

WILLIAM O. WARE LODGE OF RESEARCH

BOOK REVIEW

THE LOST RITES AND RITUALS OF FREEMASONRY

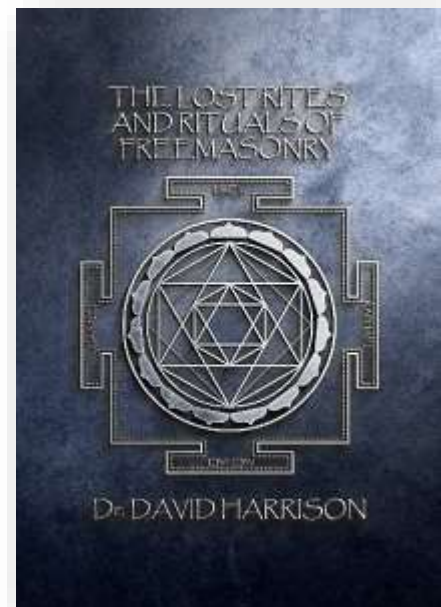
Author: David Harrison

Reviewed by Thomas L. Nitschke II, Master, William O. Ware Lodge of Research

When given the task of writing a book review for William O. Ware Lodge of Research, I chose a book from my personal collection that I have in my queue to read. As it is a smaller book, I thought it would be a quick read. I could not, however, have been more wrong.

Reading *The Lost Rites and Rituals of Freemasonry*, by Brother and Doctor David Harrison, was an intellectual challenge that I did not anticipate. The content in this book far exceeded my initial perceptions, and is best described as treasure trove of Masonic history that will assuredly leave the reader wanting to delve deeper into the content. Brother Harrison is a Masonic scholar from England, and writes extensively on English Freemasonry. He takes you on a literary journey of 18th century Rites, their development, and those responsible for their creation and for some, their resurrection in the 19th century. He also goes into detail, later in the book, to describe Craft ritual before the union of the Ancients and Moderns in 1813, along with forgotten symbols of the Craft.

The 18th century was a time of enlightenment, and Freemasonry was a powerful force in the minds of the men who practiced its tenets. As Freemasonry was developing in this period, many Brothers were on a quest to find deeper meaning in (and to) the rituals. The creation of rituals and corresponding degrees were a way for these Brothers to find philosophical and spiritual meaning and discover lost knowledge. From Cagliostro's Egyptian Rite to The Rite of Perfection and the Order of the Royal Secret, so many Rites and degrees were created to satisfy the insatiable appetite for hidden knowledge. As the century drew to a close, many of these were lost to time due to falling out of favor, or the fact that those who led them died. In the 19th century, however, many of these Rites were rediscovered by Masonic researchers such as John Yarker and Arthur Edward Waite. They sought to find hidden lost knowledge from these 18th century Rites. In the latter part of this book, Brother Harrison delves into Craft ritual before the Union of 1813 and its influences on English Freemasonry. In the closing pages of this book, Brother Harrison discusses lost symbols of Freemasonry that either have fallen out of favor, or have fallen into disuse as the ritual has changed. Although they may be lost to



time or favor, their importance is well worth the investigation into their meaning and relevance to Freemasonry.

I highly recommend *The Lost Rites and Rituals of Freemasonry*. This book, due to its in-depth content, is a must for the serious Masonic researcher, or those interested in the formation and history of Craft ritual, degrees, and symbols. Without a doubt, you will find yourself re-reading passages and finding content for deeper exploration.

The Lost Rites and Rituals of Freemasonry is available from Amazon.