chevallier's Les Ducs. If indeed these are Ramsay's words, it is interesting to note his choices: the Jacobites are Catholics and royalists; those true to the Grand Lodge in London are heretics, apostates and republicans. This is certainly a biased and uncomplimentary description, and this particular description is precisely why I doubt Ramsay would categorize French masons in such a way. First, Ramsay was known for his tolerance. Indeed, tolerance is a recurring theme in all of his written works, including his Oration of 1737. Second, Ramsay was initiated into a Masonic lodge in England. He was well aware of the English system and its Protestant, whiggish members. There is no evidence to support his turning away from the original system. As a matter of fact, in his Oration, he recognizes the importance of the English masons' contribution to the Craft.

Roberts contends the years 1736-1738 were "crucial" in the growth of French freemasonry.¹⁰⁸ Derwentwater, as Grand Master in 1736, managed to draw together both factions of freemasons, and the organization became strong and united under his leadership. French aristocrats began joining, and freemasonry spread to the provinces. But, this was also the time freemasonry came to the notice of the French government. An article appeared in the Boston Gazette on April 25, 1737, discussing the "vogue" of Freemasonry in Paris and announcing an expected suppression there, as had already occurred in Holland; by July 1737, it was rumored the King was alarmed at the rapid growth of the French masons.¹⁰⁹ As more and more men joined, the meetings could no longer be kept secret, and "a Royal Decree was issued excluding from court those members of the nobility who dared to become freemasons."¹¹⁰

Batham suggests it was Cardinal Fleury, and not Louis XV, who opposed Freemasonry in France. In a letter concerning Montesquieu's initiation, Fleury wrote:

"He is not aware evidently that His Majesty has expressed strong disapproval of the Society and does not wish it to develop any further here. You have done well to urge him not to take part in it and I beg you to acquaint him in particular with the views of His Majesty."¹¹¹

Although Fleury claimed Louis XV disapproved of French freemasonry, this does not seem to have been the case. Louis XV continued to allow French noblemen to join. Even his valet de chambre, Bontemps, became a Mason in 1737 and "it is

unlikely [he] would have taken this step without the King's knowledge and consent."¹¹²

Apparently, Louis XV even considered joining the fraternity. On August 2, 1737, Ramsay wrote to an English Jacobite friend:

"You have no doubt heard of the rumours our French Freemasons made. I was the Orator and had great views if the Cardinal [Fleury] had not wrote to me to forbear...if the Cardinal had deferred one month longer, I was to have had the 'merite' to harangue the King of France, as head of the Confraternity and to have initiated His Majesty into our sacred mysteries."¹¹³

Although there is no other evidence to support the membership of Louis XV, it has been suggested he was initiated into the Coustos-Villeroy Lodge, the "King's Lodge" in Paris.¹¹⁴

In 1738, Pope Clement XII issued his Papal Bull, in Eminenti, which excommunicated all masonic members. The Bull damned Masons for their religious tolerance, their secret oaths and "other just and reasonable motives known to us."¹¹⁵ The Bull was ignored by the French Parliament, which refused to receive it. Roberts mentions that perhaps this Bull "sharpened the desire of some French freemasons to emphasize the Catholic and legitimist nature" of their organization.¹¹⁶

The Most important event of the "crucial" period in French freemasonry was certainly Ramsay's Oration. Prior to 1737, French freemasons followed the traditions of the three English Craft masonry. From the time of Ramsay's speech,

"Freemasonry, especially in Paris, was a fad with the nobility who clung to it and distorted it for over half a century."¹¹⁷

This distortion began with the misinterpretation of two ideas in Ramsay's Oration. First, Ramsay drew a correlation between the Freemasons and the Crusaders. This correlation was interpreted by some masons as a connection with the Templar Knights. Second, Ramsay emphasized the superior antiquity of the masonic lodges in Scotland, and the role of the Scots in the years after the Crusades.¹¹⁸ These ideas, along with Ramsay's motivations, will be discussed in the next section.

It was the distortion of these two ideas which led to the creation and development of the higher degrees within French freemasonry. In Freemasonry, a degree is:

"some esoteric ceremony, no matter how brief, which advances the member or candidate to a higher rank, including the communication to him of particular distinguishing words, signs...or other esoteric matter, those of each degree being denied to members of lower degree as firmly as they are denied to complete strangers...The existence of degrees does not arise from mere names; the degrees must represent different accomplishments of symbolic Masonry, just as the corresponding names represented different grades of operative skill."¹¹⁹

"The original English masonic system consisted of the degrees Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master. In France, there was a rapid development of new degrees above these original English degrees. According to Coil, French masonry

"became loaded down with degrees and orders, not only presuming elevated social standing, but pretending to superior Masonic knowledge, secrets and authority

(the Scots or Scottish Master) and degrees of superior social and political grade (the Knightly)."¹²⁰

As a matter of fact, "the Freemasonry which accepted higher degrees beyond the original three came to be referred to as 'Scottish' Freemasonry and claimed independence from the traditional drawing authority from England."¹²¹

The development of these new higher degrees was underway certainly by 1740, and possibly even before that. Ramsay is widely considered the inventor of these degrees, although the contention he created a new Rite within Freemasonry was not made until sixty years after the Oration.¹²² There is no evidence to support this contention and no indication within the Oration that Ramsay ever intended these higher degrees of masonry. As a matter of fact, Ramsay's correlation between the Freemasons and Crusaders may not have been an original theory. He may have simply embellished an already existing idea.

Batham contends this was indeed the case. He suggests Ramsay may have been aware of the Letter from the Grand Mistress of Freemasons, an anonymous item attributed to Dean Swift and published in Dublin in 1724, which stated:

"The famous old Scottish Lodge in Kilwinning, of which all Kings of Scotland have been, from time to time, Grand Masters without interruption, down from the days of Fergus, who reigned there more than two thousand years ago, long before the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, or the Knights of Malta, to which two Lodges I must nevertheless, allow the honour of having adorned the ancient Jewish and Pagan Masonry with many religious and Christian rules."¹²³

It cannot be proven that Ramsay's intention with the Oration was to create a new realm within freemasonry, yet the coincidence of the Oration's timing and the new developments within the fraternity cannot be ignored. But, whether it was his intention or not, Ramsay's emphasis on the Crusader myth and the superiority of the Scots lodges appear in the new degrees which developed in amazing numbers after 1740.

"In this emphasis and in the specific references to the Knights of St. John lay the roots of a legendary connexion of Masonry with the Templars which was to animate both a great flowering of Masonic activity and a rich heritage of misrepresentation and misinterpretation. In the Templar association lay the germs of a mythology of revolt and vengeance."¹²⁴

The idea of this "Scottish" Masonry also became very important to these Freemasons:

"It soon came to be asserted that the true inwardness of Freemasonry and its adherents' access to the most important secrets of the Order could only be realized through those lodges which retained organic connexion with the legendary Scottish origins."¹²⁵

Not only did these higher degrees pervert English Freemasonry, their creation and development caused a serious schism among French Freemasons. According to Coil:

"From the middle of the eighteenth century, the history of French Freemasonry is virtually the history of the Haut Grades [high grades], for most events were acts of some body of the high grades of the effort of the Grand Lodge (later the Grand Orient) to prevent, avoid, or overcome the effects of such action."¹²⁶

Eventually this schism was healed. But the French Freemasons never returned to the original English Freemasonry, and the high grades became the accepted way of life within French Freemasonry.

By the turn of the century, this higher grade, or Scottish Masonry, had spread all over Europe and to the United States, where it became the Scottish Rite.

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SECTION THREE: RAMSAY'S ORATION

"This was one of the most discussed speeches ever delivered in the whole of Masonic history and it is certain that no other has ever received so much attention, been so misunderstood or had so much effect on the course and development of Freemasonry."¹

Throughout this thesis, I have alluded to Ramsay's Oration. I have discussed its importance in terms of instigating the development of the higher degrees in French Freemasonry. I have referred to it as Ramsay's only contribution to French Freemasonry and how it is remembered as his only accomplishment. In this final section, I would like to discuss the Oration, Ramsay's motives in writing it, and the subsequent criticism surrounding it.

For a speech as important as this one is recognized to have been, the circumstances surrounding Ramsay's Oration are obscure. Traditionally, it had been assumed the Oration was originally written for presentation at the French Grand Lodge meeting of March 21, 1737. But, in "Chevalier Ramsay: A New Appreciation," Cyril Batham has developed an entirely new theory on Ramsay's Oration. Although this new theory does not resolve all the uncertainties about the history of the Oration, it does provide some clarity.

Although historians agree on the importance of the Oration, they disagree on almost everything else about it. For example, they disagree on whether Ramsay actually delivered the Oration, when it was delivered, and how and when it was

published. This uncertainty can be attributed to the lack of comprehensive and dependable French Masonic Lodge records from the eighteenth century. For the most part, historians of the late twentieth century have adopted a solution to this general disagreement. They simply mention the Oration in terms of specifics, such as the Crusader connection and its effect on the development of French Freemasonry, and omit detailed references concerning the circumstances surrounding its delivery or publication. They seldom delve into the actual history of the Oration.

In part, Batham's article is an exception to this. Although this article is possibly the most definitive and detailed work ever written about Ramsay and his Oration, unanswered questions remain--especially regarding the publication of the Oration. But Batham does provide new information on the logistics of the Oration.

According to Batham, there were actually two versions of Ramsay's Oration. The first version is referred to as the "Epernay," so called because it was recently discovered in the Archives in Epernay, France, and was titled Discourse of M. le Chevalier Ramsay given at the St. John's Lodge on 26th December 1736.² The second version is simply referred to as the "Grand Lodge" Oration. This was the version that was subsequently circulated and published, and it was intended for presentation at the French Grand Lodge meeting of March 21, 1737.

The discovery of the Epernay version of the Oration clarified two important points for Masonic historians; namely why the Grand Lodge Oration seemed unsuitable for a Grand Lodge meeting and why this Oration appeared to be directed toward an audience of new initiates of the Order.³ The Grand Lodge Oration, which was the only version of the Oration known to these historians, was a revision of the Epernay version. The Epernay speech had been "so well received and was considered so important that [Ramsay] was asked to repeat it at the forthcoming Grand Lodge meeting."⁴

The Epernay version of the Oration was intended for the initiates of the Order. Ramsay's position as Grand Orator of the French Freemasons would have required him to write and deliver speeches "on special occasions and also after initiation ceremonies."⁵ When Ramsay revised this Grand Lodge version, he did not change the tone of the original speech. This may explain why some historians found the Grand Lodge Oration too simplistic for Grand Lodge members. Batham claims both the Epernay and the Grand Lodge versions are "Ramsay's version of the Old Charges."⁶ Just as Anderson revised the traditional operative masonic manuscripts for his Constitutions, Ramsay obviously studied these same manuscripts and created his own revised version.

The Epernay and Grand Lodge versions of the Oration are very similar. The differences in the texts basically concern the origins of Freemasonry:

"In the Epernay version, Ramsay traces [Freemasonry] back to the Old Testament, claiming that the early history of Masonry was closely tied up with the history of God's chosen people and stating that only after the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders was the Book containing the secrets of the Order rediscovered.

"In the Grand Lodge version, however, Ramsay discards the suggestion that the histories of the Jewish race and of early Masonry are bound together..."⁷

Batham contends that Ramsay revised the Epernay version into the Grand Lodge version to avoid inciting the Censors, who would read it and decide if it would be published.⁸ This is logical. It is unlikely the Censors, a strong arm of the Catholic Church, would have approved of the connection between the Jews and the roots of Freemasonry.

But, the question remains: did Ramsay actually deliver the Grand Lodge Oration of the Grand Lodge meeting of March 21, 1737? Did he actually deliver this version of the Oration at all?

Although Batham states that "some Masonic historians contend that Ramsay never did deliver his address before the Grand Lodge,"⁹ Gould contends that the Oration "was beyond doubt delivered on March 21, 1737."¹⁰ Gould bases this contention on Ramsay's correspondence with Cardinal Fleury. He used the dates of the letters to narrow down the date that Ramsay prepared the Oration.

In a letter dated March 20, 1737, Ramsay submitted the text of the Oration to Cardinal Fleury, the powerful Cardinal Minister to Louis XV, for Fleury's approval:

"As I am to read my discourse to-morrow in a general assembly of the Order and to hand it on Monday to the examiners of the Chancellerie [the Censors of the Press-prior to publication], I pray your Excellency to return it to me to-morrow before mid-day by express messenger."¹¹

Fleury's reply to this letter has been lost, "but it was obviously unfavourable."¹² The Grand Lodge meeting was postponed, probably in the hope that Ramsay could convince Fleury of the importance of both the Grand Lodge meeting and his Oration.

On March 22, Ramsay wrote again to Fleury, apparently in response to Fleury's negative reply to the first letter:

"I learn that the Assemblies of Freemasons displease your Excellency...I pray you to inform me whether I should return to those Assemblies and I will conform to your Excellency's wishes with a boundless docility equal to the very great respect with which I am, Monseigneur, the very humble and very obedient servant of Your Eminence."¹³

Fleury returned this letter to Ramsay. In the margin, he had written: the King does not wish it.

This terse reply from Fleury ended Ramsay's Masonic career. There is no evidence he ever participated in a Masonic function, or in Masonic activities, after this response. And, Freemasonry was officially banned in France a few days later.¹⁴

So it appears Ramsay did not deliver the Grand Lodge Oration at the Grand Lodge meeting, or, for that matter, anywhere else. The records of the Coustos-Villeroy Lodge state that the Grand Lodge meeting was postponed to March 24.¹⁵ Obviously, he could not have delivered the Oration on March 21, as Gould suggests, because there was no Grand Lodge meeting at all on that day. Batham contends that "there is no doubt that the Cardinal disapproved and there is no doubt either that Ramsay accepted his decision...We certainly have no record of any Masonic activity on Ramsay's part after this date [March 22, 1737]."¹⁶ If Ramsay's Grand Lodge Oration was indeed revised specifically for presentation to the Grand Lodge, as Batham contends, and Ramsay disassociated himself from Freemasonry after Fleury's negative response, then Ramsay never delivered this Oration at all.

If Ramsay never actually delivered this Grand Lodge Oration, how did the ideas within the Oration become so famous?

First, Ramsay had delivered the Epernay version many times, and many Masons had been exposed to the ideas in the Oration. Even though he did not actually present the revised Grand Lodge version, the Orations were similar enough to diffuse his main ideas.

Second, although Ramsay did not present the Grand Lodge Oration himself, it seems it was delivered by others. According to Gould, it was presented at the installation of

Duc D'Antin as Grand Master on June 24, 1738, and again at the Grand Lodge meeting in 1740.¹⁷

It is unclear why Ramsay allowed it to be presented, especially since he was no longer associated with the Freemasons. Perhaps he felt his ideas were important enough to be passed on to other Masons. In his letter to Carte, the English Jacobite, he referred to his ideas in the Oration as "great views."¹⁸ Even though he was unwilling to chance Fleury's disapproval by remaining a Freemason, it is conceivable he believed other Masons could benefit from his ideas, and so allowed it to be presented, circulated and published.

The circumstances surrounding the publication of this Grand Lodge Oration are equally unclear. Masonic historians do not agree on when it was first published, or under what title it was published.

Gould claims it was first published after Ramsay presented it at the Grand Lodge in 1737, and it was titled Relation apologique du Franc Maconnerie: "It was publicly burned at Rome by command of the Pope, on the ground that it was a work which tended to weaken the loyalty of the people."¹⁹

Coil agrees that this was the first publication of the Oration. Both he and Gould cite a reference in the Gentleman's Magazine for April 1739:

"There was lately burnt at Rome, with great solemnity, by order of the Inquisition, a piece in French, written by the Chevalier Ramsay, author of the

Travels of Cyrus, entitled, An Apologetical and Historical Relation of the Secrets of Freemasonry, printed at Dublin, by Patric Odonoko. This was published in Paris in answer to a pretended cathecism, printed there by order of the Lieutenant of Police."²⁰

Coil also adds: "Elsewhere the authorship of the paper is given as `par J.G.D.M.F.M., Dublin, Chez Patrice Odonoko, 1738.' The date of the burning is given as Feb. 1, 1739."²¹

This is where Gould begins to contradict himself. First, he lists the date of the Gentleman's Magazine as 1738.²² Obviously, this cannot be the case if the Oration was not burned until February 1739. Second, Gould later refers to this same article by a different title: Relation apologique et historique de la Societe des F.M., par J.G.D.M.F.M., Dublin, chez Patrice Odonoko, 1738."²³ He re-emphasizes the fact it was burned in Rome, but suddenly claims that "Ramsay did not write the Relation. Its style is far less pure than his, the orthography is totally distinct."²⁴

Why does Gould contradict himself? Why does he cite two different titles for the same manuscript? Why would Gould, at one point in his paper, state this was the first publication of the Oration, then, later, claim that Ramsay could not have written it? These questions have never been addressed, and, as far as I can tell, there are no answers for them.

Ramsay's Oration next appeared in 1741 in a "vile and obscene" Paris publication called the Almanac des Cocus [Cuckolds]. It was titled "Discourse pronounced at the reception of Freemasons by Monsieur de R____, Grand Orator

of the Order." It was supposed to be the same as the Oration because of "the condemnation pronounced upon it by the Inquisition."²⁵ Gould states the magazine "naturally treated the subjects of the day and might have published [the] Oration without previously consulting the writer."²⁶

The Oration was next published by De la Tierce in 1742 in History, Obligations and Laws of the very venerable Confraternity of F.M.²⁷ This translation by De la Tierce is generally considered the most correct, and it is the only one I have ever seen published.²⁸

The Oration was reprinted several more times. It appeared in London in 1757 and 1759, at the Hague in 1773, and in the appendix of the German translations of Anderson's Constitutions in the editions printed in 1741, 1743 and 1762.²⁹ But, according to Batham, these versions of the Grand Lodge Oration that were "published after Ramsay's death have been edited by various persons and so lack [Ramsay's] authority."³⁰

From the beginning, French Freemasonry was very different from English Freemasonry. French Freemasonry was a gentleman's club, comprised mostly of the nobility. Members met to socialize; "Assemblies were prohibited, and when people desired to hold meetings these could only take place if strictly confined to harmless pleasure and under official

supervision."³¹ Unlike English Masonic Lodges, membership in France was mostly aristocratic and

"the people of whom the lodges were composed at the beginning of French Freemasonry were not made of suitable material for the standard-bearers of a great idea, and were by no means fully conscious of the magnitude of the Cause which they were to serve."³²

Apparently Ramsay was aware of these "undesirables" within the French lodges. After all, he was well aware of the differences between French and English Freemasonry; he had been initiated in London. According to Lennhoff, Ramsay "was ardently devoted to Freemasonry and was particularly bent on ridding the Society of all those people who sought to use the lodges for their own selfish and commercial ends."³³

Perhaps this is how he came upon the idea for his Oration. It is unlikely he could have forcibly removed these undesirable members, but perhaps he thought he could reform them. Certainly "Ramsay's Oration gave him the opportunity of making important suggestions for the information of French Freemasonry."³⁴ He "deliberately sought a comprehensive ideal which would reunite Masons irritated against one another by the strains and cross currents within Parisian lodges."³⁵ Ramsay had a purpose in mind for his Oration: he intended to legitimize French Freemasonry.

Ramsay's approach was simple. There are three basic themes in the Oration: 1) the qualities of a Freemason; 2) the expectations for the future of French Freemasonry; and 3) the history of Freemasonry. When these three themes are

combined in the Oration, the ideas of an ancient and noble organization, with a powerful future, is created. Ramsay's main purpose was to inspire Masonic members and make the Freemasons proud of their Order. He meant to encourage the new members and revitalize the old. He did this by creating a noble tradition, and the speech "was a plea from the maintenance of the highest motives which we should all be prepared to accept as principles to be observed by every true Freemason, humanity, pure morals, inviolable secrecy and a taste for the fine arts."³⁶

At this point it is necessary to examine Ramsay's Oration. All citations are from Robert Gould's History of Freemasonry.

THE QUALITIES AND OBLIGATIONS FOR A FREEMASON

According to Ramsay, there are four qualities essential for a Freemason: humanity, pure morals, inviolable secrecy and the appreciation of both fine arts and the sciences . And, Ramsay believes these qualities work together to create the perfect Mason.

A Mason must believe in Humanity in order to create a united world:

"The world is nothing but a huge republic, for which every nation is a family, every individual a child. We desire to reunite all men of enlightened minds, gentle manners and agreeable wit, not only by a love for the fine arts but, much more, by the grand principles of virtue, science and religion, where the interests of the Fraternity shall become those of the

Whole human race, whence all nations shall be enabled to draw useful knowledge and where the subjects of all kingdoms shall learn to cherish one another without renouncing their own country."³⁷

A Mason must have sound morals because Freemasonry was established

"to make men lovable men, good citizens, good subjects, inviolable in their promises, faithful adorers of the God of Love, lovers rather of virtue than of reward."

A Mason must have the ability to keep secrets in order to conceal the mysteries of the Order and to protect other Freemasons:

"We have secrets, they are figurative signs and sacred words, composing a language sometimes mute, sometimes very eloquent, in order to communicate with one another at the greatest distance, to recognize our Brothers of whatsoever tongue. Our Brothers, travelling in divers [sic] lands, have only needed to make themselves known in our Lodges in order to be there immediately overwhelmed by all kinds of succor, even in time of the most bloody wars, while illustrious prisoners have found Brothers where they only expected to meet enemies."

The final quality required of a Freemason is an appreciation for the arts and sciences. Ramsay had a specific goal in mind for this particular quality. He envisioned a "Universal Dictionary of the liberal arts and useful sciences, excepting only theology and politics.

"By this means the light of all nations will be united in one single work, which will be a universal library of all that is beautiful, great, luminous, solid and useful in all the sciences and in all noble arts."

Ramsay also imposed specific obligations upon the Freemasons and instructed them on their duties:

"to protect your Brothers by your authority, to enlighten them by your knowledge, to edify them by your virtues, to succor them in their necessities, to sacrifice all personal resentments, to strive after all that may contribute to the peace and unity of society."

Ramsay's purpose in this section of the Oration seems to be to reinforce his idea of a united world via Freemasonry. Each of these qualities and obligations is geared specifically toward creating better men. Ramsay obviously believes Freemasonry, as an institution, is suited to this responsibility:

"The sole aim of which is to unite minds and hearts in order to make them better, to form in the course of ages a spiritual empire where, without derogating from the various duties which different states exact, a new people shall be created, which, composed of many nations, shall in some sort cement them all into one by the tie of virtue and science."

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF FRENCH FREEMASONRY

Ramsay had two specific purposes in mind for the future of French Freemasonry. First, he envisioned France as the center of the Masonic movement:

"From the British Isles the Royal Art is now repassing into France...In this happy age when love of peace has become the virtue of heroes, this nation one of the most spiritual of Europe, will become the centre of the Order. She will clothe our work, our statues, our customs with grace, delicacy and good taste, essential qualities of the Order, of which the basis is the wisdom, strength and beauty of genius. It is in future in our Lodges, as it were in public schools, that Frenchmen shall learn, without travelling, the characters of all nations and that strangers shall experience that France is the home of all peoples."

Second, Ramsay intended the French Masons to unite with the English Masons and contribute to the Universal Dictionary.

"The work has already been commenced in London and, by means of the union of our Brothers, it may be carried to a conclusion in a few years...The Order expects of each of you to contribute, by his protection, liberality or labour, to a vast work for which no academy can suffice. Because all these societies being composed of a very small number of men, their work cannot embrace an object so extended."

This idea of a Universal Dictionary has long confused historians. What exactly did Ramsay mean by "the work has already been commenced in London?" Was Ramsay referring to Ephraim Chambers' Cyclopoedia? This first encyclopedia of the eighteenth century was published in London in 1728. According to Jacob, Cyclopoedia "can probably be described as a Masonic project."³⁸

Chambers was probably a Mason, and he was affiliated with men such as Anderson and Desaguliers in London. It is likely Ramsay knew about the Cyclopoedia; he was in London not long after it was published. As a matter of fact, Jacob contends that Ramsay was "almost certainly" referring to Chambers' work in the Oration.³⁹

There is another question raised by Ramsay's idea of a Universal Dictionary: Was Dennis Diderot's Encyclopedie a result of this suggestion by Ramsay?

According to Jacob, "Ramsay's now famous address to a Masonic meeting has been used to argue that he was pointing toward Diderot's project."⁴⁰ She disputes this, claiming:

"It is more likely that Ramsay was concerned to prevent such a project...He wanted to see encyclopaedism harnessed to the service of Christian piety and appealed to the international masonic community to effect that linkage."⁴²

I disagree. I believe Ramsay's idea of a Universal Dictionary was to promote a humanistic piety--a sense of the world as community. When Ramsay discussed this idea of the Universal Dictionary in the Oration, he specifically emphasized that "theology and politics" be omitted.

Although it cannot be proved, it is likely that both Ramsay's Universal Dictionary and Diderot's Encyclopedie were influenced by Chambers' Cyclopoedia. Jacob contends that the Encyclopedie contains Masonic allusions.⁴² She also suggests it was initially conceived in 1745 "as a revision of Chambers' Cyclopoedia."⁴³ It is possible these Masonic allusions could have easily come from what Jacob calls Chambers' "Masonic Project."

Although they were not stated in the Oration, Ramsay had other plans for the future of French Freemasonry. During Von Geusau's visit in 1741, Ramsay showed him the Oration, and outlined his plans. These plans included: "regular occasional suppers at which members of all classes of society should sit side by side, in order that they might be suitably impressed with the fact that by nature all men are equal;"⁴⁴ the creation of a special fund "to further the main objects of

Freemasonry;"⁴⁵ and, an international conference for all Freemasons. Ramsay told Von Geusau "that he wanted to delete from Masonic ritual all that had been superimposed on it over the years...with the object of restoring the original ceremony."⁴⁶

What was the point of these plans? Did Ramsay make these plans while he was still an active Freemason, or did he thing of them later?

I believe these were later ideas. There is no mention of these plans in the Oration. Although Ramsay stopped attending Masonic activities after his correspondence with Fleury in 1737, there is evidence to suggest he maintained his regard for Freemasonry. When his house was being built at Pontoise in April 1741, he held a "masonic-style ceremony with which he laid the foundation stone."⁴⁷ He attempted to "convert" Von Geusau and his pupil to Freemasonry during their visit in 1741.⁴⁸ Obviously, he still thought about Freemasonry as late as 1741--four years after he left the Masonic fold.

THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

The final theme of the Oration is Ramsay's interpretation of the history of Freemasonry. This is the most important theme in the Oration, especially in terms of the later criticism on the Oration. Ramsay uses the historical

explanation to achieve his ultimate goal: to inspire a sense of importance and tradition in his audience.

Ironically, it was the idea of Ramsay's historical rationale that created such an uproar within Masonic circles. In his defense of Ramsay and his Oration, Gould claims the Oration is "a mere embellishment of Anderson."⁴⁹ Indeed, James Anderson and Ramsay shared a common goal in their attempt to create a prestigious history of Freemasonry.

In his Constitutions, Anderson traced the origins of Freemasonry back to Adam. Ramsay did not dispute Anderson's origins; he agreed the onset of Freemasonry occurred in Ancient times:

"Yes, Sirs, the famous festivals of Ceres at Eleusis, of Isis in Egypt, of Minerva at Athens, of Urania amongst the Phoenicians, of Diana in Scythia were connected with ours. In those places mysteries were celebrated which concealed many vestiges of the ancient religion of Noah and the Patriarchs."

And, although Ramsay never disputes Anderson's ancient origins, it is obvious he cannot resist a diplomatic dig at those origins:

"Some ascribe our institution to Solomon, some to Moses, some to Abraham, some to Noah, some to Enoch, who built the first city, or even to Adam. Without pretence of denying these origins, I pass on to matters less ancient."

Ramsay must have realized he could not surpass Anderson's notion of the origins of Freemasonry--he certainly could not trace the origins back any further than Adam. So instead, he took a different approach. He laid his emphasis on the

nobility of the Crusaders--the kings, princes and knights of the Crusades:

"The word Freemason must therefore not be taken in a literal, gross and material sense, as if our founders had been simple workers in stone, or merely curious geniuses who wished to perfect the arts. They were not only skillful architects, desirous of consecrating their talents and food to the construction of material temples; but also religious and warrior princes who designed to enlighten, edify and protect the living Temples of the Most High...At the time of the Crusades in Palestine many princes, lords and citizens associated themselves and vowed to restore the Temple of the Christians in the Holy Land, to employ themselves in bringing back their architecture to its first institution."

Although Ramsay had established this connection between the Freemason and the Crusader, he was careful to reiterate that this connection was a renaissance of Freemasonry:

"Our ancestors, the crusaders, gathered together from all parts of Christendom in the Holy Land, desired thus to reunite into one sole Fraternity the individuals of all nations.

"Our order, therefore, must not be considered a revival of the Bacchanals, but as an Order founded in remote antiquity, renewed in the Holy Land by our ancestors in order to recall the memory of the most sublime truths amidst the pleasures of society."

In order to emphasize this idea of Crusader-Freemason, Ramsay recounted a splendid affiliation:

"Our Order formed an intimate union with the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. From that time our lodge took the name of Lodges of St. John. This union was made after the example set by the Israelites when they erected the second Temple who, whilst they handled the trowel and mortar with one hand, in the other held the sword and buckler."

According to Gould, it was this particular allusion that formed "the groundwork of all subsequent Scots grades: Knightly Scotch [sic] Masons who, in the Old Temple, rediscovered the

Sacred Name, the trowel in one hand, the sword in the other." Gould refutes the idea that this allusion was intended by Ramsay, and calls it "an innocent allegory in illustration of this thesis."⁵⁰

Ramsay's account of this affiliation between Freemasonry and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem has been speculated upon for years. Was this a sly allusion to the Templar Knights? Did Ramsay mean there was a direct connection between the Freemasons and the Templars?

According to Batham, the Order of St. John of Jerusalem was associated with the Order of St. Lazarus.⁵¹ The Order of St. Lazarus had been established in Palestine in the fourth century, and the Order build hospitals for lepers. The Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem was established later, and the two Orders united. "When the Order of St. John added the vow of celibacy, these two separated."⁵² The Order of St. Lazarus continued, the Order of St. John became extinct, and:

"though the latter Order became extinct, Ramsay was, in a way, connected with it; he was, in a sense, a Knight of that Order, one of the most revered of all the chivalric Orders and so, in connecting it with [Freemasonry], he was not only adding lustre to Masonry but also paying tribute to his own Order."⁵³

Certainly Ramsay would have been aware of the history of his own Order. According to Gould,

"In 1714-19 Helyot's great work on the spiritual and temporal Orders was published at Paris (Histoire des Ordres Monastiques, Religieux et Militaires). The third

volume contains the history of the Order of St. Lazarus, of which Ramsay was a Knight. Who can doubt that he read it?"⁵⁴

He was also aware of at least a general history of the Crusades from his affiliation with the de Bouillon family, "which claimed an association with them."⁵⁵

But did Ramsay intend this as an allusion to the Templar Knights? According to Peter Partner, the answer is no.

"Of Templars Ramsay did not breathe a word...It is most unlikely Ramsay thought of the Templars at the time of his speech, since he was above all anxious for the approval of the French government, and the Templars had for centuries been viewed by French government as a banned and disgraced organization."⁵⁶

There is no indication within the Oration Ramsay ever intended any connection between the Crusader-Freemasons and the Templar Knights. It makes no sense that he would have considered such a connection. Certainly, the last thing he would have done would be to annoy the government or the Catholic Church, especially when he had taken such pains to legitimize French Freemasonry.

Actually, Ramsay could not have made a better choice when he selected the Crusaders as his Masonic ancestors. The Crusaders were considered heroes. After all, they had gone off to foreign lands to fight the heathens. They were Catholics and their goal was to perpetuate Christianity. They combined the attributes of both the religious and the military Orders, and these Orders, according to Ramsay, "were established to make perfect Christians and to inspire a love of true glory." And, not only did these Crusaders go to

fight the Holy Wars, but they also sought to restore the architecture of the Holy Land, and bring these architectural ideas home with them:

"The Kings, princes and lords returned from Palestine to their own lands and there established divers [sic] Lodges. At the time of the last Crusades many lodges were already erected in Germany, Italy, Spain, France and, from thence, in Scotland, because of the close alliance between the French and the Scotch. James, Lord Stewart of Scotland, was Grand Master of a lodge established at Kilwinning, in the West of Scotland, MCCLXXXVI shortly after the death of Alexander III, King of Scotland, and one year before John Baliol mounted the throne. This Lord received as Freemasons into his Lodge the Earls of Gloucester and Ulster, the one English, the other Irish.

"By degrees our Lodges and our Rites were neglected in most places. This is why of so many historians only those of Great Britain speak of our Order. Nevertheless it preserved its splendour among those Scotsmen of whom the Kings of France confided during many centuries the safeguard of their royal persons."

This is a particularly important passage in the Oration.

Ramsay's allusion to Scotland

"has been seized upon by the inventors of Scots rites, all pretending to hail from Heredom Kilwinning, asserting the superiority in points of antiquity and pure tenets of the Grand Lodge held there--which body, it is almost unnecessary to say, never existed."⁵⁷

I believe Ramsay chose Scotland as the seat of Freemasonry for specific reasons. Because

"no continental country could be selected, as Masonry had been introduced into all of them well within living memory...[Scotland] was remote enough, it had a long political alliance with France and many of its countrymen were living in France, either by choice or as Stuart exiles,"

Scotland was the perfect choice.⁵⁸ Ramsay was able to honor his home country, and he specifically mentions Kilwinning, "whose Masonic history was no doubt well known to him through his associations with that town."⁵⁹ Kilwinning is located outside his childhood home of Ayr.

By mentioning Scotland as the spot where the "splendour" of Freemasonry was "preserved," Ramsay was able to explain the "process by which Freemasonry had come to present itself to [the French] with British credentials."⁶⁰ Continuing his Crusader-Freemason connection, he cites a specific example:

"During the eighth and last Crusade, that great Prince Edward, son of Edward III, King of England, seeing there was no longer any safety for his Brethren in the Holy Land, whence the Christian troops were retiring, brought them all back and this colony of Brothers was established in England. As this prince was endowed with all heroic qualities, he loved fine arts, declared himself protector of our Order, conceded to it new privileges and then the numbers of this Fraternity took the name of Freemasons after the example set by their ancestors.

"Since that time Great Britain became the seat of our Order, the conservator of our laws and the depository of our secrets."

This is certainly a clever way of explaining the English roots of Freemasonry. It continues his idea of the Crusader-Freemason. But what about Scotland? According to Ramsay, Freemasonry was "preserved" in Scotland already. In this section, Ramsay gives credit to Prince Edward, and suddenly Great Britain is the "seat" of the Order. In the thirteenth century, England and Scotland were two separate countries; yet Ramsay never mentions Scotland again.

Ramsay concludes the Oration by discussing the history of Freemasonry from the Reformation, when Freemasons "lost their moral tenets, [became Protestants] becoming more operative artisans," to the present, and his conclusion that "France was destined to be the centre of the reformed Fraternity."⁶¹

"The fatal religious discords which embarrassed and tore Europe in the sixteenth century caused our Order to degenerate from the nobility of its origins. Many of our Rites and usages which were contrary to the prejudices of the times were changed, disguised, suppressed. Thus, it was that many of our Brothers forgot, like the ancient Jews, the spirit of our laws and retained only the letter and shell. The beginnings of a remedy have already been made. It is necessary only to continue and, at last, to bring everything back to its original institution. This work cannot be difficult in a State where religion and the Government can only be favourable to our laws.

"From the British Isles the Royal Art is now repassing into France, under the reign of the most amiable of Kings, whose humanity animates all his virtues and under the ministry of a Mentor [evidently Cardinal Fleury], who has realized all that could be imagined most fabulous. In this happy age when love of peace has become the virtue of heroes, this nation [France] one of the most spiritual of Europe, will become the centre of the Order..."

I have already mentioned part of this last section in my discussion of Ramsay's expectations for the future of French Freemasonry. But, I believe Ramsay had another motive in this particular section, aside from providing a historical perspective, and attempting to motivate his audience to be good Freemasons. I think this particular section of the Oration was intended for the benefit of Cardinal Fleury and King Louis XV, the leaders of the French government.

By way of explaining my thinking, I should point out that Ramsay seems to be flattering Fleury and the King. He mentions Louis XV as "the most amiable of Kings" and credits Fleury as the "Mentor, who has realized all that could be imagined most fabulous." He states that the revitalization of Freemasonry "cannot be difficult in a State where religion and the government can only be favourable to our laws." He refers to France as "one of the most spiritual of Europe."

Perhaps Ramsay thought if he concluded his Oration with compliments to Fleury, Louis XV and France as a nation, he could persuade Fleury of the innocence of Freemasonry. Perhaps he intended this complimentary conclusion as an extra incentive for Fleury, who had never had a particularly good opinion of Freemasonry.⁶² Perhaps he believed if he made it seem as if Freemasonry could flourish in a government led by Fleury, Fleury would be convinced of its future. This, of course, was not the case.

RAMSAY AND HIS CRITICS

"Until quite recently no name has been too bad for Ramsay. Every petty author of the merest tract on Freemasonry has concurred in reviling a dead brother on whose public and private life no slur can be cast and who was highly esteemed by the great and good men of his own generation--whilst even writers of weight and authority have not disdained to heap obloquy upon him without one thought of his possible innocence."⁶³

"The general accusation against Ramsay is, that he was a devoted partisan of the exiled Royal Family of England; that he delivered or wrote a speech; that, in this speech, he wilfully and knowingly, of malice prepense, fouled the pure stream of Masonic history; and

that he so acted in the interests and to further the intrigues of a political faction...Now the only particle of truth is, that Ramsay certainly did write the speech."⁶⁴

This was how Robert Gould described the treatment of Ramsay by nineteenth century critics. But in 1887, Gould published the first edition of this History of Freemasonry, and he seems to have been the first Masonic writer to defend Ramsay and his Oration. It also appears he set a precedent. In the twentieth century, with a few un-notable exceptions, Ramsay has been viewed in a different light. Instead of being accused of partisanship with the Stuarts and compliance with the Catholic Church in the attempt to recruit Freemasons for both causes, Ramsay was viewed as a naive idealist whose ideas in the Oration were misinterpreted and used to instigate the higher degrees of French Freemasonry by "clever men, ambitious to rise at once to an elevated position in the Craft, perhaps to replenish their purses by the sale of their own inventions."⁶⁵ From this perspective, Ramsay has been seen as a victim of circumstance; certainly he did write the Oration, but his ideas were distorted into something he never intended.

Some of these allegations about Ramsay are unfounded. For example, in History of the Knights Templar (1840), Sir James Burnes claimed Ramsay went to Germany, appointed the Young Pretender Grand Master of the Order and was accused of enticing and initiating "the ill-fated pretender into his

fabulous Order of chivalry."⁶⁶ Dr. George Oliver, in Historical Landmarks (1846), stated Ramsay

"stimulated by the success which attended the promulgation of his manufactured degrees in France, brought his system of pretended Scottish Freemasonry into England, with the intention of extending it indefinitely, if he found it acceptable to the English Fraternity, being commissioned by the Pretender, as an agent, to convert his interest with the Freemasons to the advantage of his employer. The attempt failed and the overtures of Ramsay were unceremoniously rejected."⁶⁷

These two particular allegations are unsupportable; there is no evidence to substantiate any of this. Ramsay never visited Germany. There is no evidence he ever saw the Young Pretender again after he left Rome in 1724. There is no indication he ever discussed Freemasonry with James Stuart at any time. As to Ramsay attempting to spread his "manufactured degrees" in England, this is simply impossible. First, after he left England in 1710, he returned only one time. It was during this trip in 1729-1730 that he became a Freemason. At that time, he certainly had not written--or thought about--the Oration.

In History of Freemasonry (1852), George Kloss states: "It is clear that Ramsay purposely introduced higher degrees in order to make a selection from the ranks of the Brotherhood in the interests of the Stuarts, and to collect funds for the Pretender."⁶⁹ J.G. Findel, in his History of Freemasonry (1861), echoes this sentiment. But Findel creates an elaborate conspiracy between the Pretender, the Duke of Wharton and Ramsay. Findel claims "a secret alliance was kept up between

Rome and Scotland in which the Jesuits played a prominent part, seeking to use Freemasonry to further the interests of the Roman Church."⁶⁹ Findel is kinder to Ramsay than the previous critics. He claims Ramsay only "completed the preliminaries necessary for the introduction of the high degrees; their further development was left to the instrumentality of others."⁷⁰ Finally, Emmanuel Rebold, in his History of the Three Lodges (1864), adds a new idea to these theories. He states:

"Ramsay was a partisan of the Stuarts, and introduced a system of Masonry created at Edinboro' by a chapter of Cannongate-Kilwinning Lodge, in the political interests of the Stuarts, and with the intention of enslaving Freemasonry to Roman Catholicism."⁷¹

But beginning with Gould's History of Freemasonry (1887), commentary on Ramsay, and his motives behind the Oration, shifted toward a more moderate view. Gould denies any wrongdoing on Ramsay's part:

"It will suffice to have proved that Ramsay did write the speech, that his intentions were quite compatible with the most absolute innocence, and that he was neither a Stuart intriguer nor a Jesuit missionary in disguise."⁷²

Henry Coil agrees with this contention. In two different sections of his Masonic Encyclopedia (1961), he devotes space to Ramsay's defense:

"There is no evidence that he was a partisan of the Stuarts, all such allegations being founded on the fact that he was born in Scotland, had been converted to Catholicism, and for 15 months was tutor to the two sons of the Old Pretender in Rome [sic]...There is no evidence that he ever created a single degree of any

kind. Also, the fact that Ramsay resided in England for some time following 1725, became a member of the Gentlemen's Society and the Royal Society, and received the Doctor's Degree at Oxford, is hardly consistent with his plotting to overthrow the King of England and restore the house of Stuart."⁷³

"He was neither a plotter nor a meddler in international intrigue, nor a Jacobite in the ordinary sense of that term, though it is natural to suppose that, being a Scotsman, he would have preferred to see on the throne of England one of his own countrymen instead of a foreign prince from Hanover."⁷⁴

Other twentieth century writers are more inclined to emphasize Ramsay's admirable motives in becoming a Freemason and writing the Oration. G.D. Henderson, in Chevalier Ramsay (1952), claims Ramsay "was interested in Freemasonry chiefly because he believed it to be governed by the highest spiritual, moral, intellectual and social ideals."⁷⁵ In The Freemasons (1934), Eugene Lennhoff states "the researchers assume today, with good foundation, that it was not Ramsay's wish to create anything new, but that, on the contrary, he advocated simplicity."⁷⁶

In their attempts to defend Ramsay, these twentieth century writers have found alternative explanations to account for the previous criticisms of Ramsay. For example, C.W. Leadbeater, in Glimpses of Masonic History (1926), claims that Ramsay's Oration "appears to have given just that impetus that was needed to set the French high-grade movement in activity, and ever afterwards the makers of high grades

looked to Ramsay as their pattern and example."⁷⁷ Gould also blames the French for the distortion of Ramsay's ideas:

"Given a nation such as we know the French to be, volatile, imaginative, decidedly not conservative in their instincts, suddenly introduced to mysterious ceremonies unconnected with their past history--given a ritual which appeals in no way to their peculiar love of glory and distinction--which fails to harmonize with their bent of mind--it was almost inevitable that some 'improvements' should have been attempted."⁷⁸

In his defense of Ramsay, Henderson chose to refute the Stuart partisanship allegations against Ramsay. According to Henderson:

"The chief interest of the matter lies in the suspicion which some have entertained that Ramsay wished to follow similar procedure by higher degrees or otherwise to raise money for the support of the political enterprise of restoring the Stuarts once more. Existing lists show that Jacobites were strongly represented in the fraternity; and the fact that Ramsay was a Jacobite, was interested himself in the finance of the movement, and was obviously a schemer, is sufficient explanation of the suspicion."⁷⁹

Can Ramsay be considered a victim of circumstance? Yes and no. I do not believe he was as innocent as twentieth century writers would have us believe. He did have ulterior motives in the Oration, an alternative agenda aside from simply inspiring his audience. But, on the other hand, he was not as evil, conniving and single-minded as earlier writers claimed either.

It is unlikely Ramsay ever intended the tremendous changes that occurred in French Freemasonry. Although he did have definite ideas and expectations for the future of French Freemasonry, they never included the development of new rites

and higher degrees beyond the original three degree system of English Freemasonry. Ramsay "certainly did not invent, or even propound, the 'higher degrees.'"⁸⁰ Ramsay's ideas were limited to what Batham refers to as a "five-year plan."⁸¹ He intended the organization to aim toward a humanistic agenda of international conferences, the compilation of a Universal Dictionary, and the development of a program of organized dinners open to all Masons--regardless of class considerations. With this humanistic purpose, Ramsay "aimed to render by degrees incredulity ridiculous, vice odious and ignorance shameful."⁸² He intended France to be the center of this humanistic Masonic universe, superceding even the English influence.

If Ramsay had ulterior motives in joining the fraternity, or in remaining a Freemason, they were selfish rather than political. During this trip to England in 1729-1730, Ramsay joined a number of clubs and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, all of which claimed prominent Freemasons as members. "In such a company of distinguished Freemasons, it can scarcely be doubted that Ramsay soon became a prey to the fashion of the hour and solicited admission to the fraternity."⁸³ Although there can be no doubt that Ramsay agreed with the Masonic tenets of tolerance, the belief in God, the interest in continued learning, and the idea of ancient wisdom passed through the ages, he also recognized the importance of belonging to a Masonic lodge. Ramsay was a

most ambitious man, surely the contacts he made as a Mason could only help him in his career as a writer and a tutor to the sons of aristocratic families. Ramsay also enjoyed knowing important people.⁸⁴ The Masonic lodges in England were full of important men, and this must have held some allure for him.

Ramsay remained a Freemason for seven years after he returned to France, and he served as Grand Orator of the Order for part of that time. I believe he remained a Mason for two specific reasons. First, Ramsay did believe in the Masonic philosophies, and "he was all enthusiasm and zeal and excitement about whatever interested him at the moment."⁸⁵ Freemasonry in France was just developing, and no doubt Ramsay wanted to be part of this development. He had been initiated in England and he knew how the English system worked. He wanted Freemasonry to equal English Freemasonry, and eventually to surpass it.

Second, Ramsay knew he could play an important role in this new French Freemasonry, and, as Grand Orator--an office unknown in England--he did. Because of the poor records from early French Freemasonry, it is unknown how Ramsay became Grand Orator or even how the position was established. For all we know, he may have created the position himself. Ramsay may have remained an active Freemason because he was offered this choice of position. And, from all indications, it was the ultimate position for him to hold. Just as Ramsay

enjoyed knowing important people, he also wanted to be considered important himself.⁸⁶ Certainly the position of Grand Orator would have afforded him importance within the Masonic community. The Grand Orator was one of the regular Officers in French Freemasonry, such as the Grand Master, and was responsible for writing and presenting speeches "on special occasions and also after the initiation ceremonies."⁸⁷

Aside-even from the element of importance, this position of Grand Orator appealed to other aspects of his personality. Ramsay was described by a contemporary as

"a worthy man; but he cause much amusement by his starchy airs, by his affectation in parading learning and wit in company, by the insipid compliments with which he overwhelmed the ladies: in a word, he was a Scots pedant."⁸⁸

Ramsay was first and foremost a teacher, "and a 'dominie' [schoolmaster] is apt to be a dominie still even when classes are over."⁸⁹ As Grand Orator, Ramsay would have had a perpetual audience to "teach." Ramsay was noted for his loquacity;⁹⁰ no doubt this is another reason the position appealed to him. What better job for a talkative teacher than presenting speeches to new members of a young organization?

Although there is no evidence Ramsay used the Freemasonry to further the Stuart cause, it cannot be denied that Ramsay was a partisan of the Stuarts. Even before he actually met James Stuart, Ramsay was a Jacobite. As a Scotsman, there can be no doubt he would have been aware of the long Stuart

tradition in his homeland. One of his earliest mentors, George Garden, was a "bold Jacobite, who refused to pray for any King but James III."⁹¹ Fenelon, probably the most influential man in Ramsay's life, was a supporter of the Stuart claim to the throne.⁹² Ramsay's friends in Paris were Jacobites, and many of them knew James Stuart well.

It is unknown if Ramsay selected his Jacobite friends in Paris for the purpose of an introduction to James, or if he just happened to gravitate toward these men. Certainly he would have had much in common with them. Many were Scottish or English Catholic ex-patriots living in a foreign country just as Ramsay was. On the other hand, Ramsay "had a knack of ingratiating himself, getting on with persons of importance and even making himself indispensable."⁹³ It is quite possible he deliberately set out to meet James Stuart, and he used these Jacobites in Paris to do so.

In the letter Lansdowne wrote to James in 1720, introducing Ramsay, Lansdowne stated Ramsay requested him to write this introduction and that Lansdowne was "readily induced" to do so.⁹⁴ This letter prompted James to write directly to Ramsay, and the correspondence was born. Meanwhile, Ramsay's other influential Jacobite friends were mentioning Ramsay's name frequently in their letters to James. It is clear, between Ramsay himself writing to James and the Jacobites mentioning Ramsay in their letters to James, Ramsay must have been much in the thoughts of James.

At that time, Ramsay was an open partisan of the Stuarts; his letters make that quite obvious. Ramsay refers to James as "Your Majesty" and "the King of Great Britain."⁹⁵ But did he remain a partisan after his dismissal from the Stuart court?

There is no indication Ramsay ever became disillusioned with James Stuart. In 1727, two years after his banishment from court, Ramsay wrote to James, telling him of sending 300 copies of a picture of Prince Charles Edward to be distributed in Holland, and begging to be allowed to return to court. In 1732, James put Ramsay back on his pension list and Ramsay received a pension until his death. In 1735, James granted Ramsay the title of Knight-Baronet on the occasion of Ramsay's marriage. James states he was "desirous to grant the favour in that shape."⁹⁶ In 1740, when Ramsay's father-in-law died, James wrote to Ramsay, offering his condolences.⁹⁷ Apparently, Ramsay had been in "occasional correspondence with the court at Rome" all along.⁹⁸ According to Batham, "Ramsay remained hopeful of further employment in the Stuart court at Rome, and from time to time he wrote expressing hopes in this direction."⁹⁹ This was not to be, but as late as 1742, Ramsay still referred to James as "a very clever, fine, jovial, agreeable, free-thinking man."¹⁰⁰

The final topic to be considered is Ramsay's intent regarding the Catholic Church. Twentieth century writers claim Ramsay was innocent of charges of collusion with respect to the Church. I disagree with this. I also disagree, in

part, with the nineteenth century critics' allegations that Ramsay meant to use Freemasonry for the benefit of the Church.

Instead, I believe Ramsay did have ulterior motives. He intended to use Catholicism for the benefit of Freemasonry. He intended to use Freemasonry for the benefit of the Catholic Church, but only in the respect that with the approval of the Church, Freemasonry might flourish in France. He recognized that without this Church approval, Freemasonry in France would be outlawed, and he did not want that.

Ramsay's correlation between the Freemasons and the Crusaders in the Oration points directly to the Catholic Church. The Crusader Knights were envoys of the Church, sent on Christian military expeditions to recapture the Holy Land in the name of Christianity.

In Gould's defense of Ramsay, he claims

"the ancient faith of the Crusaders was Christianity. At a time when the Protestants were not thought of, no distinction could possibly be made between them and the Universal Church. It would be absurd to call the Crusaders Roman Catholics in contradistinction to Protestants."¹⁰¹

I agree with this theory. But Ramsay obviously intended to transmit the idea of the superiority of Catholicism. Why else would he refer to the Reformation as "the fatal discord which embarrassed and tore Europe in the sixteenth century [and] caused our Order to degenerate from the nobility of its origin" in the Oration? Obviously these Crusader-Freemasons were Catholics prior to the Reformation. But after the Reformation, the Order fell into chaos and declined.

He chose the Crusaders as the Masonic ancestors for specific reasons. First, this Catholic connection would justify the organization, and France was a very Catholic country. Second, Ramsay felt a Crusader ancestry was "more dignified than a lineage of humble British artisans" for his audience of French Aristocrats.¹⁰² His connection between the Freemasons, the Crusaders and, consequently, the Catholic Church, was an attempt to lure Catholics to join the Order. Ramsay attempted to use this Crusader connection to prove to the French government and the Church that Freemasonry was suitable for the "higher echelons of French society."¹⁰³

Ramsay also sought the approval of the Church in another way. He believed the Church could use the Masonic lodges as a political tool. The evidence of this is cited in the letter he wrote to Fleury after Fleury had expressed his disapproval of Ramsay's Oration. In this letter, Ramsay states:

"I am persuaded that if wise men of Your Excellency's choice were introduced to head these Assemblies, they would become very useful to Religion, the State and Literature."¹⁰⁴

Why did Ramsay make this suggestion? His statement clearly means that if Fleury took an interest in Freemasonry, appointing his own choices as Officers, the Church could basically operate Freemasonry. The Church would control what went on in the lodges. And, because Masonic lodges consisted of important, influential men, eventually the Church would gain even more influence outside the lodges.

Perhaps this was Ramsay's attempt to bribe Fleury. When Ramsay initially sent the Oration to Fleury, he enclosed a letter. In this first letter, Ramsay suggested that Fleury "support the Society of Freemasons in the large views which they entertain and Your Excellency will render your name more illustrious by this protection than Richelieu did by his founding the French Academy." Ramsay stated Fleury's encouragement would be "an action of a Great Minister, of a Father of the Church of a Holy Pontiff."¹⁰⁵

It was only after Fleury's unfavourable reply that Ramsay wrote his second letter, with his suggestion that Fleury might use Freemasonry by appointing men of his own choice. This was Ramsay's last attempt to convince Fleury of the importance and validity of Freemasonry. Ramsay was known for his "meddlesomeness."¹⁰⁶ It seems he took it upon himself to do whatever he could to keep Freemasonry alive in France. If this included giving Fleury a free hand in the organization, apparently Ramsay thought it was worth it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I began this discussion of Ramsay by stating his life was a study of dichotomies, and it would be impossible to conclude it without commenting on the endless ironies that surround him.

Ramsay is remembered primarily for his Masonic Oration of 1737, and he is always mentioned in the context of this speech. Although he wrote it, he never presented the final

version. The ideas he considered most important in the Oration-his humanistic agenda-never amounted to anything. But his history of Freemasonry--something he wrote to placate French Freemasons and the Catholic Church--served as a catalyst for the development of the higher degrees and a whole new realm within French Freemasonry: the Scottish Rite. Although he never intended this development, he was lambasted for the ideas within the Oration for close to two-hundred years.

All his life, Ramsay sought a religion that would bring him inner peace with God. In the early days, he found comfort in the mysteries of Quietism, Fenelon was famous for his defense of Quietism, and Ramsay went to him for a resolution to his questions about the religion. Fenelon, instead, persuaded him to convert to Catholicism.

Coil specifically states that Ramsay converted "the better to bring himself under the Quietist philosophy."¹⁰⁷ I believe Fenelon deliberately set out to convert Ramsay to Catholicism under the auspices of counseling him on Quietism. Ramsay was spiritually vulnerable. Fenelon took advantage of this vulnerability, and persuaded Ramsay the best way to be a Quietist would be to convert to Catholicism.

Ramsay remained officially within the Catholic Church for the rest of his life, but privately he believed in Quietism. Catholicism was beneficial to him both politically and in his career; being an open Quietist would have ruined him. But Ramsay was never a Catholic in the true sense of

the word. He was a Quietist before and after his conversion. It was not until he wrote his "Great Work" that his Quietist attitudes surfaced. He died before it was published, so he never knew of the praise his ideas received.

In the twentieth century, a Masonic historian called Ramsay "one of the most sincere Masons who ever lived."¹⁰⁸ This is probably one of the most ironic ideas of all. Although there can be no doubt Ramsay agreed with the Masonic philosophies in theory, he was also willing to prostitute Freemasonry to the Catholic Church. Granted, his motives were directed toward the benefits Freemasonry would receive by an affiliation with the Church. But, he was willing to allow Fleury free reign in the Masonic lodges in exchange for Fleury's protection of the fraternity. When Fleury refused, Ramsay simply stopped his masonic activities. Although Batham claims Ramsay "certainly regretted [his] decision" to accept Fleury's "verdict," the fact remains that Ramsay chose Fleury's patronage over Freemasonry.¹⁰⁹ In other words, Ramsay was not a loyal Freemason, although he may have sincerely believed in the Masonic tenets.

In the introduction of this thesis, I stated I would investigate the motivations behind the Oration. I have argued that Ramsay had a number of motives. But, the question remains: Why was Ramsay's Oration important? In order to

answer this, one must consider eighteenth century Freemasonry and its importance.

Born from Newtonian science, Freemasonry was a quintessential phenomenon of the eighteenth century. Providing a connection between the Renaissance Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism and the Enlightenment in England, it offered English gentlemen the opportunity to belong to a fraternity that promoted knowledge of ancient wisdom and esoteric secrets. This English Freemasonry provided ceremonies and rituals to men disillusioned with traditional religion of chapel and church. It encouraged religious toleration and apolitical conversation in an atmosphere centered around discussion of Newtonian science, mathematics and architecture. It also provided an environment where men could mingle with those outside their own class. Whatever the reason men joined, within twenty-five years, Freemasonry grew from the original four lodges incorporated in London in 1717 to spread all over England, Scotland, Ireland and to the most remote parts of Europe.

France was the first European country in which Freemasonry gained widespread success. When lodges were founded in France, they were essentially patterned after the English lodges and the three Craft degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason. But in 1737, Ramsay's Oration changed the face of Freemasonry forever.

This Oration introduced the ideas that led to the development of the Higher Degrees of Freemasonry, or Scottish Masonry. By the turn of the century, Scottish Freemasonry had superceded the original English Craft Masonry and had spread all over Europe and to America. Where English Masonry was based on an apolitical and tolerant doctrine, this new Scottish Masonry was founded on mystical speculations and complex connections with antiquity, primarily the traditional Crusader and Templar legends.

The rapid acceptance of the Higher Grades outside England reflects social and political differences between eighteenth century England and the Continent. Where the English system was democratic, the European systems were much more totalitarian. Any, in many ways, these new Rites within Scottish Masonry provided an escape from the tyranny of oppressive governments and the powerful Catholic Church.

Consequently, from the perspective of this Oration, Ramsay, although unintentionally, influenced the development of Masonry throughout the world.

Section Three Notes

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- 10 Ibid., p. 292.
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 48 Henderson, Chevalier, p. 173.
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 61 Gould History, 3:15.
 62 Batham "Chevalier," p. 291.
 63 Ibid., p. 288; quoting Gould.
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 65 Ibid., 3:19.
 66 Ibid., 3:18.
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