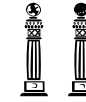


Ronald Heaton goes as far as to say that the Craft was more influential than any other institution in the establishment of the United States:

*Neither general historians nor the members of the Fraternity since the days of the first Constitutional Conventions have realized how much the United States of America owes to Freemasonry, and how great a part it played in the birth of the nation and the establishment of the landmarks of that civilization.*⁶¹

Incidentally, Heaton's mention of the establishment of landmarks brings us to another of the major themes of *The Lost Symbol*: the esoteric architecture of Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER 4



STRANGE CONSTRUCTIONS

As we saw at the start of the last chapter, the beginning of construction work in the United States capital was heavily flavored with Masonic overtones. With local lodges presiding over cornerstone ceremonies, and the President himself being a Freemason, it would appear that the building of Washington, D.C. may have been strongly influenced by the culture of the Craft. That Dan Brown weaved this architecture into the plotline of *The Lost Symbol* is no great surprise – both of Brown's previous Robert Langdon novels used the art and architecture of well-known cities to good advantage. In *Angels and Demons* Langdon follows the 'Way of Light' marked by the sculptures of Bernini, with many other references to the architecture of Rome spread throughout the book. In *The Da Vinci Code*, Brown used the art of the Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci, as well as some of the esoteric themes in Parisian architecture (and Rosslyn towards the end of the book).

Surprisingly, Dan Brown only revealed the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the hidden history of the capital. In some

cases he barely mentions monuments which could have featured prominently – such as the George Washington Masonic Memorial – while at other times he portrays some fascinating aspects simply as the imagination of ‘conspiracy theorists’. And there are a number of other locations worthy of inclusion which never made it into the pages of *The Lost Symbol*. Let’s dig a little deeper.

DESIGNING HISTORY

The site of Washington, D.C. was selected during a dinner between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, with Jefferson agreeing to support Hamilton’s federal financial plans in exchange for land dedicated to a capital. The states of Virginia and Maryland donated the necessary land, and in 1790 the site was designated as the District of Columbia, with the capital taking its name from George Washington.

The city plan was originally designed by the Frenchman Pierre Charles L’Enfant, who had served in the Revolutionary War after arriving with Lafayette. Dan Brown claims in *The Lost Symbol* that L’Enfant was a Freemason, possibly referencing David Ovason’s book about Washington, D.C., *The Sacred Architecture of Our Nation’s Capital*, which is one of the few books to make this claim. However, Ovason’s source for this claim is hardly rock-solid. “The discovery of the manuscript revealing this information has not yet been reported in the Masonic literature,” Ovason remarks in the endnotes of his book. “[C]onsequently I do not feel free to reveal the source of this information, which came to me by way of private conversation.” It might therefore be worth taking this particular claim with a grain of salt.

In any case, L’Enfant was dismissed from his position early on in the project due to personality conflicts. The emotional Frenchman

took his design drawings with him when he left, but the plan was still reproduced reasonably faithfully from the memory of those who continued with the project. An astronomer and surveyor, Andrew Ellicott, took over from L’Enfant, with both Jefferson and Washington contributing ideas. On April 15, 1791, Dr. E. C. Dick, the Worshipful Master of Alexandria Lodge, No. 22, with the assistance of his Masonic brothers, laid the cornerstone of the District of Columbia – the stone being located, as per tradition, at the southeast corner of the Federal District, at Jones’s Point.

Washington, D.C. is divided into four quadrants, marked by the cardinal directions, with the center point being the Capitol building. However, as the Capitol is not at the center of the district, the quadrants are unequal in size. L’Enfant’s plan for Washington, D.C. includes many diagonal avenues which are named after the states, probably the most famous of which is Pennsylvania Avenue which connects the White House and the Capitol. In the original plan, the Capitol, the White House and the Washington Monument form a right-angled triangle.

As a side note, the White House used to be called the Presidential Mansion, until it was burned by the British during a raid in 1814 – along with the Capitol and the bridge across the Potomac. As a consequence, white paint was used to disguise the blackened walls, and from that point on it was referred to as the White House.

WASHINGTON AND THE SACRED FEMININE

In *The Lost Symbol*, Dan Brown has Langdon explain to his class the importance of astrology on the starting date of construction of the Capitol building: “What if I told you that precise moment was chosen by three famous Masons – George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Pierre L’Enfant, the primary architect for D.C.?”



'Quadrants' of Washington, D.C. – the Capitol Building is at the center point

Quite simply, the cornerstone was set at that date and time because, among other things, the auspicious Caput Draconis was in Virgo...the cornerstones of the three structures that make up Federal Triangle – the Capitol, the White House, the Washington Monument – were all laid in different years but were carefully timed to occur under this exact same astrological condition.

As mentioned above, there is only one prominent author that says L'Enfant was a Freemason – David Ovason, in his book *The Secret Architecture of Our Nation's Capital*. And the above passage from *The Lost Symbol* indicates that this book was in fact Dan Brown's source, as the Caput Draconis conjunction is one of its major themes. Ovason analyzed some twenty zodiacs found in Washington, D.C., as well as the astrological charts for important days in the construction of the capital, and discovered that construction of the capital seems to have been ruled by the veneration of the constellation Virgo:

The imagery of Virgo as ruler of Washington, D.C. is reflected in the considerable number of Zodiacs and lapidary symbols which grace the city. The Virgoan connection has also been emphasized in a number of foundation charts which are of fundamental importance to Washington, D.C.⁶²

Ovason echoes Langdon's "coincidence" rebuttal when he states plainly, that "whoever was directing the planning of Washington, D.C., not only had a considerable knowledge of astrology, but had a vested interest in emphasizing the role of the sign Virgo...It seems that whichever way we look in connection with the building of Washington, D.C., the beautiful Virgin always shows her face." Given this reference,

it's quite surprising that Dan Brown didn't riff on this as a continuation of the wildly successful 'Sacred Feminine' meme from *The Da Vinci Code*.

In fact, Ovason and others have also raised the famous Craft image of the 'Monument to a Master Mason' as evidence that the 'sacred feminine' is a vital part of the Masonic tradition. It portrays a virgin standing above a broken column, with a sprig of acacia in her hand, and Father Time standing behind her, sometimes touching her hair. However, some have debunked this claim, with one Masonic source refuting Ovason with the following words:

*Ovason's theory stands or falls on the assumption...that freemasons held similar views about astrology that he does, and that Freemasonry places any significance in Virgo...his assumptions are unproven and his theory fails to pass any reasonable examination.*⁶³

While some Freemasons have criticized what they see as Ovason's 'mumbo-jumbo' approach in finding significance in astrological charts, others have rightly pointed out that there is a definite history of Freemasons casting horoscopes before the commencement of construction activities. For example, in their book *Talisman*, Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval confide that, after the devastation of the Great Fire of London in 1666, the early Mason Elias Ashmole was consulted about the most favorable dates for the laying of the cornerstones of important buildings.⁶⁴

However, another area of Ovason's research regarding the geometry of Washington, D.C. is also of great interest. He points out a fascinating painting of the Washington family, by Edward Savage, which shows three members of the family discretely outlining a triangular area on a map of Washington with



Washington Family Portrait by Edward Savage

disguised hand placement.⁶⁵ Is this triangle indicating a certain location within the capital, or is it a sly 'nod of the head' to Craft members via the outline of a Masonic compass (note the looped fingers at the top of the 'triangle')? Note too that in this picture we find Washington's grandson holding a Masonic compass above a globe, as well as a checkerboard floor – both distinctly Masonic motifs. As this painting hangs in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., it's a real shame that Dan Brown didn't have Robert Langdon dropping in to take a look, given his penchant for coded messages in paintings!

STREETS AND SYMBOLS

Many conspiracy theorists have pointed out other specific geometry which they say was also a part of the original design

of the capital. Some see the Masonic square and compass design in L'Enfant's diagonal street plans (see Appendix 3) – the Capitol being the top of the compass with each leg leading to the White House and the Jefferson Memorial. Others have pointed out a 'Satanic' upside-down pentagram which can be traced to the north of the White House, with the lowest point of the symbol beginning at the Presidential residence and the Scottish Rite's House of the Temple standing at the opposite end. This is generally seen as one of the more hysterical conspiracy theories, and gets the short shrift it deserves in *The Lost Symbol*, with Robert Langdon dismissing it with the explanation "if you draw enough intersecting lines on a map, you're bound to find all kinds of shapes." Rather a change in attitude from his previous jaunts around Paris and Rome, it must be said!

On a slightly more orthodox note, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh make quick mention of the street plan in their book about the history of Freemasonry, *The Temple and the Lodge*. All that they say is that the Capitol and the White House were each focal points of an "elaborate geometry governing the layout" of Washington, D.C. They also mention that the original design of L'Enfant was modified by Washington and Jefferson to produce octagonal patterns reminiscent of the insignia cross of the Knights Templar.

Authors Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval also mention the possibility of an intentional alignment along Pennsylvania Avenue, between the White House and the site of the Capitol building (Jenkins Hill), with the rising of the brightest star in the sky, Sirius. The heliacal rising of Sirius was of great importance to the ancient Egyptians, as it signified their New Year. The star was also closely associated with the great goddess of ancient Egypt, Isis – yet another tie-in to the sacred feminine. Hancock and Bauval point out that any observer looking along Pennsylvania Avenue at dawn in 1793 would have seen Sirius

'hovering' over the proposed site of the Capitol, a feature they believe could not have been missed by individuals like the astronomer Ellicott:

That such portentous astral symbolism could have gone unnoticed by the group of important Freemasons and astronomers who planned Washington and decided the locations of its principal structures, seems most unlikely.⁶⁶

In *Talisman*, Hancock and Bauval also suggest that the street-plan of Washington, D.C. deliberately incorporates the Kabbalistic 'Tree of Life' symbol (although truthfully, one could just as easily see the 'Rosy Cross' that Dan Brown uses in *The Lost Symbol*). They see the Capitol building as the 'head' of the esoteric symbol (designated as 'Kether'), with the Tree of Life unfolding to the west. They see the focal point of this design at a point within this giant shape corresponding to the Kabbalistic sephirah of 'Tipheret', and like Dan Brown it is the gigantic obelisk of the Washington Monument.⁶⁷ Whether or not this correspondence was planned, it is worth looking more closely at this monument, modeled on the impressive landmarks of ancient Egypt.

THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

The cornerstone of the Washington Monument, an eleven ton block of Maryland marble, was formally laid by Grandmaster Benjamin B. French of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia on Sunday July 4th, 1848. He is said to have worn George Washington's Masonic apron and sash, and held the same Mason's gavel that Washington had used when laying the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol on September 18th, 1793.⁶⁸



The Washington Monument

The idea of a monument to honor Washington was first conceived of and voted on by Congress in 1783, a full sixteen years before his death! It was originally proposed that “a Marble monument be erected by the United States in the Capitol, at the City of Washington, and that the family of George Washington be requested to permit his body to be to be deposited under it.”⁶⁹ However, the refusal of the Washington family to move the former President’s body after his death in December 1799 meant that the project was continually shelved.

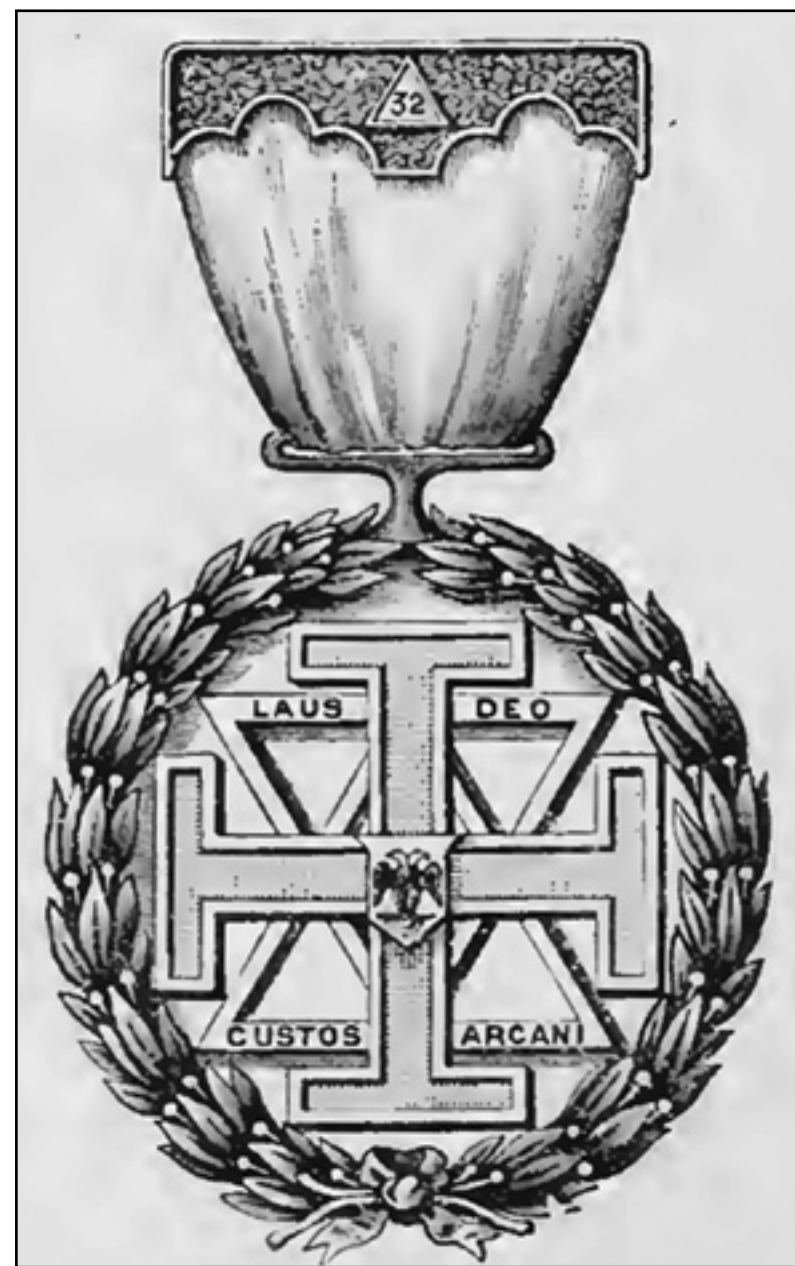
Public displeasure at the failure of the government to create a lasting memorial for Washington finally resulted in the creation of the Washington National Monument Society, which set about raising the funds necessary through private sources. Congress set aside an area of land for the monument, and it was decided to build it at a point which aligned due south of the White House and due west of the Capitol – incidentally, a location that the original designer of Washington, D.C., Pierre L’Enfant, had marked out for a monument to Washington. However, unsuitable ground meant that it was shifted 100 yards to the south-east of this point, somewhat spoiling the alignment – though Dan Brown fails to acknowledge this when he mentions towards the end of *The Lost Symbol* that it is “due south” of the House of the Temple (nitpicking, I know).

The monument was originally planned as an obelisk 600 feet in height, with a flat apex surmounted by a ‘blazing 5-pointed star’ – a distinctly Masonic symbol. The base of the monument was planned to have a surrounding ‘pantheon’ of marble columns 100 feet high. However, shortly after the beginning of construction the planned height was reduced to 500 feet, and a pyramidion was substituted for the blazing star. Then, when the Society began to run short on resources, a plan was instituted whereby other states and countries could contribute blocks of marble (or other durable stones) to the project from their own soil.

This resulted in one of the more famous incidents in the history of the Washington Monument. The Vatican, led by Pope Pius IX, contributed a block of historic marble from the Temple of Concord in Rome, approximately 3 feet long, 10 inches thick and 18 inches high. However, the xenophobic and anti-Catholic ‘American Party’ (also popularly known as the ‘Know-Nothings’) took umbrage with the outside contribution, and vowed that the stone would never become a part of the Washington Monument.

On March 6th 1854 the “Pope’s Stone”, as it has come to be known, was stolen. A \$100 reward was posted for its return, but the stone was never recovered. The most popular theory is that it was dumped into the nearby Potomac River, although another theory states that it was buried at the intersection of two streets in Washington, D.C.

The monument’s construction continued to stutter forward, until in 1876 Congress decided enough was enough, appropriating two million dollars to finish the job. Concerns that the base of the monument was not large enough to support the towering obelisk above it led to a change in the building plans, removing many planned elements (including the pantheon and numerous columns). Instead, the base was increased in size (concealing the cornerstone forever), and the focus became the massive, solitary obelisk. The idea for a pyramidion was added at this stage, and to mimic the pyramid depicted in the Great Seal, it was constructed out of 13 rows of marble. Durable aluminium sheeting then covered the pyramidion, along with the inscription *The Lost Symbol* has now made famous, *Laus Deo*: “Praise God”. It was lifted into place in 1884, more than a century after Congress had first proposed the monument to George Washington. (Incidentally, a point that Dan Brown didn’t note is that the phrase *Laus Deo* also turns up in Scottish Rite Freemasonry; see the accompanying image of a Scottish Rite jewel as an example.)



Jewel of the Past Commander in Chief featuring the phrase ‘Laus Deo’



Washington Monument during construction, ca. 1861

As an aside, I predicted many years ago that the Washington Monument would be a focal point of the sequel to *The Da Vinci Code*. For in that book, Brown inexplicably measures the length of the Grand Gallery in the Louvre as “three Washington Monuments laid end to end.” Given Brown’s concurrent research on multiple novels, and the attraction of using a monument with inherent Egyptian symbolism and importance to the landscape of the capital, it was an obvious choice.

SCOTTISH RITE AND THE HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE

Another location that features prominently in *The Lost Symbol* is the headquarters of the ‘Mother Supreme Council’ of 33rd Degree Masonry (Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite), which is located at 1733 16th Street NW in Washington, D.C. Modeled on the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus – one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World – this building, known as the ‘House of the Temple’, was designed in 1911 by the famous

architect John Russell Pope and is covered in Egyptian symbols such as the Sphinx, the Ankh and the Uraeus.⁷⁰

David Ovason points out that the great tower which tops the House of the Temple is a replica of the truncated pyramid which famously decorates the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States – right down to the detail of being constructed out of 13 courses of stonework⁷¹ – just as the pyramidion atop the Washington Monument does. The building had two architects: with Pope not being a Freemason, a 32nd Degree Mason named Elliott Woods was also employed to work on the building. Woods’ Masonic expertise was obviously necessary for the correct interior design of the Masonic temple. Ovason notes that Pope’s original design had many more than 13 courses for the pyramid, but it is not known who made the decision to modify the plan.

The “Illuminati” pyramid atop the building is just one element among many that make it a perfect Dan Brown location. From the outside, this imposing edifice just screams ‘secret society’ (if that’s not a complete contradiction in terms). Two sentinels guard the front entrance – huge stone sphinxes weighing 17 tons apiece, and carrying the names ‘Wisdom’ and ‘Power’ – behind which 33 Ionic columns, each 33 feet high, give the building a Classical look whilst symbolizing the number of degrees in the Scottish Rite. Entry is gained via a (suitably opulent-looking) bronze door, giving access to the stunning Atrium, the “central court of the Temple, where visitors are welcomed and given their first view of the majesty of the Temple’s design and architecture.” And majestic it is: paved with marble and lined by eight huge Doric columns of polished green Windsor granite. The limestone walls are decorated with bronze plaques bearing Masonic emblems. Alabaster bowls atop bronze lamps cast a soft glow upon the room.

Egyptian statues carved from marble guard the access to the Grand Staircase, while to each side we find the Executive

Chamber and the House of the Temple's library, which houses more than 250,000 volumes. Incidentally, Dan Brown was not writing fiction when he wrote about the 'pyramid illusion' in the library – you can see it for yourself if you visit the Scottish Rite website and view their images of the library.⁷²

Ascending the Grand Staircase we are confronted with a bust of the 'father' of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, former confederate general Albert Pike. Engraved in the stone above the bust is a famous quote from Pike: "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us: What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal."

On the third floor we find the Temple Room – one of the prime locations in *The Lost Symbol*. Again, the opulence of the room stuns the eye. The floor is a mosaic created from tens of thousands of tiny marble cubes; the furniture is made from Russian Walnut, with brown pigskin upholstery and finished with black and gold leaf. This finishing scheme matches the central Altar, which is made from black and gold marble. One hundred



Scottish Rite 'House of the Temple'

feet above the Altar is the huge polygonal skylight which figures in the final chapters of Dan Brown's novel. A black marble frieze on the wall surrounds the Temple Room, and is inscribed with the following words in bronze: "From the outer darkness of ignorance through the shadows of our earth life, winds the beautiful path of initiation unto the divine light of the holy altar."

Finished in 1915, the building was quickly regarded as a classic work. The January 1916 issue of the *London Architectural Review* praised John Russell Pope's design, noting that "this monumental composition may surely be said to have reached the high-water mark of achievement in that newer interpretation of the Classic style with which modern American architecture is closely identified." Pope also designed many other architectural masterpieces around Washington, D.C., including the Jefferson Memorial, the National Archives, and National Gallery of Art.

Right from the outset, Scottish Rite Freemasonry plays a major part in *The Lost Symbol*: before even opening the book, the cover image jumps out at the reader, with the wax seal impressed with the 'Double-Headed Eagle' emblem of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. Then, the opening pages detail an initiation being held at the 'House of the Temple'. Of all the different flavors of Freemasonry, Scottish Rite has perhaps the most modern conspiracy theories associated with it – so it might be worth a quick diversion here through some of the order's colorful history.

The motto that appears on the Scottish Rite seal, *Ordo ab Chao*, is just one of a number that accompany the double-headed eagle emblem. The conspiracy-flavored book *Rule By Secrecy*, by Jim Marrs – an acknowledged source for some of Dan Brown's recent research – has this to say about the motto:

The Masonic slogan Ordo ab Chao, or Order out of Chaos, generally is regarded as referring to the order's attempt to bring an order of knowledge to the chaos of the various

human beliefs and philosophies in the world – a New World Order.

Conspiracy author Epperson explained that the slogan actually means the “order’ of Lucifer will replace the ‘chaos’ of God.” Author Texe Marrs places his interpretation on a more mundane level, writing that Ordo ab Chao is a “Secret Doctrine of the Illuminati” based on the Hegelian concept that “crisis leads to opportunity.” Marrs stated, “They work to invent chaos, to generate anger and frustration on the part of humans and thus, take advantage of peoples’ desperate need for order.”

Perhaps the main focus of conspiracy theories to do with the Scottish Rite though is Albert Pike, whose body is interred within the House of the Temple. The privileged resting place is a testament to Pike’s contribution to the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction – he recomposed the forgotten rituals of the group, and was the presiding Sovereign Grand Commander of the group from 1859 until his death in 1891.

A lawyer and newspaper editor, Pike also authored a number of books on Freemasonry. The best known of these is *Morals and Dogma*, a book which was meant as a supplement to the rituals he designed for the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction. The content is a rambling commentary on ancient cultures and comparative religion, and the book was given to each initiate after they gained entrance to the 14th degree. It’s interesting to note that one section of Pike’s treatise is concerned with the similarities between the myths and iconography of the Egyptian goddess Isis, and the subsequent Marian tradition of Christianity.

Morals and Dogma has gained quite a reputation among conspiracy theorists and anti-Masons, due largely to the fraudulent writings of a Frenchman calling himself Léo Taxil (real name Gabriel Pagès). After originally writing a number of anti-Catholic

tracts, Taxil subsequently turned his attention to Freemasonry, and focused particularly on Albert Pike. He fraudulently attributed to Pike the worship of Lucifer, and designated him as the ‘Sovereign Pontiff of Universal Freemasonry’. Taxil claimed the existence of an ultra-secret sect of Masons named Palladium. However, in 1897 he revealed that his writings were hoaxes (we’ll return to Taxil in a later chapter).

Nevertheless, there are many sections of *Morals and Dogma* which show that Pike was very interested in the occult, and his writings on the ‘Luciferian philosophy’ have no doubt provided plenty of fuel for anti-Masons. However, it is important to note that Pike’s reverence for the Luciferian principle was not referring to the the Christian idea of ‘Lucifer the devil’, but instead to the Classical definition of Lucifer: ‘the shining one’ (for example, the ancient Romans named the morning star, Venus, as Lucifer). That is, Pike was a seeker of ‘the light’, another name for knowledge.

Pike also appeared to believe in a ‘hierarchy of knowing’, and wrote with disdain on much of Blue Masonry (the first three degrees). For instance:

The Blue Degrees are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations...their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry...Masonry is the veritable Sphinx, buried to the head in the sands heaped round it by the ages.

Pike’s writings show that he was deeply interested in the Kabbalah and other strands of Hermetic thinking. In fact, the historian of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction sees the 32 degrees of the order as being based upon the ‘32 paths of wisdom’ in the Kabbalah.

Pike also sided with the anti-Catholic thinking of many of the medieval occultists and scientists:

Masonry is a search after Light. That search leads us directly back, as you see, to the Kabbalah. In that ancient and little understood medley of absurdity and philosophy, the Initiate will find the source of doctrines; and may in time come to understand the Hermetic philosophers, the Alchemist, all the Anti-Papal thinkers of the Middle Ages...

Beyond these controversial philosophies however, Albert Pike is also embroiled in another, far stranger debate. In 1993, a group petitioned the Council of the District of Columbia to remove a statue of Albert Pike that sits in Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C. Their request was made on the basis that Albert Pike was one of the founders of the infamous Ku Klux Klan.

The Ku Klux Klan organization that we recognize today, replete with burning crosses, white hoods and lynch mobs, is actually the third incarnation of a group originally founded in Tennessee in 1865, after the end of the American Civil War. Confederate veterans originally created the group to achieve a number of goals: to aid Confederate widows and orphans of the war, to oppose the extension of voting rights to Blacks, and also to fight other ‘impositions’ on the southern states during the Reconstruction. According to John J. Robinson, author of *Born in Blood*:

The single All-Seeing Eye of Masonry became the Grand Cyclops. There were hand signals, secret passwords, secret handgrips and recognition signals, even a sacred oath, all adapted from Masonic experience. Some Klansmen even boasted of official connections between the Klan and Freemasonry.

However, the group became known for its use of violence to achieve some of its goals, and in 1871 President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Klan Act, which authorized the use of force to end the terrorist actions of the Klan. This legislation heralded the end of the original Klan, although it was to rise again from the discontent brewing at the start of the 20th century.

The second incarnation of the KKK arrived during World War I, and was a far more successful affair. Many whites living in poverty were drawn to the group through the propaganda that their living conditions were caused by Blacks, Jews, Catholics and foreigners. The group claimed influence in the highest circles of government, allegedly inducting former President Warren Harding, and also almost wooing former President (and 33rd Degree Mason) Harry Truman. At its peak, the KKK boasted some four million members.

The most recent group going under the name of the Ku Klux Klan was not founded until after World War II, and is in essence an organization formed in response to the fledgling civil rights movement of that time. Though it shares commonalities with the original KKK, such as the desire for segregation of races, it



Ku Klux Klan march, Pennsylvania Avenue 1928

is in reality a very separate group. Any attempt to discredit Pike on the basis of his alleged role in the original KKK therefore is not really worthy of consideration, as we must consider that Pike's thinking was shared by most people in the southern states at that time (although that certainly does not validate their philosophy!). It's also worth noting that Pike was an early supporter of the rights of Native Americans.

But was Pike even involved with the original Ku Klux Klan? The only evidence linking him with the group are the writings of a number of pro-Confederate historians from the turn of the century. There is no direct evidence that he founded the group, and it must be remembered that these historians tended to glorify the Confederate role, including the Ku Klux Klan.

Nevertheless, there is some strange history linking Albert Pike with the first incarnation of the KKK. When the anti-Catholic 'Know-Nothings' group – responsible for the theft of the 'Pope Stone' in the Washington monument – dissolved, one of its members formed a new organization. The 'Knights of the Golden Circle' was formed by a 'Know-Nothing' from Virginia named George Bickley in 1856, although others have claimed that Albert Pike himself formed the group. Its aim was American (or more correctly, Southern) expansionism: a circle on the globe some 16 degrees in radius, and centered on Havana in Cuba, was earmarked as territory that should become part of America. This circle included Mexico, Central America and even some of South America. It is alleged that the infamous outlaw Jesse James was a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle.⁷³

A curious aspect of Bickley's plan was his use of the number 32. He set up 32 local chapters of his new group, and the 'golden circle' itself was 32 degrees in diameter. The KGC army was also to be composed of two divisions of 16,000 soldiers each – 32,000 altogether. Is there a link here to General Pike? As we have already noted, the 32 normal degrees of Scottish Rite

Masonry, devised by Albert Pike, are said to have their basis in the 32 paths of wisdom in the Kabbalah.

In their book *Shadow of the Sentinel*, Bob Brewer and Warren Getler describe how the Knights of the Golden Circle amassed a fortune through various means, and how they hid this treasure in secret caches when the group had to go underground. The knowledge of the whereabouts of the treasure was hidden in a series of complex ciphers, waiting to be reclaimed by initiates when the time was right. Certainly prime fodder for a Dan Brown plot, although the fact that the KGC turned up in the movie *National Treasure 2* would likely make it too 'old hat' for him to use in a future novel.

It is alleged that the Knights of the Golden Circle eventually morphed into the original Ku Klux Klan. There is circumstantial evidence to support this: they shared many of the same goals, were both based on Confederate idealism, and 'Ku Klux' is actually derived from the Greek work *kyklos*, meaning 'circle' (literally, 'Circle Clan'). Note too that the Know-Nothings, the Knights of the Golden Circle, Pike's Scottish Rite Masonry and the Ku Klux Klan all shared a dislike of Catholicism. Many Masons were members of the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan, a fact which led the leaders of Freemasonry to purposefully distance themselves from an official affiliation.

The distrust of the Catholic Church by Scottish Rite Masons has continued into more recent history. In 1960, the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, wrote an article concerning the possible election of John F. Kennedy, a Catholic, as President. The article appeared in the February 1960 issue of *New Age*, a Scottish Rite publication:

Whatever bigotry is in evidence in the United States is exhibited solely by the Roman Catholic hierarchy...the dual

allegiance of American Catholics is a present danger to our free institutions...among American citizens there should be no question or suspicion of allegiance to any foreign power, but in the case of the Roman Catholic citizen, his church is the guardian of his conscience and asserts that he must obey its laws and decrees even if they are in conflict with the Constitution and laws of the United States.

The more fervent conspiracy theorists have taken this statement, in combination with the relatively large number of Masons involved in the JFK assassination investigation, to concoct the theory that Freemasonry (or better still, the Illuminati) was responsible for the former President's murder. However, we must remember that the anti-Catholic sentiments we read here were actually shared by the majority of Protestant Americans at the time.

ROSE-LINE OF WASHINGTON?

There is an oblique relationship between the location of the House of the Temple and *The Da Vinci Code* which Dan Brown could have incorporated into *The Lost Symbol* if he desired. In *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown remarked about the 'Rose-Line' and the meridian of Paris which passes through St Sulpice. Dr Steven Mizrach, an anthropologist at Florida International University and a respected researcher of the Priory of Sion mystery, points out that – like Paris – the U.S. capital once had its own meridian:

Apparently, DC was originally designed so that 16th Street would be its original north-south meridian – and this meridian was going to be the “zero meridian” of the United States. After Greenwich was made the international meridian, DC and

Paris both renounced their claims. Today, DC uses Capitol Street as its N-S axis, but certain monuments, especially those in Meridian Hill Park, point to the older axis.⁷⁴

The Scottish Rite's 'House of the Temple', with its 16th Street location, is also located on this same meridian. A book titled *The Jefferson Stone – Demarcation of the First Meridian of the United States*, by Silvio A. Bedini, tells how Thomas Jefferson was a driving force behind the effort to establish a prime meridian in America. This meridian was designated as passing through the mid-point of the White House. A plaque commemorating this abandoned proposal still stands today at the upper entrance to Meridian Hill Park, entered from 16th street, on the site of a previous marker established in 1816.⁷⁵ Given the ending of *The Lost Symbol*, and the direction given of 'due south' to the Washington Monument, one wonders if this meridian idea was originally a part of the novel, but was at some stage edited out.

THE PENTAGON

The Pentagon is worthy of a mention purely on the basis of its geometric construction. The five-sided shape of the building is a notable geometric figure, and also has the quality of neatly enclosing the 'magical' symbol of the pentagram (five-pointed star). Dan Brown showed his affinity for the 'Golden Section' within the pentagram in *The Da Vinci Code*, so it's surprising we didn't find a monologue regarding the headquarters of the U.S. military in *The Lost Symbol*. The pentagram symbol was first found in ancient Egypt, as a hieroglyph denoting 'star' (and by relation, the heavens).

It is said that the distinctive shape of the building arose from the problematic shape of the location originally proposed as the

building site. However, a different location was later chosen, which raises the question of why the strange design was retained when the new site had none of the restrictions of the original. Another reason given for the shape of the building is that it maximizes work efficiency by making every office accessible within a few minutes walk...although we might ask why a high-rise with elevators could not have achieved the same result. In any case, construction of the building began in July 1941.

Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval point out in *Talisman* that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who took control of the planning of the building, was raised as a Master Freemason in 1911 and in 1929 became a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason. He should therefore have been quite aware of one of Scottish Rite Masonry's key works, *Morals and Dogma* by Albert Pike, which associates the pentagon shape with the Masonic Blazing Star symbol.⁷⁶

GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC MEMORIAL

Located in the independent city of Alexandria in Virginia, some six miles south of Washington, D.C., is the George Washington National Masonic Memorial. The idea of erecting a Masonic memorial to George Washington was formulated by several members of Alexandria–Washington Lodge No. 22, which had lost numerous historical treasures in a series of fires. The Lodge decided to construct a fire-proof building to house the remaining Washington memorabilia given to them by the Washington family.

Construction of the Memorial was financed entirely by voluntary contributions from members of the Masonic Fraternity. As such, it is considered to belong to all Freemasons in the United States, regardless of their 'branch' affiliation. The cornerstone was laid on November 1st, 1923, but construction

proceeded only as funds became available. Thus, the Memorial was not dedicated until May 12th, 1932 – a moment described as “one of the most important and exciting events in the history of American Freemasonry.”

Given its explicit Masonic association, the Memorial would certainly have made a suitable location for an extended plot diversion in *The Lost Symbol*; as it turned out, it was only mentioned quickly as a literal diversion. Nevertheless, it deserves to be discussed: the building is a spectacular landmark standing 333 feet in height, and is said to have been modeled on the ancient Pharos lighthouse of Alexandria in Egypt (another of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, in the same vein as the House of the Temple's link with the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus). Visitors enter the building via 'Memorial Hall' on the second floor, and are greeted by a massive sculpture of George Washington wearing his Masonic apron, just in case you were in any doubt about the association between Freemasonry and the greatest name in American history. The various floors of the building would have offered wonderful locations for Dan Brown if he had chosen to use any of them. The fourth floor contains historic memorabilia related to both Masonry and the nation's first President, while the library on the sixth floor holds some 20,000 books on the Craft – an excellent resource if Robert Langdon had chosen to use it to rectify some of the deficiencies in his knowledge of Masonry!

Elsewhere in the building can be found a 'replica' of the crypt beneath King Solomon's Temple, as well as a replica of the Ark of the Covenant. And on the uppermost floor of the Memorial is a reconstruction of the Throne Room of King Solomon's Temple, surrounded by an observation deck which provides a panoramic view of the metropolitan Washington D.C. area.

Writing in the *Scottish Rite Journal* (Feb. 2001), 33rd Degree Mason George D. Seghers described the mission of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association:

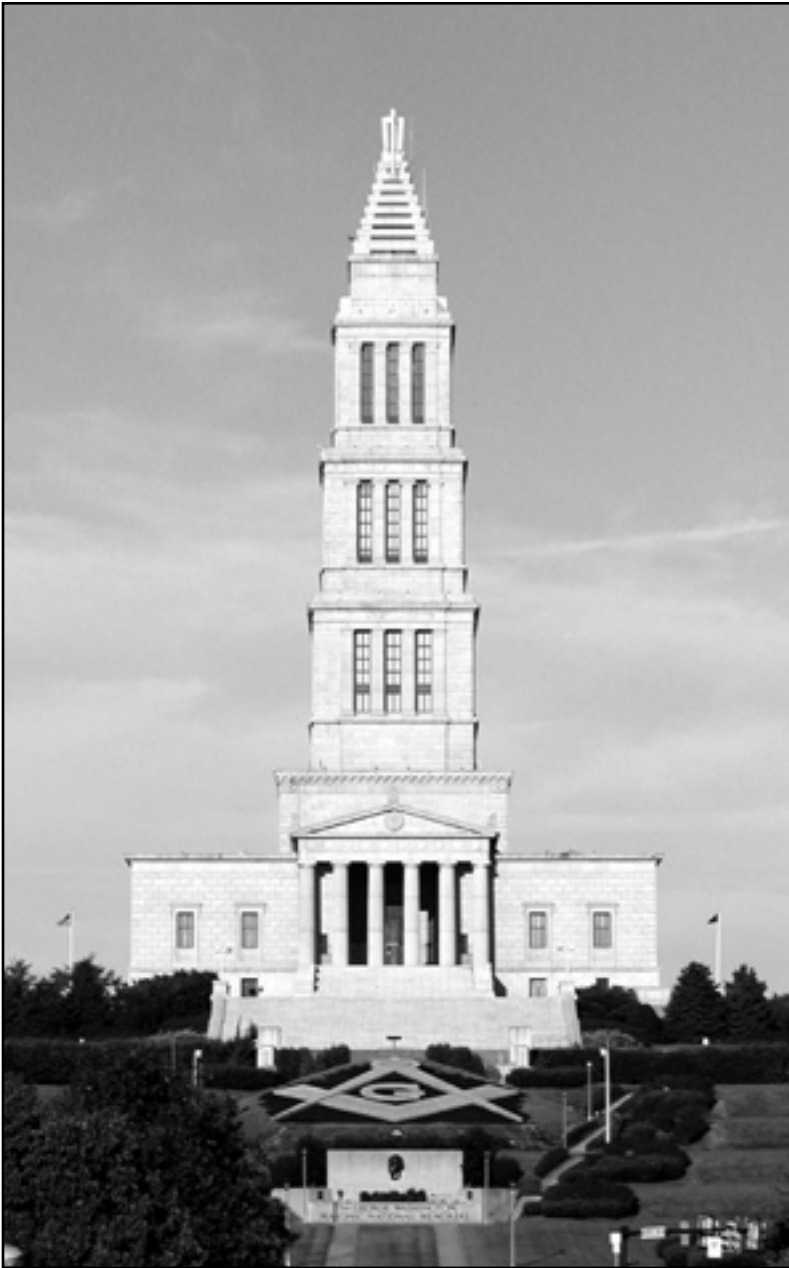
Our task today is not only to preserve the memory and legacy of George Washington but also to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the Masonic beliefs and ideals upon which this great nation was founded.

Seghers' words echo the basic plotline of *The Lost Symbol*: that the United States was founded upon, and continues to be influenced by, the ideals of Freemasonry. Between the Masonic books and relics housed there, and the 'copies' of King Solomon's Temple which can be found on the higher floors, the George Washington Masonic Memorial certainly would have provided a worthy setting for *The Lost Symbol*.

WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

Washington National Cathedral almost matches the Washington Monument in terms of the period over which it was constructed. The foundation stone was laid on September 29, 1907, in the presence of President (and Freemason) Theodore Roosevelt, using the mallet that George Washington used to lay the cornerstone of the Capitol with. The imposition of two world wars and the Great Depression delayed construction constantly, and the last finial wasn't placed until September 29, 1990 – 83 years to the day since construction began. It is the sixth largest cathedral in the world, and the fourth tallest structure in Washington, D.C. – though its elevated construction site means the *Gloria in Excelsis* Tower, at 91 m above the ground, is the highest point in Washington at 206 meters above sea level.

The cathedral was built with many intentional "flaws" – an architectural custom meant to illustrate the fact that only God can be perfect. Ironically, the built-in 'flaws' actually



George Washington National Masonic Memorial (© J. Alison)

compensate for the visual distortions which accompany the viewing of massive architecture, and thus actually make the building look ‘more perfect’.

Dan Brown did not invent the strange ornamentation mentioned in *The Lost Symbol*: Washington National Cathedral does indeed feature a Darth Vader grotesque, as well as a stained glass window featuring a piece of Moon rock. On a more serious note, the cathedral is also the last resting place of a number of prominent American individuals, including Hellen Keller and President Woodrow Wilson.



THE CAPITOL AND THE APOTHEOSIS OF WASHINGTON

The United States Capitol building has always been the centerpiece of Washington, D.C., right back to L’Enfant’s original plans. The French-born architect placed “Congress House” – soon to be renamed the Capitol on the insistence of Thomas Jefferson – on Jenkin’s Hill, the highest point in his city plan. Replaced in 1792 after a disagreement with George Washington, L’Enfant however never got to bring his plans to life, though his planned location was retained as the site of this majestic building.

A competition was announced by Thomas Jefferson in 1792 to try and fill L’Enfant’s shoes. The winning entry was a design by architect William Thornton, drawing inspiration from the Louvre in Paris and the Pantheon in Rome. However, several modifications were subsequently made, perhaps most notably by Freemason Benjamin Latrobe.

As previously mentioned, the cornerstone of the Capitol was laid by George Washington on September 18, 1793. Descending into the trench wearing his Masonic apron, Washington deposited

a silver plate, and then laid upon it the cornerstone of the Capitol, followed by the standard Masonic ‘offerings’ of corn, wine and oil. The following words were inscribed upon the silver plate:

This South East Corner Stone, of the Capitol of the United States of America in the City of Washington, was laid on the 18th day of September, 1793, in the Thirteenth year of American Independence, in the first year of the second term of the Presidency of George Washington, whose virtues in the civil administration of his country have been as conspicuous and beneficial, as his Military valour and prudence have been useful in establishing her liberties, and in the year of Masonry 5793, by the President of the United States, in concert with the Grand Lodge of Maryland, several Lodges under its jurisdiction, and Lodge No. 22, from Alexandria, Virginia.

Thornton’s original plans, inspired by the Pantheon, included a dome, but one was not built until 1823 under the orders of



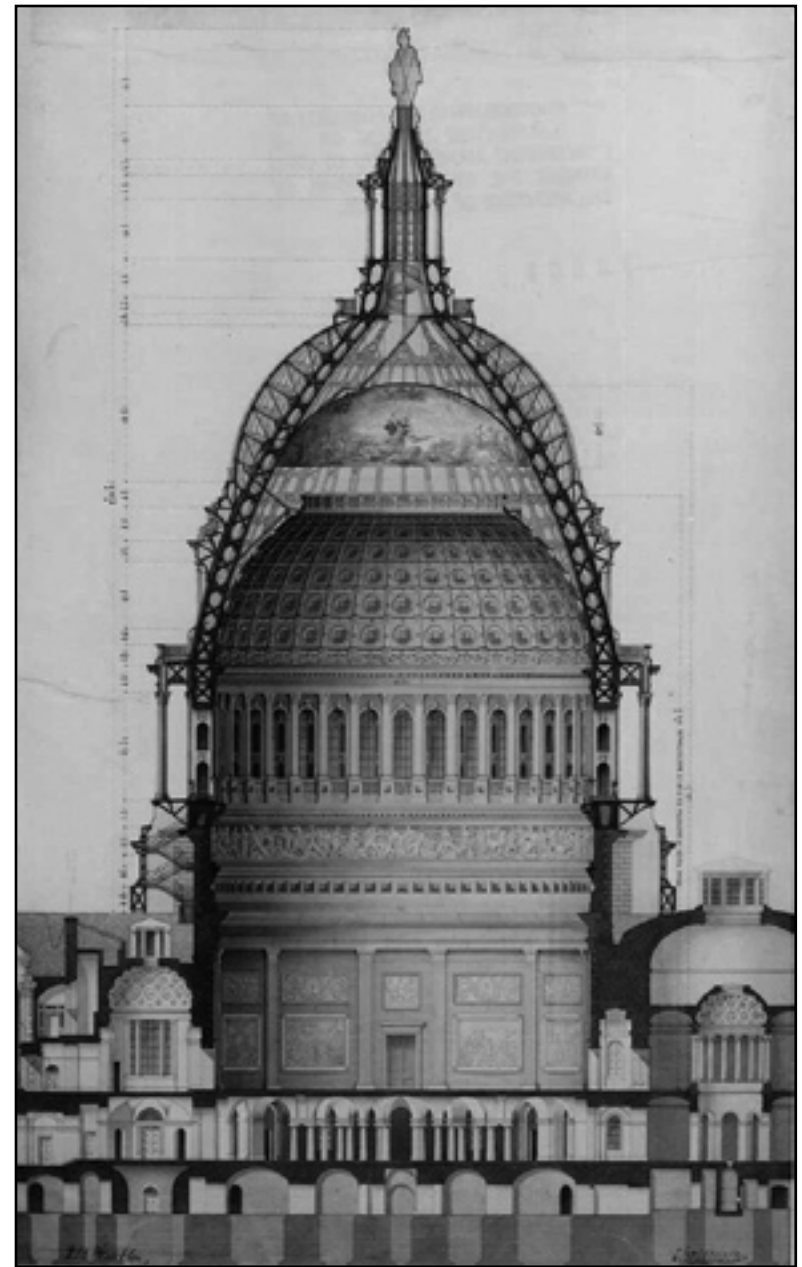
Capitol dome under construction during inauguration of President Lincoln

the third Architect of the Capitol, Charles Bulfinch. However, as extensions were built onto the north and south wings of the Capitol in order to house the growing size of the U.S. Congress, Bulfinch's original dome became an eyesore.

In 1855, legislation was passed to build a bigger dome. The new dome was designed by Thomas U. Walter, the fourth Architect of the Capitol. Costing more than a million dollars, construction took place between 1855 and 1866. The new dome was built from more than 4000 metric tons of iron, and stood 88 meters tall with the statue of Freedom included. Inside the view is stunning – the ceiling rises to 55 meters above the Rotunda floor, and looking up through the oculus of the dome one is greeted with the exquisite sight of Constantino Brumidi's fresco *The Apotheosis of Washington*.

When we take a closer look at Brumidi's fresco some fascinating elements grab our attention. The painting, taking up more than 4000 square feet in area, features not only the ascended George Washington (*à la* the earlier apotheosis depictions mentioned in the previous chapter), but also various other figures. In the center of the image, Washington is flanked by the goddesses Liberty and Victory, along with 13 maidens representing the original 13 colonies. Outside of this group there are six scenes painted representing various aspects of the nation: War, Science, Marine, Commerce, Mechanics, and Agriculture. Perhaps the most interesting is the depiction of Science: Minerva, the Roman goddess of crafts and wisdom stands amongst a group of great American scientists, including Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Morse and Robert Fulton. To the left of the main group, an individual is using a compass or pair of dividers – a possible reference to Freemasonry? Notably, Franklin and Fulton were both Masons.

Directly beneath the rotunda lies the United States Capitol Crypt, a large circular room filled with forty neoclassical Doric



Plan of the U.S. Capitol dome



Funeral of President Gerald Ford in United States Capitol Rotunda

columns. Originally designed as an entrance to Washington's Tomb (before his family refused to have his body moved there), it now instead houses a museum and gift shop. A marble compass is embedded in the floor of the Crypt, marking the center point of the District of Columbia from which the four quadrants of Washington, D.C. originate.

KRYPTOS

As readers of *The Lost Symbol* now know, located in the courtyard and surroundings of C.I.A. headquarters in Langley is a sculpture named "Kryptos". Created by American artist James Sanborn, Kryptos is actually a number of sculptures, although the most recognized piece is a large vertical "S" shaped copper screen inscribed with 865 characters, in which four separate messages are encoded, each with its own cipher. Sanborn has revealed that there is an additional riddle which will be solvable only after the four encrypted passages have been decrypted. Since its dedication in 1990, three of the four codes have been cracked, while the fourth remains unsolved.

Apparently Dan Brown, a self-confessed cryptography nut, has long been interested in the Kryptos story. In fact, some early rumors suggested that he was working closely with Sanborn as part of *The Lost Symbol*. It's interesting to note that some reports on Kryptos do say that Sanborn "collaborated with a prominent fiction writer in composing the text to be encoded," but Sanborn himself has since said that while he considered the idea when beginning the sculpture, "I decided not to do it, why let someone else in on the secret?" However, it's also worth pointing out that Kryptos was created well before Dan Brown's time as a fiction writer (it was dedicated in 1990), and in an interview with *Wired Magazine* prior to the publication of *The Lost Symbol*, Sanborn

was said to be “deeply annoyed” at the prospect of Kryptos being used as a plot device in the new novel.

The solutions to the first three sections are:

Solution 1: “Between subtle shading and the absence of light lies the nuance of Iqlusion [sic]”

Solution 2: “It was totally invisible hows that possible? They used the Earth’s magnetic field. The information was gathered and transmitted undergruund [sic] to an unknown location. Does Langley know about this? They should its buried out there somewhere. Who knows the exact location? Only WW this was his last message. Thirty eight degrees fifty seven minutes six point five seconds north seventy seven degrees eight minutes forty four seconds west. Layer two.

Solution 3: Slowly desparatly [sic] slowly the remains of passage debris that encumbered the lower part of the doorway was removed with trembling hands I made a tiny breach in the upper left hand corner and then widening the hole a little I



Main Kryptos sculpture at C.I.A. headquarters, Langley

inserted the candle and peered in the hot air escaping from the chamber caused the flame to flicker but presently details of the room within emerged from the mist. Can you see anything?

In a TV interview conducted long before *The Lost Symbol* was published, Dan Brown – when asked about the sculpture – replied that it “refers to the ancient mysteries.” Brown’s opinion no doubt comes from the third solution, which is a paraphrase from Howard Carter’s account of the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun in his 1923 book *The Tomb of Tutankhamun*. Not to mention that Mal’akh’s thought about the lost pyramid – “it is buried out there somewhere” – is a direct quote from the second Kryptos passage.

Most people have assumed that the ‘WW’ referred to in the second solution is the C.I.A. director at the time of the sculpture’s dedication, William Webster. The C.I.A., no doubt wary of an embarrassing message being encoded by the artist, had insisted that Sanborn give Webster an envelope containing the code and the message. Thus, WW should certainly know the solution. Others have cautioned against such an easy answer, and continue to search for other options – some people have even pointed out that WW turned upside down is MM, the initials of Mary Magdalene, a name that featured in *The Da Vinci Code*. However, James Sanborn has said categorically that this is not the solution, and (if we can take his word) has confirmed that WW does in fact reference Webster.

AN ENDLESS LIST OF POSSIBILITIES

There are numerous other locations in Washington, D.C. which Dan Brown could easily have inserted into the plot of *The Lost Symbol* – really, in setting the novel in the United States capital he was spoilt for choice when it comes to esoteric landmarks

(which makes the selection of the Botanica Gardens somewhat of a curiosity). For example, there are a curious number of areas in the capital named after Egyptian place names, such as Alexandria. Even better though, Washington, D.C. also has a neighbourhood and Metro stop named Rosslyn! Given the ending of *The Da Vinci Code* at the enigmatic Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland, and the proximity of this namesake to the National Mall (it sits just across the Potomac), it is a wonder that it wasn't mentioned in *The Lost Symbol*, if even briefly. There are also various 'coincidences' which could have been called on as being of historical interest: for example, the White House cornerstone ceremony was held on October 13th, the Templars' day of infamy.

Naturally enough, the United States capital is filled with monuments – some of which are well-known, some of which are less well-known but display esoteric symbolism. For instance, the headquarters of the Internal Revenue Service (I.R.S.) has some distinctive sculptures surrounding it such as a small pyramid at its entrance, as well as a hand pointing a finger to the heavens – a gesture which receives plenty of attention in Picknett and Prince's book *The Templar Revelation* as an 'insignia' of Leonardo Da Vinci, and which Dan Brown included in *The Da Vinci Code*.

Let's finish with a quick run-down of some of the more obscure locations which could have figured in *The Lost Symbol*, due to their similarity with settings in the previous Robert Langdon books:

- The Department of Commerce building, in which David Ovason correlates the Mining, Fisheries, Commerce and Aeronautics tympana with the elements Earth, Water, Fire and Air – a central theme of *Angels and Demons*.
- A memorial statue to assassinated President James Garfield near the Capitol building which

features Masonic symbolism.

- A marble sculpture within the Capitol building named *The Car of History*, carved by Carlo Franzoni in 1819, which features a goddess in a chariot surrounded by astrological symbolism.
- *Freedom*, the 20-foot-high statue of a goddess which surmounts the dome of the Capitol building, sculpted by Freemason Thomas Crawford.
- The statue of Scottish Rite patriarch, and Confederate general Albert Pike, which stands at 3rd and D Streets NW. As mentioned above, Pike's statue has recently been at the centre of a controversy with suggestions that he was a founder of the Ku Klux Klan.

If you'd like more detailed information on the esoteric architecture of Washington, D.C., take a look at David Ovason's book and also Christopher Hodapp's more recent *Solomon's Builders*, which is written from the point of view of a Freemason (and with Dan Brown's novel in mind). At this point though, we'll leave this subject and begin delving into Masonic conspiracy theories, and the strange symbolism on the Great Seal of the United States.