

1717 and Yahweh: encrypted year?

According to the official history of Freemasonry, the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster was founded on 24 June 1717, St John's Day. Recent research has shown that speculative Freemasonry was probably founded in 1721, the year of the writing of Anderson's Constitutions published in 1723. But from the 18th to the 20th century, 1717 was not questioned in any case.

As everything is a symbol in Masonry, the number "1717" could have a cryptic meaning based on the Kabbalah that was very much in vogue in the 17th and 18th centuries. Let's insist that for every Freemason, the symbolic Temple of Solomon is omnipresent and the sacred words are often of Hebrew origin¹.



The Hebrew double consonant "Hē" comes from the sacred tetragrammaton YHWH, which is deemed unpronounceable (יהוה) and translates as Jehovah for Catholics and Yahweh for Protestants of which Anderson, the author of the *Constitutions*, was part. The outline of this letter resembles a window, an opening for the soul to God, who is present in everything, but also to Knowledge. It symbolises the divine breath, the creative energy or Holy Spirit, the power of the Word and the higher soul in the making. But it is also the accomplished work. It is the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, five being linked to the victory of spirit over matter and to quintessence.

Therefore, the letter "Yod" is the initial of the Tetragrammaton. This letter symbolizes God or pure knowledge. It exerts a decisive influence at the heart of the Wisdom represented by the «Hē».

Analogical thinking might find a similarity with the spelling of the year "1717" (the 7 is written without a bar in English), the year in which Freemasonry was officially externalised in London. The symbolic and even magical world still permeated 18th century society. As this passage from 1751 shows:

The cabala [kabbalah] is divided into contemplative and practical [magic]. The first is the science of explaining Sacred Scripture in accordance with secret tradition, and thus discovering sublime truths about God, spirits and worlds: it teaches a mystical metaphysics and a refined physics².

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1 The outline of this hypothesis was circulated in 2018 in the form of a brochure and a pdf document entitled *Le Quartier Royal de Bruxelles: une forêt de symboles*.

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2 *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, t. II, Paris, 1751, art. « Cabale » par E.-F. Mallet, p. 477.

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