

# MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD MASONS AND STONE CARVERS

In medieval times not many buildings were made of brick, and none of concrete. Houses were usually made of wood and wattle and daub, but churches, castles and palaces were often made of stone. This made the stone mason's job very important.

Palaces and churches often had beautifully carved doorways and pillars, so the stone carver would be needed to make these. Stones were taken from the quarry where they were dug out, to the worksite as square blocks. Then the stones were usually carved on the ground before they were set in place.



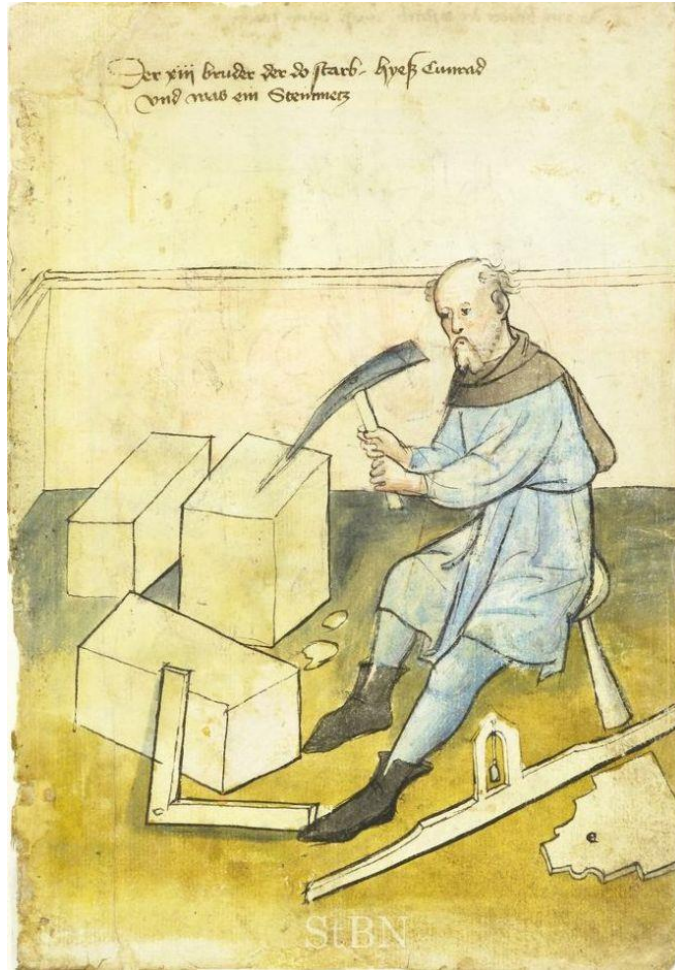
Detail of a miniature of a wright with a hammer, a hatchet, and a mason's trowel. British Library MS Royal 19 C XI f. 26



St David's Cathedral, Wales  
Photograph by [Waterborough](#), Wikimedia Commons.

Every stone of this beautiful building would have been carved and shaped by hand by the masons.

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This mason has a *square* and *template* to help him to get the shape right. Illustration in the 'Hausbuch der Mendelschen Zwölflbrüderstiftung' (1426-1549), Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg, Amb. 317.2°, fol. 76r.

Medieval masons used various tools to cut their stones. Axes, points and chisels would be used for carving, and drills, especially in sculpture.

Many different types of stone were used. For the vaulted ceilings in churches, they usually used limestone. This was hard enough to hold its shape yet soft enough to be carved.

Most stone carvers worked as part of a guild, which sometimes also included masons and bricklayers. The wages of a medieval stone carver were usually higher than average.



The tower of Babel being built by masons, from the Egerton Genesis Picture Book, England, c. 1350-1375, Egerton MS 1894, f. 5v  
<https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2016/07/masons-and-manuscripts.html>



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After he had cut the stone, the stonemason would inscribe his own individual mark to prove that he cut that piece of stone and so get paid for his work.

Then the master stonemason would then put his own mark on the stone to confirm that it was ready to go into the building that is being built.

Normally the side of the stone with the masons' marks on was put inwards into the building, so it can't be seen, but sometimes you can see these marks in churches.

Text adapted from:

<https://medievalbritain.com/category/type/medieval-life/occupations/>  
[https://www.tracingthepast.org.uk/2021/04/11/constructing\\_stonecutting/#:~:text=Medieval%20masons%20used%20a%20variety,a%20series%20of%20incised%20lines](https://www.tracingthepast.org.uk/2021/04/11/constructing_stonecutting/#:~:text=Medieval%20masons%20used%20a%20variety,a%20series%20of%20incised%20lines)  
<https://cultureseekers.blog/2017/12/28/stonemason-marks/>  
<https://www.medievalchronicles.com/medieval-life/medieval-jobs-list/sculpting-history-10-intriguing-insights-into-the-world-of-medieval-stone-carvers/>



Mason's mark, Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, Norway, early 14th century. Photo: Roede, CC BY 3.0  
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