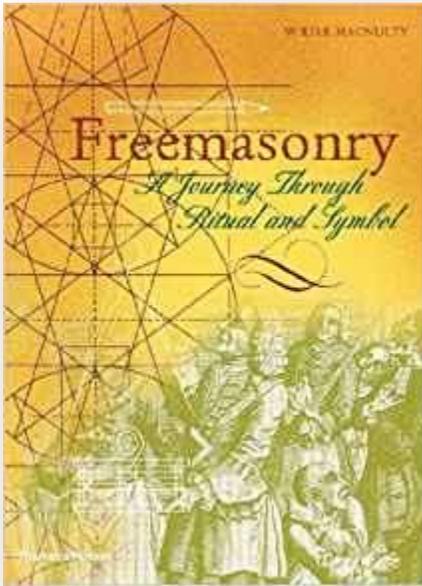


William O. Ware Lodge of Research

August 2019 Book Review

Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol **W. Kirk MacNulty**



W. Kirk MacNulty's ***Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol*** takes the reader through the deeper symbols and meanings of Freemasonry. MacNulty takes the time to review, in depth, each of the first three Degrees of Freemasonry and explains the related symbolism each may have. In addition to the symbolism of the first three Degrees, the author also explains both early and recent Freemasonry. Accompanying this research are 133 illustrations for the reader to enjoy, many of which are printed with great detail and color.

In ***Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol*** MacNulty shares his definition of Freemasonry with the reader, and it is one of the most clear, definitive definitions asserted by any author. MacNulty writes, "*Freemasonry is a very old, secular, fraternal society which requires the belief in a Supreme Being as its principle qualification for membership and which is dedicated to the practice of tolerance, respect and understanding of others; the encouragement of high standards of morality among its members; and the performance of charitable works.*"

Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol opens with an in-depth review of the history of Freemasonry. It begins with a good working history of speculative Freemasonry, with characters such as Hiram Abiff described, and then delves into the history of Freemasonry from the medieval guilds to the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. The author then explains how Freemasonry quickly grew in England immediately following this formation and with other Grand Lodges being formed such as The Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1725 and the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736. MacNulty also explains how, during this time, Freemasonry moved to the American colonies with lodges formed under the Grand Lodge of England. We start to see these in Massachusetts in 1733 and in South Carolina in 1735.

After a strong introduction of Freemasonry and the formation of lodges as we know them today, MacNulty introduces the first three Degrees of Freemasonry and the symbols related to each. Many of Freemasonry's tenets such as Brotherhood, Spiritual Fulfillment and Social Responsibility are reviewed in the second half of *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol*. Without revealing any of the secrets of Freemasonry, MacNulty shares his insights and research into the philosophical meanings of each degree and introduces the symbolism of "Mysteries" or "Mystery Schools" within Freemasonry.

Throughout the second half of the book, MacNulty discusses topics such as the Christian Biblical origin of modern Freemasonry, the relationship between atheists and Freemasons, Jungian psychological principles and their connection to the three degrees as well as the concept of separation of church and state, which many think was introduced by America's Founding Fathers.

In *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol*, MacNulty does an excellent job of introducing the reader to the history of Freemasonry, walking them through the formation of lodges and then spending time through text and illustrations to show the symbolism of the first three degrees of Freemasonry. If you are interested in history, philosophy and esotericism, then this is the right book for you. A short read with many illustrations, this book will be one you will keep on your bookshelf for many years to come.

W. Kirk MacNulty's involvement in Freemasonry spans more than fifty-five years. He received the degrees of Masonry in 1961 at Carson Valley Lodge No. 33 of Gardnerville, Nevada. He later affiliated with lodges in Hawaii, Tennessee, England, and Virginia. He was Worshipful Master of the Lodge of Living Stones No. 4957 in Leeds, England, in 1979, 1980, and 1991. He is the Charter Master (1997) of the Lodge of the Nine Muses No. 1776, a Traditional Observance Lodge in the District of Columbia. His literary efforts have earned outstanding recognition. In 2008, he was received as a member of London's prestigious Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, the world's premier lodge of research. In 2016, he was recognized as a Fellow of the Philalethes Society for his many contributions to the literature of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol is available through amazon.com or from most online book sellers.

Reviewed by S. Bradley Drew

Past Master, Latonia Lodge No. 746 and Junior Warden of William O. Ware Lodge of Research.