

The Francken Manuscripts Revisited

Bro. Dr S. Brent Morris and
Bro. Josef Wäges

SEVERAL DOCUMENTS OR MANUSCRIPTS HAVE LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH the history of Freemasonry. Any such list must begin with the *Halliwel* or *Regius Manuscript*, 'A Poem of Moral Duties', the oldest document connected with Freemasonry. It is one of the Old Charges or Gothic Constitutions. The next oldest is the *Matthew Cooke Manuscript* followed by scores more. The study of Craft ritual must include the *Edinburgh Register House Manuscript*, the *Trinity College, Dublin, Manuscript*, and the *Graham Manuscript*. The latter is famous, or perhaps notorious, for substituting Noah for Hiram Abif as the protagonist of the Master Mason Degree. For students of the Ancient and Accepted Rite,¹ the most successful of the 'high-degree' systems, The *Francken Manuscripts* provided a basis of twenty-five degrees that evolved into today's thirty-three-degree system, and there have been some recent significant developments in our knowledge of these documents. In particular, at the 2015 World Conference on

¹ Also known as the Scottish Rite, Rose Croix, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, and so on.

To be presented to the Lodge 14 September 2023

Fraternalism, Freemasonry, and History in Paris, a workshop was held on the four then known versions of the *Francken Manuscript*.² ‘All [attending the workshop] agreed there [were] most likely other undiscovered copies made by Francken or copies of Francken made by other writers in archives around the world.’³ Indeed, at the 2022 World Congress on Fraternalism, Social Capital, and Civil Society: Fraternal Art and Music, two recently-discovered versions of the Francken Manuscript were presented and discussed. The *Francken Manuscripts* are English translations of the French rituals of Étienne Morin’s *Sublime Princes of the Order of the Royal Secret*⁴ transcribed by Henry Andrew Francken (Hendrick Andriessen Francken) into at least five known manuscripts plus at least two contemporary copies. Francken, Morin’s Deputy Inspector General, assembled these rituals to exercise Morin’s powers as a Deputy Inspector of the Grand Lodge of France. The rituals were endorsed by the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England to operate in the English colonial possessions of the Americas.⁵ These texts were translated by Francken from the *Santo Domingo* (or *Morin* or *Baylot*) Manuscript,⁶ revised from 1769–70 and finalized in 1771.⁷ Francken further revised and refined the rituals in 1783, as did Moses Cohen about 1790–95, particularly on the 25° Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret.

Étienne Morin and the Order of the Royal Secret

The Premier Grand Lodge was formed in London in 1717. Eight years later in 1725 is the first written record of the conferral of the Master Mason Degree, and eight more years later in 1733, Dr Richard Rawlinson’s manuscript list of lodges includes the note that Lodge No. 115, meeting at the Devil Tavern in Temple Bar, is a ‘Scotts Masons Lodge.’⁸ This latter event marked the beginning of ‘high-degree’ Masonry and the proliferation of the many degrees and rites that have made Freemasonry the complex and unique organization that it is today.

If the high degrees originated in Britain, they flourished in France. In 1732 an English Lodge, appropriately named *Loge L’Anglaise*, was founded in Bordeaux, France. This

² S. Brent Morris, ‘Report of the Special Committee on the Francken Documents,’ *Getting the Third Degree: Fraternalism, Freemasonry, and History*, Guillermo de los Reyes and Paul Rich eds. (Washington, DC: Westphalia Press, 2016), 147–54; reprinted as ‘Henry Andrew Francken and his Masonic Manuscripts’ in *Heredom* 23 (2015), 107–14.

³ Morris, ‘Report’, 54.

⁴ It is not clear what the full original name of the organization is, as it has been translated from French to English at different times by different people as the organization evolved.

⁵ Washington Shirley, 5th Earl Ferrers, Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge, 1762–64.

⁶ Jean Baylot gave the Bibliothèque nationale de France a collection of manuscripts which forms the core of their Masonic collection. Document Baylot FM⁴ 15, a thick leather-bound manuscript, contains the French rituals for Morin’s Order of the Royal Secret plus a few other rituals. It is known by various names and is considered the mother (or perhaps grandmother) of the *Francken Manuscripts*.

⁷ Francken was Morin’s only known English collaborator and Deputy Inspector General. When you compare the *Santo Domingo MS.* with the *Francken MSS.*, it is clear the former has been renumbered and rearranged in the latter.

⁸ See *AQC* 1 (1886–88), 167.

Lodge was later chartered by the English Modern Grand Lodge and still exists today. An early offshoot of Loge L'Anglaise was the Loge la Française which, as the name implies, was French. The latter Lodge had a penchant for the so-called hauts grades (high degrees), then coming into vogue, and it founded Loge Parfaite Harmonie in 1743. Étienne (Stephen) Morin, who would become important in the history of high degree Masonry, was among the founders of Loge Parfaite Harmonie. [A. de Hoyos, *The Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor and Guide*, 3rd ed. corrected, (Washington, D.C.: Supreme Council, 33°, SJ, 2016), 101.] ...

At this early period the French Masonic strongholds were in Bordeaux and Paris. On August 27, 1761, the French Grand Lodge at Paris (the Grand and Sovereign Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem), acting with a body of the superior degrees (the Council of the Emperors of the East and West, Sovereign Écossais Mother Lodge), issued a patent to Morin as a Grand Inspector, “authorizing and empowering him to establish perfect and sublime Masonry in all parts of the world.”

Around 1763 Morin created and promulgated a Masonic rite of twenty-five degrees which he called the “Order of the Royal Secret” or “Order of Princes of the Royal Secret” (sometimes mistakenly called the “Rite of Perfection”). This Order included many of the most popular degrees worked at the time. Although it was once commonly believed that the Council of the Emperors of the East and West created the Order of the Royal Secret, recent research suggests that Morin was personally responsible for its organization. [For arguments favoring the view that Morin forged his authority, see Alain Bernheim, “Une découverte étonnante concernant les Constitutions de 1762,” *Renaissance Traditionnelle* No. 59 (July 1984): 161–97; A. C. F. Jackson, “The Authorship of the 1762 Constitutions of the Ancient and Accepted Rite,” *AQC* 79 (1984): 176–91; A. C. F. Jackson, *Rose Croix: A History of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales* rev. & enl. (London: Lewis Masonic, 1980, 1987), 46–54. For the opposite view see Jean-Pierre Lassalle, “From the Constitutions and Regulations of 1762 to the Grand Constitutions of 1786,” in *Heredom* 2 (1993): 57–88.] There is also compelling evidence that, to bolster his authority, he created and backdated documents known as the *Constitutions and Regulations of 1762*—an act that was not discovered for over 220 years.

About 1763 Morin introduced the Order of the Royal Secret to Kingston, Jamaica, and by 1764 high degrees were brought to North American soil, when they were established in New Orleans, Louisiana. About this time Morin empowered an enthusiastic Dutch Mason, Henry Andrew Francken, to establish Masonic Bodies throughout the New World, including the United States. Francken soon sailed to New York, and in 1767 he began to confer the high degrees in Albany. Fortunately, he also transcribed several manuscript copies of the rituals of the Order of the Royal Secret, some of which survive today. These copies are known as the *Francken Manuscripts*.

Morin appointed at least six deputies for the Royal Secret:

1. Bertrand Berthomieux, Saint Marc, Saint Domingue, 1763;
2. François Ignace de Villiers Deschamps, Brest, France, 1763;

3. Jean Jacques Texier. Port-au-Prince, Saint Domingue. 1764. Jacmel, Saint Domingue. 1768;
4. Martin Bérindoague, Les Cayes, Saint Domingue, 1765;
5. Henry Andrew Francken, America and the West Indies. (English colonial possessions of Albany, New York, 1767, Kingston, Jamaica 1770), 1765;
6. Mennessier de Boissy, Jacmel, Saint Domingue, 1770.

The *Santo Domingo Manuscript*

Morin collected, edited, and authored French rituals for the Order of the Royal Secret from about 1744, nearly the same time as the formation of Loge Parfait Harmonie, to 1769, when Francken began producing English translations. Morin's rituals are known variously as the *Morin Manuscript*, *Santo Domingo Manuscript*, *Saint Domingue Manuscript*, *Baylot Manuscript* (BnF Baylot FM⁴ 15). This is not the venue to study Morin's rituals, but we note the *Santo Domingo Manuscript* has the first representation of the 'camp scene' of the Subline Prince of the Royal Secret. It is interesting that Francken is the only deputy known to have produced ritual books from Morin's master book, and these in English. The deputies of francophone areas left behind no known evidence of ritual guidance for those under their purview.

One of the striking pieces of evidence of the influence of the *Santo Domingo Manuscript* on the *Francken Manuscripts* is the *Santo Domingo Knight of the Eagle and of the Sun Degree*. The page has a distinctive sun face at the top and then the rituals of the degree. Around the degree text are several pieces of ritual text that should be added to the body. In the *Francken Manuscripts*, these additions or corrections (shown here boxed) integrated into the English text are dramatic testimony as to the source text.

The Masonic Manuscripts of Henry Andrew Francken

Morin may have invented the Order of the Royal Secret, but it was his deputy, Henry Andrew Francken, who successfully propagated and expanded the system. In particular, it is Francken's translations of the *Santo Domingo Manuscript* that focus our attention here.

Much more is known about the life of Francken than that of Morin. Francken was born in 1720 and arrived in Jamaica in February 1757. Just over a year later, on March 2, 1758, he became a naturalized British citizen. A 1762 petition to the Vice-Admiralty Court shows Francken had been an appraiser, a marshal, and sergeant-at-mace in the court.⁹ In 1763, Estienne Morin passed through Jamaica on his way to Santo Domingo and had his first opportunity to meet Francken. [A[lain] B[ernheim], 'Francken,

⁹ R. Wright, 'Freemasonry on the Island of Jamaica', *Transactions of the American Lodge of Research* 3 (1) (1938–39), 126–61.

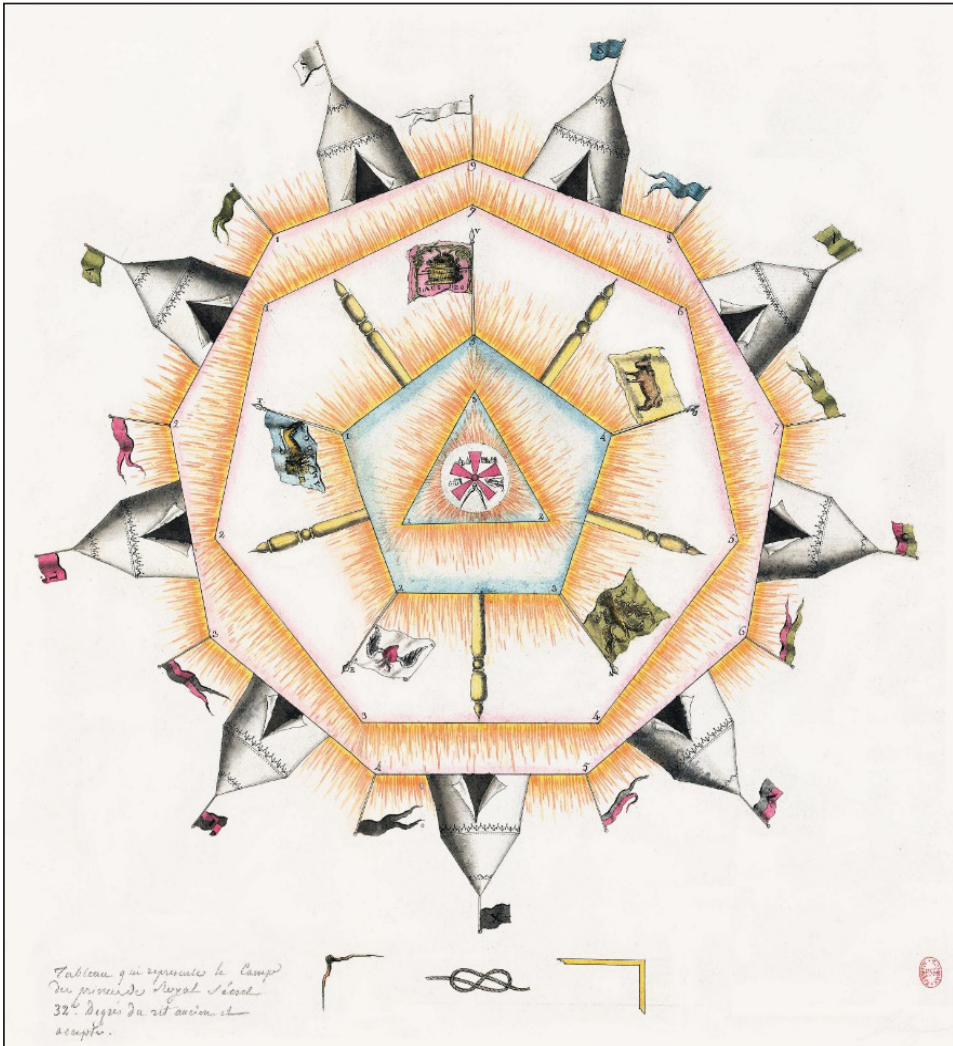


Fig. 1. The oldest known representation of the 'camp scene' from the Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret Degree. *Santo Domingo MS.* (c.1769), Baylot FM⁴ 15, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Henry Andrew', <http://www.vrijmetselaarsgilde.eu/Maconnieke%20Encyclopedie/Franc-M/fra-f-02.htm#fransF-14.>] Francken's wife, Elizabeth, died in 1764, and in 1765 he was appointed interpreter for Dutch and English for the Vice-Admiralty Court. From these linguistic skills, we can infer he was born in Holland[Wright, 'Jamaica:'] or perhaps a Dutch colony. As a professional translator, it's easy to see how he came to translate and transcribe the rituals of the Order of the Royal Secret.

After being appointed court interpreter in 1765 and with the permission of Lieutenant Governor Moore, Francken traveled to Albany, New York and New York City, both with Dutch-speaking populations. He married Johanna Low of Newark, New Jersey,[Wright, 'Jamaica:'] and on December 8, 1765, they became the godparents of Johanna Low, daughter of Nicholas and Sarah Low (Johanna's sister).[Wright, 'Jamaica:'] In [1767], he formed Ineffable Lodge of Perfection at Albany, New York, and it opened on January 11. The records of the Ineffable Lodge of Perfection indicate that it ceased activity on December 5, 1774.[*'Scottish Rite'*, en.wikipedia.org (accessed May 24, 2015).] . . .

The first known mention of a *Francken Manuscript*, i.e. one of Francken's translations of Morin's rituals, was 'To the Editor of the Freemasons' Monthly Magazine: [A Curious book in MS.],' *The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, London, 1 August 1855, 506–7; reprinted in *Mirror and Keystone*, Philadelphia, 29 August 1855, 278.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREEMASONS' MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

SIR,—I wish to bring under your notice a curious book in MS., which I lately purchased.

It is a folio volume, containing about 320 pages, bound in rough calf, and has the remains of large steel clasps or lock. The style of writing is from fifty to eighty years old. It commences with the copy of the constitution for a Grand Chapter of Princes of the Royal Secret, addressed to Henry Andrew Francken, William Adams, and others, and is signed S. Morin, G. Insp. G.S.P. of My., &c. &c. &c.

At foot are these words:—

'Copied by J. D., D.G.M., P.R.S., as the original in his possession is much defaced, and may be destroyed or lost, date June 24, 1794.'

This constitution authorises the formation of a Grand Chapter in the island of Jamaica; and the Brethren are enjoined to 'behave themselves strictly to all the rules, &c. of the nine commissioners named by the Grand Chapter at the Grand East of France and Prussia, &c. &c.'

After this are two pages explaining the symbolic ages of the various Degrees. Next follow laws for the government of a Lodge of Perfection, in twenty-nine articles. Then thirty-nine articles for the government of all regular Lodges of Perfection, transmitted from the Royal Council at Berlin to 'our most respectable, &c. &c. Brother Stephen Morin,' and 'done at the Great East of Berlin and Paris, in a holy and secret place, under the C.C., near the B.B., the 25th of the 7th month of the year 1762.'

After this follow the whole ceremony of Secret Master, Perfect Master, Intimate Secretary by Curiosity, Provost and Judge, Intendant of the Buildings, Master elected of nine; Illustrious elected of fifteen; Sublime Knights elected; Grand Master Architect; Knights of the Royal Arch; Knights of the East; Perfection ultimate of symbolic Masonry; Princes of Jerusalem; Knights of the East and West; Knights of White Eagle or Pelican; Scotch Masonry, by the name of Grand Pontiff; Sovereign Prince of Masonry, or Mr. *ad vitam*; Prussian Knight or Noachite, in two parts; Knights of the Royal Ax, Knights of the Sun, Princes adepts, Key of Masonry, Knights of K.H., and the *ne plus ultra* of Masonry, the Royal Secretary [*sic*], &c.

Each Degree is separated from the next by a broad and very rich ribbon, the length of the page; these ribbons are of various colours, and one or two of them dilapidated by age. The work is written by the same hand throughout, and contains one or two curious drawings of a knight's camp, the R.A., &c.

At the end of the fourteenth degree, called 'the Ultimate of Symbolic Masonry,' is a large wax seal, but so much defaced by time and pressure as to be illegible. It is an oval shield within an equilateral triangle, within each angle of which is the letter 'G:' the motto is 'Æquando perficit,' and the shield is surmounted by an open crown (of France?), but no crest. The mantling is very like that of the French royal arms before the establishment of the empire.

After the twenty-fifth Degree, or the *ne plus ultra*, is another large wax seal, very much defaced by time; but with the aid of a powerful glass I have been enabled to decipher a good deal of it.

The shield is placed on a double-headed eagle displayed, grasping a sword, pointed to the sinister; and, so far as I can read the bearing, it is as follows :—

Azure, a wolf (or heraldic tiger) rampant, supporting what I can really make into nothing more nor less than a *distaff*.

Crest: out of an open coronet, surrounded by rays of light, a dexter arm issuing, grasping a dagger, and debruising a branch or *sprig*. Supporters: dexter, a griffin; sinister, a lion. Motto over the crest: '... NE DEUS U... BRA' (Qy. *Sine Deus umbra*). Under the shield, 'Hoc solo mode honore.' The whole ensigned with six banners, charged as follows:—1. Three pillars . . G; 2. A cross crosslet; 3. is quite illegible; 4. Two swords in saltire, HAB above, and three other letters below; 5. Two pens in saltire; 6. Square and compasses.

The book is written throughout with great care, and is in perfect condition.

F. B.

Jeffrey Croteau, Director of Library and Archives, Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, N.M.J., deduced that the unknown brother, 'F. B.,' was Frederick Broughton (1825–89), whose 'acquisition of the Francken Manuscript coincided with his Masonic membership. Broughton was initiated on 4 June 1855, in Lodge of Tranquility No. 341

(now No. 274) in Newchurch, England.' He was 'a Mason and book collector, with a long career in railroads in England, Wales, Canada, and the United States.'¹⁰

The Seven Known Francken Manuscripts

1. 1769 *Francken MS.* (Private Collection)

This previously unknown *Francken Manuscript* in Francken's handwriting was announced at the 2022 World Congress on Fraternalism, Social Capital, and Civil Society: Fraternal Art and Music held in Paris. It is in a private collection and its provenance is unknown. There is a 6 July 1769 letter from Francken to his deputy, Moses Michael Hays, absolutely confirming Francken's ritual source is Morin: 'I can say with candour that the stile of the degrees being not yet complet'd by br Morin I am oblig'dd to render them [carful &] fully as can be permitted by the use of the c----s'.¹¹ The manuscript consists of unbound cahiers: A) 9°, 10°, 11°, 12°; B) 14°; C) 15°; D) 16°; E) 17°; F) 18°, 22°; G) 19°, 20°; H) 21°; I) 24°; J) Tyler's manual, 4°–24°. These cahiers have been transcribed and photographed in high-resolution and will be published.¹²

2. 1770 *Francken MS.* (Archives of a Grand Lodge)

This *Francken Manuscript* in Francken's handwriting was also previously unknown and announced at the 2022 Paris Conference. It is in the archives of a Grand Lodge and of unknown provenance. These rituals also have been transcribed and photographed in high-resolution and are awaiting publication. It is composed of two unbound cahiers: A) 19°, 22°; B) The Hiroglyphicks Alphabetical. One cahier is addressed to Hays establishing the date: 'For M. M. Hays | by H. a. F ____ | Jamaica aug^t 1770'.¹³

3. 1771 *Francken MS.* (Supreme Council E&W)

The Supreme Council for England and Wales was created in 1845, receiving its patent from the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the USA. Broughton's 'curious book' does not seem to have caught the attention of any members of the Ancient and Accepted Rite in England and Wales when it was announced in 1855, nor when it was sold in 1859. Indeed, no one seems to have associated it with the rite until its 1935 gifting to the Supreme Council N.M.J.

In 1976, A. R. Hewitt, Librarian to the Supreme Council for England and Wales, published a note in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* announcing 'another Francken Manuscript

¹⁰ J. Croteau, 'Provenance of the 1783 Francken Manuscript' in J. Croteau, A. E. Foulds, and A. E. Newell, *The 1783 Francken Manuscript* (Lexington, Mass.: Supreme Council, 33°, N.M.J., 2017), 15.

¹¹ A. de Hoyos and J. Wäges, 'The 1769 and 1770 Francken Manuscripts', PowerPoint, World Congress on Fraternalism, Social Capital, and Civil Society: Fraternal Art and Music (Paris: Policy Studies Organization, 2022).

¹² De Hoyos and Wäges.

¹³ De Hoyos and Wäges.

rediscovered.’¹⁴ He says, ‘The first Francken MS. . . is in the possession of the Supreme Council of the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States of America.’¹⁵ More correctly, it is the first *Francken Manuscript* recognized as associated with the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite. Hewitt also explained that the manuscript originally had the rituals for the fifteenth to the twenty-fifth degrees, but the twelve pages containing the twenty-fifth degree had been cut out. It is sad to report, but the manuscript has subsequently suffered even greater damage: the bank vault in which it was stored was flooded, and the manuscript was submerged for at least six months. All possible steps of restoration and preservation have been taken; the pages are faded, almost illegible, and stored in individual plastic sleeves. It is fortunate that the manuscript was photographed prior to 1976 but after the twenty-fifth degree was removed.

The manuscript announced by Hewitt in 1976 was dated 1771 by Francken, four to eight years after meeting Morin. In addition to rituals for the fifteenth to the twenty-fifth degrees there was a book of constitutions. Its spine was marked ‘Manuscript Ritual of the late Colonel Graham of Claverhouse,’ and a note says the manuscript once belonged to a Captain Graham of Drynie(?) and Claverhouse who, after a period in the West Indies, returned to Scotland.¹⁶

4. 1783 *Francken MS.* (Supreme Council NMJ)

In 1783 all the rituals of the Order of the Royal Secret, fourth to the twenty-fifth degrees, were transcribed into a leatherbound ledger by someone other than Henry Andrew Francken, though the fifteenth to the twenty-fifth degrees rituals were the same as those in his 1771 manuscript. This manuscript was prepared for Deputy Inspector David Small.¹⁷ Its location was unknown from its creation until 1855, when its existence was announced in the *London Freemasons’ Magazine* by Frederick Broughton. In 1859 a prominent American Mason, Enoch Terry Carson of Ohio, purchased the manuscript. It was subsequently purchased by Samuel Crocker Lawrence of Massachusetts, upon whose death in 1911 it went to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. This version was rediscovered in 1935 in the archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and the Grand Master of Massachusetts presented it to the Supreme Council, 33°, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction.¹⁸ Though not the first written, this copy became known as the ‘First *Francken Manuscript*.’ In 2017 the Supreme Council, 33°, N.M.J., published this 1783 version of the *Francken Manuscript* in a magnificent full-color edition with a transcription page facing each facsimile page.

¹⁴ A. R. Hewitt, ‘The Ancient and Accepted Rite: Another Francken Manuscript Rediscovered’, *AQC* 89(1976), 208–10.

¹⁵ Hewitt, 208.

¹⁶ Hewitt, 208, 209.

¹⁷ Hewitt, 208.

¹⁸ Hewitt, 208; Croteau, 13–23.

5. Undated *Francken MS.* (Museum of Freemasonry, UGLE)

Michael J. Spurr in 1980 arranged for an undated *Francken Manuscript* to be placed on loan to the UGLE Library. It contains the rituals of the fourth to the twenty-fifth degrees and two sets of regulations for the government of the Order of the Royal Secret. A. R. Hewitt and John Hamill compared the handwriting of this manuscript with the 1783 version. They were 'of the opinion that the rituals and the first set of regulation in this third manuscript are in the hand of Henry Andrew Francken.'¹⁹ Inscribed inside is 'Received from John Caird, Edinburgh—Jas. Caird, Liverpool 30th August 1815.' This is surrounded by a lengthy note by one M. A. Gage, recording that on the same date it was given to him by Jas. Caird.²⁰ Hamill gives the provenance and notes with understatement that 'it is of interest that both this and the 1771 Francken MS. had been in Scotland. After 1865 this one appears to have been deposited in the offices of the Provincial Grand Lodge of West Lancashire where it was re-discovered by Bro. Spurr . . .'²¹ 'Reference to 1786 in the text provides evidence of an 'earliest possible date.'²²

6. C.1783—86 *Francken MS.* (Naveed Ahmed)

This version was given by H. J. Whymper to the District Grand Lodge, Punjab, Library. It bears the bookmarks of both Whymper and the library, and nothing else is known about its provenance. At some point it was microfilmed, and a copy deposited with the UGLE Library. It was catalogued as 'Rite of Twenty-Five Degrees', thus foiling keyword searches for terms such as 'Francken', 'Royal Secret', 'Rite of Perfection', 'Ancient and Accepted', and so on. According to Roehinton Khambatta, PDGM of Punjab, after the government of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq banned Freemasonry in 1976, the District Grand Lodge quickly dispersed. The father of Naveed Ahmed was the last Master of Albert Victor Lodge and building manager of the District Grand Lodge in Lahore. The next to the last entry of Albert Victor Lodge says, 'Meeting cancelled. Free Mason Hall acquired by govt.'²³ The 1786 *Francken Manuscript* is now in the possession of Naveed Ahmed who has joined Mariner's Lodge No. 67, New York City. The manuscript has been transcribed, and high-resolution photographs have been taken.

7. C.1790—1800 *Francken MS.* (Jamaica MS.—Lost)

This version is not in the hand of Francken, but is a copy of a yet-to-be-discovered version of the *Francken Manuscript*; Arturo de Hoyos named it the *Jamaica Manuscript*.²⁴ Little

¹⁹ John M. Hamill, 'A Third *Francken MS* of the Rite of Perfection', *AQC* 97 (1984), 200.

²⁰ Hamill, 200.

²¹ Hamill, 201.

²² Hamill, 201.

²³ Naveed Ahmed, email to Jeffrey Croteau and S. Brent Morris, 22 December 2009.

²⁴ A. de Hoyos, *Freemasonry's Royal Secret; The Jamaican 'Francken Manuscript' of the High Degrees* (Washington,

is known about its provenance. ‘The earliest known reference states that it ‘belonged to an old Jewish family in Jamaica.’²⁵ Sometime later it came into the possession of the Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A., and ‘Arturo de Hoyos first saw it as a researcher in its archives in the early 1990s, when he was allowed to make a copy for study.’²⁶ In the late 1990s the manuscript was sent out for binding and disappeared. Fortunately, de Hoyos had photographed it a few years earlier. In addition to the rituals for the fourth to the twenty-fifth degrees, there are rituals for Select Master of 27 (now the Select Master Degree of the Cryptic Rite), Knight of the Royal Arch, and Grand Master Ecosse introduced to Jamaica by Moses Cohen in 1790.

Two Commercial Reproductions of the *Francken Manuscripts*

K. H. Wolfgang Brachvogel, 33°, (1925–1990) was an active member of the Supreme Council for Germany. In 1984 he completed a translation of the 1783 *Francken Manuscript* into German. The first step of his translation was a typewritten transcript of the English original. After completing this, he sent a copy to the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction Supreme Council. Kessinger Publishing, Whitefish, Montana, somehow obtained a copy of the Brachvogel typescript and began reproducing copies without authorization about 1994.²⁷

‘The Latomia Foundation’s 1980 publication of the *Francken Manuscript* appears to be a facsimile from the original manuscript. It is not.’²⁸ Gerry Prinsen had an image of the *Francken Manuscript* that emphasized where the ink had bled through from one side to the other. He devised a technique of covering each page with white paint, copying the page, suppressing the letters that had bled through, and finally writing over the original letters to make them readable. To crown his efforts, he created a title page with descriptive information, which some researchers thought was part of Francken’s original. While there was no malice in this painstakingly created homage to Francken’s originals, it has confused and misled many researchers.

Lingering Questions about the Francken Manuscripts

The Raison d’Être of the Francken Manuscripts

Perhaps the most important question about the *Francken Manuscripts* is, ‘Why were they prepared?’ The naïve answer is they served to propagate the rituals of the Order of the Royal Secret.

DC: Scottish Rite Research Society, 2014), ix n6.

²⁵ E. E. Hinman, R. V. Denslow and C. C. Hunt, *A History of the Cryptic Rite*, 2 vols. (General Grand Council, R. & S.M., U.S.A., 1931), Vol. 2, 99, quoted in de Hoyos, *Freemasonry’s Royal Secret*, ix.

²⁶ De Hoyos, *Freemasonry’s Royal Secret*, ix.

²⁷ Croteau, 21.

²⁸ Croteau, 22.

The United States had several lodges of perfection in east coast port cities: Charleston, South Carolina; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Newport, Rhode Island; Albany, New York; and others, yet none of them are known to have had a copy of the *Francken Manuscript*. It appears that Francken prepared and most likely sold these manuscripts to British Officers, as they all made their way back to Britain with most coming through Scotland; they did not remain with the Lodges of Perfection.²⁹

Francken moved to New York in 1765, the same year he was appointed court interpreter, and married Johanna Low. On 8 December 1765 they became the godparents of Johanna's niece; it was a busy year for him. In 1767 he was conferring the Order of the Royal Secret degrees in New York and chartered the Ineffable Lodge of Perfection.³⁰ Also in 1767 there was a petition for a land grant of 2,000 acres on the western frontier of Ulster County from Francken and Cornelius P. Low.³¹ On 2 March 1768 there is another petition for a land grant of 5,500 acres from Francken and John Morin Scott, M. G. Van Bergen, and their associates.³²

Francken's land speculation apparently was not successful, because in 1769 he and a pregnant Johanna suddenly returned to Jamaica, leaving their belongings behind. A notice in the 17 April 1769 supplement to *The New York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury* summarizes Francken's financial misfortunes:

Public Auction. To-morrow, will be sold at Moore & Lynsen's auction-room, several rich cloaths, ---the property of a gentleman absconding. On Wednesday, at the house of Henry Andrew Franckin, Esq; near the New Dutch Church, the household furniture of the gentleman, who departs the province.

It is noteworthy that 1769, the year Francken 'absconded' from New York is the same year he began translating the *Santo Domingo Manuscript*.

The 1771 (UGLE), 1783 (SCNMJ), and c.1783–86 (Ahmed) manuscripts are the same size with the same number of pages. The watermark on the paper of the 1771 (UGLE) and c.1783–86 (Ahmed) manuscripts bears 'G R' for 'Georgius Rex'. Susan Snell proposed that the watermark, common size, and binding point to these being common United Kingdom record books for use by courts and civil servants.³³ Francken, presumably returning to his position in Jamaica as an interpreter for the Vice-Admiralty Court, would likely have had ready access to blank record books, an otherwise scarce resource in the Caribbean.

Thus his translation efforts may have started as support for the emerging Order of the Royal Secret but ended as a supplement to his precarious finances. Henry Andrew

²⁹ Morris, 'Report', 153.

³⁰ Morris, 'Report', 149.

³¹ De Hoyos and Wäges.

³² De Hoyos and Wäges.

³³ Morris, 'Report', 152–3.

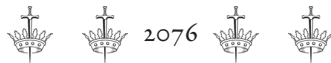
Francken died on 20 May 1795, survived by his son Parker Bennett Francken of St Kitts, his daughter, Mary Long Goutris, and his granddaughter, Elizabeth Goutris. He was buried on 24 May in Kingston Parish Churchyard.³⁴

Does Anything Remain to be Done?

If asked, ‘Does anything remain to be done?’ the short answer is an emphatic, ‘Yes!’ Since the 2015 PSO World Conference, two previously unknown copies of the *Francken Manuscripts* have come to light. The microfilmed c.1783–86 (Ahmed) manuscript was camouflaged for years in the Museum of Freemasonry as ‘The Rite of Twenty-Five Degrees.’ Check your own archives and those of academic institutions with appropriate collections. Check the vaults and bookshelves of Masonic lodges, especially those whose members may have been associated with the Caribbean.

- As you study the known and yet-to-be discovered manuscripts, study the evolution and correction of ritual within and between manuscripts.
- Are there other French or English manuscripts between the *Santo Domingo Manuscript* and the 1769 *Francken Manuscript*?
- The Order of the Royal Secret was a French system and its rituals may have taken many paths other than through the Caribbean.
- There needs to be a consolidated and amplified study of the Order of the Royal Secret in the American and other colonies.
- What is the Masonic history of Jamaica beyond the Order of the Royal Secret and how did it overlap?

Indeed, much remains to be done. Start by checking your own vaults!



³⁴ Wright, ‘Jamaica’.

THE FRANCKEN MANUSCRIPTS REVISITED



Bro. S. Brent Morris, PhD, has been managing editor of the *Scottish Rite Journal* of the Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, USA, editor of *Heredom*, the transactions of the Scottish Rite Research Society, a mathematician with the US federal government, and an instructor at Duke, Johns Hopkins, and George Washington Universities. He is a former Distinguished Lecturer of the Association of Computing Machinery and author of *Magic Tricks*, *Card Shuffling*, and *Dynamic Computer Memories*. He is Past Master (1979, 2000, 2017) of Patmos-Solomon's Lodge No. 70, Savage, Maryland, Past Master (2008) of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, a Fellow of the Philalæthes Society, and a member of many other Masonic organizations. He is author of many articles and books on Freemasonry, including *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry*.



Josef Wäges, 32°, is a member of Plano Lodge No. 768, the Valley of Dallas (AASR SJ), the Blue Friars, a Fellow of the Philalæthes Society, a Fellow of the Grand College of Rites and Knight Grand Cross, a full member of the Texas Lodge of Research, Michigan Lodge of Research and a life member of the Missouri Lodge of Research. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Scottish Rite Research Society. He is shortly to publish two additional works: Étienne Morin: From the French Rite to the Scottish Rite, and Ecosais Masonry: A History of the High Degrees from the Scots Master to the Order of the Royal Secret. His research focuses in particular on the higher degrees of the eighteenth century.