

## The Leland or Locke MS.

6 May 1696

ca 1436 by John Locke's reckoning

Note: Henry VI (6 Dec 1421 - 21 May 1471) was King of England from 1422 to 1461 and again from 1470 to 1471, and disputed King of France from 1422 to 1453.

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Note: A transcription of this MS, without attribution or Preston's notes, appears in Charles A. Lakin's "History of Military Lodge No. 93, F&AM, Manlius, N.Y. 1893. pgs 124-127.

<http://www.masonicsecrets.org/history-of-freemasonry/part1/leland-manuscript.html>

The History of Freemasonry  
by Albert Gallatin Mackey  
Chapter 44 - The Leland Manuscript

THE Leland Manuscript, so called because it is said to have been discovered by the celebrated antiquary John Leland, and sometimes called the Locke Manuscript in consequence of the supposititious annotations appended to it by that metaphysician, has for more than a century attracted the attention and more recently excited the controversies of Masonic scholars.

After having been cited with approbation by such writers as Preston, Hutchinson, Oliver, and Krause, it has suffered a reverse under the crucial examination of later critics. It has by nearly all of these been decided to be a forgery - a decision from which very few at this day would dissent.

It is in fact one of those "pious frauds" intended to strengthen the claim of the Order to a great antiquity and to connect it with the mystical schools of the ancients. But as it proposes a theory concerning the origin of the Institution, which was long accepted as a legend of the Order, it is entitled to a place in the legendary history of Freemasonry.

The story of this manuscript and the way in which it was introduced to the notice of the Craft is a singular one.

In the Gentleman's Magazine for September, 1753, the so called manuscript was printed for the first time under the title of "Certayne Questyons with Awnsersers to the same, Concernynge the Mystery of Maconrye, wrytenne by the Hande of Kyng Henrye the Sixthe of the Name, and faythfullye copied by me John Leylande Antiquaries, by the Commaunde of His Highnesse." That is, King Henry the Eighth, by whom Leland was employed to search for antiquities in the libraries of cathedrals, abbeys, priories, colleges and all places where any ancient records were to be found.

The article in the Gentleman's Magazine is prefaced with these words:

"The following treatise is said to be printed at Franckfort, Germany, 1748, under the following Title. Ein Brief Vondem Beruchmten Herr Johann Locke, betreffend die Frey-Maureren. So auf einem Schrieb-Tisch enines verstorbnen Bruders ist gefunden worden. That is, A Letter of the famous Mr. John Locke relating to Freemasonry; found in the Desk or Scritoir of a deceased Brother."

The claim, therefore, is that this document was first published at Frankfort in 1748, five years before it appeared in England. But this German original has never been produced, nor is there any evidence before us that there ever was such a production. The laborious learning of Krause would certainly have enabled him to discover it had it ever been in existence. But, although he accepts the so-called manuscript as authentic, he does not refer to the Frankfort copy, but admits that, so far as he knows, it first made its appearance in Germany in 1780, in J. G. L. Meyer's translation of Preston's Illustrations.(1)

Kloss, it is true, in his Bibliography, gives the title in German, with the imprint of "Frankfort, 12 pages." But he himself says that the actuality of such a document is to be wholly doubted. (2)

(1) "Kunsturkunden der Freimaurerei," I., 14 (2) "Bibliographie der Friemaurerei," No. 329

Besides, it is not unusual with Kloss to give the titles of books that he has never seen, and for whose existence he had no other authority than the casual remark of some other writer. Thus he gives the titles of the Short Analysis of the Unchanged Rites and Ceremonies of Freemasons, said to have been printed in 1676, and the Short Charge, ascribed to 1698, two books which have never been found. But he applies to them the epithet of "doubtful" as he does to the Frankfort edition of the Leland Manuscript.

But before proceeding to an examination of the external and internal evidence of the true character of this document, it will be expedient to give a sketch of its contents. It has been published in so many popular works of easy access that it is unnecessary to present it here in full.

It is introduced by a letter from Mr. Locke (the celebrated author of the Essay on the Human Understanding), said to be addressed to the Earl of Pembroke, under date of May 6, 1696, in which he states that by the help of Mr. C- ns he had obtained a copy of the MS. in the Bodleian Library, which he therewith had sent to the Earl. It is accompanied by numerous notes which were made the day before by Mr. Locke for the reading of Lady Masham, who had become very fond of Masonry.

Mr. Locke says: "The manuscript of which this is a copy, appears to be about 160 years old. Yet (as your Lordship will observe by the title) it is itself a copy of one yet more ancient by about 100 years. For the original is said to have been the handwriting of K. H. VI. Where the Prince had it is at present an uncertainty, but it seems to me to be an examination (taken perhaps before the king) of some one of the Brotherhood of Masons; among whom he entered himself, as 'tis said, when he came out of his minority, and thenceforth put a stop to the persecution that had been raised against them."

The "examination," for such it purports to be, as Mr. Locke supposes, consists of twelve questions and answers. The style and orthography is an attempted imitation of the language of the 15th century. How far successful the attempt has been will be discussed hereafter.

Masonry is described to be the skill of Nature, the understanding of the might that is therein and its various operations, besides the skill of numbers, weights and measures, and the true manner of fashioning all things for the use of man, principally dwellings and building and of all kinds and all other things that may be useful to man.

Its origin is said to have been with the first men of the East, who were before the Man of the West, by which Mr. Locke, (1) in his note, says is meant Pre-Adamites, the "Man of the West" being Adam. The Phoenicians, who first came from the East into Phoenicia, are said to have brought it westwardly by the way of the Red and Mediterranean seas.

(1) It will be seen that in this and other places I cite the name of Mr. Locke as if he were really the author of the note, a theory to which I by no means desire to commit myself. The reference in this way is merely for convenience.

It was brought into England by Pythagoras, who is called in the document "Peter Gower," evidently from the French spelling of the name, "Petagore," he having traveled in search of knowledge into Egypt, Syria, and every other land where the Phoenicians had planted Masonry. Having obtained a knowledge of the art in the Lodges of Masons into which he gained admission, on his return to Europe he settled in Magna Grecia (the name given by the ancients to Southern Italy), and established a Grand Lodge at Crotona, one of its principal cities, where he made many Masons. Some of these traveled into France and made many Masons, whence in process of time the art passed over into England.

Such is the history of the origin and progress of Masonry which is given in the Leland Manuscript. The remainder of the document is engaged in giving the character and the objects of the Institution.

Thus it is said, in relation to secrecy, that Masons have at all times communicated to mankind such of their secrets as might generally be useful, and have kept back only those that might be harmful in evil hands - those that could be of no use unless accompanied by the teachings of the Lodge, and those which are employed to bind the brethren more strongly together.

The arts taught by Masons to mankind are enumerated as being Agriculture, Architecture, Astronomy, Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Poetry, Chemistry, Government, and Religion.

Masons are said to be better teachers than other men, because the first of them received from God the art of finding new arts, and of teaching them, whereas the discoveries of other men have been but few, and acquired only by chance. This art of discovery the Masons conceal for their own profit. They also conceal the art of working miracles, the art of foretelling future events, the art of changes (which Mr. Locke is made in a note to interpret as signifying the transmutation of metals), the method of acquiring the faculty of Abrac, the power of becoming good and perfect without the aid of fear and hope, and the universal language.

And lastly it is admitted that Masons do not know more than other men, but only have a better opportunity of knowing, in which many fail for want of capacity and industry. And as to their virtue, while it is acknowledged that some are not so good as other men, yet it is believed that for the most part they are better than they would be if they were not Masons. And it is claimed that Masons, greatly love each other, because good and true men, knowing each other to be such, always love the more the better they are.

"And here endeth the Questyones and Awnsveres."

There does not appear to be any great novelty or value in this document. The theory of the origin of Masonry had been advanced by others before its appearance in public, and the characteristics of Masonry had been previously defined in better language.

But no sooner is it printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for the month of September, and year 1753, than it is seized as a *bonne bouche* by printers and writers, so that being first received with surprise, it was soon accepted as a genuine relic of the early age of English Masonry and incorporated into its history, a position that it has not yet lost, in the opinion of some. The forgeries of Chatterton and of Ireland met a speedier literary death.

Of the genuine publications of this document, so much as this is known.

It was first printed, as we have seen, in the Gentleman's Magazine, in September, 1753. Kloss records a book as published in 1754, with no place of publication, but probably it was London, with the title of *A Masonic Creed*, with a curious letter by Mr. Locke. This, we can hardly doubt, was the Leland Manuscript, but with a new title. The republications in England pursued the following succession. In 1756 it was printed in Entick's edition of the *Constitutions* and in Dermott's *Ahiman Rezon*; in 1763 in the *Freemasons Pocket Companion*, in 1769, in *Wilkinson's Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of Ireland*, and in *Calcott's Candid Disquisition*; in 1772, in *Huddesford's Life of Leland*, and in *Preston's Illustrations of Masonry*, in 1775, in *Hutchinson's Spirit of Masonry* and in 1784, in *Northouck's edition of the Constitutions*.

In Germany it first appeared in 1776, says Krause, in G. L. Meyer's translation of *Preston*; in 1780, in a translation of *Hutchinson*, published at Berlin; in 1805, in the *Magazin für Freimaurer* of Professor Seehass; in 1807, in the collected Masonic works of Fessler; in 1810, by Dr. Krause in his *Three Oldest Documents*, and in 1824, by Mossdorf in his edition of *Lenning's Encyclopedie*.

In France, Thory published a translation of it, with some comments of his own, in 1815, in the *Acta Latomorum*.

In America it was, so far as I know, first published in 1783, in *Smith's Ahiman Rezon of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania*; it was also published in 1817, by Cole, in his *Ahiman Rezon of Maryland*, and it has been copied into several other works.

In none of these republications, with one or two exceptions, is there an expression of the slightest doubt of the genuineness of the document. It has on the contrary been, until recently, almost everywhere accepted as authentic, and as the detail of an actual examination of a Mason or a company of Masons, made by King Henry VI., of England, or some of his ministers, in the 15th century.

Of all who have cited this pretended manuscript, Dr. Carl Christian Friederich Krause is perhaps the most learned, and the one who from the possession of great learning, we should naturally expect would have been most capable of detecting a literary forgery, speaks of it, in his great work on *The Three Oldest Documents Of the Fraternity of Freemasons*, as being a remarkable and instructive document and as among the oldest that are known to us. In England, he says, it is, so far as it is known to him, accepted

as authentic by the learned as well as by the whole body of the Craft, without a dissenting voice. And he refers as evidence of this to the fact that the Grand Lodge of England has formally admitted it into its Book of Constitutions, while the Grand Lodge of Scotland has approved the work of Lawrie, in which its authenticity is supported by new proofs.

And Mossdorf, whose warm and intimate relations with Krause influenced perhaps to some extent his views on this as well as they did on other Masonic subjects, has expressed a like favorable opinion of the Leland Manuscript. In his additions to the *Encyclopedie of Lenning*, he calls it a remarkable document, which, notwithstanding a singularity about it, and its impression of the ancient time in which it originated, is instructive, and the oldest catechism which we have on the origin, the nature, and the design of Masonry.

The editor of Lawrie's History is equally satisfied of the genuine character of this document, to which he confidently refers as conclusive evidence that Dr. Plot was wrong in saying that Henry VI. did not patronize Masonry.

Dr. Oliver is one of the most recent and, as might be expected from his peculiar notions in respect to the early events of Masonry, one of the most ardent defenders of the authenticity of the manuscript, although he candidly admits "that there is some degree of mystery about it, and doubts have been entertained whether it be not a forgery."

But, considering its publicity at a time when Freemasonry was beginning- to excite a considerable share of public attention, and that the deception, if there was one, would have been publicly exposed by the opponents of the Order, he thinks that their silence is presumptive proof that the document is genuine.

"Being thus universally diffused," he says, "had it been a suspected document, its exposure would have been certainly attempted if a forgery, it would have been unable to have endured the test of a critical examination. But no such attempt was made, and the presumption is that the document is authentic."

But, on the other hand there are some writers who have as carefully investigated the subject as those whom I have referred to, but the result of whose investigations have led them irresistibly to the conclusion that the document never had any existence until the middle of the 18th century, and that the effort to place it in the time of Henry VI. is, as Mounier calls it, "a Masonic fraud."

As early as 1787, while the English Masons were receiving it as a document of approved truth, the French critics had begun to doubt its genuineness. At a meeting of the Philalethes, a Rite of Hermetic Masonry which had been instituted at Paris in 1775, the Marquis de Chefdebiens read a paper entitled *Masonic Researches for the use of the Primitive Rite of Narbonne*. (1) In this paper he presented an unfavorable criticism of the Leland Manuscript. In 1801 M. Mounier published an essay *On the Influence attributed to the Philosophers, the Freemasons and the Illuminates in the French Revolution*, (2) in which he pronounces the document to be a forgery and a Masonic fraud.

(1) "Recherches Maconniques a l'usage des Freres du Regime Premitifde Narbonne." (2) "De l'Influence attribuee aux Philosophes, aux Franc-Macons et aux Illumines sur la Revolution de France," per F.F. Mounier.

Lessing was the first of the German critics who attacked the genuineness of the document. This he did in his *Ernst und Falk*, the first edition of which was published in 1778. Others followed, and the German unfavorable criticisms were closed by Findel, the editor of the *Bauhutte*, and author of a History of Freemasonry, first published in 1865, and which was translated in 1869 by Bro. Lyon. He says: "There is no reliance, whatever, to be placed on any assertions based on this spurious document; they all crumble to dust. Not even in England does any well-informed Mason of the present day, believe in the genuineness of this bungling composition."

In England it is only recently that any doubts of its authenticity have been expressed by Masonic critics. The first attack upon it was made in 1849, by Mr. George Sloane, in his *New Curiosities of Literature*. Sloane was not a Freemason, and his criticism, vigorous as it is, seems to have been inspired rather by a feeling of enmity to the Institution than by an honest desire to seek the truth. His conclusions, however, as to the character of the document are based on the most correct canons of criticism. Bro. A. F. A. Woodford is more cautious in the expression of his judgment, but admits that "we must give up the actual claim of the document to be a manuscript of the time of King Henry VI., or to have been written by him or copied by Leland." Yet he thinks "it not unlikely that we have in it the remains of a Lodge catechism conjoined with a Hermetic one." But this is a mere supposition, and hardly a plausible one.

But a recent writer, unfortunately anonymous, in the *Masonic Magazine*, (1) of London, has given an able though brief review of the arguments for and against the external evidence of authenticity, and has come to the conclusion that the former has utterly failed and that the question must fall to the ground.

(1) Vol. vi., No. 64, October, 1878, p. 148

Now, amid such conflicting views, an investigation must be conducted with the greatest impartiality. The influence of great names especially among the German writers, has been enlisted on both sides, and the most careful judgment must be exercised in determining which of these sides is right and which is wrong.

In the investigation of the genuineness of any document we must have resort to two kinds of evidence, the external and the internal. The former is usually more clear and precise, as well as more easily handled, because it is superficial and readily comprehended by the most unpracticed judgment. But when there is no doubt about the interpretation, and there is a proper exercise of skill, internal evidence is freer from doubt, and therefore the most conclusive. It is, says a recent writer on the history of our language, the pure reason of the case, speaking to us directly, by which we can not be deceived, if we only rightly apprehend it. But, although we must sometimes dispense with external evidence, because it may be unattainable, while the internal evidence is always existent, yet the combination of the two will make the conclusion to which we may arrive more infallible than it could be by the application of either kind alone.

If it should be claimed that a particular document was written in a certain century, the mention of it, or citations from it, by contemporary authors would be the best external evidence of its genuineness. It is thus that the received canon of the New Testament has been strengthened in its authority, by the quotation of numerous passages of the Gospels and the Epistles which are to be found in the authentic writings of the early Fathers of the Church. This is the external evidence.

If the language of the document under consideration, the peculiar style, and the archaic words used in it should be those found in other documents known to have been written in the same century, and if the sentiments are those that we should look for in the author, are in accord with the age in which he lived, this would be internal evidence and would be entitled to great weight.

But this internal evidence is subject to one fatal defect. The style and language of the period and the sentiments of the pretended author and of the age in which he lived may be successfully imitated by a skillful forger, and then the results of internal evidence will be evaded. So the youthful Chatterton palmed upon the world the supposititious productions of the monk Rowley and Ireland forged pretended plays of Shakespeare. Each of these made admirable imitations of the style of the authors whose lost productions they pretended to have discovered.

But when the imitation has not been successful, or when there has been no imitation attempted, the use of words which were unknown at the date claimed for the document in dispute, or the reference to events of which the writer must be ignorant, because they occurred at a subsequent period, or when the sentiments are incongruous to the age in which they are supposed to have been written, then the internal evidence that it is a forgery, or at least a production of a later date, will be almost invincible.

It is by these two classes of evidence that I shall seek to inquire into the true character of the Leland Manuscript

If it can be shown that there is no evidence of the existence of the document before the year 1753, and if it can also be shown that neither the language of the document the sentiments expressed in it, nor the character attributed to the chief actor, King Henry VI. are in conformity with a document of the 15th century, we shall be authorized in rejecting the theory that it belongs to such a period as wholly untenable, and the question will admit of no more discussion.

But in arriving at a fair conclusion, whatever it may be, the rule of Ulpian must be obeyed, and the testimonies must be well considered and not merely counted. It is not the number of the whole but the weight of each that must control our judgment.

Those who defend the genuineness of the Leland Manuscript are required to establish these points:

1. That the document was first printed at Frankfort, in Germany, whence it was copied into the Gentleman's Magazine for September, 1753.
2. That the original manuscript was, by command of King Henry VIII., copied by John Leland from an older document of the age of Henry VI.
3. That this original manuscript of which Leland made a copy, was written by King Henry VI.
4. That the manuscript of Leland was deposited in the Bodleian Library.
5. That a copy of this manuscript of Leland was made by a Mr. C-n-s, which is said to mean Collins, and given by him to John Locke, the celebrated metaphysician.
6. That Locke wrote notes or annotations on it in the year 1696, which were published in Frankfort in 1748, and afterward in England, in 1753.

The failure to establish by competent proof any one of these six points will seriously affect the credibility of the whole story, for each of them is a link of one continuous chain.

1. Now as to the first point, that the document was first printed at Frankfort in the year 1748. The Frankfort copy has never yet been seen, notwithstanding diligent search has been made for it by German writers, who were the most capable of discovering it, if it had ever existed. The negative evidence is strong that the Frankfort copy may be justly considered as a mere myth. It follows that the article in the Gentleman's Magazine is an original document, and we have a right to suppose that it was written at the time for some purpose, to be hereafter considered, for, as the author of it has given a false reference, we may conclude that if he had copied it at all he would have furnished us with the true one. Kloss, it is true, has admitted the title into his catalogue, but he has borrowed his description of it from the article in the Gentleman's Magazine, and speaks of this Frankfort copy as being doubtful. He evidently had never seen it, though he was an indefatigable searcher after Masonic books. Krause's account of it in that it first was found worthy of Locke's notice in England; that thence it passed over into Germany- "how, he does not know" - appeared in Frankfort, and then returned back to England, where it was printed in 1753. But all this is mere hearsay, and taken by Krause from the statement in the Gentleman's Magazine. He makes no reference to the Frankfort copy in his copious notes in his *Kunsturkunden*, and, like Kloss, had no personal knowledge of any such publication. In short, there is no positive evidence at all that any such document was printed at Frankfort-on-the-Main, but abundant negative evidence that it was not. The first point must therefore be abandoned.

2. The second point that requires to be proved is that the Manuscript, was, by command of King Henry VIII., copied by John Leland, from an older document of the age of Henry VI. Now, there is not the slightest evidence that a manuscript copy of the original document was taken by Leland, except what is afforded by the printed article in the Gentleman's Magazine, the authenticity of which is the very question in dispute, and it is a good maxim of the law that no one ought to be a witness in his own cause. But even this evidence is very insufficient. For, admitting that Locke was really the author of the annotations (an assertion which also needs proof), he does not say that he had seen the Leland copy, but only a copy of it, which had been made for him by a friend. So that even at that time the Leland Manuscript had not been brought to sight and up to this has never been seen. Amid all the laborious and indefatigable researches of Bro. Hughan in the British Museum, in other libraries, and in the archives of lodges, while he has discovered many valuable old records and Masonic Constitutions which until then had lain hidden in these various receptacles, he has failed to unearth the famous Leland Manuscript. The hope of ever finding it is very faint, and must be entirely extinguished if other proofs can be adduced of its never having existed.

Huddesford, in his *Life of Leland*, had, it is true, made the following statement in reference to this manuscript: "It also appears that an ancient manuscript of Leland's has long remained in the Bodleian Library, unnoticed in any account of our author yet published. This Tract is entitled *Certain Questions with Answers to the same concerning the mystery of Maconrye*. The original is said to be the handwriting of K. Henry VI., by order of his highness K. Henry VIII. (1) And he then proceeds to dilate upon the importance of this "ancient monument of literature, if its authenticity remains unquestioned."

(1) Huddesford's "Life of John Leland," p. 67

But it must be remembered that Huddesford wrote in 1772, nineteen years after the appearance of the document in the Gentleman's Magazine, which he quotes in his Appendix, and from which it is evident that he derived all the knowledge that he had of the pseudomanuscript. But the remarks on this subject of the anonymous writer in the London Masonic Magazine, already referred to, are so apposite and conclusive that they justify a quotation.

"Though Huddesford was keeper of the Ashmolean Library, in the Bodleian, he does not seek to verify even the existence of the manuscript, but contents himself with 'it also appears' that it is from the Gentleman's Magazine of 1753. He surely ought not to have put in here such a statement, that an ancient manuscript of Leland has long remained in the Bodleian, without inquiry or collation. Either he knew the fact to be so, as he stated it, or he did not; but in either case his carelessness as an editor is to my mind, utterly inexcusable. Nothing would have been easier for him than to verify an alleged manuscript of Leland, being an officer in the very collection in which it was said to exist. Still, if he did not do so, either the manuscript did exist, and he knew it, but did not think well, for some reason, to be more explicit about it, or he knew nothing at all about it, and by an inexcusable neglect of his editorial duty, took no pains to ascertain the truth, and simply copied others, by his quasi recognition of a professed manuscript of Leland.

But it is utterly incredible that Huddesford could have known and yet concealed his knowledge of the existence of the manuscript. There is no conceivable motive that could be assigned for such concealment and for the citation at the same time of other authority for the fact. It is therefore a fair inference that his only knowledge of the document was delved from the Gentleman's Magazine. There is therefore, no proof whatever that Leland ever copied any older manuscript.

Referring to certain obvious mistakes in the printed copy, such as Peter Gower for Pythagoras, it has been said that it is evident that the document was not printed from Leland's original transcript, but rather from a secondary copy of an unlearned. Huddesford adopts this view, but if he had ever seen the manuscript of Leland he could have better formed a judgment by a collation of it with the printed copy than by a mere inference that a man of Leland's learning could not have made such mistakes. As he did not do so, it follows that he had never seen Leland's Manuscript. The second point, therefore, falls to the ground.

3. The third point requiring proof is that the original manuscript of which Leland made a copy, was written by King Henry VI. There is a legal rule that when a deed or writing is not produced in court, and the loss of it is not reasonably accounted for, it shall be treated as if it were not existent. This is just the case of the pretended manuscript in the handwriting of Henry VI. No one has ever seen that manuscript, no one has ever had any knowledge of it; the fact of its ever having existed depends solely on the statement made in the Gentleman's Magazine that it had been copied by Leland. Of a document "in the clouds" as this is, whose very existence is a mere presumption built on the very slightest foundation, it is absurd to predicate an opinion of the handwriting. Time enough when the manuscript is produced to inquire who wrote it. The third point, therefore, fails to be sustained.

4. The fourth point is that the manuscript of Leland was deposited in the Bodleian Library. This has already been discussed in the argument on the first and third point. It is sufficient now to say that no such manuscript has been found in that library. The writer in the London Masonic Magazine, whom I have before quoted, says that he had had a communication with the authorities of the Bodleian Library, and had been informed that nothing is known of it in that collection. Among the additional manuscripts of the British Museum are some that were once owned by one Essex, an architect, who lived late in the last century. Among these is a copy of the Leland Manuscript evidently a copy made by Essex from the Gentleman's Magazine, or some one of the other works in which it had been printed. I say evidently, because in the same collection is a copy of the Grand Mystery, transcribed by him as he had transcribed the Leland Manuscript, as a, to him perhaps, curious relic. The original Leland Manuscript is nowhere to be found, and there the attempt to prove the fourth point is unsuccessful.

5. The fifth point is that a copy of Leland's MS. was made by a Mr. C-ns, and given by him to Locke. The Pocket Companion printed the name as "Collins," upon what authority I know not. There were only two distinguished men of that name who were contemporaries of Locke- John Collins, the mathematician, and Anthony Collins, the celebrated skeptical writer. It could not have been the former who took the copy from the Ashmolean Library in 1696, for he died in 1683. There is, however, a strong probability that the latter was meant by the writer of the prefatory, since he was on such relations with Locke as to have been appointed one of his executors, (1) and it is an ingenious part of the forgery that he should be selected to perform such an act of courtesy for his friend as the transcription of an old manuscript. Yet there is an uncertainty about it, and it is a puzzle to be resolved why Mr. Locke should have unnecessarily used such a superabundance of caution, and given only the initial and final letters of the name of a friend who had been occupied in the harmless employment of copying for him a manuscript in a public library. This is mysterious, and mystery is always open to suspicion. For uncertainty and indefiniteness the fifth point is incapable of proof.

(1) It is strange that the idea that the Collins mentioned in the letter was Collins, the friend and executor of Locke, should not have suggested itself to any of the defenders or opponents of the document. The writer in the "London Masonic Magazine" intimates that he was "a book-collector, or dealer in MSS."

6. The sixth and last point is that the notes or annotations were written by Mr. Locke in 1696, and fifty-two years afterward printed in Frankfort-on-the-Main. We must add to this, because it is a part of the story, that the English text, with the annotations of Locke, said to have been translated into German, the question - was it translated by the unknown brother in whose desk the document was found after his death? - and then retranslated into English for the use of the Gentleman's Magazine.

It is admitted that if we refuse to accept the document printed in the magazine in 1753 as genuine, it must follow that the notes supposed to have been written by Locke are also spurious. The two questions are not necessarily connected. Locke may have been deceived, and, believing that the manuscript presented to him by C-ns, or Collins, if that was really his name, did take the trouble, for the sake of Lady Masham, to annotate it and to explain its difficulties.

But if we have shown that there is no sufficient proof, and, in fact, no proof at all, that there ever was such a manuscript, and therefore that Collins did not transcribe it, then it will necessarily follow that the pretended notes of Locke are as complete a forgery as the text to which they are appended. Now if the annotations of Locke were genuine, why is it that after diligent search this particular one has not been found? It is known that Locke left several manuscripts behind him, some of which were published after his death by his executors, King and Collins, and several unpublished manuscripts went into the possession of Lord King, who in 1829 published the *Life and Correspondence of Locke*. But nowhere has the notorious Leland Manuscript appeared. "If John Locke's letter were authentic," says the writer already repeatedly referred to, a copy of this manuscript would remain among Mr. Locke's papers, or at Wilton house and the original manuscript probably in the hands of this Mr. Collins, whoever he was, or in the Bodleian."

But there are other circumstances of great suspicion connected with the letter and annotations of Locke, which amount to a condemnation of their authenticity. In concluding his remarks on what he calls "this old paper," Locke is made to say: "It has so raised curiosity as to induce me to enter myself into the fraternity; which I am determined to do (if I may be admitted) the next time I go to London, and that will be shortly."

Now, because it is known that at the date of the pseudo-letter, Mr. Locke was actually residing at Oates, the seat of Sir Francis Masham, for whose lady he says that the annotations were made, and because it is also known that in the next year he made a visit to London, Oliver says that there "he was initiated into Masonry." Now, there is not the slightest proof of this initiation, nor is it important to the question of authenticity whether he was initiated or not, because if he was not it would only prove that he had abandoned the intention he had expressed in the letter. But I cite the unsupported remark of Dr. Oliver to show how Masonic history has hitherto been written - always assumptions, and facts left to take care of themselves.

But it is really most probable that Mr. Locke was not made a Freemason in 1697 or at any other time, for if he had been, Dr. Anderson, writing the history of Masonry only a few years afterward, would not have failed to have entered this illustrious name in the list of "learned scholars" who had patronized the Fraternity.

It appears, from what is admitted in reference to this subject, that the Leland Manuscript, having been obtained by Mr. Collins from the Bodleian Library, was annotated by Mr. Locke, and a letter, stating the fact, was sent with the manuscript and annotations to a nobleman whose rank and title are designated by stars (a needless mystery), but who has been subsequently supposed to be the Earl of Pembroke. All this was in the year 1696. It then appears to have been completely lost to sight until the year 1748, when it is suddenly found hidden away in the desk of a deceased brother in Germany. During these fifty-two years that it lay in abeyance, we hear nothing of it. Anderson, the Masonic historian, could not have heard of it, for he does not mention it in either the edition of the Constitutions published in 1723, or in that more copious one of 1738. If anyone could have known of it, if it was in existence, it would have been Anderson, and if he had ever seen or heard of it he would most certainly have referred to it in his history of Masonry during the reign of Henry VI.

He does say, indeed, that according to a record in the reign of Edward IV. "the charges and laws of the Freemasons have been seen and perused by our late Sovereign, King Henry VI., and by the Lords of his most honourable Council, who have allowed them and declared that they be right good, and reasonable to be holden as they have been drawn out and collected from the records of ancient times," etc. (1)

(1) Anderson's "Constitutions," edition of 1738, p. 75

But it is evident that this is no description of the Leland Manuscript which does not consist of "charges and laws," but is simply a history of the origin of Masonry, and a declaration of its character and objects. And yet the fact that there is said to have been something; submitted by the Masons to Henry VI. and his Council was enough to suggest to the ingenious forger the idea of giving to his pseudo-manuscript a date corresponding to the reign of that monarch. But he overleaped the bounds of caution in giving the peculiar form to his forgery. Had he fabricated a document similar to those ancient constitutions, many genuine manuscripts of which are extant, the discovery of the fraud would have been more difficult.

But to continue the narrative: The manuscript, having been found in the desk of this unknown deceased brother, is forthwith published at Frankfort, Germany, in a pamphlet of twelve pages and in the German language.

Here again there are sundry questions to be asked, which can not be answered. Had the tale been a true one, and the circumstances such as always accompany the discovery of a lost document, and which are always put upon record, the replies and explanations would have been ready.

Was the letter of Locke, including of course the catechism of the Leland Manuscript, which was found in the desk of the unknown brother, the original document, or was it only a copy? If the latter, had it been copied in English by the brother, or translated by him into German? If not translated by him, by whom was it translated? Was the pamphlet printed in Frankfort merely a German translation, or did it also contain, in parallel columns, the English original, as Krause has printed the English documents in his *Kunsterkunden*, and as, in fact, he has printed this very document? These are questions of very great importance in determining the value and authenticity of the Frankfort pamphlet, and yet not one of them can be answered, simply because that pamphlet has never been found, nor is it known that anyone has ever seen it.

The pamphlet next makes its appearance five years afterward in England, and in an English translation in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1753. Nobody can tell, or at least nobody has told, how it got there, who brought it over, who translated it from the German, how it happened that the archaic language of the text and the style of Locke have been preserved. These are facts absolutely necessary to be known in any investigation of the question of authenticity, and yet over them all a suspicious silence broods.

Until this silence is dissipated and these questions answered by the acquisition of new knowledge in the premises, which it can hardly now be expected will be obtained, the stain of an imposture must remain upon the character of the document. The discoverer of a genuine manuscript would have been more explicit in his details.

As to internal evidence, there is the most insuperable difficulty in applying here the canons of criticism which would identify the age of the manuscript by its style.

Throwing aside any consideration of the Frankfort pamphlet on account of the impossibility of explaining the question of translation, and admitting, for the time, that Mr. Locke did really annotate a copy of a manuscript then in the Bodleian Library, which copy was made for him by his friend Collins, how, with this admission, will the case stand?

In Mr. Locke's letter (accepting, it as such) he says: "The manuscript, of which this is a copy, appears to be about 160 years old." As the date of Locke's letter is 1696, this estimate would bring us to 1536, or the thirty-first year of the reign of Henry VIII. Locke could have derived his knowledge of this fact only in two ways: from the date given in the manuscript or from its style and language as belonging, in his opinion, to that period.

But if he derived his knowledge from the date inserted at the head of the manuscript, that knowledge would be of no value, because it is the very question which is at issue. The writer of a forged document would affix to it the date necessary to carry out his imposture, which of course would be no proof of genuineness.

But if Locke judged from the style, then it must be said that, though a great metaphysician and statesman, and no mean theologian, he was not an archaeologist or antiquary, and never had any reputation as an expert in the judgment of old records. Of this we have a proof here, for the language of the Leland Manuscript is not that of the period in which Leland lived. The investigator may easily satisfy himself of this by a collation of Leland's genuine works, or of the Cranmer Bible, which is of the same date.

But it may be said that Locke judged of the date, not by the style, but by the date of the manuscript itself. And this is probably true, because he adds: "Yet (as your Lordship will observe by the title) it is itself a copy of one yet more ancient by about 100 years: For the original is said to have been in the handwriting of K. H. VI."

Locke then judged only by the title - a very insufficient proof as I have already said, of authenticity. So Locke seems to have thought, for he limits the positiveness of the assertion by the qualifying phrase "it is said." If we accept this for what it is worth, the claim will be that the original manuscript was written in the reign of Henry VI., or about the middle of the 15th century. But here again the language is not of that period. The new English, as it is called, was then beginning to take that purer form which a century and a half afterward culminated in the classical and vigorous style of Cowley. We find no such archaisms as those perpetrated in this document in the Repressor of over-much Blaming of the Clergy, written in the same reign, about 1450, by Bishop Pecock, nor in the Earl of Warwick's petition to Duke Humphrey, written in 1432, nor in any other of the writings of that period. It is not surprising, therefore, that the glossary or list of archaic words used in the document, by which from internal evidence we could be enabled to fix its date, has, according to Mr. Woodford, "always been looked upon with much suspicion by experts."

If I may advance an hypotheses upon the subject I should say that the style is a rather clumsy imitation of that of Sir John Mandeville, whose Voiage and Travails was written in 1356, about a century before the pretended date of the Leland Manuscript.

An edition of this book was published at London in 1725. It was, therefore, accessible to the writer of the Leland document. He being aware of the necessity of giving an air of antiquity to his forgery, and yet not a sufficiently skillful philologist to know the rapid strides that had taken place in the progress of the language between the time of Mandeville and the middle of the reign of Henry VI., adopted, to the best of his poor ability, the phraseology of that most credulous of all travelers, supposing that it would well fit into the period that he had selected for the date of his fraudulent manuscript. His ignorance of philology has thus led to his detection. I am constrained, from all these considerations, to endorse the opinion of Mr. Halliwell Phillips, that "it is but a clumsy attempt at deception, and quite a parallel to the recently discovered one of the first Englishe Mercurie."

But the strangest thing in this whole affair is that so many men of learning should have permitted themselves to become the dupes of so bungling an impostor.

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Herewith is a transcription of the 'Leland MS.' and some other notes pertaining to it.

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"Illustrations of Masonry" by William Preston  
from Book Three - The Principles of Masonry Explained  
<http://www.robertlomas.com/preston/padlock/index.html>

a copy of this is on file in my MS Word docs/Masonic/MasHist along with the 'old Manuscript' noted below: glh

### A Letter

From the learned Mr. John Locke,  
to the Right Hon. Thomas (Herbert) (8th) Earl of Pembroke (1656-1732),  
with an old Manuscript on the subject of Free-Masonry.

My Lord,

6th May, 1696

I have at length, by the help of Mr. Collins, procured a copy of that MS. in the Bodleian library, which you were so curious to see: and, in obedience to your lordship's commands, I herewith send it to you.

Most of the notes annexed to it, are what I made yesterday for the reading of my Lady Masham, who is become so fond of masonry, as to say, that she now more than ever wishes herself a man, that she might be capable of admission into the fraternity.

The MS. of which this is a copy, **appears to be about 160 years old**; yet (as your lordship will observe by the title) it is itself a copy of one **yet more ancient by about 100 years**: for the **original is said to be the handwriting of K. Henry VI.** Where that prince had it, is at present an uncertainty; but it seems to me to be an examination (taken perhaps before the king) of some one of the brotherhood of masons; among whom he entered himself, as it is said, when he came out of his minority, and thenceforth put a stop to a persecution that had been raised against them: But I must not detain your lordship longer by my preface from the thing itself.

I know not what effect the sight of this old paper may have upon your lordship; but for my own part I cannot deny, that it has so much raised my curiosity, as to induce me to enter myself into the fraternity, which I am determined to do (if I may be admitted) the next time I go to London, and that will be shortly.

I am,  
My Lord  
Your Lordship's most obedient,  
And most humble servant,  
John Locke

Certayne Questyons,  
with  
Answeres to the same,  
concerning the  
Mystery of Maçonrye;  
Writtene by the hande of kynge Henrye,  
the sixthe of the name,  
and faithfullye copied by me (1) Johan Leylande,  
*Antiquarius,*  
by the commande of his (2) Highnesse

They be as followeth,

Quest. What mote ytt be? (3)

Answ. Ytt beeth the skylle of nature, the understandyng of the myghte that ys hereynne, and its sondrye werckynges; sonderlyche, the skylle of rectenyngs, of waightes and metynges, and the true manere of façonnyng al thynges for nannes use; headlye, dwellinges, and buyldynges of alle kindes, and all odher thynges that make gudde to manne.

Quest. Where dyd it begynne?

Answ. Ytt dyd begynne with the (4) fyrste menne in the este, whych were before the (5) ffyrste manne of the weste, and comyng westlye, ytt hathe broughte herwyth alle confortes to the wylde and comfortlesse.

Quest. Who dyd bryng ytt westlye?

Answ. The (6) Venetians, whoo beyng grate merchaundes, comed ffyrste ffromme the este ynn Venetia, for the commoditye of marchaundyng beithe este and weste bey the redde and myddlelonde fees.

Quest. Howe comede ytt yn Englonde?

Answ. Peter Gower (7) a Grecian, journeyedde ffor kunnyng yn Egypte, and in Syria, and yn everyche londe whereas the Venetians hadde plauntedde maçonrye, and wynnyng entraunce yn al lodges of maçonnes, he lerned muche, and retournedde, and woned yn Grecia Magna (8), wacksyng, and becommynge a myghtye (9) wyseacre, and gratelyche renowned, and her he framed a grate lodge at Groton (10), and maked manye maçonnes, some whereoffe dyde journeye yn Fraunce, and maked manye maçonnes, wherefromme, yn processe of tyme, the arte passed yn Englonde.

Quest. Dothe maçonnes descouer here artes unto odhers?

Answ. Peter Gower, whenne he journeyede to lerne, was ffyrste (11) made, and anonne techedde; evenne soe shulde all odhers beyn recht. Natheless (12) maçonnes hauethe always, yn everyche tyme, from tyme to tyme, communicatedde to mannkynde soche of her secrettes as generallyche myghte be usefulle; they haueth keped backe soche allein as shulde be harmfulle yff they comed yn euylle haundes, oder soche as ne myghte be holpyng wythouten the techynges to be joynedde herwythe in the lodge, oder soche as do bynde the freres more stronglyche togeder, bey the proffytte and commoditye commynge to the confrerie herfromme.

Quest. Qhatte artes haueth the maçonnes techedde mankynde?

Answ. The artes (13) agricultura, architectura, astronomia, geometria, numeres, musica, poesie, kymistrye, governmente, and relygyonne.

Quest. Howe commethe maçonnes more teachers than odher monne?

Answ. The hemselve haueth allein in (14) arte of ffyndyng neue artes, whyche arte the ffyrste maçonnes receaued from Godde; by the whyche they fyndethe what artes hem plesethe, and the treu way of techyng the same, whatt odher menne doethe ffynde out, ys onelyche bey chaunce, and herfore but lytel I tro.

Quest. What dothe the maçonnes concele and hyde?

Answ. They concelethe the arte of ffyndyng neue artes, and thatt ys for here own proffytte, and (15) preise: They concelethe the arte of kepyng (16) secrettes, thatt soe the worlde mayeth nothyng concele from them. They concelethe the arte of wunderwerckyng, and of foresayinge thynges to comme, that so thay same artes may not be usedde of the wyckedde to an euylle ende. They also concelethe the (17) arte of chaunges, the wey of wynnyng the facultye (18) of Abrac, the skylle of becommynge gude and parfyghte wythouten the holpynges of fere and hope; and the universelle (19) longage of maçonnes.

Quest. Wylle he teche me thay same artes?

Answ. Ye shalle be techedde yff ye be werthy, and able to lerne.

Quest. Dothe all maçonnes kunne more then odher menne?

Answ. Not so. Thay onlyche haueth recht and occasyonne more then odher menne to kunne, butt manye doeth fale yn capacity, and manye more doth want industrye, that ys pernecessarye for the gaynyng all kunnyng.

Quest. Are maçonnes gudder men then odhers?

Answ. Some maçonnes are not so virtuous as some odher menne; but, yn the moste parte, thay be more gude then thay woulde be yf thay war not maçonnes.

Quest. Doth maçonnes love eidher odher myghtylye as beeth fayde?

Answ. Yea verylyche, and yt may not odherwife be: for gude menne and treu, kennynge eidher odher to be soche, doeth always love the more as thay be more gude.

[Here endethe the questyonnes, and awnsweres.]

A Glossary of antiquated Words in the foregoing Manuscript

Antiquated Word

*Albein*

*Always*

Translation

only

always

Antiquated Word

*Middlelonde*

*Myghte*

Translation

Mediterranean

power, might



<i>Beithe</i>	both	<i>Occasyonne</i>	opportunity, occasion
<i>Commodityte</i>	conveniency	<i>Odher</i>	other
<i>Confrerie</i>	fraternity, confrere	<i>Onelyche</i>	only
<i>Façonnyng</i>	forming, fashioning	<i>Perneccarye</i>	absolutely necessary
<i>Fore-sayinge</i>	propheying	<i>Preise</i>	honour, praise
<i>Freres</i>	brethren	<i>Recht</i>	right
<i>Headlye</i>	chiefly	<i>Reckenyngs</i>	numbers, reckonings
<i>Hem plesethe</i>	they please	<i>Sonderlyche</i>	particularly
<i>Hemselfe</i>	themselves	<i>Skylle</i>	knowledge, skill
<i>Her</i>	there, their	<i>Wacksyng</i>	growing
<i>Hereynne</i>	therein	<i>Werck</i>	operation, work
<i>Herwyth</i>	with it, herewith	<i>Wey</i>	way
<i>Holpyng</i>	beneficial	<i>Whereas</i>	where
<i>Kunne</i>	know	<i>Woned</i>	dwelt
<i>Kunnyng</i>	knowledge, cunning	<i>Wunderwerckyng</i>	working miracles
<i>Make gudde</i>	are beneficial, make good	<i>Wylde</i>	savage, wild
<i>Metynges</i>	measures	<i>Wynnyng</i>	gaining, winning
<i>Mote</i>	May	<i>Ynn</i>	into

Notes of John Locke from the above transcription:

1. John Leylande was appointed by Henry VIII. at the dissolution of monasteries, to search for, and save such books and records as were valuable among them. He was a man of great labour and industry.
2. His Highnesse, meaning the said king Henry VIII. Our kings had not then the title of majesty.
3. What mote ytt be?] That is, what may this mystery of masonry be? The answer imports, That it consists in natural, mathematical, and mechanical knowledge. Some part of which (as appears by what follows) the masons pretend to have taught the rest of mankind, and some part they still conceal.
4. (4) (5) Fyrste menne yn the este, &c.] It should seem by this, that masons believe there were men in the east before Adam, who is called the 'ffyrste manne of the weste;' and that arts and sciences began in the east. Some authors of great note for learning have been of the same opinion; and it is certain that Europe and Africa (which, in respect to Asia, may be called western countries) were wild and savage, long after arts and politeness of manners were in great perfection in China and the Indies.
6. The Venetians, &c.] In the times of monkish ignorance it is no wonder that the Phenicians should be mistaken for the Venetians. Or, perhaps, if the people were not taken one for the other, similitude of sound might deceive the clerk who first took down the examination. The Phenicians were the greatest voyagers among the ancients, and were in Europe thought to be the inventors of letters, which perhaps they brought from the east with other arts.
7. Peter Gower.] This must be another mistake of the writer. I was puzzled at first to guess who Peter Gower should be, the name being perfectly English; or how Greek should come by such a name: But as soon as I thought of Pythagoras, I could scarce forbear smiling, to find that philosopher had undergone a metempsychosis he never dreamt of. We need only consider the French pronunciation of his name, Pythagore, that is, Petagore, to conceive how easily such a mistake may be made by an unlearned clerk. That Pythagoras travelled for knowledge into Egypt, &c. is known to all the learned; and that he was initiated into several different orders of priests, who in those days kept all their learning secret from the vulgar, is as well known. Pythagoras also made every geometrical theorem a secret, and admitted only such to the knowledge of them, as had first undergone a five years silence. He is supposed to be the inventor of the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid, for which, in the joy of his heart, it is said he sacrificed a hecatomb. He also knew the true system of the world, lately revived by Copernicus: and was certainly a most wonderful man. [See his life by Dion. Hal.]
8. Grecia Magna, a part of Italy formerly so called, in which the Greeks had settled a large colony.
9. Wyseacre.] This word at present signifies simpleton, but formerly had a quite contrary meaning. Wiseacre in the old Saxon, is philosopher, wiseman, or wizard, and having been frequently used ironically, at length came to have a direct meaning in the ironical sense. Thus Duns Scotus, a man famed for the subtilty and acuteness of his understanding, has, by the same method of irony, given a general name to modern dunces.
10. Groton.] Groton is the name of a place in England. The place here meant is Crotona, a city of Grecia Magna, which in the time of Pythagoras was very populous.
11. Fyrste made.] The word Made I suppose has a particular meaning among the masons; perhaps it signifies, initiated.
12. Maçonnes haueth communycatedde, &c.] This paragraph hath something remarkable in it. It contains a justification of the secrecy so much boasted of by masons, and so much blamed by others; asserting that they have in all ages discovered such things as might be useful, and that they conceal such only as would be hurtful either to the world or themselves. What these secrets are, we see afterwards.
13. The artes, agricultura, &c.] It seems a bold pretence this of the masons, that they have taught mankind all these arts. They have their own authority for it; and I know not how we shall disprove them. But what appears most odd is, that they reckon religion among the arts.
14. Arte of ffyndige neue artes.] The art of inventing arts, must certainly be almost useful art. My lord Bacon's Novum Organum is an attempt towards somewhat of the same kind. But I much doubt, that if ever the masons had it, they have now lost it; since so few new arts have been lately invented, and so many are wanted. The idea I have of such an art is, that it must be something proper to

be employed in all the sciences generally, as algebra is in numbers, by the help of which, new rules of arithmetic are, and may be found.

15. Preise.] It seems the masons have great regard to the reputation as well as the profit of their order; since they make it one reason for not divulging an art in common, that it may do honour to the possessors of it. I think in this particular they shew too much regard for their own society, and too little for the rest of mankind.

16. Arte of keypyng secrettes.] What kind of an art this is, I can by no means imagine. But certainly such an art the masons must have: For though, as some people suppose, they should have no secret at all, even that must be a secret, which being discovered, would expose them to the highest ridicule; and therefore it requires the utmost caution to conceal it.

17. Arte of changes.] I know not what this means, unless it be the transmutation of metals.

18. Facultye of Abrac.] Here I am utterly in the dark.

19. Universelle longage of maçonnes.] An universal language has been much desired by the learned of many ages. It is a thing rather to be wished than hoped for. But it seems the masons pretend to have such a thing among them. If it be true, I guess it must be something like the language of the Pantomimes among the ancient Romans, who are said to be able, by signs only, to express and deliver any oration intelligibly to men of all nations and languages. A man who has all these arts and advantages, is certainly in a condition to be envied: But we are told that this is not the case with all masons; for though these arts are among them, and all have a right and an opportunity to know them, yet some want capacity, and others industry, to acquire them. However, of all their arts and secrets, that which I most desire to know is, 'The skylle of becommynge gude and parysyghte;' and I wish it were communicated to all mankind, since there is nothing more true than the beautiful sentence contained in the last answer, 'That the better men are, the more they love one another.' Virtue having in itself something so amiable as to charm the hearts of all that behold it.

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### *Sect 2. - Remarks (by William Preston) on the preceding Manuscript, and on the Annotations of Mr. Locke.*

This dialogue possesses a double claim to our regard; first, for its antiquity, and next for the notes added to it by Mr. Locke, who, though not at that time enrolled in the order of masons, offers just conjectures on their history and traditions.

Every reader must feel a secret satisfaction in the perusal of this ancient manuscript, especially the true mason, whom it more nearly concerns. The recommendation of a philosopher of as great merit and penetration as this nation ever produced, added to the real value of the piece itself, must give it a sanction, and render it deserving a serious examination.

The conjecture of the learned annotator concerning its being an examination taken before King Henry of one of the fraternity of masons, is just. The severe edict passed at that time against the society, and the discouragement given to the masons by the bishop of Winchester and his party, induced that prince, in his riper years, to make a strict scrutiny into the nature of the masonic institution; which was attended with the happy circumstance of gaining his favour, and his patronage. Had not the civil commotions in the kingdom during his reign, attracted the notice of government, this act would probably have been repealed, through the intercession of the duke of Gloucester, whose attachment to the fraternity was conspicuous.

[Book 3 | Section 1] What mote ytt be ?] Mr. Locke observes, in his annotation on this question, that the answer imports, that masonry consists of natural, mathematical, and mechanical knowledge; some part of which, he says, the masons *pretend* to have taught mankind, and some part they still conceal. - The arts which they have communicated to the world, are particularly specified in an answer to one of the following questions; as are also those which they have restricted to themselves for wise purposes. - Morality, however, ought to have been included in this answer, as it constitutes a principal part of the masonic system.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Where dyd ytt begynne ?] In the annotation to the answer on this question, Mr. Locke seems to suggest, that masons believed there were men in the east before Adam, which is indeed a mere conjecture. This opinion may be countenanced by many learned authors, but masons comprehend the true meaning of masonry taking rise in the east and spreading to the west, without having recourse to præadamites. East and west are terms peculiar to their society, and when masonically adopted, are very intelligible to the fraternity \*, as they refer to certain forms and established customs among themselves. From the east, it is well known, learning extended to the western world, and gradually advanced into Europe.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Who dyd bryng ytt westlye ?] The judicious correction of an illiterate clerk, in the answer to this question as well as the next, reflects credit on the ingenious annotator. The explanation is just, and the elucidation accurate.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Howe comede ytt yn Engelonde ?] The records of the fraternity inform us, that Pythagoras was regularly initiated into masonry; and being properly instructed in the mysteries of the Art, propagated the principles of the Order in other countries into which he travelled.

**Pythagoras** lived at Samos, in the reign of Tarquin, the last king of the Romans, in the year of Rome 220; or, according to Livy, in the reign of Servius Tullius, in the year of the world 3472. He was the son of a sculptor, and was educated under one of the greatest men of his time, Thercydes of Syrus, who first taught the immortality of the soul. Upon the death of his patron, he determined to trace science to its source, and supply himself with fresh stores in every part of the world where these could be obtained. Animated by this desire of knowledge, he traveled into Egypt, and submitted to the tedious and discouraging course of preparatory discipline which was necessary to obtain the benefit of Egyptian initiation. When he had made himself a thorough master of all the sciences which were cultivated in the sacerdotal colleges of Thebes and Memphis, he pursued his travels through the east, conversing with the Magi and Indian Brachmans, and mixing their doctrines with those he had learnt in Egypt. He afterwards studied the laws of Minos at Crete, and those of Lycurgus at Sparta. Having spent the earlier part of his life in this useful manner, he returned to Samos well acquainted with every thing curious either in nature or art in foreign countries, improved with all the advantages proceeding from a regular and laborious course of learned education, and adorned with that knowledge of mankind which was necessary to gain the ascendant over them. Accustomed to freedom, he dislike the arbitrary of Samos, and retired to Crotona in Italy, where he opened a school of philosophy; and by the gravity and sanctity of his manners, the importance of his tenets, and the peculiarity of his institutions, soon spread his fame and influence over Italy and Greece. Among other projects which he used to create respect and gain credit to his assertion, he concealed himself in a cave, and caused it to be reported that he was dead. After some time he

came abroad, and pretended that the intelligence which his friends gave him in his retreat, of the transactions of Crotona, was collected during his stay in the other world among the shades of the departed. He formed his disciples, who came from all parts to put themselves under his direction, into a kind of republic, where none were admitted till a severe probation had sufficiently exercised their patience and docility. He afterwards divided them into the esoteric and exoteric classes: to the former he entrusted the more sublime and secret doctrines, to the latter the more simple and popular. This great man found himself able to unite the character of the legislator to that of the philosopher, and to rival Lycurgus and Orpheus in the one, Pherecydes and Thales in the other; following, in this particular, the patterns set him by the Egyptian priests, his instructors, who are not less celebrated for settling the civil than the religious (o) economy of their nation. In imitation of them, Pythagoras gave laws to the republic of Crotona, and brought the inhabitants from a state of luxury and dissoluteness, to be eminent for order and sobriety. While he lived, he was frequently consulted by the neighbouring republics, as the composer of their differences, and the reformer of their manners; and since his death (which happened about the fourth year of the 70th olympiad, in a tumult raised against him by one Cylon) the administration of their affairs has been generally intrusted to some of his disciples, among whom, to produce the authority of their master for any assertion, was sufficient to establish the truth of it without further inquiry.

The most celebrated of the philosophical notions of Pythagoras are those concerning the nature of the Deity, the transmigration of souls into different bodies (which he borrowed from the Brachmans), and the system of the world. He was the first who took the name of *philosopher*; that is, a lover of wisdom. His system of morality was admirable. He made unity the principle of all things, and believed that between God and man there were various orders of spiritual beings, who administered to the divine will. He believed in the doctrine of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls; and held that God was diffused through all parts of the universe, like a kind of universal soul, pervading every particle of matter, and animating every living creature, from the most contemptible reptile to mankind themselves, who shared a larger portion of the divine spirit. The metempsychosis was founded on this maxim, that as the soul was of celestial origin, it could not be annihilated, and therefore, upon abandoning one body, necessarily removed into another, and frequently did penance for its former vicious inclinations, in the shape of a beast or an insect, before it appeared again in that of a human creature. He asserted, that he had a particular faculty given him by the gods, of remembering the various bodies his own soul had passed through, and confounded cavillers by referring them to his own experience. In his system of the world, the third doctrine which distinguishes his sect, was a supposition, that the sun was at rest in the centre, and that the earth, the moon, and the other planets moved round it in different orbits. He pretended to have great skill in the mysterious properties of numbers, and held that some particular ones contained a peculiar force and significance. He was a great geometrician, and admitted only those to the knowledge of his system, who had first undergone a probation of five years silence. To his discovery is attributed the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid, which, in geometrical solutions and demonstrations of quantities, is of excellent use; and for which as Mr. Locke observes, in the joy of his heart, he is said to have sacrificed a hecatomb. His extraordinary desire of knowledge, and the pains he took to propagate his system, have justly transmitted his fame to posterity.

The pupils who were initiated by him in the sciences and study of nature at the Crotonian school, brought all their goods into a common stock, contemned the pleasures of sense, abstaining from swearing, and eat nothing that had life. Steady to the tenets and principles which they had imbibed, they dispersed abroad, and taught the doctrines of their preceptor, in all the countries through which they traveled.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Dothe maçonnes descouer here artes unto odhers ?] Masons, in all ages, have studied the general good of mankind. Every art, which is necessary for the support of authority and good government, or which can promote science, they have cheerfully communicated to the world. Points of no public utility, as their peculiar tenets, mystic forms, and solemn rites, they have carefully concealed. Thus masons have been distinguished in various countries, and the privileges of their Order kept sacred and inviolable.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Whatte artes haueth the maçonnes techedde mankynde ?] The arts which the masons have publicly taught, are here specified. It appears to have surprised the learned annotator, that religion should be ranked among the arts taught by the fraternity; but it may be observed, that religion is the only tie which can bind men; and that where there is no religion, there can be no masonry. Among masons, however, it is an art, calculated to unite for a time opposite systems, without perverting or destroying those systems. By the influence of this art, the purposes of the institution are effectually answered, and all religious animosities happily terminated.

Masons have always paid due obedience to the moral law, and inculcated its precepts with powerful energy on their disciples. Hence the doctrine of God, the creator and preserver of the universe, has been their firm belief in every age; and under the influence of that doctrine, their conduct has been regulated through a succession of year. The progress of knowledge and philosophy, aided by divine revelation, having enlightened the minds of men with the knowledge of the true God, and the sacred tenets of the christian faith, masons have readily acquiesced in a religion so wisely calculated to make men happy. But in those countries where the gospel has not reached, nor christianity displayed her beauties, they have pursued the universal religion, or the religion of nature; that is, to be good men and true, by whatever denomination or persuasion they may be distinguished; and by this universal system, the be conduct of the fraternity still continues to be regulated. A cheerful compliance with the established religion of the country in which they live, is earnestly recommended in their assemblies; and this universal conformity, notwithstanding private sentiment and opinion, is the art they practice, and effects the laudable purpose of conciliating true friendship among men of every persuasion, while it proves the cement of general union.

It may not be improper to state, that this universal system teaches men not to deviate from the line of instruction in which they have been educated, or to disregard the principles of religion they have been originally taught. Though they are to suit themselves to circumstances and situation, in the character of masons they are advised never to forget the wise maxims of their parents, or desert the faith in which they have been nurtured, unless from conviction they are justified in making a change; and in effecting that change, masonry has no share. The tenets of the institution interfere with no particular faith, but are alike reconcilable to all. Hence religious and political disputes never engage the attention of masons in their private seminaries; those points are left to the discussion and determination of other associations for whom the theme is better calculated: and it is a certain truth, that the wisest systems are more frequently injured than benefited by religious cavil.

Notwithstanding the happiest events have arisen in many periods of the history of the world from the efforts of a wife, pious, learned, and moderate clergy, seconded by the influence and authority of religious princes, whose counsels and examples have always had a commanding power, which has enabled them to do good, with a facility peculiar to themselves; it must have been observed with a generous concern, that those efforts have not been sufficient to extinguish the unhappy spirit of fanaticism, of whose deplorable

effects almost every age has exhibited a striking picture. Enthusiastical sects have been perpetually inventing new forms of religion, by working on the passions of ignorant and unwary; deriving their rules of faith and manners from the fallacious suggestions of a warm imagination, rather than from the clear and infallible dictates of the word of God. One set of men has covered religion with a tawdry habit of type and allegory; while another has converted it into an instrument of dissension and discord. The discerning mind may easily trace the unhappy consequences of departing from the divine simplicity of the gospel, and loading its pure and heavenly doctrines with the inventions and commandments of men. The tendency of *true religion* is to strengthen the springs of government, by purifying the motives and animating the zeal of those who govern, to promote the virtues which exalt a nation, by rendering its inhabitants good subjects and true patriots, and by confirming all the essential bonds and obligations of civil society. The enemies of religion are the enemies of mankind; and it is the natural tendency of infidelity and licentiousness to *dissolve* the most sacred obligations, to *remove* the most powerful motives to virtue, and, by corrupting the principles of individuals, to *poison* the sources of public order and public prosperity.

Such are the mischiefs incident from zeal and enthusiasm, however laudably excited, when carried to excess. But if the principles of masonry are understood and practised, they will be found the best correctors of misguided zeal and unrestrained licentiousness, and prove the ablest support of every well-regulated government.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Howe commeth the maçonnes more teachers than other menne ?] The answer implies, that masons, from the nature and government of their association, have greater opportunities than other men, to improve their talents, and therefore are allowed to be better qualified to instruct others.

Mr. Locke's observation on masons having the art of finding new arts, is judicious, and his explanation just. The fraternity have always made the study of arts, a principal part of their private amusement: in their assemblies, nice and difficult theories have been canvassed and explained; new discoveries produced, and those already known, illustrated. The different classes established, the gradual progression of knowledge communicated, and the regularity observed throughout the whole system of their government, are evident proofs, that those who are initiated into the mysteries of the masonic Art, may discover new arts; and this knowledge is acquired by instruction from, and familiar intercourse with, men of genius and ability, on almost every important branch of science.

[Book 3 | Section 1] What dothe the maçonnes concele and hyde ?] The answer imports, the art of finding new arts, for their profit and praise; and then particularises the different arts they carefully conceal. Mr. Locke's remark, 'That this shews too much regard for their own society, and too little for the rest of mankind,' is rather severe, when he has before admitted the propriety of concealing from the world what is of no real public utility, left, by being converted to bad uses, the consequences might be prejudicial to society. By the word *praise*, is here meant, that honour and respect to which masons are entitled, as the friends of science and learning, and which is absolutely necessary to give a sanction to the wife doctrines they propagate, while their fidelity gives them a claim to esteem, and the rectitude of their manners demand veneration.

Of all the arts which the masons profess, the art of secrecy particularly distinguishes them. Taciturnity is a proof of wisdom, and is allowed to be of the utmost importance in the different transactions of life. The best writers have declared it is agreeable to the Deity himself, may be easily conceived, from the glorious example which he gives, in concealing from mankind the secrets of his providence. The wisest of men cannot pry into the *arena* of heaven; nor can they divine to-day, what to-morrow may bring forth. Many instances might be adduced from history, to shew the high veneration which was paid to the art of secrecy by the ancients. Pliny informs us, that anaxarchus, being imprisoned with a view to extort from him some secrets with which he had been intrusted, and dreading that exquisite torture would induce him to betray his trust, bit his tongue in the middle, and threw it in the face of Nicocreon, the tyrant of Cyprus. - No torments could make the servants of Plancus betray the secrets of their master; they encountered every pain with fortitude, and strenuously supported their fidelity, amidst the most severe tortures, till death put a period to their sufferings. - The Athenians bowed to a statue of brass, which was represented without a tongue, to denote secrecy. - The Egyptians worshipped Harpocrates, the god of silence, who was always represented holding his finger at his mouth. - The Romans had their goddess of silence, named Angerona, to whom they offered worship. - Lycurgus, the celebrated law-giver, as well as Pythagoras, the great scholar, particularly recommended this virtue; especially the last, who, as we have before observed, kept his disciples silent during five years, that they might learn the valuable secrets he had to communicate unto them. This evinces that he deemed secrecy the rarest, as well as the noblest art \*.

Mr. Locke has made several judicious observations on the answer which is given to the question here proposed. His being in the dark concerning the meaning of the faculty of Abrac, I am noways surprised at, nor can I conceive how he could otherwise be. ABRAC is an abbreviation of the word ABRACADABRA. In the days of ignorance and superstition, that word had a magical signification; but the explanation of it is now lost \*.

Our celebrated annotator has taken no notice of the masons having the art of working miracles, and foresaying things to come. But this was certainly not the least important of their doctrines. Hence astrology was admitted as one of the arts which they taught, and the study of it warmly recommended.

The ancient philosophers applied with unwearied diligence to discover the aspects, magnitude, distances, motions, and revolutions of the heavenly bodies; and, according to the discoveries they made, pretended to foretell future events, and to determine concerning the secrets of Providence. This study became, in a course of time, a regular science.

That astrology, however vain and delusive in itself, has proved extremely useful to mankind, by promoting the excellent science of astronomy, cannot be denied. The vain hope of reading the fates of men, and the success of their designs, has been one of the strongest motives to induce them, in all countries, to an attentive observation of the celestial bodies; whence they have been taught to measure time, to mark the duration of seasons, and to regulate the operations of agriculture.

The science of astrology, which is nothing more than the study of nature, and the knowledge of the secret virtues of the heavens, is founded on scripture, and confirmed by reason and experience. Moses tells us, that the sun, moon, and stars, were placed in the firmament, to be for *signs*, as well as for seasons. We find the Deity thus addressing Job, "Canst thou bind the *sweet influences of the Pleiades*, or loose the bonds of Orion ?" We are instructed in the Book of *Judges*, that "they fought from heaven; the *stars* in their courses fought against Sisera." The ancient philosophers were unanimous in the same opinion; and among the moderns, we may cite lord Bacon and several others as giving it a sanction. Milton thus expresses himself on the subject:

Of planetary motions and *aspects*  
In *Sextile, Square, and trine, and opposite,*  
Of *noxious efficacy*, and when to join  
In synod unbenign, and taught the *fixed*  
Their *influence* malignant when to *shower*, &c.

It is well known that inferior animals, and even birds and reptiles, have a foreknowledge of futurity; and surely Nature never intended to withhold from man those favours, which she has so liberally bestowed on the raven, the cat, and the sow? No, the aches in our limbs, and the shootings of our corns, before a tempest or a shower, evince the contrary. Man, who is a microcosm, or world in miniature, unites in himself all the powers and qualities which are scattered throughout nature, and discerns from certain signs the future contingencies of his being; finding his way through the *palpable obscure to the visible diurnal and nocturnal sphere*, he marks the presages and predictions of his happiness or misery. The mysterious and recondite doctrine of sympathies in Nature, is admirably illustrated from the sympathy between the moon and the sea, by which the waters of the ocean are, in a certain though inconceivable manner, drawn after that luminary. In these celestial and terrestrial sympathies, there is no doubt that the vegetative soul of the world transfers a specific virtue from the heavens to the elements, to animals, and to man. If the moon alone rule the world of *waters*, what effects must the combination of solar, stellar, and lunar influences have upon the *land*? In short, it is universally confessed, that astrology is the mother of astronomy; and though the daughter have rebelled against the mother, it has long been predicted and expected that the venerable authority of the parent would prevail in the end.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Wylle he teche me thay same artes ?] By the answer to this question, we learn the necessary qualifications which are required in a candidate for masonry - a good character, and an able capacity.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Dothe all maçonnes kunne more then odher menne ?] The answer only implies, that masons have a better opportunity than the rest of mankind, to improve in useful knowledge; but a want of capacity in some, and of application in others, obstructs the progress of many.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Are maçonnes gudder menne then odhers ?] Masons are not understood to be collectively more virtuous in their lives and actions, than other men; but it is an undoubted fact, that a strict conformity to the rules of the profession, may make them better than they otherwise would be.

[Book 3 | Section 1] Do the maçonnes love eider odher myghtlye as beeth sayde ?] The answer to this question is truly great, and is judiciously remarked upon by the learned annotator.

By the answers to the three last questions, the objections of cavillers against masonry are amply refuted; the excellency of the institution is displayed; and every censure, on account of the transgressions of its professors, entirely removed. A bad man, whose character is known, can never be enrolled in our records; and should we unwarily be led to receive an improper object, then our endeavours are exerted to reform him: so that, by being a mason, it is probable he may become a better subject to his sovereign, and a more valuable member to the state, than he would have done had he not been in the way of those advantages.

To conclude, Mr. Locke's observations on this curious manuscript deserve a serious and careful examination; and though he was not at the time one of the brotherhood, he seems pretty clearly to have comprehended the value and importance of the system it was intended to illustrate. We may therefore fairly conjecture, that the favourable opinion he conceived of the society of masons before his admission, was afterwards sufficiently confirmed.

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### Additional notes on the Earl of Pembroke

<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/nigel.battysmith/Database/D0005/I15670.html>

Spouses of Thomas Herbert 8th Earl of Pembroke

1 Margaret Sawyer

Death Date 17 Nov 1706

Father Sir Robert Sawyer Knt. ( - )

Thomas Herbert 8th Earl of Pembroke and Margaret Sawyer had the following children

1 Henry Herbert 9th Earl of Pembroke

2 Robert Sawyer Herbert

3 Thomas Herbert

4 William Herbert

5 Nicholas Herbert

6 Catherine Herbert

7 Rebecca Herbert

Descendants of Thomas Herbert 8th Earl of Pembroke and Margaret Sawyer

1 Henry Herbert 9th Earl of Pembroke = Mary ...

1 Henry Herbert 10th Earl of Pembroke = Elizabeth Spencer

1 George Augustus Herbert 11th Earl of Pembroke = Elizabeth Beauclerc

1 George Augustus Herbert 11th Earl of Pembroke = Catherine Woronzow

2 Robert Sawyer Herbert = Mary Smith

3 Thomas Herbert

4 William Herbert = Catherine Elizabeth Tewes

1 Henry Herbert 1st Earl of Carnarvon = Elizabeth Alicia Maria ...

1 Henry George Herbert 2nd Earl of Carnarvon = Elizabeth Kitty Acland

5 Nicholas Herbert = Anne North

1 Barbara Herbert = ... 2nd Earl of Aldborough

6 Catherine Herbert = Nicholas Morice

7 Rebecca Herbert = William Neville 16th Baron Abergavenny

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[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0PAL/is\\_494\\_157/ai\\_107277548](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PAL/is_494_157/ai_107277548)



By far the most important early country house collection of Egyptian sculptures was that assembled by Thomas Herbert, 8th Earl of Pembroke (1656-1733), at Wilton House, Wiltshire between 1690 and 1730, where it formed but part of a much greater collection of Greek and Roman antiquities. Pembroke's Greco-Roman sculpture was mainly bought in Italy, but in the early 1700s he also acquired items in Paris from the famous collection of Cardinal Mazarin. These included Egyptian pieces, amongst them 'Two Statues in black Marble, out of the ruins of the Palace in Egypt, in which the Viceroy of Persia lived many years after Cambyses returned to Persia, from the conquest of Egypt', set in niches outside the house. (24) Inside, the 'White Marble Table Room' contained a statue of Isis with 'Osiris, her husband, in a Coffin open ... with a great Multitude of Hieroglyphicks quite round the bottom and behind the statue'. (25) Elsewhere in the house were displayed, alongside many Roman pieces, 'Cleopatra with Caesarion, her son by Julius Caesar, sucking on her lap', and a 'Sesostris, the head is of red Egyptian Granite; the bust part is of the White Egyptian Granite; the head is adorned with a tiara, after the Egyptian form, and has a peculiar liveliness; it was found amongst the pyramids'. (26)

But the Egyptian sculptures at Wilton were unusual, and most contemporary collectors of Greco-Roman marbles would have considered such works barbarous and displeasing.

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[http://76.1911encyclopedia.org/P/PE/PEMBROKE\\_EARLS\\_OF.htm](http://76.1911encyclopedia.org/P/PE/PEMBROKE_EARLS_OF.htm)

Thomas, the 8th earl (c. 1656-1733), was a person of note during the reigns of William III and Anne. From 1690 to 1692 he was first lord of the admiralty; then he served as lord privy seal until 1699, being in 1697 the first plenipotentiary of Great Britain at the congress of Ryswick. On two occasions he was lord high admiral for a short period; he was also lord president of the council and lord-lieutenant of Ireland, while he acted as one of the lords justices seven times; and he was president of the Royal Society in 1689-1690

See also: <http://www.thepeerage.com/p1616.htm>

<http://www.highclerecastle.co.uk/Front/Grounds.htm>



After the Reformation, in the mid 16th century, Highclere passed from the clergy into secular hands and was owned successively by the FitzWilliam, Kingsmill and Lucy families. It was purchased in 1679 by Sir Robert Sawyer, Attorney General to Charles II and James II. He bequeathed the house and estate to his daughter in 1692, and her marriage to the 8th Earl of Pembroke brought Highclere to the Herbert family, ancestors to the Earls of Carnarvon. Highclere Place House was at this time a double-fronted, Elizabethan brick mansion with a courtyard, stables, garden and orchards.

Margaret Pembroke's second son, Robert, inherited Highclere in 1706. Robert began to lay out a vast formal landscape including pleasure gardens and several follies. He was succeeded by his nephew, Henry Herbert, who carried out many improvements to the landscaped park. It is recorded that his cousin the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery offered to send him "400 exotic tree seedlings called Cedars of Lebanon" in 1770. Henry replied "thank you for your nice offer but I pray you... send me 4000 as I have plenty of room in my Park". He was sharply rebuked and told he was lucky to get any at all.

#### HM 1092 "Wilton Codex"

[View all images for this manuscript](#)

**PTOLEMY, GEOGRAPHIA** Italy, ca. 1480

*Atlas* of the world from Western Europe and Africa to Indochina, containing 27 maps and 26 tables.

Purchased ca. 1700 by Thomas Herbert, 8th Earl of Pembroke (1656-1733) for his library at Wilton House, Salisbury.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilton\\_House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilton_House)

The South Front of Wilton House >

**Wilton House** is an [English country house](#) situated at [Wilton](#) near [Salisbury](#) in [Wiltshire](#). It has been the country seat of the [Earls of Pembroke](#) for over 400 years.

The first recorded building on the site of Wilton House was of a [priory](#) founded by [King Egbert](#) circa 871. This priory later due to the munificence of [King Alfred](#) was granted lands and manors until it became a powerful and wealthy [abbey](#). However, by the time [Wilton Abbey](#) was dissolved during the [Dissolution of the Monasteries](#) by King [Henry VIII of England](#), its prosperity was already on the wane — following the seizure of the abbey King Henry then presented it and the estates to William Herbert (c.1544).



### **William Herbert**



The East front of Wilton, photographed by [Queen Alexandra](#) circa 1907. The central tower is all that remains of the Tudor house.

William Herbert, the scion of a distinguished family in the Welsh [marches](#), was a favourite of the King. Following a recommendation to King Henry by [King Francis I](#) of France, whom Herbert had served as a [soldier of fortune](#), Herbert was granted arms after only two years. Returning to England circa 1543, Herbert married Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Parr of [Kendal](#) and sister of King Henry's last Queen, [Catherine Parr](#). The granting of an estate such as the Abbey of Wilton to Herbert was an accolade and evidence of his position at court.

Herbert immediately began to transform the deserted abbey into a fine house and symbol of his wealth. It had been thought that the old abbey had been completely demolished; however, following renovations after [World War II](#) traces of the old abbey were found at lower levels of the walls.

### **Hans Holbein**

It has long been claimed, without proof, that [Hans Holbein the Younger](#) re-designed the abbey into the rectangular house around a central courtyard, which is the core of the present house. Holbein died in 1543, so his designs for the new house would have to have been very speedily executed indeed. However, the great entrance porch to the new mansion, removed from the house and later transformed into a garden [pavilion](#) in the 19th century to this day is known as the "Holbein Porch" — a perfect example of the blending of the older Gothic and the brand-new [Renaissance](#) style. If not by Holbein, it is certainly by the hand of a great master.

Whoever the architect, nevertheless a great mansion arose. Today only one other part of the [Tudor](#) mansion survives: the great tower in the centre of the east facade (see illustration above). With its central arch (once giving access to the court beyond) and three floors of [oriel](#) windows above, the tower is slightly reminiscent of the entrance at [Hampton Court](#). Flanked today by two wings in a loose [Georgian](#) style — each topped by an Italianate pavilion tower, this Tudor centrepiece of the facade appears not in the least incongruous, merely displaying the accepted appearance of a great English country house, which has evolved over the centuries.

### **Inigo Jones**

The Tudor house built by [William Herbert, 1st Earl of Pembroke](#) in 1551 was to last but eighty years. On the succession of the [4th Earl](#) in 1630, he decided to pull down the southern wing and erect a new complex of staterooms in its place. It is now the second great name associated with Wilton appears: that of [Inigo Jones](#).

The architecture of the south front is in severe [Palladian](#) style, described at the time as in the 'Italian Style'; built of the local stone, softened by climbing [shrubs](#), it is quintessentially English to our eyes today. While the remainder of the house is on three floors of equal value in the English style, the South Front has a low rusticated ground floor, almost suggesting a semi-basement. Three small porches project at this level only, one at the centre, and one at each end of the facade, providing small balconies to the windows above. The next floor is the piano nobile, at its centre the great double height Venetian window, ornamented at second floor level by the Pembroke arms in stone relief. This central window is flanked by four tall sash windows on each side. These windows have low flat pediments. Each end of the facade is defined by 'corner stone' decoration giving a suggestion that the single-bay wings project forward. The single windows here are topped by a true pointed pediment. Above this floor is a further almost [mezzanine](#) floor, its small, unpedimented, windows aligning with the larger below, serve to emphasise the importance of the piano nobile. The roofline is hidden by a balustrade. Each of the terminating 'wings' is crowned by a one storey, pedimented tower resembling a Palladian pavilion. One must remember this style was a revolution in England at the time, a mere thirty years previously [Montacute House](#) had been in an amazing new style; and only a century earlier the juxtaposing mass of unplanned wings that is [Compton Wynnyates](#) was just being completed.

Attributing the various architectural stages can be difficult, and the degree to which Inigo Jones was involved has been questioned. [Queen Henrietta Maria](#), a frequent guest at Wilton, interrogated Jones about his work there. At the time (1635) he was employed by her, completing the [Queen's House](#) at [Greenwich](#). It seems at this time Jones was too busy with his royal clients and did no more than provide a few sketches for a mansion, which he then delegated for execution to an assistant [Isaac de Caus](#) (sometimes spelt 'Caux'), a Frenchman and landscape gardener from Dieppe.

A document that [Howard Colvin](#) found at [Worcester College](#) library in [Oxford](#) in the 1960s confirmed not only de Caus as the architect, but that the original plan for the south facade was to have been over twice the length of that built; what we see today was intended to be only one of two identical wings linked by a central portico of six Corinthian columns. The whole was to be enhanced by a great parterre whose dimensions were 1000 feet by 400 feet. This parterre was in fact created and remained in existence for over 100 years. The second wing however failed to materialise — perhaps because of the 4th Earl's quarrel with [King Charles I](#) and subsequent fall from favour, or the outbreak of the [Civil War](#); or simply lack of finances.

It is only now that Inigo Jones may have taken a firmer grip on his original ideas. Seeing De Caus' completed wing standing alone as an entirety, it was considered too plain — De Caus' original plan was for the huge facade to have a low pitched roof, with wings finishing with no architectural symbols of termination. The modifications to the completed wing were of a balustrade hiding the weak roof line and Italianate, pavilion-like towers at each end. The focal point became not a portico but the large double height Venetian window. This South Front (*illustration above*), has been deemed an architectural triumph of [Palladian](#) architecture in Britain, and it is widely believed that the final modifications to the work of De Caus were by Inigo Jones himself.

Within a few years of the completion of the new south wing in 1647, it was ravaged by fire. The seriousness of the fire and the devastation it caused is now a matter of some dispute. The architectural historian [Christopher Hussey](#) has convincingly argued that it was not as severe as some records have suggested. What is definite is that Inigo Jones now working with another architect [John Webb](#) (the nephew of his wife) returned once again to Wilton. Because of the uncertainty of the fire damage to the structure of the house, the only work that can be attributed with any degree of certainty to the new partnership is the redesign of the interior of the seven state-rooms contained on the [piano nobile](#) of the south wing; and even here the extent of Jones' presence is questioned. It appears he may have been advising from a distance, using Webb as his medium.

### **The State Rooms**

The seven [state rooms](#) contained behind the quite simple [mannerist](#) south front of Wilton House are equal to those in any of the great houses of Britain. State rooms in English country houses were seldom used; being reserved for the use of only the most important house-guests, often a monarch and his consort, or another high ranking member of state, hence the name. They are nearly always of an odd number for the following reason. At the centre of the facade, the largest and most lavish room, at Wilton the famed Double Cube Room, this was a gathering place for the court of the honoured guest. Leading symmetrically from the centre room on either side were often two suites of smaller, but still very grand rooms, for the sole use of the occupant of the final room at each end of the facade — the state bedroom. The smaller (but still huge) rooms in between would be used for private audiences, a withdrawing room and a dressing room. They were solely part of the bedroom suite and not for public use.

In most English houses today these rooms have usually become a meaningless succession of drawing rooms and the original intention lost, this is certainly true at both Wilton House and [Blenheim Palace](#). The reason for this is the [Edwardian Period](#), when large house-parties needed a huge collection of salons for playing bridge, dancing, talking and generally amusing themselves, also the occupants of the state bedroom preferred the comfort of a warmer more private room on a quiet floor with an en-suite bathroom!

The magnificent state rooms at Wilton designed by Inigo Jones, and one or other of his partners are:

- **The Single Cube Room:** This room a complete cube 30ft long, wide and high; has pine panelling gilded and white, it is carved from [dado](#) to [cornice](#), The white [marble](#) chimney piece was designed by Inigo Jones himself. It has a painted ceiling, on canvas, by the [Mannerist](#) Italian painter [Cavalier D'Arpino](#), representing [Daedalus](#) and [Icarus](#). This room, hung with paintings by [Lely](#) and [Van Dyck](#), is the only room thought to have survived the fire of 1647, and be the only interior surviving of Jones and De Caus.
- **The Double Cube Room:** The great room of the house. It is 60ft long, 30ft wide and 30ft high. It was created by Inigo Jones and Webb circa 1653. The pine wall painted white is decorated with great swags of foliage and fruit in gold leaf. The gilt and red velvet furniture compliments the collection of paintings by Van Dyck of the family of Charles I and the family of his contemporary Earl of Pembroke. Between the windows are mirrors by [Chippendale](#), and console tables by [William Kent](#). The coffered ceiling painted by [Thomas de Critz](#) depicts the story of [Perseus](#). Here again is another anomaly which makes one question the true involvement of Jones, the great Venetian window, centre piece of the south front and centre piece of the double cube room is not the dead centre of the room, the other windows in the room are not symmetrically placed, and the central fireplace and Venetian window are not opposite each other as the proportions of a room designed as an architectural feature in itself would demand.
- **The Great Ante Room:** Before the modifications to the house in 1801 a great staircase of state led from this room to the courtyard below, this was the entrance to the state apartments. Here hangs one of Wilton's greatest treasures: the portrait of his mother by [Rembrandt](#).
- **The Colonnade Room:** This was formerly the state bedroom. The series of four gilded columns at one end of the room would have given a theatrical touch of importance to the now missing state bed. Furnished today with 18th century furniture by William Kent. The room is hung with paintings by [Reynolds](#) and has a ceiling painted in an 18th century theme of flowers, monkeys, urns and cobwebs.

Other rooms are:

- **The Corner Room:** The ceiling in this room, representing the conversion of [Saint Paul](#) was painted by [Luca Giordano](#). The walls of the room are covered in red damask and adorned with small paintings by among others [Rubens](#) and [Andrea del Sarto](#).
- **The Little Ante Room:** The white marble fireplace in this room with inserts of black marble is almost certainly by Inigo Jones. The panels in the ceiling were painted by [Lorenzo Sabbatini](#) (1530 -1577) and therefore far older than this part of the house; again there are paintings by Van Dyck and [Teniers](#).
- **The Hunting Room:** This is one of the most delightful rooms in the house, and not shown to the public, as it is used as a private drawing room by the Herbert family. It is a square room with white panelling with gilded mouldings. The greatest feature of the room is the panels depicting hunting scenes by [Edward Pierce](#) painted circa 1653. These panels are set into the panelling rather than framed in the conventional sense.

Concluding the 17th century history of Wilton House — what was probably the true involvement of Inigo Jones? He was certainly a great friend of the Herbert family, it has been said that Jones' original studying in Italy of [Palladio](#) and the other Italian masters was paid for by the [3rd Earl](#), father of the builder of the South front; it seems likely that Jones originally sketched some ideas for de Caus, and following the fire conveyed through Webb some further ideas for tidying the house and its decorations. Fireplaces and decorative themes can be executed at long distance. The exact truth of the work by Jones will probably never be known, there are in existence designs for gilded doors and panels at Wilton annotated by Jones. He was an old man by the time work was completed, but would he have repaid his debt for the Italian study trip to the son of his benefactor so haphazardly? Or perhaps Jones had a fit of pique, outraged that the 4th Earl was supporting the Parliamentarians in the civil war. We shall probably never know.

In 1705 following a fire the [8th Earl](#) rebuilt some of the oldest parts the house, making rooms to display his newly acquired [Arundel marbles](#), which form the basis for the sculpture collection at Wilton today. Following this Wilton remained undisturbed for nearly a century.



## 19th century and James Wyatt



Jones and de Caus's South Front and the Palladian Bridge (1736/7), in a view of circa 1820

The [11th Earl](#) (1759–1827) called upon [James Wyatt](#) in 1801 to modernise the house, and create more space for picture and sculptures. The final of the three well-known architects to work at Wilton (and the only one well documented) was to prove the most controversial. His work took eleven years to complete.

James Wyatt as an architect who often employed the neo-classical style, but at Wilton for reasons known only to architect and client he used the [gothic](#) style. Since the beginning of the 20th century his work at Wilton has been condemned by most architectural commentators. The

negative points of his 'improvements' to modern eyes are that he swept away the Holbein porch, reducing it to a mere garden ornament, replacing it with a new entrance and forecourt. This entrance forecourt created was entered through an 'arc de triumph' which had been created as an entrance to Wilton's park by Sir [William Chambers](#) circa 1755. The forecourt was bounded by the house on one side, with wings of fake doors and windows extending to form the court, all accessed by Chambers's repositioned arch, crowned by a copy of the [life-size equestrian statue](#) of [Marcus Aurelius](#). While not altogether displeasing as an entrance to a country house, the impression created is more of a hunting estate in northern France, or Germany.

The original Great Hall of the Tudor house, the chapel and De Caus painted staircase to the state apartments were all swept away at this time. A new gothic staircase and hall were created in the style of [Camelot](#). The Tudor tower, now the last remnant of William Herbert's house, escaped unscathed except for the addition of two '[medieval](#)' statues at ground floor level.

There was however one huge improvement created by Wyatt — The [Cloisters](#). This two-storeyed gallery which was built around all four sides of the inner courtyard, provided the house with not only the much needed corridors to link the rooms, but also a magnificent gallery to display the Pembroke collection of classical sculpture. Wyatt died before completion, but not before he and Lord Pembroke had quarrelled over the designs and building work. The final touches were executed by Wyatt's nephew Sir [Jeffry Wyattville](#). Today nearly two hundred years later Wyatt's improvements do not jar the senses as much as they did those of the great architectural commentators [James Lees-Milne](#) and Sir [Sacheverell Sitwell](#) writing in the 1960s. That Wyatt's works are not in the same league of style as the South front, and the Tudor tower, is perhaps something for future generations to judge.

### Secondary rooms

Wilton is not the largest house in England by any means: compared to [Blenheim Palace](#), [Chatsworth](#), [Hatfield](#) and [Burghley House](#) it is relatively small. However the magnificent state rooms are not the only rooms worthy of mention, a few of these are:

- **The Front Hall:** redesigned by Wyatt, access is gained from this room to the cloisters through two gothic arches. The room is furnished with statuary; the dominating piece a larger than life statue of [William Shakespeare](#) designed by William Kent in 1743. It commemorates an unproved [legend](#) that Shakespeare came to Wilton and produced one of his plays in the courtyard.
- **The Upper Cloisters:** designed by Wyatt but completed circa 1824 by Wyattville in the gothic style contain neoclassical sculpture, and curios such as a lock of Queen [Elizabeth I](#)'s hair, and [Napoleon I](#)'s despatch box and paintings by the [Brueghel](#) brothers.
- **The Staircase:** Designed by Wyatt, it replaces the [muralled](#) state staircase swept away during the 'improvements'. The [Imperial staircase](#) has a single flight of stairs dividing into two flights, and is lined with family portraits by [Lely](#). Also hanging here is a portrait of Catherine [Woronzow](#), the only sister of 1st [Prince Vorontsov](#) and the wife of the 11th Earl; her Russian [Sleigh](#) is displayed in the cloisters.
- **The Smoking Rooms:** These rooms are in the wing attributed to Inigo Jones and John Webb linking to the South front. The cornices and doors are attributed to Jones. The larger of the two rooms contains a set of fifty-five [gouache](#) paintings of an equestrian theme painted in 1755. The room is furnished with a complete set of bureau, cabinets, and break-front bookcases made for the room by [Thomas Chippendale](#).
- **The Library:** A large book-lined room over 60 feet long, with views to a formal garden and vista leading to the 'Holbein' Porch. This is used as a private room and not shown to the public.
- **The Breakfast Room:** A private small low-ceilinged room on the rustic floor of the South front. In the 18th century this was the house's only bath room; more of an indoor swimming pool, the sunken plunge pool was heated and the room decorated in the [Pompeian](#) style complete with [Corinthian](#) columns. Converted by the Russian Countess of Pembroke to a breakfast room circa 1815, it is today wallpapered in a Chinese design, the paper being an exact copy of that used in the original 1815 decoration of the room. The 18th century furniture of a simulated-bamboo, gothic style gives this private dining room a distinct oriental atmosphere.

## The gardens and grounds



< The Palladian bridge

The house is renowned for its gardens — [Isaac de Caus](#) began a project to landscape them in 1632, laying out one of the first French [parterres](#) seen in England. An engraving of it made the design very influential after the royal Restoration in 1660, when grand gardens began to be made again. The original gardens included a [grotto](#) and water features. Later, when the parterre had been replaced by turf, the Palladian Bridge over the little River Nadder was designed by the [9th Earl](#), one of the "architect earls," with [Roger Morris](#) (1736/7). A copy of it was erected at the much-visited garden of [Stowe](#) in [Buckinghamshire](#), and three more were erected, at [Prior Park, Bath](#), Hagley and [Amesbury](#). Tsarina [Catherine the Great](#) commissioned another copy, known as [Marble Bridge](#), to be set up at the landscape park of [Tsarskoye Selo](#).

In the late 20th century the [17th Earl](#) had a garden created in Wyatt's entrance forecourt, in memory of his father, the [16th Earl](#). This garden enclosed by pleached trees, with herbaceous plants around a central fountain, has done much to improve and soften the severity of the forecourt.

For younger visitors there is an adventure playground with trampoline, swing boats and climbing ropes.

### Wilton House 2006

The house is often described as England's most beautiful [country house](#), in a land of beautiful country houses where judgment has to be made by each individual. An accurate way to describe Wilton today is a direct quote from the architectural writer [John Summerson](#) writing in 1964, it is as true today as it was then:

*...the bridge is the object which attracts the visitor before he has become aware of the Jonesian facade. He approaches the bridge and, from its steps, turns to see the facade. He passes through and across the bridge, turns again and becomes aware of the bridge, the river, the lawn and the façade as one picture in deep recession. He may imagine the portico; he will scarcely regret the curtailment. He may picture the formal knots, tortured hedges and statues of the 3rd. Earl's garden; he will be happier with the lawn. Standing here he may reflect upon the way in which a scene so classical, so deliberate, so complete, has been accomplished not by the decisions of one mind at one time but by a combination of accident, selection, genius and the tides of taste.*

### External links

[Wilton House official web site](#)  
[Wilton House Garden — a Gardens Guide review](#)  
[Mike W. Bucknole, "Wilton House"](#)  
[Aerial photo](#) of Wilton House. Other [map and aerial photo sources](#).