

1717 and All That
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I

In 1964, the Regius Professor of Modern History, Vivian Galbraith, published *An Introduction to the Study of History*.¹ One chapter was entitled 'Historical Research in Action' and consisted of a case study. The example Galbraith chose was the reign of King Alfred the Great and in particular the biography of Alfred by a monk called Asser on which much of our knowledge of the king depends. Galbraith reviewed the history of Asser's text and argued that it was a forgery, compiled in Exeter in the eleventh century. Professor Galbraith's criticisms caused a storm in the world of Anglo-Saxon studies. Another distinguished historian, this time in Cambridge, countered with evidence that the biography of Alfred was genuine.² The consensus now is that the Asser is genuine, but the reverberations of Galbraith's intervention are still evident – in 1995 another major study appeared which again argued that Asser was a forgery.³

This is how historical research progresses – not by the simple accumulation of materials, but rather by cross-questioning and reassessing our sources and continually looking at them from different angles. Historical sources are complex objects and do not reveal all their secrets at first reading. As we look at them in different ways, they tell different stories and we can see nuances we missed before.⁴ As new sources are found, our existing sources start to fall together in different patterns.

Historians constantly revisit and reconsider their sources, and this is what we will be doing in this symposium today. Much of what we will be discussing does not revolve around new factual discoveries but rather the reexamination of sources that have been familiar for a long time. That is why our discussions today will not result in our confirming whether Grand Lodge was founded in 1717 or 1721. Whatever our conclusions today, new materials will come along in the future which show our existing sources in a different light. We would be very disappointed if we came back for the four hundredth anniversary of Grand Lodge and found that the research we have recently undertaken was still current. In one hundred years time, we hope we will have reached completely different conclusions about the early history of Grand Lodge. History is only valuable if it continues to question and suggest new perspectives and new angles.

¹ V. H. Galbraith, *An Introduction to the Study of History* (London: C. A. Watts, 1964).

² Dorothy Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser*, The Stenton Lecture, 1967 (Reading: University of Reading, 1968).

³ Alfred P. Smyth, *Alfred the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); *The Medieval Life of King Alfred the Great: a translation and commentary on the text attributed to Asser* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

⁴ For a discussion of these issues, a good starting point is John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

For these reasons, we hope that you will leave this event not with the view that one opinion or the other has been confirmed, but rather go away with questions about our understanding of the early Grand Lodge that you will then try and investigate in the primary sources and explore for yourself.

Little of what we are about to present is new. Henry Sadler as long ago as 1887 reminded us that 'we must not consider official historians infallible, even when we find the distinctive prefix Reverend, in company with their names'.⁵ Sadler declared that something more reliable than Anderson's bare statement was required to convince him that the four lodges said to have formed the Grand Lodge were the only lodges in London at that time.⁶ More than one hundred years ago both Gould and Robbins pointed out how parts of Anderson's history of the early years of Grand Lodge are contradicted by contemporary newspaper reports.⁷ In 1909 Begemann said that the story of 1717 'bears only too clearly the impress of Anderson's luxurious imagination' and declared that 'I personally have been unable to avoid the conclusion, that the whole story of the election of the first Grand Master is a myth of Anderson's invention',⁸ proposing that Anderson's history of the formation of Grand Lodge should be discarded. It is unfortunate that the unwillingness of Quatuor Coronati Lodge to promote the work of a German scholar during the First World War has meant that Begemann's criticisms of Anderson are not more widely known.

The implications of the findings of these pioneering masonic scholars have generally not been followed up and they deserve more discussion. Most of the new information we will present that was not available to these earlier scholars relates to the life of James Anderson. This extra information about Anderson's personal circumstances provides us with new perspectives on the sources for the early Grand Lodge, and shows us how new discoveries and the reappraisal of existing sources are deeply intertwined.

II

We will not recapitulate in detail the story of 1717 and all that. You have all heard many times over the past year how four London lodges met together at the Apple Tree Tavern in Covent Garden in 1716 and revived the quarterly communications of lodge officers and the annual assembly and feast. On 24 June 1717, we are told, the Assembly and Feast of Free and Accepted Masons was held at the Goose and Gridiron alehouse near St Paul's Cathedral, when Antony Sayer was chosen as Grand Master and Joseph Elliot and Jacob Lamball as Wardens.

This story is not mentioned at all in the first edition of the *Book of Constitutions* compiled by James Anderson, a Scottish presbyterian minister in London, which appeared in 1723.⁹ It

⁵ H. Sadler, *Masonic Facts and Fictions* (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1985), p. 15.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ R. F. Gould, 'The Duke of Wharton', *AQC* 8 (1895), pp. 114-55; A. F. Robbins, 'The Earliest Years of English Organized Freemasonry', *AQC* 22 (1909), pp. 67-89.

⁸ W. Begemann trans. L. Vibert, *Early History and Beginnings of Freemasonry in England*, typescript in Library and Museum of Freemasonry, pp. 570, 577.

⁹ *1723 Constitutions*, pp. 44-8.

appears for the first time in the new edition of the *Book of Constitutions* completed by Anderson in 1738, nearly 21 years after the events it purports to describe.¹⁰ Even then, of course, Anderson did not state that Grand Lodge was founded in 1717. Anderson claimed that masonry stretched back to Adam. He declares that the first four Grand Officers were Noah and his three sons. The first Grand Master he names is Joshuah, the son of Abraham. According to Anderson, Grand Master Moses had Joshuah as his Deputy and Aholiah and Bezaleel as his Wardens.¹¹ According to the list of Grand Masters of Freemasonry in England inserted by Anderson in the 1738 *Constitutions* on the instructions of Grand Lodge, the first Grand Master of Masons in England was St Augustine of Canterbury.¹² For Anderson, 1717 was not the foundation of Grand Lodge, and the appointment of Antony Sayer as Grand Master was merely a means of reviving Grand Lodge after it had fallen into the doldrums at the end of Sir Christopher Wren's life.

Freemasonry was a hot topic for journalists and writers from the moment that the Duke of Montagu became Grand Master in June 1721. It is very surprising that in all the press reports and pamphlets on Freemasonry published in England between 1721 and 1738, there is no mention of the story of 1717 or the Goose and Gridiron. It is only with Anderson, writing 21 years later about events at which he was not present, that we have the first report of 1717 and all that.

The only evidence which apparently supports Anderson's story also dates from the 1730s, long after the event. There is a list of Grand Officers appended to the first minute book of the Grand Lodge which begins with Sayer as Grand Master and Lamball and Elliot as Wardens and gives the same succession of Grand Officers as Anderson.¹³ Indeed, as we will see, this list may have been one of the sources used by Anderson. The list was compiled by William Reid, who was appointed Grand Secretary in 1727.¹⁴ The handwriting and colour of the ink shows that the list was inserted by Reid in the minute book sometime after 1731 and possibly as late as 1734. Other references to Sayer and other early Grand Masters are late. For example, a letter in the Royal Society archives by the Duke of Richmond to Martin Folkes about the engraving of portraits of Grand Masters referring to Sayer, Payne and Desaguliers as Grand Masters is undated. The date of any engravings cannot be firmly established but seem to be probably from the 1730s.¹⁵ The first references in the Grand Lodge minutes to Desaguliers and George Payne as Grand Masters are in November 1728, while the first mention of Sayer as a Grand Master is in 1730.¹⁶ And so on – the elements of the 1717 story only appear surprisingly late.

¹⁰ *1738 Constitutions*, pp. 109-10.

¹¹ *1738 Constitutions*, pp. 7-8.

¹² *1738 Constitutions*, p. 140.

¹³ *QCA 10*, pp. 196-200.

¹⁴ *QCA 10*, p. xxv.

¹⁵ Royal Society, MS/865/4. The only known engraving of Sayer is by Faber from a portrait by Highmore, but is undated and perhaps dates from towards the end of Sayer's life. The only engravings of portraits of Montagu and Richmond by Faber form were made in 1731 and 1733 as part of the Kit Kat series.

¹⁶ *QCA 10*, pp. 88, 123. Prior to November 1728, Payne had been described as Grand Warden, his role in 1724-5, and Desaguliers as Deputy Grand Master, his role from 1722-4.

However, we do not need to take Anderson's word for it. We have two pieces of evidence which present a very different picture to Anderson. These sources are contemporary with the events they describe, not written many years later by a man who wasn't there. These documents are not new discoveries; they were both published in the nineteenth century. We think they deserve greater credence than they have received.

First, there are the papers of the physician, antiquary and natural philosopher William Stukeley. Stukeley was one of the founders of the Society of Antiquaries and is celebrated for his archaeological investigations of Avebury and Stonehenge. He records in his diary that on 6 January 1721 he was made a freemason at the Salutation Tavern in Covent Garden.¹⁷ Stukeley states that he was the first person to be made a freemason in London for many years and that it had been difficult to find enough members to perform the ceremony.¹⁸ Stukeley's claim that it was difficult to find enough freemasons to perform an initiation at the beginning of 1721 is impossible to reconcile with Anderson's narrative, which states that at that time 'Noblemen were also made brothers, and more new Lodges were constituted'.¹⁹ The Salutation was just a few hundred yards from the Apple Tree and it is surprising that there was difficulty in finding freemasons if a lodge really was meeting there.

The accuracy of much of Stukeley's reporting is apparent elsewhere in his papers, where he gives an account of the installation of the Duke of Montagu which is more circumstantial and detailed than that of Anderson and is supported by other sources. Stukeley's description of his initiation has been known for many years, and the contrast between Stukeley and Anderson has always been a puzzle. However, a second source supports Stukeley's account and suggests a solution to the puzzle, namely that the Grand Lodge was established not in 1717 but at the installation of the Duke of Montagu as Grand Master at Stationers' Hall on 24 June 1721.

This source is a rough book in the archives of the Lodge of Antiquity No. 2. We are very grateful to the Worshipful Master and brethren of the Lodge of Antiquity for permission to consult this volume. Many of the records of this lodge were destroyed or damaged in 1778 during the dispute with Grand Lodge when supporters of William Preston seized the lodge's property. Book E is a rough book containing the trade card of Charles Stokes, a stationer who was a member of the lodge, showing that the book was given to the lodge in about 1720. The book remained largely unused until the 1750s, when it was used to draft lodge accounts and minutes.

However, at the beginning of the book is a minute describing the installation of the Duke of Montagu as Grand Master and a list of members of the lodge dated 18 September 1721

¹⁷ Bodleian Library, MS Eng. misc. c.533: f. 34v; W. C. Lukis, ed., *The Family Memoirs of the Rev. William Stukeley, M. D.*, vol. i, Surtees Society 73 (1880), 62; David Boyd Haycock, *William Stukeley: Science, Religion and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 175. Close inspection of the manuscript suggests that these memoranda were compiled by Stukeley at the time of the events noted.

¹⁸ Bodleian Library, MS Eng. misc. e.260: f. 88; *Family Memoirs*, vol. i, 122; Haycock, 175.

¹⁹ *1738 Constitutions*, p. 110.

with additions to 1726. Reg Hewitt and others assumed that the minute and list was copied into the book in the 1760s,²⁰ and therefore untrustworthy, but this is wrong. Comparison of the minute in Book E with other manuscripts shows that the writing dates from the 1720s. This is confirmed by the list of members, which begins in the same hand of the minutes but is then continued by the signatures of new members of the lodge, showing that it is contemporary. This minute was written in 1721, or not very long afterwards, and is the oldest contemporary account of a meeting associated with the Grand Lodge.

The minute in Book E describes the meeting at Stationers' Hall on 24 June 1721 as a general assembly of a great number of Freemasons and states that the Duke of Montagu was installed as Grand Master of Masons and swore on the Bible to protect the franchises and liberties of the Freemasons of England and all the ancient records in the custody of the old lodge at St Paul London. He also swore never to connive at any encroachment of the landmarks of the old lodges in England or suffer the same to be done by his successors, who were to swear a similar oath.

In return, the Freemasons of London in the name of themselves and the rest of their brethren in England vested their rights and powers of congregating in the old lodges of London in trust. This was publicly recognised by the brethren assembled in Grand Lodge. The Masters of the old lodges accepted the trust for their lodges and were sworn accordingly. Thus, Book E describes a process whereby the lodges gave up the power to govern freemasonry to the Grand Master and masters of the lodges assembled in Grand Lodge, in other words the creation of a Grand Lodge. It suggests that Grand Lodge was founded not at the Goose and Gridiron on 24 June 1717 but four years later when a formal transfer of authority was made to the new body on 24 June 1721 at Stationers' Hall.

III

A foundation date of 1721 for Grand Lodge fits our overall evidence much better than 1717. There are no contemporary references to Grand Lodge between 1717 and 1721: no press reports, no anti-masonic pamphlets, no diary entries, no theatrical burlesques of masonic ceremonies. In England, freemasonry bursts suddenly on the scene in 1721. The first reference to Grand Lodge in the press is a report in the *Post Boy* of 24-27 June 1721 of the installation of the Duke of Montagu as Grand Master. Almost immediately, freemasonry became a subject of constant fascination for newspapers.

It has been suggested that we should not be surprised by the lack of references to Grand Lodge before 1721 as it was little more than an obscure tavern society. However, other clubs which were no more than a few friends gathering in a pub have nevertheless left documentary traces. The Society of Antiquaries in 1707-8 consisted of a small group who met on Friday evenings in the Bear and Young Devil taverns in the Strand, but some rough minutes and references to meetings in letters nevertheless survive. The subsequent

²⁰ *AQC* 77 (1964), p. 209.

refoundation of the Society at ‘the Miter Tavern, Fleet Street, in the room up 2 pair of stairs’ in July 1717 was solemnly recorded in the Society’s minute book by Stukeley himself.²¹

By contrast, for the history of Grand Lodge between 1716 and the beginning of the first minute book for Grand Lodge in June 1723 we are totally dependent on Anderson’s account. It has been assumed that, as Wallace McLeod put it, Anderson’s story can be neither confirmed or refuted. Under such circumstances, the default position has been to trust Anderson. Yet, apart from the fact that Anderson’s account is much later and at odds with two more contemporary records in the shape of Stukeley’s paper and Book E of the Lodge of Antiquity, there are many reasons for doubting Anderson’s report. It is riddled with inconsistencies. Many of Anderson’s references to people and places are inaccurate, and are at variance with contemporary press reports. Anderson was not present at the events he describes and his sources of information about them are suspect.

The inconsistencies in Anderson’s narrative are evident right from the beginning of his account of 1717. He explains that the Grand Lodge consisted of the quarterly meetings of lodge officers and states that the first action of Sayer was to revive the quarterly communications. But he then refers only to annual feasts. According to Anderson, no quarterly communication was held until 25 March 1721, when Anderson claims that a meeting was held to nominate Montagu as Grand Master.²² It is unlikely that this meeting was held on Lady Day which was the equivalent of New Year’s Day at the time, and it seems probable that his meeting was invented by Anderson to explain how Montagu was selected. There are further puzzles. Anderson’s identification of the four time immemorial lodges does not square with the Grand Lodge minute book or the 1723 engraved list, which show the lodge at the Cheshire Cheese in Arundel Lodge as senior to the Horn Lodge, one of the time immemorial lodges.²³

Anderson invents information to pad out his narrative. The arithmetic progression of the number of lodges during 1721-2 reported by Anderson in the 1738 *Constitutions* is suspiciously regular and look to be fabricated: 12 on 24 June 1721; 16 on 29 September; 20 on 27 December; 24 on 25 March 1722.²⁴ These numbers conflict with the total of twenty lodges given in the 1723 *Constitutions* and with Anderson’s own list of lodges in the 1738 *Constitutions* which identifies only six lodges as constituted before March 1722, with just one constituted before June 1721, which hardly fits the picture of an expansive Grand Lodge. Although Anderson states that noblemen became brothers in 1719, none of these have ever been identified. Anderson claims that the Duke of Montagu was already Master a lodge when he became Grand Master, but none of the membership lists show him as belonging to any lodge.

Anderson’s information about people and places is often inaccurate, partly due to his unhelpful habit of updating information. For example, Anderson states that John Cordwell,

²¹ Joan Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries* (Oxford: Society of Antiquaries, 1956), pp. 25-9, 50-2.

²² *1738 Constitutions*, p. 111.

²³ Sadler, *Masonic Facts and Fictions*, pp. 14-15.

²⁴ Begemann, *Early History*, 610.

named as Warden in 1718, was 'City Carpenter'. Cordwell was indeed City Common Carpenter in 1738, when he was accused of inflating prices in timber contracts for the new Mansion House, but he was only appointed to this office in 1722.²⁵ Similarly, Anderson states that Richard Ware, said to have been Warden in 1720, was a mathematician. Ware had no recorded mathematical accomplishments, but was better known as a successful bookseller.²⁶ The Apple Tree Tavern in Covent Garden does not seem to have had this name in 1717, but was only known by this name from 1729.

Anderson was not an eye witness of the events he describes. The earliest possible date that he could have attended Grand Lodge was September 1721, although as we will see there are doubts about this. Anderson pieced together his tale of events between 1716 and 1721 from other people. At the end of the 1738 *Constitutions*, Anderson thanks those brethren and lodges who had encouraged him during the production of his book.²⁷ These undoubtedly represent Anderson's main sources of information, but they had mostly only become involved with Freemasonry in the late 1720s and 1730s.

Of the helpers listed by Anderson in the 1738 *Constitutions*, only one claimed to have taken part in the events of 1716-17. This was Jacob Lamball, a carpenter, who was said to have been appointed as the first Senior Grand Warden at the Goose and Gridiron in 1717. Lamball was apparently Anderson's chief informant about the supposed events at that time. However, there are enormous doubts about the credibility of Jacob Lamball as a witness. In 1717, Lamball was still only an apprentice carpenter, having taken out indentures in March 1714. He did not become a freeman of the Carpenters' Company until 6 June 1721.²⁸ Lamball's claim to have been the first Grand Warden is not convincing. As an apprentice, Lamball's work and leisure time was strictly controlled by his master, and he would have had little opportunity to engage in freemasonry. Although Lamball claimed to have been appointed as Warden in 1717, there is no further evidence of his involvement with Freemasonry until March 1735, when (perhaps introduced to Grand Lodge by Anderson) he appears as acting Grand Warden.²⁹ We do not know how his claim to have been Grand Warden was tested in 1735.

Anderson himself got confused about these events. He states that Joseph Elliot was the Senior Grand Warden in 1717 and Lamball Junior. But in his corrigenda he reverses the order, making Lamball the senior, as indeed he appears in the manuscript list of officers in the Grand Lodge Minute Book. Anderson was at the end of his life when he was working on

²⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine* 9 (1739), 214, 361-2; S. Perks, *The History of the Mansion House* (Cambridge: University Press, 1922), 178-87; Sally Jeffery, *The Mansion House* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1993), 78; *Evening Post*, 16 December 1721; *Post Boy*, 2 January 1722.

²⁶ 'On Saturday night last [14 Aug] died at Harefield in Middlesex, Mr. Richard Ware, bookseller and stationer on Ludgate-hill, who acquired a handsome fortune with integrity and reputation: he has left behind him a disconsolate widow, four sons and three daughters': *Daily Advertiser*, 16 August 1756.

²⁷ *1738 Constitutions*, p. 229.

²⁸ For information about Lamball from Carpenters' Company records, see www.londonlives.org.

²⁹ *QCA* 10, p. 247.

the 1738 *Constitutions* and this may explain some of the confusion in his narrative. Shortly before his death, he sent a summary of the *Constitutions* to Ephraim Chambers for his review journal *History of the Works of the Learned*. However, Anderson sent Chambers an incorrect draft and Chambers had substantially to revise it.³⁰ John Entick long afterwards noted that ‘from whatever Cause it might arise, whether from his want of Health, or trusting to the Management of Strangers’, the 1738 *Constitutions* ‘appeared in a very mangled condition’.³¹

But, it will be objected, what about George Payne, said to have been Grand Master in 1718 and 1720, and Desaguliers, said to have been Grand Master in 1719? They are both acknowledged by Anderson and would surely have ensured that his early history of Grand Lodge was accurate. Moreover, Grand Lodge appointed a committee of past and present Grand Officers to check the accuracy of the new *Book of Constitutions*. It seems likely that this committee would have been more concerned with the accuracy of the regulations than the historical section, but nevertheless it is surprising that Grand Lodge might have countenanced a false account of its recent history. To fully answer this objection, it is necessary to review Anderson’s involvement with Grand Lodge. This reveals a repeated pattern of lies and duplicity. In particular, it is evident that Anderson’s account of the history of Grand Lodge in 1722-3 is substantially falsified. Much of this fabrication was undertaken with the connivance of Desaguliers, and probably at his explicit request. It also explains why Desaguliers and Grand Lodge connived in Anderson’s falsification of its early history.

Stukeley states that at the meeting at Stationers’ Hall when Montagu was made Grand Master on 24 June 1721, George Payne produced the Cooke manuscript which appeared to be the oldest copy of the Old Charges yet found.³² It was this discovery which was the impetus for Anderson to be commissioned to digest and update the old legendary history, probably in September 1721. At this point, it is not clear that Anderson was even a freemason. He appears in the 1723 membership list as a member of the Horn Lodge at Westminster.³³ The list of lodges subscribing to the approbation of the 1723 *Constitutions* suggest that Anderson was the Master of lodge no. 17.³⁴ As Songhurst points out, it is impossible to identify lodge 17 with any of the lodges in the engraved lists or membership lists.³⁵ The wardens are shown as Gwinn Vaughan and Walter Greenwood, two Middlesex justices of the peace.³⁶ Neither Vaughan or Greenwood are shown as masons in the 1723 or

³⁰ Ephraim Chambers, *A History of the Works of the Learned*, Vol. 2 (London: Jacob Robinson, 1739), p. 317. Chambers’s comments on Anderson’s account of the events from 1717-23 is interesting: *ibid.*, pp. 343-7.

³¹ *The Pocket Companion and History of Free-Masons...* (London: J. Scott, 1754), p. v.

³² Stukeley’s drawing of the Cooke manuscript is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Top Gen b. 53 f. 89, to which Stukeley has added the following caption: The first and last pages in a Vellum M.S. being Constitutions of the Freemasons. Exhibited at the yearly meeting of the same, at Stationers’ Hall on St John’s day 1721. By Mr Payn then Grand Master, 24 June.

³³ *QCA* 10, p. 23.

³⁴ *1723 Constitutions*, p. 74.

³⁵ *QCA* 10, pp. vii, xxiii.

³⁶ www.londonlives.org.

1725 membership lists, and it is tempting to wonder whether Anderson invented this lodge to ensure his access to the Grand Lodge.

Anderson afterwards claimed that he was appointed Grand Warden sometime late in 1721 in place of William Hawkins because Hawkins was frequently out of town.³⁷ Anderson's testimony is deeply suspect. In the list of officers appended to the Grand Lodge minute book, Anderson has himself altered the list of officers, adding a statement that he replaced Hawkins as Grand Warden. In the minute of the meeting of Grand Lodge on 24 June 1723, where Anderson acted as Grand Warden, the words 'who officiated for William Hawkins', have been erased by scraping, presumably by Anderson himself, in order to give the impression that he acted as Grand Warden in his own right.³⁸ A man who falsifies Grand Lodge records must have serious question marks against him as a historian.

The timings of the approbations to the 1723 *Constitutions* demonstrate that, even if Anderson was regularly appointed as Grand Warden, which seems unlikely, he could only have acted as Grand Warden on one or two occasions. The 1723 *Constitutions* had a stormy passage in Grand Lodge. Many older masons objected to the fact that Anderson's compilation varied so much from the Old Charges and there was concern that the *Book of Constitutions* threatened the ancient landmarks. The blame for this was directed at both Anderson, as the man who 'digested' the charges, and Desaguliers, as the most prominent supporter of the changes.

There are two approbations appended to the 1723 *Constitutions*. The first approbation is in the name of the Duke of Wharton as Grand Master, with Desaguliers as Deputy and Joshua Timson and William Hawkins as Wardens, and the masters and wardens of twenty lodges.³⁹ The grandiloquent language of the first approbation is doubtless the work of Anderson himself. It states that the Duke of Montagu, having had the manuscript read and corrected by several brethren, ordered it to be printed, but that it was not quite ready for the press when Montagu stepped down as Grand Master. This indicates that Anderson was still revising the work in June 1722, which is corroborated by the inclusion in the book of a form for constituting new lodges approved by the Duke of Wharton after he became Grand Master on 24 June.

Grand Lodge had difficulty approving Anderson's work, a fact that he was afterwards keen to conceal. The *Book of Constitutions* was still going through the press in January 1723,⁴⁰ and it was necessary to issue a second much shorter and more business-like approbation in the names of Grand Master Wharton and his Deputy Desaguliers stating that the book had been produced in print at the quarterly communication on 17 January 1723 and was ordered to be published and recommended for the use of lodges.⁴¹

³⁷ *1738 Constitutions*, p. 115.

³⁸ *QCA* 10, p. xxiii.

³⁹ *1723 Constitutions*, pp. 73-4.

⁴⁰ Matthew Birkhead, the author of the *Enter'd Prentices Song*, died on 30 December 1722 (*Weekly Journal or British Gazeteer*, 5 January 1723). He is named as a master of Lodge No. 5 on p. 74 of the *1723 Constitutions* but noted as having died on p. 84.

⁴¹ *1723 Constitutions*, p. 91.

A few days later, on 23 January 1723, the following advertisement appeared in the *Daily Journal*:⁴²

For the Benefit of the ancient Society of Free-Masons
Wheras there is now ready for Publication, a new Sett of Constitutions and Orders, very different from the Ancient, by which the said Society has been happily, and quietly, regulated, for many Ages past. This is to inform all Lovers of pure Masonry, abstracted from Innovations, and Self-Interest, that there will speedily be prepar'd, and deliver'd to them, without Cost, The Ancient Constitutions, and Orders, taken from the best Copies; wherein such Errors in History, and Chronology, which, by the Carelessness of the several Transcribers, have crept into them, will be fully rectified. The extravagant Length of the said new Constitutions, and Orders, exceeding that of four ordinary Sermons, makes it most evident, that they are calculated at the Expence and Damage of the Society, meerly to serve the Interest of one *single* Member, the Author, whose assurance was such, that he got them printed off before he offers them to the General Censure of the Fraternity. For which Reasons, we hope, the Brotherhood will not now be over hasty to encourage the said Innovator; For to show honourably and justly he deals by his dear Brother Masons, his whole Two and Six-penny Book will be speedily published, on as good Paper as his, at the Price of Six-pence; of which timely Notice will be given in this Paper.

This is a remarkable attack on Anderson which shows that the process of scrutinising the *Constitutions* was contentious and probably mishandled. The advertisement was placed by the bookseller James Roberts, who had already attempted to disrupt the compilation of the new Constitutions by publishing in September 1722 a version of the Old Charges said to have been taken from a manuscript over 500 years old and containing the 'new articles' said to have been promulgated in December 1663.⁴³ This had led to the appearance of further newspaper advertisements

...to advise the Publick, that the same is false and spurious, nor does the said Book contain anything like the true Constitutions of the Society, but is calculated to deceive the Publick. Whereof we desire the Brotherhood to take notice.⁴⁴

On 11 February 1723, Roberts duly advertised again his edition of *The Old Constitutions* at the promised price of sixpence.⁴⁵ The following week there appeared a further scurrilous attack in the form of a bawdy hudibrastic poem *The Free-Masons* which parodied the masons' traditional history. *The Hudibrastick Poem*, published under a false imprint, ran

⁴² It was reprinted in the *Daily Journal* on 25 January 1723.

⁴³ D. Knoop, G. Jones and D. Hamer, *Early Masonic Pamphlets*, pp. 71-83. An earlier reprint of this version of the Old Charges, presumably by Roberts, had appeared in *The Post Man, and the Historical Account*, in July and August 1722.

⁴⁴ *Daily Journal*, 7 September 1722 and 10 September 1722.

⁴⁵ *Daily Journal*, 11 February 1723.

through three editions in just over a week.⁴⁶ The popularity of *The Hudbrastick Poem* must have been distressing for Anderson as he had been the target of two similar obscene pamphlets in 1720. Although Anderson is not directly referred to in *The Hudibrastick Poem*, the dedication is addressed to 'one of the Wardens of the Society of Free-Masons' who is apparently described as a 'mercenary scribbler'.

It was under these circumstances that the publication of the *Book of Constitutions* was advertised by John Senex and John Hooke on 23 February 1723.⁴⁷ But the controversy did not abate. The *London Journal* reported on 6 April 1723 that:

The Society of Free Masons are determined (we hear) to use all the methods in their power to raise their reputation among the People, and, we are told, they gave orders a few days ago for prosecuting a Gentleman, with the utmost severity, who reflected on their management in their private meetings.

The following month, Henry Pritchard was tried for assault after breaking the head of one Abraham Barret for 'abusing the ancient Society of Free Masons in a very scandalous Manner, and with very indecent Expressions, particularly relating to some noble Persons of that Fraternity mention'd by Name'.⁴⁸ The jury found against Pritchard but, because of the very great provocation, only awarded 20 shillings damages. Grand Lodge afterwards made a collection of £28 17s 6d so that Pritchard should not lose out from his defence of Freemasonry.⁴⁹

It seems to have been these clashes that prompted Grand Lodge to appoint a Secretary and start to keep minutes of its meetings in June 1723. At this meeting, the very first vote called into question the validity of the approbation of the 1723 Constitutions – the minute refers to the order 'purporting that they had been approved'.⁵⁰ When the meeting was asked to confirm the general regulations printed in the book so far as they were consistent with the ancient rules of masonry, it was decided that the question should be not put. Instead, a pointed resolution was passed 'That it is not in the Power of any person, or Body of men, to make any Alteration, or Innovation in the Body of Masonry without the Consent first obtained of the Annual Grand Lodge', the implication of this being that the *Constitutions* had effected such changes without proper consent. Tempers remained frayed, and much of the opprobrium was directed at Desaguliers. In November, William Huddleston, the Master of the lodge of the King's Head in Ivy Lane was expelled from the Grand Lodge and removed from his Mastership for casting aspersions against Desaguliers.⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Daily Post*, 15 February 1723; *British Journal*, 16 February 1723; *British Journal*, 23 February 1723. On the imprint of the *Hudibrastick Poem*, see now A. Bricker, 'Who was "A. Moore"? The attribution of eighteenth-century publications with false and misleading imprints', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 110 (2016), pp. 181-213.

⁴⁷ *Evening Post* 23 February 1723; *Post Boy* 26 February 1723.

⁴⁸ *Daily Post*, 18 May 1723.

⁴⁹ *QCA* 10, pp. 54-5.

⁵⁰ *QCA* 10, p. 50.

⁵¹ *QCA* 10, p. 54.

None of this contentious history is hinted at in Anderson's history of Grand Lodge between 1721 and 1723. However, the deceptions and half-truths in Anderson's narrative of the publication of the 1723 *Constitutions* are trivial by comparison with his blatant lies in his account of the Duke of Wharton's Grand Mastership in 1722-3. Gould pointed out as long ago as 1895 how Anderson's description of Wharton's time as Grand Master is directly refuted by press reports and contains irresolvable contradictions.⁵² In the light of Anderson's demonstrable distortions and fabrications at this point, it is reasonable to view the rest of his narrative from 1717 to 1723 as suspect. Moreover, Anderson created this fake news with the connivance, and probably at the behest of, Desaguliers, explaining why Desaguliers and his close associate Payne had an interest in disseminating a false account of the revival of Grand Lodge.

The Duke of Wharton was one of the most charismatic and controversial figures of the time. Lodge of Antiquity's Book E states that he was present at Stationers' Hall when Montagu was installed as Grand Master and he succeeded Montagu. Wharton had earned great popularity with his speeches in the House of Lords and when George I made him a Duke in 1719, he was the youngest recipient of such a honour outside the immediate royal family since the middle ages. However, he had also accepted a dukedom from the Old Pretender. He led a small but effective group of Whigs opposed to Walpole, but his reckless behaviour led to a series of personal and financial crises and he accrued crippling debts. He was a founder and president of the notorious Hellfire Club from 1719-23. In May 1723, he became the leading public supporter of the Jacobite Bishop of Rochester Francis Atterbury and made an impassioned speech in his defence. In 1725, partly to escape his creditors, he accepted an appointment as a Jacobite diplomat in Vienna and went into exile. He became a Roman Catholic in 1726.

In the 1738 *Constitutions*, Anderson portrays Wharton's election as Grand Master in 1722 as completely irregular.⁵³ He states that Montagu had considered staying on as Grand Master and that 'the better sort' had tried to postpone the annual feast. But Wharton, who Anderson says had 'been lately made a mason, tho' not the Master of a Lodge', got a number of others to meet him at Stationers' Hall. Anderson states that no Grand Officers were present at this meeting, so the meeting was chaired by the oldest master mason, who proclaimed Wharton Grand Master, 'without the usual ceremonials'. Anderson goes on to claim that no Deputy was appointed and that the Grand Lodge was not opened and closed in due form. According to Anderson, those worthy brethren who would not countenance irregularities refused to acknowledge Wharton's authority. Eventually, states Anderson, Montagu healed the breach by summoning a Grand Lodge on 17 January 1723 at which Montagu's former deputy Beal proclaimed Wharton Grand Master, who appointed Desaguliers as Deputy Grand Master and Anderson as one of the Grand Wardens.

This is from beginning to end a pack of lies, intended to distance the Grand Lodge, and Desaguliers in particular, from the taint of association with Wharton who by the time of his death in 1731 was a pariah who had offended even the Jacobites. Wharton had not lately been made a mason; press reports state that he was made a mason at the King's Arms

⁵² R. F. Gould, 'The Duke of Wharton', *AQC* 8 (1895), pp. 114-55.

⁵³ *1738 Constitutions*, pp. 114-5.

Tavern (close to the Goose and Gridiron) at the end of July 1721.⁵⁴ Wharton is reported as Master of this lodge in 1725,⁵⁵ and it seems probable that he had been Master for some time previously. The annual feast on 25 June 1722 was not summoned irregularly. We have copies of the engraved tickets for the feast issued in Montagu's name,⁵⁶ and 'the Grand Meeting of the most noble and ancient fraternity of Free Masons' had been widely advertised in the press.⁵⁷ These show that, characteristically, Anderson got the date of the meeting wrong.

The press reports of the meeting do not suggest that there was any controversy about Wharton's installation. They state that about 500 brethren attended the feast and that Wharton was elected to succeed Montagu unanimously.⁵⁸ Above all, two press reports declare that Desaguliers was appointed Deputy Grand Master at the feast.⁵⁹ This contradicts Anderson's claim that no Deputy Grand Master was appointed and that Desaguliers was only appointed some months later. There is no suggestion in these press reports of any irregularity. Robert Samber afterwards described this Grand Feast in his translation of a work 'The Praise of Drunkenness'.⁶⁰ His description of mountains of venison pasties, westphalia hams, chickens, salmon and plum pudding, with copious libations of wine, illuminating the faces of the Freemasons with a ruddy glow while Wharton's toasts to the King and royal family, the established church, the prosperity of England, and love, liberty and science were greeted with loud huzzas, is far removed from Anderson's description of an illicit hastily summoned gathering. Samber notes how a person of great Gravity and Science (presumably Desaguliers) reprimanded the orchestra for playing the Jacobite song 'Let the King Enjoy His Own Again', but for Samber this simply illustrated how the gathering avoided talk of politics and religion.

Shortly before his final Grand Lodge meeting in June 1723, Wharton had emerged as the leading supporter of the Jacobite conspirator Francis Atterbury, bidding the disgraced

⁵⁴ *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, 5 August 1721, reprinted in Robert Peter, *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813* (London: Routledge, 2016), Vol. 5.

⁵⁵ QCA 10, p. 31.

⁵⁶ For example, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawlinson C. 136, f. 5. In the light of the survival of this engraving, it seems odd that Anderson singles out the purchase under Wharton in 1723 of a new plate for the production of engraved tickets for the annual feast: *1738 Constitutions*, p. 115.

⁵⁷ *Daily Post* 20 June and 21 June 1722; *Daily Journal* 20 and 21 June 1722. The advertisement in the *Daily Journal* of 20 June 1722 states that 'all those Noblemen and Gentlemen that have took tickets, and do not appear at the Hall, will be looked upon as *false Brothers*'. This led to an apology in the *Daily Post* the following day, hoping that 'no such sly Insinuation will have any influence on the Fraternity'. This implies an attempt to bolster attendance but does not suggest the meeting was irregular in the manner described by Anderson.

⁵⁸ For example, *London Journal*, 30 June 1722; *Weekly Journal*, 30 June 1722.

⁵⁹ *St James's Journal* 28 June 1722; *Freeholders Journal*, 4 July 1722.

⁶⁰ Albert-Henri Sallengre trans Robert Samber, *Ebrietatis Encomium; or, the Praise of Drunkenness* (1910 reprint of 1723 edition: Privately Printed for Lewis M. Thompson, New York), pp. 81-3.

bishop farewell as he went into exile, presenting him with a sword, and appointing Atterbury's chaplain to his household.⁶¹ Wharton had also launched at the beginning of June a newspaper called *The True Briton*,⁶² and actively supported two Jacobite candidates for the shrievalty of London. Anderson suggests that the meeting at Merchant Taylor's Hall on 24 June 1723 passed off without incident, but the minutes tell a different story. Not only was the approbation of the 1723 *Constitutions* called into doubt, but Wharton as outgoing Grand Master made an attempt to obstruct the appointment of Desaguliers as Deputy Grand Master for the following year.⁶³ As Anderson reported in a letter to Montagu, 'the D of W endeavoured to divide us against Dr Desaguliers (whom the Earl [of Dalkeith] named as Deputy before his Lordship left London), according to a concert of the said D[u]ke and some he persuaded to join him'.⁶⁴ Again it is striking how Anderson denegrates Wharton – the vote to approve the appointment of Desaguliers had been 43 in favour and 42 against, suggesting that opinions of Desaguliers were evenly split. Infuriated by the reelection of Desaguliers, Wharton left the hall in a huff, without the usual ceremonies.

The main beneficiary of Anderson's fabricated account of Wharton's Grand Mastership was Desaguliers. As a Huguenot refugee and staunch Calvinist, Desaguliers would have been horrified to have his name linked with Wharton, and he was conscious that Wharton's actions had called into question his reappointment as Deputy Grand Master in 1723. Anderson's false narrative portrayed Desaguliers as a protégé of the Duke of Montagu resisting the irregular actions of Wharton. However, this created a problem in that it suggested Desaguliers's own appointment as Deputy Grand Master was doubtful. One easy way of resolving this problem was to claim that Desaguliers had been Grand Master in his own right in 1719. The idea for this probably came from Desaguliers himself. The minutes begin referring to him as late Grand Master in November 1728, the first time he appears in Grand Lodge after completing his third term of office as Deputy Grand Master, and it probably seemed to him a suitable way of acknowledging his seniority in the craft.

Anderson was so bruised by the controversies around the 1723 *Constitutions* and by Wharton's last stand in Grand Lodge that he did not appear at Grand Lodge again for another seven years. However, he took the precaution of ensuring that his work on the *Constitutions* would be remembered by presenting a copy to the Bodleian Library in Oxford on 1 July 1723 with a fulsome Latin inscription stating that this humble book was given to

⁶¹ *Evening Post* 18-20 June 1723; *British Journal* 22 June 1722; *Weekly Journal* 22 June 1723. The sword bore the mottoes 'Draw me not without Reason' and 'Put me not up without Honour'.

⁶² *The True Briton* was published by Thomas Payne who in 1724 published the first edition of the exposure *The Grand Mystery of Freemasons Discover'd*. A second edition of this exposure produced under the fake imprint 'A. Moore' advertised in October 1724 (*Daily Post* 22 October 1724) included an 'Account of the most ancient Society of Gormogons', apparently confirming the suggestion that Wharton may have been responsible for the Gormogons.

⁶³ *QCA* 10, pp. 52-3.

⁶⁴ *AQC* 12 (1899), p. 106.

the renowned Bodleian Library by its author James Anderson of London Master of Arts of the University of Aberdeen.⁶⁵

Anderson reappeared in Grand Lodge in August 1730, possibly prompted by the scandal caused by the publication of *Masonry Dissected* which Desaguliers denounced at this meeting.⁶⁶ Anderson would also have heard during this meeting a petition complaining of the irregular making of masons by one Antony Sayer, despite the fact that he had received generous charitable assistance from Grand Lodge because of his claim to have been Grand Master.⁶⁷ Anderson continued only occasionally to attend Grand Lodge.

By 1735, Anderson's personal affairs had reached a crisis.⁶⁸ He and his wife had invested heavily in a project to manufacture coloured tapestries which had failed, embroiling them in lawsuits. His Presbyterian congregation at Swallow Street off Piccadilly dismissed him in January 1735 and appointed a new minister from Aberdeen. A reported robbery from Anderson's home in November smells suspiciously like an attempt to raise some cash, since the servant accused of stealing and pawning a substantial list of items was not prosecuted. Within weeks of the theft, Anderson found himself confined to the relatively lenient but humiliating 'Rules' of Fleet Prison. The records show he was never discharged.⁶⁹

To add to Anderson's woes, in January 1735 a list of recently published books included 'A Pocket Companion for Free-Masons', price 2s 6d.⁷⁰ This was compiled by a freemason named William Smith and published by Ebenezer Ryder, an Irish bookseller based in Covent Garden. Smith cannot be identified with any certainty, but was perhaps a member of Swalwell lodge in north-east England.⁷¹ Much of the material in Smith's *Pocket Companion* was drawn from the 1723 *Constitutions*. The 1723 *Constitutions* were by that date difficult to obtain, the back stock of loose quires having been sold in May 1731 following the death of John Hooke.⁷²

On 24 February 1735, Anderson appeared in Grand Lodge and complained that Smith 'had without his privity or Consent pyrated a considerable part of the Constitutions of Masonry

⁶⁵ Pierre Mereaux, *Les Constitutions d'Anderson: Vérité ou Imposture?* (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 1995), p. 288.

⁶⁶ QCA 10, p. 125.

⁶⁷ QCA 10, p. 131.

⁶⁸ For further details, see our paper 'New Light on James Anderson' in *Reflections on Three Hundred Years of Freemasonry: Papers from the QC Tercentenary Conference*.

⁶⁹ *London Gazette*, 26 July 1737. Anderson's name does not appear in the register of those who were actually released: The National Archives, PRIS 10, Miscellanea. Records of the King's Bench, Fleet, and Marshalsea prisons, (accessed through ancestry.com, 18 February 2016).

⁷⁰ *Weekly Miscellany*, 18 January 1732.

⁷¹ W. Waples, 'An Introduction to the Harodim', *AQC*, 60 (1947), pp. 118–98, on p. 139.

⁷² *A catalogue of books bound and in quires, copies and parts of copies. Being part of the stock of the late Mr. John Hooke, which will be sold by auction to the booksellers of London and Westminster only; at the Queen's Head Tavern in Pater-noster Row, on Monday the 31st day of May, 1731, lot 260.*

aforesaid to the prejudice of the said B^r Anderson it being his Sole Property'.⁷³ Grand Lodge urged every Master and Warden 'to do all in their Power to discountenance so unfair a Practice, and prevent the said Smith's Books being bought by any Members of their respective Lodges'.⁷⁴ Grand Lodge's deprecation of the volume had little effect. By June, Ryder, the publisher of the volume, had moved to Dublin, where he started to publish a newspaper, and he issued an Irish edition of the *Pocket Companion*.⁷⁵ In November 1738, the London newspapers carried an advertisement for another edition of the *Pocket Companion* by another publisher with strong Irish connections, John Torbuck, who had taken over Rider's premises in Covent Garden.⁷⁶ Subsequent advertisements described the book as 'universally receiv'd by the Regular Lodges in Town and Country'.⁷⁷

Anderson's claim that the copyright of the *Book of Constitutions* belonged to him was false. The format of the title page of the 1723 *Constitutions* makes it clear that, in accordance with early eighteenth-century practice, the copyright belonged to the publishers John Senex and John Hooke. This is confirmed by the subsequent descent and sale by various publishers of the rights to the *Book of Constitutions*.⁷⁸ After the death of John Hooke, the rights in the volume had descended to his successor Richard Chandler. Grand Lodge had no say in the matter; its only involvement was through giving its approbation which would boost sales. Anderson's false claim that the Book of Constitutions was his sole property reflects both his desperate personal circumstances and Grand Lodge's poor collective memory of its early history.

Anderson nevertheless made a proposal to Grand Lodge that a second edition of the *Book of Constitutions* should be prepared. He had some thoughts as to alterations and additions to the new edition which he was happy to share with Grand Lodge. Grand Lodge accordingly

⁷³ QCA 10, p. 244.

⁷⁴ QCA 10, pp. 244-5.

⁷⁵ On Rider, see M. Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade* (London: Bibliographical Society, 2000)

⁷⁶ *Daily Gazetteer*, 18 November 1735. On Torbuck, see Pollard, *Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade*. He moved to Dublin after having been imprisoned for reprinting parliamentary debates. Torbuck's publication of parliamentary debates was in competition with a major project by Richard Chandler, one of the publishers of the 1738 *Constitutions* for publication of House of Lords debates, and led to a vitriolic dispute between them: J. B. Shipley, 'Fielding's *Champion* and a Publishers' Quarrel', *Notes and Queries* 200 (Jan. 1955), pp. 25-8.

⁷⁷ *London Evening Post*, 10-13 April 1736; *Daily Post* 17 May 1736.

⁷⁸ Following Chandler's suicide in 1744 and Ward's bankruptcy in 1746, The remaining stock of the 1738 *Constitutions* was sold to a publisher named Robinson, apparently not a Freemason, who reissued the volume with a new title page under his imprint without reference to Grand Lodge: QCA 12 (1960), pp. 80-1. The sale of the remaining stock and copyright of the 1738 *Constitutions* to Robinson for £ 5 15s is recorded in *A catalogue of the remaining bound stock, the books in quires and copies, of Mr. Caesar Ward, of York, bookseller, which will be sold by auction, to a select number of the booksellers of London and Westminster, at the Rose Tavern, without Temple-Bar, on Thursday, February 27, 1745-6*, p. 3, in the John Johnson Collection in the Bodleian Library.

agreed that a committee should be set up consisting of present and former Grand Officers, who would call on other master masons as appropriate, to scrutinise and approve the new Book of Constitutions before Grand Lodge set its seal of approval to the new publication.

There is much that could be said about Anderson's work in compiling the new *Book of Constitutions*. One key point is that the title page makes it clear that the copyright of the new volume was also owned by the publishers, the ambitious partnership of Caesar Ward and Richard Chandler.⁷⁹ Chandler had inherited the business of John Hooke, one of the publishers of the 1723 *Constitutions*. Caesar Ward was heavily involved in extending his partnership's business in York, where they took over publication of the *York Courant*. It was probably Ward and Chandler's commitments in York which accounted for the delay in the publication of the 1738 *Constitutions* which was not advertised until a year after Anderson had told Grand Lodge it was ready for the press.

Anderson was paid in 'copy money' by the sheet for his work on the 1738 *Constitutions*, as he had been in 1723. It was in his interests and that of his publishers to produce a substantial volume that would sell well, and this encouraged him to expand the historical section. He also doubtless hoped that his history of masonry in ancient times would consolidate his reputation as a historian. He also had to accommodate demands from Grand Lodge. Anxious to demonstrate its antiquity in the face of competition from other groups of masons in York, Ireland and Scotland, Grand Lodge instructed Anderson to insert in his book the names of all the Grand Masters who could be collected from the beginning of time. He was also told to name all those who had served Grand Officers and Stewards so that in future only these more respectable brethren could be selected as Grand Officers.

There were political pressures on Anderson. Desaguliers and other senior Freemasons were assiduously cultivating the patronage of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, at a time when the Prince of Wales was emerging as a figurehead of opposition to Robert Walpole. The 1738 *Constitutions* with its prominent dedication to the Prince of Wales appeared shortly after Frederick Lewis was excluded from court, with anyone holding an office from the king barred from entering Frederick Lewis's presence. The presentation of the *Book of Constitutions* by Grand Lodge to Frederick Lewis in November 1739 occurred while the prince was working assiduously to build up his political and parliamentary support. Anderson in compiling the 1738 *Constitutions* would have been very conscious of the need to endorse the agendas of the political opposition groped around the Prince of Wales.

The features of the patriot programme cultivated by Frederick Lewis included a stress on Anglo-Saxon origins, with Frederick portrayed as a modern-day King Alfred. An influential work was Bolingbroke's *Idea of a Patriot King* which stressed the importance of continuity and ancient roots. Anderson was only too willing to echo this by enhancing his history to how the succession of Grand Officers stretched back through the Anglo-Saxons to Moses, especially as it gave him an opportunity to display the historical researches he had undertaken for his vast project on royal genealogies. Anderson would have wanted to play

⁷⁹ C. Y. Ferdinand, 'The Economics of the Eighteenth-Century Provincial Book Trade: The Case of Ward and Chandler' in M. Bell, S. Chew, S. Eliot, L. Hunter and J. West, *Reconstructing the Book: Literary Texts in Transmission* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 42-56.

down any suggestion that the creation of Grand Lodge might have been due to an initiative associated with George I's court. The story of the 1717 revival was a convenient way of both demonstrating continuity and emphasising that freemasonry was rooted in ancient craft traditions. Piecing together his history from various documents and stories current in Grand Lodge in the mid 1730s, and mindful of many different political pressures ranging from the need to discredit Wharton and to ingratiate Grand Lodge with the Prince of Wales, Anderson concocted the story of 1717 and all that.

Anderson went to great deal of trouble firmly to embed the story of 1717 in his text. He includes in the 1738 *Constitutions* 'as a specimen to avoid repetition' a description of the procession when the Duke of Norfolk was installed as Grand Master in January 1730.⁸⁰ The minute book shows that Anderson substantially alters the order of the procession. The minute book groups Grand Master, Deputy Grand Masters and Grand Wardens together, and records that they processed in order of seniority.⁸¹ Anderson separates out the former Grand Masters and adds the names of Desaguliers, Payne and Sayer as former Grand Masters. Moreover, Anderson reverses the order of the procession to give the impression that Payne and Desaguliers were senior to the Grand Masters. Sayer is nowhere mentioned in the minute book as joining this procession and it seems unlikely that he would have been part of the 'very Grand Appearance of Nobility and Persons of Distinction'⁸² on this occasion, since three months later he petitioned Grand Lodge for relief from his great poverty.⁸³

It may seem surprising that nobody commented on the 1717 story at the time, but it seems that few people involved with Freemasonry in 1738 had much knowledge of the early years. We cannot be certain that Ephraim Chambers was a freemason, but he was nevertheless knowledgeable about freemasonry, presumably because of his association with John Senex, one of the publishers of the 1723 *Constitutions*.⁸⁴ When Chambers produced a summary of the 1738 *Constitutions* for his journal *History of the Works of the Learned*, he makes it clear that he had not previously heard the story of how Freemasonry was almost at death's door when George I succeeded to the throne and how it was revived.⁸⁵ Besides, for most readers, the news was not that Grand Lodge had been founded in 1717 but that its antecedents stretched back through St Augustine and back to Noah. This was the key message of both *Books of Constitutions* and some readers did claim that this was either a fabrication or that there were serious errors in Anderson's early history. An exposure published in 1724 severely criticised Anderson's biblical and historical learning, declaring that he was 'a true Author of Uncertainties'.⁸⁶ Others suggested that the origins of the

⁸⁰ *1738 Constitutions*, pp. 124-7.

⁸¹ *QCA* 10, pp. 117-19.

⁸² *Daily Post*, 30 January 1730.

⁸³ *QCA* 10, p. 123.

⁸⁴ C Revauger, 'Chambers, Ephraim (1680-1740)' in C. Porset and C. Revauger (eds.) *Le Monde Maçonique des Lumières (Europe-Amériques et Colonies)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2013), Vol. 1, pp. 728-30.

⁸⁵ Ephraim Chambers, *A History of the Works of the Learned*, Vol. 2 (London: Jacob Robinson, 1739), pp. 343-7.

⁸⁶ D. Knoop, G. Jones and D. Hamer, *Early Masonic Pamphlets*, pp. 120-4.

society actually only went back as far as the fourteenth century.⁸⁷ In the context of this debate about how ancient the society really was, the question of what happened in 1717 seemed beside the point.

There are strong parallels between the creation of the Grand Lodge of Free Masons in June 1721 and the creation of the Order of the Bath four years later in 1725, recently discussed by Andrew Hanham.⁸⁸ In the case of the Order of the Bath, the herald John Anstis had performed the role of developing a legendary history. Pushing back beyond the earliest documented references to Knights of the Bath in the fourteenth century, Anstis traced the precedents of the order back to Anglo-Saxon times. Indeed, his claim that the first such knight was the Anglo-Saxon King Athelstan,⁸⁹ who also has a prominent role in the legendary history of freemasonry, was probably not coincidental. The Knights of the Bath demonstrate the enthusiasm of early eighteenth-century society for the creation of prestigious orders with recently discovered legendary orders. In the case of both the freemasons and the Knights of the Bath, the moving force was the Duke of Montagu who was very anxious to enhance the splendour and authority of George I's court through such orders designed to promote loyalty and harmony. The parallels between the creation of Grand Lodge in 1721 and the launch of the Order of the Bath four years later are remarkable, and Montagu appears to have been the driving force behind both events.

By contrast with Anderson's history in the 1738 *Constitutions*, the descriptions of the installation of the Duke of Montagu as Grand Master in 1721 and the inauguration of the Grand Lodge by Stukeley and Book E of the Lodge of Antiquity are inwardly consistent and can be verified at key points from other sources. The accuracy of the list of lodge members in Book E is for example confirmed by the appearance in the list of the name of Thomas Coke, afterwards Earl of Leicester and Grand Master from 1731-2. Coke's household accounts include a payment for Coke to Richard Trueby, the licensee of the King's Arms Tavern and a member of the lodge, of £52 10s on 31 May 1722 for 'ye entertainment on acct of free masons'.⁹⁰ Coke's name appears in the list of lodge members in Book E at exactly the place we would expect if he was initiated at this time.

IV

We feel that we have said enough to substantiate the view that Anderson's history is fabricated and that the descriptions of events by Stukeley and in Book E are more likely to be reliable. However, during recent discussions a number of further objections and issues have arisen and we would like to conclude by briefly considering them.

⁸⁷ Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *Early Masonic Pamphlets*, pp. 233-6.

⁸⁸ A. Hanham, 'The Politics of Chivalry: Sir Robert Walpole, the Duke of Montagu and the Order of the Bath', *Parliamentary History* 35 (2016), pp. 262-297.

⁸⁹ John Anstis, *Observations Introductory to an Historical Essay upon the Knighthood ofv the Bath* (London: James Woodman, 1725), pp. 10-11.

⁹⁰ D. Mortlock, *Aristocratic Splendour: Money and the World of Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 2007).

In an address to Grand Lodge on 14 June 2017,⁹¹ John Hamill suggested that the postscript in the 1723 *Constitutions* with an order for constituting a new lodge reprinted in the 1738 *Constitutions* was introduced by George Payne and shows Grand Lodge acting as a regulatory body in 1720. This is wrong. The 1723 *Constitutions* describes this document as ‘The Manner of Constituting a New Lodge, as practis’d by his Grace the Duke of Wharton, the present Worshipful Grand Master, according to ancient usages of masons’.⁹² This dates it clearly to 1722-3. In the 1738 *Constitutions* this is described as ‘The Ancient Manner of Constituting a Lodge’.⁹³ There is nothing anywhere to suggest that this document dates from 1720.

In the same address, John Hamill states that *The Book M or Masonry Triumphant* published by Leonard Umfreville in Newcastle in 1736 includes a report of a meeting of Grand Lodge in 1720 at which a set of rules drawn up by George Payne was adopted.⁹⁴ John states that these formed the basis of the rules first printed in the 1723 *Constitutions*. Again, this is wrong. *Book M* has a preface signed by W. Smith, apparently the author of the 1735 *Pocket Companion*, the book about which Anderson complained to Grand Lodge. Waples states that Smith was initiated into the Harodim at Swalwell Lodge in 1733.⁹⁵ *Book M* shares a great deal of material within the *Pocket Companion*. Neither book has any report of a meeting of Grand Lodge in 1720. The rules reproduced in both volumes are described as ‘General Regulations for the Use of Lodges in and about London and Westminster, being first approved by the Grand Lodge, on the 24th of June, 1721, at Stationers’ Hall, London, when the most Noble Prince John Duke of Montagu was unanimously chosen Grand Master’. It is stated that these regulations were ‘proposed by the Grand Lodge, to about 150 Brethren, on St John the Baptist’s Day, 1721’. In fact, these rules are word for word the regulations printed in the 1723 *Constitutions*. *Book M* is a red herring.

It was precisely the adoption of these regulations in response to the surrender of privileges by the London lodges on 24 June 1721 which created Grand Lodge. John Hamill has expressed doubts that Grand Lodge could have been created suddenly in this way, ‘like Athene springing fully armed from the head of Zeus’, but eighteenth-century clubs and societies were notable for their prolific generation of rules and regulations, and for a civil

⁹¹ ‘1717 – Formation and Foundation: John Hamill on 300 Years of Freemasonry’, *Freemasonry Today*, 14 June 2017: <http://www.freemasonrytoday.com/ugle-sgc/ugle/speeches/1717-formation-and-foundation-john-hamill-on-300-years-of-freemasonry>

⁹² *1723 Constitutions*, p. 71.

⁹³ *1738 Constitutions*, p. 149.

⁹⁴ John Hamill states that *Book M* is very rare, and indeed the only copy listed in the ESTC is at Newcastle Central Library. There are copies in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry (BE 98 SMI) and the J. Willard Marriot Library of the University of Utah. The Utah copy is available online (<https://collections.lib.utah.edu/details?id=239506>) and extracts from the copy in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry are edited with a detailed introduction by J. A. M. Snoek in R. Peter, *British Freemasonry 1700-1813* (Routledge, 2016).

⁹⁵ W. Waples, ‘An Introduction to the Harodim’, *AQC*, 60 (1947), pp. 118–98, on p. 139.

servant like George Payne, the drafting of the regulations for the new Grand Lodge in June 1721 would have been meat and drink.

It is striking that the *Pocket Companion* and *Book M* do not mention George Payne in connection with these regulations. Anderson states in the 1723 Constitutions that these regulations were 'Compiled first by Mr George Payne, Anno 1720, when he was Grand-Master'.⁹⁶ It would be tempting to dismiss this as another error by Anderson, except that Stukeley also refers to Payne as Grand Master in his report of the 1721 meeting. This suggests that Payne adopted the rank of Grand Master in arranging and chairing the 1721 meeting, but does not show that there was a Grand Lodge in existence before June 1721 or that it was exercising any regulatory authority.

Another objection, raised by David Harrison, is that the rivals of the London Grand Lodge in York would surely have said something if false information was being circulated about the foundation of Grand Lodge. Again, the vital point is that Sir Francis Drake and the Grand Lodge of All England were not interested in matters of recent history. They were keen to show in Sir Francis Drake's words that 'the first Grand Lodge, ever held in *England*, was held in this City [of York]; where *Edwin*, the first Christian King of the *Northumbers*, about the Six Hundredth Year after *Christ* ... sat as Grand Master'.⁹⁷ Anderson's counter to this was to claim St Augustine of Canterbury as the first Grand Master of England, but the York Grand Lodge countered this by claiming the right to be the Grand Lodge of All England, echoing the words traditionally used by the Archbishop of Canterbury to claim primacy over York.

There were probably more immediate reasons why Drake and his brethren in York would not have been concerned about the story of 1717. The publishers of the 1738 *Constitutions*, Richard Chandler and Caesar Ward, were trying to establish themselves in York. Ward had moved to York in 1736 and became a freeman of the city in 1736.⁹⁸ Ward and Chandler took over the bankrupt *York Courant* from Alexander Staples in 1739 while they were seeing the Book of Constitutions to market. Ward became a close friend of Sir Francis Drake, who afterwards worked with Ward on the vast *Parliamentary or Constitutional History of England*. Ward became heavily involved in local politics and was elected a common councillor for Bootham Ward in 1740. It is not known whether he was a member of a lodge in York, but it seems possible. These various links would have discouraged Sir Francis Drake from criticising his friend's new publication.

If we accept that Grand Lodge was created in June 1721, then Desaguliers' visit to Edinburgh in August 1721 assumes a new significance. The pretence for Desaguliers' invitation to the city was to use his expertise in hydraulics to advise on its water supply.⁹⁹ However, it also gave Desaguliers an opportunity to undertake some masonic fact-finding for the new Grand Lodge. He visited the St Mary's Chapel Lodge in Edinburgh on 24 August 1721, where he was described in the minutes as 'Doctor John Theophilus Desaguliers, fellow of the Royall Societie, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Grace James Duke of Chandois, late Generall

⁹⁶ *1723 Constitutions*, p. 58.

⁹⁷ Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *Early Masonic Pamphlets*, p. 205.

⁹⁸ Ferdinand, 'Economics of the Eighteenth-Century Provincial Book Trade', pp. 44-6.

⁹⁹ Carpenter, *John Theophilus Desaguliers*, pp. 140-1.

Master of the Mason Lodges in England'.¹⁰⁰ This ambiguous phrase 'General Master' could be taken as indicating that Desaguliers had been Grand Master, but if so, why is that term not used? It seems more likely that Desaguliers indicated in some general way that he had some kind of wider authority among the English lodges. The Edinburgh lodge found him 'duly qualified in all points of Masonry', but they would only have been able to test his knowledge of the first two degrees. They had no way of establishing if someone had been Grand Master or not.

Perhaps the biggest surprise in the minute in Book E is its statement that the Duke of Wharton was present in Stationers Hall for the installation of Montagu in June 1721. This suggests that the creation of Grand Lodge might perhaps have been something as a joint enterprise between Montagu and Wharton. Among the other distinguished people listed by Book E as present in Stationers' Hall was Lord Hillsborough, a close friend of the Duke of Wharton, and the Whig MPs Lord Hinchingbrooke, Sir George Oxenden and Sir Robert Rich. The most substantial objection to the accuracy of the Book E minute is that we know Wharton was not a freemason on 24 June 1721. A newspaper report on 5 August 1721 described how 'Last Week his Grace the Duke of Wharton was admitted into the Society of Free-Masons; the Ceremonies being perform'd at the King's-Arms Tavern in St. Paul's Church-Yard, and his Grace came Home to his House in the Pall-Mall in a white Leathern Apron'.¹⁰¹ So how could Wharton have been present at the installation of Montagu a month earlier?

The answer appears to be that the event at Stationers' Hall was not restricted to freemasons. A further newspaper report on 12 August 1721 said that the previous week Hinchingbrooke, Oxenden and Rich had also become freemasons at the King's Arms tavern.¹⁰² Hinchingbrooke's initiation is also confirmed by Stukeley who refers to his visiting his lodge at the Fountain tavern. This may explain why there is no further record of the masonic membership of others recorded as being present at this event, such as Lord Pembroke and Sir Andrew Fountaine. The fact that there were a number of prominent non-masons present at Stationers Hall in 1721 raises further doubts about Anderson's history. Because Anderson claimed that Grand Lodge already existed, he states that brethren were appointed to exclude strangers from the assembly. Yet we know that there were non-masons there. This further undermines the credibility of Anderson's description of the installation of Montagu in 1721. Anderson portrays the event as one at which only masons were present. As a result, he had to insert an elaborate and unconvincing rigmarole stating that Chesterfield was initiated at the King's Arms Tavern before the feast in Stationers' Hall and that there was then procession from the tavern to the dinner.

At the end of the day, does any of this matter? After all, we are only discussing about four years. What difference does it make if we say 1717 or 1721? In itself, not great deal, but the important point is that in investigating these matters we are improving our understanding

¹⁰⁰ Carpenter, *John Theophilus Desaguliers*, pp. 100-1.

¹⁰¹ *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, 5 August 1721, printed in Robert Peter, *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813*.

¹⁰² *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, 12 August 1721, printed in Peter, *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813*.

of the social, political and cultural context of freemasonry in the early eighteenth century. If we believe that freemasonry has played a significant role of society and that one period in which freemasonry made a particularly important contribution to human development was that of the Enlightenment, then the exploration of the way freemasonry emerged in a modern form in the taverns and coffee houses of London is an important and urgent matter.