

## **Reading List**

This reading list is created by the Training, Education and Mentorship committee to assist Masonic Readers of all levels and interest.

Annotated comments may be made and recommendations can be included if contributors to the list wish to submit them. This list is intended to be amorphous, changing shape and content over time.

The categorization of a book/article/paper is not to suggest the level of reading difficulty but to identify conceptual development. Some authors can deal with the esoteric using more common and identifiable Masonic references while others will make reference to other writers and researchers to develop their theme.

Books at all levels may be of interest to any reader. This is intended as a guide only. Some of the readings are clearly non-Masonic and, at times, are critical of Freemasonry. They are included so that the reader can be more acutely aware of the variety of readings that are “out there”.

This reading list is not intended to be exclusive nor comprehensive and Masonic Readers are encouraged to make recommendations along with comments to the Training, Education and Mentorship Committee.

The list will be maintained by the Committee and will be updated from time to time. Recommendations about format can also be submitted. The aim is to be in a continuous state of improvement. We recognize that the list is only as useful as the readers find beneficial.

Before you begin or sometime along the line, the following article concerning critical reading in Masonic literature is very important. The article will be found with this list on our website. **Critical Reading of Masonic Literature** by *Bro Voshio Washizu*

The readings will be listed by category and in alphabetical order of the surname of the author. Our categories, for now, are as follows:

### **Introductory**

For the beginning Masonic reader. This category will provide interesting reading for any level of reader but will allow the Mason who is just beginning serious reading to become familiar with concepts and background.

### **Getting Settled**

For the reader who has done “some” Masonic reading and may wish to pursue specific authors and/or themes.

### **Exploratory**

These readings will offer challenges to the reader to, at times, extend beyond the ordinary boundaries of Masonic Reading but into related areas.

## **Introductory**

### **Bullock, Steven, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (1998) - Introductory**

Bullock traces Freemasonry through its first century in America. He follows the order from its origins in Britain and its introduction into North America in the 1730s to its near destruction by a massive anti-Masonic movement almost a century later and its subsequent reconfiguration.

Bullock links Freemasonry with the changing ideals of early American society. Although the fraternity began among colonial elites, its spread during the Revolution and afterward allowed it to play an important role in shaping the new nation's ideas of liberty and equality. Ironically, however, the more inclusive and universalist Masonic ideas became, the more threatening its members' economic and emotional bonds seemed to outsiders, sparking an explosive attack on the fraternity after 1826.

### **Davis, Robert G., *The Mason's Words* – Introductory**

This is, simply put, a great book on Masonry. This study of the history of the development of our ritual is comprehensive. The credit given to Preston and Webb seems to be justified and appropriate as we look at the rituals that we use in each of our jurisdictions. Yet, Davis does not stop there. A mere reflection of history would be only that and as valuable as that may be, it would not delve into the thought processes, development and origin of the work. The many disagreements and arguments are insightful as well in our current understanding of the work.

Davis's analysis of the current situation of North American Freemasonry attributes some of the "blame" on the almost obsessive devotion to the memorization of the work. He avidly promotes the Prestonian vision of the importance of intelligent polite discussion that was the expected norm for gentlemen in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Preston was convinced that Masonry enhanced and supported men in their growth and abilities in that respect.

The importance of Webb's work was in the lodges of North America and the focus was primarily on the perfect presentation of ritual and lectures. Webb believed that through this perfection of the ritual that it is better understood. Unfortunately, in most cases, memorization became the dominant characteristic and expectation. Understanding was rarely a goal.

Davis's closing chapters offer many opinions on the future of Freemasonry. I find this invigorating.

## **Hackett, David G., *That Religion In Which All Men Agree; Freemasonry in American Culture* (2014) - Introductory**

This book weaves the story of Freemasonry into the narrative of American religious history. Weighed down with the mythical legacies of stonemasons' guilds and the Newtonian revolution, English Freemasonry arrived in colonial America with a vast array of cultural baggage, which was drawn on, added to, and transformed during its journey through American culture. David G. Hackett argues that from the 1730s through the early twentieth century the religious worlds of an evolving American social order broadly appropriated the beliefs and initiatory practices of this all-male society. For much of American history, Freemasonry was both counter and complement to Protestant churches, as well as a forum for collective action among racial and ethnic groups outside the European American Protestant mainstream. Moreover, the cultural template of Freemasonry gave shape and content to the American "public sphere." By including a group not usually seen as a carrier of religious beliefs and rituals, Hackett expands and complicates the terrain of American religious history by showing how Freemasonry has contributed to a broader understanding of the multiple influences that have shaped religion in American culture.

Hackett's book reminds the reader of just how central Freemasonry was to American public life during the second half of the eighteenth century. "Freemasonry," he writes, "was the most successful colonial organization in crossing political, ethnic, and religious boundaries among leading affluent white men." To become a Mason "was to share in the values and behavior of America's emerging elite." Thousands, then tens of thousands of men, joined. Protestant ministers joined. Masons were a visible part of American public life during the closing decades of the eighteenth century, and Freemasonry became more overtly Christian and republican during these years. No one living in an American city in the 1770s or 1780s would have been unaware of the public importance of Freemasonry.

A very good read.

## **Hammer, Andrew, *Observing the Craft – The Pursuit of Excellence In Masonic Labour and Observance* (2010) – Introductory**

Observing the Craft is a manifesto of sorts for the Lodge that decides to seek quality over quantity in every aspect of Masonry. It is a stringent argument for the Symbolic (Blue) Lodge as the *ne plus ultra* of the Craft, asking that Masons put actions behind their statements that 'nothing is higher than the third degree. It is a book that calls for nothing but the utmost personal effort and commitment to be put into the operation of a Masonic Lodge, and the experience of a Masonic meeting, in search of the transformational experience which Masons define as 'making good men better'. An easy read that can prove to be inspirational for those who have an open mind; this book can serve as a guide for Lodges that want to "do it right".

**Harland-Jacobs, Jessica L., *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism 1717-1927* (2007) - Introductory**

They built some of the first communal structures on the empire's frontiers. The empire's most powerful proconsuls sought entrance into their lodges. Their public rituals drew dense crowds from Montreal to Madras. The Ancient Free and Accepted Masons were quintessential builders of empire, argues Jessica Harland-Jacobs. In this first study of the relationship between Freemasonry and British imperialism, Harland-Jacobs takes readers on a journey across two centuries and five continents, demonstrating that from the moment it left Britain's shores, Freemasonry proved central to the building and cohesion of the British Empire.

The organization formally emerged in 1717 as a fraternity identified with the ideals of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, such as universal brotherhood, sociability, tolerance, and benevolence. As Freemasonry spread to Europe, the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Africa, the group's claims of cosmopolitan brotherhood were put to the test. Harland-Jacobs examines the brotherhood's role in diverse colonial settings and the impact of the empire on the brotherhood; in the process, she addresses issues of globalization, supranational identities, imperial power, fraternalism, and masculinity. By tracking an important, identifiable institution across the wide chronological and geographical expanse of the British Empire, *Builders of Empire* makes a significant contribution to transnational history as well as the history of Freemasonry and imperial Britain.

**MacDougall, Walter, *Freemasonry: The Vital Experience* – Introductory**

Walter MacDougall is a Past Grand Master in the Grand Lodge of Maine. He has accomplished much in academic and Masonic life. He is a much respected and called upon speaker and participant in Masonic Education programs. He is a lover of the Arts and Sciences.

In this book he gathers together many of his “talks” and develops them into papers of reflection. They are, in many ways, autobiographical recounting his experiences and thoughts.

This is an excellent book for the Mason who is interested in the journey into the more esoteric aspects of our Society. At the same time, he does not shy away from the exoteric and operational.

His paper on “The Virgin Weeping” is deeply moving and thought provoking. It, like other papers in the collection, presents a subtle challenge to the ambitious reader to extend his thinking and unshackle his mind so that myriads of thought possibilities may flourish.

He seems to truly enjoy this journey into reflection and thought and the opportunity to share those experiences. His writing style is easy to read and the Mason beginning to read some of the esoteric writings will find this work very satisfying.

**Poll, Michael (ed.), The Freemasons Key – A Study of Masonic Symbolism (1st ed – 2008) – Introductory**

This is a collection of articles on the subject by well-known writers on Masonry including Mackey and Newton. This is an excellent resource for those studying symbolism. The purpose in many of these papers seems to be to point directions rather than to provide answers although the effort is made to do so in some cases.

A central theme is that Freemasonry is essentially symbolism and that knowledge of the history and development of Freemasonry is essential to an understanding of the symbols. There is virtual unanimity in agreeing that historical accuracy is challenging in many cases but that the study of Masonic development by various students provides insight into the Fraternity.

Specific symbols are discretely discussed. This discretion will frustrate the neophyte who has not fully developed an understanding or opinion on the significance of the symbol for him. A deep understanding of the ritual is helpful for a critical reading and analysis of these works.

I found myself saying “Aha” as often as “I can’t buy that”. One should not read this to find validation of his opinions nor to find answers to all of his questions. My recommendation is to use this resource as a partial map.

**Roberts, Allen, The Craft and Its Symbols (1974) – Introductory**

This is a very good book for the reader who is looking for a straight forward conversational tone. While the concepts are familiar and very recognizable to the Master Mason, the discussion often leads beyond the routine and ritual based interpretations that the Mason is familiar within Lodge work.

There are many illustrations and diagrams which will draw the Mason’s attention to that which he has experienced. It is entirely written from the author’s perspective and includes few footnotes and no bibliography.

The author is very cognizant of what should/should not be stated in writing. The writing is an easy reading conversational tone but does not oversimplify the concepts. The writing invites the curious Mason on a journey of exploration. The content is sufficient in itself to provide a solid foundation in the understanding of the copious symbols with which we are faced in our Masonic journeys.

I recommend this ready to any Mason who wishes to become acquainted/reacquainted with our symbols.

### **Claudy, Carl; Introduction to Freemasonry, 1931- Introductory**

Every type of literature has within its unique genre those volumes which are considered to be classics. In North American Freemasonry one of those classics is Carl Claudy's "Introduction to Freemasonry". First printed in 1931 it has since that time gone through more than 30 printings. Contained between the boards of this book are answers to the elementary inquiries of the newly made brother. Broken down into the three degrees, Claudy's work should be required reading for all new members or as one reviewer stated " Every Freemason should read these books within a week of being raised a Master Mason and before speaking in lodge or offering any opinion on any aspect of the Craft."

This book (sometimes broken up into the three degrees as separate publications) covers all the basics of the three degrees without getting overly complicated and as such makes for an easy read.

Highly recommended

### **Newton, Joseph Fort; The Builders, 1921- Introductory**

Another Masonic classic is Joseph Fort Newton's "The Builders" first published back in 1921. Newton was thorough in his examination of the craft although his treatment of the historical aspects of Freemasonry are now dated. Unlike other works of its type it is not a recitation of facts and dates, this book builds upon the narrative to expound a deep insight underlying the philosophies behind the craft. Still a very worthwhile read for the neophyte Mason.

Recommended

### **Getting Settled**

#### **Berman, Dr. Ric, The Foundations of Modern Freemasonry (2012) – Getting Settled**

While Masonic tradition holds (and certain authors and readers continue to fantasize) Freemasonry to be of great antiquity, this is simply not the fact. Today, there is overwhelming consensus within academic and scholarly Masonic circles that our ancient and honorable association is no more than a mere four hundred years old or so. The real debate, however, has been the process by which so-called operative lodges, a largely moribund collection of craft guilds, transformed into 'speculative' Masonry, a fraternal body formerly associated with aristocrats and intellectuals that now spans the globe.

In The Foundations of Modern Freemasonry, Ric Berman places the 'modern' Freemasonry's early years under a microscope, examining so-called 'transitional' masonry, early players of the first Grand Lodge, and related social and political circles. Most interesting, and perhaps shocking for some, is his rejection that operative bodies as such 'evolved' into modern speculative lodges. On the contrary, Berman argues that a coterie of likeminded intellectuals and aristocrats revolutionized the notion of a lodge in the early 1700s and created something entirely new – an overtly Whig social club, operating under a central authority, which promoted tolerance, education, conviviality, and social networking.

Chief among modern Freemasonry's architects and proponents, Berman notes, was the Rev. John Theophilus Desaguliers – a member of London's French community, an endowed clergyman with aristocratic connections, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. "Desaguliers' approach to Freemasonry was bound up with personal, philosophical and political objectives, and Grand Lodge provided a means by which these could be advanced. Largely motivated by self-interest, his pro-Hanoverian political views were shared by the Huguenot community as a whole and, more importantly, by many senior Whigs and entwined with Enlightenment theories and the natural rights of John Locke. The reinvention of Freemasonry as a bulwark of the Hanoverian status quo and enlightened thought led to its embrace by the Whig establishment and many of those at its political core. And the forum it provided for education and entertainment resonated with its aspirant members to the extent that it could be regarded as an outpost of the scientific Enlightenment." Desaguliers, George Payne, Martin Folkes, and other prominent modern Freemasons used their personal and political influence to mould the Order and extend its membership through a variety of civic, social, and intellectual networks, not least of which were the learned professions and, even more important, the military which carried their new fraternity around the world. It is the fruit of their labor, rather than the stone carvers and architects of old, which gave rise to the myriad forms of fraternal Freemasonry that we know and enjoy today.

### **Bizzack, John, For the Good of the Order: Examining the Shifting Paradigm Within Freemasonry (2013) – Getting Settled**

For the Good of the Order deals with the issue of shifting paradigms within the Masonic fraternity. It is an excellent analysis on historical shifts and what is taking place now. The author very acutely and accurately confronts the issues that Freemasonry faces as a result of our failure to retain an educational system in our lodges and our willingness to surrender the quality of the craft in our incessant quest for quantity. He points out that the paradigm today does not deal with the relevancy of the precepts of Masonry, nor "due to a failure of its principles and lessons but purely on the basis of numbers." He poses the question, "does Masonry need more members or more Masons?" He writes that it is not important the reader agree with what this book says, as long as he thinks about it. His observations supported by learned students of the craft contend that, "Freemasonry does not help itself by being 'transparent' and further strips the fraternity of its aura of secrecy and mystery." He presents well the potential involvement of the Traditional Observance, European Concept and Affinity Lodges in the paradigm shift by offering "better and more in-depth education, further opportunity for fellowship and a return to more traditional spirit and fundamental core ideologies of the fraternity as it was in the past." He also makes the observation that: "None of the solutions tried to this point by various English-speaking Grand Lodges have reversed the downward trend." It has been apparent for some time that the English-speaking Grand Lodges have shown the greatest rate of loss over several decades, all using principally the charitable style of the craft. Bizzack's observation that "We cannot escape the fact that the general public judges Freemasonry by whom they observe are permitted to become Masons." is one that we cannot ignore. It is a book well worth reading.

### **Gambi, Paolo and Raffi, Gustavo, Interviews with the Grand Master (2012) – Getting Settled**

Gustavo Raffi was the Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy from 1999 through 2014, a position he filled for longer than many of our current Grand Lodge Officers have been Masons. This volume is a discussion between the Grand Master and journalist Paolo Gambi exploring the philosophy that forms the basis of his outlook as a Freemason. It is a journey through esoterism, the science of dialogue, the Great Architect of the Universe, laicism, the eternal conflict between science and faith, the sacrosanct right to the pursuit of happiness, with a critical analysis and proposals for the near future. His thoughts are refreshing and validating for those who see Freemasonry more than fund-raising and fun times. If Hammer and Porter speak to the practical approaches to Freemasonry then Raffi takes us down a path that is more philosophical and esoteric in thought.

### **Porter, Cliff, A Traditional Observance Lodge (2011) – Getting Settled**

Cliff Porter's latest book relates his experience within a Traditional Observance Lodge. Once you get past the spelling and grammatical errors one quickly becomes taken with the fact that there can be more to a lodge meeting than mundane business, discussions of the upcoming roast beef dinner and mediocre degree work. This is one of a number of recent books that attempts to illustrate that Freemasonry can move past the language of old ceremonial forms and rituals and trite conversations and develop an environment where its members will feel comfortable in embarking on a quest of self-discovery, development and improvement.

### **Rees, Julian, The Tracing Boards of the Three Degrees in Craft Freemasonry Explained. (2009) – Getting Settled**

Freemasonry is about rendering in symbol and allegory that which words alone cannot render. And a visual image gives us a way of using our own insight to decode the message. The tracing boards are there to do just that — from their original function of laying out the plan of the building, they have developed into a means for us to lay out the message, and then to profit by it.

In a sense, this book is written back-to-front; Julian Rees examines the three Craft tracing boards first, laying out the allegories and symbols, then, as an adjunct, the Author takes a short look at the history of their development, looking at some older forms of the tracing boards in use long before the present-day Emulation boards were developed. After that the book looks at practices in other Masonic jurisdictions and other countries. But the first three chapters of this book deal with the Emulation tracing boards, since they are the most commonly used in England. The tracing boards used in the Emulation Lodge of Improvement in London were designed and painted by John Harris in 1845 and measure approximately 183 cm (6 ft) by 91 cm (3 ft), measurements which have an allegorical significance in the third degree. Although these boards were painted by Harris expressly for the Emulation Lodge of Improvement, many copies of them were made, and these are the images reproduced in the ritual and lecture books of the Emulation working.

However, it is interesting to note that a mere four years later, in 1849, Harris painted a different set in which, most importantly, a significant change was made to the second degree board, which is mentioned in this book in the chapter dealing with that degree. When the building of the new Freemasons' Hall in London was completed in 1933, the boards commissioned for use in the individual lodge rooms were of a different design, reflecting the art deco influence of the period. The architects were commissioned to produce a new design on a simplified basis which would be more suitable for reproduction. This excellent book is richly illustrated and features tracing boards never before seen outside museums.

### **Stevenson, David, *The Origins of Freemasonry* (1998) – Getting Settled**

David Stevenson demonstrates that the real origins of modern Freemasonry lie in Scotland around 1600, when the system of lodges was created by stonemasons with rituals and secrets blending medieval mythology with Renaissance and seventeenth century history. This fascinating work of historical detection will be essential reading for anyone interested in Renaissance and seventeenth-century history.

*The Origins of Freemasonry* considers the broader nature of Freemasonry. Stevenson, however, does more than amass an impressive pile of evidence. He audaciously attempts to revise the accepted view of Masonry's beginnings. If previous historians have disagreed about the precise nature of the shift from operative to speculative Masonry, they have overwhelmingly cited the creation of a Grand Lodge in London during 1717 as a key turning point. Stevenson challenges this view, arguing that the event was "almost an irrelevance in the long process of development of the movement" What he prefers to call "modern freemasonry," actually began during the previous century in Scotland.

Stevenson's books represent a major advance in knowledge, making Scottish issues more significant in the broader history of the fraternity.

### **Jones, Bernard E; *Freemasons' Guide and Compendium* -Getting Settled**

First published in 1950, the 'Freemasons' Guide and Compendium' is filled with detailed information on a wide variety of subjects related to Freemasonry. Written by an experienced member of the craft Jones brings to this book evidence of a great deal of research having been undertaken to provide the rich fabric of information. Whether a newly made Master Mason or someone who has been around for a while, this book will provide a wealth of information and as such is an excellent resource book. As is the case with other books written in the mid twentieth century his opinions of a historical nature are somewhat dated in light of current historical research. That caveat aside, this is an excellent addition to your bookshelf.

Recommended

## Exploratory

### **Churton, Tobias, The Mysteries of John the Baptist (2012) - Exploratory**

Churton is one of my “go to” Masonic authors. He has a strong background and interest in the esoteric approach to Freemasonry and has a strong background and understanding of the traditions of Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Alchemy and other traditional philosophies and their relationships and similarities to Freemasonry.

This book deals with the connections between Freemasonry and the Holy Sts. John. But, were the Holy St. John two distinct individuals? It is an interesting historical study of the life of The Baptist and his relationship with his cousin Jesus. Churton postulates that John’s roles has been subverted by those who had a personal interest in promoting Jesus and demoting John – most notably Paul who may, in fact, been a party to the executions of John and Jesus. The Mandaens (Gnostics) or Iraq hold that John, the Baptist (Yahya) was the last prophet.

Churton portrays John as a courageous, revolutionary figure as vital to the origins of Christianity as his cousin Jesus, himself. Churton shows how John and Jesus, as equal partners, launched a covert spiritual operation to overcome corruption in the Temple of Jerusalem, re-initiate Israel and resurrect Creation. Masons have forgotten or never knew that Masons were once known as “St. John’s Men”.

Historical analysis demonstrates connections with the Essenes, Gnostics that persist to this day - discussions concerning the connection of The Baptist to the Summer Solstice, fertility rites and ancient Jewish harvest festivals. John was more than just the “herald” that Paul said that he was. This is a challenging read at times. Interesting. Not quite what I expected.

### **Churton, Tobias, Freemasonry, The Reality (2007) - Exploratory**

A fascinating, entertaining, informative and sometimes difficult read. Churton has called upon his broad and deep knowledge of Masonic history in creating this work that is a worthy read by serious Masonic students.

Often frank, critical and seldom pulling punches. Churton details the development of Freemasonry from its earliest documented times. Churton brings the esoteric connections along with “practical” developments of Masonry.

He deals extensively with the individuals who have impacted Freemasonry over the past centuries. His work is often laced with the political and religious realities of the day that had dramatic effects on the perspective and appearance of The Grand Lodge (and subsequent United Grand Lodge) of England.

Churton believes strongly in the beneficial role that Freemasonry and Freemasons have on the world. He is often critical of the perspective that the UGLE takes when it refers to Freemasonry. He says that the statements often refer to what the UGLE is or isn’t not to Freemasonry.

I found this book interesting and very worthwhile. I find that Churton may be biased against what he refers to as “socialism” although, in fairness, he may be more accurately referring to the outward manifestations of Socialists.

**Davis, Robert G., Understanding Manhood in America – Freemasonry’s Enduring Path to the Mature Masculine (2005) Getting Settled - Exploratory**

Davis is a contemporary Masonic author who has published a number of studies into the state and historical development of Freemasonry especially in the United States. In this work, he studies the male role and identity in the USA and how Freemasonry has played a significant role. This book presents a perspective on the role of Freemasonry in the life of a man that I have not considered. The approach is fascinating and has certainly convinced me that this perspective is worthy of including in my understanding of Freemasonry. At times, I am a little uncomfortable with the extent to which Davis takes the role of the male in society – almost to the point of some of the “Male Rights” organizations that he is very critical of.

Although we often mouth the words of “making good men better”, mentorship, brotherly love, and Fraternity, Davis puts solid concepts and processes to these oft abused words. He contends that one of Freemasonry’s primary purposes is to provide models and directions for men to develop into the full masculine, taking his central role in society. He identifies how society has failed to adapt to the changing environments and to the co-dependent roles of males and females and their essential functions within the family. He contends that every boy needs a father and that often it is not his biological father. Freemasonry has a vital function in these situations.

Near the conclusion of the book, he has a brief discussion on Freemasonry and what it is and what it is not. He emphasizes the importance of symbols and makes a clear distinction between “fact” and “truth”.

**Hogan, Timothy, Entering the Chain of Union (2012) - Exploratory**

1. Entering the Chain of Union is an exploration of the world’s esoteric traditions and what unites them. Timothy Hogan examines different spiritual and initiatic traditions from around the world and shows how they share common ritual elements and spiritual doctrines. His firsthand account of his travels around the world introduce[s] readers to traditions as diverse as the Sufi, Druze, Mayans, Taoists, Tibetan Buddhists, and his personal meetings with spiritual leaders like Harun Yahya. In this book, he explores in great detail the spiritual philosophies of Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Qabbalistic doctrines, Taoist and Tibetan alchemy, secret Mayan traditions, and ancient sacred landmarks from around the world. He further shows how they relate directly to the western traditions of initiation, to include Templarism, Freemasonry, Martinism, and Rosicrucianism. He unveils certain secret spiritual doctrines that have been perpetuated (sometimes unknowingly) by the world’s great religions. The travels presented in this book cover areas as diverse as Tibet, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, and areas in both North and South

America, and it clearly illustrates how secret societies and associations over the centuries have contributed to the Western esoteric tradition. While unraveling the mysteries of The Primordial Tradition, this book presents a glimpse of esoteric history and doctrines that have just never been published previously.

For those interested in the esoteric this book will prove to be an interesting read.

2. Hogan has a resume that commends him. He has served in the highest offices of Masonic and other mystic organizations. His interests in Alchemy, Hermeticism, Kaballah and Gnosticism make him an ideal person to write about the esoteric and mystical societies. However, Hogan is not a good writer and while I found much of the information that I was looking for, it was interspersed with copious information that seemed to be included to show the reader the depth of experience and knowledge of the author which I have acknowledged is extensive and impressive. A lot of space in this book is spent on the derivation of words and names and speculation runs rampant. However, the knowledge and information concerning the esoterics of Freemasonry and other mystical societies is very useful to the exploring mind.

I recommend this book to the exploring mind that has experience in a variety of writing styles. The reader needs to be able to separate the “wheat from the chaff” so that he can get to the information for which he searches.

For my purposes, this book could have been half the length and omitted much of the personal experience and word derivations.

### **Jacob, Margaret C., The Radical Enlightenment; Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans (2006) – Exploratory**

This book chronicles those beginning events in Europe that gave Freemasons a proud heritage of freedom and fighting for it. Written by one of the foremost authorities of early European Freemasonry Professor Jacob traces the impact that Freemasonry had on the development of the Enlightenment period in Europe. This book is written at the academic level and as such is not an easy read, the reader should have a background in European history as well as in philosophy in order to appreciate the contents of the book.

### **Wilnhurst, William Leslie, Meaning of Masonry - Exploratory**

At the beginning of the 20th century, Wilnhurst became very prolific in his writings. In this paper, he explores his thoughts about the opportunities that Freemasonry offers to the committed Mason.

Wilnhurst truly releases his mind to consider the broad implications inherent in the study of the Craft. He, however, remains bound to the very clear beliefs that Masons must have. He has been described as a mystic – a Christian mystic and, at times, as a Christian Gnostic. Whether he would have asserted this, I don't know but the descriptions are apt. At times, the reader will need to read multiply times before he gets meaning from the writing. This is high level writing and demands full attention and focus.

Wilmhurst, in my view, should be included in the list of truly great Masonic thinkers. While the writing style is not the easiest to deal with, this is a resource that demands to be included in the list of “must reads” for the more active Masonic reader. This piece of work has “esoteric” written all over it. Wonderful!

### **Baigent, Michael and Leigh, Richard The Temple and the Lodge (2012)**

In this book Baigent and Leigh that claim to trace a link between the suppressed Knights Templar and modern day Freemasonry. They claim that following the suppression of the Knights Templar by the King of France some of them initially sought refuge in Scotland. The book then explains how the Templars helped the Scots in the fight for independence from the English, and how the Templar Order survived through Jacobite Freemasonry to Strict Observance and the Grand Orient of France.

It also claims that many of the people behind the American Revolution were Freemasons, as were some of the less successful British commanders such as Howe and Cornwallis, even claiming they intentionally lost some of the battles to prevent the destruction of America's economic base.

Baigent and Leigh also point out that the ideas of European thinkers such as Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, and the French philosophers are incorporated in the Constitution. They also suggest that most of these thinkers were Freemasons or men who moved in Masonic circles

I would classify this book as “Speculative Masonic History” rather than a pure Masonic text, but still a very interesting read for those interested in Masonic History.

### **Wilmhurst, William Leslie, The Masonic Initiation (2007 Revised Edition) - Exploratory**

In the opening paragraph of chapter I Wilmshurst wrote "No more needed and useful work is to be done in the Masonic order today than the education of its members in the true purpose of rites of initiation, that they may the better appreciate the reason, the importance, and the seriousness of the work the order was designed to achieve" Thus begins the sequel to Wilmshurst's other enduring classic, The Meaning of Masonry. Within this new edition by Plumbstone (which has been fully revised and re-set in modern type) we find the author's most advanced expression as he explores the profound depths of Masonic ritual as a contemplative art, and offers his vision of the future of the Craft. Wilmshurst's insights into the initiatic experience enables the reader to develop a greater understanding of the first degree ritual. Prominent Masonic author Robert G. Davis writes in his Foreword that this edition provides "a new look at a timeless classic which has induced many generations of Masons to feel that, when they are in the sacred space of lodge, they are in the presence of a mystery that goes to the root of their own being."

For those interested in the deeper meaning of the craft and its ritual this is one the 'must read' books out there and one that you will find yourself going back to re-read time and time again.

Highly recommended.