



IRISH MASONIC JEWELS

THE TRINITY TRIPOS, JONATHAN SWIFT AND SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY PRIOR TO 1725.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRINITY TRIPOS MS. (MANUSCRIPT) 1688 CANNOT BE UNDERSTATED AS THIS DOCUMENT, WITHOUT DOUBT, ESTABLISHES THAT SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY WAS WELL KNOWN IN IRELAND IN 1688 SOME THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS BEFORE THE FIRST RECORDED MEETING OF THE M.W. THE GRAND LODGE OF IRELAND IN 1725.

THE TRIPOS WAS A SATIRICAL ORATION DELIVERED BY THE *TERRAE FILIUS* (1), AS HE WAS CALLED, AND ONLY TWO OF THESE SPEECHES HAVE SURVIVED, BOTH DATING FROM THE 1680'S WITH THAT OF 1688 RECEIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION (2).

THE TRIPOS WAS DISCOVERED AND ATTRIBUTED TO JONATHAN SWIFT SOLELY AS A RESULT OF THE BOOK BY REV. JOHN BARRETT, VICE-PROVOST OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN (1806 - 1821) ENTITLED "*AN ESSAY ON THE EARLIER PART OF THE LIFE OF SWIFT*" PUBLISHED IN 1808.

THE TRIPOS WAS REPRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY BY REV. JOHN BARRETT IN HIS BOOK AND THROUGH HIS ANALYSIS OF THE MS. HE CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE TRIPOS OF 1688 HAD BEEN PENNED BY JONATHAN SWIFT. THIS CONCLUSION WAS ONE OF THE GOALS OF REV BARRETT'S BOOK, NOT TO ESTABLISH THAT FREEMASONRY WAS A PART OF IRISH SOCIETY DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. ACCORDINGLY THE TRIPOS APPEARED IN MANY PUBLICATIONS OF THE WORKS OF JONATHAN SWIFT, FOR EXAMPLE, BY SIR WALTER SCOTT IN 1814 AND 1824 AMONGST OTHERS.

I HAVE REPRODUCED A PDF COPY OF THE COMPLETE THE TRINITY TRIPOS OF 1688 FROM THE 1824 EDITION OF SIR WALTER SCOTT'S "*THE WORKS OF JONATHAN SWIFT, D.D., VOLUME VI*" ON THE IRISHMASONICJEWELS.IE WEBSITE ON THE "GRAND LODGE – A HISTORY" WEB PAGE FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES. YOU WILL NOTE THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE FOOTNOTES ARE FROM REV. BARRETT'S BOOK AND THEIR PURPOSE IS TO IDENTIFY THE INDIVIDUALS REFERRED TO IN THE TRIPOS WITH A VIEW TO ATTRIBUTING THE SPEECH TO SWIFT, THE SAID INDIVIDUALS BEING HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

I HAVE REPRODUCED THE TRIPOS IN ITS ENTIRETY TO SHOW THAT THE MENTION OF FREEMASONRY IS ALMOST INCIDENTAL TO A DOCUMENT THAT RUNS TO 35 PAGES.

AS STATED THE SPEECH OF THE *TERRAE FILIUS* OCCUPIES IN THE ORIGINAL MS., 35 CLOSELY WRITTEN QUARTO PAGES, AND IS DIVIDED INTO THREE ACTS OR SECTIONS, OF WHICH THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND AND THE EPILOGUE OF THE THIRD ACT ALONE CONCERN US (AS FREEMASONS). I HAVE REPRODUCED IN THE APPENDIX TO THIS PAPER EXTRACTS OF THE SECTIONS OF THE SPEECH RELEVANT TO FREEMASONRY.

IN TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN THE TRIPOS WAS DELIVERED AT THE CEREMONY OF GRADUATION THAT WAS CALLED THE “INITIA” OR “COMMENCEMENTS” (3).

THE *TERRAE FILIUS* WHO DELIVERED THE TRINITY TRIPOS OF 1688 ON THE 11TH JULY OF THAT YEAR, WAS JOHN JONES, A STUDENT OF THE SENIOR YEAR.

THE *TERRAE FILIUS*, WHO FROM LONG CUSTOM WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE, AT PUBLIC ACTS OF THE UNIVERSITY, TO THROW FORTH HIS SATIRE, WITH IMPUNITY, UPON THE FELLOWS AND HEADS OF THE COLLEGE, AS WELL AS AMONG THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE (4).

THE FELLOWS OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE COMMENCEMENTS CEREMONY IN 1688 WERE SUFFICIENTLY SHOCKED BY THE CONTENT AND TONE OF THE TRIPOS WHICH WAS A MIXTURE OF RIBALD SPEECH AND BAWDY DRAMATISATIONS RIDICULING STAFF AND STUDENTS TO DEMAND THAT THE MAN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, THE SAID *TERRAE FILIUS*,

JOHN JONES, BE EXPELLED FROM THE COLLEGE (5). THE SENTENCE WAS AFTERWARDS MITIGATED INTO A TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF HIS DEGREE AND ACADEMICAL RIGHTS (6).

AS STATED ABOVE THE TRIPOS WAS ATTRIBUTED TO JONATHAN SWIFT AS A RESULT OF THE WORK OF REV. JOHN BARRETT, HOWEVER THE CONSENSUS SUBSEQUENTLY IS THAT JONATHAN SWIFT WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRINITY TRIPOS AND WE FIND SIR WALTER SCOTT STATING IN HIS 1861 PUBLICATION: -

“IT IS PROBABLE THAT.... THE TRIPOS MAY HAVE BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE SATIRICAL STROKES OF SWIFT.... I CANNOT THINK IT LIKELY THAT HE WAS THE PRINCIPAL AUTHOR OF THE WORK FOR WHICH JONES SUSTAINED THE SENTENCE OF EXPULSION, SINCE WITH ALL HIS GROSSNESS, IT EXHIBITS LITTLE OF HIS HUMOUR (7)”.

ACCORDINGLY IT DID NOT APPEAR IN LATER EDITIONS OF THE COMPILATIONS OF SWIFT’S WORKS BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

DESPITE SIR WALTER SCOTT’S OPINION AT THAT TIME THAT THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE TRIPOS COULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO SWIFT THE QUESTION CONTINUES TO BE MENTIONED IN ACADEMIC PAPERS REGARDING SWIFT. WE FIND IN A 2004 PAPER BY ANDREW CARPENTER (UCD) CONCLUDING THAT SWIFT HEARD JOHN JONES DELIVER THE BURLESQUE, PARODIC TRIPOS SPEECH AND THAT THE 1688 TEXT WAS CLEARLY THE WORK OF A COTERIE AND

WAS WRITTEN BY VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR CLASS OF WHICH SWIFT WAS A MEMBER (8).

THE ACADEMIC DEBATE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THIS 1688 MS. COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO JONATHAN SWIFT HAS RESULTED IN EVIDENCE OF SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY BEING BROUGHT TO THE FORE. WITHOUT THE ATTENTION THE MS. HAS RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF THIS SPECULATION THE MS. MAY HAVE BEEN LARGELY IGNORED AS A CURIOSITY BEING NO MORE THAN A MS. OF A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY STUDENT "FOOTLIGHTS" PERFORMANCE.

AS TO THE MASONIC CONTENT OF THE MS. RICHARD CARON AND ANTOINE FAIVRE SUGGEST WHEN WRITING ABOUT SWIFT'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE TRIPOS: -

"SWIFTS INITIAL ACCESS TO SCOTTISH STYLE FREEMASONRY DATES BACK TO 1688, WHEN HE ALLEGEDLY PARTICIPATED IN A LODGE AT TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN (25). WORKING WITH A "CLUB" OF FELLOW STUDENTS, SWIFT CONTRIBUTED TO A SATIRIC TRIPOS, WHICH UTILIZED INSIDE KNOWLEDGE TO LAMPOON THE FREEMASONS. IN THEIR HIGH-SPIRITED BURLESQUE, SWIFT AND HIS CO-AUTHORS DESCRIBED THE MULTI-CLASS MEMBERSHIP OF TRINITY LODGE, THE LINKS OF CERTAIN RITUALS WITH CHIVALRIC MILITARY EQUIPMENT, THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATIONS OF ITS NUMBERS, AND NEW METHODS OF INITIATING GENTLEMAN (OR SPECULATIVE) MASONS. ... (25) PHILIP CROSSLE "FREEMASONRY IN IRELAND CIRCA

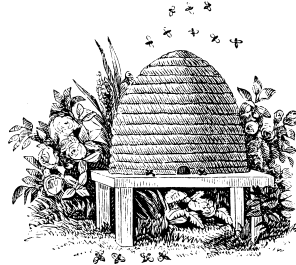
(9).

THE RELEVANT EXTRACTS OF THE TRIPOS ALSO SHOW, THAT IN REGARD TO FREEMASONRY, THE *TERRAE FILIUS*, COULD COUNT ON HIS AUDIENCE UNDERSTANDING ALLUSIONS TO THE PROMINENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRAFT AND THAT HE WAS ADDRESSING A MIXED ASSEMBLAGE OF UNIVERSITY MEN AND WELL-TO-DO CITIZENS, WHO HAD COME TOGETHER TO WITNESS THE CHIEF UNIVERSITY FUNCTION OF THE YEAR AND HIS USE OF THE [MASONIC] THEME PROVES THAT THE FREEMASONRY KNOWN TO HIM AND HIS AUDIENCE WAS CONSPICUOUS FOR ITS SECRECY AND FOR ITS BENEVOLENCE. WE CAN FAIRLY DEDUCE, TOO, THAT MEMBERSHIP OF THE CRAFT WAS NOT CONFINED TO OPERATIVES, OR TO ANY CLASS. OTHERWISE THE CATALOGUE OF INCONGRUOUS CALLINGS WOULD BE WITHOUT POINT (10).

I WOULD ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE PHRASE “...FREEMASONIZED THE NEW WAY” IS THE MOST TELLING REMARK IN THE SPEECH AND INDICATIVE OF A CHANGE FROM OPERATIVE FREEMASONRY TO SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

IN CONCLUSION, THE FOLLOWING REMARKABLE EXTRACT SET OUT IN THE APPENDIX FROM THE TRIPOS DEMONSTRATES THAT THE FRATERNITY OF FREEMASONS WAS WELL KNOWN IN DUBLIN IN 1688 AND THE

IMPORTANCE OF SUCH PUBLIC NOTICE OF FREEMASONRY AT THAT TIME COULD NOT BE UNDERSTATED AS THE INSTANCES OF ANY MENTION OF OUR FRATERNITY IN IRELAND BEFORE 1700 IS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT.



- (1) LIT. "SON OF THE EARTH" ~ FORMERLY, ONE APPOINTED TO WRITE A SATIRICAL [LATIN] POEM AT THE PUBLIC ACTS IN THE UNIVERSITY.**
- (2) "HERMATHENA" (TRINITY COLLEGE PUBLICATION) (1981).**
- (3) "MASONIC REPRINTS AND HISTORICAL REVELATIONS...", HENRY SADLER & W.J. CHETWODE CRAWLEY (1898).**
- (4) "THE WORKS OF JONATHAN SWIFT, D.D.," SIR WALTER SCOTT (1824).**
- (5) "VERSE IN ENGLISH FROM TUDOR AND STUART IRELAND", ANDREW CARPENTER (2004).**
- (6) "THE MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WORKS, VOLUME I", SIR WALTER SCOTT (1861).**
- (7) "THE MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WORKS, VOLUME I", SIR WALTER SCOTT (1861).**
- (8) "A TALE IF A TUB AS AN IRISH TEXT", A PAPER BY ANDREW CARPENTER DELIVERED AT THE DEANERY OF ST. PATRICK'S, DUBLIN (16 -17 OCTOBER 2004).**
- (9) "ESOTERISME, GNOSES & IMAGINAIRE SYMBOLIQUE: MELANGES OFFERTS A ANTOINE FAIVRE", RICHARD CARON ETC. (2001).**
- (10) "MASONIC REPRINTS AND HISTORICAL REVELATIONS...", HENRY SADLER & W.J. CHETWODE CRAWLEY (1898).**



APPENDIX

"A TRIPOS OR SPEECH,
DELIVERED AT A
COMMENCEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF
DUBLIN,

HELD THERE JULY 11, 1688,

BY

JOHN JONES,

THEN A.B., AFTERWARDS D.D.

ACT [Section] I.

[Nihil ad rem.]

ACT [Section] II.

"

It was lately ordered that for the honour and dignity of the University there should be introduced a Society of Freemasons, consisting of gentlemen, mechanics, porters,

parsons, ragmen, hucksters, divines, tinkers, knights, thatchers, cobblers, poets, justices, drawers, beggars, aldermen, paviours, sculls, freshmen, bachelors, scavengers, masters, sowgelders, doctors, ditchers, pimps, lords, butchers, and tailors, who shall bind themselves by an oath never to discover their mighty no-secret; and to relieve whatsoever strolling distressed brethren they meet with, after the example of the Fraternity of Freemasons in and about **Trinity** College, by whom a collection was lately made for, and the purse of charity well stuffed for, a reduced Brother, who received their charity as follows:

“ From Sawny Richardson, a bottle of ale and two rolls.

“ From Mr. Hassett, a pair of old shoes.

“ From a kind-hearted butcher at Lazy Hill, a calf's countenance.

“ From the Right Honourable Lord Charlemont, a cast hat.

“ From long Lawrence, an inch of tobacco.

“ From Mr. Ryder, a groat.

“ From Dr. Gwithers, an old glister-pipe.

“ From Mr. Marsh and Sir Tenison, a bundle of godly ballads.

“ From Mr. Smith, an old pair of quilted stockings.

“ From a tapster at the sign of the Hog in Armour, a comfit.

“ From Sir Goodlet, a piece of an old Smiglesius for a natural use, cunningly procured by the means of Sir Goodlet.

“ From Sir Warren, for being Freemasonized the new way, five shillings.

“ From Mr. Edward Hall, a pair of cast night gloves.

“ Lastly, from Mr. Hancock, a slice of Cheshire cheese; which the hungry brother eat up with such gusto, and liked so well, that he stole away the rest in his breeches.

“ Tam libera potitus contributione, frater scoundrellus sarcinulas suas discessurus colligit, et vultu

hilariorē solito. Quadrangulum transit; dumque præ nimio gaudio, porrectiorē incedit fronte, altioresque tendit gressus, quisnam inter homines obviam dedit illi, nisi frater fraterrimus Cooper; qui ut fidelem novit hominem, festinatus accurrit, humaniter corripit dextram, utque moris est spississimo conspuat basio: deinde Bibliothecam versus, comiter ambulat ut inter caetera admirabilia Ridlaeum visitent: quem dum hospes curiosis lynceis oculis perscrutatur, et diligentius rimatur, quantum homuncionis iudices, carnifex, et medici, reliquerunt, pooh dolor, inter partes, an nobiliores an posteriores nescio, privatum Fraternitatis notavit signum (Anglicè, the Freemasons' Mark). Quo viso, Dii boni, quanto clamore totam infecit domum. Ter et saepius pulsavit pectus, exsanguis dilaniavit genas, et eheu nimium dilaceratas dilaceravit vestes. Tandem vero paulo modestius insaniens, hujusmodi versiculis ridiculum effudit dolerem.

[Our Brother, the scoundrel, having become master of so generous a collection, gets his wallets together with a view of making off, and crosses the Square with a more cheerful countenance than usual. And while, through his excess of joy, he advances with head erect and stalks with prancing paces, who of all men came to meet him but the most brotherly of brothers, Cooper! As soon as he recognises this faithful fellow, he runs to him with all speed, cordially grasps his hand, and, as their wont is, beslobbers him with a most glutinous kiss. Thereafter: they walk towards the Library, with the object of viewing Ridley among the other wonders of the place. While the visitor is examining him with the prying eyes of a lynx, and is ransacking, with particular care, whatever the judges, the executioner, and the surgeons have left of the poor fellow's carcass, alas! and alas! he descried—whether on the nobler or the hinder parts, I know not for certain—the *Signum* (in plain English, the Freemasons' Mark). As soon as he saw this, good Heavens! with what a yell he filled the building. Over and over again he thumped his breast, lacerated his pallid cheeks, and tore to rags his garments, already, alas! too ragged. After a while, when his paroxysm had cooled down a bit, he poured forth his ludicrous grief in verses after this fashion.]

“ EULOGIUM RIDLAEANUM :
“ AN ELEGY UPON RIDLEV.

“ Unhappy Brother, what can be
In wretchedness compared to thee,
Thou grief and shame of our Society !

Had we in due time understood
That thou wert of the Brotherhood,
By fraud or force thou had'st got loose
From shameful tree and dismal noose :
And now perhaps with life been blest
As comely a brother as the best,
Not thus exposed a monumental jest ;
When lady longs for college beer,
Or little dame or country squire
Walk out an afternoon, to look
On thee, and devil-raising book ;
Who kindly rather chose to die,
Than blemish our Fraternity,
The first of us e'er hang'd for modesty.
And now, alack, and well-a-day,
Thy parchment hide is stuff'd with hay :
Nay, worse : the Æsculapians,
Thy mighty misery to enhance,
Have cruelly cut thee out of countenance ;
And, to show witty spite, at once
Preserved thy skin and lost thy bones.
Thus here, in wooden hatch you stand,
With scornful musket at your hand :
The mice' and rats' mock centinel,
A poor ridiculous spectacle
To gibing Joan, to Kate and Nan,
Thou worse than skeleton of man.
So does he measure out his grief,
For loss of Brother and of thief.
Nor less concern'd does Cooper stand ;
But sobbing with his clout in hand,
And destitute of consolation,
Kept time with all his tribulation.
Their grumbling woe runs thro' and thro' them ;
If all were known, 'twould quite undo them.
The sighs which up and downward go,
Their unfeigned sorrow show :
For the devil's in't, if they pretend,
Who vent their grief at either end.

“ Hoc munere elaborato, non diutius lacrymis indulgent, sed dolore pollice [pollice?] suppresso, taciti discedunt. Protinus lodgum convocant, fratresque omnes certiores faciunt quantum sibi infamiae, et quantum miseriae infelicissimo accedit fraterculo; graviter luget fraterculus et Societas, et suspiriis ex imo pectore petitis, statim provisum est in posterum, neminem qui crucem meretur, vel qui suspendendus est, in Societatem Freemasonorum admitti; quo autoritate statuto et albo [libro] lodgi prolato, singuli, tam generosi quam scoundrelli, solidissimis basiis promiscuè dicunt valedictionem.

[Having carefully attended to this duty, they give way to tears no longer, but, wiping their eyes on their knuckles [*lit.*, their grief being stifled with the thumb], make off in silence. They summon a Lodge forthwith, and inform all the brethren of the load of disgrace in store for themselves, and of suffering for their most unhappy little brother. The Fraternity and the aforesaid little brother take it greatly to heart, and, amid sighs heaved from the inmost breast, arrangements are made on the spot, that hereafter no one deserving of the extreme penalty of the law, or sure to be hanged, shall be admitted into the Society of Freemasons. As soon as this has been formally ruled, and the Register of the Lodge produced, each of them, gentlemen and scoundrels alike, bids farewell to the other with most solid kisses indiscriminately bestowed.]

END OF ACT [Section] II.

ACT [Section] III.

[In the epilogue, the orator makes rueful reference to the likely results of his afternoon's work, enumerating the various classes whose hostility he has excited.]

“ . . . I have left myself no friend. . . .
 If I betake myself to the Library, Ridley's ghost will haunt me, for scandalising him with the name of Freemason. . . . The Freemasons will banish me their Lodge, and bar me the happiness of kissing Long Lawrence. . . . I take my leave.

“ FINIS.”