

Conflicts: Science – Freemasonry – Religion

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As a long-term practising forensic scientist and a catching up freemason, I believe the emergence of speculative freemasonry had a strong link to the emergence of evidence-based science, (the enlightenment) and to law-speakers. Does speculative freemasonry have this link today? I think not to any degree.

What began with the work of Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam, Viscount St Albans (22/01/1561 to 9/04/1626)¹ and his espousal of ‘natural philosophy by experiment’ was developed by a group of neo-scientists into the Invisible College (1646-1647). It is thought that the idea for the Invisible College was based on Francis Bacons’ idea of a vision of the establishment of an academy or society of natural philosophers “Solomon’s House” as described in his book *New Atlantis* (1627).² The Invisible College, so named by member Robert Boyle (25/02/1627 to 31/12/1691), was basically a European correspondence club of individuals of like-minded enquirers (see Samuel Hartlib (c.1600 to March 1662), his letters and proposals for universal education, a modern).³ Similarly, on the 8th of November 1620, Theodore Haak left Bohemia after the start of the 30 years’ war, at the battle of White Mountain, for London and set up another European correspondence club of individuals of like-minded enquirers.⁴ This Rosicrucian based crusade FAILED completely.

An informal body of men, following the philosophy of Francis Bacon, formed just prior to 1645 at Gresham College London in order to foster experimentation in science. Another group formed in about 1648 at Oxford under the leadership of John Wilkins, then Warden of Wadham College Oxford, with some members from Gresham. In 1658-59 the group returned to Gresham College the Royal Society’s (1660) espousal of Bacon’s ideal institution is shown in the Frontispiece to Thomas Spratt’s *History of the Royal Society* (1667) the first president Viscount Brouncker on left, Charles II (patron) a bust in the middle on a pillar, and Sir Francis Bacon on the right.



London. Many of these movements were caused by the civil war of 1642-1651, the later Black Plague of 1665 and the Great London Fire of 1666.

The Royal Society founded in 1660 in London, took the motto *Nullius in Verba*, (nothing in words) or perhaps don’t take anyone’s word for it. In this blossoming of early experimental based sciences, the previously long-held authority of the church and of the

¹ *The Age of Genius*, A. C. Grayling, Bloomsbury, London & New York, 2016 pages 209-219

² McKie D Chapter 1 *The Royal Society: its Origins & Founders*, ed Hartley Royal Society 1960.

³ *The Age of Genius*, A. C. Grayling, page 131

⁴ *The Age of Genius*, A. C. Grayling, page 38

established universities changed gradually to the

authority of observation and reason. The Royal Society was also sceptical of the occult sciences – hermeticism, kabala, magia but perhaps not alchemy and like Freemasonry, forbade the discussion of politics and religion, probably in the wake of the divisions in society following the disastrous civil war (1642 – 1651).

The Royal Society received its Royal Charter from the restored monarch Charles II in 1662. It survived the great plague of 1665 and the great fire of September 1666. There has been some dispute as to the exact sequence of these pre-1660 events. The official history of the Royal Society written by Thomas Spratt FRS and published 1667, declares the Royal Society origin to be the later Oxford meetings of 1650's.

However, Margery Purver in her book *The Royal Society: Concept and Creation*⁵ dissects two distinct streams of learning, **antient** and **modern**, in this period leading up to the formation of the Royal Society and supports Gresham College as the seedbed of the Royal Society. The first stream is the traditional format of learning, as practised by the universities at the time, based on surviving ancient texts – Plato, Aristotle, Paracelsus et al., and involving an ongoing comparison of new findings with these texts which were taken to be infallible.

The academic argument, usually in universities, was: -

literal (what actually happened),

typological (seeking to unite both past and present whereby something that occurred in the past was seen as a forerunner of the event occurring in the present, and

topological (drawing a moral lesson from the events) and anagogical (seeing events as foretelling the future). This is the *antients* DNA.

The second stream, or Royal Society format of learning firstly by experimentation, was almost exclusively and concerned with the natural world, rather than updating old texts. On 24th November 1639, when Jeremiah Horrocks and William Crabtree, shut in a darkened attic, observed the visible passage of a black dot, the planet Venus, across the surface of the sun, testing Kepler's tables of planetary motion published twelve years earlier, they literally saw with their own eyes, proof of Copernicus' 1543 system. This *moderns* glimpse of a universe, aided by telescopic observation, is far different from that of traditional belief based on *antients* Ptolemy.

This warfare between the *antients* or schismatics of 1751 lead by scots peer Lord John Murray, the 5th Duke of Atholl, and the *moderns* of 1717 lead by Prince Augustus Frederick, the Duke of Sussex, 6th son of George III, was a major feature of life in 16th century to the 18th century restoration England.⁶ Joseph Devine in his book, *Between the Ancients and the Moderns*, covers what was called the "Battle of the Books" about a series of books on the enormous quarrels between the *antients* and the *moderns* in England, Scotland and France. Jonathan Swift (an Ancient) even wrote a short satire called "*The Battle of the Books*" in 1704. This quarrel probably started with Francis Bacons' book *Advancement of Learning* (1605) advocating experiment as well as consulting the Greek and Roman classics. Society

⁵ *The Royal Society: Concept and Creation*, Purver M, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1967

⁶ *Between the Ancients and the Moderns: Baroque Culture in Restoration England*, Devine J M, Yale University Press, 1999

was deeply divided. John Milton was an antient. Thomas Hobbes was a modern. Alexander Pope was an antient.

Rene Descartes was a modern. The French exile, Charles de Marguetel de Saint-Denis, seigneur de Saint-Évremond (1610 to 1703) was an antient. John Evelyn and John Dryden were moderns. Sir William Temple, an aggressive antient, wrote a defence in his book "*Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning*" 1690. William Wotton gave a modern reply to Temple in 1694 with his book "*Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*".

When FRS William Harvey's book, "*On the motion of the Heart and of the blood in Animals*" appeared in 1628 refuting Classic Galen, it was frowned upon at first by traditionalist *antients*, but when better microscopes revealed Harveys' theoretical capillaries, the tide turned, and both moderns and antients (mostly) accepted his findings.

So, who won the battle of the Books? Today, this quarrel seems to be a draw with a divided field, the ancients still commanding the Humanities and the moderns in the sciences. It is still here today, as shown in British scientist C.P. Snow's 1959 Rede Lecture *The Two Cultures*.

Is Freemasonry still in the camp of the ancients? Was the Duke of Suffolk an antient? Is there evidence that science is not taken that seriously by Freemasonry?

Consider this. From the secrets in the apprentices passing the second degree, he is told that the sign of prayer took its rise at the time that Joshua fought the battles of the Lord, when it was in this position that Moses prayed fervently to the Almighty, to continue the light of day that he might complete the overthrow of his enemies. That is, the Grand Architect of the Universe made the Sun stand still, to help Joshua defeat his enemies. Joshua Chapter 10. Are Freemasons aware that this passage was long cited by traditional authorities as proof that the sun moves through the sky and therefore the earth is the centre of the Universe?

This very argument was used at Galileo's trial in 1633 before the Sacred Congregation of the Index (the Inquisition's official title, see also example 2 following) along with disapproval of the last book he published (*Il Saggiatore* – The Assayer in 1623). After his first appearance before his critics in 1616, Galileo recanted his discoveries and their contradictions to ancient authority, otherwise he would have been condemned to the stake as were Copernican promoter Giordano Bruno (1600), Lucilio Vanini, who had his tongue cut out before he was strangled and burned in Toulouse in 1619 for his book *The Secrets of Nature*, Jean Fontanier executed in Paris in 1622, Theophile de Viau in Paris in 1623 who only escaped death by suffering banishment.⁷

It is becoming evident, that almost alone among the members of the Royal Society, Isaac Newton spent much of his time with alchemical ancient treatises writing "*This philosophy, both speculative and active, is not only to be found in the volume of nature but also in the sacred scriptures, as in Genesis, Job, Psalms, Isaiah and others. In the knowledge of this philosophy, God has made Solomon the greatest philosopher in the world*"⁸ (The Newton Papers by Sarah Dry OUP 2014 pg xx) This alchemic philosophy is now an interesting but distant dead-end sideline in the advance of human knowledge. It now seems that Newton was unusual, in that he had a foot in both the modern and antient camp.

⁷ *The Age of Genius*, A. C. Grayling, pages 222, 223, 224, & 247.

⁸ *The Royal Society: Concept and Creation*, Purver M, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1967 page ??

The 2015 ANZMRC travelling lecturer, Jaccard spoke to the Launceston Lodge of Research re Isaac Newton on 15th October 2015. **Does Freemasonry rely to any extent on Isaac Newtons' alchemy work?** And his presentation on Solomon's Temple where he interprets it as a source of mathematical knowledge and information about the size of the universe and the place of mankind in it? What is certain is that the arrival of the Newtonian natural law-abiding universe changed the Bible from an indisputable authority to just a historical text.

The Conventicle Act (1664) forbidding conventicles (religious assemblies of more than five people other than immediate family, outside the auspices of the Church of England) which was directed against all non-Anglicans, barring state civil employment, some religious practices etc, was revived in 1670 and with personal danger objected to by Reverend John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester FRS, showing that the Royal Society was independent of party and not least, of party in religion. It upheld Christian principles but insisted on the right of the individual to freely follow his conscience in religious practice. Later wholeheartedly enshrined in Masonic practice.⁹

In 1813, the Doctrine of the Trinity Act formally extended toleration to those who held beliefs similar to Newtons rejection of the Trinity, could now legally call themselves Unitarians, hold civic office, and serve as legal guardians but could still be prosecuted for blasphemy. Was early Freemasonry influenced by the intolerant rule of the law overturned by the 1813 Unitarianism Act? Is a remnant of pre-1813 restrictions seen in waiting for the return of the junior Deacon? Is it the reason for the opening up of Freemasonry to other religions, that took place at this time?

Has Freemasonry kept up with the changes in society brought on by the enlightenment?

Many of the old revered ancient number/symbol systems (i.e. Alchemy, Hermeticism, Pythagoras, Dr John Dee etc) have been overtaken. It was then thought that sensorial experience induced by meditation on symbols could supplement the absence of evidence-based knowledge.

Perhaps the most elaborate was the Persian Mysteries of Mithras.

Paracelsus (7 body organs below)

7 Gold	Sun	Truth	Heart
6 Silver	Moon	Mansion of the Blessed	Brain
5 Iron	Mars	World of births	Gall-bladder
4 Tin	Jupiter	Middle World	Liver
3 Copper	Venus	Heaven	Kidneys
2 Mercury	Mercury	World of Pre-existence	Lungs
1 Lead	Saturn	First World	Spleen

It was believed that the harmony in the universe was related to the number seven:-

Seven Patriarchs – Adam, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Job.
This probably will not change.

⁹ *The Royal Society: Concept and Creation*, Purver M, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1967 pages 155-158

Seven planets - moon, sun, Venus, earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn
Now eight (Pluto demoted) and the sun, not a planet.

Seven days of the week

Seven metals – lead, mercury, copper, tin, iron, silver & gold.

Today there are an acknowledged eighty-eight metals listed in the periodic table of the elements. Six alkali metals, six alkaline earth metals, thirty-eight transition metals, eight post-transition metals, fifteen Lanthanides and fifteen Actinides.

Seven major organs of body – spleen, lungs, kidneys, liver, gall-bladder, brain, heart.

Today it is widely believed that there are seventy-nine organs in the human body contained in the musculoskeletal system, digestive system, respiratory system, urinary system, reproductive system, endocrine system, circulatory system (cardiovascular and lymphatic), nervous system and the integumentary system.

Five Senses (Aristotle) – sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. Investigation of the biochemical and DNA basis of the senses has vastly expanded the list perhaps up to 33. For example, equilibrioception (balance), nociception (pain), kinesthesia (movement). Many new senses are found by rare conditions brought on by a genetic mutation – ie adipsia (sense of thirst) the automatic maintenance of appropriate hydration levels which persons with adipsia lack.

Modern science has discovered new primordial numbers such as **nine** essential amino acids – histidine, leucine, isoleucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine. If we add those essential only to babies and growing children, we rise to twelve by adding arginine, cysteine and tyrosine.

Such as the **five** basic chemical bases that make up our DNA - adenine and guanine are the larger purines, cytosine and thymine and uracil are the smaller pyrimidines. This specific binding of adenine to thymine and guanine to cytosine is the very basis of all life on earth.

And very big numbers. In the human body, there are on average 15 million million cells. It is a miracle how one single cell expands and differentiates reliably to this incredible degree. A similar miracle is how the 3-metre length of DNA is stored and then even doubled, in cell 10 to 30 microns across.

In Freemasonry, we look back to the age of enlightenment for our paradigms and ideals. Perhaps we should embrace some of today's version of the enlightenment so as to persuade more of the younger generation to become masons.

Where has Freemasonry diverged from the common path of our society today? In 1887 Scots Judge Adam Gifford endowed an annual University lecture as a venue for debate about “all questions about man’s concept of God or the infinite”. Lord Gifford was not an orthodox adherent of any religion. I wonder if he was a Freemason? He did believe that our relationship to God is the most important relationship we have. See Larry Witham’s overview of the 220 Gifford lectures to 2005.¹⁰

¹⁰ “*The Measure of God - the Story of the Gifford Lectures*” Witham L., Harper Collins 2005

Taken from the book of 2010 Gifford lecture by Roger Scruton. *"I doubt whether Lord Gifford could have anticipated the culture that prevails today, in which the belief in God is widely rejected as a sign of emotional and intellectual immaturity. I think he would have endorsed the attempt to explore what we lose when we lose that belief. This will be one of the themes in my lectures. I will be considering some of the consequences of the atheistic culture that is growing around us. I will suggest that it is not only an intellectual phenomenon expressing a disbelief in God but also a moral phenomenon, involving a turning away from God".*¹¹

You can glimpse the thrust of this growing disbelief by reading one of the chief evangelical atheists today Professor Richard Dawkins' Reference 1986 book - "The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design: The Enemies of Reason" 2007.

Scruton ends his book with *"Our disenchanted life is, to use the Socratic idiom, not a life for a human being. By remaking human beings and their habitat as objects to consume rather than subjects to revere, we invite the degradation of both. Postmodern people will deny that their disquiet at these things has a religious meaning. I hope that my arguments have gone some way to show they are wrong."*



I agree with the arguments in Scutons' lectures. How can Freemasonry reinject itself back into modern life, to assert that our relationship with the Grand Architect of the Universe is the most important relationship we have? In my discussions with the 2017 Travelling lecturer, John Belton in Hobart, and his paper "The Missing Master Mason" I found he is convinced the underlining decline is purely economic. I think the recent appearance of today's' separate "youth" "teenager" culture, now largely free from adult guidance and restrictions, with knowledge only coming from the internet and virtue signalling more important than morals restraint, also plays an important part.

In the early days of speculative Freemasonry, the Royal Society in England was formed in part (approx. half) by Freemasons and the discussions of science (called natural philosophy then) were an integral part of the freemason's world. Some of this is alluded to in our ritual - i.e. Newtonian astronomy - but none of any later scientific advancement. Let us fight fire with fire. Let us discuss modern evidential science in our meetings and perhaps augment our ritual with it.

See *"The Magus of Freemasonry, Elias Ashmole, Scientist, Alchemist and founder of the Royal Society."* By Tobias Churton (founding editor of Freemasonry Today).

¹¹ "The Face of God - The Gifford lectures 2010" Scruton R., Continuum London 2012

Idea 1. Your body is evidence of the work of the Grand Architect of the Universe. We know that 99% of your body is made up of six elements from the 98 naturally occurring elements, listed here in order of increasing atomic number (size) hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and calcium. Five more elements, about 0.85%, are necessary for life - sodium, magnesium, sulphur, chlorine, and potassium. About another twelve trace elements play a role in good health. The lighter elements (including those eleven above) are the most abundant in the universe. The larger the element, the lower its abundance, with a few exceptions ie lithium, beryllium and boron. Of the neighbouring elements, those with even atomic numbers have somewhat higher abundances than those with odd atomic numbers.

Now, these elements in your body are immensely old - some untold billions of years old, as a general trend the larger, the older. The lighter elements are formed in commonplace stars such as our own and are formed by nuclear fusion reactions up to the size of the element iron (atomic number 26) and by neutron capture in a supernova (star implosions) or neutron star collision with each other or with black holes for the higher atomic numbered elements. Some elements in your body could be as old as the Universe 1.9×10^{19} years. In summary, **you are made of stardust, immensely old stardust.**

Can elemental isotope research impinge on Freemasonry research? Consider research presented in August 2017 in Paris showing that, far from becoming enriched, Spain, newly conquered by avenging Romans, ended up losing much of its silver reserves, providing the raw metal for the coinage of Rome's expanding empire. Evidence? German geochemists have added solid science to the evidence of historians and archaeologists.

A team of geochemists from Goethe University in Frankfurt analyzed 70 Roman coins dating from between 310 and 101 BCE. Roman conquered Spain, and thus acquired control of the country's silver mines, around 211 BCE. Using mass spectrometry, the German team showed that the lead content of most Roman coins changed after 209 BCE. Lead isotope concentration serves as a geological clock, identifying the origin of the ores used to extract silver.

Looking at four isotopes – ^{208}Pb , ^{207}Pb , ^{206}Pb and ^{204}Pb – the researchers established that Roman coins made before the Spanish conquest used silver that came from the same sources used by Greek and Sicilians in the same period. By 211 BCE, however, the isotopes clearly identified the silver sources as being located in either southeast or southwest Spain.

Background. Hannibal, as documented by the Roman historian Livy, memorably led his Spanish army, aided by columns of war elephants, over the Pyrenees and the Alps, intent on sacking Rome. The general successfully occupied much of Italy, although not Rome itself, for about 15 years, until he met defeat at the hands of the Roman general Scipio Africanus.

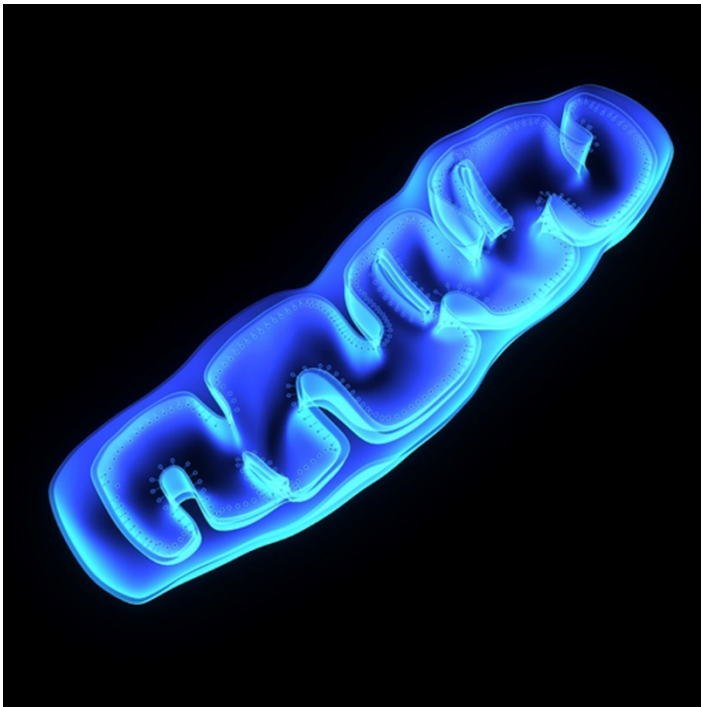
Defeat, by the way, did not mark the end of Hannibal's career. He went on to enjoy a stint as a judge in Carthage, before taking up a role as military advisor to Antiochus III, ruler of the Seleucid Empire. His new job went pear-shaped after the king was roundly defeated by the Romans, but Hannibal, who seems to have been made of Teflon, simply sped away and made a new gig for himself as naval chief in the court of Bithynia. He was eventually betrayed to Rome by Bithynian double agents and poisoned himself before he could be captured.

Moving on. One day, an ancient eukaryote single cell ingested an oxygen-consuming purple bacterial cell which survived inside this cell. Suddenly this new hybrid cell could live and multiply in a now oxygen-filled environment because the toxic oxygen was removed by its

internal companion. This inner energy producing oxygen-consuming organelle is present today in almost all living organisms present on the earth. We call them mitochondria. They have their own DNA separate from the eukaryote nuclear DNA. Mitochondria produce nearly all the energy used by our cells. They can be likened to the battery in a watch or torch. This led to the evolution of multi-celled animals and the world of life forms we see about us today.

Idea 2. Again, your body is evidence of the work of the Grand Architect of the Universe. Some parts of your body are more powerful than the sun. Which part? Your mitochondria. They are tiny organelles or powerhouses (or batteries if you like) inside the 15 trillion cells of your body. On average, there are three to four hundred in each of your eukaryotic cells, giving ten million billion in your body. They look like bacteria, and appearances are not deceptive, they were once free-living blue-green bacteria that adapted to life inside a primitive **archezoan** cell, forming a symbiotic relationship to both their advantages. If you remove your pink colour derived from the iron in your haemoglobin in your red cells, you would, in fact, be a pale blue-green colour, the colour of your mitochondria. An inspiration for the movie Avatar? Complex multicellular bodies, such as ourselves, became possible because of the abundance of energy this combination created.

Mitochondria are not just powerhouses, they also control the cell turnover of your body. This is called apoptosis - some 10 billion cells die and are replaced by new cells every day. Your mitochondria produce your energy by respiring oxygen from the air. If you stop breathing and cease supplying oxygen to your mitochondria, you die very quickly. You are an incredible energy machine. Gram for gram, even when just sitting quietly, your mitochondria are converting ten thousand times more energy than the sun every second. A very intense microscopic energy source.¹²



A single mitochondrion showing energy producing sites.

Mitochondria are passed to each new successive generation only via the egg cell of the mother - a maternal lineage. They cannot leave this symbiotic relationship as some of their genes have migrated into the nucleus of the host, but they retain some genes that are necessary for the functioning of the eukaryote cell as a whole.

The circular “bacterial” DNA in your mitochondria are less protected than the host DNA and so your lifespan is heavily linked to that of your mother.

It is thought that many uncontrolled diseases at present will be conquered via our new and increasing knowledge of our

¹² “Power, Sex and Suicide - Mitochondria and the Meaning of Life” Lane N., OUP 2005 page 67.

mitochondrial functions. It is an interesting thought that the evolution of two distinct species forms, male and female, may be due to the acquisition of mitochondria. How? Oxygen, via free radical formation, causes the mutation of DNA. Functioning like a simple bacterium, stranded inside its host cell, and prevented from dividing as fast as normal bacteria, mitochondrial genes cannot be rejuvenated by sex or by bacterial style selection. Without sexual reproduction mitochondria only degenerate. With sexual reproduction by two haploid cells combining to form the next generation, the paternal sperm cell mitochondria are disposed of like the fuel tanks of a rocket, while in the maternal cell lineage, the future egg-line cells with their mitochondria, are kept on ice in a dormant state for the next generation.

Mitochondrial DNA is a powerful tool to trace the evolution of life including ourselves. The discovery of what is thought to be the skeleton of King Richard III will be confirmed or denied by comparison with the mitochondrial DNA of his living maternal line descendant Michael Ibsen.¹³

Are there examples where Science is at variance with the Bible (and Freemasonry?)

Yes. DNA is showing that parts of history based on the bible and our ritual are wrong.¹⁴

The Canaanites lived at the crossroads of the ancient world. They experienced wars, conquests and occupations for millennia, and as a result, evolutionary geneticists expected that their DNA would become substantially mixed with incoming populations. No, the new genetic analysis shows that this was not so. Today's Lebanese share a whopping 93% of their DNA with the

ancient Canaanites. The study also found that the Bronze Age inhabitants of Sidon, a major Canaanite city-state in modern-day Lebanon, have the same genetic profile as people living 300 to 800 years earlier in present-day Jordan.

Later known as Phoenicians, the Canaanites have a murky past. Nearly all of their own records have been destroyed over the centuries, so their history has been mostly pieced together from archaeological records and the writings of other ancient peoples.

Archaeologists at the Sidon excavation site have been unearthing ancient Canaanite secrets for the last 19 years in the still-inhabited Lebanese port city. They have uncovered 160 burials from the Canaanite period alone, with people of all ages in these Canaanite burials, children were buried in jars and adults were placed in sand.

Aided by new DNA sampling techniques, they sequenced the whole genomes of five individuals found in Sidon who lived about 3,700 years ago. The team then compared the genomes of these ancient Canaanites with those of 99 Lebanese people currently living in the country, along with the previously published genetic information from modern and ancient populations across Europe and Asia.

First, they investigated the genetic ancestry of the Canaanites themselves. They found that these Bronze Age inhabitants of Sidon shared about half their DNA with local Neolithic

¹³ *"Identification of the remains of King Richard III". Nature Communications. 5 (No. 5631): 5631* King, TE; Gonzalez Fortes, G; Balaesque, P; Thomas, MG; Balding, D; Maisano Delser, P; Neumann, Rita; Parson, Walther; Knapp, Michael; Walsh, Susan; Tonasso, Laure; Holt, John; Kayser, Manfred; Appleby, Jo; Forster, Peter; Ekserdjian, David; Hofreiter, Michael; Schürer, Kevin (2014).

¹⁴ American Journal of Human Genetics DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ajhg.2017.06.013>

peoples and the other half with Chalcolithic Iranians. Interestingly, this genetic profile is nearly identical to the one found last year in Bronze Age villagers near 'Ain Ghazal in modern-day Jordan.

This suggests that Canaanite-related ancestry was spread across a wide region during the Bronze Age and was shared between urban societies on the coast and farming societies further inland. This evidence supports the idea that different Levantine cultural groups such as the Moabites, Israelites, and Phoenicians may have had a common genetic background. The researchers were also able to determine that the genetic mixing of the Levantine and Iranian peoples happened between 6,600 and 3,550 years ago, a range they would be able to narrow down with more ancient DNA samples from the region.

The next task was to compare the ancient Canaanite genome with the genetic makeup of the people who currently inhabit the ancient Canaanite city sites. To do this, the DNA from 99 Lebanese people including Druze, Muslim, and Christian alike was collected.

As expected, the authors found some new additions to the modern Lebanese genome since the Bronze Age. About 7% of modern Lebanese DNA originates from eastern Steppe peoples found in what is now Russia but wasn't represented in the Bronze Age Canaanites or their ancestors. What was surprising was what was missing in their genetic data. They expected to see greater genetic contributions from multiple conquering peoples and were surprised that as much as 93% of the Lebanese genome is shared with their Canaanite predecessors. This is very similar to the 88% of the Irish, 81% of the Welsh, 79% of the Cornish, 70% of the Scots and 68% of the English that modern Britons share with the original migrators who arrived before the first farmers of 6 to 7000 years ago.¹⁵

The team also wanted to know if the individuals from Sidon are more similar to modern-day Lebanese than to other modern Eurasian populations. Despite small genetic variations between the three religious groups caused by preferential mating over time, the Lebanese genome is not widely varied. As a whole, the Lebanese people have more genetic overlap with the Canaanites from Sidon than do other modern Middle Eastern populations such as Jordanians, Syrians or Palestinians.

¹⁵ "The origins of the British" Oppenheimer S., Carrol & Graf, New York 2006 page 406



An aerial view of the Sidon excavation site.

Is there anywhere, Science is confirming Freemasonry?

Yes, **example 1.**

Recently archaeologists believe they have found the lost Roman city of Julias, formerly the village of Bethsaida, which was the home of Jesus' apostles Peter, Andrew and Philip. Last month, archaeologists completed excavations at el-Araj on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Background: The Roman city of Julias was born out of the Jewish fishing village of Bethsaida during the 1st century AD, according to the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius. The New Testament describes Bethsaida as the home of Jesus' apostles Peter, Andrew and Philip. Jesus also healed a blind man at Bethsaida, according to Mark 8:22-26, while Luke 9:10-17 describes a nearby location for the feeding of the 5,000 people.

Many experts had previously assumed there was no human presence at el-Araj during the Roman period. But a previously unearthed Byzantine structure offered plenty of clues to the archaeologists. More than 30 coins found beneath the structure's floor dated its construction to the 5th century AD. Below the Byzantine-era level, Roman-era pottery dating back to between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD was found, along with a bronze coin from the late 2nd century and a silver denarius coin of Emperor Nero that dates from 65 to 66 AD. Some 6.6 feet below the Byzantine floor, a Roman-period wall also was discovered.

Geologists studying el-Araj found that the site was covered with mud and clay, possibly from flooding of the nearby Jordan River, and abandoned sometime between 250 AD and 350 AD.

The site appears to have been resettled toward the end of the 4th century AD during the Byzantine period.

The Byzantine structure at el-Araj also offers a fascinating glimpse into the site's biblical past. Small gilded glass blocks called tesserae that form part of a mosaic were found,

suggesting that the building was once an important church. Archaeologists note that Willibald, the bishop of Eichstatt in Germany, visited the Holy Land in 725 AD and describes visiting a church at Bethsaida built over the remains of the house of apostles Peter and Andrew. It may well be that the current excavations have unearthed evidence for that church.¹⁶

Is there anywhere Science is confirming Freemasonry?

Yes, **example 2**

In a 2017 paper in the journal “*News and Reviews in Astronomy and Geophysics*”, Colin Humphreys, from the department of materials science and metallurgy at the University of Cambridge, UK, and colleague Graeme Waddington, refine earlier attempts by scholars to tie a perplexing reference in the Book of Joshua to an actual astronomical event.

The text reads: “*Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon. And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stopped until the nation took vengeance on their enemies.*”

Humphreys and Waddington are not the first to suggest that the verse is not a report of a miracle, but could be a reference to a solar eclipse. Previous studies went so far as to narrow the time-period during which it was possible for the event to have occurred.

A stone inscription known as the Merneptah Stele (named after a pharaoh thought to have ruled Egypt between 1213 and 1203 BCE) contains lines that indicate the Israelites were in the region of Canaan between 1500 and 1050 BCE. Gibeon was a Canaanite city.

With the possible dates thus constrained, and the movements of the Earth, sun and moon readily calculable, however, historians failed to find any eclipses. In their new research, Humphreys and Waddington challenged two assumptions: first, that the translation of the verse from Hebrew was accurate, and second that the eclipse was a total one. The verse translation fundamentally hadn’t changed since the King James Bible of 1611.

By going back to the original Hebrew text, they determined that an alternative meaning could be that the sun and moon just stopped doing what they normally do: they stopped shining. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Hebrew word translated 'stand still' has the same root as a Babylonian word used in ancient astronomical texts to describe eclipses.

The second challenge also bore fruit. Instead of searching only for total solar eclipses, where the moon temporarily blocks the whole of the sun, they also searched for annular eclipses, where the moon moves in front of the sun but does not obscure it completely, leaving a “ring of fire”.

By taking into account changes in the Earth’s rotations over time, they calculated that an annular eclipse took place on October 30, 1207, BCE. Being able to precisely pin the date of the eclipse also allowed the researchers to refine the dates of the reign of one of Egypt’s most famous rulers, Rameses the Great, Merneptah’s father.

Using the fresh calculations, the researchers established the Merneptah’s reign must have started later than previously held, in 1209 or 1210 BCE. Egyptian texts already established

¹⁶ <https://academic.oup.com/astrogeo/article-abstract/58/5/5.39/4159289>

how long Rameses ruled for, but are hazy when it comes to start and stop times. Humphreys and Waddington are confident those dates can now be stated as 1276 to 1210 BCE with a possible variation of only one year.

Are there any prior historical examples where Freemasonry actively interfaced with enlightenment science?

Yes. As found in Harashim 62 December 2013, page 2 “**You are now permitted to extend your researches into the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science**” by Br Ronald Ng from Singapore and the “History of Old Kings Arms Lodge No 28 by Albert Calvert. This lodge was consecrated on 25th May 1725. RWBro Anthony Sayer was one of its founding members. Some abstracted topics from their monthly meetings are: -

1 st October	1733	lecture on muscular movements.
5 th Nov	1733	lecture on the force of muscles
7 th January	1734	an account of a water clock invented by Ctesbius of Alexandria
4 th March	1734	Lecture by Bro Chovis the human brain & the circulation of the blood
3 rd June	1734	Bro Adams with microscope demonstrating microscopic specimens.
2 nd Sept	1734	Lecture on iron and steel manufacture.
6 th October	1735	Bro Clare on magnetism.
17 th Nov	1735	Bro Graeme on fermentation - 15 th Dec 1735 and 15 th Nov 1736
5 th March	1739	Bro Robertson on astronomy.

This list from August 1733 to January 1740 holds 78 months, 29 devoted to lectures and 21 of those subjects related to the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science. Thus 37% of meetings were devoted to lectures and 27% (i.e. one quarter) to lectures on the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science. How common was this? Clavert on page 9 of his book writes “The practice of reading papers at lodge meetings (of No 28) was according to Bro H Sadler, **a custom much in vogue at this time amongst the higher class of Lodges.**” Note that this is all before the Union of 1813. WBro John Belton characterises this time as the wild west of freemasonry – no overall Grand Lodge guidance. Was “History of Old Kings Arms Lodge No 28” a modern of the antient lodge?

What can science contribute to the idea that the origins of Freemason practice arise solely from medieval stone-masons?

Perhaps another ancient non-written institution the **law-speakers** are immersed but not apparent in the origins of Freemason practice? Who were these law-speakers? We have very little written evidence for them, precisely because they did not write anything down. They did not trust the written word.

Using Google, we find the Scandinavian **Lagman** or **lagmann**. An official office in medieval Sweden for regional government. Each lasagna (province) was under the jurisdiction of a law-speaker, who was subordinate to the law-speaker in Tiundland. He was obliged to memorise the law and to recite it at the regional administrative gatherings (Thing) and was responsible for the execution of the gatherings decisions. It was his duty to safeguard the rights and liberties of the people, and to recognise an elected king when he passed on the Eriksgata.

The office was not hereditary. The first named Swedish law-speaker is Lumm from approx. 1000. The first with a substantial biographical information is Eskil (c 1175-1227). One famous law-speaker was Snorri Sturluson who was also a **skald**, a court saga composer

(Heimskringla – a collection of royal sagas) which were also orally transmitted before being written down between 1150 and 1350. Most of the sagas in existence today originate in Iceland. (*The Normans*) Francois Neveux page 8.

In Sweden, by the 16th century, the law-speakers were chosen by the king. In 1849, the office was abolished. Due to the ready availability of written codes of law?

Other sources mentioning law-speakers include *A history of French Public Law* by Jean Brissaud (in French) who lists earlier officials performing a similar role. For example, the **Rachimbourgs** of the Salian Merovingian period (450 – 752) before the later Carolingian empire of Charlemagne. The Merovingian state Neustria (capital Paris) included the ecclesiastical provinces of Rheims, Sens, Turs and Rouen and had the same borders as the old Roman province 2nd Provincia Lugdunensis, established in the fourth century. The capital of the Provincia Lugdunensis was Lugdunum (Lyons). However, the law-speakers are not descendants of the **assessors** of the fourth century Roman magistrates.

In Friesland, the function of the **aesaga** was only to make known the usage by public proclamation and give advice. Among the Saxons, they were known as **vivinantes** or **pagensis** and by the Anglo-Saxons as **sapientes** or **witan** and dictated the sentence to the assembled people. In Iceland, they merely gave information on the existing law.

The Norwegian Vikings colonised Iceland in about 860 according to the Irish monk Dicuil and in 870 according to Ari Thorgilsson in his *Islendingabok*. The general assembly of all Icelanders or the **Althing** dates from this time and Iceland's institutions have retained their character through the middle ages up to modern times.

The investigation of genetic inheritance of diseases is of special importance in Iceland as the genealogies of the current population are on record back to foundation settlement. So, the law-speaker role there, as merely proclaiming the existing law, maybe the original form of the office. Maurizio Lupoi in his chapter on Consensus by Assembly in *the origins of European Legal Order* on page 204 as translated from the Italian by Adrian Belton.¹⁷ in the domain **par excellence** of the judicial assembly, Iceland, the rule was developed on the basis of judgements. The lawspeaker from memory reiterated the judgements, then systematised and slightly generalised them, so to, later did the Gragas.”

Is it possible that these ancient law-speakers who memorised laws for public proclamation, passed them down to apprentices in a non-partisan and apolitical manner have lent some of their ideas (ie exclusive oral recording even when written records were later available) and practices (strict morality) to early freemasonry? Their tradition was entirely oral and has not been recorded. There are traces of them in the ancient Salic Law first compiled in 500 AD by the Frankish king, Clovis. Salic law 57 indicates their minimum number was seven.

The law-speakers basic themes of recording by memory alone and upholding the very strictest moral code is the very basis of Freemasonry.

¹⁷ “*The origins of European Legal Order*” Chpt Consensus by Assembly, Maurizio Lupoi Cambridge University Press, 2000 translated by Adrian Belton p204



Did the law-speaker tradition exist in later times? Consider the extermination of the Cathars during the Albigensian Crusade. In some town sieges, even those who recanted were not spared. Why? The Cathar religion had a vocal memorised base and therefore their leaders, the Perfecti, could not be traced by searching non-existent documents. It is true the Cathars had one book “The Secret Gospel of John” but this is before the Gutenberg printing revolution and the books of this time were laboriously hand-made and meticulously guarded. There is an illustration of the fanatic heretic pursuing priest Dominic Guzman burning copies of this book in a book on the Knights Templar.¹⁸

The Finnish composer Jean Sibelius (a freemason) and his music “Finlandia” contributed greatly to the emancipation of Finland from Russian rule in the second world war. Sibelius incorporated elements

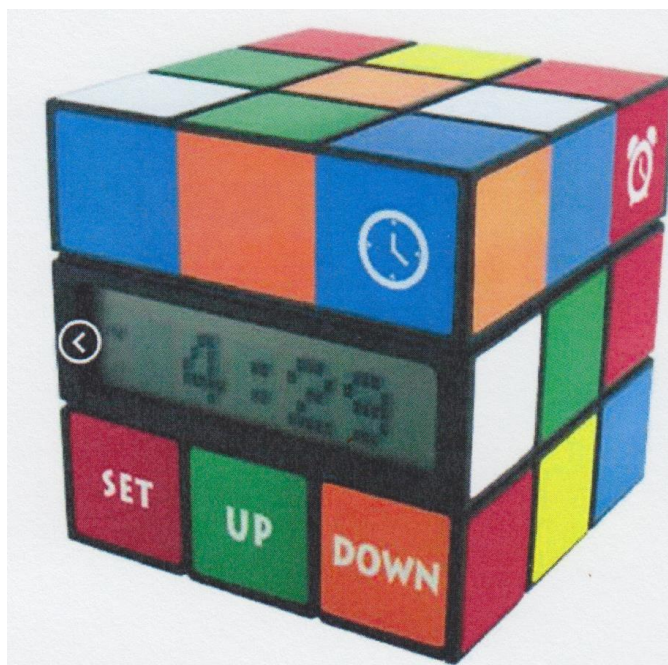
of folk songs into his music. The oral tradition of storytelling through song alone has existed in Finland for many centuries and is known there as “runic” singing.

Has morality become independent of the existence of God/Great Architect of the Universe?

No, brethren it has not. My reasoning to believe this? Let me put to you an analogy. Conjure up the image of a jigsaw puzzle. They are two dimensional. Now imagine jigsaw puzzle where the pieces are three dimensional, then imagine a three-dimensional puzzle that has no borders/edges, that is with an infinite number of pieces.

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¹⁸ “The Enigma of the knights templar; their history and mystical connections” Marilyn Hopkins, Ivy Press Ltd, 2007 page115



We, humans, have an underlying drive to know what this whole jigsaw puzzle picture is like, yet we cannot see the COMPLETE picture. But the rational coherent fitting together jigsaw puzzle constructs we see as our universe is surrounded by loose pieces that are not a fit to the assembled picture we have so painstakingly assembled over the millennia. The grand design of the great architect of the universe is an understanding of the COMPLETE jigsaw puzzle.

There are hints of this frame of mind/concept in the Jewish ineffable name of God, the lost word of the Freemasons, and the attention to the “unknowable” by scientist Herbert Spencer. It is illustrated by the practice during the enlightenment, of automatically comparing discoveries in the new sciences with the accepted jigsaw puzzle creation by Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Galen etc. It is also hovering in the background when we wonder why we are the only life on earth that can imagine/contemplate our own mortality.

Can we draw new youthful souls to join our fraternity? I would argue Yes by associating the concept of Great Architect of the Universe with the above analogy. In my humble opinion, this jigsaw puzzle analogy is NOT a divisive religious intrusion such as would be frowned upon by the brotherhood.

Over to you for your ideas.