



Volume XVII, Issue 4

Winter 2024



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Sovereign Grand Inspector General Orient of Virginia

Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, 33° GC

My Brethren,

Over two hundred members, spouses, and guests attended the Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia and celebrated its 100th anniversary at the Richmond Hilton Hotel & Spa/Short Pump on September 26-28.

On Thursday, September 26 we enjoyed Heavy Hors d ‘Oeuvres and a tour of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

On Friday afternoon, September 27 we had two special educational presentations by Illustrious William G. “Bill” Sizemore, 33°, GC about The House of the Temple and Illustrious Arturo de Hoyos, 33°, GC on the History of the Conference. Later that evening, we enjoyed Heavy Hors d ‘Oeuvres and music by David George and the Beech Nuts. Everyone dressed up in their finest Hawaiian Shirt.

Saturday morning, we conducted the business of the conference, which included reports from the nine Valleys, remarks from the Grand Master, conducting the Necrology Service, the election and installation of officers for 2025, and remarks/updates from myself. Also, the Conference Rite Foundation of Virginia conducted their Annual Meeting.

While we were conducting business, the Ladies had a luncheon and program at the Masonic Home of Virginia and afterwards they toured the Library/Museum of the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

On Saturday afternoon, Illustrious Robert W. Cockerham, 33°, SGIG in Missouri and Grand Chancellor for the Supreme Council, presented a program entitled “A New Era -The Cinematic Degrees.”

At the closing banquet, the Sovereign Grand Commander and the Grand Master were presented under the Arch of Steel by the Scottish Rite Guard. The entertainment for the evening was provided by the Strolling Strings from the Norfolk, Virginia area. Ms. Gabrielle Belisle, an Alumna of the Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center in Richmond, shared her experiences about what the Rite Care program had done for her. The Sovereign Grand Commander, Illustrious James Dean Cole, 33°, SGIG at Large, was the Keynote Speaker and shared an inspirational and moving message.

The Valley of Richmond is to be commended for putting together a quality agenda consisting of educational programs, entertainment, and tours. I extend my appreciation to the Conference President, Linwood R. Spears, KCCH, and the Host Committee for a job well done.

We look forward to beginning the next century of the Scottish Rite Conference of Virginia in September 2025 in Virginia Beach.

My definition of a Leader... is a man who can persuade people to do what they don't want to do or do what they're too lazy to do, and like it.

Harry S. Truman

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Illustrious James D. Cole, 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander
of the Supreme Council, 33°,
Ancient and Accepted
Scottish Rite, SJ, USA

Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, 33° GC
SGIG Orient of Virginia

Bro. Gerald L. Frey, 32° KCCH
Virginia Light Editor

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virginialighteditor@gmail.com

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Spring	February 1
Summer	May 1
Fall	August 1
Winter	November 1

Speech Language Pathologist



We have served close to twelve thousand children since the doors opened on November 1, 1991. You have provided over \$3,000,000 in financial assistance! You are helping to change lives every day from someone being able to say “mama or dada” for the first time to someone using assistive technology to talk because they are unable to use their voice to helping an individual accept their communication challenge, such as stuttering, and become a self-advocate! This is YOUR philanthropy! Power to influence lasting change!

What a wonderful weekend! Wow! One hundred years, that is impressive!

The Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center, your philanthropy! What an interesting word: Philanthropy. A philanthropy has the power to influence lasting social change. When your philanthropy, the Childhood Language Center receives support, a ‘ripple effect’ takes place. Many lives are touched, potentially for generations. When people come together to help others, whether donating money or time, we’re reminded what it means to help communities grow stronger.

As a Scottish Rite member, you believe in the welfare of children- specifically the communication needs. At the Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center in Richmond, we serve children birth to age eighteen with communication disorders with fees based on the family’s ability to pay.

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This evening I would like to introduce a former client from the Center, Gabrielle Belisle. I know you will find her story compelling.

Speech Language Pathologist



Good Evening everyone, My name is Gabrielle Belisle, I am an eleventh grader at Cosby High School, in the Health Science Governor's school

I am deeply honored to be here with you today and to have the opportunity to share my personal journey and express my gratitude. Reflecting on my early school years, I recall the challenges I faced, which often went unnoticed because I was able to maintain academic success, achieving A's and B's, yet beneath that surface, school was a daunting struggle for me compared to my peers. The difficulty I experienced took a considerable emotional toll, leading to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and even anger. It was disheartening to see others appear to navigate their academic lives with relative ease, which only intensified my feelings of frustration and isolation.

As my parents began to recognize the depth of my struggles, they reached out to my school for assistance. The initial response was minimal. The school recommended a vision test, which revealed that I did need glasses, but this was only a small piece of a much larger puzzle. The only visible numerical indication of my difficulties was in standardized testing, and this marked the beginning of a journey that ultimately led me to Scottish Rite. It was there that I had comprehensive evaluations and received diagnoses of dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and both auditory and visual processing disorders.

Regarding the therapy I received, I would like to highlight the significant role it played in my journey. I participated in virtual therapy twice a week for forty-five minutes to an hour, where we worked through worksheets that were printed out. Together, we addressed any questions I had, explored various strategies, and learned different ways to approach my challenges. We also focused on expanding my vocabulary and improving my spelling. Although the sessions could be overwhelming at times, I found them incredibly beneficial, especially since the virtual format fit seamlessly into my busy schedule. This flexibility allowed me to balance my academic and extracurricular commitments while still receiving essential support.

In addition to virtual therapy, I also engaged in vision therapy once a week, which included physical activities and eye-strengthening exercises. This combination of therapies was both challenging and enlightening. While there were moments when I experienced headaches from the intensity of the sessions, the progress I made was undeniable. Over time, I saw a

Continued on page 5.

My dedication to giving back has led me to deepen my involvement with Scottish Rite, where I am currently working on a research initiative titled "Silent Stars." This project is designed to bridge the gap between schools and Scottish Rite, with a particular focus on students who, like I once was, struggle academically despite earning good grades. These students often go unnoticed because their potential is hidden beneath the surface, and "Silent Stars" aims to change that by recognizing their unique talents and strengths.

Speech Language Pathologist

Continued from page 4.

positive impact on my academic life, and I gradually found myself needing therapy less and less. Eventually, I reached a point where I no longer required it, which speaks to the hard work I put in and the effective support I received. This experience not only helped me academically but also equipped me with tools to thrive in my busy life.

The impact that the Scottish Rite program has had on my life has been truly transformative. Since testing and therapy, I have seen remarkable progress both academically and personally, reshaping my outlook on the future. A key milestone in my journey was the incredible opportunity to study at Oxford University this past summer. I studied business marketing and economics at the new Blavatnik School of Government with graduation at the Said school of business. This experience broadened my perspective, deepening my understanding of the world and solidifying my passion for learning.

Through my involvement with DECA, a global organization that prepares students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management, I have had the privilege to compete in various marketing events, where I earned multiple awards and advanced to the international competition. As Vice President of DECA for the past three years, I've taken on leadership roles, helping expand membership and engage students in meaningful projects. This experience has not only honed my marketing skills but also ignited my passion for healthcare marketing, an area I aim to explore further.

Beyond DECA, I was honored to be accepted into the Governor's School for Health Sciences at Cosby High School. My dedication to advanced placement courses has strengthened my academic foundation, and my success in Honors English has awakened a newfound love for reading and writing. This passion for literature has enriched my life, sparking curiosity and opening doors to new opportunities.

The support I have received from Scottish Rite has also had a profound impact on my extracurricular interests, such as piano. The therapy I underwent made it easier for me to continue playing, allowing me to enjoy music on a deeper level. In addition to academics and music, I have remained dedicated to sports, particularly power-lifting, where I have won multiple state titles. This year, I am training with high hopes of earning a national title in bench press.

These diverse experiences have shaped me into a well-rounded individual who understands the value of hard work, resilience, and community. The Scottish Rite program has been instrumental in helping me achieve my goals, and I am committed to using my talents and passions to make a positive impact on the world around me.

It is clear to me that none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the support provided by Scottish Rite. They equipped me with the tools and strategies necessary to overcome my challenges, and for this, I am profoundly grateful. The impact of their support has made a world of difference in my life.

However, I have observed a troubling lack of awareness about the support that Scottish Rite offers. Many individuals I have encountered are unfamiliar with the organization and its services. This realization has fueled my determination to raise awareness about the program that has been so instrumental in my life. I have come to understand that even the most impactful services can only reach their full potential if they are effectively communicated and widely recognized with the right marketing. I am committed to ensuring that more children and their

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Speech Language Pathologist

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families become aware of the support provided by Scottish Rite, and I am eager to contribute to this important effort.

My dedication to giving back has led me to deepen my involvement with Scottish Rite, where I am currently working on a research initiative titled “Silent Stars.” This project is designed to bridge the gap between schools and Scottish Rite, with a particular focus on students who, like I once was, struggle academically despite earning good grades. These students often go unnoticed because their potential is hidden beneath the surface, and “Silent Stars” aims to change that by recognizing their unique talents and strengths.

The project is a collaborative effort with the Childhood Language and Development Center at Scottish Rite and is symbolized by the sun and stars working in harmony. This symbolism reflects the idea that every child has their own light, but some require help to shine.

To achieve this, I have been speaking at schools, addressing special education teachers, counselors, and educators. My goal is to raise awareness about learning disabilities and equip teachers with the tools to identify signs of these challenges early on. By doing so, we can ensure that children receive the help they need as soon as possible, allowing them to thrive both personally and academically.

Through this research project, I hope to give back to the organization that has done so much for me. My goal is to analyze current strategies, identify areas for improvement, and help ensure that Scottish Rite’s valuable services are reaching the children and families who need them most. By expanding your market presence and strengthening connections with elementary schools, I aim to make it easier for others to discover this life-changing resource. My ultimate goal is to prevent other children from experiencing the same struggles I faced and to provide them with the support they need to thrive.

Once again, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Scottish Rite for all that you have done for me. I am excited about the future and look forward to continuing our collaboration to make a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of others.

Thank you.

EDITORS
NOTE: The attendees rose as one and provided a protracted round of applause.



L-R: Illustrious Alan W. Adkins, Gabrielle Belisle, and Illustrious James D. Cole.

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Views

Conference



Attracting and Retaining Brothers

Illustrious Norman L. Hoff, Jr., 33°
Personal Representative of the SGIG in Virginia, Valley of Alexandria.

What attracts Blue Lodge Brothers to our Appendant Bodies? Some appear to hunger for a deeper understanding of the lessons, legends and allegories of the Craft degrees they received as they travelled toward becoming Master Masons, or later as they hear of the lessons of the Appendant Bodies. For those who do become active in their Lodges and other Bodies, and begin to study and participate in the conferral of those degrees, they can begin to perceive, perhaps slowly at first, how the lessons are more than just “theatrical” presentations of the arcana of the Craft. They soon discover that the broad lessons of the degrees can be applied to achieve increased success in their relationships with family, friends, and, importantly, with society-at-large. This discovery eventually leads to a suspicion that the answers they have sought are not just fixed maxims about dealing with others, but rather, being philosophical in nature, might lead to a new level of enlightened character and awareness of their own selves.

Once this “suspicion” presents itself, we soon realize that, while no sublime end-state may ever be attained in this life, we are inexorably driven toward a goal of complete understanding. At this point, we may become more focused on the allegorical clues embedded in the lessons of the Appendant Bodies. We are soon informed by our Officers, mentors, program speakers and representatives of the many Bodies about how the various rituals might contribute to our quest for enlightenment. Our many degrees and the many books that have been written to augment those degrees have aided the personal growth of us and our Brothers over the years.

At the same time, we unfortunately will lose a Brother. I recently received a note from a Valley Honourman, who was reporting on the concerns of one of the members in his Craft Lodge. He reported that the Brother, “... is disenchanted with the Craft (citing that it conflicts with his religion but much more so his extreme displeasure with Brethren who insert politics and religion into the Craft and are hypocritical regarding our common oaths in the treatment of other Brothers).”



He continued his report, saying, “Our conversation was cordial as we have always had a good relationship. He did not decline my offer to sit down one-on-one at some stage for an all encompassing chat... He has already been [suspended from other Appendant Bodies] and is probably close to that happening with the Valley as well.”

Brethren, our Blue Lodge Craft Lodges and Appendant Bodies all teach the “Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.” There is no room in our Fraternity for sectarian division or rejection of a Brother’s political, theological or social beliefs simply on the basis of being different from our own.

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Attracting and Retaining Brothers

Continued from page 8.

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I had recently had a similar conversation with another Brother who was asking about the process to “leave the Scottish Rite.” He cited religious concerns with the Scottish Rite’s inclusion of lessons in our degrees from various world religions that were inconsistent with his own. My response to him was, “I’m sorry to hear this. A major desire of Freemasonry is to recognize and respect a worldwide Brotherhood of Man and the major religions practiced in honor of a Supreme Being - by any name - still while practicing our own personal beliefs. Neither the Scottish Rite, nor Freemasonry writ large, demands any particular religion, but our Scottish Rite degrees seek to increase our understanding of the beliefs of others so as to understand that we are all more alike than different. Albert Pike dwells on this matter in Chapter 14 of his “Morals and Dogma of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry” and notes that we, as Perfect Elus, are to be ‘tolerant even of intolerance.’”

I concluded my response to him with, - “I would encourage you to read and study this matter more, and please call me if you would like to discuss further. If you still wish to demit from the Scottish Rite, you should notify our Valley Secretary...and he will assist you.”

This Brother did demit and I explained to him that if after further consideration, he decided to reactivate his association with the SR, we would welcome him back.

Brethren, our Blue Lodge Craft Lodges and Appendant Bodies all teach the “Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.” There is no room in our Fraternity for sectarian division or rejection of a Brother’s political, theological or social beliefs simply on the basis of being different from our own.

In his Preface to “Morals and Dogma,” Brother Pike wrote: “The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite uses the word “Dogma” in its true sense, of doctrine, or teaching; and is not dogmatic in the odious sense of that term. Everyone is entirely free to reject and dissent from whatsoever herein may seem to him to be untrue or unsound. It is only required of him that he shall weigh what is taught and give it fair hearing and unprejudiced judgment.”

Brethren, as we often say, “take due notice thereof and let it be, accordingly, so done.”



Thomas Smith Webb, Masonic Educator

Illustrious William A. Parks, Jr.

“became the ‘father of the American Masonic rituals’ with the publication in 1797 book, *The Freemason’s Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry*... By the time of Webb’s death in 1819, more than 16,000 copies of his *Monitor* had been sold... and numerous grand lodges had accepted it for their official ritual work.”

Albert Pike carped that “There is no sight under the sun more pitiful and ludicrous at once, than the spectacle of... the Webbs, not to mention other later incarnations of Dullness and Commonplace, undertaking to ‘explain’ the old symbols of Masonry, and adding to and ‘improving’ them, or inventing new ones.”² Nevertheless, much of Webb’s work lives on in *The Masonic Text Book*,³ and Virginia’s ubiquitous *Presentation Volume*.⁴

Referring to Webb’s lectures, “Dr. Mackey, in his *Lexicon* said of the lectures: ‘These constitute the simple text of Masonry, while the extended illustrations which are given by an intelligent Master or Lecturer constitute the commentary, without which the simple text would be comparatively barren and uninstructional.’”⁵

Webb expanded upon and Americanized the *Illustrations* of his British predecessor, William Preston. “The ‘Baltimore Convention of 1843’” approved a “joint committee report recommending the adoption of the Webb lectures to the Grand Lodges of Massachusetts and New Hampshire.”⁵

The Convention dealt with the minutest of Masonic details, including, for example: “Under the immovable jewels, Dr. Mackey’s *Lexicon* says: ‘According to the old system in England, the immovable jewels of the Lodge are the Rough Ashlar, Perfect Ashlar and Trestle Board, but in this country, by the decision of the Baltimore Convention, in 1843, they are made to consist of the Square, Level and Plumb.’”⁵

Webb’s *Freemason’s Monitor* includes timely and compelling exhortations, observations and symbolic explanations well worthy of consideration for today’s Freemason. His emphasis on education as the pathway to virtue remains compelling to this day. The *Monitor* teems with examples.

On friendship, perhaps the most important tenet of the Craft, Webb says; **Friendship not only appears divine when employed in preserving the liberties of our country, but shines with equal splendor in the more tranquil scenes of life. Before it rises into the noble flames of patriotism, aiming destruction at the heads of tyrants, thundering for liberty, and courting danger in defence [sic] of rights; we behold it calm and moderate, burning with an even glow, improving the soft hours of peace, and heightening the relish for virtue. In these happy moments contracts are formed, societies instituted, and the vacant hours of life wisely employed in the cultivation of social and polished manners.**⁷

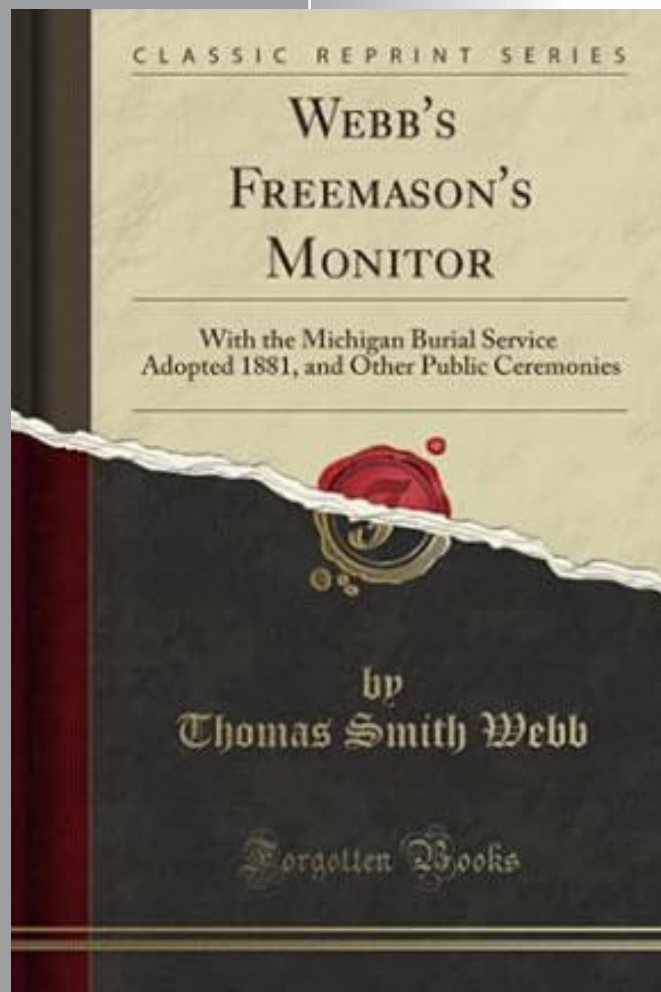


Brother Thomas Smith Webb

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Thomas Smith Webb, Masonic Educator

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Charge at Initiation into the first Degree: **At your leisure hours, you are to study the liberal arts and sciences; and that you may improve in Masonic disquisition, converse with well-informed Brethren, who will be always be as ready to give, as you will be to receive, instruction.**(*Monitor*, p.50) In this charge and elsewhere Webb defines Freemasonry as an institution of lifetime learning, a view of the Craft too often overlooked.

As for the First Degree, Second Section: **To make a daily progress in the Art, is our constant duty, and expressly required by our general laws. What can be more noble, than the pursuit of virtue? what [sic] motive more alluring, than the practice of justice? or [sic] what instruction more beneficial, than an accurate elucidation of symbolical mysteries which tend to embellish and adorn the mind? Every [sic] thing that strikes the eye, more immediately engages the attention, and imprints upon the memory serious and solemn truths.**(*Monitor*, p.51)

Webb's Remarks on the Second lecture: **Masonry is a progressive science, and is divided into different classes or degrees, for the more regular advancement in the knowledge of its mysteries. According to the progress we make, we limit or extend our inquiries; and, in proportion to our capacity, we attain to a less or greater degree of perfection...**

Masonry includes within its circle almost every branch of polite learning... To please the accomplished scholar, and ingenious artist, masonry is wisely planned...To exhaust the various subjects of which it treats, would transcend the powers of the brightest genius; still, however, nearer approaches to perfection may be made, and the man of wisdom will not check

the progress of his abilities, tho' the task he attempts may at first seem insurmountable...

Perseverance and application remove each difficulty as it occurs; every step he advances, new pleasures open to his view, and instruction of the noblest kind attend his researches. In the diligent pursuit of knowledge, the intellectual faculties are employed, in promoting the glory of God, and the good of man. (*Monitor*, pp. 58-59)

On learning: Listening with attention to the wise opinions of experienced craftsmen on important subjects, he gradually familiarizes his mind to useful instruction, and is soon enabled to investigate truths of utmost concern in the general transactions of life. From this system proceeds a rational amusement; while the mental faculties are fully employed, the judgment is properly exercised. A spirit of emulation prevails; and all are induced to vie. (*Monitor*, pp. 59-60)

The Charge into Initiation into the Second Degree: As you increase in knowledge, you will improve in social intercourse...The study of the liberal arts [that valuable branch of education, which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind] is earnestly recommended to your consideration. (*Monitor*, pp. 60-61). The seven liberal arts and sciences are illustrated in this section, it may not therefore proper to insert here a short explanation of them.

Thomas Smith Webb, Masonic Educator

Grammar teaches the proper arrangement of words; ... and that excellency of pronunciation which enables us to speak or write a language with accuracy, agreeably to reason, and correct usage.

Rhetoric teaches us to speak copiously and fluently on any subject, ... wisely contriving to captivate the hearer by strength of argument and beauty of expression.

Logic teaches us to guide our reason discessionally in the general knowledge of things... It consists of a regular train of argument, whence we infer, deduce, and conclude, according to certain premises laid down, admitted or granted.

Arithmetic teaches the powers and properties of numbers... By this art, reasons and demonstrations are given, for finding out any certain number.

Geometry treats of the powers and properties of magnitudes in general, where length, breadth, and thickness are considered. By this science, the architect is enabled to construct his plans...; the general to arrange his soldiers; the engineer to mark out ground for encampments; the geographer to give us the dimensions of the world... In fine, geometry is the foundation of architecture, and the root of the mathematics.

Music teaches the art of forming concords, so as to compose delightful harmony... It inquires into the nature of concords and discords, and enables us to find out the proportion between them by numbers.

Astronomy is that divine art, by which we are taught the wisdom, strength, and beauty of the almighty Creator, in those sacred pages, the celestial hemisphere... While we are employed in the study of this science, we must perceive unparalleled influences of wisdom and goodness, and thro' the whole creation, trace the glorious Author by his works. (*Monitor*, pp.79-82)

Webb's lecture on the seven arts and sciences consumes far more space than presented here. Indeed, his entire Second Degree Charge consumes much more instruction, time, and space in explication of the five Orders of Architecture, the Five Senses and other matters than the twenty-first century candidate for the Entered Apprentice Degree now receives.

The Prayer at Initiation into the Third Degree includes: **grant that as we increase in knowledge, we may improve in virtue.**(*Monitor*, p. 85)

Of interest are Webb's "moral observations on the instruments of masonry, thus presented to the aster of a lodge at installation," including the "Chissel [sic]:" **The Chissel demonstrates, the advantages of discipline and education. The mind, like the diamond in its original state, is unpolished; but as the effects of the chissel on the external coat, soon presents to view the latent beauties of that diamond; so education discovers the latent virtues of the mind, and draws them forth to range the large field of matter and space, to display the summit of human knowledge, our duty to God, and to man.**(*Monitor*, p. 118)

Referring to Webb's lectures, "Dr. Mackey, in his *Lexicon* said of the lectures: 'These constitute the simple text of Masonry, while the extended illustrations which are given by an intelligent Master or Lecturer constitute the commentary, without which the simple text would be comparatively barren and uninteresting.'"⁵

Continued on page 13.

Thomas Smith Webb, Masonic Educator

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For Thomas Smith Webb, Freemasonry involves far more than learning to subdue one's passions. These days, that can be handled with counseling and anger management programs – and insurance will pay for those. As demonstrated by the extractions from Webb's *Monitor*, Freemasonry provides opportunities and recommendations to acquire the habit and treasure of lifetime learning and education. Webb's inclusion of far ranging subjects of philosophy, architecture, the seven liberal arts and sciences, the five senses, multiple virtues, and other subjects validates the view that early Masonry existed as a prominently educational institution. That view persists in what remains of the Second Degree's Senior Deacon's lecture. As Webb states repeatedly, virtue flourishes as learning progresses.

1. Tabbert, Mark A. *American Freemasons*, National Heritage Museum, 2005, p. 53.
2. De Hoyas, Arturo, *Alber Pike's Morals and Dogma, Annotated Edition*, 2nd Ed., Supreme Council 33°, S.J., 2013, 179-180.
3. Dove, John, *The Masonic Text Book*, 1847, facsimile Ed., Legare Street Press, undated.
4. *Presentation Volume* of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, 17th Ed.
5. "The Baltimore Convention," *The Masonic Bulletin*, Oct 2010, Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, www.freemasonry.bcy.ca.
6. Several works bear the title *Illustrations of Masonry*, one of the more notorious authored by "Captain" William Morgan, which set off the scandal and Masonic crisis of 1826, a prime example of profoundly ignorant misunderstanding of Freemasonry.
7. Webb, Thomas Smith, *The Freemason's Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry*, facsimile Ed., The Masonic Book Club, 1996, p. 7.

Further page numbers of this work appear in the text.



“It is a Dirge”

Brother Wesley H. Latchford, 32° KCCH

Brother David Vinton was an American silversmith, merchant, and Masonic lecturer, was born in either Medford or Medfield, Massachusetts on January 6, 1774. A member of Providence’s Mount Vernon Lodge No. 4., Brother Vinton became prominent in Freemasonry when 1816 he compiled and published a volume called The Masonick Minstrel, of which the full title was The Masonick Minstrel, a Selection of Masonic, Sentimental, and Amorous Songs. Duets, Glees, Canons, Rounds and Canzonets, Respectfully Dedicated to the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, with an appendix containing a short historical sketch of Masonry and a list of all the Lodges in the United States. It was sold by subscription, printed by H. Mann and Company, and sold for \$2.50 (about \$56.00 today); more than twelve thousand copies are reputed to have been sold. Today the most well-known of the songs from this collection is a piece on p. 326 simply titled “Dirge”; we know it better as “Solemn Strikes the Funeral Chime.”

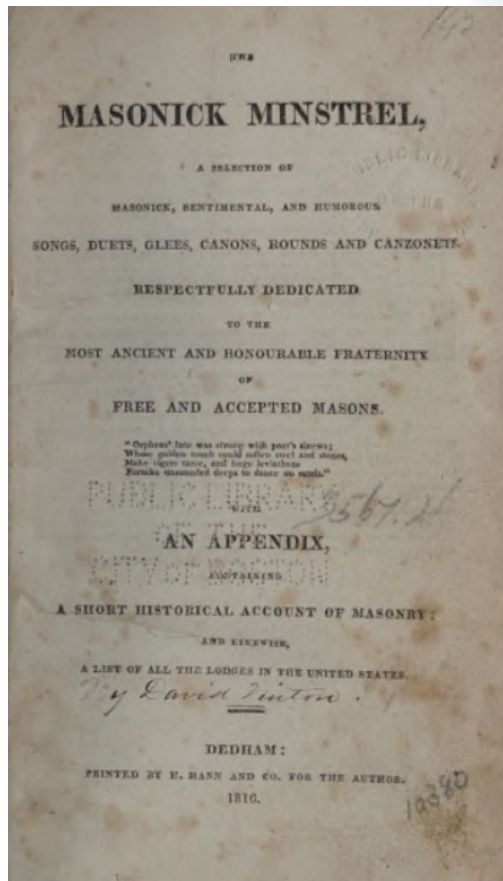
The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines a dirge as a “song or hymn of grief or lamentation, especially one intended to accompany funeral or memorial rites.” Performed to the tune of Brother Ignace Joseph Pleyel’s (1757-1831) hymn “Children of the Heavenly King” – more commonly known as simply “Pleyel’s Hymn” – this hymn along with Brother Vinton’s lyrics are still part of Masonic ritual in some states, including here in Virginia.

Here are all eight verses of “Dirge” – we only sing the first, third, and eighth verse in our Virginia ritual:

Solemn strikes the funeral chime!
Notes of our departing time,
As we journey here below,
On a pilgrimage of woe.

Mortals, now indulge a tear,
For Mortality is here!
See, how wide her trophies wave
O’er the slumbers of the grave!

Here another Guest we bring,
Seraph,s of celestial wing,
To our fun’ral-altar come,
Waft a Friend and Brother home.



Masonick Minstrel

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There’s a sad irony in the fact that the man who wrote these words, sung in Lodge rooms and at graves by thousands of Freemasons in America, was himself buried without Masonic honors. In the last years of his life, Brother Vinton traveled as an itinerant teacher and lecturer of Masonic rituals, in particular York Rite degree work. In 1821, Vinton was summoned by the Grand Chapter of Virginia to be examined on charges for “highly improper and un-masonic conduct.” The charges against Brother Vinton were conferring the Mark and Past Master’s degrees without any authority to do so and pocketing the fees. Vinton did not respond to the summons, so he lost his privileges as a Mason in that Grand Chapter and “throughout the world.”

“It is a Dirge”

Continued from page 15.



Dirge

For, beyond the grave, there lie
Brighter mansions in the sky;
Where, enthron'd, the Deity
Gives man immortality.

God of life's Eternal Day!
Guide us – lest from Thee we stray,
By a false, delusive light,
To the shades of endless night!

Calm, the good man meets his fate
Guards celestial 'round him wait!
See! He bursts these mortal chains,
And, o'er Death, the Vict'ry gains!

Lord of all, below, above,
Fill our hearts with Truth and Love.
As dissolves our earthly tie,
Take us to Thy Lodge on High.

There, enlarg'd, his Soul will see
What was veil'd in mystery;
Heav'nly glories of the place
Shew his Maker—'face to face.'

Continued on page 16.

“It is a Dirge”

Continued from page 15.

Even though Brother Vinson’s work was written as and to be performed as a dirge, in many Masonic Lodges one sees “Solemn Strikes the Funeral Chime” executed in a tempo more akin to an Irish reel than a funeral dirge. According to Jordan Drum, Education Assistant for The Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, the beats per minute (bpm) of a funeral march or dirge should be performed somewhere between Largo—very slowly and broad (40 - 58 bpm) and Adagio—slow (60 - 76 bpm). Anything with BPM above that is considered Andante—walking speed (80 - 106 bpm) or Moderato—moderate pace (108 - 118 bpm). Military units of the United States and Great Britain adhere a standard of between 60-65 bpm when in ceremonial parade. So, if your degree team is moving and singing about the Lodge room faster than 65 or so bpm they’re missing conveying the rich symbolism of Brother Plezel and Brother Vinton’s wonderful music and lyrics as part of our ritual. To listen to a very solemnly done recording of “Solemn Strikes the Funeral Chime” visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b67bGq-k-us>, which is Edison Blue Amberol cylinder record No. 1953 originally recorded in November 1909 for Edison wax Amberol record No. 4M-388; the vocalists are unknown.

There’s a sad irony in the fact that the man who wrote these words, sung in Lodge rooms and at graves by thousands of Freemasons in America, was himself buried without Masonic honors. In the last years of his life, Brother Vinton traveled as an itinerant teacher and lecturer of Masonic rituals, in particular York Rite degree work. In 1821, Vinton was summoned by the Grand Chapter of Virginia to be examined on charges for “highly improper and un-masonic conduct.” The charges against Brother Vinton were conferring the Mark and Past Master’s degrees without any authority to do so and pocketing the fees. Vinton did not respond to the summons, so he lost his privileges as a Mason in that Grand Chapter and “throughout the world.” He was also expelled from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina on charges of selling manuscripts of the Masonic lectures. As it turns out, Vinton’s misdeeds and notes were far less extensive than is normally found in monitors and cipher books of the present day. In fact, according to Thomas Hayward, Grand Master of Florida in 1858, who personally reviewed Vinton’s printed work, it would not even raise an eyebrow compared with what Albert Pike or Albert Mackey had published.

Brother David Vinton died in Shakertown, Kentucky, in July 1833. While on his deathbed, the Freemasons of Lodge No. 73 at Bowling Green wrote to the Grand Lodge of Kentucky inquiring whether David Vinton was a Mason in good standing. The reply was negative. The kind Brethren of Kentucky, who said they “were willing to give him funeral honors if his character were cleared up,” could find no one to offer an official declaration of forgiveness. They could do nothing for him or his memory.

Brother David Vinton lives on today only because of his lyric contribution to Masonic Ritual as employed in the workings of the Third Degree in this Grand Jurisdiction. His simple, poetic dirge has earned him the respect of every Brother who has marched the march of Solomon or prayed the soliloquy over a fallen Brother. Just be sure you do so at no more than 65 beats per minute!

Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines a dirge as a “song or hymn of grief or lamentation, especially one intended to accompany funeral or memorial rites.” Performed to the tune of Brother Ignace Joseph Pleyel’s (1757-1831) hymn “Children of the Heavenly King” – more commonly known as simply “Pleyel’s Hymn” – this hymn along with Brother Vinton’s lyrics are still part of Masonic ritual in some states, including here in Virginia.

“It is a Dirge”

Continued from page 16.

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Image files and captions:

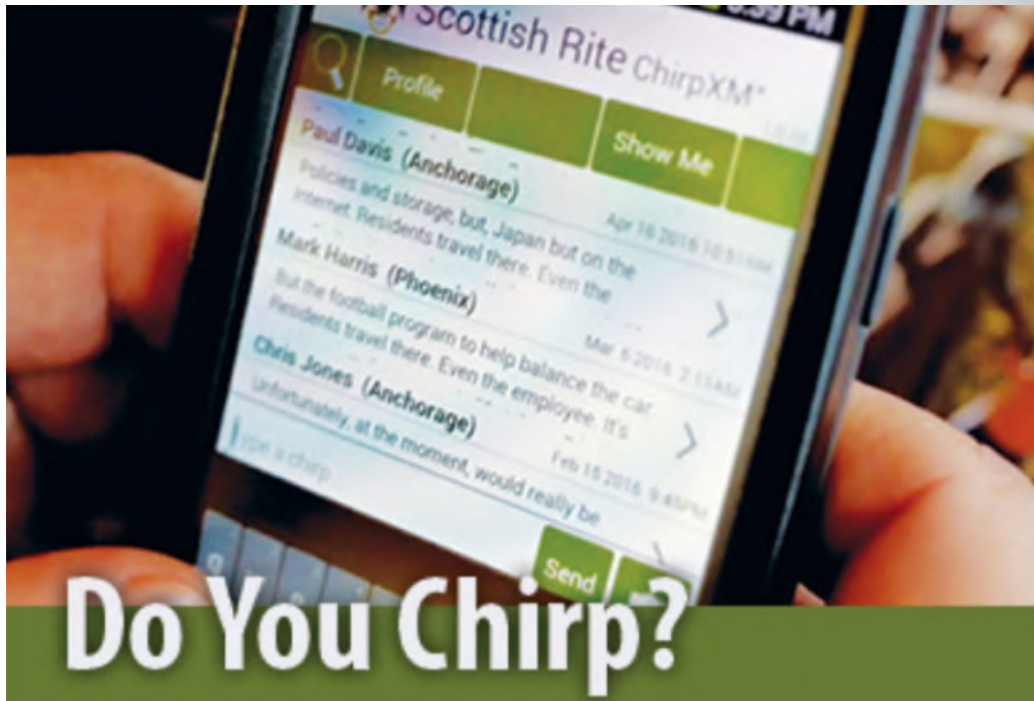
- 1) Masonick Minstrel

Caption: Cover page of Brother David Vinton’s *The Masonick Minstrel*, of which the full title was *The Masonick Minstrel, a Selection of Masonic, Sentimental, and Amorous Songs. Duets, Gleees, Canons, Rounds and Canzonets, Respectfully Dedicated to the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons*.

- 2) Dirge

Caption: Brother David Vinton’s song “Dirge”, from *The Masonick Minstrel*, of which the full title was *The Masonick Minstrel, a Selection of Masonic, Sentimental, and Amorous Songs. Duets, Gleees, Canons, Rounds and Canzonets, Respectfully Dedicated to the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons*.

Scottish Rite Chirp



The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction is making a new tool available exclusively to Scottish Rite Masons, known as SR Chirp. This is a personal communication and messaging utility which operates as a mobile phone application and is unique to the Scottish Rite.

Maintaining meaningful personal communications in today's fast-paced and technology intense day can be challenging. Smartphones are everywhere, and a variety of services including Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging make keeping in touch possible using many different methods.

Each popular technology provides benefits as well as challenges. With so much information available to us, it's often hard to keep track of some of the messages that are most important.

The name "Chirp" was selected by the application's developer, which has other business-to-consumer projects apart from the Scottish Rite. SR Chirp messages are known as "Chirps."

Using the application, Scottish Rite members may to "Chirp" to each other and share their experiences, day-to-day interactions and thoughts, updates from their local Valleys and Orients, or simply stay connected throughout the jurisdiction.

The application enables Scottish Rite Masons to quickly and conveniently communicate and interact. Although SR Chirp is similar to text messaging in some ways, because SR Chirp is usable only by Scottish Rite members, it becomes simple to separate communications with brothers from the sometimes overwhelming number of messaging that are part of our personal and business lives.

The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry—Southern Jurisdiction is making a new tool available exclusively to Scottish Rite Masons, known as SR Chirp. This is a personal communication and messaging utility which operates as a mobile phone application and is unique to the Scottish Rite.

SR Chirp is a Smartphone app that enables Scottish Rite Masons to communicate quickly and conveniently.



Certain faculties of man are directed toward the Unknown-thought, meditation, prayer. The unknown is an ocean, of which conscience is the compass. Thought, meditation, and prayer, are the great mysterious pointings of the needle. It is a spiritual magnetism that thus connects the human soul with the Deity. These majestic irradiations of the soul pierce through the shadow toward the light.

Arturo de Hoyos, Ed.,
Albert Pike's Morals
and Dogma. (Washing-
ton D.C.: The Supreme
Council, 2011), 77

The Scottish Rite Research Society

The benefits of membership in the Scottish Rite Research Society are many. Some are intangibles, such as the potential for interaction and discussions with the brightest minds in contemporary Masonic philosophy and debate. The most important benefit is the availability of what we all came here for, which is more light in Masonry. This is manifest most particularly in SRRS publications and Masonic conferences.

The tangible benefits of membership in the SRRS include:

- Access to some of the most thought-provoking ideas in contemporary Masonic research
- A 10% discount on Society books and certain items bought at the House of the Temple or via the on-line Store
- The annual hardback volume of *Heredom*®, the preeminent publication of scholarly Masonic research
- The Society's quarterly research journal, *The Plumblin*®
- Early notice for upcoming conferences and meetings on issues of Masonic importance
- Your SRRS membership card and lapel pin SRRS Members may also receive:
- Special discounted offers on advanced sales throughout the year
- A bonus book or other item

TO JOIN

There are two levels of membership in the Society.
Annual membership \$52.00 or Life membership available for \$1,300.

In addition to receiving *Heredom*, *The Plumblin*, and discounts on Scottish Rite merchandise, SRRS members who pay their dues before the end of the year they are due occasionally receive an extra "bonus item" produced for that year. This is our way of saying "thank you" to members who stay dues-current.

Remember to visit the Scottish Rite Research Society section of the Store to see what products are available with your membership discount.

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Join us via our on-line Store and click on "Scottish Rite Research Society."

By Telephone

Call the Scottish Rite Store toll-free at 1-866-445-9196, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please have your credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover) information ready.



The Twentieth Degree “Master of the Symbolic Lodge”

~ Summary ~

This degree teaches that a Mason who knows that he does not possess the qualities of leadership, and who has not duly prepared himself to be a leader, should not want to be one. Notwithstanding, every Mason should endeavor to educate himself, bearing in mind that one day he may be ask to lead. Because he is of his community, it expects him to dispense light and knowledge; to practice the virtues both in and out of Lodge.

“Master of the Symbolic Lodge”

DUTIES:

Dispense light and knowledge. Practice the Masonic virtues both in and out of the Lodge.

FOR REFLECTION:

Is your behavior the same both in and out of the Lodge?

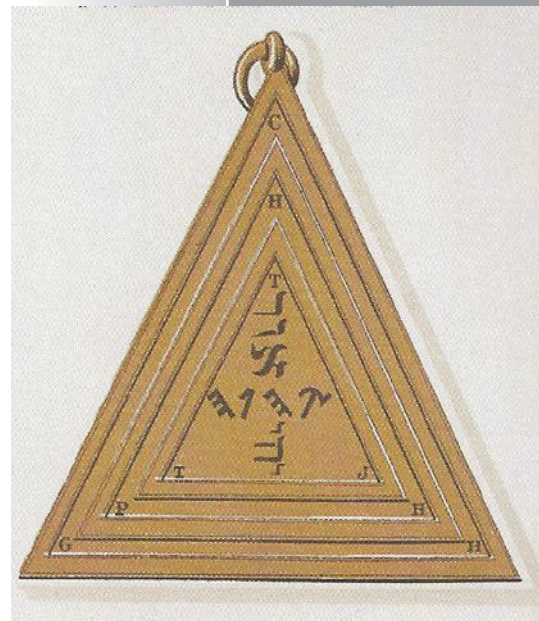
IMPORTANT SYMBOLS:

Triangle, square, octagon, candles, three pillars, Pythagorean right triangle.



The cordon is a broad ribbon of yellow and sky-blue; it may also be two ribbons, one of each color, crossing each other.

The jewel is gold, like the triangles on the apron, with the same words and letters.



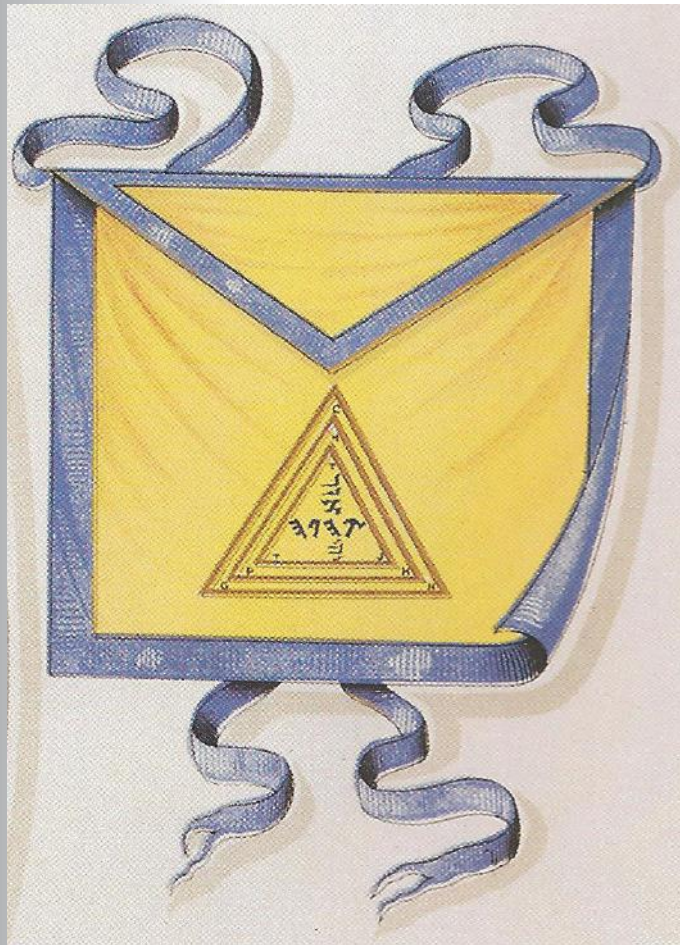
Continued on page21

The Twentieth Degree “Master of the Symbolic Lodge”



Continued from page 20.

The apron is yellow, bordered and lined with sky-blue. In the center are three concentric equilateral triangles, with the initial letters of the nine Great Lights in the corners. The letters stand for the following: Charity, Generosity, Veneration, Heroism, Patriotism, Honor, Toleration, Truth and Justice. In the center of the inner Triangle is the Tetragrammaton in Phoenician characters. Across it, from below upwards, are the Hebrew letters Yod, He, Yod, written vertically bottom to top and sideways. The remaining letters are Aleph, Vau, Ras; together the letters form the Hebrew for “Let Light Be!” or, as in the King James Version of the *Bible*, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3).



Continued on page 22.

The Twentieth Degree “Master of the Symbolic Lodge”

Lessons of the Degree

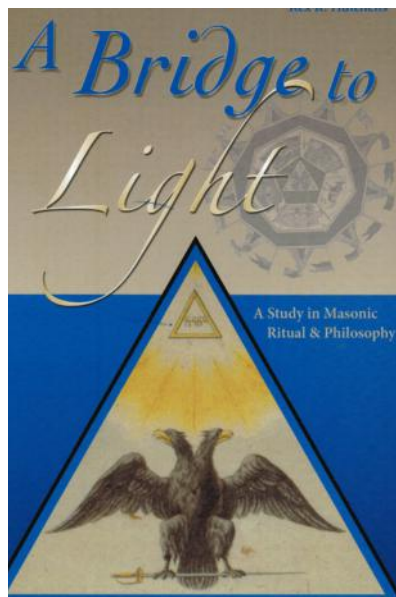
“Truth, justice and toleration are indispensable qualities for a Master of the Lodge.
Example is the best teaching method known.”

Continued from page 21.

“Over the many years that the ceremonies of the Scottish Rite have been performed, many acceptable changes, additions and minor deletions have been made. The Rubric (a text of acceptable modification) says of this degree:

The 20th Degree is a most beautiful Degree; conferred in full, including the opening and closing, it presents the lessons of the Degree in pure, classical drama, scarcely excelled anywhere. Nothing should be added, and nothing subtracted. Finish the Degree according to our ritual. Do not spoil it by introducing a single thing (p. 10).

This Degree is considered classical drama for many reasons. The most significant are its simplicity in set and action, the ceremonial use of candles, and the use of squares, triangles and pillars, the classic symbols of Masonry. In *Morals and Dogma* Pike notes that Masonry should be returned to its primitive purity (p. 325). The ceremony is a dramatic statement of this “primitive purity.” (*A Bridge to Light*, p. 170)



A Bridge to Light

Dr. Rex R. Hutchens, 33°, G.C.

An introduction to the Scottish Rite’s Degrees and symbolism, this book is the most popular exposition available, by one of the Rite’s most articulate philosophers and writers. The 4th Edition of this classic work includes the changes introduced with the adoption of the Revised Standard Pike Ritual; the official Ritual of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. Highly recommended by the Grand Archivist and Grand Historian.

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