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# Handbook of Freemasonry

EDITED BY

Henrik Bogdan and Jan A.M. Snoek

BRILL

# Handbook of Freemasonry

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# Handbook of Freemasonry

*Edited by*

Henrik Bogdan  
Jan A.M. Snoek



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Göteborg and Marbella, Vernal Equinox 2014  
Henrik Bogdan and Jan Snoek

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# Introduction

*Henrik Bogdan and Jan Snoek*

With roots going back to the medieval guilds of stonemasons, Freemasonry is the oldest initiatory society in the West not dependant on a religious institution. Having lodges in virtually every major city in most parts of the world, it has changed from an originally British institution to a worldwide phenomenon with a wide range of local idiosyncratic features and characteristics. Numbering millions of active members it is also the largest fraternal organization in the world, still managing to attract new members in the postmodern society of the twenty-first century. The continued presence and development of Freemasonry with its rich diversity in practices and interpretations, raises the question what it is that makes such an old phenomenon seem relevant to so many diverse people for over three hundred years? There is no single answer to the question, but part of it surely rests on the fact that despite its emphasis on tradition, transmission and authority, Freemasonry has always been a non-dogmatic organisation in the sense that its rituals, symbols and practices have not had official and final interpretations. On the contrary, Freemasonry is characterised by a striking diversity of interpretation—it is thus possible to find purely moral interpretations of its central symbols, but also scientific, psychological, esoteric, political, philosophical, religious etc. interpretations of the same symbols—a fact that will become more than apparent by reading the various chapters of this handbook. It should furthermore be stressed for readers unfamiliar with the study of Freemasonry, that Freemasonry is not *one* organisation, but in fact represents a plethora of organisations (independent Grand Lodges, Rites and Systems), each one of which might recognise some organisations as Freemasonry, while dismissing others. In masonic terminology one might speak about regular or conservative forms of Freemasonry on the one hand, and on the other of liberal or irregular ones, whereas from a scholarly perspective also clandestine or fringe forms of Freemasonry may be distinguished. As the editors of this *Handbook* we have chosen not to use such value-laden designations as ‘conservative’ and ‘irregular’, which are based on emic understandings of the construct of authority and legitimacy, but rather the self-designations ‘regular’ and ‘liberal’ to distinguish between the two dominant forms of Freemasonry.

However, despite its diversity, ever since its reformation in the early eighteenth century there are certain recurrent phenomena, that can be regarded

basic features of Freemasonry. Some masonic authors speak in this context about the ‘ancient landmarks’, although they do not seem to agree on what these landmarks actually consist of. For the present purposes, it suffices to mention the following features: (1) the practice of rituals of initiation (i.e. those for the three Craft or Symbolic degrees, Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, and those for the ‘high’ or ‘additional’ degrees which differ from system to system); (2) the use of a particular set of symbols (as often encountered in the rites of initiation), such as symbols taken from the Bible or the Christian tradition (for example the Temple of Solomon with its two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, and the chequered floor, or the Eye in the Triangle as symbol for the Great Architect of the Universe [= God]), tools and other objects adopted from medieval stonemasonry (for example the square and the compass, the rough and perfected ashlar or stones, the white apron and gloves, tracing boards for each degree), and so on; (3) an organisational structure with hierarchical degrees, officers of the lodge, local lodges, Provincial and Grand Lodges; (4) emphasis on tradition and legitimacy where the members often see themselves as transmitters of an unbroken chain of initiation; (5) the individual’s quest for improvement through the initiatory system, where each degree is interpreted as a step in a process leading to perfection (interpreted, of course, in different ways); (6) often an emphasis on charitable works; (7) an emphasis on a universal brotherhood, fraternity and conviviality (the latter often expressed through more or less formal dinners and banquets held in connection with the performance of the rituals of initiation); (8) the advocacy of privacy and the praxis of secrecy; and (8) opposition, or what is often referred to as ‘anti-masonry’, as an historically accompanying phenomenon. Although each of these aspects is worth studying from a scholarly perspective, it is our assumption, as editors of the present volume, that Freemasonry, no matter how interesting a field it is on its own, should also be contextualised and understood against its wider cultural and socio-political context. We have therefore specifically encouraged the contributors to contextualise Freemasonry, and thereby making the subject relevant for not only specialists in the study of Freemasonry, but also to a wider scholarly audience.

### Overview of the Volume

The *Handbook* is divided into five parts: (i) ‘Historical perspectives’; (ii) ‘Freemasonry and Religion’; (iii) ‘Ritual, organisation, and diffusion’; (iv) ‘Freemasonry, society and gender’; and (v) ‘Freemasonry and culture’. The first part, consisting of chapters 2 to 8, starts with an overview of the history of

Freemasonry, written by Jan Snoek and Henrik Bogdan. Tracing the history of Freemasonry from the medieval 'Old Charges' and the Statutes signed by William Shaw in 1598 and 1599, it focuses mainly on the development of organised Freemasonry from the founding of the Premier Grand Lodge, through the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the beginning of the twenty-first century. It becomes evident in this part of the volume that the traditional founding date of 1717 is a purely artificial one for the commencement of Freemasonry, and that it is impossible to say when Freemasonry as we know it was founded. 1717 is merely the legendary date, claimed for the founding of the Premier Grand Lodge by four *existing* lodges in London. It seems clear that Freemasonry gradually transformed from the medieval stonemasons' guilds (particularly in Scotland and England, although similar developments can be traced in other parts of Britain and Europe) into so-called 'gentlemen Freemasonry', i.e. non-operative masonry. Fundamental to the understanding of the medieval stonemasons' guilds are the so-called 'Old Charges', discussed by Andrew Prescott in Chapter 3. It is in particular the Cooke and Regius manuscripts, dating from the fifteenth century, that have exerted a profound influence upon Freemasonry. As noted by Prescott, the Old Charges are not only important for our understanding of the medieval stonemasons' guilds, but more importantly they were read and used by Masons in the eighteenth century: in particular, James Anderson drew heavily from the Old Charges when writing the 'history' of the stonemasons included in his extremely influential *Constitutions* (1723). The transition from stonemasons to the Freemasons as we know them in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries took different but parallel routes in Scotland and England, as demonstrated by David Stevenson in Chapter 4 and Matthew Scanlan in Chapter 5. Stevenson identifies the William Schaw Statutes written in 1598 and 1599 as key documents in this transition in Scotland, whereas Scanlan argues that the English origins of Freemasonry have often been overlooked by scholars, and that much of the scholarship on the origins and early history of Freemasonry is flawed because of a lack of understanding of certain key terms used in the field, in particular the terms 'freestone-masons' or 'freemasons', and the 'acception'. Much of the symbolic language used by the authors of the Old Charges was, understandably, influenced by the Bible, and this continued as modern Freemasonry developed in the first decades of the eighteenth century. The combination of speculation on the art and craft of stonemasonry with Christian symbolism naturally made the Temple of Solomon and its architect Hiram Abiff ideal symbols for Freemasonry, as evidenced by the legend of the third degree of Freemasonry which was adopted in the first half of the 1720s. The Master Mason degree and the Hiram legend spread throughout the



masonic world, much thanks to Samuel Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*, published in 1730.

However, as discussed by Pierre Mollier in Chapter 6, "Freemasonry and Templarism," there soon appeared chivalric and Templar degrees, which were added as high or additional degrees to those of the original three Craft or Symbolic degrees. Instrumental to this development in France was Andrew Michael Ramsay's famous lecture of 1737, in which he claimed that Freemasonry was not founded in Biblical times or at the time of the construction of Solomon's Temple as claimed in the legendary histories of Freemasonry, but that it was founded during the Crusades in the Holy Land or *Outremer*. Ramsay did not specifically name the medieval Knights Templar as the founders, although it was assumed that he did indeed allude to them. Following Ramsay's oration a wide range of chivalric and Templar degrees were created and many of these were subsequently collected into systems or Rites, such as von Hund's (1722–1776) Strict Observance, and/or were included as parts of masonic systems such as the Swedish Rite, created by Eckleff, and reformed by Duke Charles, later King Charles XIII (1748–1818). Many of the Templar degrees and rites were infused by esoteric currents and practices, such as illuminism, alchemy and Christian Kabbalah, currents that at first appearance might seem in opposition to the ideals of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on rationality and logic. Such Enlightenment ideals dominated at least part of the intellectual discourse of the eighteenth century, including that of large parts of the masonic world, as discussed by Margaret Jacob and Matthew Crow in Chapter 7, "Freemasonry and the Enlightenment." Using Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)—who seemed to embody the apparent tension between the Enlightenment and Western esotericism—as a case study, Jacob and Crow argue that the masonic lodges "provided space for the discursive and experimental ethos that characterized the ongoing project of Enlightenment." The final chapter of the first part "Masonic Historiography" was written by Charles Porset (†). He traces the history and development of the study of Freemasonry.

The second part, 'Freemasonry and Religion', consists of Chapters 9 to 16. As the title shows, each chapter deals with the relationship between Freemasonry and a specific religious tradition (or traditions in the plural in some of the chapters). In Chapter 9, José A. Ferrer Benimelli discusses the attitude of the Catholic Church to Freemasonry. The Roman Catholic Church, the largest religious organisation in the world with over 1.2 billion members, has maintained a highly critical stance towards Freemasonry ever since the 1730s. Benimelli discusses four distinct periods in the relationship between the Catholic Church and Freemasonry; first, the eighteenth century with the three condemnations of Freemasonry (those of Clement XII in 1738, Benedict XIV in 1751, and

Cardinal Firrao in 1739), in which the main objection was the use of secrecy, the swearing of oaths, and the suspicion of heresy and of threatening the order of society; second, the nineteenth century during which the allegations against Freemasonry centred on plotting against the Church and the 'legitimate civil authorities', culminating in the Canonical Law of 1917 whereby members of the Catholic Church would be excommunicated if joining Freemasonry; third, the years preceding the Vatican II during which the Church recognised that many branches of Freemasonry did not plot against the Church; and fourth, the attempt by more conservative forces within the Catholic Church in the early 1980s to once again condemn Freemasonry, which was defeated by vote at the Plenary Congregation of 1981. The original arguments against Freemasonry set forth by the Catholic Church in the eighteenth century are also found in condemnations by many of the Orthodox and Protestant Churches, as described by Jean-François Var and Guy Liagre in Chapters 10 and 11, respectively. However, the main difference between these churches and the Roman Catholic Church is that since they are organised differently with many local and national independent churches, there is room for a variety of opinions about Freemasonry, ranging from hostile and condemnatory to positive and affirmative. As regards to religion, it should be kept in mind that Freemasonry was almost entirely a Christian phenomenon during the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century, and many masonic rites and degrees remain exclusively Christian even to this day. Whereas there have been periods of anticlerical sentiments in Freemasonry, especially in Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece as a response to the anti-masonic Bulls of the Roman Catholic Church, these remain rare cases and the overall attitude of Freemasonry towards Christianity have been positive, in the sense that belief in the Christian faith has not barred people from joining Freemasonry.

This open attitude changes, however, when we look at the relationship between Freemasonry and non-Christian religions. In the case of Judaism, dealt with by Robert Jan van Pelt in Chapter 12, the complex relationship between Freemasonry and a non-Christian religion comes to the fore. Through a systematic analysis of the religious, social, political and apocalyptic aspects of the relationship between Freemasonry and Judaism, van Pelt shows that, as opposed to claims in anti-masonic and anti-Semitic discourses, there is actually very little influence of rabbinical Judaism upon eighteenth-century Freemasonry, if at all. The use of Old Testament texts and Hebrew words are filtered through the long history of Christian interpretation of Judaism and it says more about the Christian legacy in Freemasonry than any interest in Judaism as such. Despite the fact that since the eighteenth century a very small number of Masons were Jews, Freemasonry was gradually linked to Jews by its

opponents, and by the first decades of the nineteenth century anti-masonry and anti-Semitism became inseparable. The main polemical discourse was about whether or not Freemasonry is actually run by the Jews, with the intent of destroying Christianity and assuming political power. In his chapter—the longest in this volume—van Pelt shows how this polemical narrative continued to develop throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, culminating in the anti-Semitism of the Nazis and its apocalyptic and deadly outcome. Van Pelt argues that European anti-Semitism changed during the nineteenth century through its mingling with anti-masonry, whereby the Jews were depicted as having global political ambitions. Previously, anti-Semitic narratives did not ascribe any political power or influence to Jews. The anti-Semitism of the Nazis gradually downplayed the anti-masonic rhetoric, focusing exclusively on the Jews. The combination of anti-Semitism with anti-masonry did not disappear, however. A clear example of this can be found in the Muslim world where Freemasonry is often regarded as a Jewish organisation with a Zionist agenda. However, as Thierry Zarcone shows in Chapter 13, “Freemasonry and Islam,” Freemasonry has had a long and influential presence in the Muslim world, with large numbers of Muslims joining masonry from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, whereas examples of individual Muslims joining Freemasonry can be attested already from the mid-eighteenth century. The increased admission of Muslims (and Jews) during the nineteenth century was facilitated by the fact that Freemasonry only required that the members should believe in a Supreme Being, the ‘Great Architect of the Universe’.

This requirement proved more difficult as Freemasonry encountered non-Abrahamic religions, as discussed by Jessica Harland-Jacobs and Jan Snoek in Chapter 14, “Freemasonry and Eastern Religions.” It was in colonial India that the question of monotheism and belief in *the* ‘Great Architect of the Universe’ was actualised. From the 1840s onwards Parsis (Zoroastrians), Sikhs, and Jains were allowed to join Freemasonry, but it was not until 1872 before the first Hindu was admitted to a lodge. However, in order for this to happen, the faiths in question went through a process of reinterpretation, where the polytheistic elements were downplayed in favour of a monotheistic understanding of their beliefs. This process both reflected and stimulated wider changes in Eastern religions during the second half of the nineteenth century, where religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism reacted against the Western dismissal of their creeds as based on ritual, superstition, and idolatry, and instead emphasised the philosophical and ‘rational’ aspects of their own traditions. In the case of Hinduism, certain forms of neo-Vedanta promoted by Hindu reformers epitomised the particular form of modern Hinduism that the Hindu members of

Freemasonry embraced. The final two chapters of the section on Freemasonry and religion return to the Western cultural context. In Chapter 15 Henrik Bogdan analyses the relationship between Freemasonry and Western esotericism. After having presented the current major scholarly approaches to Western esotericism, Bogdan discusses the use of secrecy in Freemasonry and its relation to the concept of initiation and claims to absolute knowledge, as an example of an esoteric discourse in Freemasonry, followed by two examples of the influence of esoteric currents within Freemasonry, namely Rosicrucianism and Christian Kabbalah. In Chapter 16, "Freemasonry and New Religious Movements," Massimo Introvigne explores the continued presence of Freemasonry in new religious contexts. Focusing on three 'old' New Religious Movements (Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science), Introvigne shows how these movements have adopted aspects of Freemasonry, in particular certain symbols and terms, but on the whole have not adopted any significant doctrine or ideas from Freemasonry as claimed by Evangelical critics.

Part three, 'Ritual, Organisation, and Diffusion', consists of five chapters. In Chapter 17, "Masonic Rituals of Initiation," Jan Snoek discusses the core, as it were, of Freemasonry. Dividing the masonic rituals into three classes: initiation, emblematic, and investiture rituals, Snoek proceeds to describe in detail the perhaps most important rituals of the masonic system of initiation, the rituals of the degree of Entered Apprentice and the degree of Master Mason. The rituals of Freemasonry were devised to be performed, to be put into practice. It is believed that by performing the rituals the symbols are internalised and thereby change the personality of the initiate. In Chapter 18, "Freemasonry and Performance," Kristiane Hasselmann discusses how, in the course of the eighteenth century, English Freemasonry adopted a new philosophy, resulting in new rituals being accepted in 1816, which aim at creating a performative *habitus* that aimed to "spiritually and morally refine its members and modify their behaviour patterns." As there are literally thousands of different masonic rituals preserved in archives and libraries around the world, the symbols, teachings and doctrines transmitted through them have varied greatly. Many of these rituals may have been never performed, or only used for a brief period, whereas others survived and were collected into various systems or Rites. In Chapter 19 Arturo de Hoyos gives a chronological overview of the most significant masonic systems. These systems are usually referred to as 'Rites', which de Hoyos defines as "the linking of masonic degrees, for initiation or instruction, under administrative or governmental authority." Most of these Rites consist of high or additional degrees, i.e. as supplements to the Craft or Symbolic degrees. The Craft degrees are governed by Grand Lodges, that often wield authority over the lodges in a nation or a state, although there are many

cases where there exist competing Grand Lodges in the same geographical area. The claimed authority of these Grand Lodges rests on a peculiar form of legitimacy based on a combination of traditional and legal authority in the Weberian sense, connected to the masonic concepts of 'regularity' and 'recognition'. In Chapter 20, "Relationships between Grand Lodges," Jan Snoek explains what each of these terms imply and what the difference between the two is. The final chapter in this section, "Freemasonry and Friendly Societies," is written by Daniel Weinbren and it deals with Freemasonry's connections with other fraternal organisations. Focusing on the relationship of Freemasonry with the friendly societies of the United Kingdom and the British Empire, and in particular the Oddfellows, Weinbren shows that these societies did not seek to copy or imitate aspects of Freemasonry, as it is frequently claimed, but rather that there existed close ties between these organisations and that many friendly societies enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the Freemasons.

In section IV, 'Freemasonry, Society and Gender', attention is directed towards social issues, thereby placing Freemasonry in a wider context. One of the most enduring misconceptions about Freemasonry is that it excludes women from membership, but history shows that this is not factually correct. There are examples of women having become Freemasons during the early eighteenth century, and there existed variants of Freemasonry, such as the Adoption lodges (which were officially recognised by the *Grand Orient de France* in 1774) that accepted women, as discussed by Jan Snoek in Chapter 22, "Freemasonry and Women." Snoek traces the history of the Adoption lodges, as well as the mixed lodges (which admitted both men and women) and the later women-only lodges, which were mostly created between 1945 and 1960, and thus preceded the second-wave feminism of the 1960s. However, the majority of all Grand Lodges do not accept women as members, which can be compared with the fact that Blacks were for a long time barred from membership (particularly in the United States and the British Caribbean) as well. Issues of race and gender have been in conflict with the masonic ideal of universal brotherhood, and thus been the cause of internal strife and conflict. In Chapter 23, "Freemasonry and Blacks," Cécile Révauger discusses the causes for the ban on Blacks from joining Freemasonry in the United States and the British Caribbean, and traces the subsequent history of Black, or Prince Hall, Freemasonry in the United States, and the emergence of Black Freemasonry in the Caribbean. The worldwide spread of Freemasonry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries went hand in hand with the growing empires of Britain, France, and the Netherlands. In Chapter 24, "Freemasonry and Colonialism," Jessica Harland-Jacobs examines the role of Freemasonry in the colonies, and argues that Freemasonry was in many ways instrumental in

establishing the colonies, but also that the ideology of Freemasonry—equality and fraternalism—ultimately undermined the fundamental basis of imperialism and thus contributed to the demise of the empires. The decolonization of the twentieth century was to a large extent fuelled by nationalism, dealt with by Jeffrey Tyssens in Chapter 25, “Freemasonry and Nationalism.” Tyssens addresses the seemingly paradoxical question of how Freemasonry, a quintessentially cosmopolitan society, “could get entangled in processes of configuration of national identity, in the making of nation-states, in nationalist politics.” What becomes apparent is that Freemasonry and its individual members, as human beings generally, do not have a single identity, but rather several identities, which are actualised in specific contexts and under specific circumstances. A telling example is what happens with a Freemason’s identity at the time of war, as discussed by François Rognon in Chapter 26, “Freemasonry and War.” Despite the transnational nature of Freemasonry and its bonds of brotherhood, Rognon argues, Freemasons have historically shown that their loyalty to their country supersedes that of the masonic oaths, and that Masons have found themselves fighting against each other in times of war. At the same time, there are examples of Masons who managed to meet as brothers despite the fact that they were formally enemies.

The final part of the handbook, ‘Freemasonry and Culture’, consists of Chapters 27 to 31. Music, literature, art, and architecture have always been important for Freemasonry, and a long list of important composers, authors, artists and architects have joined the ranks of Freemasonry over the years. In many cases, their membership of Freemasonry has been overlooked or neglected by non-specialists in Freemasonry, which in some cases has led to a limited understanding of central figures of Western culture. In Chapter 27, Malcolm Davies (†) deals with “Freemasonry and Music,” in which he limits himself to music composed for a specific masonic context, namely Freemasons’ songs (four such songs already appeared in Anderson’s *Constitutions* published in 1723, and have been a recurrent feature in masonic official publications ever since); music for instruments performed in the lodge; funeral music; odes, cantatas and oratorios; and operas and other dramatic works (of which Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* is the most well-known). Davies concludes by discussing the music of two composers who were Freemasons: Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) and Willem Pijper (1894–1947). In Chapter 28, “Freemasonry and Literature,” Robert A. Gilbert distinguishes between Freemasonry in literature, and the literature of Freemasonry. In his chapter Gilbert focuses on the history and development of the latter, placing significant examples of the former into their appropriate places, and considers the nature of the relationship between ‘cultural’ literature and masonic writing over the past three hundred years. In a

similar way, Marijo Ariëns-Volker deals with “Freemasonry and Modern Art” in Chapter 29, in which she explores the connections between romanticism and Martinism (a current closely related to Freemasonry), and the continued relationship between twentieth century neo-Martinism and modern art, such as Dada. The chapter written by James Stevens Curl deals with “Freemasonry and Architecture.” Curl argues that classical architecture is in many ways central to Freemasonry, and geometry and architecture form indeed an intrinsic part of its symbolism. It should therefore come as no surprise that many influential architects have been attracted by Freemasonry and joined its ranks. As an example, Curl discusses Sir John Soane (1753–1837) and his work, and argues that aspects of Soane’s work can be seen as specifically connected with Freemasonry. Other examples discussed by Curl include the use by architects of such masonic themes as the ‘Lost Temple’ and symbolical buildings in gardens, again influenced by masonic themes and symbolism. The final chapter of this volume, “The Material Culture of Freemasonry” deals specifically with the study of the values of Freemasonry through its artefacts. As Mark J.R. Dennis points out in the introduction to his chapter, “the creation of material culture is of importance in evidencing unwritten norms of behaviour and in transmitting these across time.” This chapter provides some hands-on methodological examples of how one can approach the study of the material culture of Freemasonry.

**PART 1**

*Historical Perspectives*







# The History of Freemasonry

## *An Overview*

*Jan A.M. Snoek and Henrik Bogdan*

### Introduction

Freemasonry has no founder or founding date. It developed slowly towards the point where we, now, recognize it as such, and developed onwards ever since. Therefore, it has no canonical form. Indeed, around 1600, the time when it can be identified with certainty, there seem to have existed at least two distinct forms, one in Scotland and one in England. A century and a half later, there exists also an Irish form, while in England at least three forms are found side by side, that of the so called 'Premier' Grand Lodge, or 'Moderns', that of the 'Athol' Grand Lodge, or 'Antients', and a third tradition including among others the 'Harodim' and the 'Grand Lodge of All England, held at York'. Even if we assume that the tradition of the 'Antients' in fact developed out of a combination of the Irish and the 'Moderns' ones, there were still at this time at least four different forms in existence. Yet nothing is known of the relationships that existed between them. Right from the time that they can be historically grasped, then, there never was one Freemasonry, but rather a diversity of Freemasonries.

### Origins and Early History in Scotland and England

The number of theories about the origins of Freemasonry runs in the dozens. Most famous, probably, is the Gould Thesis, first formulated by Robert Freke Gould and his friends around the time when they founded the first research lodge in the 1880s, the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076. According to this theory, at first there were simple, so-called 'operative', stonemasons, who had their Craft and their lodges, but who did not 'speculate' about their Craft or their working tools, that is, they did not interpret them symbolically. Then, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, more and more 'gentlemen masons' became members of the lodges, who introduced, during a period of transition, the speculative element, out of which arose modern 'speculative' Freemasonry. This theory would be regarded as fact for about a century, but we know now

that it is wrong (Hamill 1986). Firstly, Freemasonry is significantly older than 1717. Secondly, the early Freemasons were all but simple folk. ‘Freemason’ being short for ‘freestone mason’, the term refers to the highest trained members of the Craft, the sculptors and architects, those who were allowed to work with the most expensive material: freestone. It is, thirdly, also clear now that these freestone masons *did* ‘speculate’ about their craft, its tools etc. Freemasonry, then, was speculative right from its start. And precisely this explains why ‘gentlemen masons’ were interested in it in the first place. It were not them who introduced the speculative element, but rather the other way round: they learned it from the stonemasons. Consequently, we should no longer oppose speculative to operative Masons, but rather gentlemen Masons to stone Masons, all of whom were speculative Masons, while the last ones were also operative (see Snoek 2010).

The oldest documents, which are usually associated with Freemasonry, are the so-called ‘Old Manuscript Constitutions’ or ‘Old Charges’. Among the oldest ones are the Constitutions of the Masons of York (1352, 1370, 1409), the *Ordonnances des masons de Londres* (1356), the Constitutions of the Carpenters Guild of Norwich (1375), the Regius MS and the Cooke MS (both from between 1425 and 1450), and the *Constitutiones artis geometricae secundum Euclidem* (fifteenth century). From 1583 onwards there are more than a hundred. Most of them are English and date from between 1675 and 1725. Especially these later ones often state that they should be read during the ‘acceptation’ of a candidate. This shows that these ones were related to the English ‘acceptation’ (see below), but we do not really know much of the context of the older ones.<sup>1</sup> Most of them have the same structure: they start with a prayer, after which follows a legendary history of the craft. Then follow the actual ‘Articles and Points’ or ‘Charges’, as well as rules for the Grand Meetings, and instructions for the administration of justice. Finally follow instructions for the adoption of new members, such as the text of the oath to be administered, and a closing prayer. Especially interesting in the light of later developments are these old forms of the oath, such as:

These Charges that you haue Received you shall well and truly keepe not disclosing the secresy of our Lodge to man woman nor Child : sticke nor stone : thing moueable nor vnmoueable soe god you helpe and his holy Doome Amen

BUCHANAN MS. 1, ca. 1670.

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1 For more on this subject, see Prescott, “The Old Charges,” in this volume.

The contents of these documents are explicitly Christian. You should serve God, the (Roman Catholic) Church, your Master, and the members of your lodge. You should behave properly, that is, bury the dead, support widows, go to church regularly, and so on. The Craft and its tools are interpreted symbolically (Prescott 2005).

In 1598 and 1599, William Schaw, the King's Master of Works and General Warden of the Craft, signed new 'statutes' for the lodges of the Masons in Scotland. Three existing lodges are named explicitly: those of Edinburgh St Mary's Chapel, Kilwinning, and Stirling. From the information these texts give there can be no doubt that these are masonic lodges, more or less in the modern sense. Their members are called Masons, and there is at least one ritual reception, namely when, after one has passed his examination as a Master Mason in the Incorporation, one is brought into the lodge and 'made' a 'Brother and Fellow in the Craft'. Such a lodge was presided over by a Warden and his two Deacons. The candidate paid an entrance fee, with which the dinner at the occasion was financed, and presented gloves to the members. In the statutes of 1599—which are a complement to, rather than a replacement of, those of 1598—Schaw confirmed that the lodge of Edinburgh was the oldest one. The lodge of Kilwinning did not agree. It took some years before a successor to Schaw decided that both would get the status 'time immemorial', meaning that there was no longer anyone alive who could remember when one of them did not yet exist. Thus we must assume that at least these two lodges existed around the middle of the sixteenth century, but possibly already much earlier (Stevenson 1988; Snoek 2002).<sup>2</sup>

The archives of the Mason's Company of London go back a long time. After a gap, probably resulting from the Great Fire of London in 1666, they continue from 1619 onwards. New terms, which were not there before the gap, appeared: 'the making of Masons' (1621), masons are 'accepted' (1630), or the 'acception' (1645–1647, 1649–1650). There is no reason to assume that the phenomenon to which these terms refer, the 'acception', was an invention of 1621 only, much rather it was in existence at that moment for some time already. In 1646 Elias Ashmole wrote in his so called diary: "I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire, with Col. Henry Mainwaring of Karincham in Cheshire. The names of those that were then at the Lodge, Mr. Rich. Penket Warden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Rich: Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, Rich: Ellam & Hugh Brewer." And in 1682 he noted: "I rec[eive]d a Sumons to appe[ar] at a Lodge to be held the next day, at Masons Hall London....I was the Senior Fellow among them (it being 35 years since I was admitted)..." All the members

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2 See also Stevenson, "The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland," in this volume.

mentioned in Ashmole's first entry were senior members of the Mason's Company of London, as well as members of the 'acception', and from the lodge mentioned in the second entry, we now know that there is a continuous link to the four lodges which James Anderson in his second edition of his *Constitutions*, of 1738, claims to have united in 1716, forming the start of the development which led to the 'Premier Grand Lodge' (Hamill 1986; Snoek 2002; Snoek 2010).<sup>3</sup>

### The Development of Freemasonry in England

In 1666 London was devastated by the Great Fire. As a result, workmen from the building trade came to the English capital in order to rebuild it. Some of them joined the London lodges, which thus flourished. Once George of Hanover had become King of England at the end of 1714, the building activity in London came to an end. London had been largely rebuilt and there was no money left. So, the workmen went to other places, leaving the lodges of London with only a few members. According to Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1738, Sir Christopher Wren had been elected Grand Master in 1685, an office he supposedly held until 1695, and was "again chosen Grand Master, [in] A.D. 1698." However, he "neglected the Office of Grand Master," "some few years after" 1708. Further, still according to Anderson, in 1716 the lodges in London found "themselves neglected by Sir Christopher Wren." Anderson's complaint that Wren neglected the lodges is not at all surprising, if we remember that in 1716 he was eighty-four years old. Consequently, one can easily imagine that he was just too aged to continue his work of organising the Quarterly Communications, i.e. the four main annual meetings of the Grand Lodge. Still, the lodges felt the need to assemble in order to discuss their problems. Set against this background, Anderson's story of what happened in 1716 and 1717 makes eminent sense.

[Four London lodges] and some old Brothers met at the Apple-Tree [Tavern], and having put into the Chair the oldest Master Mason [present] ([making him for that evening what we would] now [call] the Master of a Lodge) they constituted themselves a Grand Lodge pro Tempore in Due Form, and forthwith revived the Quarterly Communication of the Officers of Lodges ([which Quarterly Communications are also sometimes] call'd the Grand Lodge) [and] resolv'd to hold the Annual Assembly

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<sup>3</sup> See also Scanlan, "The Origins of Freemasonry: England," in this volume.

and Feast, and then [i.e. at that next Annual Assembly] to chuse a [new] Grand Master from among themselves

ANDERSON 1738: 109.

What happened on St John's Day in 1717—according to Anderson's report, which is the only account of that event we have—was definitely *not* the foundation of a new organisation, but no more than the continuation of an old one. There can be little doubt that in the decade *following* this event, the Grand Lodge was reorganised into a form which had not existed in London before, mainly by developing itself into an organisation completely independent from the London Company of Masons and by considerably modifying and simplifying its ceremonial practice in order to adapt it to its new, less educated target group, the gentlemen Masons (Snoek 2004a; Snoek 2004b). But there was no significant discontinuity between the Quarterly Communications before and after 1716, apart from the gap caused by Wren's inactivity (Snoek 2010).

According to Anderson, it was on St John's Day (24 June) 1717 that the already-mentioned four lodges from London met again and chose Anthony Sayer as their new 'Grand Master' for 1717–1718. Soon, the most important and influential members would become John Theophilus Desaguliers, James Anderson, and George Payne. Anderson was a minister of the Church of Scotland. Desaguliers was a minister of the Church of England, assistant to Isaac Newton, and a member of the Royal Society. After Sayer, Payne and Desaguliers occupied the post of Grand Master for three successive years during the formative period: 1718–1719 (Payne), 1719–1720 (Desaguliers), and 1720–1721 (Payne). Then, in 1721, the Duke of Montague became the first aristocratic Grand Master. From then on, all further Grand Masters have been aristocrats. In 1720, Payne signed new regulations, which were included in Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the seventeenth and the start of the eighteenth century, the Scottish and English forms of Freemasonry seem to have discovered and influenced each other. As a result, whereas previously they seem to have had only one initiation degree each, there now developed a two-degree system, which we find referred to in Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723: the 'acceptation', of London origin, had now become the first degree, which the Scotsman Anderson called 'Entered Apprentice', while the Scottish 'Master Mason or Fellow in the Craft' became the second degree, now called 'Fellow Craft or Master Mason'. Around 1725 the contents of these two degrees were in London redistributed over three degrees, now called 'Entered Apprentice' (containing part of the old

4 See further Scanlan, "The Origins of Freemasonry: England," in this volume.

first degree), 'Fellow of the Craft' (containing the rest of the old first degree), and 'Master Mason' (containing the old second degree) (Vibert 1967; Snoek 2002). There was, of course, only one possibility to persuade the lodges to work with the new trigradal system: in 1730 its rituals were published as Samuel Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* (Snoek 2003a).<sup>5</sup> This pamphlet, first published in October 1730, is perhaps the most influential of all masonic 'exposures' published in the eighteenth century, and it ran into no less than thirty editions in the eighteenth century. With the publication of this book the development of the Craft degree system had reached its completion in the sense that there were now three degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. It was to a very large extent because of *Masonry Dissected* that these three degrees and their particular rituals of initiation were implemented in the masonic initiatory system.

In 1723–1724 the Grand Lodge of Ireland was formed, and in 1736 the Grand Lodge of Scotland followed. After 1725, Freemasonry started spreading over continental Europe and the British colonies: lodges were founded in Paris (1726), Mannheim (1727 ?), Madrid (1728), Gibraltar and Bengal (1729), Lisbon (1730), Florence (1733), The Hague (1734), Hamburg (1737), and so on. Next, other colonial powers such as France and the Netherlands started founding lodges in their colonies as well, while from 1732 onwards, lodges were attached to military regiments.<sup>6</sup>

In 1725, the old lodge in the City of York formed itself into the 'Grand Lodge of All England'. It was related to a particular tradition in English Freemasonry, the practitioners of which called themselves the Harodim. When a conflict arose within William Preston's 'Lodge of Antiquity', the Grand Lodge ('Moderns') expelled it, whereupon it founded in 1779, on a warrant by the York-based Grand Lodge, the 'Grand Lodge of England, South of the River Trent,' which disappeared again after ten years. Within this Grand Lodge, Preston created in 1787 the 'Ancient and Venerable Order of Harodim' (Hills 1967). It is becoming more and more clear at the moment, that this Harodim/York tradition of English Freemasonry is the source of most English 'high degrees', as well as the Royal Order of Scotland and the Adoption Rite (Snoek 2012).

There were in the eighteenth century large numbers of Irish day labourers in London. If they tried to visit lodges of the 'Premier' Grand Lodge, they would either not be let in because of their low social status, or if they were, they

5 See also Bogdan, "Freemasonry and Western Esotericism," in this volume for a discussion of the Master Mason degree, as implemented by Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*.

6 See Harland-Jacobs, "Freemasonry and Colonialism," in this volume.

would be rather surprised by the rituals they saw there. From the 1730s onwards, they thus formed lodges of their own, which in 1750–1752 united in a separate English Grand Lodge, which referred to itself as that of the ‘Antients’. In 1756, their Grand Secretary, Laurence Dermott, published the Constitutions of this new Grand Lodge under the title *Ahiman Rezon*. Of course, their lodges too needed printed rituals, and thus ‘exposures’ of those were published in the 1760s. The two most important ones were the 1760 *Three Distinct Knocks* and the 1762 *Jachin and Boaz* (Snoek 2003a).

After more than half a century of rivalry between the Moderns and the Antients, an attempt was made to merge these two English Grand Lodges. During the years 1809 to 1811 the Lodge of Promulgation, created especially for that purpose, prepared the merger and formulated the Articles of Union. In 1813 the Duke of Sussex was Grand Master of the Moderns, and his brother, the Duke of Kent, his Deputy Grand Master. At the same time, the Duke of Kent was also the Grand Master of the Antients. And so it came that on 27 December 1813 the two Grand Lodges merged into the United Grand Lodge of England and Wales with the Duke of Sussex as Grand Master. At once the Lodge of Reconciliation was formed to effectuate the merger. It functioned from 1813 to 1816. One of the things it did was to create new rituals for the new Grand Lodge, which were approved and confirmed by the Grand Lodge, based on their performance, in 1816. Then it was dissolved, while in the next few years several Lodges of Instruction or of Improvement were formed to instruct the lodges in the country how to perform the new rituals. It was pretended that there existed no written text of these rituals, but we know today that texts in cipher existed perfectly well. They were first published by Richard Carlile in 1825 (Carlile 1831; Hasselman and Snoek 2010).

### Freemasonry Goes International

In 1720–1721 there had been an unofficial lodge in Rotterdam, composed of British Freemasons (Snoek 2000), but, as stated above, the spread of Freemasonry to the Continent and the rest of the world really started after 1725. The first country where it appeared was France. In 1688, William III had forced James II Stuart to abdicate the British throne, and to flee to France, where he lived until his death in 1701 at his court in exile in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, west of Paris. His son, James (III), was called ‘the Old Pretender’, and his son, Charles Edward, ‘the Young Pretender’. They too stayed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where they were surrounded by large numbers of men from Scotland. Given the popularity of Freemasonry in Scotland between 1688 and 1725, it



seems more likely than unlikely that there were enough Freemasons at this court to form a lodge, but no documentary evidence is known which could prove this. In 1704 the Stuarts were by law excluded from the English throne and in 1713, England and France concluded the Peace of Utrecht, which took the Stuarts the support of France. The next year, George of Hanover became King of England and in September 1715 Louis XIV died and was succeeded by Louis XV. From September to November that year James (III) invaded England, but without success. Still, the Jacobite court in exile in France was maintained until the Young Pretender tried for the last time to conquer his throne back in 1745. In 1717 the French concluded an alliance with England. Soon, everything English became en vogue in France. It is, no doubt, against this background that also Freemasonry was introduced in France. The first lodges in Paris, founded from 1726 onwards, were Jacobite ones, probably working within the Harodim tradition, but from 1729 onwards also Hanoverian lodges, working in the tradition of the 'Moderns', were founded. The first Grand Masters of the French Grand Lodge were British Jacobites. Only in 1738 the first French one was elected (Lefebvre-Filleau 2000).

The first interdict against Freemasonry came from the States of Holland and West Friesland in 1735. The first lodges had been founded here in 1734 (The Hague) and 1735 (Amsterdam and The Hague again), and they had elected their own Grand Master. Then the States demanded certain documents from the lodges, including Anderson's *Constitutions* (1723), and Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* (1730). The interdiction of 30 November 1735 formulated three reproaches: the Freemasons would support a certain political party (the supporters of the Prince of Orange), they would be responsible for certain riots, and they would practice sodomy. Bouman and Van den Brand have shown that all three of these accusations were unfounded and in fact no more than what at that time were the usual arguments to make an interdiction acceptable in the face of the general public (Bouman 1993; Van den Brand 1993). However, it is perfectly possible to read between the lines of the several documents pertaining to the interdict in the archives in order to conclude that authorities were concerned (1) that the Order demanded an oath with imprecations, that a sword of sovereignty was carried before the Grand Master of the Order and before the Master of a lodge, and that the Order had its own Book of Constitutions, all indications that the Order claimed *sovereignty*, and thus formed a 'state within a state', and (2) that the Master of a lodge, as well as the Grand Master of the Order, were elected *democratically* (Snoek 1994).<sup>7</sup>

7 See also Ferrer Benimeli, "Freemasonry and the Catholic Church," in this volume.

The French King had ordered the police officer Hérault to find out what the Freemasons were doing. In 1737 Hérault succeeded obtaining a copy of a ritual, used by one of the Paris lodges, which he published on 5 December (Snoek 2001). The next year it was reprinted, together with a French translation, of the Dutch translation of ca. 1735 (Bernheim 1993), of Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* (1730), as part of *La Réception Mystérieuse*, purportedly published in London. However, as Freemasonry became popular in France, better printed rituals were required. As a result, in 1744 no less than four 'exposures' were published: *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons* by the Abbé Gabriel Louis Calabre Perau gave the rituals for the first two degrees of the tradition of the 'Moderns' (for the date of this publication see Bernheim 1993), while *Le Catéchisme des Francs-Maçons* by Louis Travenol, writing under the name Leonard Gabanon, added the third degree. Both established a new style of presentation, narrative rather than catechetic, and added much more information about the actions to be performed than the older publications had done. The rituals presented in *La Franc-Maçonne* seem not to relate to any known masonic tradition, but it tells a story about the beginnings of the initiation of women in Adoption lodges. *Le Parfait Maçon* seems to present rituals of the first four degrees of the tradition of the Harodim (Snoek 2012). In 1745 *Le Sceau Rompu* gave a number of corrections on *Le Secret* and *Le Catéchisme*, after which *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi*, published in Amsterdam, merged all three into one. Therewith the French version of the rituals of the tradition of the Moderns was established, and it was this form, which now spread rapidly over all of the European continent, almost completely replacing whatever traditions might have been worked in lodges founded there earlier (on the early French 'exposures', see Carr 1971).

### 'High Degrees' and Rites

In or shortly after 1730, it seems, the first masonic knightly Order, the *Ordre Sublime des Chevaliers Élus*, was founded in France (Kervella and Lestienne 1997; Bernheim 1998).<sup>8</sup> Around the same time, there were in England the first 'Scots Masons Lodges'. In one of them, the (French) Union lodge in London, the Italian painter Jacopo Fabris was initiated. In 1742, Fabris in his turn founded the Scots Masters lodge 'L'Union' in Berlin (Mollier 2002). From there this degree of Scots Master (probably of Harodim origin) spread over the continent. Soon new degrees were created, especially in France, England (Harodim tradition), and Germany. These degrees were at first mainly practiced in

<sup>8</sup> See also Mollier, "Freemasonry and Templarism," in this volume.

normal lodges, but soon separate bodies (Scots lodges, Chapters, and so on) were formed which accumulated a number of these, now called 'high degrees', and usually ordered them into a system, a Rite. Examples of these are the 'Strict Observance' (1751/1763–1782, Germany), the Swedish Rite (1756/1759, Sweden), the Bavarian 'Illuminati' (1776–1785, Germany), the 'Rectified Scottish Rite' (1778, France), the 'French' or 'Modern Rite' (1786, France), the York Rite (1797, United States of America), and the 'Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite' (1801, United States of America).<sup>9</sup>

Once the tradition of the 'Moderns' became the more successful one on the continent, the lodges there working in the Harodim tradition seem to have found other ways to survive: some of them, such as the lodge 'Zur Eintracht' or 'Zur Einigkeit' (= Union!) in Mannheim (Germany), turned into Scots Master lodges, while others started, from approximately 1744 onwards, to initiate women. The rituals of the first two degrees, practiced by these lodges, were transformed in a new trigradal system, the Adoption Rite (Snoek 2012). It took until the last quarter of the nineteenth century before women were initiated in the lodges, working in the continental tradition of the 'Moderns', forming the mixed Order 'Le Droit Humain' in France. Early in the twentieth century, the British branch of this Order adopted rituals, which were based on rituals from the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Later this branch started to work also with the rituals of the United Grand Lodge of England. Mainly after the Second World War, purely female Orders began to be founded. As a result, there are today male, mixed, and female masonic Orders.<sup>10</sup>

During the latter part of the eighteenth century a new form of masonry appeared which, to a certain extent, was a reaction against the 'Écossais' and the Templar Rites. This form of masonry did not place the origins of the Order of Freemasons with the medieval Crusades, but in ancient Egypt. That the origins of Freemasonry might be found in ancient Egypt was hinted at before Egyptian masonry as such appeared on the scene; for instance, in the 1745 publication *Le Sceau Rompu* (Carr 1971: 208). While Egyptian masonry never became a real threat to the predominance of the other forms of high degree masonry, it has remained on the fringes of conservative masonry to this day. One of the earliest propagators of Egyptian masonry was Karl Friedrich von Köppen (1734–1797) who founded the Order of the *Afrikanische Bauherren* (African Building Masters) in 1767 (Caillet 1994: 17). This order was based on a short text by Köppen and Bernhard Hymmen (1731–1787), entitled *Crata Repoa* (published only in 1770). Another influential system was Cagliostro's *Egyptian*

9 See de Hoyos, "Masonic Rites and Systems," in this volume.

10 See Snoek, "Freemasonry and Women," in this volume.

*Rite*, which was founded in Naples in 1777, with a Supreme Council established in Paris in 1785 (Introvigne 2005: 225). Allesandro di Cagliostro (the pseudonym of Giuseppe Balsamo, 1743–1795) was one of the most famous and charismatic adventurers of the eighteenth century. Among other things, he claimed to have been initiated at the pyramids in Egypt, and that he possessed the knowledge to transmute base metals into silver and gold. Other claims included the ability to evoke spirits, and that he had lived for no less than two thousand years. In 1785 he announced that both men and women should be entitled to the mysteries of the pyramids, and thus he opened his Rite to women (McIntosh 1975: 30–31). Cagliostro's preoccupation with esoteric matters apparently found its way into the initiatory system of his Egyptian Rite, and the Rite included alchemical aspects, the search for a spiritual immortality, and angelic theurgy (Caillet 1994: 19; Introvigne 2005: 225–227). Other influential Egyptian Rites worth mentioning are the Rites of Memphis and Misraim, which were founded during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

Masonic Rites of a more outspoken esoteric bent included Rites and orders such as *L'Ordre des Élus Coëns* and the *Rite Ecossais philosophique*, but Rosicrucian Rites and degrees can also be counted into this category.<sup>12</sup> The first of these, *L'Ordre des Élus Coëns*, or the *The Order of the Masonic Knights Élus Coëns of the Universe*, was founded by the theosophist and kabbalist Martines de Pasqually (1708/1709–1774) in the 1760s, and it included a peculiar form of theurgy mixed with the philosophy and theosophy of its founder (see Le Forestier 1987 [1923]; Nahon 2005: 332–334). Although this order possessed all the outward characteristics of a masonic organisation such as a hierarchical degree system, rituals of initiation and lodges, and employed a typical masonic terminology, it is perhaps more fitting to label the *Orde des Élus Coëns* a religious movement. The reason for this is not only the peculiar religious teachings derived from Pasqually, but also the marked religious life that the members were expected to live, which is referred to in the name of the order: 'chosen priests', from the Hebrew *kohen* (meaning priest). Pasqually's teachings centre round the Gnostic idea of the Fall of Man through which humankind became separated from God. Through the initiatory system of the order the members were expected to reverse the Fall, and make an upward journey in which the seven degrees of the order (not counting the three Craft degrees) corresponded to the seven gifts of the Spirit. The final goal of the initiatory process

11 For more information about these Rites, see de Hoyos, "Masonic Rites and Systems," in this volume.

12 For a brief description of the most important Rosicrucian masonic systems, see Bogdan, "Freemasonry and Western Esotericism," in this volume.

was 'reintegration', a return to the primitive and primordial state of man characterised by union with God. The theurgy employed in the order was a means to this goal, through which divine energies were invoked and the communion with good spirits was sought. According to Jean-François Var this theurgy was not aimed at acquiring natural or supernatural powers, but it was part of a religious 'cult' which included a liturgy (Var 2005: 935). As mentioned, the initiatory system of the order consisted of a total of ten degrees, of which the preliminary Craft degrees were not seen as part of the Order as such. The degrees were divided into four different classes (again, not counting the Craft degrees), with the degree of Réau-Croix as the highest degree, which constituted a class of its own. After the death of Pasqually in 1774 Caignet de Lester (1725–1778) succeeded him as the leader of the order (Grand Souverain de l'Ordre), followed by Sebastian de Las Casas in 1778. Although *L'Orde des Élus Coëns* was formally dissolved in 1781 it continued to have active lodges, most notably the one in Lyon under the leadership of Willermoz (Nahon 2005: 332–334; Var 2005: 931–935). The *Rite Ecossais philosophique* was the successor of an esoteric Rite called *Rite Hermétique d'Avignon*, which was founded in 1774. It is often stated that Dom Antoine Joseph Pernety (1716–1796) was the founder of not only the *Rite Hermétique d'Avignon*, but also of the *Rite Ecossais philosophique*. Modern scholarship, however, contest this assumption (Snoek 2003b: 28–32). In 1776 the *Rite Hermétique* was exported from Avignon to Paris, where it changed its name to *Rite Ecossais philosophique*. It is uncertain when the Rite was dissolved, but it probably occurred sometime between 1844 and 1849 (Snoek 2003b: 70).

### The Nineteenth Century

The second half of the eighteenth century was a time in which Freemasonry flourished all over the world. However, it was also a time when major changes in the Western worldview were incubating. These changes then became manifest between 1780 and 1820. In 1789 the French Revolution shocked the Western world. In France, masonic activity came to a halt for ten years. Then Napoleon created a new world order, but was defeated himself in 1815. It is striking to see that in a large number of Western countries the masonic rituals were, for the second time,<sup>13</sup> dramatically changed during this period, reflecting a new Western culture, which was middle class, rather than aristocratic. In Germany, the rituals 'Schröder' of 1801 were among the first to reflect this new bourgeois

13 The first time was the period 1715–1725, see above.

worldview. They were followed by those for the ‘Craft’ degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, written in 1804 in Paris (Noël 2006). The new rituals for the United Grand Lodge of England, approved in 1816, were Victorian in their moralistic outlook, even though Queen Victoria was not yet born. Although superficial comparison of the new rituals with the older ones may suggest that little had changed, that what actually had changed was the heart of the matter. Instead of aiming at inducing a mystic experience in the Candidate, the new rituals reflected the conviction that proper moral behaviour can be learned by repetitive performance of proper model behaviour (Hasselmann 2009).<sup>14</sup> For example, in the third degree the candidate is identified with Hiram Abiff, the architect of the Temple of Solomon, who, according to the masonic tradition, was murdered shortly before the completion of the work. The eighteenth century rituals made clear that Hiram was in fact God, so that the candidate experienced a ritual *Unio Mystica*. In the ritual of the AASR, however, Hiram reincarnated in the human candidate, and in the ritual of the United Grand Lodge of England, Hiram steadfastly refuses to give his murderers the Master’s Word, thus showing the model behaviour of a man. The Swedish and American rituals escaped this process, at least for the time being (Snoek 2004a; Snoek 2004b).<sup>15</sup>

The nineteenth century was the era of colonialism *par excellence*. Jews had been initiated from the 1730s onwards, and the first Muslim initiated into masonry was probably the Persian diplomat Askar Khan Afshar, in Paris in 1808. Both Jews and Muslims, however, knew the most central symbol of Freemasonry, the Temple of king Solomon, from their own Holy Scriptures, wherefore the masonic ritual could make at least some sense to them. That, of course, was not the case with people who identified strongly with another religious background. To them, Freemasonry could only mean something if they had assimilated thoroughly into Western culture. It thus took until the 1840s before the first one of them, a Parsee from India, was initiated. And since Freemasonry traditionally works ‘to the Honour of the Grand Architect of the Universe,’ in singular, it took until the 1870s before Hindus—regarded by the English as polytheists *par excellence*—were admitted. Colonial politics, using Freemasonry to assimilate the ‘locals’ to the Western culture, were no doubt a major driving force behind this process. The other way round, however, the majority of the non-Christian members—Jews and Muslims included—seem to have used Freemasonry intentionally as an emancipation tool, in order to get recognition from members of the dominant culture with

14 See also Hasselmann, “Freemasonry and Performance,” in this volume.

15 See Snoek, “Masonic Rituals of Initiation,” in this volume.

whom they were confronted in daily life.<sup>16</sup> Another feature of nineteenth century masonic history was the culmination of anti-masonry. In the first place, the so-called 'Morgan affair' triggered a strong anti-masonic movement in the United States of America, resulting even in an explicitly anti-masonic political party. Secondly, the Pope, confronted with the nationalist movement in Italy, realised that he would lose (as indeed happened in 1870) most of the Church-State (the largest part of Northern Italy, with the exception of mainly Tuscany and the Republic of Venice), and fought against it with the weapons he had: Papal Bulls. Because the two leaders of the Nationalist movement Count Cavour and Giuseppe Garibaldi were both Freemasons, the Pope seems to have hoped that Bulls condemning Freemasonry would hurt these two men. The predominantly Roman Catholic French Freemasons did not understand that these Bulls were not aimed against them. So, they tried to convince the Pope that there was nothing incompatible between Freemasonry and the Church. But whatever they did, it could not stop the stream of anti-masonic Bulls. Once Rome was invaded by the Nationalists and the Church State integrated into Italy in 1870, the Papal Bulls against Freemasonry became even harsher, indicating frustration on the part of the Vatican. And thus, in 1877, the provoked *Grand Orient de France* took an explicitly anti-clerical stand. In 1896 Pope Leo XIII finally organised an anti-masonic conference and two years later the Anti-Masonic Liga was founded in Rome. The last anti-masonic Bull was Leo XIII's *Annum Ingressi* from 1902.<sup>17</sup>

In the eighteenth century, an important accusation had been that, by demanding that the candidates would take an oath with imprecations, Freemasonry not only infringed on Biblical interdictions against swearing such an oath generally (Matthew 5:34, 37; Exodus 20:7), but also against the tradition in Western Church and State law, that only sovereign Powers were allowed to do so. But this argument did not recur in the nineteenth century. The arguments against Freemasonry, forwarded in the Papal Bulls, were partly directly related to the real reason of their existence: Freemasons were supposed to plot against Church and State. Other recurrent arguments were (1) the fact that Freemasons accepted that their members were of any (Christian) religion they wanted, instead of demanding their conversion to the Roman Catholic Church ('indifferentism'), and (2) Freemasons wanted the separation of State and

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16 See Van Pelt: "Freemasonry and Jews"; Zarccone: "Freemasonry and Islam"; Harland-Jacobs and Snoek: "Freemasonry and Eastern Religions"; and Harland-Jacobs: "Freemasonry and Colonialism," all in this volume.

17 See Ferrer Benimeli, "Freemasonry and the Catholic Church," and Tyssens, "Freemasonry and Nationalism," in this volume.

Church—which would cost the Pope his worldly power, and the Church its monopoly over education. These last two points were correct.

### The Twentieth Century

After 1870, the feminist movement became ever more powerful in a number of countries. Once on 11 November 1875 Countess Ilona (i.e. Helena) Hadik-Barkóczy had been initiated in the male lodge 'Egyenlőség' ('Equality') at Ungvár, working under the *Grand Orient of Hungary*, Spain followed with the initiation of Countess Julia Apraxin-Batthyany in the lodge 'Fraternidad Ibérica' in Madrid in 1880. In contrast to the Hungarian male lodges, those in Spain did not stop after the initiation of one woman, but continued initiating more of them with the 'male' rituals of the AASR. Indeed, the phenomenon became rather popular. The struggle to initiate women into French masonic lodges at the end of the nineteenth century must be seen in the context of the struggle for women's political rights. Central to this process, on the masonic side, was the relatively short-lived *Grande Loge Symbolique Écossaise* (GLSE), which brought together the most progressive Masons of its time. The lodge 'Les Libres Penseurs' belonged to this Grand Lodge. During a short interval as an independent lodge, it initiated the feminist leader Maria Deraismes in 1882, resulting in 1893 in the creation of what is now the mixed masonic order *Le Droit Humain* (LDH). This new Grand Lodge adopted the rituals of the GLSE for the initiation of all its members, male and female. This rise of mixed Freemasonry in France, Allen argues, has in fact its origins in the remarkable synergy of men and women feminists (Allen 2008), who worked together in the name of women's interests everywhere, not just in the Craft.<sup>18</sup>

In the early twentieth century it was the British branch of *Le Droit Humain* where the third significant change of the masonic rituals took place. In 1902, Annie Besant was initiated in this mixed Order. She was not only an important feminist, but also one of the leading figures in the Theosophical Society. For her, *Le Droit Humain* and the Theosophical Society were both tools, which she could use in her feminist enterprise. The rituals she created from 1904 onwards for that part of *Le Droit Humain*, which she held under her control, were imbued with Theosophical symbolism. Given the enormous influence, which the Theosophical Society had on Western culture in the first third of the twentieth century, the form of Freemasonry she created was extremely well adapted to what was wanted by Freemasons, not only in her own masonic Order, and as

18 See Snoek, "Freemasonry and Women," in this volume.



a result, *Le Droit Humain* grew explosively. But with the Second World War, the Theosophically influenced Western culture came largely to an end (Prescott 2008).<sup>19</sup>

Anti-masonry experienced a second culmination in the twentieth century. Ever since Augustin de Barruel had in 1797 published the ideas he had stolen from his friend John Robison about a World Conspiracy, in which the Jews, the Freemasons and the Illuminati (regarded by Barruel as distinguished from the Freemasons) cooperated in order to overthrow all monarchies as well as the Vatican, and to found a World Republic instead, conspiracy theories have lived a life of their own. From now on, anti-Semitism (which was much older) became almost inseparable from anti-masonry. The culmination of this development formed the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, written in 1897 or 1898 in Paris on the initiative of the Okharana, the secret police abroad of the Russian Tsar, led by Pyotr Ivanovitch Rachkovsky. The author was maybe Matvei Golovinsky, a member of Rachkovsky's group. It was based on Maurice Joly's *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Montesquieu et Machiavel* (1864), an attack on the despotism of Napoleon III, but the Protocols reversed the argument, attacking exactly modernism. They were intended as propaganda against the progressive Count Sergey Witte, who was since 1892 minister of finances of Russia. As such they were published in Russia in the period 1903 to 1907. But with an intelligent preface, one could use the *Protocols* as propaganda for virtually any cause, as long as one could present the Jews and the Freemasons as the enemies. From 1919 onwards, translations were published in most European languages, and they played a central role in Nazi propaganda during the period 1929–1945. Consequently, masonic activity came to a halt in Germany in 1935 and in all occupied countries during the Second World War. After it a significant number of Nazis fled to the Middle East and spread there their anti-Semitic ideas, using the *Protocols* again. Anti-Zionist Muslims from then on adopted them and use especially Arabic translations in their propaganda against Israel, in passing producing strong anti-masonic sentiments as well (Cohn 1967; Taguieff 1992).<sup>20</sup>

The twentieth century saw, however, also an attempt at rapprochement. After Vatican II (1962–1965), the Roman Catholic Church took the initiative to start conversations with representatives of Freemasonry. No doubt under the influence of those, the formulation of Canon 2335 in the first edition of the *Codex*, of 1917, that a Freemason is excommunicated automatically, was dropped in the second edition of 1983. It only contained now in Canon 1374

19 See Snoek, "Freemasonry and Women," and Bogdan, "Freemasonry and Western Esotericism," both in this volume.

20 See Rognon, "Freemasonry and War," in this volume.

the statement that someone who becomes a member of an organisation, which plots against the Church, should be punished with a just punishment. The word 'Freemasonry' does not occur in it anymore. Ever since, Bishops Conferences in many countries have declared that the Grand Lodge in their country is not an organisation that plots against the Church. Regrettably, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who was Pope Benedict XVI from 2005 to 2013) took a different position, which is, however, understandable if one realises that the German Bishops Conference had declared membership of the Church and of Freemasonry incompatible in 1980—three years before the second edition of the *Codex*—and that he is the last one still living of those who signed this declaration.

In 1985, British Freemasonry was for the first time confronted with serious opposition, and that by a Protestant Church: the 'Faith and Works Committee' of the 'Methodist Conference' published its *Report*, in which the position was taken that one cannot be simultaneously a Freemason and a Christian. As a reaction, the 'Association of Methodist Freemasons' was founded, which demonstrated that the report was based on incorrect information. Thereupon the *Report* was referred back to the Committee for revision, but no new version ever appeared, so that it counts as withdrawn now. In 1986, the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church discussed the same theme, but did not come to any negative conclusions about Freemasonry. A Working Group of the Church of England, appointed in 1985 to study the Methodist *Report*, published in 1987 its *Freemasonry and Christianity. Are they compatible? A Contribution to discussion*. It did not answer the question posed in the title, but formulated certain critical remarks. One of it concerned the imprecations of the masonic oath. These had been declared no longer obligatory already in 1964, but now, in 1986, they were definitely abolished by the United Grand Lodge of England.<sup>21</sup> No doubt anti-masonry in England reached its lowest ebb with the parliamentary inquiries of the Labour party, broadcasted by the BBC in the 1990s.

Once the *Grand Orient de France* had taken an explicitly anti-clerical stand in 1877, the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) at once declared that Grand Lodge—the largest one in France—irregular. It could do so easily, having itself hardly any Roman Catholic members. Yet, it took still more than a half century before the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland together formulated what exactly, from then on, would be the rules which they would use to decide if a Grand Lodge was 'regular' or not. These rules were published in 1929 as the "Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition." At first these and additional

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21 See Liagre, "Freemasonry and Protestantism," in this volume.

rules served to expel more and more Grand Lodges from the pool of 'recognised' Grand Lodges, thus at the same time creating a second group, usually referring to themselves as the 'liberal' (as opposed to the 'conservative') ones. In the last two decades, however, attempts can be observed to reconcile the two groups. For example, at least some of the so-called 'Prince-Hall' Grand Lodges in the United States of America, composed of Blacks, are now recognised by the UGLE, and it has also abandoned the position that an organisation which has female members can, by definition, not practice Freemasonry: friendly relations are now maintained with the 'Order of Women Freemasons' in England.<sup>22</sup>

That Order was founded in 1908 as a mixed one, split-off from *Le Droit Humain*. In the 1920s it was decided to initiate no male candidates anymore, and in 1935 the Order became female only, after which it took its current name in 1958. It thus was the first female-only Grand Lodge. After the Second World War, purely female Grand Lodges were founded in many countries. The Adoption lodges of the *Grande Loge de France* were formed into one in 1945, which since 1952 is called the *Grande Loge Féminine de France*. It has founded daughter Grand Lodges in many countries, including Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Venezuela. In others, such as Germany and the Netherlands, female Grand Lodges were created on the initiative of male Masons and/or their female relatives. One of the fastest growing ones seems to be the Female Grand Lodge of Turkey.<sup>23</sup> Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, moreover, male, mixed and female masonic lodges and Grand Lodges have been founded in most of the countries which once belonged to it.

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22 See Snoek, "Relations Between Grand Lodges," and Révauger, "Freemasonry and Blacks," both in this volume.

23 See Snoek, "Freemasonry and Women," in this volume.

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## The Old Charges

*Andrew Prescott*

### The Old Charges and the Early Development of Freemasonry

Among the oldest and most numerous documentary survivals associated with the history of Freemasonry before 1717 are copies of legendary histories of the craft of stonemasonry compiled in Britain and known collectively as the Old Charges. The earliest surviving manuscripts of the Old Charges date from the early fifteenth century, but these texts continued to be copied even after the publication of the new Book of Constitutions by the Grand Lodge in London in 1723. The Old Charges are thus the chief documentary evidence for links between the medieval stonemasons and Enlightenment Freemasonry, and deserve far greater scholarly attention than they have hitherto received. The Old Charges are distinctive to Britain and, while there is obviously a need for comparative studies with European craft documents such as the various regulations of craft guilds from towns and cities in France, Italy and Germany, this chapter will focus on the British context and development of the Old Charges.

The appearance of the earliest manuscripts of the Old Charges coincides with growth in the use of the term ‘freemason’ in British documents. The Freemasons were originally a specialist grade of stonemason, who specialised in the carving of freestone, which was, in the words of Douglas Knoop and Gwilym Jones, “the name given to any fine-grained sandstone or limestone that can be freely worked in any direction and sawn with a toothed saw” (Knoop and Jones 1947: 14). Freestone was used for the decoration of capitals and cornices, the cutting of tracery, and the carving of images and gargoyles. The London Assize of Wages of 1212 refers in Latin to *sculptores lapidum liberorum* (sculptors of freestone). The Statute of Labourers of 1351, which attempted to regulate wages and contracts in the wake of the labour shortage caused by the Black Death, uses an equivalent French term: *mestre meson de franche peer* (master mason of freestone) (Knoop and Jones 1947: 14). The first use of the English term ‘freemason’ so far identified dates from 1325 when, according to the London Coroners’ Rolls, a group of prisoners who escaped from Newgate gaol included one ‘Nicholas le Freemason’ (Sharpe 1913: 130–131; Prescott 2004). The word ‘freemason’ appears to have become more common during

the late fourteenth century. In the London Letter Book, a list of craft representatives from 1376 were initially described as 'freemasons', although this was subsequently altered to 'masons' (Williams 1935). A late fourteenth-century manuscript of the poem *Floris and Blanchefour*, British Library, Egerton MS. 2862, includes the lines 'Take on þy honde squyer and scantlon, As þow were a free mason [Take in your hand square and rule, as though you were a Freemason]' (Prescott 2004). Freemasons also start from the beginning of the fifteenth century to appear more regularly in legal proceedings, such as the bills presented to the Court of Chancery concerning a dispute involving Roger Dennis, a Freemason of London, over the rebuilding of Wyberton church in Lincolnshire (London, National Archives, C 1/7/104).

In England, guilds developed from parish fraternities established to support chantry priests (Veale 1991; Barron 1985). Particular fraternities became popular with crafts and these fraternities provided a vehicle whereby crown and civic regulation of these crafts was increasingly undertaken. In London, for example, a fraternity at the church of All Hallows Bread Street received a number of bequests from salters. Salters' Hall was built on land owned by the fraternity and the fraternity's chapel became known as the Salters' Chapel (Barron 1985: 14–17). Similarly, wills show that a 'fraternity of masons' and 'fellowship of freemasons of London' was founded at the church of St Thomas of Acon in Cheapside by 1389 (Shelby 1976: 203). The character of these religious fraternities is illustrated by a copy of the regulations of the Fraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary established by the stonemasons of Lincoln in 1313, made during a royal inquiry in 1389 (London, National Archives, C 47/41/154, cited in Williams 1941). The brothers and sisters of this fraternity gave a candle to a designated church where it was kept burning on all feast days of the year. When any member died, the guild provided candles at the funeral and made charitable disbursements. Members who made bequests to the guild would be remembered by masses, on a sliding scale according to the size of the donation. Any member of the guild who went on pilgrimage would receive money for the journey and a hero's welcome on their return. Impoverished members could receive financial assistance. Provision was also made to encourage members to avoid litigation and to assist them if they were arrested. The members of the guild met together annually on the day after Easter at a 'morning speech'. Members who failed to attend or who refused to hold office in the guild were fined. The fraternal feast was the major social focus of the fraternity. To support these activities, careful management of guild funds was required and many of the ordinances were concerned with financial matters. All Masons who were members of the gild agreed to give forty pence towards the cost of gild candles each time they took an apprentice.

This Lincoln document was concerned with practical issues of guild management and the regulation of the benefits enjoyed by members of the guild. As these religious fraternities began to develop into bodies for the regulation of trade, the ordinances issued by them also had very practical and straightforward aims. The 1356 regulations for London stonemasons focus on penalties for failure to complete work to a suitable standard, on the training of apprentices and on preventing the poaching of craftsman (Knoop and Jones 1947: 44; Shelby 1976: 203–205). Such practical concerns are also evident in a series of ordinances issued to govern the work of Masons and carpenters at Calais from 1474–1475, which deal with such matters as working hours, holidays, provision of tools, and use of spare wood and stone by the craftsmen. Penalties by members of the ‘fellship’ at Calais were paid into a joint fund known as ‘Saynte Johns boxe’ (London, National Archives, E 101/198/6).

A similar pragmatic outlook is also evident in continental documents (Shelby 1976; Goldthwaite 1980: 242–286; and Prak 2011: 398–403). For example, the regulations for Parisian Masons from the mid-thirteenth century make detailed stipulations on the length of apprenticeship (although the Parisian Masons also expressed their sense of superiority to other trades by claiming that they were exempt from the duty known as *guet* because of a privilege granted them by Charles Martel) (Prak 2011: 402; Epstein 1991: 145). Such day-to-day preoccupations as the regulation of apprenticeship are also apparent in the statutes of guilds from Italy and elsewhere, as Maarten Prak has described. ‘The minimum training period varied significantly, even in relatively small areas. In Verona the minimum was just one year, in Piacenza four, in Bologna five, in Genoa and Savona six, and in Venice six to seven. The statutes in Padua distinguished between stonecutters, who were required to learn for six years, and the wallers, whose apprenticeship took up to eight years. In Germany it was the other way around: wallers had to be apprenticed for four years, stonemasons for six’ (Prak 2011: 401–402). The European guild ordinances show that stonemasons’ organisations, supported by funding from the patrons of the buildings on which they worked, could be quite sophisticated. The lodge in Strasbourg owned its own property which provided a handsome revenue. The regional organization in Germany was particularly well developed, and in 1459 master masons from all over Germany met in Regensburg to unify their statutes into ordinances which were intended to become standard for all lodges (Shelby 1976: 209–213; Goldthwaite 1980: 246). Nevertheless, the content of these ordinances was again largely concerned with detailed matters of trade organization, as is also the case with ordinances from the Low Countries, such as the set of regulations from Maastricht copied in the sixteenth century but said to date from c. 1400 published by Gérard Dielemans (Dielemans 2005).



While ordinances such as those from Germany or Italy are useful sources for understanding the organisation of the stonemasons' craft in the middle ages, they are not related to the British Old Charges which form a distinct and separate textual tradition and are, as Richard Goldthwaite has observed, mysterious in their purpose by comparison with the continental ordinances (Goldthwaite 1980: 246). The Old Charges pay scant attention to the kind of practical issues which loom large in the regulations from Lincoln, Calais or Maastricht. There is no discussion of funds or benefits and the only reference to an organisational structure is a vague mention of a general assembly whose actual existence has never been established. The main focus of the Old Charges is instead on the supposed history of the craft of stonemasons.

### The Regius and Cooke Manuscripts

The medieval text of the Old Charges survives in two manuscripts (see Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1938a; Prescott 2005). The oldest is London, British Library, Royal MS. 17 A.I. This manuscript formed part of the library of John Theyer, a Gloucestershire antiquary who died in 1673, after which his books and manuscripts were acquired by Charles II, eventually passing in 1757 with the rest of the Royal collection to the British Museum. The interest of the text for the history of Freemasonry was first noticed in 1839 by James Orchard Halliwell, a precocious manuscript scholar of controversial reputation who was afterwards accused of stealing manuscripts from Trinity College Cambridge. Halliwell described his discovery in a paper to the Society of Antiquaries in April 1839 and published an edition of the poem the following year. Royal MS. 17 A.I was generally known by masonic scholars as the Halliwell manuscript until 1889 when Robert Freke Gould, conscious perhaps of Halliwell's scandalous reputation and maybe also piqued that this manuscript should have been first identified by a scholar who was not a Freemason, proposed that it should be renamed the Regius manuscript, 'as being indicative alike of the collection—'King's' or 'Royal Library', British Museum—upon whose shelves it reposes, and its own obvious supremacy as a document of the craft' (Gould 1889: lv). Gould's designation of this manuscript has been generally used by masonic scholars ever since.

The Regius manuscript contains 794 lines of Middle English verse which have been localized by the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval England* to Shropshire (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986: Vol. 1, 115, 233–235; McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986: Vol. 2, 424–438). One of the most striking features of Regius is the inclusion of a number of other texts, including extracts on behavior in church from *Instructions for Parish Priests* by the

Augustinian prior of Lilleshall in Shropshire, John Mirk (*fl.* c. 1382–c. 1414), a popular poem on etiquette called *Urbanitatis*, and an account of the Quatuor Coronati, four stonemasons said to have been martyred in Rome. The appearance of these texts is intriguing, suggesting that Regius was at one level intended to provide a small manual on etiquette for use by the fifteenth-century stonemason. However, these additional texts are very much secondary components of the Regius text. At the heart of the Regius manuscript is an account of the origins of the craft of stonemasonry and a series of ordinances regulating the craft which were said to have been promulgated by the Anglo-Saxon King Æthelstan (893/894–939) (see Cooper 2011: 56–106). It is this legendary and highly symbolic history which forms the main thrust of Regius. The poem describes how the great clerk Euclid devised geometry and gave it the name of masonry in order to provide employment for the children of great lords and ladies living in Egypt. Euclid ordained that, although there were masters among the Masons, they should nevertheless treat each other as equals, ‘neither subject nor servant’. Regius states that masonry came to England in the reign of Æthelstan. To regulate the craft, Æthelstan made a series of ordinances, which the poem describes. According to the account in Regius, Æthelstan’s ordinances instructed that a general assembly of Masons should be held and ordered all Masons to attend it. Æthelstan enjoined that the Masons were to receive fair pay. According to Regius, Æthelstan echoed Euclid by declaring that the Masons should always remember that they were fellow workers, helping each other in their work, serving each other at meals and avoiding recourse to litigation.

The date generally given in masonic literature for the Regius manuscript is c. 1390, but this ultimately derives from outmoded assessments given by David Casley in 1735 and Halliwell, and should not be regarded as authoritative (Prescott 2005). In 1874, at the request of the masonic scholar W.P. Buchan, Edward Augustus Bond, the Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, examined the Regius manuscript and declared that in his opinion it dated from the first half of the fifteenth century. The inclusion of the extracts from Mirk and the *Urbanitatis* poem, both of which had evidently been in circulation for some time at the time that the Regius poem was copied, suggest that a late fourteenth century dating for this manuscript would in any case be optimistic. Comparison with, for example, London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius A.II, a manuscript of John Mirk’s *Instructions for Parish Priests*, suggests that Bond was broadly right, and that the dating of c. 1390 for Regius should be discarded in favour of the early fifteenth century.

The Regius manuscript is closely related to another manuscript in the British Library, Additional MS. 23198, which was acquired from an impoverished

woman called Caroline Baker in 1859. This manuscript had had a varied career before it came into Mrs Baker's hands. On 24 June 1721, this manuscript had been displayed at a meeting of the Grand Lodge in London by George Payne, a civil servant who was a former Grand Master (Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1938a; Haycock 2002: 176). Payne stated that he had found it in the west of England and alleged (wrongly) that it dated from at least the early thirteenth century. Payne's production of this manuscript caused great excitement and William Stukeley made a drawing of it which is preserved in the Bodleian Library (Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1938a: 55). The manuscript remained in the possession of Grand Lodge and in 1728 two calligraphic manuscripts were made of it.<sup>1</sup> However, shortly afterwards the manuscript left masonic custody. In 1781, it was in the possession of one Robert Crowe, perhaps in view of the later Norfolk connection of the manuscript to be identified with the solicitor of that name who lived at Swaffham in Norfolk and died in 1786. In 1786, the volume passed into the possession of the Norfolk antiquary Sir John Fenn, best known for his publication of the Paston letters. After Fenn's death in 1794, the manuscript disappeared from sight. By 1860, the manuscript had come to the attention of the self-styled 'Organist, Clerical Amanuensis, Public Lecturer and Sub-Editor', Matthew Cooke, who was an enthusiastic Freemason and regular user of the British Museum. In 1861, Cooke published an elaborate transcript and pseudo-facsimile of the manuscript, made using specially cut types. The manuscript has ever since been known as the Cooke manuscript.

In first publishing the Cooke manuscript, Matthew Cooke suggested that it dated from the end of the fifteenth century. Edward Bond of the British Museum was again asked to pronounce on its date and in 1869 stated that he considered that the Cooke manuscript was of the middle or later part of the fifteenth century, but rather inclined towards the earlier period. In other words, Regius and Cooke are roughly of the same period, with Regius being slightly older than Cooke. The Cooke manuscript is in prose, which has been localized by Douglas Hamer to the south west Midlands (Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1938a: 63). In the Cooke manuscript, the supplementary material in Regius, such as the extracts from Mirk and the poem *Urbanitatis*, is omitted. On the other hand, the legendary history of stonemasonry has been hugely expanded. It opens with an elaborate invocation to God, who had made all things to be

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1 These are the manuscripts now known as the Supreme Council MS. and the Woodford MS., which was made by William Reid, Secretary of the Grand Lodge, in 1728 for William Cowper, Clerk of Parliament, and afterwards owned by Sir Francis Palgrave, and is now owned by Quatuor Coronati Lodge No 2076 and on deposit in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry. See Knoop, Jones and Hamer (1938a: 55–57).

subject to man. God had given man knowledge of crafts, including geometry. The seven liberal arts are then listed. Clearly, the author declares, geometry is at the root of them all, since geometry means measurement of the earth, and all tools involve measurement and are made of materials from the earth. All the crafts of the world, he continues, were founded by the sons of Lamach, who were mentioned in *Genesis*, with Lamach's eldest son Jabal inventing geometry. Lamach's sons wrote their discoveries on two pillars of stone to survive fire or flood. After the flood, Pythagoras found one stone and Hermes the other. Ham, Noah's son, revived the practice of masonry. Nimrod, Ham's son, sent Masons to Assyria and gave them charges which, declares the Cooke manuscript, survive, just as those given by Euclid have survived.

The Cooke manuscript then repeats the story of Euclid in much the same way as Regius, but with more biblical references and the addition of circumstantial information about Egypt. The Cooke author describes how stonemasonry came to Europe. He states that a king was elected in France called Charles II, who loved Masons, and gave them charges which were still in use in France. Shortly afterwards, 'Saint Ad Habelle' came to England and converted St Alban to Christianity. Alban also gave charges to the Masons and 'ordeyned conuenyent [wages] to pay for þer trauayle [ordained suitable wages to pay for their work]'. Cooke then gives a slightly different version of the Æthelstan story. He states that Æthelstan's youngest son himself became proficient in masonry and that the prince gave the Masons ordinances. The prince ordered that the Masons should have reasonable pay, and procured a charter from the king which stated that the Masons might hold an assembly at whatever time they thought reasonable. Cooke then repeats the story of Æthelstan's grant in the same terms as Regius, and repeats the various ordinances. The order of the articles is slightly different, and some of the more general articles in Regius are omitted. The effect of the rearrangement is to give greater prominence to the Masons' assembly, and Cooke concludes by stressing that any mason who failed to attend the assembly would be arrested by the sheriff and cast into prison.

It has been argued that Cooke embodies an older and fuller version of the masonic legends than Regius (Poole and Worts 1935: 26–29), but this claim is difficult to sustain from a close comparison of the texts. It seems rather that Cooke elaborated the legendary history of stonemasonry in order to strengthen the claims of stonemasons that the Masons should have reasonable pay and that they should be permitted to hold an annual assembly: 'þey schulde haue resonabulle pay [they should have reasonable pay]' and 'they schulde make a sembly whan thei sawe reasonably tyme a cum to-gedir [they should make an assembly when they saw a reasonable time to come together]'. In Regius, it

is claimed that these demands were warranted by the charter of Æthelstan. In Cooke, the first regulation that Masons should be properly paid is extended back to the time of St Alban, and Æthelstan is presented as confirming these ancient provisions and authorizing the assembly. The way in which the story is subtly manipulated in Cooke to strengthen the claims of the stonemasons is strikingly illustrated by the introduction of the figure of Æthelstan's supposed son (there is no evidence that Æthelstan had any children). Æthelstan's son was apparently invented by the author of Cooke in order to extend his roll-call of royal Masons and also to establish more firmly the right of Masons to hold their own assembly. According to Regius, the Masons' assembly was held by Æthelstan and was attended by the king and many nobleman. Cooke makes a subtle but important change. The introduction in the Cooke manuscript of the figure of Æthelstan's son who becomes a mason changes the character of the assembly. In the Cooke manuscript, the Masons' assembly becomes a gathering convened and held by the Masons for their own regulation. In other words, the Cooke manuscript introduces the figure of a king's son to the story in order to help establish the right of stonemasons to meet together and regulate their craft.

By manipulating the legendary history of stonemasonry, the compiler of the Cooke manuscript sought to provide a stronger historical warrant for the claim of the Masons to hold an annual assembly. Similar concerns are also evident from the way in which Cooke treats the 'articles and points' governing the craft. The ordinances as presented in Regius have been reorganized in Cooke so as to give greater prominence to the assembly. Although Cooke contains fewer articles, it considerably strengthens a number of the provisions. For example, Regius declared that apprentices could be paid less while they were learning their craft, providing they received full wages when their training was complete. Cooke puts this slightly differently, enjoining the master to pay the apprentice a fair wage for the work he undertakes. Cooke apparently represents a shrewdly edited version of the articles from Regius in which the less important articles, such as the injunction that Masons should not criticize each other's work, have been omitted in order to emphasize more pressing issues, such as the need for fair pay and the importance of the general assembly.

All this suggests a context for the compilation of these two manuscripts. As is well known, wage pressure was particularly acute in the building trades after the Black Death, and much of the labour legislation in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries sought to restrain the wage levels of building workers (Given-Wilson 2000a). In the 1425 parliament, the commons presented a petition complaining that the annual congregations and confederacies made by the Masons in their general chapters and assemblies were publicly violating and

undermining the statutes of labourers (Knoop and Jones 1938b: 183). The commons asked the king and lords to ordain that the holding and gathering of such chapters should be utterly forbidden and judged a felony, and asked that the justices of the peace should be given authority to enquire into these chapters and assemblies. The king replied that such chapters and congregations should not be held, and those who convene such chapters should be adjudged felons. Any Masons who go to such congregations should be imprisoned without fine or ransom at the king's will. A statute to this effect was duly enacted. The stories in Regius and Cooke were intended to authorize the continued holding of such assemblies notwithstanding the statutory provision. This suggests that the manuscripts date from after 1425, placing them into the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

As such, the Regius and Cooke manuscripts are striking examples of the way in which medieval fraternities of different types invented and manipulated myths, legends and symbols to provide a historical warrant for various claims. The Masons denied the authority of parliament to prohibit the annual assemblies of Masons, because these meetings had been authorized by Æthelstan (perhaps chosen for no other reason than his name, meaning 'noble stone', was a credible one for a patron of stonemasons). When Æthelstan was not found a sufficiently high authority, the story was extended back to Nimrod. The manipulation of legends and symbols to construct historical identities and to provide invented warrants for claims to property or status is a familiar theme of the middle ages. The Regius and Cooke manuscripts, however, are unusual and important because they allow the process of manipulation to be traced in great detail.

### The Early Modern History of the Old Charges

The other striking feature of the masonic legends in Regius and Cooke is their longevity. The next oldest surviving manuscript of the Old Charges after Regius and Cooke is London, Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Grand Lodge MS. 1, which was purchased by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1839.<sup>2</sup> This

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2 A facsimile, transcript and description of the manuscript is Speth 1892. For a recent authoritative description of the manuscript, see Robinson (2003). Robinson notes that A.C.F. Jackson claimed (without providing any evidence) that the manuscript was in the possession of the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) in 1665 and that a copy was said to have been made for the Lodge Kilwinning. McLeod, 'Old Charges', disputes this on the grounds that the text of the Kilwinning MS. differs significantly from Grand Lodge MS. 1. It is perhaps worth noting that Grand Lodge MS 1 was dated just four days after William Schaw was made Master

manuscript is dated 25 December 1583, and represents a substantial elaboration of the medieval legendary history of masonry as presented in Regius and Cooke. For example, it extends, in a very unlikely way, the story of St Alban's connection with masonry. It claims that England lacked any charge of masonry until St Alban's time, when the King of England, who was a pagan, built a wall around the town that is now called St Albans. The manuscript states that St Alban was a worthy knight and a steward of the king's household who governed the realm and the town walls, 'and loved Massons well'. Grand Lodge MS. 1 claims that St Alban ordained that the Masons should receive 2s 6d a week for their work and 3d a day for food and drink. He is also supposed to have given them a charter authorising them to hold a general council.

According to the manuscript, after the time of St Alban came divers wars until the reign of Æthelstan. Grand Lodge MS. 1 adds two components to the story of Æthelstan and his son as found in Cooke, namely that the son's name was Edwin and that he held an assembly of the Masons at York. Moreover, Grand Lodge MS. 1 gives a detailed description of Edwin's alleged proceedings at York. Again, these appear to be designed to improve the narrative consistency and credibility of the story, and to enhance the authority of the supposed charges. The author of the Cooke manuscript had claimed that the various charges promulgated by Nimrod, David, Solomon, Euclid, King Charles of France and so on had survived. Grand Lodge MS. 1 accounts for the lack of any manuscripts of these charges by stating that Edwin in the assembly at York had subsumed them all into his own charges.

The supposed gap between Cooke and Grand Lodge MS 1 has been a puzzle in explaining the persistence of these legends, but there are suggestions that some intervening fifteenth- and sixteenth century manuscripts of the Old Charges have been lost (McLeod 1986). Moreover, a group of other manuscripts of the Old Charges, including for example the William Watson manuscript, copied in York in 1687, now in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry (Howard 1891), apparently preserve an earlier state of the text than Grand

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of the King's Works, and the possibility of a Scottish origin for the manuscript might bear further examination. The manuscript was purchased by United Grand Lodge of England in 1839. The manuscript was said to have been acquired through the good offices of Henry Raper Slade, an associate of Robert Crucefix and George Oliver, from Ann Siddall, a granddaughter of Hannah Dunckerley, and allegedly belonged to Thomas Dunckerley. This story has been closely examined by Sommers (2012: 141–144), who suggests that the Dunckerley provenance is uncertain and may have been embellished by Slade, with the encouragement of Crucefix and Oliver. The manuscript was stolen and mutilated in the mid twentieth century, and the section with the alleged Dunckerley inscription was lost. A glance through Hughan (1895), suggests that such a fraught history is not unusual with Old Charge manuscripts.

Lodge MS. 1. They retain the spurious references to medieval authorities such as the *Polychronicon* and Isidore of Seville which are a feature of the Cooke manuscript, but are expunged in Grand Lodge MS. 1. William Watson and the other manuscripts present the story of St Alban and the York Legend in much the same form as Grand Lodge MS. 1, but add an additional claim that the charges had been seen and approved by King Henry VI and his council. These manuscripts also make the surprising and wrong claim that Edwin succeeded Æthelstan as King. The garbled information about Edwin in this text indicates that the manuscript is not, as it claims, a reliable copy of a fifteenth century document. It seems rather that the reference to Henry VI was introduced to counter any suggestion that meetings of stonemasons had been outlawed by his parliament.

From 1583, copies of the Old Charges began to be frequently made in many different parts of England and Scotland. More than twenty manuscripts compiled between 1583 and 1717 have been so far identified, and these charges continued frequently to be copied after 1717, so that altogether more than 120 versions have so far been traced (McLeod 1986). Many of these manuscripts were first identified by the masonic scholar W.J. Hughan in the late nineteenth century (Hughan 1895; McLeod 1983).<sup>3</sup> In the first volume of *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, the German scholar Wilhelm Begemann published an attempt to classify the Old Charges, in which he used the latest philological methods to try and establish the descent of the texts (Begemann 1888). Begemann's work had a counterproductive effect in that masonic scholars have become obsessed with classifying texts of the Old Charges according to Begemann's scheme and ignore the manuscript evidence. Thus, when the discovery of a new eighteenth-century manuscript of the Old Charges by the Newcastle lawyer George Grey was reported in 1999, the manuscript was described purely in terms of its place in the existing classification schemes, making it impossible to tell from the published account what the manuscript actually says (Akenhead 1999). The best available guide to the Old Charge manuscripts currently available remains the second edition of Hughan's *The Old Charges of British Freemasons*, published in 1895 (for which Hughan published a supplement in *The Freemason* in 1906). Much of the information in Hughan's book is now, however, very out of date. The information about the dating of manuscripts in Hughan's book is particularly unreliable. For example, it has been assumed since the time of Hughan that the copy of the Old Charges in London, British Library, Lansdowne MS. 98, dates from about 1600, because it occurs in a volume of papers said to

<sup>3</sup> See also H. Poole's list of Old Charge MSS. in volume 1 of his 1951 revision of *Gould's History of Freemasonry*.



be connected with Elizabeth I's Secretary of State and Treasurer, William Cecil, Lord Burghley. However, the manuscript also contains some much later papers and it is clear from the handwriting that this copy of the Old Charges dates from the end, not the beginning, of the seventeenth century (Prescott 2005). Some manuscripts of the Old Charges are now missing.<sup>4</sup> Further confusion has been created by a tendency to refer to printed references to the Old Charges as if they were separate manuscripts. There are also probably many unrecorded manuscripts.

It will not be possible to give an authoritative account of the Old Charge manuscripts until an up-to-date listing replacing Hughan has been compiled. However, three important characteristics relating to these Old Charge manuscripts should be noted. First, the frequency of references to wage rates in the sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts of the Old Charges suggests that their compilation was closely related to agitation over pay in the building trade. While in southern England wages for building workers were allowed to rise, in northern England more vigorous attempts were made to control wages. Douglas Woodward has described how the Council in the North put pressure on local authorities in towns such as Hull, Beverley, Chester and York to prevent wages to building workers exceeding the statutory levels (Woodward 1995: 182–191; Woodward 1980a). In York, matters came to a head in 1552 when building workers, refusing to obey the city council's ordinance that they should work for 6d a day, went on strike and were imprisoned. These protests were echoed across the north of England (Woodward 1980b). In 1560, the Council in the North wrote to the mayor and aldermen in Hull expressing its concern that “we be informed that there is much disorder within our town of Kingston upon Hull by labourers, artificers and other workmen against our laws and statutes” (Woodward 1995: 184). By contrast, in southern England, the Privy Council allowed building workers to receive much higher wages. As Woodward puts it, “It is clear that the government adopted a two-pronged strategy, attempting to enforce a rigid policy in the north (insisting upon the implementation of the maxima of 1514), but experimenting with a more conciliatory and flexible approach in the south and midlands” (Woodward 1995: 184).

The mid sixteenth-century elaboration of the York legend, with its identification of Æthelstan's son as Edwin and the place of assembly specified as York, is possibly a reaction to these attempts to enforce more rigorously labour

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4 For example, Crane MS No. 2., transcribed by Rev. Thomas Crane in the eighteenth century and found among papers relating to Chester in 1884, was missing by 1915; and the seventeenth-century Wilson MS., which was supposedly in the collection of the bibliophile Sir Thomas Phillipps.

legislation in the north of England. Most of the surviving seventeenth-century English copies of the Old Charges can be linked with northern England and a number derive from York. It is obvious why York would have been chosen as the seat of the assembly, and the old legend that the minster was founded by the Northumbrian King called Edwin made this a natural choice of name for Æthelstan's son. But perhaps the most telling detail are the wages which these versions of the Old Charges specify as having been set by St Alban, namely 2s 6d a week for work and 3d a day for food and drink. Assuming a six day week, this works out as 5d a day for work and 3d for refreshment. In 1552, the York strikers specified the customary rates as 5d a day with food and drink and 8d a day without (Woodward 1980b). In other words, the wages said to have been customary in Grand Lodge MS. 1, the William Watson manuscript and elsewhere are the same as those demanded in 1552.

While the labour disputes of the mid sixteenth century led eventually to a major overhaul of the system for regulating wages with the 1563 Statute of Artificers, giving local magistrates the responsibility for determining wage assessments, copies of the Old Charges continued to circulate. Copies of the Old Charges were owned by the Acception, a social wing of the London Company of Masons. Some of the manuscripts of the Old Charges were used when individuals were initiated as Freemasons. For example, the copy of the Old Charges in London, British Library, Sloane MS. 3848, f. 179, was copied by Edward Sankey on the day that Elias Ashmole was initiated at Warrington and was apparently prepared in connection with this ceremony (Knoop and Jones 1947: 149). The Scarborough MS. contains a minute describing the admission of six men to the lodge in 1705, suggesting that the roll was used in connection with this ceremony (Hughan 1895: 17). For Hughan, the Old Charges were important evidence of the connections and continuity between Scottish and English Freemasonry. Copies of the Old Charges circulated among the lodges founded in Scotland following William Schaw's innovations, and copies survive connected with Scottish lodges at Aitcheson's Haven, Dumfries, Melrose, Kilwinning and Stirling (Stevenson 1988: 18–25).

As the Old Charges circulated more widely, they lost their direct connection with the building trade. For example, Edward Thompson (d. 1701), who copied the William Watson Manuscript in 1687, was a merchant who served as Lord Mayor of York in 1683–1684 and was MP for the city in 1689, 1695 and 1700 (Cruickshanks, 'Edward Thompson'). As knowledge of the contents of the Old Charges became more widespread, they became subject to criticism. In his 1686 *Natural History of Staffordshire* Robert Plot, who had access to a text of the Old Charges similar to the William Watson manuscript, subjected the story of the Anglo-Saxon privilege of the Freemasons and the York assembly to

merciless criticism, pointing out for example that there was no evidence that Æthelstan had any children, let alone a son called Edwin (Plot 1686: 316–317). Plot declared that there was only one possible way of salvaging the legend. He noted that there was a story that Æthelstan had a brother called Edwin, who was supposed to have plotted against the King and to have drowned in 933 while making his escape on a ship. However, Plot pointed out, it was highly unlikely that such a prince, forced into exile by Æthelstan, would have obtained a charter from the king or held an assembly at York: “Who how unlikely to learn their manners; to get them a Charter; or call them together at York let the reader judg [sic.]”. The immediate reaction of copyists of the Old Charges was to assume that there was a mistake. Some attempted clumsily to remove any reference to Edwin in the text and to suggest that Æthelstan summoned the York assembly. Others altered the text to state that Edwin was Æthelstan’s brother.

The production of the Cooke manuscript by George Payne at the Grand Lodge in 1721 must have seemed to vindicate the antiquity of the legends of stonemasons, but such scholars as Stukeley who saw the manuscript while it was at the Grand Lodge were also conscious that the medieval monks had mangled some of the historical detail. In commissioning James Anderson to use his historical skills to revise and correct the legends recorded in Cooke and elsewhere, Grand Lodge wanted to show how modern scientific method could recover ancient truths from the Gothic ignorance of the Old Charges. Anderson’s scholarly caution can be seen by examining how he treated the stories recorded in the Old Charges. In the first edition of the *Book of Constitutions*, published in 1723, he did not mention the assembly in his account of Æthelstan’s reign, but instead inserted under his entry for Edward IV an extract from a copy of the Old Charges supposedly compiled in Edward’s reign in which Edwin is described as Æthelstan’s son (Anderson 1723: 31–32). In this way, Anderson recorded the story, but distanced himself from it. By the time Anderson came to issue an expanded and revised version of his history of masonry in the second edition of the *Book of Constitutions* in 1738, he felt more confident about the York legend. It may be that his work on the royal genealogies had convinced him that the Edwin of the legend should indeed be identified with Æthelstan’s brother but, whatever Anderson’s reasoning, he moved the York legend into his entry for Æthelstan, thus more directly endorsing it (Anderson 1738: 63–64).

In doing so, Anderson amended his extract from the Old Charges to state that Edwin was the King’s brother, although he noted that he is ‘call’d in some copies his son’. Anderson had then to deal with Plot’s objection of the supposed circumstances of Edwin’s death. He did this in three ways. First, he

claimed that the York assembly was held at the beginning of Æthelstan's reign, when Edwin was more likely to have been in royal favour. However, in doing so, Anderson assigned to the assembly an impossibly early date of 926, which pre-dates by a year Æthelstan's acquisition of York following the death of the Viking King of York Sihtric Cáech in June 927. In choosing this date, Anderson was probably trying to work out the earliest feasible date at which such an assembly could have been held in York but was hampered by his reliance on the imprecise statements of Latin chronicles. Second, Anderson drew attention to the fact that William of Malmesbury, the main English chronicle source for the death of Edwin, emphasised that his information was drawn from a popular ballad, and therefore not necessarily reliable. Finally, Anderson draws attention to the suggestion in Henry of Huntingdon that Æthelstan was angered by Edwin's death.

The way in which Anderson grapples with these details illustrates how the legacy of the Old Charges loomed over Anderson's attempt to recreate the history of the stonemasons. Although Anderson's text retained little of the text of the Old Charges, their narrative structure played a fundamental part in shaping Anderson's work. The Old Charges ensured that the new Enlightenment Hanoverian Freemasonry created in London did not forget its medieval roots.

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# The Origins of Freemasonry

## *Scotland*

*David Stevenson*

### Introduction

By the seventeenth century Scotland possessed a network of permanent institutions calling themselves lodges. Membership, at first, consisted almost entirely of stonemasons, but over time men of other occupations and social statuses were admitted, from craftsmen to noblemen. Within lodges there was brotherhood, but also a division into two ranks or degrees: entered apprentices and fellow crafts (also known as masters). Members had secrets, collectively known as the Mason Word, into which they were initiated by elaborate rituals. These contained references to historical traditions relating to the mason craft and lodges, and included secret recognition codes by which initiates could identify each other. Compasses and the square played a part in their symbolism. By the second half of the seventeenth century, and probably much earlier, Scottish lodges had copies of the fifteenth century ‘Old Charges’, which encapsulated the lore of medieval English stonemasons. As well as seeking to regulate the Masons’ trade, lodges had charitable funds to help members who fell on hard times. Thus by 1600 Scotland had clearly developed a form of Freemasonry—though it is true that the members of the lodges did not call themselves Freemasons, but simply Masons (see Stevenson 1988; Stevenson 2001).

Scottish medieval Masons, like their English counterparts, had long before the seventeenth century had lodges associated with individual building sites, made up of the Masons working on them. Though the word ‘lodge’ originally meant simply the shelter in which Masons worked, in time the word came (as in the Old Charges) also to denote the collective body the Masons on the site formed. Some such lodges only existed while major building works were in progress, but in many cases they may have come to exist semi-permanently, catering for the core of Masons who remained to deal with the routine maintenance and repairs necessary for major buildings. Traces of such lodges are very rare, but in Dundee in 1537, when the town authorities appointed George Boiss to be mason for life at the parish church and other town property, he was instructed to work according to “the auld use and

consuetude of Our Lady Luge of Dundee had and usit befoire” [the old use and custom of Our Lady Lodge of Dundee had and used before] (Mylne 1893: 63–64; Knoop and Jones 1939: 61–62). The lodge may only have comprised Boiss and an apprentice or two, but it was clearly regarded as an institution with an agreed body of traditions and regulations.

The Protestant Reformation of 1560, and the long period of political instability that followed it, must have severely disrupted the Masons’ trade. Many ecclesiastical buildings were destroyed or left to fall into ruin, and employment opportunities must have been limited. But by the end of the century stability was returning, and both the crown and landowners were becoming more adventurous in their building projects. It is perhaps merely a coincidence, but just at this time the survival of a scattering of written records produces a sudden explosion of information for historians about the organisation of Scottish masonry. First, in 1590, King James VI appointed Patrick Copland of Udoch to the office of warden over the “airt and craft of masonrie” in three counties in the north east of the country (Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine). Copland’s father, allegedly, had held the office before him, and was said to have been appointed with the consent of the majority of the master masons in the region (NAS, PS1/61, f. 47r, quoted in Lyon 1900: 4–5). As warden he could hold justice courts for Masons. Scottish legislation dating back to 1427 had ordered that in rural areas barons (landowners) like Copland should be appointed as wardens over craftsmen (APS 1844–1875, ii, 15.), but apart from this one reference there is no evidence of such appointments actually being made.

However, a rival claimant to jurisdiction over Scottish Masons soon appeared. William Schaw (c. 1550–1602), a courtier, had been appointed to the office of master of works to James VI of Scotland in 1584, a post that made him the supervisor of all building projects for potentially the largest employer of Masons in the country, the crown. In 1598 Schaw issued the so-called ‘First Schaw Statutes’. These regulations were addressed to all master masons in the land, over whom Schaw claimed to have authority as general warden. They were issued on 28 December, the day after St John the Evangelist’s day. The ‘Second Schaw Statutes’ were issued in 1599 on the same day. As St John’s day was one on which Masons in many countries met traditionally, it seems likely that Masons had assembled in Edinburgh on that day in two successive years to meet Schaw, and had discussed with him the statutes he was to sign the next day.

The Masons over whom Schaw claimed jurisdiction were to be organised in lodges, and it has become clear that these were lodges that already existed. That is, Schaw was not founding them, but was introducing standard regulations for them, partly derived from the Old Charges. In the Second Statutes



three lodges are named, as there was a dispute for precedency among them. In what was presumably a compromise, Edinburgh was recognised as the principal lodge in Scotland, and Kilwinning was to be the head and second lodge, with Stirling the third. Moreover, Kilwinning was conceded a unique jurisdiction over other lodges in its region. The impression is thus given that the lodges Schaw was reorganising were long-established institutions.

One of Schaw's statutes has proved of particular value to historians. He ordered lodges to appoint secretaries and to keep records. The surviving minutes of Aitchison's Haven and Edinburgh Mary's Chapel begin in 1599, these being the oldest masonic minutes in the world (Carr 1962: 30–46). The minutes reveal that the lodges Schaw was dealing with were very different from those traceable in earlier times. The older building-site lodges continued to exist, each under the authority of the master of works in charge of individual projects. But the new-type lodges that emerge from obscurity in 1598–1599 claimed to have jurisdiction over all Masons in a town or area—and they have therefore aptly been called 'territorial lodges'. From their minutes they seem very like the guilds (called 'incorporations' in Scotland) that regulated a wide range of crafts in Scotland's towns—with one important exception. The incorporations were subject to the authority of burgh (town) councils, and in return they had a place in burgh government, with seats on the burgh council. And in Edinburgh and some other towns stonemasons had such incorporations—master masons in Edinburgh belonged to the incorporation of Masons and wrights (carpenters). But unlike other crafts, Masons, in both towns and country, had also another organisation, the territorial lodges. These lodges had no official role in local life, and though they performed many functions similar to those of incorporations—seeking to regulate trade and wages and recruitment to the trade through apprenticeship—they acted separately, and indeed ignored each other. Though their leading office holders were often identical, neither organisation mentions the other in their records. Each year the mason chosen to be mason-deacon of the incorporation of Masons and wrights in Edinburgh was also elected deacon of the lodge (Stevenson 2001: 13), the two bodies thus acting in silent collusion though the link cannot have been secret—the incorporation owned Mary's Chapel, and both organisations met there.

Why did Masons, uniquely, feel the need to have two craft organisations, parallel but outwardly blind to each other's existence? Several explanations for this duality may be suggested. Firstly, the incorporations that Masons joined were usually shared with other building crafts—wrights (carpenters), tilers, plumbers, and so on. But Masons had their own traditions, rituals and secrets that they were unwilling to share with other craftsmen. For these esoteric functions they needed organisations that were exclusive to them—the territorial

lodges. Occasionally separate organisations were not necessary. In contrast to Edinburgh, for example, in Dundee stonemasons had a single organisation that served as both lodge and incorporation, referred to as the Society, Company or Lodge of Dundee. Since the town council had licensed the Masons to have their own, exclusive organisation (though with limited powers), separate from other building trades, it could also act as a lodge for masonic rituals and secrets (Stevenson 2001: 94–97).

A second reason that stonemasons usually insisted on having lodges as well as incorporations is probably that the latter were based in the towns, and assumed that the craftsmen pursued their crafts within these towns. But (except in the largest population centres) many, if not most, stonemasons traditionally moved about in search of work, and they needed an organisation that gave them status and identity not only in a single town but at whatever building project which they were employed on, wherever it was located. The institutional side of the building-site lodges had to some degree met this need, but even site lodges were under external control—by the representatives of their employer—such as a burgh council (as in Dundee in 1537), or a nobleman building a great house or castle. Somehow, in the decades—or generations—before 1600, Scottish Masons had begun the development of their own autonomous lodges. Even lodges whose members were based in a town sometimes sought to distance themselves from its authority by meeting outside its geographical jurisdiction—as in the cases of Melrose, Aberdeen and Elgin. The assertion that no lodge could meet closer to a town than a day's journey away from it (Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1963: 32) might not be literally true, but it expressed the ideal of being free from the power of town councils. There is, however, no sign of tensions between town lodges and incorporations. In Edinburgh at least, lodge and incorporation each in their records ignored the existence of the other, in spite of their heavily overlapping memberships.

Another reason that Scottish Masons may have valued their lodges is that men could often gain the status of master in lodges that was denied to them in incorporations. In the incorporations membership was restricted to masters, defined as men who produced and sold their own wares, often employing others as wage-earners—journeymen, who had previously served time as an apprentice or trainee. In modern terms, incorporation masters were self-employed men, or owners of small businesses. But most Masons spent their working lives as journeymen, and never had an opportunity to become masters in this sense. The lodges, on the other hand, were much more inclusive in membership. After joining as an entered apprentice,<sup>1</sup> a mason would in time

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1 'Entered' presumably in the sense of recorded and initiated.

become initiated as a fellow craft or master—even if in social and economic reality he was still a wage-earning journeyman. Thus a great many Masons could find within the lodge recognition of the high status of master that the outside world denied them, but that they believed their skills and traditions deserved.

Thus Masons had good reasons for evolving lodges independent of building sites or town councils. But why did William Schaw act to reorganize the mason craft in 1598–1599, seeking to regulate and standardise these lodges? One answer is that he thought the craft was in a mess and needed his intervention. As the king's master of works he saw such reform as his duty, and he was willing to build on older foundations. Not only was the scattering of existing territorial lodges central to his plans, but he approved the recognition by Scotland's Masons of William Sinclair of Roslin as hereditary patron and protector of the Masons of Scotland, "from aige to aige" [from age to age] with jurisdiction over them, in the so-called 'First St Clair Charter' (1600/1601).<sup>2</sup> Rather than being a charter (a grant of rights) this was a petition from Schaw and the Masons to King James VI to grant a charter to Sinclair: representatives of four lodges (Dunfermline and St Andrews; Haddington; Aitchison's Haven; and Edinburgh) signed the document (Lyon 1900: 65–66).

The Sinclair 'charter' spoke of confusion and decay in the mason trade, and of how potential employers had been abandoning "grit interpryses" [great enterprises], no doubt referring to the loss of church patronage after the reformation and the troubled times that followed which had discouraged ambitious building projects (Stevenson 1988: 52). But stability began to emerge in Scotland in the 1590s after decades of political confusion, and demand from crown, landlords and towns for new building projects increased. Perhaps this revival both emphasised the lack of organisation in the mason craft, and inspired Schaw with ideas that the revival of building provided an opportunity for remedying the craft's faults. But Schaw may well have had more intellectual motives in acting. He was an educated man, and had travelled abroad (though where he had been—apart from Denmark—is unknown). He mixed with foreign diplomats at the Scottish court, collecting the autographs of some of them. The court itself, under its scholarly king, James VI, was open to many European cultural influences of the day. Little of the building work Schaw undertook has survived, but what does indicates that Schaw favoured

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2 How old the claim of the Sinclairs to authority over the masons was is unknown. But it is tempting to connect it with the building of Rosslyn [Roslin] Chapel by Sir William Sinclair in the mid-fifteenth century. Only a small part of the huge building intended was ever completed, but it is astonishing—and unique in Scotland—in its style and ornate decoration.

Renaissance styles (for example, the chapel royal in Stirling Castle). Schaw was rumoured to be a Roman Catholic (though that may mean merely that Calvinists suspected he was unorthodox in his beliefs). Schaw's zeal in reviving the mason craft may well have been influenced by his knowledge of the intellectual developments of his age, and particularly by its obsession with Hermeticism, one aspect of the Renaissance fascination with the ancient world as a source of lost knowledge and wisdom.

Hermeticism, supposedly derived from the teaching of an ancient Egyptian sage, Hermes Trimegistus, stressed the occult nature of true wisdom. The most valuable wisdom was secret, with knowledge of it limited to initiates. While most of the Schaw Statutes are mundane in content, a passage in one hints that Schaw was interested in one branch of the Hermetic search. Masons were instructed to study "the airt of memorie and science thairof" (Stevenson 1988: 49). This referred to techniques derived from the ancient world to help memorise speeches. Though practical in original purpose, by the sixteenth century the 'Art of Memory' had come to be regarded as occult and linked to the Hermetic search for knowledge. In its dominant forms, the Art involved the orator imagining himself walking through a building, and associating the ideas of his speech with places and objects in it, in the order in which he wished to speak about them. Then, when giving his speech, the orator imagined himself walking the same route through the building, and 'picking up' his ideas as he move round it (see Yates 1966). Did Schaw believe that the secrets of Scottish Masons were somehow related to Hermeticism and the version of the Art of Memory based on buildings? Hermes Trismegistus's importance in the history of masonry had been stressed in the Old Charges for centuries. It is impossible to say for certain that Schaw intended to introduce elements of Renaissance Hermeticism into the Scottish mason craft, but he was a member of a royal court at which Hermeticism and the Art of Memory were discussed. However it is possible that in recommending the art of memory to Masons Schaw was concerned primarily with its practical value. His lodges might keep minutes to record meetings and the names of members, office holders and initiates, but masonic ritual and other secrets were still preserved orally, so training in the Art of Memory would be useful.

Schaw had ambitions to regulate and control a system of masonic lodges under his own jurisdiction as master of works to the king and as general warden of the Masons, though with the overall patronage of the Sinclairs of Roslin recognised. But these aspirations came to nothing. Schaw himself died in 1602, having laid foundations but been allowed no time to build on them. William Sinclair proved useless as a patron, facing prosecution as a Roman Catholic and for moral lapses, and eventually fleeing to Ireland. His son Sir William

Sinclair was supported by the Masons in a 'Second St Clair Charter' of 1627–1628, seeking a charter from the crown to act as patron—but his jurisdiction was said now to cover hammermen (blacksmiths and other ironworkers) as well as Masons (Lyon 1900: 66–68). Thus, it seems, he was not interested in the esoteric aspects of masonry but in a wider jurisdiction over craftsmen. Schaw's successors as masters of works opposed the claims of the Sinclairs. Sir Anthony Alexander appealed to King Charles I arguing that the Sinclair claims to authority were derogatory to his own jurisdiction, and in 1636 Sir Anthony issued (with the consent of several lodges) the Falkland Statutes, claiming jurisdiction over all the building crafts as general warden. He ordered the establishment of 'companies' of building craftsmen throughout the country, and seems to have intended to use masonic lodges as a framework for these companies (Stevenson 1988: 67–72). After this the Sinclairs seem to have lost interest in their hereditary claims, and the masters of works were equally apathetic.

The attempt to impose central leadership on Scotland's lodges thus failed. As in the past, individual lodges evolved separately. Nonetheless, signs that Schaw left a legacy can be found. New lodges had been established—and the keeping of written records became common, providing evidence of their existence. About twenty-five are known to have existed by around 1700.

In the preceding century, some of Scotland's lodges had begun a slow transformation in membership. Men who were not stonemasons began to be admitted to many lodges, at first in very small numbers. Some were men of high status. Often why they were initiated is obscure, but in a scattering of cases interest in geometry and mathematics seems significant. Thus in 1641 Edinburgh Lodge initiated Robert Moray, quartermaster general, and Sir Alexander Hamilton, general of artillery. They were serving in the army of the Covenanters, who had rebelled against the rule of Charles I, and had occupied Newcastle in the north of England. Members of the lodge serving with the army initiated them there (these being, incidentally, the earliest known initiations). It seems clear that these particular generals were recruited because their duties involved use of geometry (in the laying out of camps and in ballistics). The initiation of Moray is of special interest as he took a geometrical figure, the pentacle, as his mason mark, and wrote of its significance to him, identifying it with the Greek word *AGAPA*—love (see Stevenson 2007: 6, 32, 48–49, 56, and 125). However, Moray should not be regarded as typical of the 'gentleman' Masons of the time: there is no evidence of other Masons giving symbolic meanings to their marks, but Moray clearly believed that masonic brotherhood was compatible with his own Stoic Christian philosophy and dedication to the cult of friendship.

Why increasing numbers of gentlemen wanted to be initiated, and why lodges agreed to admit them, can only be conjectured. Presumably some gentlemen, having heard that Masons possessed ancient secrets, pressed for admission, and lodges accepted such men because they were flattered that men of much higher social status were eager to join organisations of craftsmen. In addition the entrance fees collected from such men boosted the funds lodges maintained for charitable and administrative purposes.

A new wave of interest in the Old Charges probably also contributed to outsider curiosity about masonry. In England the seventeenth century saw a remarkable increase in the number of copies of the medieval Old Charges being made, and from the middle of the century copies survive in the archives of Scottish lodges. The growth of interest in these documents doubtless resulted from a number of overlapping intellectual trends—fascination with antiquities and the growing perception that mathematics (facilitated by the adoption of Indian or Arabic numerals in place of Roman ones) and geometry lay at the heart of understanding the world. The identification in the Old Charges of masonry with geometry, making it an art or science rather than a mere craft, now took on a new significance, and it may be that outsiders hoped to find secrets of ancient geometry through initiation. Hermetic attitudes, seeing secret ancient wisdom as being preserved in the hands of initiated elites, also contributed to hopes (sorely disappointed) that the secrets of Masons could play a part in the new understanding of the universe that was later to be called the ‘scientific revolution’.

Nonetheless, until 1696 the great majority of all Scottish lodges members remained stonemasons. But then the Lodge of Dunblane was founded. Not only was it the first lodge for which a date of foundation is known (rather than a date at which it is first mentioned as already existing) but the majority of its small number of members were gentlemen. This was to set a precedent for many new lodges in the decades that followed, though Dunblane was unusual in having an explicit political bias—most of its members were Jacobites, men committed to restoring the Stuart dynasty that had been overthrown a few years before.

One way in which the spread of the knowledge that stonemasons had intriguing secrets can be traced is by the popularity of the Old Charges. Another is through the growing knowledge that stonemasons called their secrets ‘the Mason Word’. The first known use of this term is in a poem composed in Perth in about 1630. There it is mentioned alongside Rosicrucianism and the ‘Second Sight’ (the alleged ability to ‘see’ into the future) because all three phenomena were believed to involve occult knowledge and powers (Stevenson 1988: 125–126; Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1945: 30).

By the 1650s it was well enough known that Masons had 'the Word' for some parish ministers of the Church of Scotland to bring it to the attention of the church courts, fearing it involved witchcraft. But masons summoned before the general assembly of the church refused to reveal 'the Word'. It was reported that the Masons suggested that the assembly chose one of its members, who would then be initiated, and could then assure the rest of the assembly of the innocence of the secrets of the Word, but that the offer was refused as no member dared for fear of finding that initiation involved some blasphemy! The inquiry was then dropped. This may have been in part due to the fact that Scotland had recently been conquered by an English regime which was determined to limit the interference of the church in public life, but churchmen may also have been reassured that the Word was harmless by claims (which cannot be confirmed) that parish ministers had in the past themselves known the secrets of the Word (Stevenson 1988: 127–128; Hunter 2001: 32).

From 1696 documents survive detailing the secrets of the Word that had previously been handed down orally—the introduction of non-stonemasons to lodges may have led to a loosening of secrecy. Certainly the earliest of these Masonic Catechisms seems to be written by someone lacking in respect for the rituals he writes about, for he uses the words 'foolish' and 'ridiculous' of parts of the rituals. He clearly was not writing for Masons, but to reveal their secrets. The various early rituals revealed in the Catechisms suggest a good deal of local variation in practice and lore, but with a common core. A flavour of them can be provided by the earliest of them, the 'Register House Ms' (Knoop 1963: 31–34). This opens with a catechism, a question-and answer session whereby an initiate could prove that he knew the secrets of the Mason Word, and whether he was an entered apprentice or a fellow craft. Much that was to be found in later masonic ritual is present—references to Solomon's Temple, to the five points of fellowship, the pillars of Jakin and Boaz, to ashlar and square pavements. The manuscript then summarises the elaborate initiation rituals themselves, with oaths sworn by God, St John, the square and compasses, and the 'common judge' [gauge?].

Some of the material in the catechisms is taken from the Old Charges. As mentioned above, written copies of these manuscripts began to be acquired by a number of Scottish lodges (the earliest known being Aitchison's Haven, 1666). The contents of the Charges had probably been known in Scotland through oral tradition long before this, and they clearly reflect English influence. The early Scottish written Charges may all have derived from English originals—Melrose Lodge's copy (1674) states that it had been copied from an English manuscript (now lost) dated 1581 (Vernon 1893: 58–63). Influence in the opposite direction—from Scotland to England—is indicated by the

appearance of the term 'Mason Word' in English sources in the later seventeenth century.

From 1717 onwards the dominant influence in the development of Scottish Freemasonry was the new Grand Lodge founded in London, which later developed into the Grand Lodge of England. It introduced a form of Freemasonry that had little contact with the craft of stonemasons and had no interest in trying to regulate the stonemasons' trade. In formalising Freemasonry in England, the Grand Lodge appeared to acknowledge some debt to Scotland and its masonic traditions, for the man chosen to compile its *Constitutions* (London, 1723) was a Scotsman, James Anderson, in all probability an initiate of Aberdeen Lodge, of which his father had been master (Stevenson 2002: 267–310). In this work the degrees of entered apprentice and fellow craft first appear in English masonry. A further acceptance that Scotland had a special place in masonic history is suggested by the fact that of the first twenty-seven 'English' Grand Masters (1717–1762), nine were Scottish noblemen (Frere 1967: 262–271), three of whom had previously been Scottish Grand Masters.

The fast expansion of Freemasonry in England after 1717 soon began to effect Scottish masonry. Copies of Anderson's English *Constitutions* were obtained by Scottish lodges, and many more gentry, merchants and others, than in the past sought initiation from existing lodges or created new ones. Some of the old lodges sought to resist change, determined to retain a dominantly stonemason membership. Limits were sometimes put on the numbers of non-craftsmen admitted, or rules banned them from being elected to offices in lodges. In other cases new lodges included the word 'operative' in their names to indicate explicitly that they were lodges for working men, with membership limited either entirely to stonemasons, or to them and members of related crafts. However, most of the older lodges came in time to accept new types of members—not least because those from the social elite were often willing to pay high fees to help charitable funds. Some lodges sought to limit the numbers.

In 1736 thirty-three lodges (out of a total of perhaps one hundred) agreed to form a Grand Lodge of Scotland, following the precedents set in England (1717) and Ireland (1725). A sign of the strength of the English model for Freemasonry was that the new Scottish Grand Lodge was of 'free and accepted masons', the latter term having some precedent in England but none in Scotland. However, William St Clair of Roslin was chosen as the first Scottish Grand Master, through the old tradition of his family's patronage of the craft—though the tradition was so much in decay that he had to be hastily initiated to make him eligible for election (Lyon 1900: 186–187).

Thus Scotland made for the first time since William Schaw's death well over a century before an attempt to bring individual lodges together through



coordination and a degree of centralisation. But it took generations for the claims of the Scottish Grand Lodge to supervise all Scottish masonic lodges to become a reality. The initiatives leading to the Grand Lodge's foundation had come from lodges dominated by gentlemen, merchants, lawyers and other non-craftsmen. Most lodges that were predominately made up of craftsmen, whether or not they called themselves 'operative', valued their independence and were unwilling to pay the fees that Grand Lodge sought to impose. They therefore refused at first to recognise Grand Lodge's authority. Thus in the decades after 1737 there might be said to be two types of Freemasonry in Scotland, one made up of working men in independent lodges, which still attempted to control some aspects of the mason trade (though this was increasingly unrealistic as social and economic conditions changed) and provide charitable help for members and their families; the other dominated by gentlemen in lodges which accepted the Grand Lodge, and were social and ritual institutions. However, there was a good deal of overlap between the two types of lodge, often leading to internal tensions, as poorer members sought to keep costs to a minimum, while the richer favoured lavish dinners and good wine. The brotherhood of men of all ranks was an ideal, but difficult to put into practice in a hierarchical society.

Over time, however, the great majority of lodges came to accept Grand Lodge and seek charters from it. In some cases prolonged debate over precedence was involved, reflected in the number assigned to lodges. Old lodges late to join Grand Lodge sought recognition of their antiquity. Such disputes, settled by compromise, led to the rather farcical situation that gives Scottish masonry a lodge No. 0 (Kilwinning) and three lodges 'No. 1' (1<sup>1</sup>, 1<sup>2</sup> and 1<sup>3</sup>). These are, respectively, Edinburgh Mary's Chapel, Melrose, and Aberdeen. Melrose was the last of the old independent lodges to accept the Grand Lodge, in 1892, its high rank being its price for doing so (Lyon 1900: 456–459; Vernon 1893: 50–54).

This chapter on the origins of Scottish Freemasonry has concentrated on written evidence, but stressed that the earliest manuscript evidence for early lodges and their activities almost never marked a 'foundation date', instead marking the point at which evolving institutions, hitherto invisible to historians, emerge into daylight. How long the past of these 'invisible' lodges had been is quite impossible to say. Attention has long been drawn to the fact that twelve of the thirteen known pre-1675 lodges are located near and associated by name with major ecclesiastical buildings. Two had cathedrals (St Andrews, Glasgow), five had major abbeys (Kilwinning, Dunfermline, Dundee, Scone, Melrose), while five had major town churches (Edinburgh, Aberdeen,<sup>3</sup> Stirling,

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3 Aberdeen had a cathedral, but it was situated in Old Aberdeen, a separate town from the 'New' Aberdeen with which the masonic lodge was associated.

Linlithgow, Haddington). This has led the more enthusiastic to assume that the foundation dates (or major rebuilding dates) of these edifices can be taken to mark the foundation of the corresponding lodges, but there is no historical evidence for continuity.

Other suggestions seeking to fill in the vacuum of Scottish Freemasonry's invisible (pre-documentary) distant past are even less convincing. Some carvings at Roslyn's fifteenth century chapel have been claimed to correspond with aspects of later freemasonic ritual, but these interpretations have failed to win widespread acceptance. Claims of the involvement of the Knights Templar or the Rosicrucians (if, indeed, the latter ever really existed) in the formation of Freemasonry may be dismissed (to be polite) as fanciful in the extreme.

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# The Origins of Freemasonry

*England*

*Matthew D.J. Scanlan*

## Introduction

On 20 January 1739 an advertisement appeared in the *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* which announced, “This Day is publish’d...The New Book of Constitutions of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of FREE and ACCEPTED MASONS” (*London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 20 January 1739, issue no. 1320). The advertisement informed the reader that “This book is above twice as large as the former,” an oblique reference to the first edition of the *Constitutions* of ‘Free and Accepted Masons’ published in February 1723 ([Anderson] 1723). And in honour of the fraternity’s most recent and illustrious recruit it proudly announced that the work was dedicated to the heir to the throne, “His Royal Highness FREDERICK, Prince of Wales” (Anderson 1738: 137).

Stylistically, both editions of the constitutions were remarkably similar. Both carried a ‘Dedication’, a list of ‘Charges’ and ‘General Regulations’, as well as a handful of songs that had been specially written for the brotherhood. However, the revised edition was, as the advertisement boasted, substantially larger than its predecessor in that it carried 140 pages of additional material mostly owing to a greatly expanded historical section in which the author, Bro. James Anderson D.D., attempted to trace the history of the craft all the way back to the era of the Old Testament Patriarchs and even to Adam himself.

Even by the inexact historiographical standards of the day, Anderson’s semi-mythologised account of Freemasonry’s past was somewhat whimsical. Consequently, modern historians have tended to dismiss his work as little more than uncorroborated fancy. But despite its many flaws, including a slew of factual inaccuracies and unsupported claims, it was the first work to offer a detailed account of Freemasonry’s origins and as such it was significant in that it has coloured, and continues to colour, the way in which historians approach the subject.

Following the publication of Anderson’s historical opus, the study of Freemasonry in the English language was left mainly to amateur historians and conspiracy theorists for the best part of two centuries. Accordingly, the general standard of historical writing on the subject generally lacked the rigour of modern scientific method. During the late nineteenth century attempts were

made to raise the level of research in this field and thereby extricate it from the quagmire into which it had fallen, the most notable achievement in this regard being the establishment of the first English research lodge, Quatuor Coronati, number 2076,<sup>1</sup> whose stated aim was to replace “the imaginative writings of earlier authors on the history of Freemasonry.” Several founders of the lodge, such as Robert Freke Gould and William James Hughan, were evidently intrigued by the association’s enigmatic origins, however, their lack of training as professional historians, coupled with a distinctly antiquarian and positivist approach to the material they were examining, resulted in studies that were rather more attuned to a masonic audience than to an academic one. As a result, the subject remained in the shadows, at least as far as British academics were concerned, for the next half century or more.<sup>2</sup>

The first professional English historians to work on the origins of Freemasonry were two Professors of Economics based at the University of Sheffield, Douglas Knoop and Gwilym Peredur Jones. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s these two scholars (sometimes accompanied by fellow Sheffield academic Douglas Hamer) produced a series of pioneering studies on Freemasonry that culminated in a ground-breaking essay on the origins titled, *The Genesis of Freemasonry* (Knoop and Jones 1947). In this seminal tome, Knoop and Jones argued that modern ‘speculative’ Freemasonry evolved after a lengthy period of transition from the practices and traditions of ‘operative’ stonemasons in both Scotland and England, an idea not dissimilar to the one espoused by most masonic historians of their day. However, there was a subtle yet distinct difference in their argument, in that they did not believe the modern ‘speculative’ Freemasonry emerged *directly* from the practices of ‘operative’ stonemasons. They posited the idea that there was an intermediary stage of development, a bridge from ‘operative’ to ‘speculative’ masonry, which they termed ‘accepted’ masonry, and that during this phase non-stonemasons and gentlemen entered English lodges, entities that were in their view, “largely, if not entirely, independent of operative control” (Knoop and Jones 1947: 129–158). They also contended that modern ‘speculative’ Freemasonry did not begin with the founding of the first grand lodge in London in June 1717 as was

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1 The lodge was founded in 1884.

2 It should be noted that one academically trained historian, the German Freemason Dr Georg Emil Wilhelm Begemann, did write on the British origins of Freemasonry at this time, although his findings were never published in English. His work, *Vorgeschichte und Anfänge der Freimaurerei in England* [‘Pre-history and beginnings of Freemasonry in England’] (Berlin: Mitter, 1909–1911), was translated into English in 1913 by Lionel Vibert, a Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge. However, his manuscript remains unpublished.

popularly believed at the time. Indeed, they argued that that 'speculative' Freemasonry only began to emerge in embryonic form around 1730, from which time the association continued to evolve until the early nineteenth century (Knoop and Jones 1947: 132–133).

In 1948, a year after the publication of their ground-breaking work, Douglas Knoop died and with his passing the academic study of Freemasonry fell once again into abeyance, returning to what one reviewer of their work once acerbically termed "the lunatic fringe of the British Museum Reading Room" (Saltmarsh 1937: 103). Therefore when the distinguished historian, John Morris Roberts, came to publish an essay on Freemasonry in *The English Historical Review* some two decades later, he noted how English-speaking historians had neglected the subject and commented how curious it was "that in the country which gave Freemasonry to the world" the subject "has hardly attracted any interest from the professional historian" (Roberts 1969: 323). Such neglect, he argued, had resulted in "the impoverishment of English historians' understanding of European history and even, though to a less important degree, of their own," and he lamented how the topic had been effectively abandoned "to masonic antiquarians" and "cranks" (Roberts 1969: 324). Roberts did, however, acknowledge the pioneering work of Knoop and Jones, and he relied on their findings to underscore the opening words of his own work (Roberts 1969: 323). And when, some three years later, he published his own milestone study on secret societies in eighteenth-century Europe he once again paid credence to their notion of a three-stage theory of origin (Roberts 1972: 36).

The response to Roberts' clarion call for further work to be carried out on this neglected historical topic was hardly voluminous, although a small number of works did slowly begin to appear. In the same year that Roberts published his tome, Frances A. Yates produced her celebrated study, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, which included a chapter on Freemasonry's origins. In an echo of Roberts, Yates began by sounding a cautionary note to anyone who might be considering researching this subject, as much of the available literature she warned "deservedly sinks below the notice of the serious historian" to the extent that "the enquirer" may end up feeling "that he is sinking helplessly in a bottomless bog" (Yates 1972: 206). She then proceeded to take a brief look at what was known of early Freemasonry: however, her argument relied heavily on secondary sources and she was non-committal regarding the question of a possible linkage between early Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. That aside, Yates clearly revealed that she had been influenced by Anderson's *Constitutions*, which she described as the "official source for masonic mythology and mystical history" (Yates 1972: 213), and much like Roberts before her, she was evidently

content to rely on the findings of Knoop and Jones who she referenced several times in her work.

The next historian to work on the theme of Freemasonry's origins was the American historian, Margaret Jacob, who published a controversial work titled, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (1981). Jacob dedicated a sizeable portion of her study to the subject of Freemasonry's origins and paid credence to the time-honoured theory of transition; that is, that an older form of 'operative' masonry, over a period of time, morphed into a new and 'speculative' form of masonry, what she later termed a "transition from masonic guild to Freemasonry" (Jacob 2006: 12). This latter form, she argued, was ostensibly the preserve of non-stonemasons, gentlemen and members of the social elite that owed a "significant debt to the Newtonian Enlightenment as well as its early infiltration by pantheists and republicans" (Jacob 1981: 109). She also suggested that politicians such as late seventeenth-century London magnate and Whig Exclusionist, Sir Robert Clayton, and the radical Whig and pantheist, John Toland, may have been Freemasons (Jacob 1981: 118), and postulated the idea that, by the 1690s, radical Whigs "had formed private groupings, clubs and cabals that, in at least one instance, embraced the form of a Masonic lodge" (Jacob 1981: 143; Jacob, 2006: 15).

Jacob's work was initially well received, although the general encomium was soon punctured by some stern criticism of her thesis. One reviewer labelled her ideas "controversial" (Heyd 1983: 309), while another unleashed a withering thirteen-page assault on her work, in which he proceeded to question almost all of her claims.

There is a great deal of conjecture, far too much conjecture, a veritable whirlpool of conjecture, into which all manner of persons and things are sucked. Some of the conjecture is so widely at variance with what is in the documentation Professor Jacob has cited as to be more properly described as invention.

GIBBS 1984: 68

Certainly Jacob's approach was curious in that she neglected a sizeable corpus of evidence relating to early British Freemasonry and in contrast to the approach of both Roberts and Yates she also side-stepped the only scholarly, English-language study on the subject then available in print, Knoop and Jones's, *The Genesis of Freemasonry*. Indeed, she was adamant, there was "no adequate account, in English, of the origins of European Freemasonry," and that historians "can only trace the barest outline of its history in England" (Jacob 1981: 109).

The first British scholar to dedicate an entire work to the theme of Freemasonry's origins since Knoop and Jones was Scottish historian David Stevenson, who in 1988 produced two detailed and carefully considered tomes on the vexed topic (Stevenson 1988a; Stevenson 1988b). In these studies Stevenson drew heavily on the rich streams of primary source material available on pre-eighteenth century Scottish masonic associations. In *The Origins of Freemasonry, Scotland's Century 1590–1710*, he began by reviewing the nature of medieval stonemasonry before highlighting the significant contribution of King James VI's master of works, William Schaw, who reorganised Scotland's stonemason lodges towards the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Although many of these lodges existed before this time, Stevenson argued that in reorganising these craft institutions Schaw helped to establish them as permanent entities, bodies that were independent of the Incorporations which typically comprised several different trades and fell under the control of the local burgh (town) authorities. He also argued that the late sixteenth-century Scottish lodges absorbed renaissance ideas, both Platonic and Hermetic, which set them apart from other craft-based associations both within Scotland and beyond. Central to this process of enculturation was the art of memory, a method of learning once popular in classical antiquity that was revived during the Renaissance, an art which Schaw stipulated was to be employed by every Scottish lodge as a pedagogical device so that members could be tested on their knowledge of masonry (Stevenson 1988a: 49, 82, 85, 95–97, 117, 140, 142–3, 163, 212, 214). Over time, Stevenson suggested, the use of this mnemonic gradually gave rise to the development of ritual forms, central to which was the enigmatic 'Mason Word', a prized verbal signal or watchword that was only given to the qualified master mason members of a lodge (Stevenson 1988a: 125–165).

Stevenson noted that throughout the seventeenth century the Scottish lodges remained predominantly the preserve of stonemasons (Stevenson 1988a: 215), even though a small number of non-stonemasons, including members of the nobility and gentry, were admitted as members of some lodges from as early as the 1630s. He was uncertain why these men sought the membership and sociability of a working craft association at this time, but, he observed, many of the non-stonemasons who joined lodges appeared to share an interest in geometry, an art long viewed as synonymous with stonemasonry and building. Whatever their motivation, the mere fact that non-stonemasons did begin to join Scottish stonemason lodges during the seventeenth century persuaded Stevenson that the northern kingdom was the birthplace and crucible of

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3 William Schaw issued the first set of statutes on 27 December 1598, and the second on the same date in 1599. Stevenson (1988a: 34–51).



modern 'speculative' Freemasonry. And he ended his thesis by claiming that Freemasonry, having originated in Scotland as early as 1600, was subsequently adopted in England during the first quarter of the eighteenth century (Stevenson 1988a: 231–233).

Stevenson's works were generally well received and today his thesis is widely regarded as the most comprehensive and reliable account of the emergence of Freemasonry so far published. As a result, his works have been, and continue to be, highly influential. Nevertheless, his thesis did not escape totally unscathed and Margaret Jacob in particular was highly critical of what she termed his "positivist" approach. She asked why he had not non-engaged with the "theoretical issues raised by the phenomenon of secular fraternizing," or indeed "the social and political factors at work in seventeenth-century Scotland and England that might have produced the transformation from masonic guild to speculative Freemasonry." She also lamented that Stevenson seemed to be more concerned with proving Freemasonry's origins along "nationalist" lines, arguing that, as she put it, "the Scots invented speculative Freemasonry, not the English" (Jacob 1990: 323). And on this latter point Jacob was not alone, for the distinguished English historian of early modern science, Michael Hunter, ended his otherwise warm response to both of Stevenson's studies in cautionary mode and questioned the Scotia-centric bias of his work. Hunter charitably acknowledged that it was perhaps "an understandable reaction to the chauvinism shown by some English historians of Masonry in the past," but he critiqued, by approaching the subject along such nationalistic lines Stevenson "arguably underestimates the significance of some of the evidence that survives south of the border during the period that he covers" (Hunter 1992: 472).

Possibly motivated by Stevenson's offerings, Margaret Jacob returned to the subject of Freemasonry's origins again in 1991 with a tome that examined the association in context of the wider eighteenth-century European Enlightenment (Jacob 1991: 23–51). In the opening chapter of her work, which was dedicated to the theme of origins, Jacob once again subscribed to the idea that Freemasonry had emerged from the old craft guilds of the British Isles after a period of transition, although once again she made no mention of the pioneering work of Knoop and Jones. She argued that it was hardly surprising that Freemasonry emerged in Britain as the country's craft guilds had been weakened earlier than those on the European continent. The country also had a more advanced market economy, there was greater social interaction between the various social classes, greater social mobility, and, as Voltaire noted, there was also a greater degree of religious toleration. She paralleled Freemasonry's emergence with the rise of the public sphere and Britain's new secular civic culture, and concluded that Freemasonry was not only a by-product of Britain's

developing constitutional democracy, but it was also a bit player in the birth of modernity itself. She was also emphatic in her belief that the association was not exclusively English as many masonic historians had traditionally argued, but British, born from a century of troubles that had bedevilled *all* of the British Isles and not just a part of it.

In spite of Jacob's forceful objections to Stevenson's nationalist approach, and despite returning to the subject once more in 2006, this time with a volume solely dedicated to the theme of masonic origins (Jacob 2006),<sup>4</sup> the force and cogency of Stevenson's argument persuaded many historians that evidence relating to early Freemasonry in England is scanty and therefore the movement must be Scottish in origin. Indeed, his influence and approach to the subject is evident in a number of works that have appeared since 1988, such as Lisa Kahler's study on the masonic networks and lodges in early eighteenth-century Edinburgh (Kahler 1998).<sup>5</sup> And even though Kahler's study was not primarily focused on the theme of Freemasonry's origins, she nevertheless based many of her arguments on the findings contained in Stevenson's studies and boldly argued that "there is nothing definite to connect English Freemasonry with an operative past," therefore "it is plausible that these ideas spread from Scotland" (Kahler 1998: 38).

In the last decade several new studies have appeared on Freemasonry's formative years, although most do not concentrate solely on the theme of origins. In 2007, David Harrison tackled the subject in the opening chapter of his doctoral thesis and argued strongly that some proto-form of the association was active in England during the seventeenth century (Harrison 2007: 14–46). Like many of his predecessors, Harrison believed that modern Freemasonry emerged after a period of transition from an 'operative' to a 'speculative' association, and he readily acknowledged Scotland's contribution to this process by commenting at some length on the lodge of Dundee, which as Margaret Jacob noted, was a prime example of a lodge that underwent a change of this type. He also highlighted evidence, long known to historians in this field, which shows that a handful of gentry in the counties of Staffordshire and Cheshire joined Freemason's lodges during the 1640s and 1660s. He then speculated on the possible motives for these men to seek membership of craft associations and suggested that they were probably motivated by some unspecified esoteric or political interest, or indeed both. However, Harrison did not proffer any new

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4 This work was essentially a brief re-working of her former work and contained little or no new research on the title topic.

5 It should be noted that Professor David Stevenson was Lisa Kahler's doctoral supervisor at the University of St Andrews.

or substantial evidence to bolster his claims, and the rest of his thesis concentrated on Freemasonry once it had been established in the eighteenth century.

Another study to appear on early Freemasonry was Peter Kebbell's unpublished doctoral thesis on early Freemasonry titled, "The changing face of English Freemasonry, 1640–1740" (Kebbell 2009), but despite its chosen starting date of 1640, Kebbell only dedicates seventeen pages to the subject of Freemasonry before 1716 and produces little in the way of new evidence. A more serious and considered look at early Freemasonry is Ric Berman's *The Foundations of Modern Freemasonry* (2012), a work that was ostensibly based on his doctoral thesis completed at the University of Exeter. Berman dedicates the work's opening chapter to the subject of the associations' origins and competently surveys much of the available evidence relating to early Freemasonry, before rejecting the idea of a transition from a working stonemason form of Freemasonry to a more 'speculative' or 'spiritual' form. However, Berman's thesis is weakened by his repeated use of certain defining terms such as the term 'speculative'—a word that was not actually used in any original documents relating to modern Freemasonry until the latter half of the eighteenth century (Berman 2012: 8–38). And this highlights a problem that weakens much, if not most, of the available literature on early Freemasonry.

### Methodological Flaw

Throughout much of the historiography of early Freemasonry, including the aforementioned studies, there exists a problem, one that relates to a general lack of understanding of some key terms commonly used in this field. Indeed, historians working in this area frequently use words, and base entire arguments on the same, without having a clear and common understanding of their true meaning and import. This is largely due to a general reliance on inherited and stipulative definitions for certain key words and almost inevitably this rather flawed methodological approach only serves to further confuse an already confused and beguiling topic, in that terms are repeatedly used in both an inconsistent and anachronous way.

A handful of studies have briefly attempted to tackle the problem of definitions, or rather a lack of them. For instance, Knoop and Jones began the seventh chapter of *The Genesis of Freemasonry* with "a brief examination of the terms employed" (Knoop and Jones 1947: 129), and more recently the American scholar, Lisa Kahler, dedicated an entire chapter to the problem in her doctoral

thesis (Kahler 1998: 41–57). However, in both instances, the authors not only failed to secure commonly understood meanings for these key words, but they also repeated many of the same errors that other historians in this field have made.

This problem becomes immediately apparent when one looks at the word ‘freemason’, as the term does not appear in any Scottish documents until the beginning of the eighteenth century, which appears to make Stevenson’s use of it in relation to seventeenth-century Scottish lodges somewhat problematic. Indeed, it is generally not realised that the term originated in medieval England as an abbreviated form of ‘freestone mason’ and that its earliest known use can be found in the City of London’s Coroners’ Rolls for the year 1325–1326 (Sharpe 1913: 13–131; Prescott 2004). Freestone-masons or Freemasons were a superior class of stonemason who were typically employed to carve the more delicate tracery of a building and from the late fourteenth century the term appears in a wide variety of English records, particularly those relating to building (Scanlan 2002: 155–160; Scanlan 2003: 55–112). For instance, in a contract dated 5 June 1506, John Aylmer and William Vertue, described as ‘fremasons’, agreed to vault the choir of St George’s Chapel, Windsor, ‘with free stone’ together with flying buttresses, parapets, pinnacles, and carved figures (St. John Hope 1913: 460; Salzman 1953: 102 and Appendix B: 556–557). Aylmer and Vertue were two pre-eminent master masons who flourished during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, and in 1510 Aylmer was one of the signatories on a petition that was presented to the Court of Aldermen on behalf of the London Company of Freemasons (London Metropolitan Archives, Calendar Letter Book M: f. 168), the mason’s guild that governed all working Masons within the City of London from the second half of the fourteenth century. In his will Aylmer later referred to “the wardens of the craft of the ffremasons of London” (Harvey 1954: 23).

Aside from innumerable manuscript references to the term, the word ‘freemason’ also appears in print during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in works relating to architecture. For instance, in 1601 an English translation of a work by Hans Blum was published in London, *The booke of five collumnes of architecture*, the subtitle of which announced that it was based on the *right Semetry and cunning measure of Free-Masons: Gathered with great diligence by Hans Bloome out of Antiquities, for the benefit of Free-Masons, Carpenters, Goldsmithes, Painters, Carvers, In-layers, Anticke-Cutters, and all other that delight to practice with the Compasse and Squire*. Similarly, in 1612 Henry Peacham published, *The Gentlemans Exercise*, a work he hoped would help improve drawing and painting skills of “all young Gentlemen and

others,” as well as “divers Trades-men and Artificers, as namely Painters, Joyners, Free-Masons, Cutters and Carvers, &c.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1654, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the London Company of Freemasons changed its name to the London Masons’ Company. However, individual members of the company, as well as many Masons across the country, continued to use the term to describe their profession, and the word remained in use as a trade term well into the eighteenth century. For example, in 1719 a Magistrate in Kendal, Westmoreland, ruled that “a Master Freemason,” when hewing or walling “freestone,” receives more than a “rough mason” and other workmen (Gould 1895: 35; Begemann 1909–1911: 49).

Lodges are also known to have been active in early modern England, albeit that most do not appear to have been the permanent entities that existed in Scotland. At Westminster in 1532 a “stock-lock” and “shytting [shutting] plate” were “set upon a dore belonging to one of the lodgies wherein certein of the masons worke” (Exchange Treasury of Receipt, Miscellaneous Books, vols. 251–252: f. 316), a lodge known to have been involved with the building of Henry VIII’s new palace at Whitehall. The master mason in charge of the project was John Molton, the King’s master mason (Harvey 1954: 187), who in 1536 was also granted “the office of Master of all their works commonly called freemasonry, when it should be vacant,” by the Prior and Convent of Bath (*Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 1861–1862: 37–60). The building accounts of Henry VIII’s Palace of Nonsuch (begun in 1538) are also replete with references to the wages of “lodgemen freemasons” at this time (Gairdner and Brodie 1898: 560–577), and despite the seismic upheavals of the Reformation, lodges remained a feature of the English architectural landscape throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed, documentary evidence attests to the existence of working Freemason lodges at London’s St Paul’s Cathedral in the 1630s (Hart 1994: 108), at Chester in the 1660s, at Newcastle in the 1680s (Tyne and Wear Archives, GU.MS/8), at Alnwick circa 1700 (Rylands 1901: 4–13), and at York from 1705 until circa 1730.

Contemporary masonic manuscripts known as ‘Old Charges’ repeatedly refer to lodges throughout this period and several also refer to Freemasons. The two oldest examples of these documents date from the first half of the fifteenth century, although the majority (there are approximately 130 known to exist) date from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These manuscripts typically contain a semi-mythologized history of the craft, drawn from a mixture of biblical, classical and apocryphal sources, that trace the history of the mason craft all the way back to ancient Egypt and the Biblical Patriarchs. It should also be noted that, like the word ‘freemason’, these old charge manuscripts are of English provenance, with the possible exception of one. And

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6 A second edition of this work was published in 1634.

this is significant in that the author of the Freemasons' constitutions, James Anderson, is known to have made extensive use of these documents when preparing his own works for the London grand lodge during the 1720s and 1730s.

### The Case of Elias Ashmole

It is in this context that Elias Ashmole joined a lodge, the earliest known record of such an occurrence in England by an English gentleman. Ashmole was a seventeenth-century antiquary best known for helping to establish the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, who left two manuscript accounts detailing his association with Freemasonry. In the first of these accounts he recorded that on 16 October 1646, "I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire," before giving the names of eight other men present in the "Lodge" that day (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ashmole MS. 1136: f. 19v). In the second account he recorded that on 10 March 1682 he received a "Sumons to appe[ar] at a Lodge to be held next day, at Masons Hall London." He duly attended the meeting and witnessed six men "admitted into the Fellowship of Free Masons" as "New-accepted Masons," before listing the names of all those in attendance.

Much has been written about these two accounts and many commentators have concluded that they point to the existence of a 'speculative' fraternity in seventeenth century England, one that was completely divorced from the associations of working stonemasons. However, such a theory quickly disintegrates when one scrutinises Ashmole's accounts in depth. Firstly, recent analysis of the 1682 account reveals that the lodge Ashmole attended not only met at the home of the London Masons' Company, but it also included the Company's reigning master, two of its former masters and both its acting wardens. Secondly, of the sixteen 'accepted masons' who attended the meeting, fourteen are known to have been leading stonemasons of their day and approximately half are known to have worked with Sir Christopher Wren on a variety of building projects (Scanlan 2002: 163–167, 177, 189–192). The fact that this lodge consisted of eminent stonemasons and that it was so closely connected to the London Masons' Company, which, prior to 1654, was known as the London Company of Freemasons, is more than a little suggestive. But crucially, Ashmole also stated that he "was the senior Fellow among them (it being 35 years since I was admitted)" (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ashmole MS. 1136: f. 69v), an obvious allusion to his initiation into Freemasonry at Warrington in October 1646, a statement which strongly suggests that both the 1646 and the 1682 lodges were connected, if not part of the same craft-based tradition or association.

The notion that Ashmole might have joined a working stonemason's association is also supported by several other pieces of evidence. For instance,

not only does an old charge date from the actual day of Ashmole's initiation, but it was also written by one Edward Sankey, who is believed to be the same Edward Sankey named by Ashmole as an attendee of the Warrington lodge (British Library, Sloane MS. 3848: f. 183—Edward Sankey, "A Discourse of the history and craft of Masonry"). It is also evident that Ashmole knew the term 'freemason' referred to a specific class of stonemason as he used the word several times in his writings, but at no stage did he ever intimate that there was a second interpretation of it (Ashmole 1652: 7); on the contrary, in a reference to some building work undertaken at St George's Chapel, Windsor, in the early sixteenth century, Ashmole tellingly described the two contracting Masons, John Aylmer and William Vertue (already cited), as "Free Masons" (Ashmole 1672: chapter iv, section ii, 136).

Ashmole was not the only gentleman to join a lodge at this time, as the Chester antiquary and herald, Randle Holme III, also joined a Freemasons' lodge in about 1665. And the membership of his lodge is similarly revealing, in that it included thirteen craftsmen, a merchant, four local aldermen and two gentlemen (British Library, Harliean MS. 2054: f. 34). Holme later wrote about his membership of the "Felloship [sic] of the Masons," a society he honoured "because of its Antiquity" and because he was "a Member of that Society, called Free-Masons." He affirmed that it was part of a stonemason tradition, and proceeded to discuss the terms and tools of their art, as well as the different stones they used. He also revealed that the fellows of the society were bound by a secretive oath and he ended his account by recommending some architectural reading for those who might "desire farther instruction in the Theorick part of Free Masonry" (Holme 1688: book iii, chapter iii, 100, 393; ch. xiii, 467).

Another informative account relating to Freemasonry at this time was written by Dr Robert Plot, a onetime student of Ashmole's, who was Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum and Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University. In his *Natural History of Staffordshire* (1686), Plot documented a popular custom of the county, that "of admitting Men into the Society of Free-Masons." He stated that he found "the Custom spread more or less all over the Nation," but, he observed, in Staffordshire "persons of the most eminent quality...did not disdain to be of this Fellowship." Plot described how the society had a manuscript roll, which contained "the History and Rules of the Craft of masonry" (a clear reference to the old charge tradition), and he also affirmed that the society was inextricably linked with the art of stonemasonry. He observed that new members of the society were admitted in a meeting called a "Lodg" (sic) which had to consist of at least five or six "Ancients of the Order," and that the

process of admission involved the “communication of certain Secret Signes,” after which the candidate became “A Fellow of the Society” whom “they otherwise call an accepted mason” (Plot 1686: 316–318).

Plot’s account, like those of Ashmole and Holmes, strongly suggests that the working Freemasons or stonemasons, or at least elements of them, presided over an organised ‘fellowship’ that consisted of stonemasons, other trade professionals, and gentlemen; that met in lodges and made use of secret signs and binding oaths. Both Ashmole and Plot also stated that the members of this fellowship were known as ‘accepted masons’, which, as we shall see, is highly significant in that this term has been generally misunderstood by historians. Indeed, most historians who have written on early Freemasonry have concluded that an ‘accepted’ mason was someone who was not a working stonemason (Knoop and Jones 1947: 129–158; Kahler 1998: 41–57, 295). However, recent research shows that this view is flawed and that an accepted mason was in fact a fellow of a fraternity that was made up of both stonemasons and non-stonemasons alike. And importantly, like the word ‘freemason’, the term accepted was unknown in Scotland before the eighteenth century.

### The Accepted Masons

Among the surviving records of the London Masons’ Company there are a series of accounts relating to the activities of the seventeenth-century accepted Masons which have been largely neglected by historians. The earliest surviving minute book of the Company, then known as the London “Company of ffreemasons,” begins on 1 July 1619 (Guildhall Library, Corporation of the City of London, MS. 5303/1:1) and it reveals that between 1630 and 1677 there were at least eight meetings of an enigmatic association attached to the company called the ‘acceptation’. Recent analysis of the acceptation reveals that it met on an irregular basis and that its members were mostly leading stonemason members of the company, however, non-company members, non-stonemasons and gentlemen were permitted to join if they so wished, provided they were prepared to pay double the fee normally exacted from those who already held company membership.

What makes the acceptation highly unusual is that it was unrelated to the three time-honoured modes of membership that all London livery companies or guilds, including the Masons, were obliged to observe, namely servitude, patrimony and redemption. Indeed, the acceptation was unique to the Masons’ Company most members of the acceptation were already long-standing and eminent members of the company when they entered this curious association.



Frustratingly, the company's surviving records only provide a partial picture of the acceptance, but it is known that it met in lodges, that its meetings usually involved an expensive banquet or dinner, and that its members were known as 'Accepted Masons'. Furthermore, two inventories made by the company on 24 June 1663 and 4 July 1676, reveal that 'the names of the Accepted Masons' were kept "in a faire enclosed frame with a lock and key," alongside a "book of the Constitutions of the Accepted Masons" and a "fair large table of the Accepted Masons" (Guildhall Library, Corporation of the City of London, MSS. 5303/1:172; 5313:1; Conder 1894: 195–196; & 1896: 44). Regrettably, however, the aforementioned items are no longer extant.

The last reference to the acceptance in the company accounts occurs in April 1677, however, some six months earlier, a 'Divertisement' appeared in *Poor Robin's Intelligence*, which contained the earliest known printed reference to the association. The notice parodied a number of esoteric and political groups who it intimated were somehow connected, and claimed that they and the "Company of accepted Masons" intended to dine together on "the 31st of November next" (sic). The divertissement was self-evidently a skit, however, it demonstrates that the accepted Masons were sufficiently well known to the publication's readership, for the anonymous author to deem them worthy of inclusion in this literary satire.

Another reference to accepted masonry occurs in 1691 this time in a memorandum note penned by the English antiquary, John Aubrey, in relation to the alleged induction into Freemasonry of the celebrated architect and scientist, Sir Christopher Wren. Aubrey claimed that on 18 May that year "a great convention at St. Paul's-church of the Fraternity of the *Free* [struck through in the text] Accepted Masons" were to make Sir Christopher Wren and "Divers others," an "adopted" brother (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Aubrey MS. 2: f. 72v). The veracity of this account has been queried by some masonic historians, but if it had been fallacious it would not have been endorsed by the Royal Society, of which both Wren and Aubrey were then prominent members. For in 1691 the Society's Clerk, Mr. B.G. Cramer, was asked to copy Aubrey's manuscript before his papers were deposited in the Bodleian Library at Oxford for posterity, and the copy, still extant in the Society's archives, contains an almost identical account of Wren's alleged association with the fraternity, albeit that the word "adopted" was used in place of the term "Accepted."<sup>7</sup> In addition, another leading fellow of the Royal Society, John Evelyn, who was an acquaintance of both Aubrey and Wren, also

7 "Memoires of Naturall Remarques in the county of Wilts, to which are annexed observables of the same kind in the county of Surrey and Flynt-shire," Royal Society, London, MS. 92: f. 277.

recorded an almost identical account in his commonplace book whilst penning some architectural notes.

Sir Christopher Wren (Architect of St. Paules) was at a convention (at St. Paules 18 May 1691), of Free-mafone, adopted a Brother of that Society; shore [?] have kings ben of this sodality.

British Library, Add. MS. 78333

Both Aubrey's and Evelyn's accounts once again clearly point to an association linked to working stonemasons. This is significant because in May 1691 many of the senior contract Masons who worked with Wren on the rebuilding of London after the great fire of 1666 are known to have been 'accepted freemasons', as they were named by Ashmole as attendees of the "Lodge" that was held at Masons' Company hall on 11 March 1682. And Wren himself later wrote about Freemasonry on more than one occasion and recollected how the "highest or last stone" on the lantern of St Paul's Cathedral had been laid

in the presence of that excellent Artificer Mr. Strong, his son and other Free and Accepted Masons chiefly employed in the execution of the Work.

*Parentalia* 1750: 293

Rather tellingly, the "excellent Artificer" referred to here was the Oxfordshire mason Edward Strong senior, who upon in his death in February 1724, was described by a London newspaper as "one of the ancientest Masons and FREEMASONS in England" (*Read's Weekly Journal*, 14 February 1724). While his son, who was also mentioned by Wren, was in 1725, listed as a member of the lodge that was affiliated with the Grand Lodge in London that met at the Swan in East Street, Greenwich. Both men also served as master of the London Masons' Company.<sup>8</sup>

In 1708, the same year that the last stone was placed on the lantern of St Paul's Cathedral, a survey of the City of London was published, which was written by Edward Hatton and entitled, *A new view of London*. The work contained a brief account of all London's livery companies, from the apothecaries to the weavers, and in each instance Hatton gave details of the company's foundation date, its internal structure and hierarchy, the design of its armorial bearings, and the location of its hall or meeting place. But when he described

<sup>8</sup> Edward Strong senior served as master in 1696, and Edward Strong junior took the chair in 1718.

the Mason's Company and its hall he noted that the company had an unusual grouping at its core which none of the other companies had.

Masons Hall, situate in Masons Ally in Bazing hall Street as you pass to Coleman Street. This Company was Incorporated about the year 1410, having been called Free Masons, a Fraternity of many of the Nobility and Gentry being of their Society.

HATTON 1708: 611

Hatton's statement that a fraternity existed within the London Masons' Company has not only been ignored by historians looking at early Freemasonry, but it also appears to point strongly in the direction of the only fraternity known to exist within the company, and that was the acceptance. And the fact that members of this fraternity were known as 'accepted masons' or 'accepted freemasons', would appear to indicate that modern Freemasonry did owe its parentage, at least in part, to the associations and traditions of England's stonemasons. Indeed, the official constitutions of the new grand lodge in London published in February 1723, readily acknowledged that the modern society had sprung from the associations of working stonemasons, and its title pages openly stated that the work had been "COLLECTED From" the "general RECORDS" and "faithful TRADITIONS" of the "Accepted Free Masons" ([Anderson] 1723: 1). Moreover, in a foreword written by the society's deputy grand master, Dr John Theophilus Desaguliers, it was openly stated that the author of the work had gone to great lengths to digest "this Book from the old Records," while the author himself, James Anderson, penned an equally telling note on page 82 of the work in which he acknowledged that the London "*Company of Masons*" was of "*auncient standing*" (sic) and had "*otherwise [been] termed FREE MASONS.*" He also affirmed that the "*Free and Accepted Masons*" and the "LONDON COMPANY" were inextricably linked, and that they shared a common ancestry ([Anderson] 1723: 82).

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# Freemasonry and Templarism

*Pierre Mollier*

## Introduction

The ‘Order of the Poor Soldiers of Christ’—also known as the those of the ‘Temple’ as result of their establishment close to the ruins of King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem—was one of the most prestigious orders of chivalry in the Middle Ages. But in 1314 it was suppressed by Pope Clement V, persecuted by the king of France, Philip the Fair, and banned by the majority of rulers in Europe. It then disappeared. But since the eighteenth century and up to the present day, there are those who believe that Freemasonry is a secret continuation of the medieval Order of the Knights Templar. This notion, the first evidence of which appeared around 1740, has given rise to a wealth of literature and is still today the theme of best-sellers such as *The Temple and the Lodge* (1989) by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh or *The Hiram Key* (1996) by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas. Furthermore, within masonry itself degrees, ceremonies and teachings make reference to the Knights Templar.

In fact, this theory of their ‘survival’ has the Templars seeking refuge in far-off Scotland in order to escape the persecution they were suffering. As a means of disappearing and passing un-noticed they attached themselves to the brotherhood of Masons whose traditionally secret customs afforded them a safe haven. Hidden away in this small northern kingdom, far from the Pope and the main European monarchies, the Order of the Temple is purported to have survived for four centuries within the masonic fraternity. What is more, if the Templars were condemned by the Pope, it was in consequence of the esoteric and heretical knowledge they had acquired during their time spent in the Middle East. Knowledge which, in addition, was probably the source of their power and which enabled them to survive. And finally, all that was only possible because of the protection of the kings of Scotland which explained the unflinching support of the order to the Stuart dynasty.

It’s a lovely story ... but there is not a single serious historical fact to support it. If we adhere to the classic methods of approach to history, there is no reason to think that the Order of the Temple survived, in one form or another, its abolition by Pope Clement V. For historians studying the Middle Ages, there is not a single document, not one piece of contemporary evidence which could

uphold the hypothesis that the Templars survived in any way whatsoever. The same goes for the medievalists; there is not a single piece of documentary evidence to suggest that the Templars ever professed anything other than orthodox Catholicism, for which they fought for over two centuries, nor that they were given to esoteric ideas. The serious accusation of heresy, brought for the first time when they appeared before the tribunals, was simply a classic procedure of the time for trials where the accused is guilty before the verdict.

The Knights Templar who escaped the flames or imprisonment probably joined other orders—chivalric or religious—or returned to a secular life as soldiers or to their estates. Not a single medieval document hints in any way at the survival of even the remnants of the ‘Order of the Poor Soldiers of Christ’. Naturally, it is risky to speculate on the fate of the Templars had they not been crushed by the combined interests of the Pope and the king of France. We cannot re-write history. But we are allowed to think that it may have differed very little from that of similar orders such as the Knights Hospitaler of Saint John—the Knights of Malta—or the Order of Saint Lazarus. The Order of Malta became in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and still is today, essentially a charitable institution for the nobility. Saint Lazarus was to be adopted by the French monarchy and became an Order of the King, which is to say that it was a national honour, linked to a structure for distributing pension to faithful servants. Furthermore this evolution is shared by the only branch of the Templars which survived abolition, thanks to the Lusitanian monarchy. In Portugal, at first only the name changed, but as the centuries progressed the ‘Order of Christ’ also became a national honour. It is today one of the most prestigious honours in the Portuguese Republic.

And so, to study links between Freemasonry and the Templars is to turn legend into history. How, in masonic circles in the eighteenth century, was the idea born that the Order of the Temple had not been totally destroyed and that the descendants of its survivors, gathered at the heart of secret societies, continued to hold on to esoteric wisdom?

### Freemasonry and Chivalry

In 1723, in Anderson’s *Constitutions*, we find the first suggestion of a link between chivalry and Freemasonry:

In short, it would require many large Volumes to contain the many splendid Instances of the *mighty Influence* of Masonry from the Creation, in every Age [...] Nay, if it were expedient, it could be made appear, that from this *ancient Fraternity*, the Societies or Orders of the Warlike



KNIGHTS, and of the Religious too, in process of time, did borrow many solemn Usages...

ANDERSON 1723: 44, 46.

In this short paragraph Anderson establishes, at the heart of the text on which speculative Masonry is based, a link, presented as a certainty, between Masonry and chivalry. But more importantly, the result of this statement, which says little but implies a good deal more, is that he opens the door to a vast amount of speculation on the subject. In addition to this, in 1724 an anonymous author reveals in detail the precise nature of the connection between Masonry and Chivalry. In the Irish pamphlet entitled *A letter from the Grand Mistress of the Female Free-Masons*, we read the following:

The Branch of the *Lodge of Solomon's Temple*, afterwards call'd the *Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem* on which our Guardian fortunately hit, is as I can easily prove, the Antientest and Purest now on Earth: The famous old *Scottish Lodge of Killwinin* of which all the Kings of *Scotland* have been from Time to Time Grand Masters without Interruption, down from the Days of *Fergus*, who Reign'd there more than 2000 Years ago, long before the Knights of *St. John of Jerusalem* or the Knights of *Maltha*, to which two *Lodges* I must nevertheless allow the Honour of having adorn'd the Antient *Jewish* and *Pagan Masonry* with many Religious and Christian Rules.<sup>1</sup>

In 1737, the famous lecture delivered by Andrew Michael (*le chevalier*) Ramsay popularised the idea that Freemasons are descendants of the Crusaders and that therefore their brotherhood was in fact a chivalric Order:

Our Ancestors the Crusaders, gathered together from all Parts of Christendom desired thus to reunite in a single Fraternity the individuals of all Nations ... & to create, in the course of time, a wholly spiritual Nation (La Tierce 1742: VIe partie: Discours préliminaire pour servir d'introduction aux obligations [this is Ramsay's discourse], 129)<sup>2</sup> ... At the time of the Crusades in Palestine many Princes, Lords and Citizens associated themselves and vowed to restore the Temples of the Christians in the Holy Land

1 *A letter from the Grand Mistress of the Female Free-Masons to Mr Harding the Printer*, Dublin, John Harding, 1724, 8–9. A second edition was printed, again in Dublin, in 1730. A facsimile and short study of this curious text can be found in: Lepper and Crossle (1925, Vol. I: 445ff.), Knoop, Jones and Hamer (1975: 235) provide a transcription of it.

2 The text given by La Tierce corresponds to the so-called definitive or 'Grand Loge' version of the *Discours* (early 1737).

& to work to return their Architecture to its first institution. They agreed on several ancient signs and symbolic words drawn from the depths of Religion, in order to recognise each other and to distinguish them from the Infidels and Saracens. These signs and words were only communicated to those who had solemnly promised, sometimes even at the foot of an altar, never to reveal them. This sacred promise, therefore, was not an execrable oath, as is suggested, but a respectable bond which unites Christians of all Nations in the same Brotherhood. Some time later our Order became closely linked to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Since then all our Lodges are called Lodges of St. John. This union followed the example of the Israelites at the time when they were building the second Temple. While they held the trowel and mortar in one hand, in the other they held their sword and shield.

LA TIERCE 1742: 137–138

The influence of Ramsay's discourse is important not only in France but also in several European countries with established relations with French lodges (such as Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Russia). Neither was the chivalric nature of Freemasonry a secret kept uniquely behind the closed doors of the lodges, but a kind of piece of evidence for many contemporaries. Many texts which appeared in France in the 1740s, either to present, defend or condemn Freemasonry, considered it to be some sort of Order of chivalry. Given the rapid development of the chivalric theme running through French Freemasonry after the 1730s it is difficult to ascribe its origins to anything other than the personal innovation of Ramsay. And if we believe that it is due less to the initiative of one man than to the collective ideas of a group then we are faced with a question. What is this group which, among the first French lodges, wanted to change Masonry into a Chivalric Order? It seems very likely that Ramsay—initiated into Anderson's lodge in London in 1730—was a member in France of the lodge of the Grand Master Derwentwater. This hypothesis is supported by the opinion of the Worshipful Master Coustos who informs us that the idea of considering Masonry as “an order of chivalry” is an “innovation created in the lodge of the ... grand master” (Anonyme 1965: 38). In addition a contemporary writer portrays Derwentwater as “the grand master of the Freemasons [with...] a large court of his knights” (*L'Abbé de la Garde's gazette* 1737, quoted by Chevallier 1994: 105). So that one conclusion which is both unexpected yet at the same time obvious presents itself, namely that the Scottish supporters of the house of Stuart—which made up the large part of Grand Master Derwentwater's lodge—were the promoters of the transformation of Masonry into an Order of Chivalry. And this is even more curious given that, as Robert Cooper has demonstrated, Scotland itself seems to be a country where the Templar theme was very late in reaching Masonry.

So how do we explain this meeting of chivalry and Masonry? In fact, in the second half of the seventeenth century and the first decades of the eighteenth, chivalry was very much in fashion. It benefitted from a pre-romantic infatuation. Even though the last of the knights had disappeared in the second half of the fourteenth century, the ideal—or if we are to remain neutral on the subject, the image—of chivalry survived them. Medieval chivalric romances were ‘modernised’ and frequently re-published. Bookshops offered a multiplicity of treatises on the Chivalric orders. Quoting but a few examples, among many others we find Favyn’s enormous work published in 1620: *Le Théâtre d’Honneur et de Chevalerie ou l’histoire des ordres militaires* (almost 2000 pages); the popular *Histoire des religions ou ordres militaires de l’Eglise et des Ordres de Chevalerie* by Hermant, published in 1698, reprinted in 1704 and in 1725; or the monumental *Histoire des ordres monastiques religieux et militaires* in eight volumes by Father Hélyot which came off the presses between 1714 and 1719 and was reprinted in 1721. The great number of publications clearly shows how well the public received them. Having disappeared from daily life in Europe, knights nonetheless remained ever present in people’s minds, the imagination revealing itself to be infinitely more resilient than the real world.

### From Knights to Templars

From the moment when a link was established between Freemasonry and Chivalry, especially if that Chivalry was connected to the Crusades, the Templars were never very far behind. Furthermore the numerous works dealing with Orders of Chivalry which appeared at the time all devoted long chapters to them, recalling the importance and the prestige of the order—and the doubts surrounding the accusations levelled against them. Some, like that of Elias Ashmole—one of the very first Freemasons—even suggested that the Templars might have survived the suppression of the Order:

Knights Templars ... in England, Anno I. Ed. 2. they were also apprehended afterwards, rendred convicts, and all their possessions seized into the king’s hands. Howbeit the Bishop of York commiserating their deplorable condition within his dioceses charitably disposed of them in monasteries under his jurisdiction.

ASHMOLE 1715: 24<sup>3</sup>

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3 “Anno I. Ed. 2.” probably means “in the first year of the reign of Edward the second”. Edward II Plantagenet was king between 1307 and 1327.

Now the ancient city of York has a claim to be the cradle of a very old form of English Masonry. Contrary to what may have been written the Templars had already been hinted at in Ramsay's *Discourse*. Ramsay refers to: "This sacred promise was not an execrable oath, as is suggested". And one of the principal accusations brought forward at the trial of the Templars, and reported by the numerous works dedicated to chivalry, was that of having the novice swear an heretical and obscene oath ... which was, in a word, execrable. They were the only group of knights to face this accusation.

In 1737, we can read in a letter: "A new Order which originated in England has been established in Paris and which is called ... Free-Masons. Those in this Order swear an oath of fidelity ... and which [Order] is more or less like the Order of Knights Templar" (quoted by Luquet 1963: 192). In 1746, *L'Examen de la Société des Francs-maçons* explains that "The Free-masons have, like the Templars, such vital and secret points that they would rather lose their life than reveal them". Another example, in 1752, *Les vrais jugements sur la société des Francs-Maçons*, states that "on examining [the sect] of the Templars in their final days, it seems to live on in its entirety within that of the Masons". From the 1740s onwards public opinion establishes a link between masonic mysteries, which are widely talked about, and the Order of the Temple. To conclude, let us quote from the memoirs of the great archivist of French Freemasonry of the eighteenth century, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz:

... from 1752, that is 30 years ago, having been elected to preside over the [lodge] into which I was initiated & having no connection, neither with the late W[orshipful] Br[other] *ab Ense* [von Hund], nor with any of the followers of his System, I mysteriously taught those upon whom I conferred that 4th degree of the [lodge] that they had become heirs to Kni[ght] T[emplars] and their wisdom; I repeated this and have repeated it for ten years, just as I learned it from my predecessor, who in turn had learned it through an ancient tradition, the origins of which he knew not.<sup>4</sup>

Inspiring testimony, but one which poses a good many questions: what was this fourth degree? Was it limited to revealing the general principle behind the connection between the Templars and Freemasons or was it the start of special ceremonies which were supposed to follow those of the Order of the Temple?

Thus the Masons were very quick to claim the chivalric nature of their Order and their connection with the Knights of the Temple, so prestigious and rich in

4 Pointed out, emphasised and quoted by Bernheim (1998: 169). Willermoz' Intervention at the Convention of Wilhelmsbad 29 July 1782. Transcribed by Var (1985: 50–51).

symbolic possibilities. As often happens in lodges, ceremonies and degrees soon followed. The advent of these new chivalric templar degrees and the popular vogue they created among the brethren went on, in their turn, to feed and fill out the legend. The success and development of masonic degrees claiming as their heritage chivalry and the Order of the Temple leads us into a genuine legendary cycle, in the sense that this expression can have in medieval literature. The versions of the story multiply, each one adding to the tale some new details of the baleful lot of the ill-fated knights, to the secrets of their survival and to the mysteries of the occult hierarchy. It is truly an imaginary world that we see built up in the second half of the century of Enlightenment.

### The First Templar Degree

The 'templar legend' makes its first appearance in a masonic ritual in an ancient version of the degree of 'Knight Kadosh', dated 1750. We are dealing here with the famous documents relating to a 'Sublime Order of Elect Knights' which were discovered simultaneously at Quimper and Poitiers. So, what is the 'rare and precious knowledge' which this archaic Kadosh ritual reveals to us? A masonic scholar, on reading it for the first time has a slight feeling of disappointment. Far from being a source of new revelations the whole thing has an air of *déjà vu*. In effect, it turns out to be nothing other than a ritual for the 'Elect of IX', one of the oldest and most widespread degrees of the eighteenth century, to which has been added chivalric ennoblement, with a 'mystical ladder' thrown in and a slightly odd story in which the Templars intervene. It is hard not to have the feeling that it has been cobbled together—a fabrication even. But these are the thoughts of a twenty-first century analyst. If we place it in the context of the 1740s, it is precisely its proximity to the degree of 'Elect Master', even down to its name, which gives meaning to the 'Sublime Order of Elect Knights'. The ritual it contains appears as a 'revelation', and herein lies its teaching and the key to the new perspective it brings. The degree of 'Elect Master' is one of the oldest higher degrees in French speculative Freemasonry. It is closely allied, via its symbolical theme, to the degree of 'Master Mason'. Consequently it was known to all Masons, perhaps from as early as the beginning of the 1730s. And so the 'Elect Knight' rituals add to what we know, reveal a secret part of the degree of 'Elect Master': This degree, which every Freemason in the first half of the eighteenth century thought they knew, is in fact—it was claimed—the vestige and surviving remains of one of the most illustrious Orders of Chivalry. A 'Sublime Order', but one extinguished as a result of an injustice. On closer examination we note that the legend of the degree of 'Elect

Knight' is made up of several parts. Firstly, the 'Elect Knights' are descendants of the Templars. Secondly, the Order of the Temple was itself nothing other than the extension of a long line of initiates. Thirdly, the final and most important element is that the 'Sublime Order' survived in Scotland. The 'Elect Knights' are, therefore, the descendants of the Templars. Members of the most illustrious Order of Chivalry of the Middle Ages, their name is associated with the mysteries of their wealth and supposed heresy; their fate stands out as one of the great examples of unjustly persecuted innocence. The legendary theme of the 'Elect Knight' is all the more convincing because it offers a structural cohesion with the symbolic outline of that of 'Elect Master'. Behind the election of the 'Elect of IX' to avenge the unjust death of Hiram, the ritual unveils the election for another vengeance, that of the unjust death of Jacques de Molay and of the end of the fine flowering of Chivalry. In both instances the election avenges innocence. And it is this shared symbolic structure which plants the 'Elect Master', and alongside it templar masonry, firmly in the roots of traditional speculative Freemasonry. What is more, in the 1760s Stephen Morin's 'Kadosh' ritual explicitly says so:

The trials that you have gone through to learn the historical facts of, and the antient Bible, do they not serve you to understand and sound your heart to make a just application of the death of Hiram Abif, in comparing it with that of James de Molay? By the degree of 9 elected, when your heart was disposed to revenge, you have been prepared to the implacable hatred, that you have sworn to the Knights of Malta, in whom you ought to revenge the death of James de Molay. As a Grand Elected you have acquired by your proved discretion in symbolic masonry, the light, which leaves nothing more to desire than your submission to the degree of the sublime Prince of the Royal Secret ...

Let us now add a third element which happens to coincide with this symbolic structure: the death of Charles I and the unjust banishment of the house of Stuart.

### **Masonic Templar Systems**

Appearing in France in the 1740s at the heart of the rich and complex Masonry of higher degrees, the 'Sublime Order of Elect Knights' is probably the direct source of all masonic templar degrees. Effectively, from this period onwards the majority of masonic systems will take up the idea of a link with

the Order of the Temple. Many make it the object of one or more degrees, all the more important because they are placed high up on the ladder they bring in, but some systems make the templar legacy the focal point of their teaching to the extent of modelling their entire organisation and ceremonies on those of the medieval Order. We can identify four large families of templar degrees.

In France, the 'Knight Kadosh' and a certain number of its variations conceived in the 1760s (some of which are known as 'Knight of the Temple') is a direct continuation of the 'Sublime Order of Elect Knights', the main elements of whose ritual it preserves, only expanding or lengthening this or that part according to the different versions. The 'Kadosh' remains the final degree, being the pinnacle of a system of some twenty or so degrees practiced in Paris at the beginning of the 1760s, and which the noteworthy French mason Stephen Morin was to take with him to America. Known by the name (incorrectly but established by custom) of Rite of Perfection, it became, after several modifications following its establishment in the United States, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Today it is the most widely practiced system of higher degrees in the world and the degree of 'Kadosh', which is ranked thirtieth on a ladder of thirty-three, is an essential step. The 31st, 32nd and 33rd degrees develop Templar elements that are already present in the 30th.

British and American Masonry have a degree of 'Knight Templar'. The oldest recorded evidence for this comes from the minute book of the 'Saint Andrew Royal Arch Lodge of Boston'. On August 28, 1769, William Davis "begging to have and receive the Parts belonging to a Royal Arch Mason ... was accordingly made by receiving the four steps, that of an Excell[en]t, Sup[er Excellent], Royal Arch and Kt. Templar" (Smyth 1991: 90). The Lodge of Saint Andrew held its warrant from the Grand Lodge of Scotland but maintained very close ties with an Irish military lodge. Charles Cameron has come to the conclusion that the practice of the 'Knight Templar' degree was passed on to it via the lodge of the 29th Irish Infantry Regiment which was garrisoned at Boston at that time (Cameron 1900: 157). It is generally thought that Ireland played a major role in the introduction and spread of the degree of 'Knight Templar' within Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry, which practiced it with great zeal in the eighteenth century, records being relatively common from 1780 onwards, but before that we stumble against a lack of written evidence. A simple study of the text demonstrates the distance which separates the 'Knight Templar' from the *Chevalier Kadosh* and the other continental templar degrees. The first surprise is that no reference is made to the Order of the Temple, nor to the tragic fate of Jacques de Molay—so important in the continental rituals—within the body of the text. In fact, the only appearance the Templars make is in the name

of the degree. The ceremony itself consists largely of a chivalric knighting in a Christian context.

Germany went on to witness the birth of one of the most astonishing forms of templar Masonry: the 'Strict Observance'. At the start of the 1750s, at Kittlitz in the Dresden region, a group of young aristocrats and soldiers, led by Freiherr von Hund (1722–1776), founded the Lodge *Aux trois Colonnes* (the Three Columns). From the very beginning it had a strong chivalric dimension—for example, the companions adopted a chivalric name—and it quickly laid claim to links with the Order of the Temple. Von Hund and his friends gradually drew together and absorbed other Templar degrees from different systems which appeared in Germany in the 1750s and 1760s. They went on to structure their masonic system as the VIIth Province of the Order of the Temple. The names, organisation and decoration were by and large borrowed from treatises on the history of Orders of chivalry. The 'Strict Observance'—implying 'Templar'—was to achieve a great success in the 1770s in Germany and also in other countries, such as France, where the IIInd Province was established in 1773–1774. This success was accompanied by lively debates on the nature of the Order and notably on the historical reality of the links with the medieval Order of the Temple. Von Hund and the titles he laid claim to were also called into question. These controversies were to come to the fore at the different conventions held by the order: at Kohlo in 1772, Braunschweig in 1775, Wiesbaden in 1776, Wolfenbüttel in 1778 and Wilhelmsbad in 1782. What is more, after all the debates and at the initiative of French members of the 'Strict Observance', the Wilhelmsbad convention renounced the claim to an historical link with the Order of the Temple. The 'Strict Observance' died out at the end of the 1780s. The French had introduced a fundamental change at their Lyon convention in 1778. They transformed the 'Strict Observance' into a Christian order of Chivalry with a strong theosophical dimension under the names of 'Rectified Scottish Rite' and 'Order of the Benevolent Knights of the Holy City'. In the nineteenth century the RSR and the BKHC only continued to exist in Switzerland and it was from Geneva that the order became re-established in France and some other countries during the twentieth century.

The Swedish Rite is the fourth great branch of Templar Masonry. The higher degrees which arrived in Sweden in the wake of symbolic Masonry, notably from France, became the object of several attempts to organise them in the 1750s. Finally, the 'Illuminated Chapter of Stockholm' founded in 1759 by Karl Friedrich Eckleff gained pre-eminence. In 1774 Duke Carl of Södermanland, brother to the king and from 1809 king Charles XIII of Sweden, became its head. From then on exchanges with the German Strict Observance grew in number. In 1778 at the convent of Wolfenbüttel, Duke Carl was elected 'Heermeister'



(Grand Master) of the VIIth province of the SO. Since many German members did not want to be ruled by a Swedish Prince, there was much opposition to his Grandmastership. Therefore he resigned again in 1781. But just before that, in 1780, he transformed the Swedish Grand Lodge into the IXth province of the SO (covering Sweden, Finland and Russia) and he remained Grand Master of that, also after his resignation as Grand Master of the VIIth province. The rituals of the system were revised twice by Duke Carl (with some advisors) in 1778–1780 and 1798–1801 (Snoek 2003: 41–44), which strengthened the Templar element. An emissary from the Swedish dignitaries even obtained at the end of his life from the now ageing ‘Young Pretender’, Bonnie Prince Charlie, a document affirming that the Stuarts were in fact the secret grand masters of Templar Masonry and that they handed on this distinction to those in charge of the IXth province (Maruzzi 1990: 96–101), none other than the Grand Master of Swedish Masonry. The Swedish Rite remains active right up to the present day and is firmly established in all Scandinavian countries and Germany.

### An Imaginary Continent

With the ritual of the ‘Sublime Order of Elect Knights’, Freemasonry struck a chord with the legendary fate of the Knights of the Temple. This osmosis only became stronger with the passage of time. The story of the Templars as it is presented in the ritual of ‘Elect Knight’ is clearly taken directly from the numerous treatises published on Orders of Chivalry since the seventeenth century. Here we find the same thread of the story, with the creation of the Order by Hugues de Payens, the high point of Templar Chivalry in Palestine and finally the trial with the four reasons for the guilty verdict and the collapse of the order. From the starting point of a few lines in the ‘Kadosh’ ritual of 1750, the templar legend was to become firmly rooted in the world of the lodges of the eighteenth century and in differing forms. The 1750 ritual, if it can be taken to be complete, only devotes twenty lines to the story of the Templars with a very brief summary. Those few rituals which can be dated from the early 1760s show a very marked enrichment of the text. In the manuscript rituals of Saint-Domingue from 1764 and Francken’s rituals of 1771, 1783 and 1786, the Templar story takes more than a hundred lines. As regards the Tschoudy ritual,<sup>5</sup>

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5 *G.J.G.E. or Chevalier Kados; connu aussi sous les titres de Chevalier-Élu ou chevalier de l’Aigle Noir*, Paris, 1781. This is a ritual taken from the archives of Tschoudy, d. 1766 (or 1769, according to both Amadou in Saunier and Ligou), and published by Labady. It is most likely that this ritual was in use in Metz where Tschoudy was Master of the Lodge in the 1760s.

there we find “a short history of the ancient religious and military Order of the knights of the Temple, which is communicated after initiation”, some 29 pages long. Increased as it is in volume the text of the ritual is equally enlarged in terms of style which presents the dramatic and romantic side of the story of the condemnation of the Templars.

Whereas the Kadosh rituals remain by and large fairly similar to one another and are based on the direct continuation of the ritual of the ‘Sublime Order of Elect Knights’, other masonic degrees go on to pick up the templar legend and further embellish it. So that in the degree of *Chevalier de Dieu et de son Temple* (Knight of God and of His Temple) we read:

these noble Templars on whose head there was a price, were led by their friends, the knights of Saint Andrew of the Thistle, to the caves near Heredon, where they were safe from the searches carried out by the enemies of their order; they were fed and kept safe by their friends for several years while they remained hidden in the caves. Eventually the persecution gradually diminished and the knights of Saint Andrew of the Thistle joined the 9 knights of the T. who had sought refuge in Scotland in the caves of Heredon. Even the very name of Templars was forgotten and the two orders became as one ... they created the Order of Freemasonry. At Heredon in Scotland was established the 1st lodge of free-masons; in the following years several more were set up both in Scotland and England, from which Masonry spread throughout the entire world and especially to Paris where the first founders came from and where the headquarters of the Order were located.<sup>6</sup>

To the ceremony which followed was added another revelation: “I have another confidence to share with you my dear brother for now there is nothing that is hidden from you. We have several members who believe in natural philosophy, and working with nature, they are learned in her secrets” (Girard-Augry 1996: 52). The Templars were also alchemists, and therein lay the the explanation

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6 *La Stricte Observance Templière avec ses deux manuscrits datés du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rouvray: Éditions du Prieuré, 1994), second degree of Knight of the T. or of the Profess, p. 26. These are indubitably eighteenth century templar rituals, but the attribution to the Strict Observance is more problematic. These texts do indeed reveal details of one of the classic templar degrees of the time: the *Chevalier de Dieu et de son Temple*, which Le Forestier presents, without any proof, as one of the oldest chivalric degrees. In addition to the manuscript rituals to be found in public collections, other rituals belonging to this family can be found in Girard-Augry (1996: 39–97).

for their great wealth. In 1775, the baron of Corberon was raised to the degree of 'grand K.S.' (i.e. Kadosh), and in 1777, within the framework of his masonic circles, Melessino entrusts him with the *Testament of Jacques de Molay*, a manuscript which reveals "the greatest hermetic and cabalistic secrets" which the Knights of the Temple possessed, according to their rank (Faivre 1967).

Chivalric literature, whose rapid expansion we have witnessed after the seventeenth century, is indubitably one of the sources for masonic templar rituals, and it is also very much in tune with the spirit of the age. Consulting the works of Favyn, Hermant or Hélyot must have been one of the first things a brother newly admitted to these degrees and anxious to learn more would have done. They were widely known and circulated. One of the great Kadosh rituals of the eighteenth century, the Francken-manuscript—and its source the *Saint-Dominique* 1764 manuscript—explicitly directs the attention of Brethren to several references to books to be consulted by "Brethren wishing to further inform themselves on matters concerning the facts related in this history or in this degree". Once the reader had delved into these enormous volumes, with cross references to footnotes, plates showing Knights in full regalia and engraved illustrations of the collars of the Order, he was drawn into the glittering mystery of the god of the Knights of the Temple. There is a kind of echo or something which resonates between the rituals and the literature. The ritual reveals: "Q: Tell me what is Masonry? A: The secret of Masonry can be explained by the story of the Order of the Templars" (Girard-Augry 1996: 54).

Nurtured on rituals and the reading of these books, in the middle of the 1780s in Paris at the celebrated Convention of the 'Philalèthes', a:

Brother presents the history of Masonry: Masonry owes its strength to the suppression of the Templars: these latter gained their knowledge in the East. The Order, founded by nine gentlemen in the twelfth century, was established in the place where Solomon's Temple had been and more especially close to where the two columns were situated; they had several degrees: candidates were received at night and before dawn; their assemblies were held in a securely guarded place; they called themselves Brothers.

PORSET 1996: 370

The books, to be specific, *L'Histoire véritable de la condamnation des Templiers* by Pierre Dupuy, the main source of information for the eighteenth century on the Knights Templar, are then quoted to lend weight to the link between the illustrious Order and Freemasonry:

Some passages from Dupuis prove that candidates were received wearing nothing more than a shirt and trousers and the secret location of the house was arrived at after a lengthy detour, that the door was guarded by two BR.: (sic) servants armed with a sword and guarding the keys; they had signs and words; following their persecution several of them fled to England.

PORSET 1996: 370

Did Dupuy really write all that? It is certainly what an impassioned brother read there ... perhaps between the lines.

Belief in a real connection between the Order of the Temple and Freemasonry was, then, quite widely held in the lodges of the eighteenth century. As another member of the Philaletes stressed: "A constant tradition, and one shared by almost all the different shades of M.: speaks of secret knowledge handed down to the Kni.: Temp.:, and this tradition is confirmed by monuments and historical facts" (Porset 1996: 352). The convention of the Philaletes is full of allusions to the Templars. Even though there are some like Chefdebien, who have their doubts, the majority seem to accept the role of the Knights Templar in the origins of modern Masonry. This is particularly true of the debates over the Third Proposition: "Which societies, bodies or individuals do we think were formerly in possession of (Masonic knowledge) and through which it has been handed down over the years to be perpetuated by us" (Porset 1996: 360). Many contributions take up again the elements set out in the 1740s in the ritual of 'Elect Knight' and give prominent places to the Essenes, to the Desert Fathers, and naturally to the Templars in the chain which stretches from Solomon to the lodges of the Enlightenment.

The legend was to undergo two metamorphoses. One, outlined in the degree of 'Knight of God and of His Temple' (*Chevalier de Dieu et de son Temple*) would emphasise the occult and mythical dimension. Here the Templars are presented as holders of esoteric knowledge. The other would underline the injustice of their fate and—following a path that takes on an undeniable political dimension—would call for the restoration of justice and law. These two perspectives are, however, never completely separate and heresy provides the link between esotericism and social protest. The esotericism attributed to the Knights of the Temple was to be one of the major points of controversy among the French adepts of the 'Strict Observance' in the 1780s: on one side Beyerlé, with Willermoz and Milanois on the other. The arguments developed in *De Conventu Latomorum* (See *De Conventu Generali Latomorum*, [attributed to Jean-Pierre Louis Beyerlé] s.l. s.d., or the re-edition Libris Éditions, Paris, 1997) and the *Réponse à a Fascia* are rich and complex and cannot be gone into in detail here. These debates which were followed closely by all the

masonic elite were to give wide coverage to the ‘templar question’. The political aspect is not less legendary. In 1788 Nicolas de Bonneville published fanciful *La Maçonnerie Écossaise et le Secret des Templiers* (Scottish Masonry and the Secret of the Templars) (de Bonneville 1788) in which, due to what he symbolises, the ‘Chevalier Kadosh’ plays an eminent part. Published in 1797, *L’Histoire de la conjuration de Louis-Philippe-Joseph d’Orléans surnommé Égalité* (The History of the conspiracy of Louis-Philippe-Joseph d’Orléans known also as Equality) (Montjoie 1796) sees in the prince’s reception into the degree of ‘Kadosh’ the origins of the position he took during the French Revolution. There we discover:

a summary of the doctrine to the continuation and propagation of which Louis-Philippe-Joseph [Philippe Égalité] swore to contribute to the utmost of his power, when he was admitted to the degree of Knight Kadosh (Montjoie 1796: 53). [To sum up] the object of this degree is to renew the human race; that is, to take it from slavery to freedom (Montjoie 1796: 54) ... and running through all this madness [we discover] a true conspiracy against the heirs of Philip the Fair.

MONTJOIE 1796: 56

Another famous pamphlet with the evocative title of *Le Tombeau de Jacques de Molay ou histoire secrète et abrégée des initiés* (Jaques de Molay’s tomb or the secret and abridged history of the initiates) by Cadet de Gassicourt develops a similar theme (see on this subject Lemaire 2002). It is followed by an essay on *La clef des loges* (The Key to the Lodges). We note also that Cadet de Gassicourt assigns a role to the Templars in the French Revolution as well as the Enlightenment. Engaged in pursuing vengeance against the heirs of Philip the Fair, the Templars also devoted themselves to “uncovering the secrets of nature, transmuting metals and finding the universal agent ...” (De Gassicourt 1797: 75–76). Magnified by rituals over the passing years, supported by selective readings from a wide range of literature almost unanimously accepted by the Brethren, the Templar legend—occult and revolutionary—is the driving force behind a world of imagination in a century which passes for being rationalist.

The prestige of an illustrious Order and the purported heresy of Knights familiar with the mystic East, the coming together—unexpected but historical—of these two singular features, was to turn the Templars into harbingers of renescent gnosis. The templar degrees in Freemasonry will afford a framework and support for that “precious and secret knowledge”, dixit Willermoz, which—paradox of the century—fascinated the men of the Enlightenment, critics of

religious institutions, yet frustrated by the emergence of modern rationalism. "A false idea is a fact in reality" say the historians. It matters little whether the survival of the Templars is an invention or not. On the margins of the orthodoxy of the churches and secular history, the templar legend has created a place where the most diverse speculations can find a home. The same causes produce the same effects: for three centuries, be it in literature or in esoteric movements, the Templars hide in the folds of their cloaks the quest of men who, today just as before, find themselves strangers in a world become too secular.

### Conclusion

History relies on its documents; that is its methodology, but also its limitation. To go further back, prior to 1740, the absence of archives stands in our way. However we may be permitted, in conclusion, to evoke some hypotheses, some possible avenues of work. For a long time the higher degrees, and in particular the chivalric degrees, have been considered belated and artificial. Historians today are more and more convinced that the higher degrees are contemporary with the beginnings of speculative Masonry and are closely bound to the very foundations of the Order. The elements of which we have become aware lead us to think that the notion of chivalry is very ancient within Freemasonry. Comparison is never proof but we can nonetheless remind ourselves that in France certain guilds or companies of archers, for example, well before the eighteenth century, laid claim to chivalric qualities. That shows, at the least, the possibility of such a reference within bourgeois or tradesmen's social groupings. So this symbolic reference was not impossible within 'accepted' Masonry at the end of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries, and that would enable us to explain its very advanced presence in speculative Masonry at the start of the eighteenth century.

Whether it is a legacy from Masonry of the seventeenth century or whether it takes root from the seeds sown by the reform of 1717, the appearance of chivalric and templar degrees is not the result of the vagaries of masonic history. The lack of archival material, especially for ancient times, too often causes the historian to underestimate the deliberate intention behind the creation of speculative Masonry in the eighteenth century. If, as with all social phenomena, the spirit of the age, coincidences and chance events have a part to play, certain structural elements of the Order seem to show signs of deliberate planning. It seems to us that masonic Chivalry falls into this category. It was not dreamt up by the Chevalier de Ramsay nor anyone else for that matter—readymade and awake—to breathe life back into the chivalric ideal which

haunts the European conscience century after century. It is, in fact, a peculiarity of our culture to propose a way of life which unites spirituality and practicality for society. Above and beyond the contingencies of the succeeding ages, this strange alliance remains a pathway for man to assume his destiny without turning his back to what is tragic in the world.

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# Freemasonry and the Enlightenment

*Margaret Jacob and Matthew Crow*

## Introduction

In 1717, four old London lodges consolidated and a remarkable social organization emerged. They formed the Grand Lodge of London, an umbrella organization to which other British, and eventually even foreign lodges would give their affiliation, and then as their numbers grew, seek to imitate. From this rather simple beginning grew an organization that by 1750 was steeped in controversy yet growing in popularity in both Europe and America (for a more detailed account see Jacob 1991; for Franklin and Freemasonry see the most recent account in Lemay 2006: vol. 2, chapter 3).

Who were these Masons, why did they form a ‘Grand Lodge’? Were there no Masons before 1717? Masons, carpenters, bakers, bell makers, barber-surgeons had all been protected and supervised by guilds for centuries in many European countries. Medieval and early modern guilds provided social life, benefits, wage protection, and quality control over skills and finished goods (Epstein 1991). The identity of members and hence their right to work in places far from home was protected by secret words and handshakes. A worker who knew them was truly a member of the guild. Of the many medieval artisan crafts, only the Masons’ guilds survived the transition into modern market conditions by becoming something other than a protective and disciplining club for workers, by becoming Freemasonry (see also Dachez 2002; Hamill 1986; Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1943, 1963, 1975; for a meditation on the role of Newtonianism at the origins, see Bauer 2003). The four London lodges must have gone through such a process. We meet them only in 1717 when the existence of the Grand Lodge became known. But the great English architect, Sir Christopher Wren, had been asked to head the London lodges as early as 1710, one of the few pieces of information we have about them before 1717.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Some of the earlier evidence for Wren comes from a letter of 1774 from the masonic historian De Vignoles, in Kloss MSS, 190.E.47, The Library of the Grand Lodge, The Hague, “Le Chev. Wren fameux architecte, intendant des Bâtimens du Roi, membre du Parlement, ayant été élu en 1710 pour la seconde fois G.M. des la Société”; cf. Ward (1921: 159–160) citing a

Besides conviviality and fellowship, the masonic lodges held other cultural attractions for merchants and gentlemen, and these may partly explain why lodges tended to associate with a new, enlightened culture. Master Masons were literate and known for their mathematical and architectural skills, particularly with fortifications, military and urban. The myth and lore associated with the lodges tied the geometrical skills of the masters with ancient learning supposedly inherited from the legendary Egyptian priest, Hermes Trismegistus (Linden, 2003). He was thought to have taught Moses and to have transmitted a mystical understanding of the heavens that included a dedication to mathematics. Educated non-masons may have been attracted to the lodges because of orally transmitted legends about their antiquity, and because in them the prosperous found useful men skilled in architecture and engineering. Mystical Hermeticism combined with utilitarianism to bond genteel brothers who became increasingly interested in the first, while shedding the second.

Of the many forms of new social behavior to become an integral part of enlightened culture during the eighteenth century, Freemasonry has been the most difficult to understand. Secretive, ritualistic, devoted in many Grand Lodges to hierarchy—that would be one set of characteristics. But the eighteenth-century lodges also consistently spoke about civic virtue and merit, about men meeting as equals, about the need for brothers to become philosophers, about their being ‘enlightened’. They said it in every European language: brothers must become in French *éclairé*, in Dutch *verlicht*, in German *aufgeklärt* (Jacob 1991). Such lofty ideals surfaced early in the transition from masonic guilds to the society of Freemasons. With ideals and myths went a set of ancient practices and beliefs born in the guilds, but capable of being given modern meaning. By late in the century the egalitarian logic had spread—particularly in France—where women flocked to the new lodges of adoption.

Now seen to be forward looking and enlightened, masonic practices such as elections, majority rule, orations by elected officials, national governance under a Grand Lodge, and constitutions—all predicated on an ideology of equality and merit—owed their origin to the growth of parliamentary power, to the self-confidence of British urban merchants and landed gentry, and not least, to a literature of republican idealism. The masonic ideology of rising by merit, which justified egalitarian fraternizing among literate men of property free to choose their governors, belonged first and foremost to the English

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manuscript note in the Bodleian from John Aubrey, “This day [18 May 1681] is a great convention at St. Paul’s Church of the fraternity of the free [free then crossed out and “accepted” put in its place] Masons, where Sir Christopher Wren is to be adopted a brother & Sir Henry Goodrie of ye Tower.”

republican tradition. This identity did not prevent the lodges from being hierarchical and everywhere eager for aristocratic patronage, but it did ultimately tilt the lodges in the direction of being schools for government, inculcating principles for a more republican politics. It was a social atmosphere within which the new ideas of the age, religious toleration, scientific literacy, and intellect rather than birth as the criterion of excellence, could flourish.

Therein lay the importance of the lodges in the age of democratic revolutions and also the source of the hostility they could arouse especially among royalists and conservatives, who opposed the revolutions and found easy scapegoats in enlightened associations. There was no conspiracy that made the French Revolution happen, but right-wing ideology of the nineteenth century proclaimed it and some people believed it. By the 1830s anyone who identified with liberal and reformist causes could find a home in one lodge or another. This was true particularly in Continental and Catholic Europe where the condemnation of the French Revolution remained a centerpiece of the right. Already by the middle of the nineteenth century, hostility toward the Jews combined with conspiracy theory to invent the myth of the Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. In the twentieth century that myth became a centerpiece of Fascist and Nazi ideology—with radically horrific consequences.

It is worth pausing to speculate on how masonic ideals might have rested in the mind of an eighteenth-century Briton, for that is what Benjamin Franklin was before he became an American revolutionary. As an artisan turned intellectual, as publisher intent upon creating new social and philanthropic institutions, Franklin lived his Enlightenment while becoming a symbol for the new fraternizing of the age.

### **Freemasonry and the Formation of a Philosophe: The Case of Benjamin Franklin**

Benjamin Franklin's Freemasonry warrants further consideration for what it can tell us about the role of Freemasonry in the Enlightenment and vice-versa. Indeed there are a host of major themes emerging out of Franklin's relationship to Freemasonry. Firstly, through Franklin alone, the indispensability of Freemasonry to the ideology of the American founding is made clear, and its lack of serious consideration in works that aim to synthesize the ideology of the revolutionary era is a hole in our understanding of the late eighteenth century. With regards to Franklin in particular, Freemasonry is generally depicted as sort of circumstantial to his moral, religious, and political thought. But the historical record tells a different tale, especially after he becomes a Freemason

in 1731. Franklin's number games and images of mathematical principles and ideals in natural philosophy, as well as his political activity abroad, all illustrate an important reliance on the ritualistic relationship to reason, political liberty, and public virtue that characterized Freemasonry.

Born 1706, Franklin began writing the *Silence Dogood* letters in 1722, which were published by *The New England Courant* of Boston, run by his brother. Caution must be taken in treating the letters as source on Franklin's thought, because they are the letters of a fictional character, much like the *Poor Richard's Almanack* published later in his life. They are significant, however, in that they represent his entrance into the world of writing and publishing; they reveal the workings of a literary genius at a very early age, and they begin to give some inkling of the rationalist, anti-theological stance that will remain consistent throughout his intellectual career. Take for example, the dream that the narrator has in one of his entries, where he depicts following crowds into temples in an open field, one of which is the Temple of Learning, the other the Temple of Theology. In the former, he finds everything in a terrible state of disarray, and in the latter he finds "nothing worth mentioning" (Franklin cited in Lemay, 1987: 10–14).

Franklin's first public entrance into philosophy is his *Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity*, published in 1725 in response to his reading of the deist tract, William Wollaston's *The Religion of Nature Delineated*. In his essay, Franklin argued against the existence of free will, stipulating that the universe is bound together in natural necessity. He echoes Leibniz: "there is nothing in the universe" but "what God does, or permits to be done", offering a kind of theodicy. After proving the existence of an all-perfect being who is infinitely good, Franklin goes on to state: "whatever an infinitely good God hath wise Ends in suffering to be, must be good, is thereby made good, and cannot be otherwise". What is most striking about Franklin is his unapologetic attack on the idea of human liberty. Take for example, propositions 6 and 7: "If a creature is made by God, it must depend upon God, and receive all its power from him; with which power the Creature can do nothing contrary to the Will of God, because God is almighty; what is not contrary to His Will, must be agreeable to it; what is agreeable to it, must be good, because He is Good; therefore a creature can do nothing but what is good". This was followed by: "If the Creature is thus limited in his Actions, being able to do only such Things as God would have him to do, and not being able to refuse doing what God would have done; then he can have no such Thing as Liberty, Free-Will, or Power to do or refrain from an action". He goes on in part 7: "Is it not necessary then, that our Actions should be over-ruled and governed by an all-wise Providence? How exact and regular is every Thing in the *natural* World! How wisely in every Part contrived!

We cannot here find the least Defect". Franklin goes on to echo Locke's *Essay* in arguing that the springboard of human action is an uneasiness or pain that produces the desire to resolve it. From here it is not difficult at all to make a radically utilitarian claim about morality: "How can any Action be meritorious of Praise or Dispraise, Reward or Punishment, when the natural principle of *Self-Love* is the only and irresistible Motive to it?" (Franklin, cited in Lemay 1987: 59–61, 63–64). It is no wonder that the publication of this text won Franklin, in his first trip to England, an audience with Bernard Mandeville. With his appearance on the British scene Franklin is to be found in the circle of philosophical innovators.

Historian Kerry S. Walters has described this text as a spiritual misstep, one of many in a life of metaphysical searching that never, so far as we know, came to a certain or stable conclusion (Walters 1999; Walters 2008). Within a matter of just a few years Franklin surrendered his commitment to absolute necessity and explored instead a philosophy of human liberty. Franklin's "Plan of Conduct", jotted down in 1726, already illustrates a changing mind, a mind searching for a discipline: "I have never fixed a regular design in life; by which means it has been a confused variety of scenes. I am now entering upon a new one: let me, therefore, make some resolutions, and form scheme of action, that, henceforth, I may live in all respects like a rational creature" (Franklin cited in Lemay 1987: 72). In 1728, Franklin wrote the first part of what was supposed to be a two part philosophical liturgy. Entitled *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*, subtitled "First Principles", this was truly a text of the Enlightenment. It begins, "I believe there is one Supreme Being, Author and Father of the Gods themselves" (Franklin cited in Lemay, 1987: 83). The use of the word 'Gods' here is rather interesting and historians disagree on what exactly it means.<sup>2</sup> Franklin, in the rest of the text, recognizes that he worships in response to an internal impulse that he cannot help but heed, considering it his duty to "pay Divine Regards to SOMETHING" (Franklin cited in Lemay 1987: 84). The emphasis on reason, virtue, and friendship all speak for themselves, but what does need to be noted specifically is Franklin's citation of John Ray's *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation* as something he might pause and read as part of the liturgy. Ray, and to a lesser extent Shaftesbury, according to Douglas Anderson, formed the foundation for nearly all of

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2 A.O. Aldridge argues that the use of the plural designates Franklin as flirting with polytheism, and suggests that this connects Franklin to the radical private circles of Newton and some of his disciples; see Aldridge (1967: 29). Walters disagrees, arguing instead that the plural here only references the religious valorization of nature that one would expect from any deistic thinker in the Enlightenment, see Walters (1999).

Franklin's intellectual activity prior to his career as a diplomat, but one could argue this remains true until his death (Anderson 1997: 124–129; see also Chaplin 2007). Ray's injunction to interrogate nature not only for signs of divine wisdom, but as an extension of divine wisdom itself, is certainly a dominant influence, as is made clear by the philosophical liturgy. In an unpublished essay of 1730, Franklin accommodated free agency into his insistence on working in a providential framework (Franklin cited in Lemay 1987: 163–168). From his wanderings in Enlightenment naturalism, he had begun etching out a philosophy with increasingly civic implications. He was also veering toward a moderate form of deism.

### Franklin and Freemasonry

One of the first instances of Freemasonry in the British Colonies, at least in any organized fashion, is 'St John's Lodge' of Philadelphia, which was founded in 1730. In December of 1730, apparently upon the deaths of a number of elder masonic figures, Franklin published articles in his own *Philadelphia Gazette* mocking the secrecy of all such societies and purporting to discover those secrets and bring them out in public: "Their grand secret", he wrote, "...is just no secret at all." (Franklin, cited in Lemay 2006: 85). The suggestion that he actually had any kind of authentic dispute with secret societies was disingenuous, for by January of 1731, Franklin was inducted into 'St John's Lodge' in Philadelphia. It seems more than likely that Franklin might have been trying to get himself into a masonic organization, for his founding of the Leather Apron Club and later the Junto upon his return to America from London illustrate that he was desirous of membership in elite fraternal organizations, and his ambitions fostered his civic-minded desire to pursue projects of both self and social improvement. It is tempting, given his presence in Philadelphia before 1731, his heterodox religious thought, and his participation in various unions and learned societies, to think that Franklin might have had at least some relationship to Freemasonry before 1731, perhaps acquired in his first trip to England from 1724 to 1726. It should be noted that Franklin's close friend in London during their mutual stay there, Isaac Greenwood, was John Desaguliers' assistant experimenter at the Royal Society. Desaguliers, of course, was a masonic leader during the 1720s and 1730s. Ultimately, we can only speculate on whether Franklin may have met Desaguliers himself, but he certainly knew of Freemasonry upon or shortly after his return to Philadelphia.

What is clear is that Franklin, once a mason, was an extraordinarily successful one. In 1731, he was elected the Junior Warden of 'St John's Lodge' and

helped to found the first subscription Library in America. There gentlemen were allowed to subscribe to the library for a fee, and had privileges to check out one book at a time, adding to their knowledge and character to be put to the good use of society. In 1732, Franklin helped write the by-laws of his lodge and in 1734, not only is he elected Grand Master of the Masons of Pennsylvania, serving a one year term, he also prints the *Constitutions of the Freemasons* by James Anderson, the first published masonic book in America, bearing the dedication of John Théophilus Desaguliers (Grand Lodge of Philadelphia 1906: 230; Van Doren 1938: 132–136; Brands 2000: 13; Lemay 2006: 89–90). At the same time he had become a mason, Franklin was appointed through his friend and fellow mason Andrew Hamilton to be the printer for the Pennsylvania Assembly, and in 1736, he was elected its clerk.

Despite early success, the fate of Freemasonry as an emerging force in Philadelphia (although by then it had spread elsewhere) took a small blow, as did the reputation of Benjamin Franklin, when a young man named Daniel Rees was killed by a mock masonic induction ceremony in the summer of 1737. Rees, curious about the fraternal organizations that demonstrated in the streets while at the same time remaining secretive and exclusive, happened across a band of three young men, Evan Jones, John Remington, and John Tackerbury, the first of whom was a lapsed mason himself. The gang tricked Rees into thinking he could become a Freemason, and they initiated him into an 'authentic' secret society, staging a mock induction ceremony where Rees was forced to take a Satanic Oath and, rumor had it, kiss the buttocks of one of the men. These same men who carried out the ceremony related the incident to Franklin at a tavern, and showed him the Satanic Oath, which amused Franklin and he went on to share it with his friends. On 13 June of that same year, the gang staged another mock ceremony for Rees, this time under the guise of giving the boy a promotion in rank. One of the leaders was dressed in leather and was wearing horns on his head to represent the presence of Satan, and the dark room wherein this ceremony was carried out was lit only by a bowl of flaming brandy. Whether it was an accident or on purpose (it was never discovered for certain), the bowl of burning liquid either fell or was poured onto the body of Daniel Rees, leading him to die of his injuries two days later. Franklin testified at the trial, where two of the boys were convicted of manslaughter and one was acquitted, but he had to defend himself in his own paper thereafter for quite some time, admitting he had smiled at the original story but never encouraged further tormenting of the boy (see Brands 2000: 150–154; Bullock 1996: 50–51; Lemay, 2006: 288–295).

Largely as a result of the Rees incident, the Freemasons of Philadelphia, who had once staged parades and spectacles in the streets of the city, were

forced to run much more of a private operation in the face of public distrust and anger. In one of the rare instances in which he actually writes of Freemasonry as such to anyone not also a Freemason, Franklin had to explain himself to his family, who upon hearing that he could be possibly caught up not only in such a terrible event, but tied to an organization that was hardly in line with the Calvinist upbringing he had received as a boy in Boston, inquired after the state of his soul. "I think opinions should be judged of by their Influences and Effects", he wrote to his mother, "and if a Man holds none that tend to make him less Virtuous or more vicious, it may be concluded that he holds none that are dangerous, which I hope is the case with me...As to the Freemasons, unless she will believe me when I assure her that they are in general a very harmless sort of People, and have no principles or Practices that are inconsistent with Religion or Good Manners, I know of no way of giving my Mother a better Opinion of them than she seems to have at present" (Franklin cited in Lemay, 1987: 426). Franklin went on to admit to his mother that she had every right to be upset that they did not admit women into their ranks.

One of the more convincing pieces of evidence we have that Franklin was operating under what might be called the indirect influence of Freemasonry or similar organizations prior to 1730 was his forming what he called the Junto in 1727, with Hugh Meredith, Stephen Potts, George Webb, Joseph Breintnall, Thomas Godfrey, Nicholas Scull, William Parsons, William Maugridge, Robert Grace, Philip Syng, Hugh Roberts, and William Coleman. "We met on Friday evenings", he would write in the *Autobiography*, and the rules he had drawn up "required that every Member in his turn should produce one or more Queries on any point of Morals, Politics or Natural Philosophy..." (Franklin cited in Lemay 1987: 1361). In 1732, Franklin wrote out a list of questions and topics for discussions that would be assigned to members and openly discussed at meetings, entitled *Rules for a Club Formerly Established in Philadelphia*. This elite brotherhood of learning had clear similarities to the basic spirit that Franklin saw in Freemasonry: free intellectual association among middling sorts and gentlemen, attaining personal betterment through enlightened conversation.

Other instances of key importance in Franklin's life, as well as in the history of the eighteenth century, bear the mark of masonic influence. Franklin's prior engagement with the founding of the Library Company led Franklin, on May 14, 1743, to publish in the *Philadelphia Gazette*, "A Proposal for Promoting Useful Knowledge Among the British Plantations of America". This call became the founding document of the American Philosophical Society that very same year, an institution that, according to Bernard Fay, was in its inception for all intensive purposes a masonic organization. Indeed, as Fay suggests, most of



what made Franklin the central figure of the American Philosophical Society, his experiments and findings in the scientific study of heat and electricity, were directly influenced by Desaguliers, who had conducted research on exactly the same problems and phenomena for which Franklin became known (Fay 1932: 258). In 1749, the same year he was appointed Provincial Grand Master by Thomas Oxnard of Boston, he completed his first successful experiment with the lightning rod and published *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth In Pennsylvania*, a publication that led directly to the founding of the Philadelphia Academy, which would become the University of Pennsylvania. While the documentation of Franklin's formal relation to Freemasonry fades after 1738, and even more so after 1750, when he takes the lower rank of Deputy Grand Master of the Province, we know he was still relatively active, visiting the Freemasons at Boston in 1752 and in Philadelphia until his departure for England in 1755 (Grand Lodge of Philadelphia 1906: 50 and 136–137; Lemay 2006: 92).

One of the more peculiar and fascinating instances of Franklin's intellectual life during this period is his correspondence with Peter Collinson in 1752. Franklin sent to Collinson what he called a Magical Square and a Magical Circle (Franklin cited in, Lemay 1987: 448–453). The geometrical figures were puzzles, essentially, filled with numbers whose sums moving in any direction were always the same. The purpose of such an exercise, according to Franklin, was to sharpen the reasoning, and was not meant to produce any “useful knowledge”. Simpler puzzles of a similar sort had been passed to Franklin by James Logan, who corresponded with Franklin about Logan's treatise *Duties of Man, Deduced From Nature*, which is now lost, but upon which Franklin remarks that the author is too critical of Hobbes. Franklin also counted on Logan, in his proposal for establishing the university, for the use of Logan's extensive classical library (Franklin cited in Lemay 1987: 424–425).<sup>3</sup> The Circle, in particular, in Douglas Anderson's interpretation, is a symbol for his social as well as his mathematical and philosophical system. Anderson writes:

For Franklin, the diagram might readily have embodied, in a curious and delightful way, the concept of a plural unity to which his civic and political experience in America necessarily led...Heeding exclusively the results of a single calculation is the natural limitation of human partiality. Within the circumference of the primitive circle, a single figure contributes to the formation of many required wholes. The aggregate

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<sup>3</sup> On the importance of Logan's library to Franklin's educational project, see the *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*, in Lemay (1987: 326–327).

calculation is mankind itself, the most inclusive expression of individual identity, containing all lesser expressions like the concentric and “excentric” interlocking rings of the “Magic Circle of Circles” with which Franklin half playfully inscribed his sense of order

ANDERSON 1997: 185.

The Circle appeared in the 1769 edition of Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*. As Anderson notes, the Circle suggests to us Franklin's familiarity with the long tradition of masonic and hermetic iconography, and bears striking resemblance to many of Giordano Bruno's magic circles as well as those of John Dee in the *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Anderson 1997: 251; Yates 1991: 306–310, 339).

Nicholas Hans has done the most comprehensive cataloging of his ties to British masonic or mason-like organizations later in Franklin's life (Hans 1954: 406–426). In 1774, he co-founded with David Williams the Society of 13, a deistic circle that included in its original membership Franklin, Williams, Major Dawson, Thomas Bentley (assistant to Joshua Wedgewood), James Stuart, John Whitehurst, Thomas Day, and Daniel Solander. According to Hans, the Society of 13, was echoing the masonic model of a secret society of learned men. All of the men in and/or associated with the group were radical Whigs and republicans, so they were not entirely wrong in thinking of themselves as persecuted. Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, Benjamin Vaughan, J.R. Forster, Edward Bancroft, Thomas Paine, and David Hartley were among the big names associated with the group. All of these men supported the American Revolution, and the group served, above all else ultimately, to get English and French radicals safely and secretly across the Atlantic. Jefferson, even though his temperament was not for secret societies and philosophical liturgies, nevertheless knew of the group, corresponded with its members, and as a deist and republican shared the general spirit of their views on religion and politics. Franklin, Price, and Priestley were associated with another British radical organization, the association of Constitutional Whigs, which traced its origins back to the principles of the Glorious Revolution of 1689 and the preceding years of oppositional political thought.

While in France in 1778, negotiating French assistance in the Revolutionary War, Franklin did not help himself in the eyes of the King by joining the masonic ‘Lodge of the Nine Sisters’ in Paris, an organization to which he had been introduced by Madame Helvetius, and through which he had access to just about every important philosopher or political actor in France (Hans 1953: 516–521). When Voltaire died, Franklin attended the memorial ceremony put on by the lodge on November 28, a ceremony from which d'Alembert

and Diderot wisely stayed away. The charter of this lodge was revoked in 1779, and it was only established once again when Franklin was elected its Master (*Venerable*) in 1782, using his political connections and his directorship of its public educational face to keep the lodge from being the focus of police or other government interference (Grand Lodge of Philadelphia 1906: 52–53, 155; Brands 2000: 563–565). Again, through this group, Franklin had ties to not only the *philosophes* but to literary figures such as duc de la Rochefoucauld, d'Emille and the emerging French Constitutionalists, Marat among them. Marat, it bears noting, had signed the visitor's book of the Amsterdam lodge, 'La Bien Aimée'.

When Franklin himself died on 17 April 1790, no masonic ritual accompanied his burial ceremony, which took place on 21 April in the Christ Church burial ground, Philadelphia. Even before and during Franklin's stay in Europe from 1757 to 1762, middle class 'Antient' masonry began to overtake the elite 'Modern' style that had been practiced by Franklin and his contemporaries early on, focusing, or refocusing, masonic ideas around the myth of its ancient heritage and minimizing what had been its close links to Enlightenment natural philosophy, deism and other forms of natural religion, as well as republicanism. According to Stephen Bullock, when Franklin returned from Paris in 1785, he could not have stepped foot in a masonic lodge if he had wanted to, and the masonic editor of the 1906 republication of Franklin's masonic work calls Franklin at the end of his life "an unaffiliated Mason" in his own land (Bullock 1996: 85; Grand Lodge of Philadelphia 1906: 160).

### Conclusion

The life of Benjamin Franklin, in so far as it intersected with the history of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century, illustrates that the period we have come to call the Enlightenment needs to be thought of less as a simply philosophical idea or movement than an experience, or series of experiences, both individual and collective, social and intellectual. For a limited sector of society, but across national boundaries, Freemasonry provided a space in which one could practice the speculative, experimental ethos of the era, and a number of leading members of the eighteenth century "republic of letters" took up this opportunity, and indeed, they did so to the point where divisions between self and society, or social and philosophical experience, lose the total distinctiveness of their meaning. Exploring natural and ethical philosophy required discussing them, and in a new culture of discussion, Freemasons cultivated the explorative, discursive ethos as a virtue in and of itself.

Across eighteenth century Europe, masonic lodges provided a remarkably secular intellectual environment, and their growing status as objects of debate, even fear, fed on the perceived threat to the philosophical foundations of human ethics that secularization entailed. While lodges multiplied in Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, and even France, in 1738 the Catholic Church condemned Freemasonry, banned membership for Catholics in lodges, and identified the common practice of holding elections within lodges as republican (Jacob 1985). Theologically, masonic tendencies to reference the 'Grand Architect of the Universe', were a threat to the concept of transubstantiation in the Eucharist as well as the imminence and omnipotence of God, employing Newtonian language of a rational universe governed by natural laws. These laws, whether they were created by an identifiable Deity or not, were increasingly understood in the eighteenth century as self-perpetuating, even self-evident, and the deistic, rationalist representations of God that we find in masonic constitutions, handbooks, and diaries were self-consciously generic enough to allow significant leeway (Jacob 2006). James Anderson's *Constitutions of the Freemasons*, originally printed in London in 1723, later printed in Philadelphia by Franklin in 1734, deemed it appropriate that lodges oblige their members only "to that religion in which all men agree" (Anderson 1723, see <http://www.2be1ask1.com/library/anderson.html#dieu>). With this use of the language of natural religion, Freemasonry was undoubtedly in conversation with not only the Newtonian aspects of Enlightenment philosophy, but with the consequent religious and civic offshoots manifest in the spread of Deism and proto-republican assumptions of conversational ethics.<sup>4</sup> While the previous two centuries had been fraught with violent civil wars often centered on religious and denominational conflict, within masonic lodges members sought a space where moral and scientific inquiry could sidestep potentially divisive allegiances.

The Irish deist John Toland encountered and kept records of a society residing at the Hague whose members included émigrés from across Europe, including Huguenot booksellers, journalists, and scientists. Jean Rousset de Missy, later a leader in the spread of Freemasonry in the Netherlands, was a member of the group, as was Prosper Marchand, a French Protestant writer and correspondent of Rousset and Toland on matters concerning travel to lodges across Europe. This lodge at the Hague possessed all the characteristics and language of masonic organizations: secrecy, brotherhood, a written constitution, and a Grand Master. At close proximity to the most republican

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4 Pauline Chakmakjian points to the potentially performative aspects of the rhetoric of natural religion employed by Anderson (Chakmakjian 2008).

government in Europe, and with clear ties to a host of other fraternal or deistic clubs, the group at the Hague offers a prime example of the interconnectedness of Freemasonry with other trends in Enlightenment culture. Toland himself was a leading intellectual and political member of Deist, republican clubs in Britain that surfaced in the late seventeenth century, and in that he was joined by Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, whose *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, published in 1711, proved to be a foundational text of ideas about cultivating moral sensibility through an associative life of reading, criticism, and polite conversation in eighteenth century thought (Jacob 1991; Pocock 1985: 215–310; Herrick 1997; Klein 1994).

For its both real and perceived connections to republicanism, Freemasonry earned at least as much enmity as respect, particularly from governments on the continent. By the end of the eighteenth century, masonic lodges were to be found moving beyond Germany, the Netherlands, and Brussels to as far as Moscow, to say nothing of the dramatic expansion throughout the Americas. In the eyes of many rulers and their advisors, the spread of Freemasonry and similar societies devoted to freethinking and alternative forms of civic association on the one hand and the dramatic social and political upheavals that took place over the course of the eighteenth century on the other hand were hardly a coincidence. This was particularly true in the aftermath of the French Revolution. But as early as the 1740s, the French Minister of State, Cardinal Fleury, arranged to have lodges spied on. Over the course of the eighteenth century, masonic lodges in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna had to tread a careful line between tending to undermine traditional clerical authority in matters of religion and remaining safe in the eyes of political rulers. Across the continent this was generally done by accommodating the lodges to the moderate, enlightened reform efforts of centralized bureaucratic states. Indeed, Freemasonry itself became more centrally organized over the course of the century, and this gave central, more elite lodges greater control over lodge activity. Greater organization in capitol cities on the part of lodges also provided greater opportunity for connections between lodges and governments, as well as allowing for the exchange of operational and governing methods. In the 1780s, the Grand Lodge in Vienna worked with the government to suppress lodge activity in the then Austro-Hungarian colony of Belgium, and did so directly under the influence of Joseph II. In Berlin, Frederick the Great successfully wielded influence within masonic lodges, and in Sweden, nearly the entire body of royal courtiers joined lodges. Furthermore, as Jessica Harland-Jacobs has shown, as Britain became the predominant overseas power in Europe, Freemasons played a crucial role in the colonial project: providing social networks of recruiting brothers at home and instituting control as

colonial officials in service throughout the Empire (Jacob 2006; Harland-Jacobs 2007).<sup>5</sup>

Freemasonry also both borrowed from and provided models for republican governmental structures, in addition to the practice of writing and organizing under the rubrics of written constitutions. In 1756, the organization of the lodges in the Netherlands under the centralized Grand Lodge of the Netherlands mimicked the form of the Estates General of the Dutch Republic itself. Likewise in 1774, the Grand Lodge in Paris gathered members in the form of a general assembly consisting of brothers from across France, each with one vote. And while the public face of the Grand Lodge was in line with the State and the Church, the practice of gathering in such a constituent assembly was unprecedented in Paris, and unparalleled in the previous century and a half until the convening of the French Estates General in 1789. Freemasons in New York and Philadelphia paraded in public festivals along with other organizations in the celebrations of the early anniversaries of the signing of the American Declaration of Independence, the ratification of the Federal Constitution, the election of George Washington to the Presidency of the United States, and the 1793 laying of the cornerstone of the US Capitol by the new President, in full masonic regalia.

In conclusion, Freemasonry played a significant and complex role in the development and transmission of intellectual currents in Enlightenment thought as well as in the revolutionary creation of democratic republics on both sides of the Atlantic. Neither a full-scale secret society operating as the veiled hand of the Absolutist state or the nefarious conspiracy depicted by public fears of the Bavarian Illuminati, nor a uniform force for democratic ends, Freemasonry served primarily as an early incubator of larger trends in an age of rapid, sometimes traumatic intellectual, political, and social change. Masonic lodges provided space for the discursive and experimental ethos that characterized the ongoing project of Enlightenment. In France, and other European locales before the middle of the eighteenth century, women were welcomed as members of lodges, sometimes in the same lodges as men.<sup>6</sup> As we saw in the case of Benjamin Franklin, Freemasonry in England and America provided space for free conversation and exploration of the ideas emanating from the Scientific Revolution in Europe, as well as a space for social, cultural, and economic connection and association. Wherever Masonic lodges appeared, their practice of governing themselves by internal elections and written constitutions provided a kind of schoolroom for the emergence of

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5 See the chapter by Jessica Harland-Jacobs, "Freemasonry and Colonialism", in this volume.

6 See the chapter by J.A.M. Snoek, "Freemasonry and Women", in this volume.

republican politics. At the same time, however, a disjuncture always existed between the sometime secretive, hierarchical and on several levels restrictive character of the Masonic lodge and the explosive birth of democratic political culture. Undoubtedly, this disjuncture continues today. The origin of this uncertain but nevertheless real line of fissure lies in the ideological tensions at the heart of attempts of radical Enlightenment thinkers to place the foundations of human knowledge and society on natural reason, attempts that could be both liberating and limited, even restricting, in the scope of their capacity and applicability. Thus Freemasonry in many ways crystallized Enlightenment, and that in such an intensive way that for the purposes of scholarly investigation into Freemasonry, the two terms can hardly be separated. If that is true, then it might also be said that the future survival of what became of Freemasonry depends on its members exploring the historical conjoining of these two terms, and on the recovery of the spirit of experimental endeavor in the associational life of human beings that gave rise to Freemasonry in the era of Enlightenment.

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# Masonic Historiography<sup>1</sup>

*Charles Porset*

## Introduction

In France at least, people have clung on to the dream of *masonology* (Hamill 1986; Porset 1987; Prescott 2003; Bullock 1996a; Jacob 2000; Burke 2000; Beachy 2000; Bullock 2000; Porset 2007; Porset 1998; Bernheim 1999; Dachez 2000; Beaurepaire [2001]; Beaurepaire 2003). In the spirit of Alec Mellor, who coined the word in the 1960s, what they wanted to do was to give academic status to the history of Freemasonry.<sup>2</sup> The idea, quite a good one in itself, did not catch on, and the attempt by Jacques Brengues at Rennes also failed. This was of course predictable: as a *social entity* Masonry did not enjoy any special privilege that set it apart and it can be studied in the same way as other social entities of a similar kind such as clubs, societies or political parties. Morphologically it hardly differs at all from the Tolandian fraternities or any of the mutiplicity of gossiping or drinking clubs of which Arthur Dinaux and Jean-Luc Quoy-Bodin have drawn up the definitive list (Dinaux 1867; Quoy-Bodin 2009). However, Freemasonry is not to be confused with these associations and right from the start it is clearly different; firstly as a result of the obscurity surrounding its origins, then by the secrecy which it wraps around itself and finally by the part it claims to play, or which it is believed to play, in the affairs of men. Its exponential development over the course of the eighteenth century bears witness to this. It presents itself then as a *complete social entity*, the driving force and mirror of a society in full flood of transformation. The fact that it was condemned by the secular powers of Europe confirms this (Ferrer Benimeli 1982 [1972]). Transcending its English origins, it quickly became an international phenomenon, first French and then rapidly European and crossing the oceans, world-wide.

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- 1 Editors' note. Since Charles Porset sadly passed away in May 2011 before reviewing the final version of this chapter, it has been necessary to silently correct a few obvious errors and mistakes.
  - 2 "a new branch of history ... which bring about at last the application of modern scientific historical methods to Masonic history" (Mellor 1979a: 16).

Intimately linked to the society of its time it would be impossible to separate Freemasonry from the surrounding society without turning Masonry into something manufactured. And here we touch on the limits of all possible masonology. By studying it as a phenomenon *sui generis*, autonomous, historians run the risk of not understanding it and leading one to believe that it falls outside the bounds of the normal rules of society. This is the mistake of the majority of local or regional monographs which recount the history of a lodge or a group of lodges. Provincial erudition has its merits, but they rarely exceed those of a telephone directory or a tourist guide. One can increase the number of items but that has very little overall effect. A catalogue remains what it is: a catalogue, regardless of how thick it is. Generally the history of a lodge gives us a picture of a state of affairs but has nothing, or very little to say about Masonry or Masons. It leaves us in history's waiting room.

### The French Revolution

Such could have been masonic history—it can be summed up as mere *data* for many—if for pressing reasons and which have been the object of many a study, but which remain controversial, it hadn't become *involved* in history at the time of the French Revolution, or previously the American Revolution. Without fear of being contradicted I think I can affirm that masonic historiography was built, after 1789, on this defining event. From near and far, the question has been put, and continues to be asked in a thousand and one ways, what are the links that Freemasonry has with the French Revolution. A recurring question since Lefranc, Robison and Barruel (Lefranc 1792; Robison 1797; Barruel 1797–1798). A question still being asked from Cochin to Furet (Cochin and Charpentier 1904; Cochin and Charpentier 1921; Cochin and Charpentier 1924; Furet 1978) by way of Gustave Bord, Gaston Martin and Bernard Faÿ (Bord 1908; Martin 1926; Faÿ 1935). A contemporary question ever since the establishment of the French Republic. If we discount the purely polemical writings, the ones written in bad faith and plagiarising each other, we still have to recognise that globally Masonry is not without links to what was being prepared in 1789 and took the course we know it did in the years which followed. So now we must examine the extent to which Masonry was linked to what was to become a Revolution which, like it or not, was to define the shape of our modern life.

The pattern of thinking which has predominated for a long time is that of a 'conspiracy'. It dates at least from as early as Lefranc and we know that Barruel expressed it in canonical terms in his famous *Mémoires*. Shortly afterwards this

thinking was countered by the opposition of Mounier (Mounier 1801)<sup>3</sup> who exonerated Freemasonry from all involvement in the preparation and then the bringing to fruition of the French Revolution. These patterns of thought were abandoned by the historical community. Augustin Cochin (Porset 1990; Schrader 1992), counter-revolutionary and confirmed anti-mason, but isolated in his own time, took up again at the start of the twentieth century the problems raised by Barruel, but in a completely different light. As far as he was concerned it was no longer a matter of thinking of the French Revolution in terms of causality but in terms of ideology. He acknowledged Durkheim. His approach was sociological and set out to unveil the mysterious mechanism which led the group to adhere to a consensual unanimous opinion, admitting of no dissidence even when the parties were not in complete agreement. According to Cochin, the matrix for this democracy of the word is the masonic lodge which he defines as a machine for producing a consensus. It is the model for Jacobinism.

This theory which in its own time had passed completely un-noticed had been forgotten until François Furet (De Calan 2004) resurrected it. Without going over the polemical intentions of its 'inventor' once more, nor casting doubt on his intellectual honesty, let us say that it allowed one to think in a new light of the masonic lodge as a laboratory of democratic sociability, that is to say as a means of producing a consensus. Taken up and refined by Ran Halévi (Halévi 1984; Halévi 1985)<sup>4</sup> within the framework of the urbane

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3 The theme is taken up again by Portalis (2007 [1820]), with a preface by Joël-Benoit d'Onorio who clearly states his liberal position. Portalis was a member of the *Nine Sisters* Lodge both before and after the Revolution.

4 "... revolutionary historiography is, as it were, split between two approaches which rarely have anything in common: on the one hand a whole host of monographs which, with an unequal amount of success recreate the infinitely fragmented reality of a Jacobinism whose ideological dimension they tend to ignore; on the other a canonical historiography—legitimist or Jacobin—which systematically reduces the history of revolutionary societies to the understanding of Montagnard dictatorship. The originality of Augustin Cochin ... was to place himself at the point where the two came into contact ... He has been, since Michelet, the only historian to pay attention not only to Jacobin ideology but also to social conditions and mechanisms which allow the creation of unanimity of a maximalist narrative. Jacobin ideology is the will of the people which is supposed to have come out of meetings of the mother society: nothing can be justified, explained except in respect of this unique reference, open to all interpretations and all abuses. It only allows, by definition, votes without a minority, debates without discussion, undivided opinion, quickly passed on to country as a whole. Hence the system of periodical purification whose object is to maintain the unanimity of the club and thus the unanimity of the people. It is both a political issue and an

network of the lodges, it was hoped that this sociology of Masonry would shed some light on its true nature and furthermore on the essential nature of democracy, but it has to be recognised that this line of enquiry remained unfruitful and lies fallow, the author having redirected his research towards the orators of the Revolution. Which brings us back to Aulard (Aulard 1885–1886; Furet and Halévy 1989), but drives us further away from Cochin and the Freemasons.

However, such an approach, subscribing to the perspective of ‘new’ history for which the school of *Annals* provided the model (Burguière 2006), had the advantage of contextualising Masonry by trying to articulate the social and the political of which the lodge was the concrete manifestation. One stepped out of the political whole and the social whole to seize *in vivo* the peculiar moment when an ideology is formed and mechanically imposes its rule (‘Jacobinism’, ‘democracy’). Cochin saw in this the invisible hand of the Grand Orient of France, but for historians that hand remains invisible.

Nevertheless, it seems incontrovertible that the Masons did not remain indifferent to the Revolution. Their position in the society of the *ancien régime* placed them in front row seats, if we may say so, for the important reason which has nothing to do with the ideology nor the symbolism which surrounds it, but with the fact that they made up the only organised body in the France of the *ancien régime* whose existence did not depend on the Throne or the Altar. The creation of the Grand Orient in France in 1773 seems to be an essential fact in this conjuncture. Pierre Chevallier, who was not an historian of the *Annales*, but one who subscribed to the tradition of Langlois and Seignobos (Langlois and Seignobos 1909 [1897]), rather positivistic and teleological—let us say republican (Cochin aiming at Aulard said “in defence of the republic” [Cochin 1909])—remarks in that context:

The constituent masonry which was the Grande Loge Nationale (which gave birth to the Grand Orient) ceased to hold its meetings on 1st September 1773. Without wishing to institute a comparison which would be extreme with the States General of 1789 one cannot, on the other hand fail to notice the analogies which explain a shared state of mind. In both instances it comes down to removing barriers and privileges. Within the

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instrument of power ... Jacobinism just like pre-revolutionary Masonry reveals, in every crisis, the extraordinary difficulty of conceiving of day to day practicalities other than in terms of unanimity opposed to chaos and the egoism of personal vested interests, of unshakeable legitimacy opposed to all dissidence necessarily judged to be illegal, suspect and therefore reprehensible”, Gueniffey and Halévi (1990: 226–227).

Masonic Order it is the Parisian Masters who are the privileged ones, the aristocrats, and what the Duke of Luxemburg invites them to do is to accept the principles of democracy and election of the officers of the lodge just as on August 4th 1789 all aristocratic privileges were abolished in revolutionary France.

CHEVALLIER 1974–1975, Vol. I: 166

The analogy highlighted by Pierre Chevallier between the Grand Orient and the Assembly can be explained according to him by a “shared state of mind;” but nothing is said about this “state of mind”, nor its origins. He puts forward the notion that Freemasonry and revolution are answering in the same way the questions of the moment. Historians have written a great deal on the cultural and intellectual origins of the French Revolution. The works of Daniel Mornet (Mornet 1933), William Doyle (Doyle 1988) and Roger Chartier (Chartier 1990; Hazareesingh 2007) bear witness to this; but this wide-ranging causality which in the end leads us back to the spirit of the age, mixes different phenomena and does not allow us to seize the moment when something new is about to happen. Cochin understood this very well. After having described the workings of what he called Jacobinism he postulated the existence of a ‘machine’ which, whatever the ‘invisible hand’ theorists thought, was being operated by a machinist. For him it was obvious: the ones pulling the levers were the Masons.

One had to conclude to this conspiracy—or to put it differently, the idea of a conscious intervention by organised groups seeking to control the course of history—in some indirect, erudite, way. Barruel never wrote that Masons in general had been part of a plot. Indeed he considered himself a mason. In his *Mémoires*, he has in view particularly Masons of the higher degrees whose anti-monarchist plans had been strongly developed by the Illuminati of Bavaria. Recent work by Hermann Schüttler, his publication of Bode’s (Bode 1994: 11–152) *Journal* and the creation of a secret lodge rooted in the *Amis Réunis* by Savalette de Langes (see Porset 1996: 227–236, Schüttler 1990; Schüttler 1992), led one to think that there was a fringe of Masonry that clearly intended to take part in a Revolution. And immediately it was convenient to look again at the conspiracy theory in a new light.

### Early Scholarly Approaches

The work done by Giuseppe Giarrizzo (Giarrizzo 1994) and Gian Mario Cazzaniga (Cazzaniga 1999)—translator and commentator on Mirabeau—published in recent years, had the merit of clearing up this problem (the transition from a society with secrets to a secret society) and giving it its proper place in the long

view of the European context. Being cosmopolitan, Freemasonry lies outside the boundaries of nationality. It presents itself as a secular religion lodged in the cracks of the Roman Catholic Church after the Council of Trent (*Concilium Tridentinum*, 1545–1563). This religion of the modern age, of which, as Gian Mario Cazzaniga puts it, the lodges are the crucible, clears the path for the political parties which we come to know in the following century after having passed through the *Philalèthes* (an inner circle in *Les Amis Réunis*), the Carbonari and other loosely defined groups. Hence the renewed attention that any researcher must bring to masonic utopias, to the legends with which Masonry surrounds itself and the zeal with which the brethren seek to bring to the construction of a universal masonic Republic which cannot be summed up as noble speeches but translates itself into writings and a variety of creative ideas.<sup>5</sup>

Recent work by Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire (Beaurepaire 1998)<sup>6</sup> has concentrated on this aspect. Rather than taking classical masonology as his model he has used the innovative work of Maurice Agulhon (Agulhon 1977; Agulhon 1984), Daniel Roche (Roche 1973; Roche 1988) and Gérard Gayot (Gayot 1965; Gayot 1980) who, going beyond numbers and pictures—all necessary but never sufficient on their own—seek to understand the dynamics of an association which is not limited to building a consensus by the hiring or not of those manipulators that Bryce (Bryce and Mayra 1924) and Ostrogorski (Ostrogorski 1912 [1903])<sup>7</sup> (relayed by Cochin) unearth at the bottom of all democracies but invent new relationships between men where the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity become a regulatory principle. That a mason from Naples should be different from a mason from Saint Petersburg, Vienna, Bristol, Philadelphia or Lyon, therein lies the evidence. It is still true that the Masonry they practice—apart from a few variations in ritual, which are worth studying, and whatever the form of government holding sway where they meet (and perhaps because of those differences)—leads them to correspond, to exchange and develop a general commerce for which Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723 define the code.

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5 Some outstanding works on Masonry's contribution to culture have appeared over the last few years: Basso (1994); Tocchini (1998); Vidler (1987); and Cazzaniga, Tocchini and Turchi (2002). The late lamented Roger Cotte's two-volume doctoral thesis, *Les musiciens franc-maçons à la Cour de Versailles et à Paris sous l'Ancien Régime* (Sorbonne, 1982) should also be included [BnF, Richelieu, Musique, Vma. 5564]. It is *never* quoted but there are some who are aware of it.

6 See among other works by the same author, Beaurepaire (1999), who provides a very good summary of this problem. It would also be of benefit to consult his evocative essay, Beaurepaire (2002).

7 We refer to his numerous and evocative works which are like an ongoing commentary on it. On this 'conceptual history', see Verdo (2002: 693–720).

If Freemasonry is first and foremost the concern of Masons, the role of the historian is to explain and understand what at any given moment in time leads him to knock at the door of the temple, to become a member, to practice philanthropy and philadelphia. For a long time the history of Masonry has been studied without being too concerned about the Masons themselves. First and foremost history is about the people who make it. The institution of Masonry is not very different from any other institution; this cannot be repeated often enough. Except to say that whereas the majority of human institutions can be analysed in terms of what they do, Freemasonry defines itself by its lack of purpose; it is of no practical use and is happy just to serve those who serve it. It meets in order to meet. It is intransitive. It is an empty shell.

The temptation, therefore, to provide a goal, a purpose is very great. The cloak with which it surrounds itself has played a large part in this as well as the legendary history which it has ascribed to itself. An immense wealth of literature has been written about its Templar or operative origins. Much, too, has been written (and still will be) about the builders of the cathedrals. And yet these are but false trails to which the now quite old work of Ward (Ward 1977) should have put an end. But partisan blindness and in the end a willingness to believe prevail and often lead even the greatest minds to cling to a mythology from which only the merchants in the temple courts profit. However, this nonsense leads away from history. With Margaret C. Jacob, things are entirely different; we come back to the higher ground and retake the field. Her books lean towards the scientific revolution and the origins of the modern age; most of them have been translated into several languages and are on the list of recommended reading for our students. Nevertheless on close inspection they still require caution; and furthermore they are far from unanimously accepted within the scholarly community (see, for example, Ann Thomson, in Kors 2003: Vol. III, 238–239 and 241). The chapter we are concerned with deals with the ideological origins of Masonry which some people have claimed to lie in the radical pantheism of John Toland (Porset 1995). This is an old saw which has divided and still divides the supporters of liberal historiography and those of progressive historiography. Libertarian dross. The contentious issue is that of knowing what 'real' sources of modernity are?

### **The Masonry of the Masons**

This detour demonstrates the sterility of genealogical debates: they lead only to dead ends or declarations of faith: whether Masonry has anything to do with the circles, coteries and all those micro-societies which preceded it depends on the evidence; but it seems a waste of time to attribute it to them for the



simple reason that Masonry is an *invention* (Dachez 2008) to which can be applied Ovid's words, used by Montesquieu as an epigraph to his *Esprit des lois: Prolem sine matre creatam* ("a lineage created without a mother"). This originality remains to be studied. It is not to be found in its 'initiatory' aspect, a recently invented word whose esoteric content has taken the place of that of reception which we find in Anderson's tradition. The *prisca theologia* and Hermeticism both predate Freemasonry by a long time, and will certainly outlive it. What appears to be beyond doubt is that the 'Scottish' Masons represent a mere handful in the eighteenth century and that Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin had understood fully that it was not a matter of dealing with seekers after an absolute truth—besides he distanced himself from this idea fairly quickly. However, even if the Martinist stamp remained unfruitful (the Rectified Scottish Rite being the only tangible result), its potential alone gives us an idea of the suppleness of the structure of Masonry which, depending on time and place, can become the receptacle for the most diametrically opposed stances.<sup>8</sup> How does one align the egalitarian utopia of the Illuminati of Bavaria, to which Nicolas de Bonneville gives a militant expression in the France of the Revolution, and the mystical search of those men in Avignon around Dom Pernety. How can we reconcile the primitivism of Court de Gébelin, who died in the arms of Mesmer, and the atheism of men like Lalande or Maréchal? And yet Masonry reconciles Fréron and Voltaire, De Maistre and Lalande, Du Laurens and Gresset, water and fire—*sub specie aeternitatis*. And the list is not complete. This 'great mystery' which is Freemasonry has to be studied *in situ*, on the ground, that is to say wherever it takes shape and comes to life: in the salons and not just the literary elite, in the academies, learned societies or popular ones, garrisons and even in the market place. I have mentioned everything that the work of Giarrizzo, Cazzaniga<sup>9</sup> and Beaurepaire covered: to their names we must add that of Eric Saunier (Saunier 1998), and, much earlier, the work of Cécile Révauger (Révauger 1987 [1990, abridged edition])<sup>10</sup> who, regardless of any received ideas, demonstrated that politics is at the heart of masonic sociability, that the 'regularity' on which the United Grand Lodge in London prides

8 But in general these are only conjecture. It can be seen in the coming together of Muslim mysticism and Masonry during the Ottoman period. See Zarcone (1993).

9 Whose edited volume, *Storia d'Italia, La massoneria* (Annali, 21), Torino, Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2006, pulls together some thirty contributions.

10 Reference should also be made to the impressive edition Number 7 of *Lumières*, published by the University of Bordeaux III, dealing with *Franc-maçonnerie et politique au siècle des Lumières: Europe-Amériques*, first term 2006 (Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux). This collection of articles was put together by Cécile Révauger.

itself, far from being a matter of doctrine, is essentially one of power. Her recent work on Prince Hall is a fine example in this respect and furthermore proves that territory until then off limits to researchers is now open to public scrutiny. Black Freemasons have become acceptable company. The ‘landmarks’ which no-one believed were set in stone for eternity, are moving; under the historian’s spotlight they are becoming less well defined. These changes can be seen in the dealings which traditional Masonry has reserved for women whose entry into the Order is not as recent as some people think, but which a sexist historiography has for a long time neglected. The work, now quite old, of Le Forestier (Le Forestier 1979b) and recent studies by Francesca Vigni (Vigni 2006: 771–794), Janet Burke (Burke 1989: 283–294; Burke and Jacob 1996: 513–549), Margaret Jacob (in Jacob 1991),<sup>11</sup> Françoise Jupeau-Réquillard (Jupeau-Réquillard 1998; Jupeau-Réquillard 2000), Maria-José Lacalzada de Mateo (Lacalzada de Mateo 2007),<sup>12</sup> and, finally, Jean-Pierre Bacot (Bacot 2009), invite us to revisit the topic of women in Masonry in a wider context with less emphasis on the opposition of the sexes and more on the conditions.<sup>13</sup>

But there is more to it than the history of masonic networks. An increasing number of works show that Freemasonry may have taken the same route as commercial exchanges, that it may have been connected to official or secret diplomacy or the cultural network of European intelligentsia.<sup>14</sup> The publication of letters, memoirs, autobiographies, in short all the ego-documents hitherto ignored should shed an entirely new light on Masonry as it was lived, and the meaning

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11 See also the impressive series edited by Margaret Jacob, *Freemasonry. Early Sources on Microfiche 1717–1870*, From the Grand Loge Library in the Hague, Leiden-Riverdale N.Y; IDC Publishers, 1985 [651 items on 2345 microfiches],

12 He also wrote a remarkable intellectual biography of Concepción Arenal (a Spanish Maria Deraismes) *Mentalidad y proyección social de Concepción Arenal* (1994). That work was introduced by José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli.

13 See also the chapter by Jan Snoek, “Freemasonry and Women”, in this volume.

14 See Weisberger 1980; unfortunately the collective work edited by Weisberger, McLeod, and Morris 2002, juxtaposes old studies in the form of reprints and original articles and it is difficult to get a clear idea of the work as a whole. It also raises the question of Mexican Masonry which appears like a fly in the ointment with regard to the stated subject of the work. See the harsh, but fair judgement given by Andrew Prescott in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol., 83, No. 4 (Oct., 2005), p. 758–760: “The aim of the volume is unclear”, he notes—which says it all. Whist awaiting an overview which will shed light on the Masonry of both worlds, one can always refer to Bullock 1996b, and Harland-Jacobs 2007, who put forward a global view of the phenomenon. One must also include the collection published by Martin 2000, and the impressive collection published by Jean Breuillard in *Slavica occitania* (No. 24, 2007) on *La franc-maçonnerie et la culture russe*.

which should be attributed to the commitment involved. What is it that drives the uninitiated to become a mason? *Curiositas*? Shared values (if so which ones?), class conformity? shared interests? social contacts? Only a confessor would know. But every time it seems possible, the historian will make the balance between the sincerity of the testimony and its instrumental function. To write is one thing; to write about oneself is an entirely different matter. To whom is Rousseau referring in his *Confessions*? To *Jean-Jacques*? Who knows. Whatever the case may be, the memoirs of Cambacérés, recently discovered,<sup>15</sup> tell us more about Masonry in the time of the Empire than Thory in his *Acta*, even if we still do not know exactly who Cambacérés was. From then on the history of Freemasonry ceases to be a chronology and becomes heuristics.

Historiographical assessments do not have a dogmatic vocation. As the American historian Steven C. Bullock says: "Divergent understandings of Masonry may be inevitable";<sup>16</sup> but that does not give *carte blanche* to anyone to write whatever they want to. When De Witt Clinton, governor of New York and student of masonic history, dismisses out of hand, in 1825, all the absurdities which had been written about its origins but at the same time affirms that it is "the most ancient society in the world" ("The Address of De Witt Clinton" [to the Grand Lodge of New York, 29 Sept. 1825]), he visibly changes tack, no longer talking about history but talking to the brethren: he no longer speaks as a historian but as a believer.

### The Anglo-Saxon Approach

Any assessment has to take into account the state conditions on the ground. So how does 'masonology' look in 2011? If we set aside all the books about para-masonry which load the shelves of 'specialist' bookshops and only offer the reader chicken feed disguised as history, if I insist on history by historians

15 By Laurence Chatel de Brancion: Cambacérés, *Mémoires inédits*. Clarifications published by Cambacérés on the main events in his political life. 1. *La Révolution et le Consulat*. Preface by Jean Tulard. Presentation and notes by Laurence Chatel de Brancion; 2. *L'Empire*. Presentation and notes by Laurence Chatel de Brancion, Paris, Perrin, 1999. See also: Mollier 2001.

16 "Divergent understandings of Masonry may be inevitable. Brothers adapted the fraternity to an extraordinary range of cultural and geographical settings. Stevenson [1988; 1990] points out that eighteenth-century Scottish lodges included operative Masons more often than their English counterparts; Jacob [1991] notes the intense battles over legitimacy and authority within the French fraternity. And, as Curl [1993] suggests indirectly, Masonry's elements of mystery helped lead the Enlightenment into Romanticism. A broad and nuanced view of European Masonry as a whole (let alone its experiences in other areas) may not be possible in the foreseeable future" (Bullock 1996a, 90). Which seems to me to be the case.

who know how to read and write and are not just happy to scratch the surface, it has to be recognised that for the last thirty years the most innovative masonic history is that which has been able to benefit from the new history which the galaxy of the *Annales* has been able to promote by taking advantage of the Anglo-Saxon approach and which, in our time has been afforded academic professorships. The ghetto to which it was confined just a short while ago, but where it was often quite contented, is no longer in fashion. 'Masonology' is no more. It has a place in the public domain. Masonic Obediences have done much to bring this about by opening their archives and their libraries to researchers. In France, England, The Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Spain where the richest stores are to be found. Even the Vatican has opened its doors. The secret is out.

The task is no longer to reveal it, but to re-evaluate the modern era, not using Freemasonry as the point of departure, but by putting Masonry back in its rightful place. No doubt Masonry played a part in the Protestantism which split apart the Roman Catholic world; that its birthplace was England is not merely by chance; that it should then spread throughout Europe using existing widespread commercial links is written into the logic of the *Imperium britannicum*. What is less obvious, and requires explanation, is that this club which was so very little different from any other which existed at the time in the early days,<sup>17</sup> should have survived under so many different regimes, should have walked alongside the French and American Revolutions (the Founding Fathers, but the great Commander Pike, titular head of the American Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, said quite openly that he couldn't stand the negroes and he would leave Freemasonry if ever one was admitted ...), that it should have become a power in England and the entire Commonwealth, should have inspired the revolutionaries of 1848 across the whole of Europe, the Pronunciamientos of South America, the Italian Risorgimento, the Paris Commune, the French radical Republic, but at the same time the counter-revolution, Barruel, de Maistre, later on the government in Versailles, and that it should have sworn allegiance to the Führer in Munich, Germany and dismantled itself in France under Pétain.

One could go on. It gives us an idea of the many different faces of Masonry, which makes the work of the historian so difficult. If the French Revolution still divides them—for it remains a 'hot topic',<sup>18</sup> if the Great Architect of the Universe is still the bone of contention setting 'regular' Masonry against the rest, it has to be said that historical research over the last thirty years has

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17 To put things into perspective we refer to the excellent work by Capdeville 2008 Bacot's essay 2009b.

18 As can be seen in *Le livre noir de la Révolution française*, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2008, an impressive work published under the direction of Fr. Bruno Escande, *o.p.* a fairly reactionary dominican.

risen above it and is no longer bogged down by the arguments between different obediences. Spinoza made this saying his own: “*Humanes actiones, non ridere, nec lugere, sed intelligere*” (We have to be satisfied to understand and explain). The increase in the number of independent centres of research,<sup>19</sup>

19 Even though they emanate from a powerful Masonic body. The *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (AQC) published for more than a century by the London research lodge *Quatuor Coronati* remain a model; but like any journal not everything we read in it can be taken as Gospel; this is also true of the *Cahiers Villard de Honnecourt*, the organ of the Grande Loge Nationale de France. There is always something to be gleaned from the *Cahiers de la Grande Loge Provinciale d'Occitanie* of which professor Jean-Pierre Lassalle is the editor in chief. *Quatuor Coronati Jahrbuch*, organ of lodge No. 808 in Bayreuth in Anglo-Saxon nomenclature presents itself as a truly scientific journal. The *Chroniques d'Histoire maçonnique* published by the Grand Orient de France, are open to all and always offer much useful material. *Renaissance traditionnelle*, emanating from the Loge Nationale Française, founded by René Guilly, currently under the direction of Roger Dachez and Pierre Mollier, offers mainly studies of symbolism, I mean articles which have to do with the diverse Masonic rituals and regimes. *Acta macionica*, published by the research lodge 'Ars Macionica' of the Grande Loge Régulière de Belgique, is more general and offers richly documented articles. But special tribute must be paid here to the activities of the *Centro de Estudios de la Masonería Española*, created and led by Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, who as well as the *Boletín informativo* which lists everything which appears in respect of Spanish and international Freemasonry (Noviembre de 1986 No. 0–2008 No. 23), has organised some ten international colloquies across Spain and whose regular publications amount to more than a thousand pages; an irreplaceable source of material for all 'masonologists'. In addition, still in Spain, we see the more discreet work but still of great scientific value, of the *Instituto de Investigacion sobre el Liberalismo, Krausismo y Masonería*, led by Pedro Ureña and Lazaro Alvarez at Pontifical University of Comillas (Madrid). I give details of all these centres in Porset 1998, 23–29: I invite the reader to refer to them. It would also be appropriate to mention the *Canonbury Masonic Research Centre* in London, supported by the United Grand Lodge of England which has for a number of years organised conferences on Masonry and published its transactions. The *Zeitschrift für Internationale Freimaurer-Forschung* (IF) is since 1999 edited by Helmut Reinalter in cooperation with the Institut für Ideengeschichte of the University of Innsbruck (Austria), and in Halle (Germany), Monika Neugebauer-Wölk directs several research projects about Freemasonry in the eighteenth century. For about a decade, the principal Centre for Research into Freemasonry was that at the University of Sheffield (UK), under the direction of first Andrew Prescott, and then Andreas Önnersfors. It functioned for the Anglo-Saxon world in a comparable way as that directed by Ferrer Benimeli for the Hispano-American world. It published an informative Newsletter as well as the *Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism* and organised scholarly international symposia. Regrettably, the University of Sheffield decided in 2010 to close this institute. Also in 2000 was created the Chair for the study of Freemasonry at the university of Leyden (The Netherlands), first occupied by Anton van de Sande, and after his retirement by Malcolm Davies, who, however, died only one year later. A successor has not yet been appointed.

the opening up of all of their masonic archives<sup>20</sup> by the main Obediences, cannot fail to have a direct impact on future research. Masonic research no longer has to justify itself. Recognised in England, Austria, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium it has now been accorded the same status by the Sorbonne.<sup>21</sup>

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20 The principal archive was that of the KGB, fruit of the sequestration of material carried out by the Nazis during the Second World War, which found its way to Berlin (DDR) and finished up in Moscow. Unknown to anyone, these Masonic archives were brought to my attention by Alexander Stroeve, who is today professor of comparative literature at Paris III, but at the time was a member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and who with rare concern for which he must be congratulated, put me in contact with the Conservator. Having had the opportunity to work there, on my return to France I published the table of contents which Stroeve had let me have (“27 000 dossiers gelés à Moscou”, *Humanisme*, mai 1997, No. 232–233, p. 157–163 ; and again in Porset 1998, 16–23) ; struck by the richness of this seam and by its interest to the research community I had also made the President of the Grand Orient de France, Philippe Guglielmi, aware so that he could intervene at the highest level as I had done in Moscow with the ambassador at the time, so that the documents could be returned to France. Which he did. I then learned that the French government had an interest in the matter and that negotiations had been going on for some years. Whatever the case may be, in the years which followed the Grand Orient recovered the main body of archive material which is today available for all researchers.

21 Where for several years I have been leading a group ‘Masonry, Elightenment, Revolution’. Linked four years ago to the CIBEL (*Centre Interdisciplinaire Bordelais d'Étude des Lumières*), we have been working together on a collective publication *Le Monde maçonnique des Lumières (Europe-Amériques et colonies)*. *Dictionnaire prosopographique*, co-directed by Professor Cécile Révauger. This project which engages more than a hundred researchers from all nationalities is coming to point of completion and will comprise more than 2000 pages offering for the first time the intellectual biography of 1500 Masons from both worlds detailing everywhere it is possible their Masonic career—each entry accompanied by a bibliography. [The dictionary was published by Honoré Champion in 2013.] Linked to this great collective effort I have organised, at the Sorbonne, several *Rond Table* sessions where French and foreign researchers have met “La Plume et le compas : littérature et franc-maçonnerie”, “Les réseaux maçonniques au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, “Les Muses maçonnnes”, etc.

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**PART 2**

*Freemasonry and Religion*





## Freemasonry and the Catholic Church

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### Introduction

In the relationship between the Catholic Church and Masonry there are two key moments of tension and confrontation: one in the eighteenth century and the other in the nineteenth, and a third period of calm and rapprochement brought about, above all, in the aftermath of Vatican II, although in some sections of the Church there have recently arisen certain problems of incomprehension and lack of understanding.

For Masonry—formally founded in 1717—the eighteenth century was a time of anxiety and persecution; very few governments or states did not show concern about the Freemasons and banned their meetings. In this sense the Holy See, or as we can read documents of the time, the Court of Rome, was not the first nor was it alone in condemning and prohibiting in that century not just Masonry but meetings held by Masons as well. In 1735 the States General of Holland followed suit, then in 1736 the Counsel of the Republic and Canton of Geneva; in 1737 the government of Louis XV in France and the Prince Elector of Manheim in the Palatinate; in 1738 the magistrates of the city of Hamburg and King Frederick I of Sweden; in 1743 Empress Maria Theresa of Austria; in 1744 the authorities in Avignon, Paris and Geneva; in 1745 the Council of the Canton of Bern, the Consistory Council of the city of Hanover and the chief of police in Paris; in 1748 the Grand Sultan of Constantinople; in 1751 King Charles VII of Naples (the future Charles III of Spain) and his brother Fernando VI of Spain; in 1763 the magistrates of Danzig; in 1770 the governor of the island of Madeira and the government of Bern and Geneva; in 1784 the Prince of Monaco and Charles Theodor the Elector of Bavaria; in 1785 the Grand Duke of Baden and the Emperor Joseph II of Austria; in 1794 the Emperor of Germany Francis II, the King of Sardinia Victor Amadeo, and the Russian Emperor Paul I; in 1798 William III of Prussia, etc., to list just the most well-known examples. In this context the condemnation and prohibition declared by Clement XII, in 1738, and later by Benedict XIV, in 1751, as well as the decree issued by Cardinal Firrao for the Pontifical States in 1739, are nothing more than further links in the long chain of measures adopted by European authorities throughout the eighteenth century.



In all of these cases, it can be seen that the alleged reasons given by one or another, whether they be Protestant (Holland, Geneva, Hamburg, Bern, Sweden, Danzig, and Prussia) or Catholic governments (France, Naples, Spain, Vienna, Bavaria, Sardinia, Portugal, or the Papal States), and including Muslim ones (Turkey), are similar to those set out by Clement XII and Benedict XIV. In short, they come down to the secrecy with which Masons cloak themselves, as well as the oath taken under such dire penalties, and above all to the jurisdiction of the age—based on Roman law—under which any group or association not authorized by the government was considered illegal, a focus of subversion and a danger to the good order and peace of the State.

Within this range of motives, the Papal Bulls were no exception. This can be deduced not only from an analysis of their texts, but also from the abundant correspondence of the Vatican relating to this subject, including that sent out by the Holy Roman Office, especially in 1737. It is certain that both Clement XII and Benedict XIV added to the reasons of State security—that is to say political reasons—others of a religious nature, which were that meetings of Masons were ‘suspected of heresy’ from the mere fact that masons admitted into their lodges men of different religions (‘indifferentism’, that is to say, Catholic and non-Catholic) on condition that they expressed a belief in one God; a reason which in the eighteenth century was distinctly more significant than in our time. Meetings—including straightforward contact—between Catholics and non-Catholics were strictly forbidden under pain of excommunication, which was precisely the punishment inflicted on the Masons.

It is obvious, then, that there were reasons of State for condemning Masonry. When all is said and done, Clement XII and Benedict XIV only followed the example of other governments that were troubled and ill at ease facing the air of secrecy and sworn oaths that surrounded Freemasonry. The governments of Europe—and on this point the Protestants, Catholics and Muslims were of one mind—did not like what they understood to be the clandestine nature of Freemasonry which prevented them from knowing what was taking place in masonic meetings. The approach of the Holy See was the same. The proof for this can be found in the correspondence of the time and in the Edict issued by Cardinal Firrao, secretary of state, on January 14, 1739, which declared that masonic meetings were not only suspected of heresy but, more importantly, represented a danger to public peace and order within the Ecclesiastical State, for if they did not contain material contrary to orthodox faith and against the State and public order they would have no need for such secrecy. For this reason the Masons were condemned to death, confiscation of their goods and destruction of the places where they met, although at that time not even the Tribunal of the Inquisition—according to its own Penal

Code—could condemn a person to death, but only to prison, for the offence of heresy.

The Bull *Providas* (1751) of Benedict XIV went further by calling on, as the strongest argument (apart from the charter of Plinio Cecilio which, however, was not correctly applied), the provisions of Roman Law (Dig. 47, tit. 22: *De Collegiis et corporibus*) against *collegia illicita*, which forbade associations formed without the permission of the public authority. Here we should note that the illegitimacy of any such association, from the legal point of view, caused it to be considered and held as illicit, not only legally and politically, but also morally. There was a clear shift of principle in this reasoning. Moreover, as the Jesuit Karl Michaeler makes clear in his 1782 reply to Benedict XIV's bull, what appears to be a logical proof is in reality an argument which discredits that which it sets out to prove, then affirms precisely the contrary, since we know today that the quotation from Pliny was intended to be used against Christians. So, paradoxically, the Masons were accused of the same crime for which the pagans impugned the first Christians, which shows clearly both the deficiency of the Roman Laws and their application.

Many states, on the basis of the Papal Bulls, and following the wishes demonstrated by their pronouncement, prohibited Masonry under the severest of penalties. What happened next was that in those countries with a confessional political system, the Masons were persecuted not as such, but for an offence against the Catholic religion, since they were excommunicated, which declared the crime of Masonry as being harmful to the Catholic religion, and from the moment that this was enshrined in the constitution of Catholic countries, the ecclesiastical crime automatically became a political one and was punished as such. This is the reason why no document of the eighteenth century states—and in this Clement XII's and Benedict XIV's Bulls are no different—that Masonry as an institution is prohibited, but rather 'meetings' held by Masons are considered illegal. These meetings are described in all manner of ways in Clement XII's Bull *In eminenti*: assemblies, conventions, companies, gatherings, circles, meetings, societies, and so on.

Nevertheless, with the exception of Rome and those countries where the Inquisition was established, the majority of these prohibitions were not enforced in the eighteenth century. This is shown by the growth and prestige that, despite everything, Masonry enjoyed, coupled with the fact that many important men of the nobility and the clergy, and in one instance a monarch, were members. One of the most striking facts is the presence in Masonry during the eighteenth century of a significant number of Protestant pastors, especially Anglican, Calvinist and Lutheran, as well as Orthodox priests and above all Catholic clergy: bishops, canons, parish priests, vicars and

members of practically all the religious Catholic orders, despite the Papal prohibitions.

In the nineteenth century a notable change took place. The new patriotic or political societies that fought for Italian unification, especially the *Carbonari*, became the object of Rome's concern and attacks. Following the French Revolution in which a number of Freemasons had been persecuted, among them the Catholic priest Father Gallot from Laval, who was later beatified by the Catholic Church, the situation changed radically.

Masonry in the Anglo-Saxon countries gained a certain social prestige, especially in the United States, Great Britain and the Nordic countries where the presence of non-Catholic clergy continued to be important and influential within Masonry, to the extent that kings of England and Sweden became Grand Masters of Freemasonry in their respective countries, and a large number of presidents of the United States were to be found in its ranks. However, in the so-called Catholic countries the ideals of Masonry were by and large confused and identified with those of liberalism, which caused the Catholic Church and the absolutist governments of the time to react forcefully, founded on the well-known union of the Throne and the Altar, in defence of their power. In the early years of the nineteenth century the clash between the Catholic Church and Masonry was coloured by the ways in which the French Revolution was interpreted, and by the birth of the famous myth of the masonic-revolutionary plot for which Abbé Barruel was largely responsible. From this time onwards Masonry in Latin Europe saw itself tainted by an image far less solid and respectable than how Freemasonry was seen in the Protestant world. And then it found itself especially affected by the confusion which arose out of the proliferation of secret societies and by it being falsely associated with the Illuminati of Bavaria, the *Carbonari* and other similar organisations. The emergence of the so-called patriotic societies and their struggle for Italian unification—particularly the *Carbonari* so readily associated with the Masons—attracted the attention of Popes who saw their temporal power under threat.

Thus our attention is drawn to the fact that from Pius VII, in 1821, with his Constitution *Ecclesiam Christi*, up to the *Humanum genus* (1884) of Leo XIII, as far as Rome was concerned, Masonry was classed as a secret society whose aim was “to conspire against the Church and the powers of the State”. The result was that Masonry was *a priori* associated with the patriotic societies that were struggling in some countries for the independence of the people and in others, such as Italy, for unification.

The key period of confrontation between the Catholic Church and Masonry corresponds to the papacies of Pius IX and Leo XIII. Let us remind ourselves that these two Popes alone, in their documents and speeches, spoke out against

Masonry more than 2,000 times, frequently identifying it with the Carbonari (which is unsustainable from the historical point of view) and always with the patriotic and secret societies which at the time were fighting for the unification of Italy and against the temporal powers of the Pope, who was opposed to the loss of his Papal territories. The political nature of these attacks was reflected in the *leitmotif* which, throughout all of them, synthesised the Papal thinking: simply stated, that masonry and secret societies were attacking “the rights of the Papal power and civil authority”, that they “were conspiring against the Church and civil powers”, and that they were “attacking the Church and legitimate authority”. Leo XIII himself in his *Humanum genus* alludes to the prohibition of Masonry by certain governments and emphasises that “the ultimate and principle aim” of Masonry “was to destroy to its very foundations any civil or religious order established throughout Christendom, and bring about in its place a new order founded on laws drawn out of the entrails of naturalism”. And as proof of the behaviour of the “masonic sect” and its determination to “bring to fruition all the theories of the supporters of natural law” he adds that Masonry “has for a long time been striving tenaciously to put an end to any interference in society by the rulers and authority of the Church and for this purpose it openly contends that the Church and the State should separate, thereby excluding from the laws and administration of the public domain the very salutary influence of the Catholic Religion”. It is evident that Vatican II advocated this separation of Church and State without, as a result, falling into line with the ideas of natural law.

In the years following the publication of *Humanum genus* (1884) a multitude of studies and books were published, designed to ‘enlighten’ Catholic public opinion: anti-masonic associations and magazines were created; anti-masonic congresses were held, among which it is worth mentioning the International Congress of Trent (1896), at which the famous Leo Taxil played such an important part and where he made public the deception he had kept up for so long with regard to Masonry and the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> As a reply the various masonic orders in the Latin countries moved further towards, and exaggerated, anti-clericalism and secularism.

Finally, the Code of Canonical Law, promulgated shortly after the death of Leo XIII (May 27, 1917), brought together all the legal doctrines hitherto expressed, especially that of Pius IX and Leo XIII. In fact canon 2335 confirmed all previous Papal dispositions of the nineteenth century (thus overruling those of the eighteenth century: the secrecy, the swearing of oaths and the

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1 For more on Leo Taxil and Freemasonry, see the chapter by Robert Jan van Pelt, “Freemasonry and Judaism”, in this volume.

“suspicion” of heresy were completely forgotten and omitted, setting out the sanction by establishing that “those who belong to the masonic sect or other associations of a similar kind, which plot against the Church or against legitimate civil authorities, will incur *ipso facto* excommunication, which is the sole prerogative of the Holy Apostolic See”.

This identification of Masonry with a society which “plots against the Church or legitimate civil authorities” can only be understood from the standpoint of the problem created in Italy by the famous ‘Roman question’, or the loss of the Papal States. This symbolised the twin powers of the civil and ecclesiastical, the Throne and the Altar or, if you wish, the Catholic Church and the ‘legitimate’ governmental power, which came together in one person, the Pope, as the King of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic church, which is to say the King-Pope or Pope-King, to which Charles van Duerm devoted his book *Rome et la Franc-Maçonnerie: vicissitudes politiques du pouvoir temporel des papes de 1789 à 1895* (Brussels, 1896).

Commentators on the Code of Canon Law, when deciding on the exact nature of the crime set out in canon 2335, went on to state: “Societies which plot against the Church or against legitimate civil powers are those whose aim is to develop a subversive activity by using illicit means”. Therefore only those Catholics who belonged to a masonic or another association which was in reality plotting against the Church or civil authorities could incur the penalty of excommunication. Anyone who was in Masonry ‘of good faith’ (not finding it, for example, anything other than an association seeking universal brotherhood, or a society for social progress) would not be subject to the penalty of excommunication. For this reason Catholics could join Masonry so long as it did not coincide with what Canonical Law erroneously described as Masonry, that is, a society which plotted against the Church or legitimate civil powers.

## Vatican II

Vatican II can be seen as the third point of reference in what has ended up as a coming together between masonry and the Catholic Church, which was started in certain quarters at the beginning of the century. The intervention of Monsignor Méndez Arceo (Bishop of Cuernavaca, in Mexico) at the Vatican Council II was a landmark during the 31st and 71st General Congregations (1962–1963), in which he asked that the question of the attitude of the Church towards secret societies, and in particular Masonry, should be dealt with. From that moment on mutual distrust began to evaporate. And so the French bishops, in 1967, set about examining the theme of Masonry and the Church.

The Scandinavian Episcopal Conference at the end of 1967 went further by declaring that any mason wishing to become a Catholic could be received into the Church without having to relinquish membership of Masonry. The auxiliary Bishop of Paris, Monsignor Pezeril, was invited to give a lecture to the *Grande Loge de France* (June, 22, 1971); the Archbishop of Aracajú, in Brazil, spoke to the *Logia de Cotinguiba* in 1969, and in 1971 he received the title and gold medal of *Gran Reconocimiento Masónico*.

We could go on to quote the experiments carried out by the Archbishop of Marseille, Monsignor Etchegaray, president of the French Episcopal Conference, in his diocese as well as those of Cardinal Cooke in the Grand Lodge of New York, those of the Episcopal conference of England and Wales, etc. or the changes tried out in the way of dealing with the question of Catholicism and Freemasonry in the magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the 'official' organ of the Vatican. But the need to bring their thinking into line meant that they were obliged to refer only to the document produced by Cardinal Seper, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, dated July 19, 1974, in which for the first time since the excommunication of 1738, the Holy See admitted publicly the existence of branches of Masonry which were free of content contrary to the Church, and therefore membership of them did not incur the penalty of excommunication. Put another way, it was recognised that the excommunication declared two centuries earlier—and renewed and reiterated during the period leading up to the unification of Italy with the loss of the Papal States—could be explained in the context of political problems and religious strife.

Two years earlier, in 1972, Cardinal Seper had already set in motion the possibility of the presence of Catholics within Masonry. Briefly, he intervened in France, the United Kingdom and Italy via a representative of the Vatican, in the person of the then secretary of the Papal Commission for non-believers and adviser to the Holy Congregation on the Doctrine of Faith, don V. Miano, who was given the task of studying the problems posed by canon 2335 and to state *viva voce* that the interpretation of the said canon could be accepted as meaning excommunication for members of those associations "which were dedicated to conspiracies against the Church and legitimate authorities".

Subsequently, on July 19, 1974,—as we have seen—Cardinal Seper made public a document stating this position in a letter addressed to certain bishops' conferences most directly concerned with the problem as to whether or not Catholics could become Masons. This judgment was renewed on March 12, 1975, in a reply to the bishops' conferences most directly concerned such as England, North America, Canada, Brazil, France, Scandinavia and the Dominican Republic.

It is obvious that from Cardinal Seper's document it was to be understood that excommunication of Masons was only valid where they belonged to lodges that worked expressly against the Church or its mission. And in this sense a large part of the bishops' conferences most affected by the problem of what to do about Catholic Masons—with the exception of Germany—were sufficiently clear about what the Church had to say, and there remained no doubt about the possibility of being both a Catholic and a mason as long as the Masonry to which they belonged "did not plot against the Church", which—when all is said and done—was the correct interpretation maintained for a long time by the specialists on the subject. "The Penal law [said Cardinal Seper] needs to be interpreted in a restricted sense. For this reason we can confidently teach and apply the opinion that it only affects those Catholics who are members of associations which really do plot against the Church".

In the new Code of Canonical Law, promulgated January 25, 1983, and still in force, canon 2335 was replaced by canon 1374, which reads as follows: "Those who subscribe to associations which plot against the Church will be quite rightly punished; those who promote or direct them will be punished by interdiction". This means that all references to Masonry have been removed, along with the references to excommunication as well as plots against legitimate civil authorities, three of the fundamental aspects whose only reason for being there was in the historical context of a solely Italian problem from the nineteenth century, which, since it clearly did not exist today, meant that holding on to them was an anachronism. This was the way in which the experts who worked on drawing up the new Code of Canonical Law for more than twenty years understood it, despite all the pressure brought to bear on them—especially by certain fundamentalist elements of the Church—to retain the penalty of excommunication for Masons.

In part born out of this pressure, Cardinal Ratzinger, the then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, took everyone by surprise on November 27, 1983, coinciding with the coming into force of the new Code of Canonical Law, nine months after its promulgation, in an event without precedent in the history of the Church, by publishing a "declaration concerning masonic associations" by which, before even the Papal commission for the interpretation of the Code had been named and constituted, he pre-empted it in a restrictive, not to say negative, way by making the Code say what his declaration to some extent said, thus wrecking some of the small advances that had been made in recent years with regard to clarification of the relations between the Church and Masonry. In essence his statement says that "the negative opinion of the Church with regard to masonic associations has not changed, because their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the

Church, for which reason membership of them remains prohibited”, despite the fact that the new Code of Canonical Law deliberately makes no mention of Masonry. He added that “those members of a congregation who did belong to masonic associations were committing a grave sin and would not be allowed to partake of Holy Communion”. Finally he concluded by saying that “it did not fall within the competences of local Church authorities to reach their own decisions with regard to the nature of masonic associations”.<sup>2</sup>

### Reactions against Vatican II

Faced with the reaction of several bishops’ conferences against Ratzinger’s declaration, which ran contrary to the practical approach of the Church since Vatican II and of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith itself—which, as we have seen, had ten years earlier publicly and officially authorised membership of certain masonic orders—the *Osservatore Romano* found itself obliged to publish, on February 23, 1985, on the front page with a three column spread, an anonymous article—although obviously a reflection of the official position of the ancient Holy Roman Office—under the heading “Reflections, one year after the Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. The irreconcilability of the Christian faith and Masonry”.<sup>3</sup> This article is even more unfortunate, if that is possible, than Ratzinger’s declaration and suggests a return to the time of the inquisition.

To begin with, the title itself does not appear to be particularly relevant. It would have been more accurate to have referred to the *Catholic* faith since there was certainly at that time no ‘official’ incompatibility between *Christian* beliefs and Masonry, since from 1723—when Anderson and Desaguliers, who were both clergymen, published the *Constitutions* of Masonry—until the present day there have been many highly placed members of the Church of England, of the Scandinavian and German Lutheran churches, ministers of the Scottish, Swiss, Dutch, Finnish, North and South American reformed churches as well as Methodists, evangelicals etc. who belonged to masonic lodges without having any problem with their faith, such as—to give just two examples—the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr John Fisher, or the Patriarch of Athens of the Orthodox Church, with whom Pope John XXIII, far from any hint of personal

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2 At [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19831126\\_declaration-masonic\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19831126_declaration-masonic_en.html). Accessed 09/08/2013.

3 At [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19850223\\_declaration-masonic\\_articolo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19850223_declaration-masonic_articolo_en.html). Accessed 09/08/2013.



triumphalism, initiated, with his characteristic simplicity and humility, an opening of ecumenical dialogue in an atmosphere of fraternal understanding.

Neither was the initial approach of the article any more astute, stating as it did that the judgment of the Church against Masonry had been inspired by a multiplicity of reasons both practical and doctrinal. Among the practical reasons it quotes 'the subversive activity' of Masonry against the Church. Among the doctrinal reasons is the suggestion that Masonry has philosophical ideas and moral concepts opposed to Catholic doctrine, which are in essence "a rationalist naturalism which is behind its activities in opposition to the Church". The use of two documents by Leo XIII, *Humanum genus*, of 1884, and a letter to the Italian people of 1892, as evidence gives the impression of profound historical weakness and partiality, not so much because the Church to which Leo XIII refers is not the Church of today, nor that the political problems of the unification of Italy would still continue to affect the universal Church of today, but that the Masonry of our time has nothing to do with that of the nineteenth century, nor with any specific political question either past or present.

But what is most worrying is that both the "Declaration" of 1983 and the "Reflections" of 1985 are founded on the reactionary and erroneous document that the German bishops had published against Masonry on April 28, 1980. In fact the Vatican "Reflections" of February 23, 1985 are just a summary of that German declaration, adhering to its fundamental points such as the relativism, the concept of truth in Masonry, the ritual, the view which Masons hold of the world, etc. The similarities are all the more striking given the totally false premise of the German declaration. The starting point is seriously flawed in its view of Masonry as a religion or pseudo religion and in the way it considers masonic rituals to have some kind of sacramental aspect.

Masonry is not and never has been a religion or a pseudo-religion. It is an initiatory and secular society, with philanthropic, cultural humanist, and philosophical aims, which are bound together in a notion of universal brotherhood and the improvement of mankind, sufficiently broad and ambiguous in its structure as to admit men of differing beliefs and political opinions, without being seen as indifferent or detached but simply as being tolerant and respecting the freedom of thought and belief of others, in an association which admits men of all faiths be they Catholic Christians, Protestant Christians, Muslims, Jews, or Buddhists. But perhaps the most striking aspect of both the Vatican "Reflections" of 1985 and the Declaration by the German bishops of 1980 is that neither quote any authentic text from Masonry itself, but use as their unique source Lennhoff-Posner's *Dictionary of Masonry (Freimaurer-Lexikon)*—as if it were the Bible of Masonry—when anyone with the very slightest knowledge of history knows the relative and personal value that all dictionaries have,

and even more so this one which was published in 1932, although the bishops quote from a 1975 unaltered reprint (“unveränderter Nachdruck”). Similarly, all the philosophical reflections made therein with respect to Masonry miss the point completely since they follow Lessing’s philosophy of Masonry to the letter by making the same basic mistake of considering Lessing as the greatest authority on the philosophy of Masonry and its official compiler. However, Masonry does not have any official philosophy, although throughout history there have been philosophers who were Masons such as Lessing himself, Herder, Goethe, Fichte and Krause, who all wrote of their ‘own’ philosophy of Masonry. These philosophers reflected on what they thought was or should be the philosophy of Masonry, reflections which differ radically one from another in the same way as those that have been written more recently by so many enthusiasts for philosophy and which are a clear demonstration of a great deal of ignorance and arrogance.

To sum up, the document published by the *Osservatore Romano* in 1985 avoids the fundamental and historical question of the hostility of Masonry towards the Church, or if you prefer that of the Church towards Masonry, which was the sole legal reason for incompatibility contained in the old Code. Instead, it attempts to return to doctrinal questions and questions of principle—including theological ones—based not on any current documents but rather on references to the teachings of the nineteenth century, and more specifically to the writings and doctrines of Leo XIII. This is conspicuous given the fact that at the time of the publication of the article so much was known about the historical context of that period and of the ideological confusion that existed then, at least as far as Masonry is concerned.

The document which claims our attention—the “Reflections” of 1985, which is the last official pronouncement by the Vatican on the subject of Masonry—is a clear step backwards along the path followed by the very Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith since the opening up started by John XXIII and Vatican II. So, from the explicit recognition that there can exist today—and therefore there are—types of Masonry which do not plot against the Church, the logical conclusion should have been that the ideological and moral principles which inspire Masonry were not in opposition to the Catholic Church. And to reach this conclusion all that would have been required was a reading of the constitutions and analysis of the practices of Masonry without the need to refer. Masonry was not plotting against the Church but its doctrinal principles had not changed, and therefore, according to the “Reflections”, any Catholics who became Masons—using a simple game of semantics—were not excommunicated although “their membership constituted a grave sin” and therefore “they could not partake of Holy Communion”.

It remains very worrying that it can be said that membership of Masonry constitutes a grave sin. The state of grave sin implies in all cases an act of free will and being conscious of committing an intrinsically evil action. For which reason—according to the judgment of some commentators—it is doubtful that one can be in a state of grave sin when one is not aware of having committed a culpable act.

Finally the document in question annulled the right of bishops' conferences and local ecclesiastical authorities to make their own decisions, which they had over recent years been doing openly and in favour of Catholics joining and remaining in membership of Masonry, in line with the directives of Cardinal Seper, Ratzinger's predecessor on the same post. In future all important evaluations of the nature of any lodge wherever in the world would be made in Rome—one of the most absurd things in the document, but in line with the reactionary attitude of, and withdrawal of prerogatives imposed by, the Vatican policy of the time.

But if the document published in the *Osservatore Romano* seems somewhat less disturbing, the one published by the Holy Apostolic Penitentiary (Prot. n.º 456/84) one year earlier and sent out to every bishop in the world on August 7, 1984, exceeds it as a cause for concern by impulsively accusing sects, and in particular Masonry, of profanation of the most Sacred Sacrament. Here, although there is no reference to Leo XIII, there could easily have been one and more especially to his friend and 'convert', the genial joker Leo Taxil, or to the fundamentalist Bishop Lefebvre who was especially obsessed by 'masonic Satanism', references which were quite eloquent whatever the case. This document would not be deserving of any further comment if it were not for the fact that—as someone has written about it—"it is offensive in its presentation, slanderous in its content, and false as well as unjust", because one cannot speak in general of the masonic 'sect', ignoring the wide variety of ideological orientations and differing practices which exist in the world, and because even in the worst of cases, the vast majority of members of masonry cannot be judged and found guilty of the presumed or proven crimes of individuals, nor because the wrongly denominated 'sect' of Masonry drives people to defile the elements of Holy Communion, nor because its "theories and practices" are "in opposition to truth and honesty", nor even because it is hostile towards the Church, although there may have been some sections of it that are or have been in the past, in the same way that certain sections of the Church have been and continue to be hostile towards Masonry, the fruit in both instances of the prejudices of bygone times and profound ignorance, which it is difficult to justify today.

Those anti-masonic sections of the Church were the ones especially preoccupied with diffusing the article in question and the document of 1980 put out

by the German bishops (although it would be more accurate to say: the one put out by Monsignor Stimpfle, Bishop of Augsburg), by which the article in question was both inspired and supported. And in order to do this they used a series of publications and many other resources known for their marked conservative ideology. Publications that were clearly manipulative, both in their language and content, and in which important historical facts and Vatican and ecclesiastical documents which did not agree with their particular way of thinking were ignored or distorted. Publications and attitudes which were in stark contrast to those of the people who were admonished and ordered to remain silent on the matter.

### Conclusion

With all the dangers that any synthesis of the uneasy relationship between the Catholic Church and Masonry brings, from the historical point of view, we can establish four very distinct periods:

First, the eighteenth century with the three fundamental condemnations of Clement XII in 1738, Benedict XIV in 1751 and Cardinal Firrao, Secretary of State, in 1739 for the Papal States. Three condemnations which justified the prohibition and illegality of meetings of Masons—in the same way that other rulers, Catholic, Protestant or Muslim of that period did—by citing the secrecy with which the Masons surrounded themselves, the oath they swore, and Roman Law in force at the time which suspected them of acting against the peace and good order of society. It is certain that the Pope, as Head of the Church, added to this list that of suspicion of heresy due to their custom of allowing Catholics and non-Catholics to meet together, something that at the time was punishable by excommunication, at the very time when the majority of Masons were Catholics, including priests.

Second, the nineteenth century by and large ignores the secrecy, the oath and the suspicion of heresy and condemns not so much ‘meetings of masons’ but Masonry itself as an institution identified with liberalism from a political point of view and with naturalism from a philosophical one. Nevertheless, both in the condemnations before Pius IX—strongly influenced by the alliance of the Altar and the Throne—and in the 2,000 condemnations which were issued during the Papacies of Pius IX and Leo XIII, the *Leitmotiv* of all of them is that Masonry and other secret societies “plot against the Church and the legitimate civil authorities”, the two powers which the Pope—at that time—represented in Rome as the Head of the Church and as a king, in an armed struggle against those who sought the unification of Italy. The first Code of

Canonic Law drawn up and promulgated shortly after it, in 1917, summarized all the previous ecclesiastical laws and synthesized them in the famous canon 2335 which identified Masonry with all other secret societies which plot against the Church and other legitimate powers.

Third, having overcome the former political problems, in the years which preceded and followed Vatican II, attempts to reach an understanding, a rapprochement and to forget the now outdated moments in history, were increased and ended in the recognition by Rome and most especially by the ancient Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, that there were branches of Masonry which did not plot against the Church, and as such their members did not incur the punishments set out in the Canonical Law of 1917.

Fourth, as a result of the preparation and promulgation of the new Code of Canonical Law, the interest of a fundamentalist section of the Catholic Church, particularly determined to continue to condemn all members of Masonry to excommunication, is highlighted. Faced with a large number of bishops' conferences in favour of lifting the condemnation, the only one which adopted the opposing view, in 1980, was the German one, following the determination of Monsignor Stimpfle, Bishop of Augsburg, principal promoter of the initiative. This pressure was kept upright until the final meeting in Rome of the Commission preparing the new Code of Canonical Law, at which the German proposition was put to the vote and comprehensively defeated in the Plenary Congregation of 1981 with only 13 of the 59 members voting in favour of the German proposals for condemnation and 31 voting against, among them Cardinal König who, one year earlier, had refused to sign the declaration of the German bishops' conference.<sup>4</sup> Consequently there is no mention of either Masons, or excommunication or legitimate civil powers in canon 1374 of the New Code of Canonical Law.

However, the declaration issued by Ratzinger (a Cardinal at the time)—who voted in favour of the defeated German proposition—on the eve of the promulgation of the new Code, had the result of making it say something that was not contained in the text and imposed the German restrictive and condemnatory approach, despite being in the minority of bishops' conferences which were far more concerned with the pastoral problems posed by the existence of

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4 Those who voted in favor of the German thesis were, amongst others, the Cardinals Schröffer, Siri, Seper (who nuanced his vote with only partial approval; he was in favour partisan of including the name of Freemasonry while leaving out the penalty proposal), Ratzinger, Palazzini, Höffner and the Congregation for the Clergy. Those who were against were the Cardinals König, Marty, Muñoz Vega, Phillippe, Rugambwa, Garrone, Duval, Rossi, and the Archbishops Arrieta Villalobos, Henriquez, Tzadua, Morelos and Castillo Lara.

so many Catholic Masons, and despite the proposition having been thrown out in the final plenary meeting devoted to the question. And although the harshness of the penalty contained in the “Declaration” seems striking, (whilst Masons are not excommunicated they are nonetheless all in a state of grave sin—without going into scholastic distinctions between the characteristics necessary to distinguish between whether a sin is ‘objectively’ or ‘subjectively’ grave), what is disappointing, whichever way you look at it, is the fact that the unique source of inspiration for such a measure is the so-called German document (ignoring all the others of a positive nature) as was evident from the unfortunate attempt to justify it, made by the *Osservatore Romano* on February 22, 1985. This attempt was marred from the outset—just as the German bishops’ conference document—by the denial of the existence of different branches of Masonry, and above all by considering Masonry to be a religion and its rituals as a substitute for the Sacraments and by the theological arguments put forward based, among other documents, on the Bull *Humanum genus* of 1884, on a letter to the Italian people by Leo XIII in 1892, on the philosophy of Lessing and on the work so often quoted by the German bishops, the dictionary of Masonry by Lennhof-Posner of 1932. Publications, though perhaps not the ideal ones, with which they attempted to provide evidence to prove the relativism and deism of Masonry, even going so far as to define the presumed God of the Masons.

But in the opinion of some commentators the above was at least partisan, not to say unjust and false, just as was the banning of every bishop in the world from taking the opposite view, whilst the proliferation of publications in defence of the “Declaration” appears surprising, not just for their quantity and widespread circulation, but for the poor quality of their arguments. Publications which—with their outdated and often ignorant anti-masonic attitude—have only served to create uncertainty among Catholic Masons and have delighted the anticlericals, agnostics and free-thinkers who have rediscovered the anticlerical banner as a cohesion and justification for a reality which, but for that, was beginning to have no meaning at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

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# Freemasonry and the Orthodox Churches

*Jean-François Var*

## Introduction

The subject of this chapter is not easy to deal with, for one main reason: the organization, or rather the absence of a general organization, of the Orthodox Churches. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church whose pattern is monolithic and monarchic, the characteristic of these Churches is equality in diversity. There are plenty of Orthodox Churches, each of them being independent from others and equal to others. The only element, which is the most important, they partake of, is the Orthodox faith as it was defined by the seven Councils recognised by Orthodoxy as ecumenical. As for the disciplinary rules, hierarchical patterns, etc, they have the force of laws only if stated by the decrees or *canons* of the same Councils. For the rest, every Church is free. Because the seventh and latest ecumenical Council dates back to 787 AD, and the 'holy and great Pan-Orthodox Council', which has always been announced and expected, is still waited for even today, this remainder of the rules, which is different in each of the Orthodox churches, has become substantial. Over more than twelve hundred years, many more or less important issues that emerged in the world, have not been decided upon in the same way by all the Orthodox Churches, but only in their own way by some of them. Amongst those issues is that of Freemasonry.

## Freemasonry and the Russian Orthodox Church

As a result, a comprehensive *exposé* would consist in going through each Church's canonical standards, but it would be probably non exhaustive and nevertheless tedious. It appears better to point out some major trends in the historical and geographic fields. The example of Russia seems the most significant. When Freemasonry was spread over Europe in the course of eighteenth century, the Orthodox space was either Ottoman or Russian, and the history of Freemasonry in those areas belongs to the history of western influences into the Russian and Ottoman Empires respectively. As for the latter, those influences were nil until its collapse in 1922–1924 (for a discussion of Freemasonry



in the Ottoman Empire, see the chapter by Thierry Zarcone in the present volume). Thus it is only in Russia that one may observe a long-lasting coexistence between masonic bodies and Orthodox Church, and from that situation draw some meaningful conclusions.

Freemasonry is supposed to have emerged in Russia in the 1770s. The times were auspicious, for Tsar Peter the Great (1672–1682–1725) had undertaken to westernize his country at all costs, even by force, and Tsarina Catherine the Great (1729–1762–1796)—who was born a German princess—carried on with the same politics. Most of the masonic Rites and systems practised in Western Europe were imported in Russia, especially those belonging to the current called by the specialists ‘Mystic Masonry’ which were in great favour among the upper classes of the society. Tatiana Bakounine estimates that, from the beginnings of Freemasonry in Russia until its abolition there in 1822, it may have counted four to five thousand members. She established a directory containing 3,267 names of members belonging to all the social classes (Bakounine 1967). And, what is important for our study, she identified twenty-four clergymen, amongst them four metropolitans, two archbishops, five archpriests, and three abbots (archimandrites). The most preponderant was the metropolitan Philarethe of Moscow, the first dignitary of the Church of Russia since Peter the Great had abolished the patriarchal title and function in 1721. Metropolitan of Moscow from 1825 until his death in 1867, he was an outstanding figure in ecclesiastical and theological studies, and in the spread of the Bible, which he was the first to translate into the vernacular language, that is in Russian (from 1816 onwards), in spite of critics from conservative Orthodox groups. He was ardently devoted to teach religion to the neglected masses of Russia. In that task, he was very similar to Novikov, with whom he cooperated. Philarethe was to be solemnly canonized by the Church of Russia in 1994: a rare but not unique example of a Freemason recognised as a saint by a Christian Church.

Novikov can be seen as the typical eighteenth century Russian Freemason. Founder of three publishing companies, he issued in the course of ten years 461 books on practical sciences, mysticism, Fathers of the Church, and so on. At the same time he helped, at his own expense, deprived students and *moujiks* (countrymen), who were victims of starvation. His aim was to struggle against physical, moral and religious destitution by means of the lights of reason and faith, of religion and education. One of Philarethe’s predecessors, metropolitan Platon wrote to Catherine II: “I pray the heavens another Christian like him may be found, not only in the flock God entrusted to you and me, but even in the entire world” (Bakounine 1967: xxxiv). Actually both Platon and Novikov were Martinists (source, personal documents in possession of Daniel Fontaine)—a fact which the Tsarina was not aware of.

Russian masonry of that time was deeply and ardently Christian. One of its members wrote: "Just as the religion and the Church bind man and heaven with supernatural strength, Freemasonry binds mankind to that strength as it guides it along the way of truth, experience and charity" (Bakounine 1967: xiv). A present-day Russian theologian, Father Florovsky, has written an acute analysis, in which he stated: "Freemasonry finalized a method of ascetic life and self-overseeing. For Lopoukhine, the true aim of a Mason is to die on the cross of abnegation and burn to the fire of purification". Further, "The philanthropic activity of the Masons of that time is well-known. On the theoretical level, all its doctrine fights against the 'vaticinating discourses of blind reason' and to false wisdom" (Florovsky 1979: 162–163). The Russian Freemasons' activity was "an obstacle to freethinking ... One sole word by [Novikov's friend and assistant] Schwartz was enough to grab the tempting atheists' books out of the hands of many and put the Holy Bible instead." (Florovsky 1979: 165).

So, during a quarter of century, from about the 1770 until 1794, there took place a quite exceptional and striking period in all the history of Freemasonry, not to be seen again in any era or country, made conspicuous by a close collaboration, even a symbiosis, between Freemasonry and Church. The Church of Russia was like a partner of Russian Freemasonry, and had absolutely no part in its prohibition by Catherine II in 1794. That decision was collateral damage caused by the French Revolution, because the Empress, even though she was praised by such *philosophes* as Voltaire and Diderot, as the true *despote éclairé*, and claimed to favour freedom, she did not approve of freedom actually being implemented in Russian society. Novikov was kept in jail in the fortress of Saints Peter and Paul in Saint Petersburg.

Under the reign of Catherine's grand-son Alexander I (1777–1801–1825), Freemasonry, first tacitly allowed to reappear and sparkling again for twenty years, was prohibited once more in 1822, owing to the Tsar's conversion to mysticism, which led him to propose the *Sainte Alliance*, which in his mind would become a sort of theocracy in which there was no place for the masonic brotherhood. Thus came to an end the sole historic period of forty years in total, though interrupted by a gap of seven years, when a true harmony existed between Freemasonry and an Orthodox Church, maybe because both of them had a mystical inspiration. That harmony seemed to renew Emperor Justinian's ideal society, where a 'symphony' did exist between the *basileus* and the patriarch.

When Freemasonry came again to Russia during the first years of the twentieth century, it was quite different. It was a social, political and humanistic Masonry, like the one practised in the *Grand Orient de France*. Many Russian academics, lawyers, writers, politicians, etc., had been initiated in France in *Grand Orient's* lodges, and later carried Freemasonry back home. Although the

prohibition *ukase* (imperial decree) of 1822 had not been withdrawn, the tsarist police was too occupied by terrorists and nihilists to bother Masons. And the Church did not utter a word. The first government after the October Revolution, the Menshevik one of Kerensky, was entirely made up of Masons, with the exception of only one minister (Paléologue 2007). After the Soviets seized power in 1917, they banned Freemasonry once again, while also tormenting the Church. Henceforth the Russian situation was to be a standard for all the countries of Eastern Europe. Nowhere were Churches allowed to express any position concerning a matter that was considered as belonging to the State's power. Such was the situation in Romania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia with respect to the Orthodox Churches, which were as ill-treated as the Roman Catholic and Protestant ones in Poland and in Eastern Germany.

The countries which could be called 'Orthodox', that is those where Orthodoxy was the prevailing Christian denomination, had been under Ottoman rule for centuries. In Europe, they began to gain freedom one after another during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century: the first one was Greece in 1821; then followed, after the Crimean war (1856), Romania; Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose union in 1919 would constitute Yugoslavia; Bulgaria; and last Albania. In all those countries, Freemasonry took an active part in the struggle for freedom, for example in Greece where it helped to conceal patriotic movements. The same was the case in Serbia and Romania. Within those politically and nationally committed Freemasonries, we can find priests, monks, even bishops, as members. So Freemasonry and Orthodox Churches closely cooperated in the fight for national freedom.

In Turkey, Freemasonry played a similar role and took part in the Young Turks' fight to liberalize the regime. In the other Asiatic parts of the former Ottoman Empire broken up in 1922–1924, the newly independent countries quickly came under France's and Great Britain's trusteeship: Lebanon and Syria under the first, Palestine, Iraq and Egypt under the second. In all those countries flourished a 'colonial Freemasonry', complying with the metropolitan standards: peacefully coexisting with churches in the English context, and conflicting with them in the French one. In all these countries, the Orthodox churches remained carefully silent regarding Freemasonry. After the decolonization, the Islamic rules were enforced and Freemasonry was prohibited, with three exceptions: Turkey and Israel, because they are supposed to be secular States, notwithstanding many restrictions; and Lebanon, owing to its singular situation as a multiconfessionnal State.

As for the new Soviet Union, as Lenin had decreed the prohibition of Freemasonry and started on antireligious persecutions with the aim of freeing

the new *homo sovieticus* from all sorts of religion, it resulted in a double emigration movement, often involving the same persons. On the one hand, Russian Freemasonry was built up again in exile, especially in France, where it was greatly influenced by French Freemasonry of that time. On the other hand, Orthodox communities were established in Western countries such as France, Great Britain and the United States, where they gave birth to local Churches belonging to different jurisdictions. The most important was the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia<sup>1</sup> (ROCOR), which considered itself as the authentic Russian Orthodox Church, forced to live in exile by an atheist and impious government, until it re-established, after eighty-seven years, canonical communion with the Russian Orthodox Church in 2007. From those historic events emerged a new coexistence between Orthodox Churches and Freemasonry and a new style of relations between them, no more in their respective countries of origin, but in the foreign Western countries in which they were now established.

Which style they assumed depends upon each Church, that is, upon peculiar circumstances of time and place. As was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, no general and common position was ever adopted. The great majority of Orthodox Churches have not yet taken a decision neither for nor against Freemasonry. For the time being, only four of them have pronounced an official sentence on Freemasonry. If we leave aside a sentence supposed—without proof—to have been passed by an archbishop of Cyprus in 1815, the first one is rather late, as it dates from 1933, nearly two centuries later than the first Papal Bull *In Eminenti* of 1738.

Thus, on October 12, 1933, the Synod of the Church of Hellas (Greece) promulgated a solemn condemnation of Freemasonry, forbade all clerics to be members of it on pain of being stripped of their rank, and insisted that the faithful misled in the lodges break all relations with Freemasonry. The part played by Greek Masons in the struggle for national freedom a century before was apparently unknown or unrecognised. The official motives for the sentence follow those of previous Roman Catholic condemnations of Freemasonry: it is an idolatrous religion, deriving from the ancient mysteries; its actions and teachings are secret and mysterious; it welcomes not only Christians but also Jews and Muslims; it leads to syncretism; and it 'deifies rationalism'. To conclude, Freemasonry is a false and anti-Christian system, absolutely incompatible with Christianity (text *in extenso* in Hannah 1984: 70–74). All that gives a strange sense of *déjà vu*, because all the elements of the prosecution seem to have been

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1 Constituted in 1922 in Sremski Karlovci (Serbia) and later transferred to New York (United States of America).

word for word copied from the papal documents on the same subject. We see in it nothing specifically Orthodox. However, it is important to note during what time that condemnation was pronounced: a time when anti-Semitic, anti-masonic and xenophobic feelings were spreading and increasing, connected to the emergence of Fascism and National Socialism. That this ban had to be renewed in 1949, and again in 1969, demonstrates that it was ineffective.

Four years later, in 1937, a condemnation was pronounced by the Church of Romania, upon the same grounds and in a similar political context. About twenty years later, in 1955, a condemnation was issued by the Orthodox Church of America (OCA). The ROCOR did the same in the 1950s, and that is all.

It is worth noting, however, that several patriarchs of Constantinople were Freemasons. The most famous was the patriarch Athenagoras (1886–1948–1972), who received the 33rd degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in the USA. Athenagoras was not the only patriarch who was a Freemason: one may also mention Meletios IV (1871–1935, patriarch of Constantinople 1922–1923, then patriarch of Alexandria 1926–1935) who was initiated into masonry in 1909; Basil III, one of Meletios' successors as patriarch of Constantinople (1925–1929) who was even initiated after he had become a patriarch. According to Jérôme Rousse-Lacordaire, one must add to that list Joachim III of Constantinople (1834–1912, patriarch from 1878 to 1884, then from 1901 to 1912) and Photios I of Alexandria (1853–1900–1925) (Rousse-Lacordaire 2003).

### Conclusion

In short, there is no common and general rule decreed by the Orthodox Churches about, or more precisely against, Freemasonry. Only four of them have officially proclaimed its prohibition, but the banning ordered by a Church applies only to its own members. As for the others, there reigns a freedom. So there one can see within one and the same Church clergy and laymen vehemently opposed against Freemasonry, and others having benevolent feelings or even being members of it, even reaching the masonic hierarchical summit. That is possible, because in Orthodoxy, with the exception of truths of faith, the rule applying everywhere is freedom under supervision of the sole personal conscience.

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# Protestantism and Freemasonry

*Guy Liagre*

## Introduction

Anderson's *Constitution* (1723) is generally considered as the founding charter of modern Freemasonry. The emphasis in the second version of 1738 is on the Noachidic law (a set of moral imperatives that, according to the Talmud, were given by God as a binding set of laws for the children of Noah, that is, all of humankind), considered as the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization. Thus, Freemasonry is not a religion in itself, although it has "consciously or unconsciously a religious character" (Vorgrimler 2004: 99–100). Many Roman-Catholics have seen Freemasonry as an extension of Protestantism, because of the loyalty to the Hanoverian dynasty that was common in many masonic lodges during the eighteenth century. However, competing Catholic Jacobite lodges also existed on the masonic scene during this period. But it is no coincidence that in Protestant countries such as Sweden and Britain Freemasonry has been associated with the conservative establishment, whereas in Catholic and Orthodox countries Freemasonry has often been considered as a subversive force. There is a generally recognised close relationship between the Protestant movement (viz. of the Liberal, rationalistic and in Northern Europe of the pietistic type) and Freemasonry. They are sometimes even considered as parent and child, as expressed in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, June 13, 1917 for the two hundredth anniversary of Freemasonry (1717) and the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation (1517):

The coincidence, for it is only a coincidence, which unites the two celebrations in the same year suggests the question as to whether these two spiritual forces, Protestantism and Freemasonry, are not very closely related to each other. It is a remarkable fact that the one rests on the other as on its foundation and that Freemasonry is inconceivable without Protestantism.

It should be emphasised that the impact of theologians during the Enlightenment changed radically the face of European Protestantism, accentuating the cultural–politic dimension. In this period, Protestantism developed a

more emancipatory ethos. Also, it is the beginning of a period underlining the relativity of religious beliefs and confessional dogmas. During the Enlightenment the necessity of Christian tolerance and freedom of conscience was emphasised, and a more moralistic-rationalistic approach of Protestant beliefs and practices developed. The Protestant movement wanted to transcend the confessional differences, but meanwhile it was still very anti-Catholic. But in Protestant Germany—the only larger country in Europe in which two major distinct denominational (Protestant and Roman-Catholic) Churches existed—like in England and other Protestant-Anglican countries, the Enlightenment was a movement *within* religion and not *against* religion, as was the case in large parts of Catholic Europe. In Protestant countries the Enlightenment was an alliance with the more liberal parts of Protestantism, and moreover had no anti-religious impetus. The close ties between the Enlightenment and liberal Protestantism influenced Freemasonry in these regions, which led to a development of Freemasonry that is traceable in the different character of Masonry, for example in France and the Anglo-Saxon world. In the Anglo-Saxon and Protestant countries we see many Masons defending Masonry as a servant of religion.

Historically we can distinguish five ‘ideal types’ of Freemasonry: esoteric Freemasonry with a *florilegium* of higher degrees; Christian Freemasonry where initiation is sometimes reserved for Christians and more specifically Protestants, e.g. some German and Scandinavian forms of Masonry; the Anglo-Saxon (more Anglican) moral Freemasonry with an accent on humanitarian aspects; modern liberal-symbolic Masonry and (in Catholic countries) agnostic Freemasonry. Of course, Freemasonry—as Protestantism—is a polymorph movement, but this general typology can help to understand the different types of Masonry.

### Protestant Influences

There is no question that an overwhelming majority of Freemasons over the centuries have been Protestants, especially in the English-speaking and North-European countries. It is one of the reasons that the Bible and the biblical narratives are as fundamental in Freemasonry as they are in Protestantism. In European Protestant countries, Freemasonry is roughly divided into two main currents. The first, liberal and Latitudinarian (emphasizing an ordered universe, designed for man’s happiness) form of Freemasonry dominates in the British Isles, Holland and in the great Hanseatic-cities of Northern Germany (it was only with the founding of the nation in 1870 that absolute Protestant



dominance in Germany arose). The second, the German-Scandinavian form of Freemasonry, has a mystic character and is heir to Lutheran pietism.

Freemasonry came to Sweden at a time when Lutheranism was the compulsory state religion, and basically there were no non-Lutherans in the country. As late as 1972, no less than 95.2 percent of the Swedish population were still members of the Swedish State Church, and it is thus natural that the Swedish System of Freemasonry is built around the Lutheran faith. It is also fair to describe it as a major system, but one that differs greatly from the other systems. The Swedish System is also worked in the rest of Scandinavia and in one German Grand Lodge. When Duke Charles XIII ascended the Swedish throne as king in 1809, the royal princes were considered to be born Freemasons and the highest Templar degrees were restricted to members of the Swedish nobility, although this later changed. The developing Swedish Masonry followed its own lines, which were different from those of English-American Masonry.

Protestantism and Freemasonry have thus from the eighteenth century onwards been closely connected, be it in a different way in different contexts. Nevertheless, the first official condemnation of Freemasonry, influenced by protestant politics, was made by the States of Holland as early as 1735. But the developments in Holland led to a new situation at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the association of the Protestant Royal Family with Freemasonry. From 1816 onwards, the Dutch Prince Frederik obeyed his father's wish that he become the Grandmaster in both the Northern and the Southern Netherlands (from 1830: Belgium), because King William I hoped that, with Protestantism, Freemasonry would help to unite the two countries into one (Snoek 1997). He remained in this office for sixty-five years. The relation between the creation of the first Protestant Churches in Cape Town and the first masonic lodge in South Africa (working under the Grand Lodge of Holland) is also known. In West-India, Anglican-Protestant ex-pats created new masonic lodges in the Dutch colonies, and when in 1832 slaves burned a part of Paramaribo (Surinam) and also the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, the congregations asked the masonic lodge 'Concordia' for permission to meet in their building (Liagre 2004).

### **Freemasonry and Protestantism in the Eighteenth Century**

In other Protestant countries, one finds the same situation. In Geneva—the centre of Calvinism—the first masonic Protestant condemnations were pronounced in 1736–1744 (the Protestant King of Sweden originally forbade Freemasonry with the death penalty in 1738). In later times, Protestants in Roman Switzerland took a more positive attitude towards Freemasonry.

In France Protestantism was officially tolerated but at the same time Protestants were discriminated against in the eighteenth century, which affected the relations between Freemasonry and Protestantism (*Protestantisme et Franc-maçonnerie* 2000). The masonic lodges were places—in a period of great religious intolerance—where the Huguenots (French Protestants) could express their religious beliefs. For some of them it even became the *only* place where they could express their faith (and their anti-Catholic political opinion), and so it was through the lodge that many Huguenots could find their place in society. In some places such as Caen, Masonry was completely in the hands of the Huguenots because in the years preceding the edict of religious tolerance in 1787, which recognised Protestants as part of society and gave them a legal existence, only the Roman-Catholic faith was accepted.

We see in this period for this reason an increasing number of Protestants in the lodges. But their masonic interests were not everywhere the same. For example, some Protestant pastors were very enthusiastic about Mesmerism, a theory and practice of animal magnetism as distinguished from mineral magnetism, cosmic magnetism and planetary magnetism, coined in the eighteenth century by the German physician Anton Mesmer (1734–1815). It was a new spiritual movement that also tried to cure the sick. Part of Mesmer's theory was that all animated bodies including man were affected by a magnetic force, which also mutually influenced the celestial bodies and the earth.

Others were interested in the romantic theosophy of Martinez de Pasqually (1727?–1774), a theurgist, theosophist and founder of the 'Ordre de Chevaliers Maçons Élus Coëns de l'Univers', that influenced the Rectified Scottish Rite. So called Martinism is a form of mystical and esoteric Christianity concerned with the fall of the first man, his state of material privation from his divine source, and the process of his return, called 'reintegration' or illumination. As a mystical tradition, it was first transmitted through a masonic high-degree system established around 1740 in France and later propagated in different forms by his two students Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803) and Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824).

Sometimes Masonry also played the role of a substitute-religion, and masonic rituals such as the Knight of the Rose Croix (many historians agree that the *Fama Fraternitatis*, published in 1614 in Kassel, was written by the Lutheran theologian, Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654)) gave French Protestants the opportunity to secretly take the Lord's Supper in a Protestant-ecumenical context, with bread and wine. It explains also why so many Protestant pastors were active in the French lodges and until 1779 only Protestants were accepted in the degree of Knight of the Rose Croix in France. Nevertheless, in the archives we find little information about this Protestant presence:

because Protestantism was forbidden, for security reasons the lodges did not make a note in their records of the religion of the members.

Recent research has focused on the Protestant masonic sociability from a sociological and cultural perspective. Protestant traders and businessmen, who were also Freemasons, were creating European networks in the eighteenth century. They were interested in Masonry because of the opportunities it gave to their international businesses. Meanwhile, in the revolutionary period in France both Protestants and Freemasons were patriotic. Important Protestants such as the pastors Antoine Court de Gébelin (1725–1784), Jean-Paul Rabaut Saint-Etienne (1743–1793) and Jacques Antoine Rabaut-Pommier (1744–1820) were active in politics and Freemasonry.

A good example of the problems Protestants had to face is the situation in Portugal. By 1727 Freemasonry was established in Portugal by Protestant/Anglican merchants. Indeed, the influence of British culture was present in Portugal since the signing of the Anglo-Portuguese trade act in 1703, establishing the overseas trade of the Portuguese wines and English textile. Constant naval traffic, migration and excellent diplomatic relations justified the existence of a colony of approximate one thousand English-speaking people based in Lisbon. They contributed decisively to the prestige of English culture in the face of traditional French hegemony within the Portuguese society. They also prepared the advent of the colonial English speculative Freemasonry in Portuguese territory. In an attempt to protect the spiritual absolute exclusivity of Catholicism, a second, predominantly Irish Catholic lodge, was founded in 1733. A third lodge was formed by the Protestant John Coustos (1703–1746), but he wrote in his autobiographical report, published after returning to London in 1746, that he was arrested in 1743, tortured and sentenced in the same year. The reality is that the reports of the inquisition show that he was not tortured at all: he confessed everything he knew precisely in order to avoid being tortured, but the foreign ecumenical non-Latin Masonry that Coustos had introduced, was indeed considered by the political and religious authorities as atheist and potentially subversive. The records of the Inquisition, which are the earliest known documentary references on the existence of lodges in Portuguese territory, referred to the first Masons as 'heretic merchants'. Meanwhile Coustos had the opportunity to express his gratitude to the English monarch and aristocrats, his intercessors, and praised the excellent work of the lodge of Lisbon (Coustos 1746).

In the city of Funchal, on Madeira, another masonic lodge composed of British merchants was founded in 1767 which became heavily persecuted by the local government in 1770 and was accused of heresy and liberalism, causing many members to go into exile in London. Persecutions of 1791–1792

dismantled for the second time the Portuguese masonic organization. As a result of the European and American liberal revolutions, after this period Freemasonry in Portugal slowly shifted from a British-centred form of Masonry to a more indigenous or Portuguese form.

Since 1730 Freemasonry seems to have been present in New York. But officially the first masonic lodge was founded in 1733 and the first American edition of the *Constitutions* published by Benjamin Franklin in 1734. Protestant immigrants saw Masonry as a necessary Christian force to implement harmony, and they worked together within the brotherhood. The masonic ideal was 'The universal brotherhood of men under the fatherhood of God'. Some of them had an eclectic faith, but George Washington (1732–1799), a prominent Freemason, was a lifelong member of the Episcopal Church, being convinced that organized religion served a good purpose, that of promoting morality and maintaining order. He disliked religious quarrels, which might disturb the peace. Masonry could bring to men the fundamental religious principles needed by all, because it was a plan of life, a trestle-board, containing the 'edicts of the Grand Architect of the Universe', which, if faithfully followed, would not fail to bring happiness (*Masonry and Americanism* 1924).

### **The Situation in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries up to 1945**

After 1802 the French Protestants—at this time there were around three thousand Protestants in the French lodges—were officially recognised by Napoleon. It was the beginning of a new period, in which Protestants and Freemasons would find each other struggling against the Roman-Catholic Church. In the nineteenth century there existed a close worldwide union between Protestantism and Freemasonry: both standing for civil and religious liberty and the rights of man. The conservative reactionary Roman-Catholic French thinker Louis de Bonald (1754–1840) asserted that the declaration of rights represented the evil influence of Enlightenment philosophy and with it atheism, Protestantism, and Freemasonry, which he lumped together (Klinck 1996). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Rome had not definitively taken the anti-liberal direction signalled by the 1832 encyclical *Mirari Vos—On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism* addressed 'To All Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic World', which condemned religious pluralism:

This perverse opinion is spread on all sides by the fraud of the wicked who claim that it is possible to obtain the eternal salvation of the soul by

the profession of any kind of religion, as long as morality is maintained (www.papalencyclicals.net, accessed June 13, 2011).

After the first (and only) Europe-wide collapse of traditional authority, the European Revolutions of 1848 (known in some countries as the Spring of Nations), anti-ultramontaniam ('over the mountains', that is, Rome) became explicitly anti-religious. The rejection of the Roman Catholic philosophy that emphasises the prerogatives and powers of the Pope became an important political and religious force. In reaction, the Vatican Council of 1869–1870 virtually established the views of ultramontaniam as dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the masonic lodge *'L'Union des Cœurs'* in Geneva, to which many pastors—such as Ami Bost (1790–1874) who is considered as one of the best-known advocates of the Revival Movement—belonged, was the centre of a Protestant religious awakening. It is a paradox to note that Protestantism on one hand reinforced the secular character of society, whilst at the same time promoting a new Protestant spirituality. Also interesting is the close collaboration of orthodox and liberal Protestants. English—Protestant-Anglican—Freemasonry was marked by latitudinarianism, but a new form of mystic-theosophist Freemasonry, influenced by new evolutions in Lyon and Strasbourg, prepared with other societal evolutions the orthodox-Protestant awakening in Geneva. This new spiritual and Protestant movement was exemplified by the Régime (also called Rite) *Eccossais Rectifiée*, the oldest continuously existing chivalric masonic Order in the world. It arose out of the remnants of Baron von Hund's (1722–1776) 1754 'Rite of Strict Observance' (Ursin 2004).

It is important to note in this context that Reformed and Lutheran Protestantism does not distinguish between ordained and non-ordained members, but in the nineteenth century a process of clericalisation of the pastoral function took place, so that in Protestant countries, the pastoral function had a great influence on social life. Bible societies were founded with the help of pastors and their masonic lodges (for instance in Geneva and New York), or were directed by Masons (as in Paris). Protestant Masons were also active in the propagation of the gospel through Evangelical Missionary Societies, founded in the first decade of the nineteenth century. On August 19, 1846, the Evangelical Alliance was launched in the Freemasons' Hall in London, and for many years the meetings of the Alliance were held at the same place. Nevertheless, much work is still to be done to explore the whole range of the interrelationship between Bible societies, associated Protestant missionary institutions and Freemasonry (Liagre 2007).

As orthodox Protestant Masons were adopting the revival movement at the beginning of the nineteenth century, at the end of the nineteenth century the relationship between Freemasonry and Protestantism changed and some French liberal Protestant Masons left the Church to go into politics, while others e.g. in France, the Netherlands and Belgium, created new liberal free Churches. Some continental Masons held also that Christianity was a corruption of monotheism. In Belgium (1872) and France (1877) this change in masonic spirituality resulted in the suppression of the expression 'the Great Architect of the Universe', in the name of freedom of conscience.<sup>1</sup> To understand this fact, it is important to note that in this period very often there was no sharp distinction between being in and outside the Protestant Church. Whether a pastor could remain in his Church or not and whether he was still tolerated, depended on many factors. A number of Protestants considered in these years that Protestantism prevented consistent secular thinking, while it gave the possibility to reduce religion to the extent that one could use Church rituals, without being obliged to accept the mythic-religious character of religion. In this context, masonic lodges helped to set up philanthropic actions in the Protestant Churches. This philanthropy (in societies where the Catholic Church predominated, and a radical atheist modernity developed, coupled with religious enmity) was an important vector in the relation between Protestantism and Freemasonry.

In 1913 a clash between Protestants and anti-religious atheists in French Masonry could no longer be avoided. The Grand Orient de France refused the lodge 'Le Centre des Amis' to use the symbol of the Great Architect and the Grande Loge Nationale Indépendante et Régulière pour la France et les Colonies was created.

On the other side of the ocean American Freemasonry in the 1790s was already linked to 'anticlerical latitudinarianism'. Latitudinarianism in connection with various political issues led to a problematic period for Freemasonry in the United States between 1826 and 1836. At the beginning of the century many Protestant Churches had annual masonic services at which the brethren wore full regalia in public, a tradition that continued till 1930 in England and Wales. But after several incidents a negative attitude towards Freemasonry began to emerge. As a result, as in Europe a few decades later, there was a mass exodus of Protestant (and Roman-Catholic) Christians from the lodges, thereby creating a vacuum to be filled by those who held a non-Christian view of Masonry. After this period, anti-revivalist creed-oriented Protestantism dismissing the religious revivals and Freemasonry were seen by most American

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1 In France the Protestant clergyman Frédéric Desmons (1832–1910) was National Grandmaster at that time.

evangelicals as in some ways similar to Roman-Catholicism. The well-known preacher Charles G. Finney (1792–1875), the greatest of the nineteenth century evangelical evangelists, left Freemasonry when he acknowledged revivalist Christian faith. He published his ideas in *The Character and claims of Freemasonry* in 1869 (Finney 1948). For Finney, since through revelations of the masonic rituals the Church and the world can know what Masonry really is, one can only acknowledge their incompatibility. At the end of the century Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) made similar charges against Freemasonry, and he could not see how any Christian, most of all a Christian minister, could go into the secret lodges with unbelievers (Whalen 1998: 161–162).

On the other hand and at the same time, mainstream American Protestants were convinced that Freemasonry could learn from the Church the value and importance of religious convictions. For them the best members of the Churches and masonic lodges alike were men who had the deepest religious convictions. They underlined—well knowing that Freemasonry is not a religion—the value of religious elements in Freemasonry. This was also the case at the end of the century in some masonic circles in Belgium, Italy, France and Spain. From the middle of the century this agreement between Freemasonry and Protestantism would lead, not only in Europe, but also in Latin-America to a liberal and anti-clerical movement, with (after 1848) a particular stance against the Ultramontanism of the Roman-Catholic Church. It culminated after the First Vatican Council in 1870 when new Protestant congregations and Churches were created that were supported by masonic lodges. Freemasons and liberal Protestants believed that the anti-Roman-Catholic struggle promised to guarantee them religious freedom and reduce the power of the (official) Church. Both were in favour of the democratisation of society. In Roman-Catholic countries Protestantism and Freemasonry were allied, in that both movements found themselves marginalized as ‘dissenters’. In recent decades much work has been done in Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain, Brazil and other countries to explore this field of interrelation between ideological and religious aspects in a major political conflict. In all these predominantly Roman-Catholic countries, Freemasonry has been deeply involved in liberal and mainstream Protestantism. In France, during the Third Republic, until the first World War, a political distinction was often made between left and right circles, the left being Protestant, Republican and anticlerical, the right royalist and Catholic. When in 1900 there was no republican radical left wing party in France, it was created by Protestant and anticlerical Freemasons in Paris in 1901. It was a unique situation: 155 lodges created a new party. The French academic, educational bureaucrat, Protestant pastor, social pacifist and politician Ferdinand Buisson (1841–1932) was one of the most famous

politicians from this party. Like other Protestants he sympathised with the Freemasons, without being a Freemason himself. From 1914 to 1926 he was an active member of the human rights organization. During 1880s Buisson helped to establish the French system of universal primary education and in 1927 he received the Nobel Prize for Peace.

There is still much work that needs to be done to analyse the precise relationship between masonic lodges and Protestant sociability on the Iberian Peninsula, in Latin America and the Hispanic Caribbean, as well as in other regions. We know that Protestantism made a comeback following the (Spanish) Glorious Revolution of 1868, which resulted in the granting of greater religious liberties. From the nine founding fathers of Spanish Protestantism after 1868, at least four had also important functions in Spanish Freemasonry: Juan Bautista Cabrera (1837–1916), member of lodge 'Mantuana' No. 1 in Madrid, Cipriano Tornos y Blasco (1843–1918), ex-priest and confessor of the queen, member of lodge 'Acacia Fraternal' No. 3, José Alhama Teba (1826–1892), founder of the Protestant congregation in Granada and a member of lodge 'Lux in Excelsis' No. 7 in Granada and the so called father of Spanish Protestantism, Miguel Trigo Bustamante (1825–?), lodge 'Hijos de Hiram' in Cartagena, 'Unión Africana' in Orán and 'Hijas del Sol' in Madrid.

The continuous presence of Protestant pastors in Freemasonry, has largely influenced Protestantism in Spain, so much so that it became one of its constituent elements. Freemasonry and Protestantism evolved at the same rhythm and in a parallel ways: together with Freemasons, Protestant religious activists were persecuted as militant republicans and educators, defending a democratic and secularised society. They fought together for the education of women and the abolition of prostitution. Not without reason, in the twentieth century the Spanish fascist circles close to Franco wanted to extinguish Marxism, Protestantism and Freemasonry in Spain. For Franco's supporters, Protestantism and Freemasonry went hand in hand. In the Caribbean we see the same situation. Lay and Catholic clerical conservatives attacked anything that threatened the monarchy, slavery, mercantilism, and Catholicism. Periodicals such as *La Verdad Catolica* published articles, denouncing Protestantism, Freemasonry and even freedom of Thought, for what they considered as being nothing other than the pretended right to deny God's revelations. Conservatives became more Catholic; progressives and liberals gravitated with Freemasonry towards anti-Catholicism or even favoured Protestantism. Still others saw religious pluralism, Freemasonry and Protestantism as ways to debilitate the Church of the colonial state.

The bishops of Santiago in Cuba, St Anthony Mary Claret (1807–1870) and Havana, Manuel Santander Y Frutos (1835–1907), denounced Protestant



Churches as 'sinful sects', one of the three major threats to the true faith, the others being Freemasonry and Spiritualism. The Cuban Roman-Catholic Church also tried to continue to use Church control over cemetery access as a weapon against Protestantism, Freemasonry and irreligiosity (Torres-Cuevas 2005). In Ireland, Paul Cardinal Cullen (1803–1878), the Roman-Catholic Archbishop of Dublin who became the first Irish Cardinal, shaped Irish Catholicism by fighting the 'demonic' forces of Protestantism and Freemasonry. He saw them both as man-made movements which threatened the true Church founded by Jesus Christ. His obsession with what he considered as the occult force of Freemasonry ("Nearly all the respectable Protestants are members of the Craft..."), appears almost pathological (Bowen 1983: 16, 279).

In the nineteenth century anticlericalism as a movement was not merely a negative ideology, but a fertile field of propositions, an array of movements and political ideas that manifested themselves in the organization of paramasonic groups and leagues and even liberal Protestant congregations. Arising as a reaction to organized Ultramontanism in the nineteenth century, it was at the same time a movement and an ideology. Protestants, Jews and Masons fought together against the Papacy and the Church, both religious and political, and especially against its ideological and conservative theological character. In Catholic countries the lodges sheltered anticlerical minorities and intellectual groups. They were Societies of ideas for the dissemination of trends of European secularism, positivism and alternative forms of religious expression, such as Spiritualism and liberal Protestantism. These networks of opposition considered themselves the bearers of modernity, fighting reactionary trends. Many bridges existed for example between Italian Protestantism and Masonry, fighting together for democracy and against the ruling Catholic domination. Anti-clericalism in Italy is connected with reaction against the absolutism of the Papal States, overthrown in 1870. The intertwining of Italian Freemasonry and Protestantism started in 1787, but it is only much later—between 1870 and 1950—that Italian Protestantism and Freemasonry became really linked. The political vocation of the Grand Orient of Italy led in 1908 to a cleavage with its spiritual component, where we find such evangelical pastors as Saverio Fera (1850–1915), the Italian Sovereign Grand Commander, the Methodist superintendent William Burgess (1845–1930) born in Manchester, who arrived in 1902 and had already administered the important District of Haidarabad in India, and Theophilus (Teofilo) Gay (1850–1914). The reason for this growing interest of Freemasons in Protestantism, is that until 1848, except for the interlude of French rule, Italian Protestants (Waldensians) did not enjoy civil liberties. After the unification of Italy (a process which began in 1815 and ended around 1871), the Waldensian Evangelization Committee spread the

religion of the Word throughout the peninsula in conjunction with other Protestant denominations, especially Methodists and Baptists, who had sent missionaries to Italy since 1861. Many of these pastors (especially the American Episcopalians), found accommodation in masonic lodges (Comba 2008). At the turn of the century, relations between Protestants and Freemasons were quite frequent. At that time the Italian Protestant Church was predominantly liberal, open to reason and science and much social work could be carried out by Protestants thanks to connections with Masons overseas.

Freemasons were also prominent in the foundation of the modern Mexican state. By the early 1800s there was a strong masonic presence in Mexico. Mexican Masons of the generation of the later Grand Inspector General of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Spain and honorary member of the Grand Consistory of France, Benito Juárez (1806–1872) worked hard for the separation of Church and State, to rid the constitution of the control of Catholicism. The Mexican Catholic Church in the colonial era being far from monolithic, exhibited a diversity of expressions and perspectives that interacted with, and were sometimes at odds with one another. In the mid-nineteenth century, one such group sought to reform the Catholic Church in line with some of the policies set forth by the government of Benito Juárez. Juárez was one of the main leaders of *The Reform (La Reforma)*, which, if implemented, would change the general social structure. It would for example strip the military and the Church of some of their special privileges. This movement, eventually known as the *Iglesia de Jesús*, would lay the foundation for the emergence of Protestant Churches in Mexico (Cruz 2011). The Constitution of 1824, although Masons had a hand in composing it, maintained Roman-Catholicism as the state religion. Not until the Constitution of 1857 did religious freedom prevail. Joel Poinsett (1779–1851), a Protestant mason and the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico appointed in 1825, found like-minded brothers in the York Rite. The York Rite Masons were rivals of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Masons, and the two lodges which would function as 'political parties' in this early period emerged as bitter enemies and secretive political clubs. For Poinsett the regular clergy, formed from the very dregs of the people, was distinguished by debauchery and ignorance, wherefore

against the Protestant Poinsett...was unleashed the hatred of the clergy and their faithful. The demand for legal religious liberty was attributed to him. It was believed that the purpose was to destroy the influence of the Catholic clergy as well as the traditional religious sentiment of the people of Mexico.

Poinsett was expelled from Mexico because of the hatred of the clergy and their faithful. The Mexican bishop of Tulancingo, D. Juan Bautista Ormaechea y Ernaiz (1863–1884), published in 1877 a treatise concerning Protestantism and Freemasonry (Ormaechea y Ernaiz 1877). He traced the political problems back to Luther declaring that Mexico owes the independence that the Masons want to nullify, to the Church. He wanted to warn the Mexicans to beware of the invasion of Protestantism and Masonry.

Brazil gives us another example. The growth of Presbyterianism and Brazilian Protestantism generally paralleled the advance of liberal political ideas. It was in the neighbourhood of masonic lodges that American Protestant missionaries found the first persons to help them with the foundation of new Presbyterian and Methodist congregations. The first Presbyterian missionary, Reverend Ashbel Green Simonton (1833–1867), arrived in Brazil in 1859 and found in São Paulo about 700 Protestants. He oversaw the formal organization of the first congregation (Presbyterian Church of Rio de Janeiro) and the first Presbytery (Presbytery of Rio de Janeiro). After negotiating with a masonic lodge, the Presbyterians were allowed to meet in the masonic conference hall in Rio de Janeiro. Later, Freemasons also helped to create Calvinist Churches (Bastian 1994). Between 1872 and 1875 Brazil found itself divided by a deep crisis between the Roman-Catholic Church and the monarchy. Some liberal priests left the Roman-Catholic Church to become Protestants.

The first Baptist Church was organized in Brazil, on September 10, 1871, in the city of Santa Barbara, state of São Paulo, by five members of the masonic lodge. They were North-American colonists who, after the Secession War (1861–1865) established several colonies in Brazil. The main protestant arguments in a plead for Freemasonry, were that the fraternity as a beneficial and non-religious organisation generated respect for the Protestant presence among people of high calibre, and opened the way to serve God in society in general. But not all Brazilian Protestants showed the same enthusiasm towards Freemasonry. The unity of the Brazilian independence movement was undermined by this ‘masonic question’, with some Brazilians insisting on the incompatibility of the profession of Christian faith and membership of a masonic lodge. In 1903 a group of Brazilian pastors and elders, led by the Rev. Eduardo Carlos Pereira (1855–1923), organized the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil under the banners of nationalism, autonomy, and anti-Masonry. With few exceptions, the most theologically conservative (Free Methodist, Wesleyan, Pentecostal) Churches would position themselves against Masonry, whereas the traditional Protestant Church members tended to affiliate with the lodges. But given the growth of occultism in Brazil, Protestant Churches placed the difficult question of the compatibility of Freemasonry with Biblical faith in

another perspective. Some Churches emphasized that there are wonderful individuals and good social works in Masonry but others considered its religious and philosophical structure as contrary to the fundamental principles of the Christian faith.

By the late 1850s, a fundamental fault line in Chilean politics and society had developed between unconditional defenders of Church prerogatives, who became the Conservatives, and those who preferred to limit the Church's role in national life, who became the Liberals or, if they took more strongly anti-clerical positions, the Radicals. Independence from Spain had permitted the legal establishment of direct commercial links between Chile and other countries throughout the world. These links led to the creation, especially in Valparaíso, of wholesale commercial enterprises that brought British and other foreign nationals who were non-Catholic to the country, and they demanded the right to practice their religion. In 1847 they attended the first Protestant service in the printing office of the radical-liberal newspaper *El Mercurio*; the first concrete sign of tactical collaboration between liberal Freemasons and Protestants. During this period when the first missionary, Dr. David Trumbull, also a Freemason, arrived, the masonic lodges 'Etoile du Pacifique' (1850), 'Bethesda' (1850) and 'Union Fraternal' were created (1853) (Bastian 1994: 97).

### Conspiracy Theories

We can still see the influence of anti-Protestantism in anti-masonic conspiracy theories from the end of the eighteenth century. Already in 1791 the loyal Catholic ecclesiastic and French Abbé Jacques François Lefranc (1739–1792), saw a direct link between the modern philosophy, apostate Protestantism and Freemasonry. Hating both the Freemasons and the Socinians (followers of Faustus (1539–1604) and Laelius (1525–1562) Socinus, who created a form of Unitarian Protestantism), he advanced in his book *Voile levé pour les curieux ou le Secret de la révolution de France Révélé, a l'aide de la franc-maçonnerie* ('The veil lifted for the curious, or the secret of the French Revolution'), translated into English, Italian and Portuguese, the idea that the former was derived from the latter, assigning the origin of Freemasonry to Faustus Socinus, in the year 1546. Jews and Protestants were with Freemasons indiscriminately categorized as figures of the hereditary enemy or foreign invader, which one had to fight. This theory was renewed in the nineteenth century by many European Catholics, as it was before and during the Second World War. Nationalist theories of the conquest of France by the oligarchy of the people of the Synagogue and the Temple—the Protestant and masonic temples—were launched.

Freemasons, Protestants and Jews were seen as in opposition to Catholic thought, and between them and the State war was inevitable. Globally in the twentieth century before the Second World-War, Protestantism and Masonry were denounced by the right-wing as the inspiration for the Parliamentary Republic and as the enemy to destroy. In fact, in France the anti-masons in the thirties envisioned four Confederate enemy States: the Protestants, Freemasons, Jews, and metics (Mediterranean immigrants). The theory was simple: introducing a dissenting religion, Protestants have begun to destroy the religious unity of France. Then, by their doctrine of *libre examen* they made a priest of every believer. They introduced individualism and Freemasonry and negated the principle of a social bond. The Dreyfus affair at the end of the nineteenth century was already seen as a Protestant-Jewish matter: the individual conscience prevailed over collective discipline. We see these conspiracy theories weaving a net all over the world. For example many right wing Colombians, including future president Laureano Gómez (1889–1965) who directed the Colombian Conservative Party from 1932 to 1953, often blamed many of Colombia's difficulties on a mysterious cabal of conspiratorial forces working behind the scenes (Williford 2005). This conspiracy included communists, socialists, liberals, Protestants, Jews, Freemasons and atheists, among others.

### The Situation and Positions after 1945

In Columbia the Dominicans maintained a strong presence through schools, Churches and their own monasteries. Their publications, the weeklies *Veritas* in Chiquinquirá and *El Cruzado* in Tunja, both contained almost weekly condemnations of Freemasonry, especially after the Liberals came to power in 1930 (Williford 2005: 148–216). In 1949, the old director of 'L'Action Française', Charles Maurras (1868–1952), wrote the book *Pour un jeune Français*, in which he explained that the 'anti-France' was made up of Protestants, Jews, Freemasons, and coloured people. They were for him 'internal strangers'. Protestantism is licentiousness of thought, of consciousness and of word; Masonry is the satanic hatred of God; and liberalism is both things, in the guise of a refined hypocrisy.

In Argentina in the 1950s traditionalist and nationalist movements saw four enemies: Protestantism, Masonry, liberalism and socialism. And of course Judaism, which was seen as a transversal movement of these four. After the Second World-War, a number of Protestant denominations discouraged their congregations from joining masonic lodges, although this differed in intensity

according to the denomination. Also from a Catholic perspective, reactions against the relationship of Protestantism and Freemasonry existed. In the 1970s there appeared the movement of Mgr. Lefebvre, in reaction to what he called the crisis of the Church after Vatican II. In an open letter to confused Catholics he wrote:

Where is the rift? We can pinpoint the time with precision. It was 1789, and its name, the Revolution. The Masonic and anti-Catholic principles of the French Revolution have taken two hundred years to enter tonsured and mitred heads. Today this is an established fact.

And:

The democratisation of government was followed quite naturally by the democratisation of the Magisterium which took place under the impulse of the famous slogan 'collegiality', spread abroad by the communist, Protestant and progressive press.

He argued in his Open Letter that Vatican II was a reply to the centuries old effort of Freemasonry and Protestantism to define man (Lefebvre 1986).

Many Protestant Churches tried to find an answer to the question of how to deal with Masonry, at a time when continental and Anglo-Saxon Masonry had gone their own ways. Some denominations investigated the question seriously, but other denominations took positions on theological grounds, without seriously studying the problem. Some Churches, such as the American United Methodist Church, but also the mainstream Protestant Churches in France, Belgium, Holland, Spain and Italy, refused to pronounce an official statement or position regarding Freemasonry. The conference of English Methodist ministers, on the other hand, passed in 1927 a resolution that Freemasonry in its ritual and official language is of a theistic nature and that the distinctive faith of Christianity and the Christian message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ are wholly incompatible with the claims put forth by Freemasonry in writing and speech. These comments, however, were largely ignored and were more or less forgotten when the English Methodists (Primitive and Wesleyan) united together in 1933. After this period, the English Protestant Churches made no public comments on Freemasonry until the end of the century. In 1985 the Methodist Conference in England confirmed its position of 1927, asking Freemasons to reconsider their membership. This was a reaction against a proliferation during the 1980s of tracts and pamphlets condemning Freemasonry as anti-Christian, as occult, as a group of Satan worshippers

and as a separate religion, in opposition to Christianity. The catalyst for a new wave of anti-Masonry in England was the publication in 1984 of Stephen Knight's book, *The Brotherhood: The Explosive Exposé of the Secret World of the Freemasons*. All the various strands of anti-Masonry were brought together in this one book. The report of the Methodist Conference condemned the Craft for not mentioning the name of Jesus Christ and because of the danger that a Christian who becomes a Freemason will find himself compromising his Christian beliefs or his allegiance to Christ, perhaps without realising that he is doing so. They went on to forbid any masonic meetings or services in any Methodist properties. An association of concerned Methodist Freemasons having been formed, the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church accepted in 1993 the Memorials (Resolutions) prepared with the help of the United Grand Lodge of England in the previous year. But at the end, the final clause re-affirmed in 1996 the convictions of the 1985 Report that Methodists should not become Freemasons. The instruction led to a greater loss of Church workers than for any comparable period. At the same moment, the United Reformed Church in England, a union of the former Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, also prepared and debated a report on Freemasonry. The report, however, found no incompatibility between Freemasonry and Christianity, or their denomination's teachings on Christianity.

More interesting are the beginnings of the Free Methodists, a denomination that—like the Christian Reformed Church in America in 1857—was founded in the 1860s in the spirit of the American anti-masonic party, because its founders believed that the Methodist Church was influenced by Freemasonry and members of secret societies. The Free Methodist Church continues to prohibit its members from joining Freemasonry, as is the case with the Christian Reformed Church in America. Lodge members who desire to become members of this Church must be kindly but firmly shown that membership of the lodge and the Church of Jesus Christ involves a double commitment, which the Church does not tolerate. If they refuse to repent, they must be placed under the censure of the Church. Other Protestant organisations were less strict. The Salvation Army passed a ruling in 1986 that people that are Freemasons may not wear the Salvation Army uniform.<sup>2</sup> Calvinist Churches were sometimes harsh, sometimes lenient. Scotland has always been extremely open about Freemasonry. Nevertheless, the Church of Scotland stated in a Panel on Doctrine in 1965 that:

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2 There is no evidence to support the statement that William Booth was a Freemason.

In our view total obedience to Christ precludes joining any organisation such as the Masonic movement which seems to demand a wholehearted allegiance to itself, and at the same time refuses to divulge all that is involved in that allegiance prior to joining... The initiate is required to commit himself to Masonry in a way that a Christian only should commit himself to Christ.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND 1965, *Panel on Doctrine*

The Church does not ban members from becoming Freemasons, but in 1989 the general assembly said that there were very real theological difficulties with Church of Scotland members being Freemasons.

Of course Free Calvinistic Churches took a more exclusive position. The Free Church of Scotland declared already in 1927 that anyone wishing to become a member of the Church would have to sever connection with Freemasonry absolutely. In the minds of the committee, according to their interpretations of the Scriptures, membership of Freemasonry was inconsistent with a profession of the Christian faith.

And for the Presbyterian Church of America in 1988 the desire of some Christians to be members of Freemasonry is symptomatic of a deeper problem in the Church:

No one shall be received into membership into a PCA church who is a member of a Masonic organisation. Present members of a church in the PCA who are members of a Masonic organisation will be given a period of one year to read the report of the Committee to Study Freemasonry, pray and consider their membership in the Order in light of the clear statement of incompatibility of Freemasonry with Biblical Christianity. After said year, they will be allowed to resign membership or become the subject of formal church discipline.

Adopted by the General Assembly of PCA, April 15–16, 1988

In the Northern countries and in Germany, another situation exists. In the German Lexicon of Freemasonry we read: "In Germany many Protestant pastors are members of the brotherhood. There exists between the Protestant Churches and Freemasonry neither animosity nor fear" (Dosch 1999: 90). Already in the eighteenth century the Pietist Lutheran philosophers Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), who wrote the dialogues about Freemasonry between Ernst and Falk, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), are well known as Protestants and Masons. Actually, there are also relations between the Church and Freemasonry. Since 1972, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) conducts an



official dialogue with the United Grand Lodges of Germany (VGLD). This resulted in important clarifications: "A general objection against a membership of an evangelical Christian in Freemasonry cannot be raised from the point of view of the evangelical participants. The decision of a membership in Freemasonry must be left to the individual following his own free decision" (Dosch 1999: 156–168). In fact, representatives of the Church accepted from the masonic participants that the ritual in its meaning and intention is not a replacement for services or for sacraments and that it is not in contradiction to evangelical beliefs.

Today, in the Northern countries there are close relations between Lutheran Churches on the one hand, and Freemasonry on the other. In Sweden Kings were for many years head of the Church, while at the same time acting as Grand Masters of the Swedish Order of Freemasonry. The Swedish Church, which is evangelical-Lutheran, has no formal objections to Masonry, and many bishops are Masons.

In the Lutheran Churches in the United States the situation is not that simple. One of the Lutheran bodies there, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, has declared: "We also reject participation or membership in religious organizations which have features that are in conflict with the Christian faith, such as the masonic lodge and similar organizations" (*We Believe, Teach, and Confess* 1922).

Some larger Churches have the same position: The United Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Synod and the Missouri Synod, which together comprise over 90% of all Lutherans in America, are critical of Freemasonry. The conservative Lutheran Missouri Synod was created in 1829 by German immigrants, and the bylaw 3.925 of the Synod's Handbook summarizes the rationale for its longstanding position on the lodges: Pastors and laypeople must avoid membership or participation in any organization that in its objectives, ceremonies, or practices is inimical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ or the faith and life of the Christian Church (LCMS: 14). From its very beginning, it was held that membership in Freemasonry conflicts with a faithful confession of the Gospel. But till 1963 there was no official objection to pastors or members of the Lutheran Church in America holding membership in a masonic lodge. However, in 1963 when preparing for unification, the Church was brought into a position of official objection to Freemasonry for the first time in 215 years. After the organisation of the new Church, membership of Freemasonry was prohibited. The same position was taken by other American Lutheran Churches. Ceremonies of lodges were not permitted in the buildings, and pastors or lay assistants were not allowed to take part in any such ceremonies.

At the other side of the world, there are the same objections: the Lutheran Church of Australia has a clearly defined negative attitude towards Freemasonry. The Church stated in 1956 that all organizations, whether secret and

oath-bound or open, which are either avowedly religious, or practice the forms of religion, without confessing as a matter of principle the Triune God and Jesus Christ as the Son of God made flesh and our Saviour from sin, are anti-Christian. In other protestant denominations the positions are also very divided. For example the Baptist world is highly divided as far as Freemasonry concerns. Southern Baptists in general and Southern Baptist leaders in particular, have a long history of embracing Freemasonry. A good example is George W. Truett (1867–1944), pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas (1897–1944), president of the Southern Baptist Conference (1927–1929), president of the Baptist World Alliance (1934–1939), and trustee of Baylor University and the South-western Baptist Theological Seminary. He was raised a Master Mason in 1920 in the ‘Dallas Lodge’ No. 760. Other famous devout Baptists were also active Freemasons. A controversial report on Freemasonry was approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1993. It declared that in the light of the fact that many tenets and teachings of Freemasonry are not compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, while others are compatible, it was recommend that, consistent with the denomination’s deep convictions regarding the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local Church, membership in a masonic Order was a matter of personal conscience. Nevertheless, in 2000 the same Convention released a new publication examining Freemasonry’s compatibility with Christianity entitled: *A Closer Look at Freemasonry*.<sup>3</sup> Many Southern Baptist ministers and laypeople were practicing Freemasons, and the resolution caused quite a stir. The pamphlet expands on eight tenets and teachings of Freemasonry that were found to be incompatible with Christianity. The document is not condemning in any way, but simply seeks to put out information so that individuals can arrive at informed conclusions about what they ultimately believe about masonic organizations. Included is a fold-out ‘comparison chart’ detailing positions of Freemasonry, Christianity and the Bible on such issues as ‘God’, ‘Oaths’, ‘Jesus Christ’, and ‘Salvation by Works’. The *Closer Look* concludes by noting that, while many Christians and leaders have been and are Masons, “several points of the lodge’s teachings are non-biblical and non-Christian”. It also states that while Freemasonry encourages and supports charitable activities, it contains both multi-religious and inclusive teachings that are not Christian in its religious instruction. The Baptist Union of Scotland concluded that total obedience to Christ precludes joining any organization such as the masonic movement which seems to demand a whole-hearted allegiance to itself, and at the same

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3 *A Closer Look at Freemasonry* and the original 1993 report on Freemasonry are available electronically at [www.namb.net/interfaith](http://www.namb.net/interfaith). Accessed June 13, 2011.

time refuses to divulge all that is involved in that allegiance prior to joining (*Baptists and Freemasonry* 1980):

...The important question is not whether Freemasonry is itself a religion, but whether the undoubted religious elements in it can be accepted by a committed Christian without the danger of compromising the Christian faith. We do not find the argument convincing. The question arises, Why should a Christian for whom Jesus Christ is the fullness of God and who knows Him as Saviour and Lord wish to belong to a movement whose members when they worship together do not offer Christian worship?

...The clear conclusion we have reached from our enquiry is that there is an inherent incompatibility between Freemasonry and the Christian faith.

*Baptist Union of Scotland report 1987*

The report was endorsed by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and reprinted by the Baptist Union of New Zealand. It is surprising that—apparently—no Baptist Union in Australia has made a public declaration on the issue one way or the other. Meanwhile, Baptist congregations in Australia are not exempt from the influence of Freemasonry, and many Churches have members who are also Freemasons.

In other denominations, such as the Assemblies of God, the position is also clear: it is not the only Church group to have great concerns about secret Orders. The Assemblies of God do not allow Masons to partake in communion and declare that participation in Masonry is a sin. Article IX of the Assemblies of God Bylaws includes an entire section on forbidding membership of secret Orders (*Assemblies of God Bylaws* 2010).

### Religious Objections

In conclusion, one can note that during the last decades Freemasonry has been subject to attacks from various sections of the Protestant community. The attacks fall into two main groups. First, that Freemasonry is a secret society, secondly, that it is a religion and anti-Christian. Because of the desire for privacy it is seen as a pretext for hiding wrong-doing. On the other hand the Presbyterian Church of Queensland noted in 1987 that Freemasonry transgresses the first three Commandments by its use of titles and attributes of God not revealed in Scripture. For the Presbyterian Church of Queensland

Freemasonry has all the hallmarks of religion. Technically and practically, it is a religion. It meets in a Temple; around a holy Book (the Bible and/or the Qur'an and so on); sings its own hymns; is directed by an official called the 'Most Worshipful Master'; and prays to the 'Great Architect of the Universe'. Since, in the final analysis, the Bible alone is the only guide for faith and practice, issues related to Freemasonry and any other fraternal organizations, especially secret societies, must only be evaluated, in the opinion of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, in the light of this plumb line of Scripture. Another related objection is that Freemasonry, on its own admission, is eclectic and syncretistic, and thus, according to the critics, anti-Christian. It amalgamates strands from many religions into one lodge meeting. This same Presbyterian Church of Queensland claims that Freemasonry has considerable religious character and atmosphere and is not restricted to one belief but embracing elements common to all recognised world religions. Freemasonry is therefore a syncretistic religion, with a syncretistic worship.

But the important question for most of the evangelical and right wing Protestant Churches is not whether Freemasonry is itself a religion, but whether the undoubted religious elements in it can be accepted by a committed Christian without the danger of compromising the Christian faith. Freemasonry, in not referring to Christ in the rituals of the first three degrees, implicitly—according to evangelicals—obscures even the Father, only speaking about the Grand Architect of the Universe. For instance, the Missouri synod objected against the lambskin given to the candidate in the Entered Apprentice degree: he, who wears the lambskin as the badge of a Freemason, is constantly reminded of that purity of life and conduct which is necessary for gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides (Quoted from an American ritual, such as *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor*, edition 1976: 50). But Paul affirms in his epistle to the Galatians that, "by works of the law shall no one be justified...for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Galatians 2:16, 21). So, according to the critics, the commitment within the movement is inconsistent with a Christian's commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord. It is possible that some Christians who join fraternal organizations do so only for social purposes with little or no thought about their actual principles. However, one who is associated with them can hardly be committed to two opposing views. Salvation by works and salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ are simply incompatible positions. Eventually a choice must be made (*The Lutheran Witness* [10-2007]). The same problems arise with those Orders that are Christian and require their members to be Christian. Evangelicals and orthodox Protestants regard these Orders as being wholly blasphemous. Commitment

to secret Orders and their teachings leads to a wrong emphasis on salvation through good works and improving society.

The report of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention commended in March 1993 Freemasonry for its works of charity and education, and for upholding values such as honesty, integrity, industry and moral character; but also noted several incompatibilities, such as the use of offensive titles such as Worshipful Master, bloody oaths and obligations, the pagan and occult nature of many of the Masonic writings, the Bible's shared role among other items in masonic lodges, the doctrine of salvation by works, the doctrine of universalism (i.e. that all humans will be saved), and the refusal of most American masonic lodges to admit Afro-Americans to membership.

### Conclusion

It is undeniable that modern Freemasonry was organized under Protestant influences and found itself automatically in the turmoil of ecclesiastical turbulence. In the Anglo-Saxon world there is still a large majority of Protestant and Anglican Freemasons in the lodges. In these countries Protestantism and Freemasonry share the belief that God also can be worshipped through life and work in everyday life. Nevertheless, today it is clear that the position of the Protestant and Evangelical Churches and communities is characterised by a great variety. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Reformed and Lutheran Churches created synergies and antinomies, related to the political, religious and ideological situation, and the moment in history. But most of the criticisms were formulated in the second part of the twentieth century and are circulating on the Internet. Today anti-masons still have difficulty in understanding that worldwide Masonry does not have an official voice, and that freedom of thought and expression is a basic principle of the Order. On the other hand, mainstream Protestants argue positively from this point of view, that the fraternity is beneficial and non-religious, generates respect for the evangelical presence among people of high calibre, and opens the way to serve God in society in general. They like to emphasize that the new Basic Principles for Grand Lodge recognition, have underlined in 1989 that all Freemasons under the jurisdiction of a Regular Grand Lodge must take their Obligations on or in full view of the Volume of the Sacred Law (i.e. the Bible) or the book held sacred by the man concerned. Consequently, they emphasize the need for religious tolerance and the fact that so far, no responsible authority has held that a Freemason must believe in the Bible or any

part of it, but that it is the Great Moral Light in Masonry, and only a general rule and guide for moral practice.

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# Freemasonry and Judaism<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Jan van Pelt*

## Introduction

The relations between Freemasonry, Judaism, Jews, and Freemasons have attracted the attention of many buffs, bigots, and conspiracy theorists, and as a result the vast majority of information on the topic is pernicious and delusional drivel. In this contribution I seek to offer some solid ground amidst the quicksand by means of a very quick overview of the *religious* and *social* aspects of these real or imagined ties while providing a more substantial discussion of the *political* and *apocalyptic* aspects. The intrinsic significance of all four connections is little, yet, tragically, the extrinsic importance of the limited political association between Jews and Freemasons has been significant, while the extrinsic impact of the imagined apocalyptic aspect has been catastrophic.

## The Religious Aspect

Both Freemasons and Jews and their enemies have commented on the apparent influence of Judaism on Freemasonry. In the late eighteenth century the German officer Ernst August Anton Göchhausen, who is today remembered as a whistleblower about the allegedly nefarious aims of the Illuminati, confidently proclaimed that “no order bears more revealing marks or birthmarks—let me emphasize this very appropriate word—than the symbolism of masonry, which is centered on the purest Jewish hieroglyphics. All its implements, cloths, institutions, instructions, as well as its history—it has been published—are a heap of Hebraic imagery” (Göchhausen 1786: 398). In the 1890s the Most Reverend Johann Gabriel Léon Louis Meurin, Titular Archbishop of Nisibis and Bishop of Port-Louis (Mauritius) wrote that “everything in Freemasonry is fundamentally Jewish, exclusively Jewish, enthusiastically Jewish, from the beginning to the end” (Meurin 1893: 260). And in the late nineteenth century

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1 I thank Jan Snoek, Henrik Bogdan and Miriam Greenbaum for their patience, critical comments and valuable suggestions.

the Italian rabbi Elijah Banamozegh, a radically unorthodox and universalist thinker who believed in the unity of Judaism with all other religions, observed in his *Israel et Humanité* (*Israel and Humanity*) that “Judaism has been accused of forming a sort of Freemasonry” and that it is certain that “the theology of Freemasonry is quite similar to that of the Kabbalah” and that “the Aggadah was the popular form of a secret discipline whose initiation methods bore the most striking resemblances to Freemasonry” (Benamozegh 1995: 78). But are such assertions and allegations true?

Freemasonry developed in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Britain. It was created by mostly Anglicans in the midst of a Christian society. In the early modern period Christians were completely ignorant of and disinterested in the reality of rabbinical Judaism, that is the form into which Pharisaic Judaism evolved after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Whatever they thought they knew about Judaism was the result of the fact that the Christian Bible encompassed the so-called ‘Old Testament’, which was by and large identical to the Judaic *Tanakh*. Judaic in origin, the Old Testament was a Christian document, interpreted by Christian theologians from a Christian perspective in order to show the so-called economy of salvation—that is the idea that Christ recapitulated and fulfilled in his passion and resurrection the whole of human history (Tillich 1972: 43 ff). But the Old Testament was not equal to the New Testament.

As one of the founding texts of Christendom, the Old Testament was a source of inspiration for those who created and developed within Christian, European civilization institutions, organizations, and movements, including Freemasonry. But does that mean that as a result we may speak here of Jewish influence? I do not think so. The Hebrew religion influenced Pharisaic Judaism, which in turn influenced Christianity, which influenced Christian culture, which influenced European civilization. Therefore if we find Old Testament themes in, for example, Freemasonry, then we must follow the chain of influence in proper order, moving from the closest relation to the most remote. In other words, we have to assume first that the presence of the Old Testament theme is a manifestation of the dominance of Christian culture within European Civilization, then we might look at the Christian religion, and so on. Only if we can see that the apparently Old Testament theme is in fact directly derived from the *Tanakh* without the mediation of the Christian Bible, Christian religion, and Christian culture may we define it as a token of influence of Pharisaic Judaism—but even then not necessarily of rabbinical Judaism, which is, like Christianity, a daughter of Pharisaic Judaism.

There is no evidence that the most important Old Testament stories, themes and symbols that found their way into Freemasonry were directly derived from

the Tanakh (these texts are 2 Samuel 24, 1 Chronicles 21, 1 Kings 5, 2 Chronicles 2; see Nepveu 2003a: 102–134). In fact, they are clearly derived from the King James translation of the Bible. Therefore these are all examples of a Christian legacy. Stories or themes from the five books of Moses, which is the core text of Judaism, do not figure much in the lodge, and the key story in the Jewish tradition, the Exodus from Egypt and God's revelation of the Law to Moses, has no place in it at all. The main Old Testament theme that is used in Freemasonry, the construction of the Temple of Solomon, is used in an allusive, Christian sense in that it always refers to what is essentially a New Testament concept: a spiritual temple that is not built by hands but arises as a building of living stones, which of course refers to the community of Freemasons in particular or humanity in general in its perfected state (these ideas go back to 1 Peter 2, 1 Corinthians 3, 2 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 6, Ephesians 2; see Nepveu 2003b: 135–168).

Rabbinical Judaism had no influence on Freemasonry. Christian theologians did not accept the Jewish tradition that God had revealed to Moses not only the written law, but also an oral law that allowed interpreters of the Torah to resolve apparent puzzles and contradictions within the written law. Therefore they rejected the three important bodies of sacred writings that were generated by the oral law and that were codified by the rabbis in the centuries after the destruction of the Temple. In fact, Christian theologians considered the transcript of the oral tradition known as the *Mishnah*, the record of the debates on the Mishnah known as the *Talmud* and a collection of commentaries on the Tanakh known as the *Midrash* with great hostility. They postulated that Christianity had superseded (Pharisaic) Judaism, and that therefore Judaism had only one purpose: to remain as a fossilized witness of the legitimacy of Christianity until the return of Christ. While Christian theologians accepted that pre-Christian Judaism had a historic significance in so far that it was the location of the Old Covenant, they could not accept that Judaism had continued to evolve in the Christian era (Maccoby 1982: 20 ff). The importance which Jews gave to the rabbinical writings, especially the Talmud, was seen as an attack on the authority of the Christian Scripture because it suggested that the New Testament was not the only possible conclusion to the Tanakh.

A few isolated fragments of these rabbinical writings ended up in Freemasonry by means of the Judaic and after that also Christian *Kabbalah* ('receiving') (see Eched 2000: 9–46). The Kabbalah is a medieval offshoot of rabbinical Judaism. Most rabbis consider this phenomenon with suspicion if not hostility because kabbalists crossed an important epistemological and ethical boundary set by the Talmud: Jews, the Talmud suggested, ought not try to unveil the secrets of Creation. Therefore the Talmud forbid scholars to

expound on the passages of Genesis that described the creation of the world, and to comment on the first chapter of Ezekiel, which told of the prophet's vision of the celestial chariot. In the thirteenth-century some Jewish scholars challenged this (voluntary) limitation of enquiry, and claimed the existence of a *secret* tradition that went back to Moses and that provided access to the hidden meanings of the Tanakh, Mishnah, Talmud and Midrash. This secret tradition focused on the very chapters of Genesis and Ezekiel that the Talmud had declared to be forbidden territory and was embodied in (allegedly) ancient texts hitherto unknown to the rabbis. The most important of these were a treatise entitled *Sefer Yezira* ("Book of Creation") and the book *Zohar* ("Splendor"). These books united in an absolutely original manner theogony, cosmogony, cosmology and the earlier rabbinical traditions.

In the fifteenth century Christian philosophers adopted some parts of the Kabbalah in a Christian mystical tradition that blended neo-Platonism, Hermeticism, science, magic, some Jewish non-kabbalistic writings and elements from the Kabbalah proper in an amalgam of speculations that amongst other purposes, aimed at the conversion of Jews to Christianity. While main-line Christian theologians continued to reject the rabbinical writings because they competed with the New Testament, these heterodox if not heretical philosophers were willing to accept the Jewish esoteric teachings because their Jewish champions claimed that they either went back to God's Revelation on Mount Sinai, or that they dated from around the time of Christ—and also because they carried an explicit universalistic message. Yet the Christian interpreters kept a distance to the core elements of kabbalistic teaching, which related to the secret of Creation, the emergence of the world out of the Godhead, or the mystical concept of the *Shekinah* (literally 'dwelling'), which envisions the presence of God on earth. Christian traditions offered all of that. But Christian exegesis did not offer something like the kabbalist speculations on the meaning of words which centered on the ambiguity, flexibility and numerological values of the Hebrew alphabet, and which the Kabbalah had borrowed from the rabbinical writings. Christian kabbalists were fascinated by the way numerology allowed them to draw new meanings from well-known texts (Dan 2006: 66). And it gave sanction to an existing tradition that had a neo-Platonic genealogy and which, by labeling it with Kabbalah, was pulled into the Christian tradition. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, alchemy and astrology became part of the mix, as well as so-called Rosicrucian ideas. The result was that, as the historian of Kabbalah Joseph Dan observed, "Kabbalah, in different spellings, became a common term in European Languages, indicating in an imprecise manner anything that was ancient, mysterious, magical, and to some extent dangerous. It became an adjective that

was used in various ways, often without a clear connection to either the Hebrew sources or even the original works of the Christian kabbalists” (Dan 2006: 67). Christian kabbalists now focused on magic, and European Kabbalah fully separated from Judaic Kabbalah. It appears that this de-Judaized form of Kabbalah had some influence on various masonic ideas and practices. As in the case of the possible influence of the Tanakh on Freemasonry, also here we observe that a non-Judaic link connects the Judaic original to the masonic interpretation.

A final observation. While Freemasonry is ostensibly built on the traditions of common workmen, it has consistently pushed these into a realm of an aristocratic concern with the larger questions of life. When Masons come together, they aim at no less than to build a universal Temple of Humanity. Judaism, however, has a much more limited aim. It offers, in the words of the eminent Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel, “a theology of the common deed, of the trivialities of life, dealing not so much with the training for the exceptional as with the management of the trivial” (Heschel 1951: 271). The masonic temple and the synagogue stand universes apart.

### The Social Aspect

The story about the social significance of Freemasonry for Jews is of some interest. In the eighteenth century most of the institutions, organizations, societies and clubs of European civil society did not admit Jews. Yet in England, the Netherlands and France, Jews who were deemed to have the necessary manners, education and sophistication were able to become Freemasons without having to accept Christianity. This tolerance of—admittedly selected—Jews in the lodges arose from the wording of Anderson’s *The Constitutions of the Freemasons* which stated that Freemasonry obliged its members “to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be *good Men and true*, or Man of Honour and Honesty, by Whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish’d” (Anderson 1723: 50). Anderson had drafted this language to allow Christians of different denominations to join the lodge, but because the text did not stipulate explicitly that the candidate had to be a Christian, it suggested that non-Christians might be welcome also. When in 1732 a Jew sought admission to a London lodge, he was admitted, and a precedent having been set, middle-class Jews could join British Freemasonry (Katz 1970: 16). A small number of Jews made use of the opportunity offered. Because in the eighteenth century Jews could not interact elsewhere with gentiles in a structured social setting, the

emancipation of the Jews within Freemasonry can be considered to be an interesting laboratory to study various aspects of Jewish-Christian relations before the political and civic emancipation of the modern age (Katz 1970; Van Pelt 1979: 59–64). There is no doubt that some Jews may have derived great satisfaction from the participation in the work of the lodge. And we must assume also that friendships with non-Jewish Freemasons may have resulted from this. But it does not appear that, in the eighteenth century, the presence of a few Jews in a relatively small number of lodges influenced the emancipation of Jewry as a whole. And neither does it appear that each Jewish Freemason gained much social credit from his initiation in society at large. The Russian philosopher Alexander Piatigorsky noted that Freemasonry does not require its members to change their lives. While Freemasonry provides an “additional religious and ethical quality” to the private mode of life of each Freemason, the focus of activity remains “inward within Masonry itself” (Piatigorsky 1997: 14). The core of this activity is, of course, the ritual—but in contrast to religious rituals, masonic ritual does not intercede with the world outside the lodge. “It is the game that matters most, not the team or the club, nor even obtaining a result that has any meaning beyond the Ritual itself”. As a result Freemasonry “became abstracted—for want of a better word—from the socio-cultural conditions of the world” (Piatigorsky 1997: 345f.). Remaining something apart from the world, Jewish membership of the lodges in the eighteenth century remains at best a footnote in the history of the origins of the Jewish emancipation.

In the nineteenth century, when Jews (had) gained in most European countries political and civil rights, the lodges remained generally irrelevant to the social emancipation of the Jews. I use the qualifier ‘generally’ because in nineteenth-century France and Italy Freemasons sometimes chose to actively engage in the religious, civic and political realms as representatives of what they defined as masonic values or a masonic ideology, and membership of a masonic lodge could also pay significant dividends in a person’s social position. Such an engagement with society earned these Freemasons the hostility of political opponents and also led to an automatic break with the United Grand Lodge of England and the ‘regular’ masonic jurisdictions connected to it. Regular or not, these men considered themselves as Freemasons; everyone around them saw them as Freemasons, and so they’re part of the history of Freemasonry—even if many members of the regular jurisdictions wished this were different. In the nineteenth century the so-called Jewish Question became a focus in political battle of the Catholic Church against the Government of the Third Republic and the since 1877 ‘irregular’ Grand Orient de France. While this story has a significant *social* dimension, and might have been

discussed in this section of this contribution, it is primarily remembered for its massive political significance, and hence I have chosen to discuss it in the section on the political aspect of Jewish-masonic relations.

The twentieth century has also provided enough evidence of the general irrelevancy of Freemasonry within the social history of the Jews. When, in 1920s Germany, National Socialists and others on the right began to call for a reversal of the emancipation of the Jews, the great majority of German Freemasons did not offer any resistance, and the chill that began to characterize the attitudes of most Germans towards German Jews also changed the atmosphere in the lodges. By 1930 a few principled Christian and many Jewish Freemasons had enough of it, and established the *Symbolische Grossloge von Deutschland* (Symbolic Grand Lodge of Germany). The creation of this new masonic jurisdiction which was to have mainly Jewish members was a symbol of the failure of German Freemasonry as a tool of emancipation. Significantly, the Symbolic Grand Lodge was the first masonic jurisdiction to close its doors after the Nazi *Machtsübernahme*. Yet it did not close down as an organization. In June 1933 Grand Master Leo Müffelmann, a Christian, convened in a (for once) explicitly conspirational manner the key members of the Grand Lodge in a secret meeting in Frankfurt am Main, and they decided on the transference of the Symbolic Grand Lodge to Palestine. In November 1933 Müffelmann brought the masonic light to Jerusalem. On his return to Germany, Müffelmann was arrested. He died that same year as a result of the mistreatment during his imprisonment. Working in the German language, the members of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Germany in Exile were almost all German-Jewish refugees. Between 1935, when the last remaining German Grand Lodge closed, and 1949, when Freemasonry officially returned to Germany, the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Germany in Exile preserved, in conjunction with a lodge in Chile established by the Grand Lodge of Hamburg, the continuity of German Freemasonry. Thus German Freemasonry, which had not even tried to protect its Jewish brethren when they faced social and political discrimination, remained alive thanks to the fidelity of German-Jewish Freemasons working in Palestine (Neuberger 2001: 129ff., 165, 226f.; Appel 2002: 10, 44).

With the establishment of the State of Israel, the topic defined by the concept of social emancipation, Freemasons and Jews acquired a new twist. Israel was established as a Jewish State, and while non Jews have full civil and political rights, the fact remains that many of them feel that they are second-class citizens nevertheless. In addition, Israel has been since the day of its proclamation in a state of war with first all and now some of its Arab neighbors, and this has also contributed to unease and distrust between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. Has Israeli Freemasonry been able to make a difference?

Let's begin with some history. If we ignore the mythic beginnings of Freemasonry in biblical times, modern masonic activities in the Holy Land officially began in 1873 when American-Christian settlers living in Jaffa obtained a charter from the Grand Lodge of Canada for the Royal Solomon Mother Lodge. The lodge did not prosper, and after a few years it effectively closed. Around 1890 Arab and Jewish Freemasons established a lodge under the Rite of Memphis-Misraim, based in Paris. This lodge blossomed when French engineers involved in the construction of the Jaffa-Jerusalem railroad joined. In 1906 the lodge changed its affiliation to the Grand Orient of France. During the British Mandate (1921–1948) various lodges operated in Palestine under the Grand Lodges of Egypt, Scotland and England, the Grand Orient of France and, of course, the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Germany in Exile. It appears that most Arab Freemasons belonged to the Grand Lodge of Egypt. In 1948 many of the Arabic-speaking lodges closed—a reflection of the politics of separation that resulted from the partition vote in the United Nations and the war that followed the end of the British Mandate.

In 1953, five years after the proclamation of the State of Israel, the lodges organized in the various masonic jurisdictions in Israel joined into the Grand Lodge of the State of Israel. This Grand Lodge includes Arabic-speaking lodges in the Galilee and Acco, and in its symbolism it affirmed the equality of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions. Within the lodges Jewish-Arab encounters appear easy—a clear contrast to the suspicion that characterizes Jewish-Arab relations in civil society. But, in the same way that in the past European Freemasonry did not make any difference to the emancipation of European Jews, so today Israeli Freemasonry does not seem to have much, or any, impact on Jewish-Arab social relations in general (see Zeldis n.d.; Zeldis 2004).

### **The Political Aspect**

The story of the assumed and real political relationships between Freemasonry and Jews—or between Jews and Freemasons, or organized Judaism and Freemasons—is a tale that has become part of a toxic mythology that is full of lies, confusions, falsifications, half-truths and, at best, badly-understood truths.<sup>2</sup> The plot of this story is the way ultramontane Roman Catholics in Italy

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2 Anyone who seeks to do original work in the field does well to begin with consulting the following works: the entry 'Jude' in Lennhoff and Posner (1932: 790–798); Cohn (1967); Katz (1970); Roberts (1972); Neuberger (1980); Cubitt (1991: 121–136); von Bieberstein (1992);



and France came to believe that Jews and Freemasons were joined in a global conspiracy that aimed to overthrow the union of Throne and Altar and create a secular and democratic society that turned its back to the revealed truths of Christendom.<sup>3</sup>

The narrative begins in the shadow of the guillotine. In 1791 the forty-nine-year-old Jesuit priest Augustin Barruel fled revolutionary France (on Barruel see Roberts 1972: 188–202). In England he joined other exiles who spent their time looking for causes of the disaster that had befallen them. Barruel picked up a simple but brilliant explanation first proposed by the conservative English man of letters Edmund Burke: everything, from the fall of the Bastille to the establishment of the Republic and the execution of the former King had been the result of a conspiracy. Burke believed that the plot had been hatched by Enlightenment *philosophes* such as Voltaire, Diderot and their associates (Burke 1968: 211ff.). The French exiles appreciated the notion that a ‘cabal’ had caused the revolution: no need to consider the possibility that they might have harvested what they had sown.

Barruel picked up Burke’s idea, and made it more combative when he substituted the Freemasons for the *philosophes*. The ideas of men like Voltaire and Rousseau may have been attractive to those who believed in the emancipation of the human being from the tutelage of the Church or objectionable to those who believed in the unity of Altar and Throne, but neither friend or foe had any doubt as to what they proposed. But no-one really knew what the Freemasons stood for—if they stood for anything at all. Piatigorsky noted that because the lodge was divorced from the social reality of the world surrounding it, it became an object of unease because society did not know how to read this social, political and religious non-involvement. “It is irritated by the non-involvement of Freemasonry, which it condemns for its unseriousness, while strongly suspecting at the same time that it *must* be maliciously or anti-socially involved: no social institution can *really* be indifferent to society” (Piatigorsky 1997: 345). In addition the fact that Freemasons could not talk about the rituals with outsiders was a problem. “Whatever cannot become the object of discourse ... may find a human voice through which to sound into the world, but it is not exactly human” (Arendt 1968: 24f.), the German-Jewish political philosopher Hannah Arendt observed. By symbolically removing

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Taguieff (1992); Pfahl-Traugher (1993); Nefontaine and Schreiber (2000); Heil (2002: 40–48); Meyer zu Uptrup (2003); Goldschläger and Lemaire (2005); Wippermann (2007: 47–57).

3 The adjective ultramontane refers to Roman Catholics who defend the temporal and spiritual sovereignty of the Pope over the Papal States against modernizers in the Church.

itself from the shared space of society, the lodge came to occupy an ambiguous in-between-state that disturbed the visible order of society and suggested its nature as an immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady force (Kristeva 1982: 4).

The secrecy of the lodges had already led in 1738 to a Papal condemnation of Freemasonry, and since that date Catholics who became Freemasons were excommunicated. This had led to a breakdown between the Church and the lodge, which had led to distrust, suspicion, fear and even hatred. For a Catholic it made eminent sense to identify Freemasons as conspirators. And for a Jesuit like Barruel it made even more sense because the Jesuits had been often identified as Machiavellian plotters. The Jesuit Order was a product of the Counter-Reformation, and Protestants and the Catholic establishment regarded the centralized, efficient and global organization with awe, suspicion, and fear. Jesuits were credited with the assassinations of the leader of the Dutch Revolt, William of Orange, of King Henry III and King Henry IV of France, and they were accused of having been responsible for the Massacre of St. Bartholemew, the invasion of Ireland, the Gunpowder Plot, the Thirty Years War, and the Great Fire of London. Jesuits stood accused of being agents of the King of Spain, and as the Spanish Kingdom was in the sixteenth century a global power, Jesuits came to be seen as agents of a global ambition (Burke 2002: 165–182). Barruel had experienced the full impact of the legend when in 1764 he and other Jesuits were expelled from France on suspicion of plotting against the monarchy, finding a refuge in the Habsburg lands. Accused of being a part of a conspiracy, Barruel had no difficulty to delineate another such conspiracy when he found himself a refugee over again in the 1790s. In fact, he was to project on the Freemasons many of the accusations that had been formulated against the Jesuits. But, as we shall see, he introduced also some significant innovations.

In 1797 Barruel proposed in his *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme* (*Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*) that the French Revolution was a masonic plot to destroy Christendom in revenge for the suppression of the Order of the Templars in the fourteenth century. Barruel posited that the Templars had survived in secret, and infiltrated the Freemasons and a Bavarian secret society known as the Illuminati who, in turn, had laid the foundations for the Revolution and directed the policies of its most radical faction, the Jacobins. Every development in the French Revolution had been premeditated in secrecy (Barruel 1799: Vol. 1, xii). Barruel provided the basic narrative that postulated a single, centuries long conspiracy to destroy Christendom. In that, he moved ahead from earlier forms of conspiracy theories which usually concerned intrigues at court or

plots against a foreign power conducted by public figures. Hatched for reasons of immediate and personal gain, the nefarious schemes that held the attention of the eighteenth-century public had a limited aim and a relatively short duration. Barruel broke with precedent. If the earlier descriptions of conspiracies had aimed to reveal the hidden agendas of a few public figures that could be described in a pamphlet, Barruel claimed to reveal the activities of thousands hidden political actors who were all members of a few tightly-knit and interconnected organizations that were involved in a single, enormous conspiracy that covered the world, spanned centuries, and required the compilation of four massive volumes. Because the conspiracy that connected Templars, Freemasons, Illuminati and Jacobins had proven to be both durable and global, it was capable of absorbing crushing defeats without losing its ability to destroy Christendom. The theory of a single, large and durable conspiracy also made the conspiracy-theory itself universal and sturdy, creating a flexible framework of interpretation that would be able to assimilate new developments (see Cubitt 1993: 298ff.).

Shortly after the publication of the first two volumes of Barruel's *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme* appeared *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe, carried on in the secret meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies* (Robison 1797). Its author was the Scottish physicist John Robison. The latter's book covered some of the terrain explored by Barruel, but did not push the idea of a centuries' long conspiracy that went back to the Templars. For Robison, the conspiracy had begun with the Illuminati. In his magisterial *Warrant for Genocide*, Norman Cohn claimed that while he was working on his *Mémoires*, Barruel visited Robison in Edinburgh, and that the latter had shown the Frenchman his own manuscript—suggesting that the Scotsman inspired the Frenchman. Sadly, Cohn did not provide a source for this interesting assertion (Cohn 1967: 31). What is clear is that Barruel's *magnum opus* both created and defined the subsequent public discussion on the topic, and that Robison's book, justly or unjustly, only played a marginal part.

In his vision of a centuries' old global conspiracy, Barruel had no place for the Jews. From the twelfth century onwards Jews had been accused of being engaged in local, small-scale conspiracies to obtain the blood of Christian children, and when the Black Death hit Europe in the mid fourteenth century they also faced the accusation of having poisoned wells. But they had never been accused of being involved in a massive political conspiracy of the sort described by Barruel. And it would not have made sense: Jews were too powerless and too much segregated from Christian society, and they were not seen as a challenge to Christian dominance. This also explains the odd conclusion that the

Protestant Göchhausen made when, in 1786, he had defined the symbolism of Freemasonry as “purest Jewish hieroglyphics” and “a heap of Hebraic imagery”. Göchhausen did not see this as signs that Freemasons were the tools of Jews, but that the Jesuits ran the lodges (Göchhausen 1786: 398ff.). In Göchhausen’s time, a global *Jewish* conspiracy was still unimaginable.

The perceived position of the Jews changed when Emperor Napoleon I re-established in 1807 the Great Sanhedrin and established Judaism as the third official religion in France. For the first time in the history of Christendom, Jews were officially linked to political power (on Napoleon’s motivation to associate himself with the Jews see Schechter 2003: 198ff.). In Russia the Holy Synod was the first to raise the alarm. “[Napoleon] is daring to bring together all the Jews whom the anger of God has dispersed over the face of the earth, and launch all of them into the destruction of the Church of Christ” (as quoted in Poliakov 1975: Vol. 3, 278f.). In France conservatives and the Catholic hierarchy were equally enraged, but they had to approach the matter more diplomatically. Barruel approached Joseph Cardinal Fesch, Archbishop of Lyon and an uncle of Napoleon, and Joseph Fouché, the Minister of Police. He informed them that an Italian soldier Jean-Baptiste [sic] Simonini had berated him in a letter for having forgotten to describe the conspirational role of the Jews. Simonini claimed that the apparent separation between Jews and the Freemasons, the Jacobins and the Illuminati was only an appearance. “The Jews with all of these other sects are a single faction that seeks to annihilate, if possible, the Christian name”. Their goal was “to be within the next century masters of the world, to abolish all other sects in order to make their own supreme, to make as many synagogues as there were Christian churches, and to reduce the remaining [Christians] to genuine slavery” (“Lettre de Jean-Baptiste Simonini au Père Augustin Barruel (1878)”, in Airiau 2002: 56ff.). The letter was most likely a fabrication, produced by collaborators of Fouché, who disapproved of Napoleon’s policy towards the Jews. Barruel’s intervention seemed to have the desired effect. Cardinal Fesch leaned on his nephew, and the Sanhedrin was disbanded. The Jewish Question disappeared from the frontpages. Barruel decided not to revise his *Mémoires pour servir à l’Histoire du Jacobinisme*—fearing that it would lead to a massacre of the Jews.

While the assumption of the existence of a universal masonic conspiracy and Napoleon’s establishment of the Great Sanhedrin had created the possibility of a convincing narrative of a Judeo-masonic conspiracy, the story had not found yet what Thomas Mann defined as the particular *Geist der Erzählung*, or “spirit of story-telling” which is the necessary form the story of a Judeo-masonic plot must assume in order to be believable (Mann 1951: 3ff.). Two examples illustrate this. In 1815 appeared an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Le Nouveau*

*judaisme ou la Franc-Maçonnerie dévoilée: Réflexions nouvelles sur les malheurs de l'Europe et de la France en particulier* (*The New Judaism and Freemasonry Unmasked: New Reflections on the Misfortunes of Europe and France in Particular*). Picking up on references to the tribe of Judah and the village Nazareth in the masonic degree of Knight of the Rose Croix, the author expanded on these obviously Christian symbols (Jesus belonged to the Tribe of Judah and grew up in Nazareth) by writing that “we are not at all surprised that the Freemasons are the strongest persecutors of the children of the Church: they are Jews, . . . they come from Juda, they have passed Nazareth, they look for the Nazarean Jesus; and, on the orders of King Herod, they have massacred the innocents under the age of two ...” (Anon 2007: 44). This association between Freemasons and regicides and Jews as Christocides did not go far: no-one followed up the suggestion. Also Johann Christian Ehrmann’s *Das Judenthum in der Maurerey: Eine Warnung an allen deutschen Logen* (*Judaism in Masonry: A Warning to all German lodges*) had little impact. Ehrmann lived in Frankfurt—a city that was home to the largest Jewish community in Germany. In 1816 he claimed that a Jewish lodge, established during the Napoleonic era in Frankfurt under the auspices of the French Grand Lodge, might become a tool of Jews to penetrate into Freemasonry. German Freemasons should resist this because Jews were secret agents of the exiled Emperor “holding the threads of a conspiracy which extends not only to France, but also to Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, and whose goals consist of nothing less than world revolution” (as quoted in Poliakov 1975: Vol. 3, 284). Bad enough—but in scope this plot still belonged to the Eighteenth Century as it was linked to one mortal individual, and not to a timeless organization.

During the years of the Restoration few people were interested in the actual or possible conspiracy of Freemasons and Jews to overthrow Throne and Altar. With the Congress of Vienna, Europe had been reconstructed around “the Holy Alliance” of three conservative monarchies—Russia, Prussia and Austria, and the statesmen in Moscow, Berlin and Vienna were united in their opposition to the ideals of 1789. The Pope recovered the Papal States, re-established the Jesuit Order, and forced the Roman Jews back into the ghetto (Kertzer 2001: 25ff.). In France the Bourbons restored the monarchy. If in the 1790s, opponents of the revolution had turned to conspiracy theories to explain the sudden and dramatic destruction of the old order, liberals did not need the hypothesis of a large conspiracy to understand Napoleon’s defeat and the muddle of the Restoration. The word hubris and the memory of the ill-fated March on Moscow explained enough. Yet there were many who believed that the Jesuits had played a central role in the Counter-Revolution of 1813–15 (Michelet and Quinet, 1846: 3).

In many of its elements, the fantasy of a global Jesuit conspiracy that had steered events towards the Restoration was a mirror-image of the earlier fantasy of a masonic plot to destroy the *Ancien Régime*. Yet there were also important innovations which, after they had been articulated for the Jesuit conspiracy, would subsequently shape the perception of a Judeo-masonic plot. The first one is that the concept of a masonic plot had remained the concern of a small group of reactionaries, while the belief in a Jesuit plot was shared by the man in the street. Furthermore, discussions of the alleged masonic plot were abstract, while the alleged Jesuit plot became the object of romantic imaginings. The French novelist Eugène Sue made Jesuit machinations the plot of his best-selling novel *Le Juif Errant* (*The Wandering Jew*), and described the international reach of the infernal Jesuit Order in graphic detail (Sue n.d.: 111f.). Novelists like Sue breathed life into the abstraction of conspiracy by making it part of popular culture. A romantic view of sinister conspirators would soon be applied to Jews: influenced by Sue's novel, the German journalist Hermann Ottomar Fredrich Goetsche published under the pseudonym Sir John Retcliffe the thirteen-volume novel *Biarritz* (1868) in which he described in the first volume a mid-nightly meeting in the Jewish cemetery in Prague of a sinister cabal of rabbis, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, who reported on the success of their efforts to achieve world domination (Retcliffe 1868–1878: Vol. 1, 141–193). If *Le Juif Errant* firmly planted the subversive Jesuit in the popular imagination, *Biarritz* did the same for the perfidious Jew. Finally an important innovation in the conspiracy theory was that Jesuit influence operated through the so-called *Congrégation*, a large lay organization devoted to piety and good works. As the lay members of the *Congrégation* were fully integrated in society in general and the political institutions in particular, the extent of the reach and impact of the conspiracy became even more difficult to define (Cubitt 1993: 81f.). This construction of a compact inner body controlling society through a large outer circle had, of course, its roots in Barruel's theory of the conspiracy of the Illuminati. But with Barruel everything had remained at the level of abstract speculation. The Jesuit Order and the *Congrégation* were actual and powerful organizations that visibly influenced social and political developments.

Sue's *Le Juif Errant* and Goetsche's *Biarritz* suggest how romanticism allowed the concept of a global conspiracy to enter the collective imagination. Romanticism also influenced the topos of a Judeo-masonic plot in a second manner by proclaiming the value of personal journeys into the depths of the soul. Charles Baudelaire brought back from this shadowy world of repressed imagination his *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857). Another Frenchman, Alphonse Louis Constant, found a gate that opened to the forgotten world of magic. A lapsed

priest and an intellectual charlatan, Constant, who became known under the alias Éliphas Lévi, single-handedly revived magic in the modern age. In his main work *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* (published in English as *Transcendental Magic: Its Doctrine and Ritual*) Lévi postulated the existence of a single esoteric doctrine that spanned history from the beginning of time to the present. Lévi believed that Freemasonry was a late manifestation of this single tradition, and that it had been shaped by the Kabbalah (Lévi 1910: 3, 19f.).

Lévi's romantic postulation that Kabbalah was the core of an esoteric tradition that went back to the beginnings of time and that embraced also Freemasonry convinced the reactionary, ultramontane aristocrat Henri Roger Chevalier Gougenot des Mousseaux that Freemasons and Jews had been involved in a centuries- if not millennia-long conspirational association, and that their conspiracy was responsible for the decline of traditional values in the Second Empire. If it had not made much sense to identify Jews as a powerful force at the time of the meeting of the Great Sanhedrin, it was a more plausible proposition sixty years later. In 1807 less than 3,000 Jews lived in Paris; sixty years later their numbers had increased eightfold (Szajkowski 1946: 314). While many of them were involved in petty commerce, enough of them had created prosperous businesses or joined the professions for the Jewish community as a whole to be seen as up-and-coming. And then there were successful financiers like Emile and Eugene Pereire, Louis Bischoffsheim, and the man who became the face of Jewish finance: James Mayer Rothschild. If one got nervous when one thought about the influence of the Jewish financiers, what about the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (The Universal Israelite Alliance), an international organization established in 1860 that aimed to guarantee the human and civic rights of Jews around the world? The motto of the organization was "all Jews bear responsibility for one another", and it needs no explanation that both its global ambition and its motto provided an antisemite with the evidence of a centralized Jewish policy. The fact that the founder of the Alliance, Adolphe Crémieux, was well-known as a Freemason created another reason for suspicion (see Leff 2006).

Gougenot des Mousseaux saw plots, conspiracies and connections only hinted at before, and in 1869 he published his conclusions in a 570-page long, apparently scholarly tome entitled *Le Juif, Le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des peuples Chrétien* (*The Jew, Judaism and the Judaization of the Christian Nations*). As the title indicated, the central theme of the book was the fact that nineteenth century French society was not only in a process of 'dechristianization'—a worn complaint—but that it was undergoing a process of 'Judaization'. This process was steered by 'the Cabalistic section' of Jewry, a cabal which aimed at world domination and which, according to the writer, used a group of men

“raised with antisocial prejudices, indifferent to any belief, or animated by secret hatred against Christianity”. This was, of course, Freemasonry, which he characterized as “an immense association of which *the few initiates*, that is to say, its real leaders (which one should not confuse with its nominal leaders), live in a tight and intimate alliance with the militant members of Judaism, the princes and initiators of the high Kabbalah!” Gougenot des Mousseaux drove the point home relentlessly. “It is important enough to repeat”, he wrote, “that the elite of the [masonic] Order, the *real* leaders who are only known by *a few initiates*, and then only under assumed names, work in a profitable and secret dependence on Israelite kabbalists”. This elaborate system of control and deception worked because Freemasons were bound by oaths and intimidated by terrible threats. But also because, thanks to the “mysterious constitution” of Freemasonry, its “sovereign counsel” consists of “a majority of Jewish members” (Gougenot des Mousseaux 1869: 339f.). The proposition that Jews used Freemasonry to Judaize the world was clearly inspired by the earlier conspiracy theory that a relatively small cabal of Jesuits controlled the French state through the Congrégation.

Initially *Le Juif, Le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des peuples Chrétien* had little impact. Gougenot des Mousseaux pretended to be a serious scholar, and he wrote in a dense, impenetrable prose. In addition people had other worries at that time: in the year following the publication Napoleon III declared war on Prussia, and this led to a chain of disasters that included the destruction of the French imperial army, the German siege of Paris, the revolutionary government of the Commune, and a civil war in which French troops massacred tens of thousands of Frenchmen. Under such circumstances few had the time or inclination to wrestle with Gougenot des Mousseaux’s language.

The book had a future, however. When the Prussians invaded France, Napoleon III had rushed the French units that had protected the city of Rome from occupation by the Italian army to the frontlines, and the Italian government made use of the opportunity to enter Rome, complete Italian unification, and amongst other things provide full civic and political rights to the Jews. Pope Pius IX, who had begun his papacy as the sovereign ruler of the Papal States and who had consistently resisted Italian unification, refused to accommodate himself to the situation and withdrew into the Vatican as a voluntary ‘prisoner’, excommunicating the whole Italian political establishment (Carlen 1981: Vol. 1, 396f.).

In Italy secularism had triumphed with the Italian occupation of Rome. In France the Church also faced a more difficult time with the collapse of the Second Empire and the establishment of the Third Republic in 1871. Unlike the leaders of the two earlier republics, the leaders of the Third Republic



preferred reform over revolution. They rejected the Jacobin legacy and embraced liberalism and democratic parliamentarism (see Nord 1995: 1ff.). In the Third Republic civil society, which had languished under Napoleon II, revived. Freemasonry became an important political force: forty percent of those who served in the governments of the Third Republic belonged to a lodge. And, unusual in the history of Freemasonry, politics, including religious politics, became a topic of debate within the lodges. This development, which led to a break between the Grand Orient de France and the regular jurisdictions, had its origin in the tight control which the governments of the Second Empire had sought to impose on the lodges. In response to the pressure many Masons had radicalized politically, becoming as a group also opposed to the tight connection between Church and state and supportive of a total secularization of French society. If the general character of the Third Republic was moderate and its elites bourgeois, the Freemasons claimed to preserve ideals that went back to the First Republic, and they did not hesitate to make their position clear in the public realm. In continental Europe, this had not happened before: in society, Freemasons had been invisible as Masons. In the Third Republic they were visible, and to the outsider, they seemed everywhere (Nord 1995: 15ff.).

Not only Freemasons were visibly committed to the Third Republic. Also the Jewish elites embraced the new dispensation (Nord 1995: 64ff.). They believed that Jewish moral teachings had prepared the ground for the republican ideals, that the Republic was a secular incarnation of Jewish values. In the eighteenth century the German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelsohn had stressed how the many contradictions in the Talmud (which was a record of a discussion and not an authoritative doctrine) forced Jews to live in a spirit of ecumenicism: contradiction between rabbinical opinions had led to freedom of conscience (Moses Mendelsohn, letter to Abraham Nathan Wolf, July 11, 1782, in Mendelssohn 1969: 137f.). Ecumenicism within Judaism generated an ecumenicism towards other faiths—which fitted the fundamental republican notion that faith and religion was a private matter. The convergence between the secular and humanitarian ideals of the Third Republic and the Grand Orient de France and what were now seen as Jewish ideals was symbolized in the voluntary ambulance service of the Franco-Prussian war. Its organizers were General Émile Mellinet, former Grand Master of the Grand Orient, and Rabbi Elie-Aristide Astruc, one of the founders of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Degas was to immortalize this alliance in a famous double portrait (Nord 1995: 85).

To many ultramontane Catholics the wretched condition of the Pope, the sufferings of France in 1870–1871 and the establishment of the Third Republic were signs that the End of Days was near. One of those engaged in millenarian speculation was the vicar of the church of Saint André in the 2,600 inhabitants

strong town of Mirebeau, located in the Poitou region (on Chabauty see Multon 1999: 315–331). Speculating on the signs of the time, Father Emmanuel-Augustin Chabauty read how the Pope interpreted in his Encyclical *Etsi Multa* (1873) the attacks on the Church as part of a single global war directed by Freemasons gathered in a ‘synagogue of Satan’ (Carlen 1981: Vol. 1, 433).<sup>4</sup> The concept the ‘synagogue of Satan’ derived from the book of Revelation, where it refers to those “who say that they are Jews and are not” and who slander Christians—that is Jews who do not accept Christ (as Christians have become the true Jews) (Revelation 2:9; 3:9).<sup>5</sup> By using the term, the Pope had suggested that Jews might be involved in the conspiracy to destroy Christendom. Then Chabauty got his hands on *Le Juif, Le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des peuples Chrétien*. He read the book cover-to-cover (one of the few to do so), and then read in 1878 in a Catholic journal a memoir written by the Jesuit priest Fidèle de Grivel. De Grivel recorded that in 1817 he had obtained from his fellow-Jesuit Barruel a letter written by a certain Simonini that suggested a collusion between Jews and Freemasons. The article published the text of the letter (Grivel 1878: 49–70; Simonini’s letter is pp. 58–61, and Barruel’s note on it on page 62). Chabauty now saw the conspiracy in terms of a cosmic drama. He published in 1881, under the alias of C.C. de Saint-André, a 600-page rant entitled *Les Francs-Maçons et les Juifs: Sixieme Age de l’Eglise d’apres l’Apocalypse* (*The Freemasons and the Jews: The Sixth Age of the Church According to the Apocalypse*). According to him, Satan, through the Judeo-masonic conspiracy described by Gougenot de Mousseaux, was preparing the way for the Jewish Antichrist. Interesting theory, but Chabauty had no substantial evidence to back it up. Yet by the time the book was available he had found a smoking gun. In 1880 the newly established journal *Revue des études juives* had published two letters which purportedly came from the late fifteenth century. The first letter, written by the Rabbi of Arles to the Jewish community in Constantinople, reported that the King of France had given the Jews of Provence the choice of conversion or departure, and he welcomed advice. The second letter, written by the “Prince of the Jews in Constantinople”, counseled them to convert, but remain secretly Jews. The bulk of the letter contained advice how these crypto Jews could take revenge on the Christians by taking over the economy as merchants, by killing them as physicians, by undermining their faith as priests, and

4 The part of the encyclical referring to the Masonic conspiracy as a synagogue of Satan was later appended to the Syllabus of Errors that Pius IX issued in 1864 with the encyclical *Quanta cura*.

5 See also Romans 2:29: “He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal”.

by gaining political control by becoming lawyers (Darmesteter 1880: 119–123). The letters were seventeenth-century forgeries, but for Chabauty they provided the missing link that proved the connection between the masonic attack on Christendom and a Jewish cabal and in 1882 he rushed a new book in print to reveal the conspiracy to the world. The book carried the catchy title *Les Juifs, nos maitres!* (*The Jews: Our Masters!*) and was written in an easy-to-read style. Obviously he felt confident about the work as he published it under his own name.

Chabauty postulated that a single, secret Jewish government had existed throughout the diaspora. This government had focused for the first 1,400 years to ameliorate the situation of the Jewish communities, waiting patiently for the arrival of the Messiah. The two letters revealed that in the late fifteenth century this cabal had shifted gears, and from that time until 1789 the Jews had exploited opportunities of penetration as they arose. Since the beginning of the French Revolution Jews were engaged in a holy war “to *destroy* the Christian idea and the Christian social order”. In this campaign, “the Republic, Freemasonry, and Jewry are one and the same thing. The Republic is *usually* the standard, the label, the display; Freemasonry is *everywhere* the instrument, the footsoldier, the army; Jewry is *always* the soul, the direction, the command. OUR ENEMY IS THE JEW!” (Darmesteter 1880: 243, 247f.).

Chabauty’s book appeared when the prospects for the Church had darkened. In the late 1870s radical republican politicians had gained electoral ground on the basis of an anti-ultramontane campaign, and in 1879 they controlled the Presidency, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The clergy responded by preaching hatred against the Republic. The Government realized that it could not afford a direct attack on the Church, as it would upset the middle classes. Therefore it focused on private schools run by the Jesuits and other religious orders who were hostile to the secular ideals of the Republic and who sought to create an indelible ultramontane imprint on the mind of young people. The great majority of the children of the elites attended those schools, and most of the men admitted to the military had been educated by priests and nuns. Doubting their loyalty to the Republic, the government launched a program that would provide compulsory education to all children that would be provided free of charge and without any religious instruction. Priests and nuns would only be allowed to teach if they belonged to ‘authorized’ congregations. The Jesuits and the other orders refused to apply for an authorization, and as a result the government forcefully closed their houses and evicted their occupants. Between nine and ten thousand priests and monks found themselves on the street and without work. Many French Catholics were disgusted. Chabauty’s book helped them to identify the real

cause of the cataclysm: the Grand Orient controlled the Third Republic and, in turn, the synagogue controlled the Grand Orient.

Pope Leo XIII, who had succeeded Pius IX in 1878, was under pressure to respond to the events that unfolded in France. Yet he was not willing to attack the French Republic directly. Caught in a conflict with the Italian state, he needed France as an ally, and he realized that a restoration of the French monarchy in which the Catholic Church would be once again a state church was unrealistic. The Pope counseled French Catholics to accommodate themselves to the state. But he was willing to initiate a public counter-offensive against the Freemasons. In 1884 he published an Encyclical in which he identified, following Saint Augustine, an opposition between two communities in the world: the first was 'the Kingdom of God', represented by the Catholic Church, and the second 'the Kingdom of Satan', represented "by that strongly organized and widespread association called the Freemasons. No longer making any secret of their purposes, they are now boldly rising up against God Himself". Presenting itself to the outside world as charitable clubs of educated men, the lodges were in reality part of a terrible organization that aimed at the "utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the world which the Christian teaching has produced" (Carlen 1981: 2, 91, 93).

The Encyclical did not mention the Jews. But that did not really matter. The Pope had blessed important elements of the conspiracy theory with his infallible authority, and those below him could fill in the details. The Assumptionist Order, which had been established in 1850, and quickly acquired popularity amongst the Catholic masses as the creators and guardians of the new shrine in Lourdes, had taken a leadership role in the defense of the interests of the Church against the Republic. The Assumptionists recruited the sons of peasants who compensated for their lack of education with religious zeal. In 1880 they launched a magazine, *La Croix* (*The Cross*), which became a daily paper in 1883 and which, in a few years, had a daily readership of half a million people. *La Croix* was orthodox, clerical, sensationalist and Manichean, and offered only one choice: Christ or Satan (Chapman 1955: 24). And *La Croix* was not afraid to name the agents of Satan: articles denouncing the dechristianization of France as the result of a conspiracy between Jews and Freemasons became a staple after Pope Leo's Encyclical, and not only helped to bring the topic to the attention of the masses, but also kept it alive (Sorlin 1967: 79ff., 192f.). *La Croix* also ran an electoral organization that established local committees all over the country. Its aim was to prevent the election of Jews and Freemasons (Larkin 1974: 67). While *La Croix* addressed the public at large, the magazine *La Franc-Maçonnerie Démasquée*, founded in 1884 by Amand-Joseph Fava, Bishop of Grenoble, specifically aimed to inform the more educated classes

about the revolutionary ambitions of the Freemasons and the way they had made the Third Republic into their tool to de-christianize society. While Bishop Fava's magazine showed some restraint in pushing the idea of a Jewish-masonic conspiracy, it was quite happy to show the way Jews were dramatically over-represented in both the lodges and in the administration of the Third Republic (on the history of the magazine see Jarrige 1999).

The government eviction of the monks and nuns had galvanized the journalist Edouard-Adolphe Drumont into writing a two-volume, twelve-hundred page book entitled *La France Juive* (*Jewish France*). Drumont blamed the Jews for all the misfortunes of France. Written in a chatty and racy style and replete with colorful anecdotes, *La France Juive* became a best-seller both in its original edition as in an abridged edition directed at the masses. Its chapter on the Freemasons begins with the question: "Who are the instigators, the instruments and the accomplices of the persecution who have begun with the expulsion of the religious saints, who then focused their attacks on the soul of the child, and who subsequently refused the unhappy person who is suffering in the hospital her last consolation and the final hope ...?" (Drumont 1898: 395f.). These were, of course, the Freemasons. Drumont claimed that Freemasonry was an organization that brought together maliciously mediocre people: the credulous, perverts, vain and timid people. Governed by invisible masters, the lodge was a kind of "open Judaism, a starter home so to speak ... where the Jews fraternize with men whom they wouldn't like to invite into their own homes" (Drumont 1898: 402).

The commercial success of *La France Juive* showed that conspiracy theories were good business, and a certain Marie Joseph Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pagès decided to capitalize on it. An anti-clerical literary hack who had tried to earn his living by writing revelations about the alleged love-life of Pope Pius IX and other dark sides of life in the Church, Jogand-Pagès suddenly returned as a repentant sinner into the bosom of the Church in 1885. By now he had assumed the name Léo Taxil. Claiming that he had been a Freemason, Taxil published in 1886 four books about the going on in the masonic lodges. The central motive of his revelations was that Freemasons worshipped the devil. Satanism was a popular topic in *fin-de-siècle* France, and to understand it in its proper context, it is useful to consider the manner in which in the late nineteenth century critical thought and corrosive doubt had opened up a new appreciation of polytheism. In his *The Gay Science* the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed polytheism as the root of individualism while monotheism had pushed humans back to the status of herd animals (Nietzsche 1974 [1882]: 191f). Nietzsche's re-evaluation of polytheism as the cradle of the individual and monotheism as a religion fit for herds helps us to appreciate

the modernity of Éliphas Lévi's turn to magic, the invention of new polytheistic traditions such as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's Theosophy or MacGregor Mathers' Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, or the popularity of books that explored the worlds that lay outside the bounds of Christian morality. Hence Taxil's accusation that Freemasonry was devoted to Satanism was nothing extra-ordinary—especially as it was backed by the authority of Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical that had identified the lodges as “the Kingdom of Satan” (Harvey 2006: 187).

Taxil's allegations made their way to the distant island Mauritius, where they inspired the local bishop, the Most Reverend Johann Gabriel Léon Louis Meurin, Titular Archbishop of the dead archdiocese of Nisibis. Meurin had been for a long time Vicar Apostolic of Bombay but when Pope Leo XIII established in India an Episcopal Hierachy, he did not appoint Meurin as the first Archbishop of Bombay, but invested him with the titular archiepiscope and shipped him off to the Island of Mauritius where he was to run the diocese of Port-Louis. In the midst of the Indian Ocean there was nothing to discipline his increasingly paranoid imagination, and so he began to work on the book that had to open the eyes of the faithful back home to the conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons to destroy Christendom. Relying on the writings of Gougenot des Moussaux, Chabauty, Drumont and Taxil, Meurin wrote *La franc-maçonnerie: Synagogue de Satan* (*Freemasonry: Synagogue of Satan*). Meurin's thesis was simple: “Everything in Freemasonry is fundamentally Jewish, exclusively Jewish, enthusiastically Jewish, from the beginning to the end” (Meurin 1893: 260), Meurin wrote. The thesis of the book, as a contemporary reviewer summarized it in a somewhat ironical fashion, was “that Freemasonry is connected with Satanism, by the fact that it has the Jews for its true authors, and the Jewish Kabbalah for the key of its mysteries; that the Kabbalah is magical, idolatrous, and essentially diabolical; that Freemasonry, considered as a religion, is therefore a judaized devil-worship, and considered as a political institution, it is an engine designed for the attainment of universal empire, which has been the dream of the Jews for centuries” (Waite 1896: 86). Writing three years after the publication of the book, the reviewer noted that Meurin's book had become upon its publication “a source of universal reference in anti-Masonic literature”—an achievement which was largely due to “the exalted ecclesiastical position of the author” (Waite 1896: 82).

Indeed, while the thesis of the book was not that original, the book became important because of Meurin's archiepiscopal dignity (even when it was a titular one based on a dead archdiocese). It gave the idea of a Jewish-masonic conspiracy a legitimacy it had not had before. Gougenot des Moussaux had been a layman, Chabauty had been a country priest, Drumont was a journalist, and Taxil a pornographer. Bishop Fava of Grenoble had lent the authority of

the Church to *La Franc-Maçonnerie Démasquée*, but in this magazine the Jews figured not very prominently. This was different in *La franc-maçonnerie: Synagogue de Satan*. And it appeared that Meurin spoke with the authority of the Catholic Church as a whole.

The effect of this authority proved corrosive. A first intimation of this was the manner in which it protected a massive, three-year hoax perpetrated by Taxil. This hoax was the sequel to the unprecedented literary and commercial success of Joris Karl Huysmans' best-selling novel *La-Bas (Down There)*, which centered on a scholar's obsession with Satanism in medieval and contemporary France and which contained a very graphic description of a Satanic mass (Huysmans 1958: 268ff.). Huysmans had not mentioned the Freemasons, and Taxil realized that he could use the interest that *La Bas* had created to push his own agenda—and make a great deal of money. Beginning on November 20, 1892 Taxil published on a monthly basis revelations of a global conspiracy centering on Devil worship in masonic lodges. The series, entitled *Le diable au XIXème siècle (The Devil in the Nineteenth Century)*, purported to be the results of investigative journalism that began when a certain Dr Bataille, a physician serving on a merchant frigate, learned of a satanic cult in Calcutta. Bataille decided to investigate the rumors, obtained through the good offices of a Napolitane Freemason knowledge of the masonic degrees, and with these credentials gained access to the Satanic temples where he witnessed disturbing ceremonies. Bataille quickly realized that this was not a local phenomenon, but a small part of a world-wide phenomenon which had its headquarters in Charleston, South Carolina. This city was “the Rome of the Luciferians” and the seat of the Pope of Satanism which Bataille identified as the Freemason Albert Pike (see Harvey 2006: 177ff.).

Taxil's outrageous story echoed Huysmans' tale and dovetailed with what Meurin had written, and hence both ordinary people and the educated classes were willing to believe it. The Catholic Church embraced Taxil's revelations. On New Year's day of 1894 the periodical *L'Écho de Rome* noted that Freemasonry was “the principal force and the indispensable arm by which Judaism seeks to expel from this world the reign of Jesus Christ and to substitute for it the reign of Satan” (as quoted in Harvey 2006: 196). Remarkably, in the early installments Taxil did not mention the Jews. Yet responding to questions of his readers he began to stress their role in later installments. A turning point in the revelations occurs when the protagonist Doctor Bataille criticized the French author Léo Taxil for not having investigated ‘masonic Jewry’. He ought to have recognized that Jews had taken “a leading role in the direction of the sect. M. Drumont, for his part, was more perceptive, and a false convert, in whom he would have sensed the Jew, would not have fooled him” (as quoted in Harvey 2006: 204).

The increasing prominence of the Jewish connection in Taxil's revelations reflected the prominence of 'The Dreyfus Affair'. For eleven years France was torn apart by a case that began when, in 1895, the Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus was arrested on suspicion of having betrayed army secrets to German military intelligence. Within days of his arrest Drumont's paper *Le Libre Parole* (*Free Speech*) began a hysteric campaign of vilification. On the basis of flimsy evidence a Court-Martial condemned Dreyfus for High Treason and sentenced him to military degradation and perpetual deportation to Devil's Island. In 1896 a senior intelligence officer in the French army realized on the basis of new evidence that Dreyfus was innocent, and that the spy was a certain Major Ferdinand-Walsin Esterhazy, but the generals refused to re-open the case, believing that such action would harm the reputation of the army. Information about the new evidence began to circulate, and as a result the whole country got involved, with progressives rallying to the support of Dreyfus, most Catholics supporting the generals' contention that they arrested and convicted the right man, and antisemites using the case to stir up hatred against the Jews. Sales of *La Croix* went through the roof. In the midst of all the excitement about plots and counter-plots, one conspiracy came to an ignoble end. On April 19, 1897 Taxil gave a press conference in which he admitted that all his revelations about devil worship in the lodges had been part of a large hoax perpetrated to reveal the credulity and stupidity of all Catholics, laymen and priests, bishops, cardinals, and the Pope (Harvey 2006: 200).

In the end Dreyfus was exonerated, and the army brass, the clergy, the members of the religious orders and all the others who had refused justice for Dreyfus were shown to have acted in bad faith. Many Frenchmen felt betrayed. They were ready to forgive the army, which they believed to have been misled, and turned their rage to those who had fomented the unrest. Anatole France identified the men who had fanned the flames as "emissaries of the Roman church". They had "scattered malign reports, whispered alarming rumors, spoke of treasons and plots, disquieted people through their patriotism, disturbed their security, steeped them in fear and anger" (France 1964: 49f.). The Jesuits, Frenchmen were told, had seduced the army and made the people acquiesce in the seduction. Elections produced a victory for the left, and the new Prime Minister, the Freemason and radical anti-clerical politician Émile Combes, decided to complete the task that had been begun in 1880, and forcefully end the role of the Jesuits and other religious orders in education. In 1901 the Combes government, in which every minister was a Freemason, adopted the so-called Associations Law that allowed the Government not only to close any association that was seen to be, in character, design or influence, contrary to existing law. It also stipulated that associations that resided in



France but were controlled from abroad, were to show cause why they should be allowed to exist within the jurisdiction of the Republic. While the primary targets were the militant orders like the Jesuits and the Assumptionists, the Benedictines, Capucins, Dominicans, and other orders were also affected as they also had to apply for authorization to operate in France. Most Religious Orders refused to submit themselves to this and closed their abbeys, priories and convents, and left France (Littlefield 1902: 525f.).

The Dreyfus Affair began with the wrongful conviction of a Captain who happened to be a Jew, evolved because the army could not admit a mistake and antisemites couldn't believe that a Jew might be innocent and a Catholic guilty, and ended with a cabinet of Freemasons that shut down a crucial operation of the Church. For a conspiracy theorist this was a fine example of Judeo-masonic cooperation. Yet in France the hysteria about a conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons subsided—at least in the public realm. The verbal violence and the riots had ruptured the social fabric of France, but no-one had been killed. Many had surrendered to paranoid fantasies, but for the anti-Dreyfusards the revelation of Taxil's hoax had taken the diabolical sting out of the alleged conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons, while the Dreyfusards could not fully turn against the army—the most important symbol of the nation.

Publicly preached antisemitism went out of fashion. The chimera of a Judeo-masonic plot became the focus of the cranks that made up *L'Action Française*, established by Charles Maurras. An important voice in this period was that of the journalist Paul Joseph Copin (1851–1939), a onetime Freemason who published in 1908 a virulent treatise about the Judeo-masonic conspiracy under the name Paul Copin-Albancelli (Copin-Albancelli: 1908). Yet, in the French discourse, the obsession with a Judeo-masonic conspiracy would remain at the political margin until the defeat of 1940, when embittered traditionalists saw another opportunity to undo the achievements of the French Revolution under the aegis of Nazi Germany.

The French speculations from the nineteenth century became in the twentieth century the foundation of the Catholic discourse in Ireland, Spain and Latin-American countries where the Church successfully opposed the modernization of society. In the early 1920s the well-known Irish Jesuit academic Edward Cahill wrote an influential book on the anti-Christian character of the lodges that included a chapter exploring in great detail “the Jewish element in Freemasonry”. Cahill packed his punch in a velvet glove, and as a result the book influenced the Irish and, to a lesser extent, the American Irish-Catholic discourse on Jews and Masons until the late 1950s (Cahill 1929). Cahill's book went through many editions, but it is now out of print. The influential anti-masonic treatise written in the 1920s by the Chilean priest José Maria Caro y Rodríguez, at that time titular

bishop of the dead diocese of Mylasa and Apostolic Vicar of Tarapacá remains in print today. According to Caro y Rodríguez, Freemasonry was the “legitimate child” of Satan and the “instrument” of the Jews in their 1900-year struggle against Christianity (Caro y Rodríguez 2006: 201ff.). An ugly and hateful book based on Gougenot des Mousseaux, his successors, and most important Copin, it did not prove an obstacle for his rise to the Archbishopric of Santiago (1939) and Primate of Chile and Cardinal (1946). The exalted ecclesiastical rank that the author obtained certainly suggested that the book spoke with the authority of the Church as a whole, and from 1939 onwards the theory of a Judeo-masonic plot was to be presented with obligatory references to both the Encyclical of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, and the book by His Eminence José Maria Cardinal Caro y Rodríguez.

### The Apocalyptic Aspect

The fantasy of a political conspiracy between Jews and Freemasons had evolved in the Third Republic, but was to have its catastrophic culmination in the Third Reich. Within the nineteenth-century discourse about the conspiracy between Jews and Freemasons apocalyptic elements had been present. Gougenot des Mousseaux, Chabauty, and Meurin had seen a formidable and global threat. Yet they believed that it could be countered by traditional means—that is a general return to the embrace of the Catholic Church. They believed, in other words, that a restoration of the old world was both desired and possible. While their conservatism would be shared in the twentieth century by many, and shape the anti-masonic politics of authoritarian regimes in Spain, Portugal, or South America, the center of our story shifts to the cataclysmic reality created by Nazi Germany, a reality that was to culminate in the death camps.

The road between Paris and Auschwitz led via Saint Petersburg. As we have seen, the myth of a conspiracy between Jews and Freemasons was created and developed by Catholic conservatives who experienced a loss of status as a result of the at times revolutionary and at times evolutionary changes in the period between 1789 and 1914. The myth was the product of French circumstances, but the Russian aristocrat Matvei Golovinsky, who was a proud and self-confessed antisemite and who was employed as a member of the Russian secret police in Paris, recognized its potential to discredit those who propagated political, social and economic change in Russia.<sup>6</sup> Around 1898 he took

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6 The Russian scholar Mikhail Lepkhin established the authorship of Golovinsky. See Conan 1999.

the notion of a Judeo-masonic plot, developed within the context of the Third Republic, and combined it with Goedsche's narrative of the meeting of the representatives of the twelve tribes in the Jewish cemetery in Prague. Then Golovinsky plagiarized whole sections from Maurice Joly's *Dialogue aux enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquieu* (*The Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu*) (a good English-language edition is July 2002), which in turn was largely based on a conspiracy scene in one of Eugen Sue's novels, and he grafted all of that on an event which had galvanized many Russian Jews and which some non-Jews saw as the herald of earth-shattering change: the First Zionist Congress in Basel. Golovinsky's fabrication purported to be a series of 'protocols' or minutes of secret deliberations held by a cabal of Jewish leaders gathered in Basel. If the public proceedings spoke of the desire to create a Jewish homeland, the document alleged that these secret proceedings of the so-called 'Elders' reported on a conspiracy to destroy Christendom and obtain universal power. Freemasonry was one of their main tools. "Gentile masonry, blindly serves as a screen for us and our objects", the fourth protocol proclaimed. The eleventh protocol stated how "the goy cattle" was allowed into "the 'show' army of Masonic lodges in order to throw dust in the eyes of their fellows", and the fifteenth protocol stated that "we shall create and multiply free Masonic lodges in all countries of the world, absorb into them all who may become or who are prominent in public activity, for in these lodges we shall find out principal intelligence office and means of influence". Unbeknownst to the Masons themselves, the lodges would be ruled by the Jewish elders. "In these lodges we shall tie together the knot which binds together all revolutionary and liberal elements" ("*Selections from the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*", in Bronner 2000: 15, 22, 25).

Few of Golovinsky's ideas about the Judeo-masonic conspiracy were original. But he showed some innovation in using as the setting a well-documented gathering of Jews from all over the world. The second innovation of the *Protocols* was the explicit overwhelming dimension of the threat. Gougenot des Mousseaux and Meurin had been nostalgic for a harmonious unity of Altar and Throne (that had in fact never existed) and shared a disgust for the secularization and modernization that they witnessed in nineteenth-century Europe. But those who believed in the conspiracy did not believe that the world that the Jews tried to create with help of the Masons would be qualitatively different from the present. But the language of the *Protocols* suggested a future that had little resemblance to even the most secularized present. The *Protocols* were finally important in that they showed an important shift in the relative function of the Jews and the Freemasons in their relationship. Since Gougenot des Mousseaux the Jews had been the senior partner in the

conspiracy in providing a constancy of purpose over time, but the Freemasons had always provided the more cosmopolitan, international if not global dimension to the relationship. In the *Protocols* the Jews were presented as a global force in their own right, which allowed Golivinsky to reduce the Freemasons to the role of mere tools. As we will see, this reduction of the significance of the Freemasons in the relationship was to have dire consequences for the Jews.

The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* had been written in Paris, but for the first two decades of their existence only circulated within Russia. Only after the end of the First World War were they to gain influence in the West, and especially in Germany. Until 1919, the notion that Jews and Freemasons were involved in a conspiracy to destroy Christendom did not have any traction in Germany. Like in France, the Catholic Church had been forced to retreat in the last decades of the nineteenth century, but this decline had not occurred within a Republic that seemed to be controlled by Freemasons and that was supported by Jews. The main opponent of the Church had been the conservative and Protestant Reichs Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, and if the German Catholics looked for an enemy, it was the Lutheran Church. In addition, German Freemasons had become during the nineteenth century increasingly conservative. Many lodges did not accept Jews, and in those that did, Jews had a marginal role. The idea of a Judeo-masonic conspiracy had been politically useful in France. It made no political sense in Germany. Significantly the only substantial German reflection on the relations between Jews and Freemasons occurred within the context of an intra-masonic discourse about the role of Jews within the German lodges (Findel 1893). Thus when in 1883 the notorious German antisemite Paul de Lagarde (born as Paul Bötticher) mentioned a Jewish organization and Freemasonry in the same sentence, he did so only in a metaphorical sense. "The *Alliance Israélite* is nothing else than a Freemason-like conspiracy with the aim of Jewish world domination, a Semitic equivalent to the Jesuit Order within Catholicism" (De Lagarde 1940: 295. The *Deutsche Schriften* originally appeared in 1883.). He did not believe that the Jews and Freemasons were joined in a common conspiracy. De Lagarde may have been an antisemite, but he was a rational antisemite.

However rationalism had lost some of its glamour in the first decade of the twentieth century. "Men who are participating in a great social movement always picture their coming action as a battle in which their cause is certain to triumph", the French philosopher Georges Sorel wrote in his seminal *Réflexions sur la violence* (Reflections on Violence), published in 1908. "These constructions, knowledge of which is so important for historians, I propose to call myths". Every revolutionary movement had at its core its own myth, which made it into a historical force. According to Sorel, such a myth was not a

rational description of reality, but an expression of a determination to act. "Contemporary myths lead men to prepare themselves for a combat which will destroy the existing state of things" (Sorel 1941[1908]: 22). Because the myth was rooted in a shared conviction of how things should be, it could not be refuted. As such, a social or political myth shares essential characteristics with religion. Sorel believed that when the anticipation of the future took the form of a myth, this form became vital because it enclosed in one coordinated and intense picture the strongest desires, noblest passions and most moving inclinations of a group.

Sorel's concept of myth became very influential after 1914 because it offered a made-to-measure response to the catastrophe of war. No-one had wanted it, but when it arrived, all got caught up in it, and reason proved powerless. The moral and social structures that had seemed matter-of-fact and unchangeable crumbled and were revealed to be contingent. Within days after the outbreak of the war, writers in all participating nations began to adopt Sorel's advice and began to naturalize the historical by subsuming the events of the moment within a universal and providential unfolding of destiny. The sudden opposition of nations that had cooperated peacefully for a century became a display of opposing essences. In the war of attrition that followed writers invoked each nation's 'historical mission'. There was no place in this understanding of history for an appreciation of the contingent: everything was now understood as fated—and this, of course, made it possible for the politicians and the generals to call for immense and what turned out to be senseless sacrifices.

With the outbreak of the war began what the Italian antifascist resistor and cultural critic Nicola Chiaromonte labeled as "the age of bad faith", a time in which nothing seems natural and self-evident, and in which people cling to beliefs in order to oppose other beliefs. The universal currency in the age of bad faith are "useful lies" which are "consciously created and consciously accepted fictions that take the place of truths not only because they are serviceable, easily handled, and universally employed but because truths that give even a semblance of unity and meaning to the world in which we live do not exist". And Chiaromonte concluded that "these useful lies finally constitute a language in which even the truthful man finds himself fatally enmeshed if he wishes to live and communicate with others" (Chiaromonte 1985: 137f.).

In the spring of 1918 many Germans believed that, after three and half years of struggle, they were to taste final victory. The Russians had agreed to a humiliating peace in which they had surrendered enormous territories, and in the West the German army seemed close to a breakthrough. Then, suddenly, military catastrophe. Sailors and soldiers mutinied, and revolutionary upheavals began in the cities. The monarchy fell on November 9 and two days later a

German delegation accepted the draconian terms of an armistice in a railway carriage in the forest in Compiègne. "The German people suffered a collapse, physical and mental ... as history, doubtless, had never known before", Thomas Mann wrote a few years later. "The demoralization had no limits; it could be seen in the *deep and almost fatal anxiety of a whole nation that despaired of itself* [sic], of its history, of its finest treasures" (Mann 1986: 620). The German people did not receive leadership in those difficult days: the former leaders of the collapsed Reich and the defeated army refused to accept responsibility. Unwilling since Verdun to admit military failure, German generals openly insisted that revolution on the home front and not defeat on the battlefield had caused the collapse. "The German army was stabbed in the back" (Paul von Hindenburg, "The Stab in the Back", in Kaes, Jay, and Dimendberg 1994: 15f.), Field Marshal von Hindenburg testified in a Reichstag inquiry. The only question that remained was who had held the dagger? Many answered: the Jews and the Masons. As a rational proposition it did not make much sense. But as a *mythos* and useful lie it proved very powerful.

Already in 1917 the German Jesuit Hermann Gruber published a book entitled *Freimaurerei, Weltkrieg und Weltfriede* (Freemasonry, World War and World Peace). Gruber argued that in the same way that Freemasons had triggered the French and other revolutions, so they were also responsible for the outbreak of war in 1914. Their aim was to use the war as the tool to break up the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German empires. Others such as Karl Heise, a well known occultist associated with the Theosophic and Anthroposophic movements, followed Gruber's lead with his rambling *Entente-Freimaurerei und Weltkrieg* (Entente-Freemasonry and World War) (Heise 1918). Heise was careful to exculpate the German and Austrian lodges, and also did not mention a possible Jewish connection. Antisemitic periodicals such as Captain Ludwig Müller von Hausen's *Auf Vorposten* (On Guard), the organ of the *Verband gegen die Überhebung des Judentums* (League against Jewish Arrogance) and Theodor Fritsch's *Hammer* (Hammer) ran articles that described the alleged anti-German machinations of the Grand Lodge of Italy and the *Grand Orient de France* (Pfahl-Traughber 1993: 23f., 41ff.). In July 1918 Prince Otto zu Salm-Horstmar spoke in the Prussian Upper House that in the war the "Jewish-democratic" worldview stood opposed to a "German-aristocratic" one, and that in this titanic struggle Jews used Freemasonry as their tool (Pfahl-Traughber 1993: 24). Such language was still rare in 1918, but became commonplace after the Armistice when a flood of publications appeared which blamed a Judeo-masonic plot both for the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo and the mutinies that had ended the German ability to resist. The most important of these early publications was Friedrich Wichtl's

*Weltfreimaurerei-Weltrevolution-Weltrepublik* (World-Freemasonry-World Revolution-World Republic). The title neatly summed up the central thesis: a global organization of Freemasons had triggered a global collapse of the old order, embodied in the German and Austro-Hungarian empires in order to arrive at a global regime. Wichtl devoted a whole chapter to the role of the Jews in Freemasonry, and that they had achieved control of the lodges in many countries and had begun to make use of it. While Wichtl did not accuse the Jews directly of having triggered the war in 1914 and the revolution in 1918, the fact that he did assume that Freemasons were responsible for these events and that Jews controlled the lodges suggested as much (Wichtl 1919: 49ff.). Wichtl's argument convinced many, including a nineteen-year-old youngster named Heinrich Himmler. In September 1919 he noted in his diary that the book "provides enlightenment about everything and tells against whom we have to fight" (as quoted in Ackermann 1970: 25).

In early 1920 appeared a German translation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Zur Beek 1920). Using the alias Gottfried zur Beek, Ludwig Müller von Hausen acted as editor, and Prince Otto zu Salm-Horstmar and his friends from the former Prussian Upper House provided the financial resources. In 1922 Müller von Hausen claimed with some justification that "our translation of the Secrets of the Elders of Zion ... has contributed more to the illumination of the Jewish Question than one hundred other books were able to achieve" (as quoted in Pfahl-Traughber 1993: 43). Wichtl would have agreed, if he had not died in 1920. Shortly before his death he read the German edition of the *Protocols*, and rushed a booklet into print in which he sharpened the arguments from his first book, turning a suggestion of Jewish control of Freemasonry into a statement of fact, and subsuming the particular conspiracy that had led to the outbreak of war to the age-old conspiracy of the Elders of Zion. And he predicted that when the Germans would realize all of this, "the Furor teutonicus will erupt like never before ..." (Wichtl n.d.: 31).

The Jewish Question had become a focus of general interest because Jews seemed to do well in post-war Germany. While Jews in Bismarck's German Reich had enjoyed full political emancipation, social discrimination had remained common practice. At the same time racial antisemitism—the notion that by virtue of birth alone, every Jew was a threat to civic society and should be barred from full citizenship, socially isolated and, if possible, expelled—held little traction in the political sphere. People who held such views remained in the Second Reich on the fringes, their 'Jewish Question' was of marginal importance, and their form of antisemitism socially taboo (Kauders 1998: 160ff.; also Pulzer 1998: 271f.). The Weimar Republic offered Jews significant improvement on Bismarck's Reich. Jews ascended to ministerships, joined the

diplomatic and civil services, advanced to professorships in the universities, and made a great mark in the economy, literature, the arts, humanities and science. Yet manifest success also generated both fear and envy amongst non-Jews. The brutalization in political rhetoric triggered by the First World War and normalized in the maelstrom of post-war social violence melted the social taboo that had prevented a dislike of Jews from degenerating into racial anti-semitism. The “Jewish Question” now became an obsession for many on the right, and rabid antisemites’ “solutions” to that “Jewish Question” became commonplace. They changed the terms of the debate (quoted in Kauders 1998: 171).

Hatred for the capitalism represented by Great Britain and the United States and the belief that these countries were dominated by Jews easily combined with the paranoid imaginings of defeated nationalists such as Wichtl and Müller von Hausen. The ancient Roman concept of *cui bono?* (who benefits?) suggested a link between the evident success of German Jews in post-war Germany and the defeat. In the next two decades many Germans would speculate about the exact nature of the relationship, and in the 1920s the assumption of a masonic connection would continue to play an important role. All of this occurred within the context of a voluntary abandonment of reason as the principle of political life. When Sorel had formulated his concept of myth, French politicians had not paid any attention to it. They remained conventional in their view of the nature and purpose of politics. They continued to believe in debate and objective power relations based on the vote. But in post-war Germany there was little confidence in democratic practices. Sorel’s understanding of myth as a political force became the order of the day. Thomas Mann observed that “mythical fictions, devised like primitive battle cries”, became the basis of politics, allowing “fables, insane visions, chimaeras, which needed to have nothing to do with truth or reason or science in order to be creative” to become the engines of change, “and thus to prove themselves dynamic realities” (Mann 1948: 366).

Alfred Rosenberg was to play a crucial role in the transformation of the conspiracy theory that credited Jews and Freemasons for some of the world’s ills into a *Mythus* (myth) that blamed them for all of the world’s ills (see Meyer zu Uptrup 2003: 99ff.). Born as an ethnic German but Russian citizen in Reval (today Tallinn), Rosenberg had witnessed in 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow. He was horrified, but thanks to a copy of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* he knew who was responsible for the destruction of Throne and Altar: the Jews, aided by Freemasons. In early 1919 Rosenberg left for Germany, and found himself in Bavaria where he witnessed a revolution and a very bloody counter-revolution which provided the breeding ground of the early Nazi party. In the Fall of 1919 he met the veteran Adolf Hitler and both joined the Deutsche



Arbeiterpartei. Rosenberg quickly assumed the role of the party's public intellectual. In 1920 he published his *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten* (The Trace of the Jew in the Course of History), in which he argued amongst other things that Jewish interests had been identical with British imperial policy. In the years before the outbreak of the war Jews had penetrated into the highest British circles. But also Freemasonry proved a point of connection between Jewish financiers and the leaders of the Entente (the alliance of Great Britain, France, Russia and the other nations that had fought Germany and Austria-Hungary) (Rosenberg 1943a: Vol. 1, 230–256). Taking much inspiration from Gougenot des Mousseaux and other French writers, Rosenberg claimed that Freemasonry was an international conspiracy to destroy the old order and establish a world-republic, and that Jews were attracted to it as they are “an innate conspirational nation”. Rosenberg quoted Simonini's letter to Barruel as a particular good introduction to “the workshop of the Judeo-masonic conspiracy” (Rosenberg 1943a: Vol. 1, 243).

In 1921 Rosenberg published a German translation of Gougenot des Mousseaux's opus magnum, an undertaking that clearly demonstrated his dependence on the French discourse (Gougenot des Mousseaux 1921). That same year appeared his *Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei: Judentum, Jesuitismus, Deutsches Christentum* (The Crime of Freemasonry: Judaism, Jesuitism, German Christianity). In this book Rosenberg claimed that “Jews and Masons stand at the top and behind the scenes of current world politics”. Freemasons had tried to destroy the natural distinctions between peoples, allowing the Jews to penetrate into the body of each nation, creating bastard peoples. In addition French Freemasons, led by Jewish bankers who had chosen to remain in the wings, had created the basis of the anti-German *Entente* by pulling France, Great Britain and Italy together. “It has become a truism for Judaism to consider the principles of Freemasonry as the most effective seeds of destruction of Christian society”. Behind everything were the “never tired hands of the greatest plotter, the internationally connected owner of gold—those of the Jew”. Jews exercised “a secret dictatorship and financial dominance; in all countries delegates of Jewry are present in the lodges and thus form the cement of a world-wide society of conspirators” (Rosenberg 1943b: Vol. 1, 397, 416f., 482, 496).

In 1923 Rosenberg published a length commentary on the *Protocols*. He introduced the text by identifying the decline of a real sense of national identity as the disgrace of his own time, a disgrace that had been prepared by the materialism and cosmopolitanism of the preceding century. The Jews had used these to their advance. *The Protocols*, Rosenberg argued, had unveiled these schemes, and created an opportunity for the world to awaken. In all of this

global Freemasonry remained an important tool of the Jews, helping to create a flexible network that made Jews invulnerable. At the end of his commentary on the *Protocols* Rosenberg declared “the Jew” to be the age-old “metaphysical opponent” of the German. “Never before have we really understood this ... For the first time in history instinct and insight unite in a clear understanding. As a result the Jew, standing on the highest pinnacle of power which he so greedily ascended, faces the abyss. The last fall. After that fall there will be no place anymore for the Jew in Europe” (Rosenberg 1943c: Vol. 2, 251, 275f., 283, 322f., 428).

“For the first time in history instinct and insight unite in a clear understanding”. Rosenberg meant what he said, and it is true that he brought indeed a new and what proved to be catastrophic dimension to the speculations about a conspiracy between Jews and Freemasons by embedding it in a particular form of *mythos*: a so-called *Weltanschauung*. Coined by the eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, the word *Weltanschauung* is usually translated in English as a ‘world view’ or ‘ideology’. In fact it was something more (for a useful introduction to the Nazi use of the word ‘Weltanschauung’ see Schmitz-Berning 1998: 686–689). The philosopher Emil Fackenheim, who grew up in Germany to end up in Israel after a shorter sojourn in Great Britain and a longer one in Canada, observed that a *Weltanschauung* had three important characteristics: “cosmic scope, internal coherence or *Geschlossenheit*, and a sincere commitment on the part of its devotees”.

Hence, when the *nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung* appeared, it was respected simply *because* it was a *Weltanschauung*: not despite the fact that it was cosmic but because of it; not despite the fact that it slandered “good” as well as “bad” Jews but—indiscriminate attacks on *das Judentum* being necessary for *Geschlossenheit*—because of it. And the pimp Horst Wessel became a saint, not despite the fact that he died needlessly but, having died because he had refused a Jewish doctor’s aid, because of it.

FACKENHEIM 1988: 204

As Fackenheim’s definition reveals, Sorel’s myth and Nazi *Weltanschauung* were closely related.

In Rosenberg’s writings the conspiracy between Jews and Freemasons lost all traces of historical contingency. It became a part of an eternal drama that pitted those who were rooted in a particular place and who carefully and responsibly cultivated the earth and themselves (exemplified by racially-pure Germans) against those who had no roots and who were unable to produce culture, and who sought to make by means of lies and deception a parasitical

existence wherever this was possible (exemplified by ‘international Jewry’ which in Rosenberg’s view controlled both Bolshevism, the world of capitalist finance, and its global ally: Freemasonry) (for a useful introduction to the Nazi use of the word ‘international’ see Schmitz-Berning 1998: 322–325). Rosenberg’s view was totalitarian because it refused to acknowledge that social life occurred in a number of autonomous spheres, in which art and science, religion and politics, economics and technology can develop independently of each other. Now everything was connected, offering indeed *Geschlossenheit* (Burrin 2005: 43–45).

In ideological matters in general, and in Judeo-masonic matters in particular, Rosenberg was Hitler’s mentor. In 1924 the latter used his very comfortable nine-month confinement in the Landsberg fortress to pen down his own *Weltanschauung*. This *Weltanschauung* he had acquired during his years in Vienna, and it had become “the granite foundation of all my acts. In addition to what I then created, I have had to learn little; and I have had to alter nothing”, he wrote in *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) (Hitler 1943: 22). His *Weltanschauung* centered on the eternal and relentless threat of ‘the Jew’. “To strengthen his political position [the Jew] tries to tear down the racial and civil barriers which for a time continue to restrain him at every step. To this end he fights with all the tenacity innate in him for religious tolerance—and in Freemasonry, which has succumbed to him completely, he has an excellent instrument with which to fight for his aims and put them across” (Hitler 1943: 315). Remarkably enough, Hitler was happy to invoke the *Protocols* as evidence whilst remaining not convinced about their authenticity. “They are based on a forgery, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* moans and screams once every week: the best proof that they are authentic. What many Jews may do unconsciously is here consciously exposed. And that is what matters. It is completely indifferent from what Jewish brain these disclosures originate; the important thing is that with positively terrifying certainty they reveal the nature and activity of the Jewish people and expose their inner contexts as well as their final aims” (Hitler 1943: 307f.). If Rosenberg had analyzed and explicated *The Protocols* because he believed them to be true, Hitler used them because they were useful within propaganda. In *Mein Kampf* he explained that the fundamental principle of propaganda was that it should “confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over” (Hitler 1943: 184). Obviously “Jews and Freemasons” provided a powerful slogan and, as Hitler explained, simple if not simplistic slogans provided the basis of all propaganda.

In the late 1920s, however, Hitler and Nazi propagandists began to simplify even further the slogan by focusing only on the conspiracy of “International Jewry”. It appears that this move was not influenced by the well-argued

responses to the host of accusations about the nefarious role of Freemasons published by the *Verein deutscher Freimaurer* (Society of German Freemasons) (Verein deutscher Freimaurer 1928–1931). There is no evidence that the Nazis took note of these books: they never referred to them. Instead it appears that the shift of focus from Jews and Freemasons to ‘International Jewry’ was dictated by Hitler’s understanding of the relationship between the simplicity of the message and its political effectiveness, an understanding that was in tune with Sorel’s theory of myth. “In general the art of all truly great national leaders at all times consists among other things primarily in not dividing the attention of a people, but in concentrating it on a single foe”, he had observed in *Mein Kampf*. “It belongs to the genius of a great leader to make even adversaries far removed from one another seem to belong to a single category, because in weak and uncertain characters the knowledge of having different enemies can only too readily lead to the beginning of doubt in their own right” (Hitler 1943: 118f.). Given a choice to focus either on ‘the Jew’ or Freemasonry, it was clear that the former provided a more useful target. Not only had the discourse on a Judeo-masonic conspiracy always assumed that ‘the Jew’ was the true but hidden master of the lodge and the rank-and-file Freemason a blind dupe, but also the politically motivated hostility to ‘the Jew’ could count on a broad base of popular support created by Christian anti-Judaism and racist antisemitism. For French ultramontanes, who saw the world as a struggle between precious tradition and dangerous innovation, Freemasons were true and credible opponents. But for Hitler and the Nazis, who believed in the struggle between races, the ultimate enemy could only be a racial enemy—and most Freemasons were within the Nazi *Weltanschauung* racially acceptable. They may have been deluded, but like Social Democrats and other political opponents of the Nazis they could be reformed and brought back into the *Volksgemeinschaft* (community of the people). Unlike antisemitism, anti-masonry had not been a non-negotiable foundation of Hitler’s *Weltanschauung*. It had been Rosenberg’s hobbyhorse, and Rosenberg’s influence had begun to wane in the late 1920s. And so the Nazis dropped Freemasonry as a major target, transferring its international dimension to the symbolic target of ‘the Jew’ by labeling the now single, universal enemy as ‘International Jewry of Finance’ or ‘International Jewry’.

If political strategy suggested that a single focus on a global Jewish threat would be more effective than a double focus on a Jewish-masonic conspiracy, it also appears that the rambling ravings of Erich Ludendorff, the German war leader and early supporter of Hitler, had largely discredited the discourse on the Jews and Masons not only by pushing the argument into the absurd by including also Jesuits and even Christians into the conspiracy, but also because

he made by that time no secret of his disdain for Hitler. After the publication of Ludendorff's *Vernichtung der Freimaurerei durch Enthüllung ihrer Geheimnisse* (The Destruction of Freemasonry through the Revelation of its Secrets) the topic lost much of its power to convince (Neuberger 2001: 153; Meyer zu Uptrup 2003: 203f.). While individual Nazi writers continued to write books that attacked Freemasonry and its alleged ties to 'International Jewry', these writings became a niche product.

The result is that the Nazi *Machtsübernahme* (assumption of power) in 1933 did not prove a catastrophe to German Freemasons. Of course: the Nazi government pursued a policy that led to the closure of all lodges. But as a rule individual Freemasons did not suffer as a result of their onetime masonic affiliation. As long as they accepted the new *fait accompli* and were not Jewish, they could fully participate in the new society. In 1938 Hitler even went so far as formally declaring a general amnesty of all those who had been Freemasons (see Melzer 1999). In 1939 the publicist Max Everwien stressed in his popular history of secret societies that before the Great War Freemasons of the Entente powers had played a crucial role in whipping up enmity against Germany, but he also conceded that there was no proof that German Freemasons had actively supported their foreign brethren in their hate propaganda. Nevertheless, "pre-war German Freemasonry will never be able to shake off the reproach of an undeterminate and ambiguous attitude to all truly national issues. And that was almost worse than an active and honest opposition" (Everwien 1939: 352). They had erred, but could be forgiven.

This was of course different with the Jews. While Freemasonry and Freemasons had by 1939 largely disappeared from the target-finder of the Nazi government, the caricature of the conspirational Jewish financier who controls governments and societies behind the scenes now dominated Nazi rhetoric and guided German actions. On 30 January 1939, the sixth anniversary of his ascent to power, Hitler addressed the newly expanded Greater German Reichstag. He had been a prophet before, he said. "Once again I will be a prophet: should the international Jewry of finance succeed, both within and without Europe, in plunging mankind into yet another world war, then the result will not be a Bolshevization of the earth and the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe" (quoted in Domarus 1990–1997: Vol. 3, 1449). The "international Jewry of finance" was, of course, that very group of people who had been first identified by French ultramontanes as the source of all their troubles.

Three years later Hitler spoke again about the Jewish financiers who ruled Great Britain and the United States from the wings, and who had in their search for profit and gain caused those nations to become Germany's enemies.

And now he told the world that his prophecy from three years earlier was to be realized. Another three years later the Nazis and their allies had murdered six million Jews in their war against the spectre of International Jewry—an apparition that had been created as the shadow of the lodge in the party politics of nineteenth-century France, to come to its own in 1930s Germany.

In Auschwitz, Belsen, Chelmno and all the other places where Jews were gassed, shot or worked to death the ultramontane fantasy of a Jewish-masonic conspiracy came to its horrible conclusion. The Nazis killed only a few Jewish financiers, and not too many of the victims had been initiated into Freemasonry. Almost all of the victims were totally ignorant of such matters. I believe that there is some significance in the fact that this apocalyptic ending of a history that had begun with Barruel's theory about a masonic conspiracy without Jews only occurred after the Nazi propaganda and policies had effectively severed the assumption of a relationship, forcing the Jews to bear alone the whole burden of the legacy created, on the base laid by Barruel, by the likes of Gougenot des Mousseaux, Chabauty, Drumont, Meurin, Golovinsky, Wichtl, Müller von Hausen, and Rosenberg. It appears unlikely that the Holocaust would have happened if Hitler had chosen to ignore his deep-held conviction that one should focus on a single enemy alone, and if he had continued to credit both Jews *and* Freemasons as the shared authors of Germany's (and Europe's) misfortunes.

This, then, shows an interesting light on the conclusion of the late Jacob Katz, who wrote one of the few serious studies on the relation between Jews and Freemasons, and who inspired my own work on the topic. At the end of his seminal *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723–1939*, Katz observed that the apocalyptic narrative of a Jewish-masonic alliance became in the Third Reich a “magic formula” that, manipulated by Hitler and his henchmen, “revealed the immense proportions of its destructive power, and then exploded before the eyes of the terror-stricken and horrified spectators” (Katz 1970: 229). While it was true that ‘Jews and Freemasons’ had been a powerful formula for the sixty years that preceded the Third Reich, it only acquired its magic, genocidal force when Hitler decided to remove the Freemasons from the equation.

### Conclusion

“Hegel says somewhere that all great historic facts and personages recur twice. He forgot to add: ‘Once as tragedy, and again as farce.’” (Marx 2005: 1). Thus Karl Marx at the beginning of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. The theory of a world-wide conspiracy of Jews and Freemasons, first proposed by

Abbé Barruel, inspired such different characters as Gougenot des Mousseaux, Drumont, Golovinsky, Wichtl and Rosenberg to lay the sleepers that carried the track to Auschwitz. The theory was mad, but the hatred that pushed it to its apocalyptic conclusion was real, and so was the suffering and devastation that it created.

In 2010 the Italian scholar of semiotics, novelist, and public intellectual Umberto Eco published a rambling novel that covers the history of the belief of a Jewish conspiracy, in its dialectic with the idea of a Masonic conspiracy, from its beginnings to the creation of the *Protocols*. In his *Cimitero di Praga* (The Prague Cemetery), Eco arraigned almost all the authors of the hateful fiction that produced the Holocaust. Only the main protagonist of the book, the man who brings it all together into a one-man conspiracy (if such can exist), is a fictional himself: the schizophrenic, antisemitic forger Simone Simonini, a fictional character based, of course, on the historical, semi-fictional or fictional Jean-Baptiste Simonini who would have revealed to Barruel the Jewish dimension of the great conspiracy. In Eco's book, Simone Simonini may have learned to hate Jews on his grandfather's lap, but he ended up choreographing the unfolding of the theory of the conspiracy and the writing of the *Protocols* as a way to make some money—at least initially. “I was doubtful that documents against the Jesuits would be saleable,” Simonini jotted down in his diary. He did not know enough about the Freemasons. “Who was left? The Jews, for heaven's sake. Deep down, I thought it was only my grandfather who had been obsessed, but after listening to Toussenel I realized there was an anti-Jewish market not just among all the descendants of Abbé Barruel (and there were quite a few of them), but also among revolutionaries, republicans and socialists . . . I had to work on the Jews.” As he develops his narrative, he finds many who share his mindset. One of them, with whom Simonini draws up a division of the labor of research (the one will focus on the Jews, the other on the Freemasons), boldly articulates the ultimate conclusion to be drawn from the existence of the Judeo-masonic conspiracy.

“If the world were rid of Jews . . . we'd have a hundred years of happiness.”

“And so?”

“And so one day we'll have to try out the only reasonable solution, the final solution—the extermination of all Jews. Even children? Yes, even children. I know the idea might seem Herodian, but when the seed is bad it's not enough for the plant to be cut down—it has to be eradicated. If you don't want mosquitoes, you kill the larvae.

Written in an unrelenting ironical tone, Eco's labyrinthine novel is a playful and undoubtedly fascinating intellectual game that provides a good read to those interested in the history of the idea of the Judeo-masonic conspiracy. Yet somehow the idea doesn't work to plot as a farce the history of the idea that a cabal of Jews conspired in the lugubrious setting of the cemetery of the Prague synagogue to rule the world, and that they used Freemasons as their unwitting tools, and that the only "reasonable solution" to this threat is a genocide of all Jews. "Are there some subjects too dark to be treated as intellectual games?," British journalist and historian Sinclair McKay asked in his review of Eco's book in *The Daily Telegraph*. McKay appreciated Eco's skill to "combine the most chilling of ideas—the origin of a hoax that led to genocide—with, elsewhere in the novel, an often funny lightness of touch" (McKay 2012). Yet, still, he did not answer the question he had posed. As a scholar of the wreckage represented by the death camps that arose from the odious fantasies explored in this chapter, I believe that the answer to McKay's question is a firm "Yes."

Today speculations about the alleged ties between Jews and Masons do not only provide the material for a bestseller like *The Prague Cemetery*, but also fill countless webpages. Few of the arguments move beyond the theories described above. Bedded in an ocean of counterknowledge that credits conspiracies for UFOs, the AIDS epidemic, satanic ritual abuse, the New World Order, 9/11 and countless other phenomena, the 'Jews and Masons' formula appears to have lost its former power to shape social and political agendas. Of course: antisemitism is alive and well, and in a modern variation of the old conspiracy theory there are many who postulate that the Mossad and American neocons planned and executed the destruction of the World Trade Center (Jaeger 2005). But within the antisemitic discourse itself such speculations belong to the margins. Today the central focus is the allegedly colonial nature and supposedly fascist policies of the State of Israel. In this 'new' antisemitism Freemasonry has not acquired a place—yet.

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# Freemasonry and Islam

*Thierry Zarcone*

## Introduction

Freemasonry was born in an almost purely Christian society with its ceremonial and rituals heavily influenced by Christian culture and Western esotericism. Hence, it is not surprising that in spite of the masonic principle of tolerance, Jews, Muslims, and ‘Pagans’, were not accepted in the Order ([Nogaret] 1742: 14–15). This was the case particularly on the Continent, while the British and Dutch forms of Freemasonry were relatively open to the Jews. In 1755, according to the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of France, a person who was not baptized could not be made a Mason and several contemporary declarations were written by continental Masons, mainly German and Scandinavian, which underlined the strictly Christian character of the Order (Beaurepaire 2003). It is surprising that the Catholic Church, as indicated in the Papal Bulls of 1738 and 1751, idealized the universal tolerance of Freemasonry and imagined naively that Jews, Muslims, and Pagans were easily accommodated within the Order. Notwithstanding, we do know some cases of Muslims, in general merchants, students or diplomats, who were initiated in England and continental Europe in the eighteenth century, but they were very few and admitted into the Order under exceptional conditions only. Meanwhile, the lodges established in the East in the eighteenth century very rarely welcomed Muslims. These lodges constituted either a powerful commercial network serving the foreign merchants established in the Empire, or a diplomatic club for members of the legations (Zarcone 1993: 189–193; Beaurepaire 2006; Fozdar 2001: 46–49; van der Veur 1976: 4–6; Stevens 1994). Thereafter, in the nineteenth century, the emergence of liberalism in the West and the increasing settlement in the Muslim world of colonists and foreigners who were Freemasons led to a reconsideration of the principle of tolerance and of masonic discrimination (see the chapters “Freemasonry and Eastern Religions” and “Freemasonry and Colonialism” in this volume for further information).

## Muslims in Freemasonry: Colonial Clubs and/or Reformist Circles

Although many lodges were active in the Ottoman Empire, in Egypt, in India and even in Indonesia in the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth

century, it was not until the middle of that century that the number of Muslims admitted to these lodges started to increase. Two kinds of lodges however must be distinguished. First, the lodges which were set up in colonial areas, like British India, French North Africa and the Dutch East Indies often functioned as social clubs that supported charities, provided entertainment and aimed to bring together the colonial administrators, the Foreign military, and the well-to-do colonists (merchants, landholders) with the local aristocratic and upper class. In general, the goal of this form of colonial Freemasonry was the 'fraternal' assimilation of the indigenous population. Second, the lodges which were started in non colonised areas, such as the Ottoman Empire including its Arabic provinces and Egypt, were rather reformist groups composed of foreign diplomats, merchants and of local senior civil servants, *litterati* and well-to-do men.

Regarding the masonic bodies operating in Muslim lands, there is a distinction between the revolutionary French and Italian Freemasonry and the British masonic tradition with its public spirit of cooperation. These masonic bodies were rivals though they cultivated fraternal relations. But after 1877, the Grand Orient of France, in order to open its lodges to freethinkers and atheists, decided to remove the obligation to profess belief in the Great Architect of the Universe and the immortality of the soul. Consequently, the United Grand Lodge of England declared the Grand Orient of France irregular. This dogmatic disagreement had a great impact on the Muslim Freemasons who were, for the most part, wary of an irreligious and even atheist form of Freemasonry. This led to a major partition between Muslim Freemasons that is still very influential to this day.

### **Mixed-Race Lodges in British India and in the Dutch East Indies**

It is worth noting that the masonic lodges in general provided a training ground for Muslims in democratic and constitutional government through the use of by-laws and constitutions, election of officers by universal suffrage, and so on. The lodge was also a neutral ground for various ethnic groups and members of different religions to meet and fraternize: colonizers and native populations in India and in North-Africa; Westerners and locals in the Ottoman Empire, and also among the ethnic and religious minorities of these areas: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Turkey and in the Middle East; Hindus, Zoroastrians and Muslims in India; Muslims and Chinese in the Dutch East Indies. On the other hand, secret societies have fascinated the Muslims and this may be one explanation for the success of Freemasonry among them—the other being its social and political character. D.F. Wadia wrote, in 1912, that in

India “The Parsees and Mahomedans especially of the Persian race take to Masonry as young ducks take to water. The moment they enter the holy precincts they find themselves in their own element” (Wadia 1912: 167). In Indonesia, in 1927, a newly initiated apprentice noted that “we Javanese like ceremony and ritual” (Van der Veur 1976: 18). And in North Africa, in 1848, a French Mason said that: “we must keep in mind the fact that the Arabs have a taste for the unusual and mysteries ... that they are fascinated by the strict principles of Freemasonry, by the symbols of its ordeals, by the secret of its passwords and grips” (Yacono 1969: 240–241).

Despite Freemasonry’s principle of universal brotherhood, many British Masons in India were both racially and religiously prejudiced, which led them to resist the admission of locals into the movement. On the other hand British Freemasonry encouraged mixed-race lodge membership. The goal was to foster fraternal feelings across religious divides favouring a fraternal assimilation to be compared, in a sense, to the French *‘mission civilisatrice’*. British Freemasonry was introduced into India in the early eighteenth century but it was not until the 1830s that the first natives (Zoroastrians and Muslims) were initiated, although they were very few. In Hyderabad, a province with an important Muslim population, Muslims entered the Lodge ‘St John No. 434’ at Secunderabad, around 1850. Many of them were high officers, some being ministers, several serving in the administration of the sovereign (Nizam) of Hyderabad (Gribble 1910: 51–136; Fozdar 2001: 532–534).

The foundation in 1843 of the lodge ‘Rising Star’ at Bombay (GLS) with the objective of initiating “native gentlemen” is an outstanding example (see the chapter “Freemasonry and Eastern Religions” in this volume). The medal of the lodge had on its reverse the full size effigies of two of its prominent members, a Zoroastrian, Maneckji Cursetji, and a Muslim, Muhammad Jafar, each clothed in the full dress of his community and with an apron and a ribbon of the Order and wearing the jewel of his office. The lodge was actually open to Zoroastrians and Muslims but closed to Hindus because of their polytheism and of the caste system, and specialised in the initiation of native candidates. The Muslims initiated were locals and several Iranian merchants and diplomats. Particularly striking is the fact that the lodge adopted some deviations from the usual customs for the examination of a native candidate “to sustain the purity of the sanctuary”. The solemn obligation was not only signed in English, but also in the vernacular language of the candidate, and “an examination is entered into regarding the nature and import of the serious promise before it is made a solemn obligation, so that no part of it may be by any possibility misunderstood” (Wadia 1912: 26, 31–34, 70, 167, 200–203). In 1876, the



lodge 'Rising Star' opposed the project to start a lodge called 'Islam' and reserved to Muslims only, arguing that such a "sectarian lodge was subversive of the noble principles of Freemasonry and that it was absurd to found a lodge for a particular sect exclusively". Consequently, the lodge was founded as a mixed-race lodge only, although its banner did have some Islamic symbols (Wadia 1912: 40; Fozdar 2001: 455–458). In the course of time, this fraternal assimilation progressively undermined colonialism and allowed the Zoroastrians, Muslim, and Hindus to call the British Masons 'brother' and thus assumed an air of equality that nurtured ideas of nationalism among the western-educated locals. A good example of this can be seen in the Ismaili Muslim Badr al-Din Tuyabji (d. 1906), member of lodge 'Rising Star', helped by Kabir al-Din (worshipful master of lodge 'Islam'), who was the founder in 1876 of one of the most prominent reformist organizations of the Muslims of Bombay, the Anjuman-i Islam (Fozdar 2001: 210 and 452–453).

Native Indonesians also entered Freemasonry by the middle of the nineteenth century, the first being Zoroastrians and Muslims. Chinese and Buddhists who were considered polytheist were admitted later. These native Freemasons were higher administrators, men from the upper-class, aristocratic, or well-to-do men, as Abd al-Rahman, great grandchild of the Sultan of Pontianak, initiated in 1844, and several princes of the House of Paku Alam (Yogyakarta) renowned for their progressive ideas. The goal of the Dutch lodges, regarding the natives, was similar to that of the British and French Freemasons in their colonies: a "humanistic goal, that is to assimilate the various races in the East so that all will become brothers" (Van der Veur 1976: 16). In the first decades of the twentieth century, the project to found separate lodges—'language-lodge'—for Indonesian and Chinese brothers using languages other than Dutch was opposed because such lodges would be a 'divisive element', a decision which annoyed the natives (Van der Veur 1976: 16; Stevens 1994). Contrary to the majority of the masonic lodges in the rest of the Muslim world, with the exception of India, the Indonesian lodges remained aloof from political matters, discussing only symbolism and ritual. A certain lack of interest and the reduced prestige of the Order, the members being less engaged than before in charity and benevolence, turned away several members from the lodges and brought Masonry into decline.

### **French Colonial Freemasonry in Northern Africa: The 'Mission Civilisatrice'**

The goal of the Grand Orient of France, shortly after its first lodge was started in Northern Africa in 1831, was also to assimilate the various peoples of Africa,

since it was, according to the French, essential to have them 'civilized' (on French Freemasonry in Northern Africa see Yacono 1969; Sabah 1990; Odo 1990; Odo 2001; Porset 2003). The first Muslim to be made a mason here was Sidi Hamed, the imam and great mufti of Bougie, at the Lodge 'Les Frères Numides', in 1839. About forty Muslims were initiated during the late 1830s in the whole of Algeria (out of a total of 700 brothers) and one lodge was named 'Ismaël', a very symbolic act as Ismaël (Ishmael) was regarded the mythical ancestor of the Arabs (Odo 2001: 50).

Although the French Freemasons established in Algeria were in general favourable to the reception of the Arabs, they regarded Islam and the devout candidates as an obstacle to their assimilation. Islam was clearly seen as a threat and a religion associated with ignorance and fanaticism. Only 'enlightened' religious people, well-to-do merchants, military and especially teachers, were allowed to become Masons. Among them was Allal Ould Abdi, a consular agent, who was appointed in 1891 as a dignitary of the Grand Orient of France. During the Third Republic in France (1870–1940), the Grand Orient of France became a radical anticlerical and secular organisation and this made the reception of Muslim Algerians rather difficult. The suppression of the invocation of the Great Architect of the Universe in 1877 worsened the situation, and the perceived lack of spirituality in the Grand Orient of France made Freemasonry repulsive to the majority of the Muslims. One event which occurred in 1891 at the Lodge 'L'Union Africaine' at Oran is a good illustration of the complexity of the question. The candidature of an Arab, Yusuf Salah, who was educated in Arabic and had very little knowledge of spoken French, was postponed. The reason for this was his poor French which prevented him from understanding some key terms of the French masonic philosophy, like 'humanism' and 'homeland' (*patrie*), about which he was examined. It is said that Yusuf Salah didn't answer the questions since these terms were "abstract ideas without any equivalent in Arabic and in Berber except through a circumlocution" (Sabah 1990: 573). In addition, the Arabs were criticised also as a whole for being a "race without propensity for liberty" (Sabah 1990: 573). Following this event, there were propositions by native Masons to open a lodge working in Arabic while others resigned from the Order.

Meanwhile, the Grand Orient of France was opposed to the founding of mixed-race or mixed-language lodges and the French living in Algeria, like the British in India, feared also the emergence of an enlightened class of Arabs who would fight for the autonomy of the country and undermine colonialism. Finally, the assimilation of the North-Africans failed, just as the dream of the French Masons to launch an Arab Freemasonry. The Grand Orient of France was actually even less inclined than British and Dutch Freemasonry in India

and in the Dutch East Indies, to fraternize with the local population. This is the reason why very few Algerian reformists were Masons, not to say none, compared to the rest of the Muslim world.

### **Reformism and Political Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire**

In the Ottoman Empire, especially at Istanbul and Smyrna, and later at Salonika, Freemasonry attracted many locals (Jews, Christians and Muslims) by the middle of the nineteenth century, during the Tanzimat Reforms that brought equality for all the subjects of the Empire whatever their race and religion. The first lodge to be established was the Lodge 'Oriental' (United Grand Lodge of England) in 1856. It was followed by lodges linked to several European masonic bodies; French, Italian, German, Irish, Polish, Hungarian, and so on. French and Italian lodges were the most attractive because of the prestige of French and Italian culture and language among the elite of the Empire, but more importantly because of its political character, as it was the case with the Italian lodges (for Ottoman Freemasonry see Kologlu 1991a; Kologlu 1991b; Zarcone 1993; Iacovella 1997; and Layiktez 1999). Mixed-race lodges existed also in the European part of the Empire, in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Several members of the reformist Young Ottomans movement and, especially, Namik Kemal (d. 1888), the leading figure of this faction, were made Masons, and prince Murad V (sultan during one year in 1876) was secretly initiated by the French lodge 'Proodos' in 1872. Also, the Egyptian Abd al-Halim Pasha, son of Mehmed Ali and former Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Egypt and of the District Grand Lodge of the same country, was appointed Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge of Turkey (United Grand Lodge of England) after being banished from Egypt. Ottoman reformists were instrumental in the adoption by the Ottoman state of a Constitution and of a parliament (1877), an astonishing event in the Muslim world. However, in 1878, the Young Ottomans were exiled by the Sultan Abdülhamid II who suspended the new Ottoman Constitution and put an end to the reforms. The lodges then experienced a dark period under the surveillance of the despotic State, although they continued to operate as a meeting point for moderate Ottomans and exiled Persian reformists (mostly diplomats), whose aim was to spread liberal ideas towards Iran.

Thereafter, by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the Young Turks, successor of the Young Ottomans, started to organize themselves clandestinely to fight the authoritarian regime of the Sultan. Their main organisation was the Union and Progress Committee, an organization modelled upon the Carbonari and masonic frameworks. Many Young Turks

were also Masons and they used the network of the Italian, French and Spanish lodges established in Salonica (Lodges 'Macedonia Risorta', 'Verita', 'Perseverenciá') (E.F. [Ettore Ferrari] 1910; Dumont 1984; del Arbol 1993). Meanwhile, they strove to gain the political support of the Grand Orient of France in Paris and of the Socialist Party. Finally in 1908, the Young Turks succeeded in forcing the Sultan to restore the Constitution and a new Parliament was set up. The lodges continued to work as political clubs with close links with the Union and Progress Committee. Three Masons became the leaders of the new Constitutionalist government and numerous brethren were appointed high ranking officials. The first ottoman independent masonic body, the Ottoman Grand Orient (hereafter OGO), was founded in 1909 and a great number of lodges were created in all the provinces of the Empire, but functioning more as governmental political clubs than masonic lodges. The Grand Master of the OGO was the number one of the *régime*, Talat Pasha (d. 1921). A puppet in the hands of the Young Turk government that quickly turned despotic, Freemasonry was very much criticized and unpopular, up to the end of the First World War. Thereafter, the Freemasons gave their support to the new Republican Turkey and to its future leader Kemal Atatürk but, for political reasons, the Turkish Grand Lodge (who succeeded the OGO) was forced to close its lodges in 1935.

### Persian Masonic Network and Iranian Freemasonry

During the nineteenth century, Persian Freemasonry existed exclusively among the Iranian diplomats initiated in Europe, India, Egypt, Turkey and Palestine (on Persian Freemasonry, see Isma'il Ra'in 1968; Abd al-Hadi Hayri 1989; Sabattiennes 1977; and Algar 2001). As an example one may mention the reception of the first Persian diplomat Askar Khan Afshar, in Paris in 1808, and that of a well known reformist ambassador Mirza Husayn Khan who was made a mason in 1851 at the Lodge 'Rising Star' in Bombay when he was Consul in this city, before being sent to Istanbul in 1859 where he participated also in masonic meetings. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the initiation of Persian diplomats and princes had an obvious political objective. Later, particularly in France, where numerous Persians entered the Order, the motive was an expression of the *mission civilisatrice* with the double purpose of having Persians 'civilized' through the Order, and having the Craft imported in Iran. The structure of the Persian masonic network involved three places and several lodges, mostly of the Grand Orient of France: Paris (Lodge 'Clémentine Amitié'), Beirut (Lodge 'Le Liban'), and Istanbul (English, French

and Italian-chartered lodges), the city which was at the centre of this network. It is only in 1907 that a lodge of the Grand Orient of France, 'Le Réveil de l'Iran', was founded at Tehran. This lodge was composed of Frenchmen and a great number of Persians, princes of the Qajar ruling dynasty, high-ranking civil servants, diplomats, politicians (Hasan Taqizada), teachers, literati (Dihkhuda), and even Shiite clerics. Many among its members played a role in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905. After the closure of the lodge 'Réveil de l'Iran' in the 1920s, a new lodge was founded in 1951 named 'Humayun'. Linked to an obscure Grand Lodge in Cairo, Lodge 'Humayun' (renamed 'Pahlavi' after the new Iranian dynasty) was in fact an aristocratic club for the upper and upper-middle classes with numerous persons from the governing elite. Lodge 'Pahlavi' was closed after the post-1953 *coup d'Etat* (Azinfar, Eskandari and Joseph 2001).

Freemasonry never entered Central Asia and Afghanistan, though there was a British Lodge, probably military, at Kabul in 1880. However, some natives, in general aristocrats and literati, had some ideas, although vague, about the Order. The only writer, to my knowledge, who wrote on Freemasonry in Central Asia is the well known reformist thinker Ahmad Danish (d. 1897), the leading intellectual of the Bukhara Emirate in the nineteenth century. Intrigued by Freemasonry, Danish noticed, among other things, that those who attended this society (called also House of Oblivion—Faramushkhana, the term for Freemasonry in the Indo-Persian region) fraternized with other members regardless of the religion to which they belonged (Danish 1988; see also Adhami 1999; and Zarcone 2002: 14–15.). Also worth mentioning is the initiation of the reformist King of Afghanistan Habib Allah (d. 1919) by the British-chartered Lodge 'Concordia' at Calcutta in 1907. The King, very interested in Freemasonry, aimed to be made a mason during a trip to India and was secretly admitted in the society (McMahon 1936).

### Arab Renaissance and Freemasonry in Egypt and in the Middle East

In 1841, Egypt under the Khedive Mehmed Ali separated from the Ottoman Empire and became an autonomous country until the coming of the British in 1884. Following the arrival in Egypt after 1838, especially at Alexandria, of Italian revolutionists and carbonari fleeing their country, masonic lodges were founded by the Italian, British and French (Zaydan 1889; Landau 1965; Wissa 1989; and Anduze 2003). Muslim natives were admitted very early into these lodges where they fraternized with the foreigners and the members of the other communities existing in the country, i.e. Italian, Greek, and Armenian.

Freemasonry then started to play a notable role in the Nahda, the Arab Renaissance which espoused Western modernity, and the Arab quest for identity and nationalism. Two lodges were particularly influential in promoting social reforms and political activism: the Lodge 'Les Pyramides' (Grand Orient of France) founded in 1845 at Alexandria with about 300 members, and the Lodge 'Kawkab al-Sharq' at Cairo (United Grand Lodge of England and then Grand Orient of France). During the nineteenth and twentieth century, the lodges attracted the upper-middle class establishment and initiated some of the leading figures of the political and cultural life of Egypt, such as prince Abd al-Halim (son of Mehmed Ali); the Algerian Abd al-Qadir; the famous Islamic reformist and agnostic Jamal al-Din al-Afghani; the mufti of Egypt Muhammad Abduh; the Egyptian national Party leader Muhammad Farid; and the leader of the 1919 Revolution and founder of the Wafd Party Sad Zaghlul.

Egyptian Freemasonry must be considered the most independent and innovative masonic community in the whole of the Muslim world since there were more Muslim natives in the Egyptian lodges than elsewhere in the Muslim world, and because these lodges worked from the start with a masonic ritual in the vernacular language, that is, Arabic. Also, the country had in 1864 an independent and regular masonic body, the National Grand Lodge of Egypt which was headed in 1881 by Muhammad Tawfiq, the son of the Khedive, and also a Grand Orient of Egypt. In the course of time, other masonic bodies were set up and quarrelled with each other up to the year 1961 when president Nasser declared Freemasonry illegal. Another characteristic of Egyptian Freemasonry was the publication of masonic journals (see Cannon 1985) since the nineteenth century. It also founded lodges in Syria and Lebanon which competed with the French, Ottoman, Italian, and Scottish lodges established there.

Although Palestine and Syria were the places in the Muslim world where the first masonic lodges were founded in early eighteenth century, it was not until the 1880s that Palestinian Muslims were welcomed into the fraternity. The Lodge 'Palestine', established in 1861 at Beirut by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, was in the beginning essentially composed of Christians (Sommer 2006; Sommer 2008). Other lodges were founded by several masonic bodies in the main cities of the region. A detailed description of the masonic activity in this area is given by Robert Morris, an American mason who travelled to the Near East in 1868, visiting Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria, looking for archaeological sites with (what he believed to be) masonic connections and participating in masonic meetings (Morris 1875 [1872]: 216–229, 461–471, 552–559, 573–595). Morris organized in 1868 the first meeting of Freemasons at Damascus, in the form of an informal lodge with foreign and Arab participants. Among the latter were two sons of the emir Abd al-Qadir at the Lodge

'Palestine'. Jurji Zaydan (d. 1914), a Christian and the first masonic author in Arabic, was initiated at the Lodge 'Le Liban'. In his *General History of Freemasonry* (1889), Zaydan regarded the lodge as an elite and intellectual club attended by modernist thinkers and representatives of the Nahda. Freemasons were engaged in a quest for modernity and intellectual, moral, and social improvement. Zaydan advocated an 'Arabization' of Freemasonry and researched the Oriental origin of the Order, convinced that the mythic origin of the craft was in the East (Dupont 2006). The Lodge 'Lebanon'—which succeeded the Lodge 'Palestine', closed in 1868—was composed of Muslims, Jews, Greek Orthodox Christians and Protestants, but without any Catholic Maronites because of the criticism of Freemasonry by the Catholic Church, and especially by the Jesuit congregation (see the chapter "Freemasonry and the Catholic Church" in this volume).

In the twentieth century, the history of Freemasonry was strongly affected by the events that changed the face of the region. After the 1908 Young Turks Revolution, the Order expanded throughout the Middle East and many lodges linked to the OGO were established. Due to the increasing migration of Jews in Palestine, mixed-races lodges composed of Christians, Muslims and Jews gradually became the norm in this area. This was the case with the Lodge 'Barkai' (Grand Lodge of Egypt, and then Grand Orient of France) founded at Jaffa (Tel Aviv) in 1904–1906, reserved for Jews and Christians in the beginning, but which initiated Muslims after 1908. The lodge, frequented by the intellectual and political elite of Jaffa, gained thereafter a majority of Muslim brethren and worked a ritual in Arabic up to its closure in 1919. The Lodge 'Temple of Solomon' (Grand Orient of France, 1910) at Jerusalem, experienced a cultural and political division that pitted Europeans against natives, and Zionists against anti-Zionists, leading to a new lodge, 'Moriah', composed exclusively of foreigners and Jews. 'Moriah' told the Grand Orient of France in 1913 that, "the indigenous Turkish and Arab elements are still unable to understand and appreciate the superior principles of Masonry". After the First World War, the Ottomans lost their control over Syria, Palestine and Iraq which fell under British and French administration. Inter-communal tensions and rivalry between Jews and Arabs increased after the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and the creation of a Jewish 'national home' in Palestine. The lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Egypt were divided over the working of the ritual, in Hebrew, in French, in English, or in Arabic. The first lodge working the ritual in Hebrew was the lodge 'Har-Zion' (Mount Sion) founded in 1927. In 1932, a majority of lodges left the Egyptian Grand Lodge and set up a Grand Lodge of Palestine composed, for the most part, of Jewish brethren. However, the Arabic-speaking lodges maintained their link with the Grand Lodge of

Egypt. As a result, the ideal of the mixed-race and mixed-religious lodge was no more than a relic of the past (Sabah 1985: 70–74; Combes 2001; Campos 2005; Zeldis 2006; and Millet 2007).

An astonishing fascination with Freemasonry was observable in Syria under the French Mandate, especially between 1922 and 1928 (Millet 2006; Millet 2008). There were mixed-races lodges, with foreign, Orthodox Christian and Muslim (Sunni and Druze) members, belonging to several masonic bodies, French, Scottish, British, Egyptian and American. Several prominent Syrian families were represented like the Azm, the Mudarris, the Keyhani (an old Sufi family) and even the Jazairi (descendants of Abd al-Qadir). Muslim and Christian clerics (Orthodox Popes) mixed also in the lodges. Almost all the Arab political elites were involved in Freemasonry, which was regarded essentially as a political club and an annexe of the political parties. For example, almost all the positions in the 1924 Syrian government were held by members of the Lodge 'Kaysun' at Damascus, which set up a 'masonic party'. Later, the lodges were divided over the national issue, in favour or against the French Mandate. Many Freemasons criticized strongly the pro-Mandate policy of the Grand Orient of France and left this masonic body to join the Scottish Grand Lodge and, especially, the Grand Lodge of New York because of its non-colonialist views regarding the region. The division over the national issue was still observable in the 1930s when two masonic bodies were founded: the Grand Lodge of Syria (1938) which was nationalist and opposed to the French Mandate, and the Grand Orient of Syria (1937) recognized by the Grand Orient of France and favourable to the Mandate. Similarly, in neighbouring Lebanon, a masonic body, the Grand Orient of Lebanon, came into being in 1934.

### **Freemasonry between Interdiction and Renewal, from 1950 to the Present**

The Second World War brought an end to the activities of almost all the masonic bodies operating in the Muslim world. Post-war, the region underwent notable political changes leading to the independence of some Muslim countries and, later, to the prohibition of Freemasonry for political (nationalism, authoritarianism) or religious reasons (Arab countries, Indonesia). However, other countries permitted the Order to flourish and to operate freely up to the present time (Turkey, India, Morocco).

In Indonesia, the masonic lodges were closed during the Japanese occupation and reopened after the war. The country became independent in 1949 and several lodges working in vernacular languages were founded. In 1954–1955,



these lodges united and formed an independent and regular Grand Orient based at Jakarta which emphasised respect for Islam and the Quran (Van der Veur 1976: 25–30). However, suspected to be pro-Dutch or, at least, close to the former rulers of the country, the Order (but not the Indonesian Federation of 'Le Droit Humain') was banned by President Sukarno in 1961. After India gained its independence in 1949, most of the English, Irish and Scottish-chartered lodges of the country were integrated in a regular Grand Lodge of India founded in 1961. The lodges are nowadays still mixed-race. As a result of the partitioning of the Indian subcontinent in 1949, two new Muslim countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh, came into being. Freemasonry didn't exist in Bangladesh but worked in Pakistan until 1972 when the Order was declared illegal by President Ali Bhutto and its buildings and artefacts sequestered by the government (Sidhwa 1969; Khambatta 1990).

Only a few years after the closing of the irregular Lodge 'Humayun', regular Freemasonry flourished in Pahlavi Iran from 1955 onwards, and many French, Scottish and German-chartered lodges were established. A Grand Lodge of Iran was founded in 1969 and although the Shah was suspicious about the Order, it was tolerated and attracted many Iranians from the upper-class and the elite. Especially, there were an exceptional number of high-ranking politicians, ministers, senators, and deputies within its ranks. The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge, Shari Emami, was a former Prime Minister and the president of the Senate. After 1970, the Order opened the door of its lodges to Iranians from the middle-classes, until the Islamic revolution banned it in 1979. One of the major tragedies in the history of Freemasonry in the world, not to say the greatest, occurred in Iran in the first years of the Islamic Revolution which regarded Freemasons as Anglo-American and Anglo-Zionist agents. Hundreds of Iranian Masons were persecuted, some executed, others imprisoned, or purged from government offices. Many of them fled the country, losing all their property, and established themselves in Europe and the USA (Azinfar *et al.* 2001).

In the post-war period Freemasonry was banned in almost all the Arab countries for many reasons, such as the alleged Zionist character of the Order and its secretive framework, which was believed to threaten Muslim society and implicitly its authoritarian governments. President Nasser banned the Order in Egypt in 1964, and the Syrian government did the same in 1965. Iraqi Freemasonry—which established a few lodges after the British mandate, all British-chartered with the exception of one Egyptian-chartered lodge, probably restricted to Muslims—was shut down in 1958 (Safwat 1980: 18–23). In North Africa, after being banned by the French Vichy *régime* under German occupation in 1940, the lodges reopened after the war and launched a new

policy towards the natives, less discriminatory towards Islam and permitting the Arabic language to be used in some lodges. However, after the independence of Algeria (1961) and the end of the French protectorate over Tunisia (1956) and Morocco (1956), the lodges were abandoned by their foreign members and were thereafter definitively closed by the new governments (Odo 2001: 110, 114–119; Chater 2006). Some native Freemasons intimated, however, that certain members of these lodges have continued informal masonic meetings secretly up to the present day.

The situation in Morocco should be distinguished from the rest of North Africa with a King, Hassan II, who is said to have been a Freemason himself, more liberal toward Freemasonry than elsewhere in the Arab world. A Grand Lodge of Morocco named 'Atlas' was founded in the 1960s at Casablanca but disappeared in the following years. Worth noting is the fact that in 1973, the High Court of Casablanca, after a long court procedure, returned to the verdict that Freemasonry was compatible with Islam. This decision led to the foundation in 1999 of a regular District Grand Lodge of Morocco under the French regular Grande Loge Nationale Française, soon recognized, in 2000, as the Grand Lodge of the Kingdom of Morocco. Also an irregular body, the Grand Lodge of Morocco which claimed to be a continuation of the Grand Lodge 'Atlas', was founded in 2001.

Freemasonry was forbidden for a period in Lebanon during the 1960s since the Order was suspected of being manipulated by 'Zionist Masons' and because of the determined opposition of the Lebanese Christian clergy. Nevertheless, the government turned a blind eye to the lodges which continued to operate illegally. Finally, in 1972, the interdiction was withdrawn. After this date, the situation of Freemasonry in Lebanon became chaotic with several irregular masonic bodies. The most important seem to be the Grand Lodge of the Cedars (1976), the Central Grand Lodge of Lebanon (?), and the United Grand Lodge of Lebanon (1996).

The Grand Lodge of Palestine (1932), predominantly Jewish, endeavoured to mix all the peoples of the region and established mixed-lodges (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) working either in Hebrew, Arabic or other languages. After the creation of the state of Israel, the Grand Lodge took the title of Grand Lodge of the State of Israel. To symbolize its openness to all men, whatever their race or religion, the Grand Lodge adopted a coat of arms which includes the square and compasses, together with the emblems of the three religions to which the great majority of its members belong: the Star of David, the Crescent, and the Cross (Zeldis 2006: 318–320).

In Republican Turkey, the ban on Freemasonry was lifted in 1948, but instead of the former Grand Orient of Turkey, a new Grand Lodge of the Ancient and

Accepted Freemasons of Turkey was founded. Its lodges were concentrated in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and Bursa and the members belonged to the upper-class. In 1965, due to internal problems the Grand Lodge split up and a new Grand lodge was born, the Grand Lodge of Turkey. The former Grand Lodge obtained the recognition of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1970. In spite of strong anti-masonic attacks by Nationalists and Islamic political parties, the two Grand lodges have never been forbidden so far. Some lodges were mixed-race and worked the rituals in several languages, Turkish, English, French, German, and Greek. In 1999, in honour of the anniversary of the founding of the Ottoman Grand Orient (1909), the Grand Master of the regular Grand Lodge launched a public campaign to inform the public about Freemasonry, declaring that the Order resembles a bridge between West and East (on Turkish contemporary Freemasonry see Layikteş 2001; Layikteş 2003; Kologlu 2003).

Female Freemasonry is still in its infancy in the Muslim world where two countries only have authorised female Grand Lodges: the Female Grand Lodge of Turkey (1991) and the Female Grand Lodge of Morocco (2008). In addition to these, the founding of female lodges is in process in Lebanon. Freemasonry and Islam do not only live side by side in the Muslim countries where masonic lodges are established. There are also many lodges with Muslim members, sometimes in the majority, in European countries and in the USA, where Muslim diasporas or political refugees are established. In this context, mention should be made of the Grand Lodge of Iran (in exile) set up in 1985 at Boston in the USA.

### Freemasons and Sufi Brotherhoods: A Shock of Recognition

The discovery of Freemasonry by Muslims in the middle of the nineteenth century provoked a shock of recognition, since Freemasonry was regarded almost immediately, or at least when Muslims were accepted, as an equivalent of the Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqa*—path, way). This occurred especially in Turkey and in Iran where ‘Freemasonry’ was translated by the term *tariqa* in ritual and official documents. In fact, the Muslims considered all kinds of societies with rituals, hierarchies, and ceremonies as Sufi brotherhoods, even if they came from a non-Muslim culture. Freemasonry was associated with Sufism in three ways; the first occurred through the translation of masonic rituals, the second is based on the interpretation of the rituals by Muslim Masons, the third was followed by Freemasons who set up para-masonic societies in order to Islamize

Masonry through a deep mixing of masonic and Sufi ceremonies. To quote some examples, the Turkish and Persian Masons borrowed the terms to translate the names of the three masonic degrees from the guilds, and the masonic apron was identified with the belt of the craftsmen. Also, a Persian mason presented the lodge as the cavern of the 'Seven Sleepers' who are depicted in numerous Futuvva (Muslim Spiritual chivalry) manuals as the prototype of the spiritual knights (Zarcone 2002, chapter 5; van den Bos 2002: 97–109; van den Bos 2003–2004; Zarcone 2008a).

The major para-masonic organizations in Iran and in the Ottoman Empire maintained the masonic framework and conceptualized Freemasonry through Sufi symbolism, even mixing deeply masonic and *tariqa* frameworks. Both were primarily political organizations, either revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, fighting the despotic Persian regime of the Qajar Shahs or the Republic of Atatürk. The first organisation was the House of Oblivion/*Faramushkhana* set up at Tehran, in 1858; this is the first attempt to set up a 'Muslim Freemasonry' in which the masonic ceremonial act is reinterpreted through Sufism (Zarcone 2002: 119–131). The second example of a para-masonic society is that of the Virtuous Order (*Tarikat-i Salahiye*), founded in 1920 in Istanbul and composed of prominent Turkish Freemasons and shaykhs of the *Bektashi* Sufi Order. The reception in the Virtuous Order is an imitation of various ceremonial acts from masonic and Bektashi ritual (Zarcone 2008a: 123–125). Furthermore, masonic ideas and symbols were introduced into a modern branch of a Persian Sufi Order, the *Safialishahi* Order, at the beginning of the twentieth century; the name adopted thereafter by this branch was *Anjuman-i Ukhuvvat* (Society of Brotherhood) (van den Bos 2002: 97–102, 184–190). From as early as the 1850s ("Are the Druses Masons?" *Freemasons Magazine and Masonic Mirror* [December 31, 1859]: 506) some Freemasons tried hard to compare themselves with the Druzes, the members of a Muslim branch in Lebanon who keep their rituals of initiation absolutely secret, and use passwords, grips, and sacred numbers (Smith 1901; Springett 1922: 248–258, 270–287; see also de Smet 2004.).

To conclude this section, one thing must be said of the Algerian Sufi Abd al-Qadir, one of the great representatives of the Ibn Arabi school, whose initiation in 1864 at the lodge 'Les Pyramides' in Alexandria, on behalf of the French Lodge 'Henri IV', was actually a mutual misunderstanding. Abd al-Qadir thought naively that French Freemasonry was a spiritual movement and the French Masons dreamt of having the illustrious Algerian adopting the ideas of progress and civilisation and spreading the Order in the East (Yacono 1966; Etienne 1994: 329–373).

## Adapting Freemasonry to Islam and to Muslim Culture

### *“Is the Koran a Book to Support the Hands of a Freemason?”*

One of the first major problems faced by the Freemasons who aimed to initiate Muslims was the question of the obligation and of the sacred book on which an initiate must swear his oath. Jews were admitted in British and Dutch Lodges in the 1730s, and they were in general obligated on the Bible opened at the pages of the Pentateuch instead of those of the Gospel of St. John. The situation appeared to be different with Muslims. To my knowledge, Robert Morris was the first Mason to question the possibility of having the Qur’an as a sacred book for a Muslim candidate to be obligated, asking: “Is the Koran a book to support the hands of a Freemason?” Morris dedicated several pages in his *Freemasonry in the Holy Land* of 1872 to demonstrate “the fitness of the Koran for masonic uses” (Morris 1875: 223–229). There were many British Masons, however, who opposed the reception of Muslims in Freemasonry. For example, in the Indian mixed-race Lodge ‘Rising Star’, the candidate was obligated on the Bible, but with an addition, “for each is re-obligated on what he considers as most binding on his conscience. For instance, the Mahomedan, although he believes in the Old Testament, does not believe in the divinity of Christ; therefore, any obligation taken by him on the Gospels would not be binding on his conscience, as is the case with an obligation taken on the Koran; therefore, he is re-obligated on that book” (Wadia 1912: 39). The officers of the lodge mentioned that “these deviations, or rather additions, were considered necessary and proper, and to afford a sufficient additional safeguard for the keeping inviolate our sacred mysteries” (Wadia 1912: 40). Worthy of mention is the presence in the Museum of the United Grand Lodge of England of a copy of the Qur’an on which the King of Afghanistan, Habib Allah, took his obligation in 1907 (it is signed by the King himself) (McMahon 1936: 9).

If we look at the Ottoman Empire, we notice that the Qur’an never entered the lodges under foreign jurisdiction before the founding of the Ottoman Grand Orient in 1909, with the exception of the Scottish-warranted and mixed-race lodge ‘La Turquie’ in 1908, where “the Bible was placed in the pedestal and, on a small table close by, a Quran and the Talmud, upon which Mussulmans and Hebrews were respectively initiated and obligated” (Gould 1936, vol. 4: 313). In the beginning, the rituals worked by the lodges of the Ottoman Grand Orient followed the ritual of the Grand Orient of France and the candidates were obligated on the Book of masonic Constitution (probably the by-laws of the Ottoman Grand Orient). The only, but major, difference with the Grand Orient of France was that the meeting was opened to the glory of the Great Architect of the Universe. Another change happened in the 1920s when the

candidate was obligated both on the Book of the masonic Constitution and the “Holy Scriptures”<sup>1</sup> (see Agaoglu 2005: 51–52, 359). Years later, the “Holy Scriptures” were once again removed, until 1959. After this date, however, the candidates were obligated on the “Holy Scriptures”, more precisely: the Gospel, the Talmud, and the Qur’an, all placed on the pedestal of the lodge. We should also note that in 1954–1955, when the Grand Orient of Indonesia was set up, the “opened Qur’an was placed next to the Bible on the ‘Altar of Truth’, expressing the masonic belief in a Divine Word” (Van der Veur 1976: 29). Finally, we know that after 1953 some French lodges in Algeria allowed Muslim candidates to swear on the Qur’an (Odo 2001: 110).

### *The ‘Linguistic Turn’: Rituals Translated into Oriental Languages*

There are two aspects to the request of Muslims for the translation of the masonic rituals into vernacular languages: first, to understand the ceremonial and the message of Masonry; and, second, for nationalistic purposes. Meanwhile, there were foreign Masons who took the initiative of having the rituals translated in order to spread the teachings of Freemasonry in native society. The first attempt may have occurred in 1868, in the Ottoman Empire, at Smyrna, in the Italian-warranted lodge ‘Orhaniye’, an exceptional lodge, at this time, almost all its Masters and officers being Muslims and working the ritual in Turkish (Zarcone 1993: 228–229; and according to the facsimiles of two diplomas of this lodge dated 1870 published in Erginsoy 1990). It is known that, according to Robert Morris, in 1868, “there were no lodges in Syria and in Egypt with rituals in the Arabic language”. However, Morris noticed that the same year, at the Lodge ‘Les Pyramides’ (Alexandria), “the work was done alternately in French and Arabic and the record-books were kept correspondingly. But the rituals are in French” (Morris 1875: 219). This situation is confirmed by a French masonic journal which noted that during the meetings each office was executed by a foreign brother speaking French, accompanied by another foreigner or a native, speaking Arabic. The Lodge ‘Les Pyramides’ also set up a committee for discussing the translation of the rituals and the by-laws (*Le Monde maçonnique* [June 1868]: 119–121). Later, in 1871, another Egyptian lodge, the British-warranted ‘Kawkab al-Sharq’ (Star of the East) at Cairo, reserved exclusively to non-European brethren, was working in Arabic (Stevenson Drane 1968: 219).

Similarly, the French Lodge ‘L’Union d’Orient’ at Istanbul undertook the translation of the rituals and of the Constitution into Turkish in 1869, and informed the Grand Orient of France that this task was not easy, especially to

1 *Mübtedî Derecesi Rehber-i Mesaisi* (A Guide [Ritual] for Working the First Degree) (n.p. [Istanbul]: Ottoman Grand Orient, 1926), 35.

find the best words in Turkish to express some purely masonic terms and concepts (Zarcone 1993: 204–205). The situation in India was quite different since very few lodges worked the ritual in a vernacular language. One exception is the Lodge ‘Hayderabad’ (United Grand Lodge of England), founded in 1892, with most of its members from the Nizam family, which had the ritual translated into Urdu (Fozdar 2001: 532–534). However, in the mixed-race lodges, the rule was to work the ritual in English but to give, if necessary, explanations in vernacular languages to candidates with no knowledge of English (Wadia 1912: 24–25, 72, 129, 256–257; McMahan 1936: 8–9). The situation was not better in North Africa in spite of many projects to introduce Arabic into the lodges. One of these projects, in 1849, was to establish lodges working in Arabic with the aim of initiating Muslims obligated on the Qur’an. All these projects were however abandoned. Similarly, the lodge ‘Abd el Kader’ which was founded in Tunisia to admit natives exclusively and to work in Arabic ended in failure (Yacono 1969: 245–248; Odo 2001: 110). On the other hand, lodges in Morocco were more inclined to work in Arabic (Sabah 1990: 571).

*The Question of the Great Architect of the Universe and of the Belief in God*

The abolition of the invocation of the Great Architect of the Universe by the Grand Orient of France in 1877 brought a major turmoil in the lodges under the jurisdiction of the French Order in the Muslim world. The enlightened Muslim elites in the lodges of the Ottoman Empire, as in its Arab provinces, were open to the ideas of progress, secularisation and liberty. The belief in God was a limit, however, to this modernization, which aimed to liberate them from traditional society. And the Great Architect of the Universe perfectly incarnated this limit. The reception of a notorious atheist in the lodge ‘L’Union d’Orient’ at Istanbul in 1866 provoked a heated debate in the masonic milieu of the city, about the principles of the belief in God and in the immortality of the soul that were scorned by the Grand Orient of France. The abolition of the invocation of the Great Architect confirmed in the eyes of many Muslim and Christian Ottoman Masons the deviance of French Masonry, and many brethren left the lodges (Zarcone 1993: 280–286). In 1909, the Ottoman Grand Orient maintained the invocation of the Great Architect in its ritual, although the Turkish Masons were very sympathetic to the Grand Orient of France, and their ritual was almost a copy of the French one. Thus, the candidate swore on the Book of masonic Constitutions instead of the Volume of the Sacred Law. The philosopher Riza Tevfik, the Grand Master of the Ottoman Grand Orient, declared in 1918 that, “a candidate who doesn’t believe in a Creator [God] cannot be made a Mason” (Zarcone 1993: 319). In

1959, the Grand Secretary of the regular Grand Lodge of Turkey, which succeeded the Grand Orient, emphasised the belief in God, who was identified clearly as the Great Architect, and wrote that Allah had become a “spiritual Being” instead of a “vague Strength/God”, as he had been in the 1920s (Agaoglu 2005: 530, 569).

The situation concerning the belief in God and the invocation of the Great Architect was also very tense in the Arab provinces. As explained by the ritual translated into Arabic, there are no ambiguities about the precise identity of the Great Architect and the well known expression for the invocation, that is, “to the glory of the Great Architect of the Universe” was translated in Arabic as “to the glory of the supreme Creator of the Universe” (*li-majd Mukawwin al-Kawn al-Azam*) (Dupont 2006: 348). Particularly interesting is the case of the French Lodge ‘Le Liban’, which was authorized by the Grand Orient of France not to implement the decision of the suppression of the Great Architect and of the immortality of the soul (Dupont 2006: 348). In order to maintain its influence on the lodge, the Grand Orient of France was actually forced to turn a blind eye to the denial of its philosophical and ‘revolutionary’ principles. There is a similar case in Morocco with the Lodge ‘Union et Progrès’ (Grand Orient of France), which started in 1947 at Rabat, working the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and opening with the invocation of the Great Architect (Odo 2001: 110). Though reluctantly, the Grand Orient of France authorised these deviations from its Constitution in order to attract Muslim candidates.

Finally, the interpretation given by two major Syrian masonic writers, the Christian Jurji Zaydan and the Muslim Shahin Makariyus, of the removal of the references to the Great Architect of the Universe is very significant. Both actually considered this removal as a *bida*, a theological Islamic concept to express a blameworthy religious deviance or innovation. The abolition was in fact understood as a deviance from the masonic tradition and a grave corruption of the ritual (Dupont 2006: 348).

### Objections to Freemasonry

The popular objections against Freemasonry are very similar throughout the Muslim world. The Order was denounced in India as an idolatric house (*butkhana*), a house of Satan (*shaytankhana*), or a house of sorcery (*jadughar*), the latter being the name given by the locals to the place of gathering of the lodge ‘Hope’ in Karachi in 1914 (Burton 1877: Vol. 1, 71; Fozdar 2001: 205). The first Freemasons who established a lodge in Istanbul around 1748 were also considered sorcerers (Papastathopoulos 2001). However, the objections



underwent a change after the Order expanded in the Muslim world and especially when Muslims were initiated and the Order became better known by its opponents. The major criticisms by the Muslim clerics appeared to be similar to those of the Catholic Church as developed in the two papal Bulls of 1738 and 1751, that is the use of secrecy and religious toleration.

The oldest exposure on Freemasonry in Turkish was written by an Ottoman literate, Edhem Pertev Pasha (d. 1873), himself a Mason, probably initiated in a French lodge in the middle of the nineteenth century. Disappointed by the Order, Pertev Pasha wrote a description of a masonic reception in the form of a dream, which he entitled "Report on a dream" (*Habname*). In his eyes, Freemasonry was no more than a missionary organisation which aimed to deliver Jerusalem from the Turks and a continuation of the mission of the Crusaders. Pertev Pasha was also not convinced by the masonic humanism according to which the members of various religions can fraternize in the lodges. For him, the idea of a mixed-race lodge where men of various religions are linked by a mutual bond and an oath sworn on a Sacred Volume is purely utopian (see Zarcone 2002: 17–20).<sup>2</sup> In twentieth century and present-day Turkey, masonic tolerance was fiercely criticised, because being tolerant towards other religions was interpreted by the clerics of Islam as being less respectful of one's own religion. The secretive character of Freemasonry was also drastically denounced by Muslim clerics, who advocated that a secret organisation contradicted the principles of Islam and had no place in a Muslim society. In 1978, the Order was strongly condemned by the religious authority of Mecca and depicted as the "most dangerously destructive organisation to Islam and to Muslims".

In addition to the traditional criticisms, Freemasonry was also regarded by the Muslims as a Jewish organisation linked with Zionist activities. The alleged Zionist character of the Order has been emphasized since the end of the nineteenth century and was thereafter associated with imperialism and colonialism. The objection to Freemasonry as a pillar of colonialism was widespread, from North Africa to Indonesia. The accusation of Zionism is the major topic in the prolific anti-masonic literature in Turkey and in the Arab world; this literature is of an extremely vituperative nature and has nurtured a permanent suspicion against the Order and its members, particularly after 1950. Another political objection to the Order was its international character, considered a threat to patriotism and nationalism, which was denounced in Turkey since the first decade of the twentieth century by famous intellectuals (Landau 1996; Zarcone 2004). Also, in Iran, Freemasonry was suspect in the eyes of the Shah because of

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2 Edhem Pertev Pasha, *Habname* (Istanbul: [circa 1870–1875]).

its internationalist purpose, regarded as detrimental to nationalism and monarchy (Azinfar *et al.* 2001). In addition, masonic internationalism was one of the motives of the ban on the Grand Orient of Indonesia in 1961 on the ground that it had “its base and source outside Indonesia” (Van der Veur 1976: 30).

Finally, a new objection to the Order emerged in the 1950s in Turkey as a response to the claim of Masons who endeavoured to demonstrate that they were believers in God and good Muslims. They were answered by the clerics that although the Masons might be recognized as believers, Freemasonry must be classified, in this case, like several Sufi brotherhoods (for example the *Bektashi* Order), as a branch of the Batini movement. This movement is a historical and mystical trend, which considers that every thing, and especially the text of the Quran, has an inner side (*batin*) which is actually the true one. This trend has been condemned since its emergence, as a dangerous heretical movement by writers of Muslim heresiographies (Zarcone 2008b).

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## Freemasonry and Eastern Religions

*Jessica Harland-Jacobs and Jan A.M. Snoek*

### Introduction

Freemasonry's opening up to religions other than Christianity was an extended process of crossing successive borders. The religions involved in these crossings were first Judaism, followed by Islam, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism. At first Freemasonry was Christian, though—revolutionary for the early eighteenth century—admitting all Christians: Roman Catholics, Anglicans and dissenters alike. But, over time, Freemasonry opened to candidates with less and less knowledge of the Biblical texts on which its rituals were based. Jews would not (want to) understand the allusions to New Testament passages, referred to in the rituals. Yet they were admitted from the 1730s onwards. Muslims would not (want to) understand the allusions to both Old Testament and New Testament passages, referred to in the rituals. Yet they were admitted from ca. 1800 onwards. Members of non-Abrahamic religions would not even be familiar with the most central symbol on which the rituals were constructed: the Temple of Solomon. Yet they were admitted from the 1840s onwards. Those whom contemporary Englishmen regarded as polytheists were supposedly unable to work to the honor of *the* (singular!) 'Great Architect of the Universe'. Yet, Hindus were admitted from the 1870s onwards. The admission of members of those religions were not separate developments, but all part of one and the same border-crossing process.

Except for the first one (Judaism), all these border crossings happened, not accidentally, in India (South Asia). The first to cross the boundary between Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions was a Parsi (a Zoroastrian) who moved easily between the Indian and British worlds of Bombay (Mumbai), India. Once he was a member, other Parsis, Sikhs, Jains, etc., though not Hindus, were admitted. The debate over the admission of Hindus was also centered, and resolved, in India. In both cases, it was essential that Parsis and Hindus demonstrate their monotheism before being admitted into Freemasonry. By 1872, when the first Hindu joined an English lodge in India, members of all religions seem to have been accepted without exception.

While these developments unfolded, for the most part, in India, they had consequences for the whole world. Whether one agrees or not, within 'regular'

Freemasonry, the 'United Grand Lodge of England' creates in this respect the norm for all Grand Lodges in the world. So, the decisions taken in India within the context of the UGLE opened the same possibilities for all other Grand Lodges as well. The admission of candidates adhering to religions other than those previously accepted in other Grand Lodges was therefore part of the same process traced here, though usually there was some time delay.

### From Christians to Jews and Muslims

There can be no doubt anymore that Freemasonry was originally a product of the Christian Western culture. Most likely, the idea of initiation rituals was borrowed from the Church, which had used such rituals as baptism and ordination of priests for many centuries before Freemasonry emerged. The allusive method, as so prominently applied in masonic rituals, uses not just the *Tanakh*, but the whole Bible—Old and New Testament plus the cross-references in the notes—as its referential corpus. When in 1723, James Anderson published *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons*—the first book of regulations of the Freemasons—he formulated the first Charge, “Concerning God and Religion”, as follows:

A Mason is oblig'd, by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.

It is clear now that with the expression “Denominations and Persuasions” only variations of the Christian religion were intended (Chakmakjian 2008; Impens 2008). Surely, even that was proof of great tolerance. After all, Great Britain had known in the seventeenth century more than 90 years of civil war, largely over religious issues. As long as candidates were officially Christians, there was no problem to initiate them. In British North America, for example, Freemasonry served as an important point of contact between the British and



key Native American allies like Joseph Brant. Brant was a Mohawk leader who played an active role in the Iroquois Confederacy, which fought with the British against the patriots during the American War of Independence. But he was also a member of the Anglican Church and connected through marriage to the prominent Johnson family of New York. He was initiated into Freemasonry in London in 1776. Brant remained active in Freemasonry after the American war, when he helped settle the new colony of Upper Canada and founded lodges there in the 1780s (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 78–80).

Yet, from 1732 onwards Jews had been initiated into Freemasonry, at first only in London, but soon elsewhere as well (Katz 1970:16; Van Pelt, “Freemasonry and Judaism”, this volume). That Jews could be initiated was no doubt based on the fact that the principle symbolic theme on which the rituals of Freemasonry have been constructed is the building of the Temple of King Solomon, described in 1 Kings 5–9 and 2 Chronicles 2–7. These texts are known to Jews just as well as to Christians, and Jews could appreciate many,<sup>1</sup> though certainly not all,<sup>2</sup> of the allusions to this theme in the ritual. From the 1730s, moreover, the rituals were reformed, losing their explicitly Christian character. Even the First Charge in Anderson’s *Constitutions* was adapted in the second edition of 1738 and now read:

A Mason is obliged by his Tenure to observe the Moral Law, as a true Noachida; and if he rightly understands the Craft, he will never be a Stupid Atheist, nor an Irreligious Libertin, nor act against Conscience. In antient Times the Christian Masons were charged to comply with the Christian Usages of each Country where they travell’d or work’d: But Masonry being found in all Nations, even of divers Religions, they are now only charged to adhere to that Religion in which all Men agree (leaving each Brother to his own particular Opinions) that is, to be Good Men and True, Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Names, Religions or Persuasions they may be distinguish’d: For they all agree in the 3 great Articles of Noah, enough to preserve the Cement of the Lodge. Thus Masonry is the Center of their Union and the happy Means of conciliating Persons that otherwise must have remain’d at a perpetual Distance.

The third edition of the *Constitutions*, published in 1756, however, returned to the formulation of 1723. Nevertheless, once the understanding of the meaning

1 Such as Ezekiel’s vision of the New Temple (Ezekiel 40ff.).

2 Such as the ‘Third Temple’ (John 2:19–21; Matthew 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; 15:29).

of certain terms started to shift, this formulation opened on principle the door for the adherents of religions other than Christianity and Judaism. But it took a long time before others than Christians and Jews were accepted. Despite Islam's status as an Abrahamic religion, the initiation of Muslims was unusual and problematic. While, as noted, Christians and Jews found some common ground in the Old Testament's rendering of the story of the Temple of King Solomon, Muslims had a different exposure to the story. The Temple of King Solomon is mentioned in the *Qur'an*, but its description differs from that in the Old Testament, and the Biblical parallel texts are not all available in the *Qur'an*. Such discrepancies created barriers to Muslims' appreciation of the deeper layers of meaning in the ritual. Yet, at least they knew about the most central symbol in masonic ritual, the Temple of Solomon.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, European Freemasons were inclined to admit only a handful of high-ranking Muslims who had demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with the colonial state. So, in the 1770s, as the East India Company extended its influence over the Indian subcontinent, the Moderns' Grand Lodge of England celebrated the admission of Umdat-ul-Umrah Bahadur<sup>3</sup> into Freemasonry in lodge 'Perfect Unanimity' in Madras (Gould 1887: 336 gives 1776; Panaino 2006: 52–53 gives 1775; Brodsky 2000: 431 gives 1773). He was the son of the Nawab of the Carnatic, a principal ally of the British in southern India, and his initiation as a Freemason served to "strengthen the cement of friendship and alliance" between the British and the Nawab (Grand Lodge of England [GLE] to Umdat Ul Amrah Bakader, United Grand Lodge of England [UGLE] Letterbook III [1775–1791]). In 1808 the Persian diplomat Askar Khan Afshar was initiated in Paris (see Zarcone, "Freemasonry and Islam", this volume). And in 1810, the Earl of Moira initiated the Persian Ambassador to London, Mirza Abul Hassan Khan (Gould 1903: 397; Gould 1886: 338), and gave him the rank of Past Grand Master in the Grand Lodge of England. The first Muslim initiated in a Dutch lodge was Raden Saleh Sarief Bastaman, a popular painter from Java (Indonesia), working 23 years of his life in The Hague, who became a member of a lodge there only in 1836 (Pulle 1988). Thus, until at least the 1830s, the initiation of Muslims remained a rare phenomenon, limited to princes, ambassadors, and some well-placed merchants. Their initiation was usually not motivated by the wish to allow them to share in the masonic initiation experience, but rather to secure their cooperation with the colonial state.

3 Such names are often spelled in different ways in European documents. In this case, this is the usual form, but in the original correspondence it has several variations, including Omdut al Omrah and Umdat Ul Amrah.

### Candidates from Non-Abrahamic Religions

By the early nineteenth century, significant changes had taken place within Freemasonry itself, which had the unintended consequence of rendering it more open to members of non-Abrahamic religions. In 1813 the two rival English Grand Lodges, the 'Moderns' and the 'Antients', had merged into the 'United Grand Lodge of England', and in 1816 new rituals were approved. These rituals reflected a new approach to Freemasonry, one in which not so much the highly complex and erudite spiritual game, but much more the self-education of its members as moral citizens, was moved to the centre. This bourgeois, moralistic, romantic and proto-Victorian form of Freemasonry developed in other countries, such as Germany, around the same time, viz. ca. 1780–1820. For a successful participation in this form of Freemasonry, deep knowledge of the Bible was no longer absolutely necessary. The change of the rituals, which was based on cultural developments in the second half of the eighteenth century known as the 'Reformation of Manners' (see Hasselmann 2009), made it possible to accept an even wider range of candidates.

By the 1840s, through the actions of a rather small number of highly influential individuals, pressure began mounting on the brotherhood to admit not only more Muslims, but also adherents of non-Abrahamic religions. Freemasons in London were beginning to consider the issue. The *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, a London periodical that reported on colonial affairs, observed in 1840: "The question as to the propriety of admitting Mahomedans and Hindoos into the Order still occupies the attention of the Anglo-Indian Craft, and some intimation from headquarters is anxiously looked for" (*FQR* [Dec 1840]: 533). Two years later, the English Grand Master, the Duke of Sussex, ruled "that provided a Man believe in the existence of the...Architect of the Universe, in fraternity, and extends that belief likewise to a state of Rewards and Punishments hereafter, such a person is fully competent to be received as a Brother". He even concluded that Freemasonry could help "impress Brotherly and friendly feelings between Europeans and enlightened Hindoos" (Sussex to John Grant, 2 July 1842, UGLE Historic Correspondence HC 17/D/28).

In India, calls for their inclusion led to a controversy that took several decades to resolve. The majority of British Freemasons in India resisted the idea of widescale admission of Indian Freemasons. While they could support the admission of elite Muslims who had at least some familiarity with the story of the Temple of Solomon, they had great difficulty accepting adherents of non-Abrahamic religions to whom Freemasonry's central symbolic theme was meaningless. Contemporary European understandings, of Hinduism in particular, as will be seen, also made Freemasons in India wary about initiating

Indians. And, of course, mid nineteenth-century Britons, especially those living in the colonies, were unlikely to view their colonial subjects as their brothers. Probably, this was the main argument against their inclusion. Those living in England, on the other hand, often idealised especially the Indians in a romantic way as the adherents of the oldest and therefore most original form of religion world-wide. Accordingly, Indian admissions were closely monitored and strictly controlled. The Regulations of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal contained (until 1871) a rule that 'Asiatics' could not be initiated, unless with explicit permission from the Provincial Grand Master (Provincial By-Law 55). In the meantime, certain individual Indians began exerting pressure on the brotherhood to admit them, and they demonstrated remarkable persistence and resourcefulness in pursuit of that goal (see Harland-Jacobs 2007: 220–232).

### The First Candidates from a Non-Abrahamic Religion: The Parsis

A key role in the process of opening up Freemasonry, not only in India, for the adherents of other religions than Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, was played by Parsis in Bombay (now Mumbai) and their primary advocate and supporter, James Burnes. In November 1836, while in Scotland, Burnes was appointed Provincial Grand Master for Western India; in December the next year he left for the East; in January 1838 he arrived in Bombay and duly constituted a Provincial Grand Lodge for the Western Provinces of British India.

Manockji Cursetji, born in 1808, was the first Indian to be appointed (in 1838), as Assistant Collector of Customs, and in 1835 he was again the first one to be admitted to the Royal Asiatic Society of England. In 1845 he embarked on a highly successful legal career and ultimately became the first Indian appointed Sheriff of Bombay (Musa 1968: 320/321). At the same time, he was a prominent member of the Parsi community. So, he participated in both cultures: the Western/British and the Indian/Parsi. In 1841, he expressed his wish to be made a Freemason, and some texts suggest that he did so on the explicit invitation of Burnes. He indeed received permission from Burnes and his Depute, Philip William le Geyt, to join the Order. Cursetji turned to the English Lodge 'Perseverance' No. 546 (the Master of which was Burnes),<sup>4</sup> but he was voted down because he was an Indian (despite his status as a prominent citizen, engineer, and customs official). Undeterred, Cursetji soon left for England,

<sup>4</sup> This lodge had been founded as lodge 'Perseverance', No. 818 in 1828 (Gould 1887: 335).

where at that time the Duke of Sussex was Grand Master. As noted, the Duke wanted to open the Order to Indians,<sup>5</sup> and so Cursetji's initiation was planned to take place in England. Regrettably, however, the Duke was abroad precisely when Cursetji was in London. Still, he did not give up. He left for Paris, where he was finally initiated by his friend, the Duke of Caze (or Decazes), in the Lodge 'A La Gloire de l'Univers' (Musa 1968: 318).

Although in this way the first Parsi had been made a Mason, Cursetji was not yet a member of a lodge in India. In 1842, Lodge 'Perseverance' No. 338 had moved from the English to the Scottish Grand Lodge (Gould 1900: 49–50; Musa 1968: 319). When Cursetji returned to Bombay in 1843, he asked to be affiliated with that Lodge, but was again voted down in May. Some of the Brethren apparently held different ideas, since in November a group of about 30 Brethren—19 of them from Lodge 'Perseverance'—asked the Provincial Grand Master James Burnes to be constituted into a lodge "for the admission of natives into the Craft" and suggested he become its Master. Burnes, who had agreed even two years before with the initiation of Cursetji, now consecrated and constituted Lodge 'Rising Star of Western India' No. 342 (SC) on December 15, 1843 in Bombay, and was indeed its first Master (Musa 1968: 319). Edwardes mentions the fact that for this purpose the rituals had to be adapted in such a way that they would on the one hand be acceptable for a Parsi, while on the other hand not transgress the regulations of the Grand Lodge. What changes were actually made is not stated by Edwardes, although he seems to point to a rewording of the obligations (Edwardes 1923: 50/51). From the beginning, Lodge 'Rising Star of Western India' displayed its commitment to initiating Indians into Freemasonry. At its first meeting, four candidates were proposed: three Muslims and a Parsi, Ardeshir Cursetji Wadia.<sup>6</sup> In January 1844, the lodge initiated Mr. A.C. Wadia and Mr. Mirza Ali Mohamed Shoostri, "and for the first time in a Masonic Lodge the Zend Avesta, and the Quran (and a little later the Bhagwad Gita) were put alongside the Bible on the Altar" ([www.masonindia.org/index10.html](http://www.masonindia.org/index10.html)). Half a year later, nine Indians

5 "...the determination of the Duke of Sussex, as Grand Master, to make Masonry a genuinely universal brotherhood, 'let a man's religions or mode of worship be what it may'" (Walker 1979: 178).

6 He was "the first Indian F[ellow of the] R[oyal] S[ociety], the Chief Engineer of the Bombay Dockyard, and scion of the famous shipbuilding Wadia family, whose nine line-of-battle ships were the only vessels of their class ever to be built for the Royal Navy outside the British Isles. (There is an excellent biographical sketch of this remarkable man in *The Bombay Dockyard and the Wadia Master Builders*, by Ruttonjee Ardeshir Wadia, Bombay 1955, pp. 332–346 [actually 309–323])" (Walker 1979: 178).

were members of the Lodge: three Parsis, two Confucians, and four Muslims (Gould 1903: 398).<sup>7</sup>

Cursetji was the first Secretary of the new lodge and—after it had been dormant for a year as a result of India's revolt against the British—was its Master from 1857 to 1859. Manockji Cursetji died in 1887. In 1943, Lodge 'Rising Star of Western India' commissioned a centenary medal with Cursetjee's effigy. In 1968, the Lodge 'Manokjee Cursetjee' (G.L.Ind.) was consecrated in Bombay (Mumbai) with 217 founders. The first Master and Wardens were Parsis, as were 21 of the 30 other officers of the Lodge. The 'Bearer of the V.S.L., F.N. Singaporewalla, however, was a Muslim (Musa 1968: 321; Patel 1980: 218).

Cursetji's initiation, participation, and leadership paved the way for a close engagement with Freemasonry on the part of other Parsis, particularly Parsi scholars. The first three Parsis who studied Zoroastrianism as scholars with a western education were Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, and Manekji Nusservanji Dhalla. At least the first two were important Freemasons. Cama was probably one of the most active Parsi-Freemasons of his time (on Cama see Edwardes 1923; Modi 1900; Modi [1932]). Born in 1831, he attended the Elphinstone Institution in Bombay, and then joined the firm of a relative in Calcutta. He arrived in the Bengal capital in 1850. From there he travelled to Canton, where he was made a partner of his uncle's firm in 1852. In 1854 he returned to Bombay. The same year, aged 22, he was made a Mason. (Since Manockji Cursetji was his father in law (Modi [1932]: 149n1.), it is not difficult to guess who will have informed him about Freemasonry.) Also in 1854 he was appointed a member of the managing committee of the Mulla Firoz Madressa, an institution founded for the study of the Parsi scriptures, based on the priceless library left by Mulla Firoz at his death. This was a turning point in his life, for he now developed into a scholar, although he remained active in business affairs as well.

The next year, after having received the degree of a Master Mason, Cama sailed for England and founded the first Indian business-house in London. No one mentions any masonic activity of Cama during his stay in London, but it is extremely unlikely that he did not use his membership to visit lodges and make useful contacts. Contrary to the attitude of the Europeans in the colonies—who tended to keep the locals at a distance—those in Europe embraced the opportunity to make contact with Indians, whom they saw as romantic and mysterious. Cama, like some others coming from the colonies to Europe, seems

7 It took 40 years before this example was followed in Madras, when there was constituted the 'Carnatic Lodge' in 1883 "for the special benefit and convenience of native gentlemen" (Walker 1979: 182).

to have conscientiously used this situation in order to get what he wanted. One day, dressed in his full Parsi clothes, he captured a crowd's attention and used it to get a strategic place along the road where Queen Victoria would pass. Thus positioned, he not only had a good view of her, but she too could not fail to see him as he saluted her in the Indian way. From that resulted an invitation to come to the palace (Edwardes 1923: 15–16). Three years later he decided to resign his partnership in this firm, and in 1859 he set out “upon a journey to the principal cities of Europe to meet, and obtain enlightenment from, the leading authorities on the Pahlavi and Avesta languages” (Edwardes 1923: 16), a journey which lasted about a year.

When Cama returned to India in 1860, his masonic, scholastic, and civic careers coalesced and advanced impressively. He was at once elected Junior Warden of his Lodge in Bombay, skipping all the functions that normally precede this one. The next year he was the Senior Warden, and the following year elected Master (his brethren again departed from normal procedures when they re-elected him the following year). Such a high level of masonic activity makes it even more likely that he had been masonically active during his trip to Europe. The scholar also became a teacher in this period. In 1861 he accepted his first student, and within a year the group had grown to over a dozen young priests, who studied philology with the lay-teacher Cama for about twelve years. Meanwhile, the Bombay Government appointed him in 1863 a Justice of the Peace, a position he held until his death in 1909. Also in 1863, Cama was appointed Provincial Grand Steward in the Scottish Provincial Grand Lodge, and the next year he became the Provincial Grand Secretary for Western India (Edwardes 1923: 52). His career in the Provincial Grand Lodge culminated with his appointment as Substitute Provincial Grand Master in 1868, a function that he held until 1876, when he was appointed Honorary Depute Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India.

Cama's interests in Freemasonry and Zoroastrianism clearly intersected. In 1864 he founded a society for the study of the Zoroastrian religion, and in 1866 a journal with the title *Zoroastrian Studies*. In the first issue he published (in Gujarathi) the article “Was Spitama Zarathushtra a Free-mason?” (Stausberg 2002: Vol. 2, 105). Modi gives a summary of it in English (Modi [1932]: 148/9). According to Modi, Cama first mentions six points in which Zoroastrianism and Freemasonry are alike. “Then he dwells on a passage from the Behram yast (s. 46) wherein Ahuramazda asks Zarathushtra not to teach the Manthra, which Cama takes to be something like ‘mysteries’, to everybody and anybody, but only to the few elect and select who are in a position to grasp them. Freemasonry also [teaches] that its mysteries may be imparted only to a few select and elect who are initiated. From all these points of similarity in the

teachings, Cama says that Zoroaster may be a Free-mason". In the same year 1866 his services in the field of education were rewarded by his election to a fellowship of the Bombay University. Edwardes writes that, in 1882, the Islamic community asked Cama "to serve as member of a committee appointed to report upon the condition and needs of the Madressa attached to their chief communal institution, the Anjuman-e-Islam. The honour thus conferred by the followers of Islam upon a Parsi is probably unique in the educational history of Western India" (Edwardes 1923: 34–35). What Edwardes does not mention is that Cama may have known at least some of the Muslims involved from his Lodge 'Rising Star of Western India'.

Modi himself was one of the most prominent Zoroastrian theologians of the twentieth century. Born in 1854, he too received his education at the Elphinstone College. He was both priest and scholar. Stausberg writes: "From 1893...to his death in 1933, he worked as the secretary of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat. K.R. Cama, his example and fatherly friend, had succeeded to raise Modi's interest in Iranic Studies. Modi, who had widely travelled and was honoured many times, both at a national and international level, was one of the most learned and scholarly productive Parsi-intellectuals of modern times. Cama regarded Modi as his natural successor. Modi was an active Freemason until the death of Cama and at times he functioned as president and secretary of the Cama-Institute" (Stausberg 2002: Vol. 2, 106–107). It is not clear when Modi was initiated in lodge 'Rising Star of Western India', but since he was Provincial Grand Secretary in 1909 (Modi 1913: 252), it must have been many years before that. In 1932, at the age of seventy-eight, he wrote about it himself:

Now, in the matter of Masonry, when [Cama] spoke to me about it, more than once, I joined it with a view that I may learn something new from its circle and I am glad that I joined it. I am benefited by it intellectually. Though a Mason for a number of years, I never attended a single dinner but left my lodge when the working was over. Its work has initiated me into the ancient history of the Institution. Its ritual has interested me, especially from the point of cultural anthropology. From the time of the death of Cama [i.e. 1909], I have ceased being an active member. Since then I have been elected an Honourary member of my Mother Lodge, Lodge Rising Star of Western India and of the K.R. Cama Lodge opened recently by some brethren.... Though I have ceased to be an active member, I have stood when invited on several occasions on the platform [of] several lodges to deliver discourses on Masonic subjects. My study for and my publication of Masonic Papers has given me great pleasure.

MODI [1932]: 147



Clearly, then, Modi was an active Mason during a long part of his life. He functioned at least as Secretary of his Lodge (Modi [1932]: 147), as well as of the [Provincial] Grand Lodge of all Scottish Freemasonry in India, and wrote several masonic papers, which he published collectively in 1913. It was only 9 years later that his book *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* was published, of which Michael Stausberg writes: “This several times reprinted book is still the unchallenged standard work about Zarathustrian ritualistic” (Stausberg 2002: Vol. 2, 108). Before Modi, symbolic interpretations of the Parsi rituals are unusual. Modi’s interpretations of the symbolism of these rituals may well have been stimulated by the habit of Freemasons to interpret their rituals in that way. Also the interpretations themselves may here and there show traces of masonic influence.

Lodge ‘Rising Star of Western India’ did not limit its membership to Parsis; as we have seen, it included members of various religions. After some time, however, exclusively Parsi lodges were formed. One of them was the lodge ‘Rising Sun’. In this lodge, the texts from the Bible which at that time in the Scottish Lodges in India were normally read at the opening and closing of the lodge, were supplemented with additional texts from the Zend Avesta (Modi 1913: 245ff.). This change was initiated by a letter of September 4, 1906 by Jehangeer Cursetjee Mistree with the following contents, to the ‘Grand Lodge of all Scottish freemasonry in India, Grand Secretary’s Office’, that is, Jivanji Modi:

In Lodge “Rising Sun,” I am the Master for the current year, and I am desirous of introducing there, a system of reading some appropriate and select passages from our Volume of the Sacred Law at the opening in the three degrees and the final closing. In European Lodges they read scriptural passages as under:-

Opening, 1st degree—Ruth II chapter verse 19.

Opening 2nd degree—Judges XII, verses 5 & 6.

Opening 3rd degree—Genesis IV, verse 22.

Final closing—II Corinthians, XIII chapter 1 verse II.

It would of [course] be impossible to find in our V.S.L. the traditional text of the Order comprehended in the Bible. However, some passages (abridged), conveying the morals of the different degrees, will, I dare say, be noticeable to an expert scholar like your worthy self...I should be extremely grateful—my whole Lodge will be so—if you will very kindly make it convenient to spare yourself a short time to select some appropriate passages for the purpose mentioned. I intend trying this introduction at our regular meeting this month on the 25th, when we work the third degree. We shall have the scriptural portions read also, followed by short passages from our

Zend Avesta, with their rendering in English thereafter, for comprehension by all Brethren including visitors of any other denomination.

MODI 1913: 252/253

Modi writes that he selected the texts for the openings in answer to this letter, but “the second set of passages, viz. those to be read at the closing in the three degrees, was prepared, some-time after this, at the suggestion of Brother B.G. Patel, the then Master of the Lodge ‘Zoroaster’” (Modi 1913: 6).<sup>8</sup> What we see here is that the transfer of the masonic rituals to Parsi members was followed by their adaptation to that new context.<sup>9</sup>

### The Final Frontier: Hinduism

Once Parsis had found their way into the lodge, members of almost all other South Asian religions followed soon. For example, in Mumbai a Jain was initiated in 1849, and even before that some Sikhs.<sup>10</sup> However, there remained one more border to cross. The British regarded all of these religions as monotheistic; that was important for the Freemasons, since monotheists believe in one God whom they may symbolically refer to as the Great Architect of the Universe. Since the Europeans of that time regarded Hinduism the polytheistic religion *par excellence* (Smyth 1991: 258), it took much longer before, after much controversy and many delays, the person who is usually regarded the first Hindu Freemason was initiated (Walker 1979: esp. 178–182).<sup>11</sup> As Beck

8 Modi (1913) also gives the Biblical passages, each followed (as proposed by Mistree) by the Avestan texts selected by Modi in his English translation.

9 This is a form of ‘transfer of ritual’ (Langer *et al.* 2006).

10 At least, that is how we understand Walker when he states: “The returns of private Lodges show that throughout these early years, all Indian initiates belonged to the strictly monotheistic religions: Muslim, Parsee and Sikh. In 1849, one Bhagwandass Beeneeram, a Jain of the Dhondia sect, applied for initiation in Rising Star,…” (Walker 1979: 179). The web-site of the Grand Lodge of India, however, claims that the first Sikh was only initiated in 1861 ([www.masonindia.org/index10.html](http://www.masonindia.org/index10.html)).

11 Walker mentions (and this is confirmed by the web-site of the Grand Lodge of India), that in fact the first Hindus, Ranganath Sastry in lodge ‘Perfect Unanimity’ and Murugesha Mudaliar in lodge ‘Universal Charity’ No. 283, were initiated “without fuss” in 1857 “in the more equable South” of India. Here lodge ‘Perfect Unanimity’ initiated between 1855 and 1869 six, and lodge ‘Rock’ No. 260 between 1863 and 1877 17 Hindus. (Walker 1979: 182 and [www.masonindia.org/index10.html](http://www.masonindia.org/index10.html)). Gould mentions a case in 1860, but reports that, “having filled the chair on the occasion alluded to, the individual whose admission had

formulates it: "The most salient theological reason for the non-acceptance of Hindus into Freemasonry had to do with the polytheistic nature of Hinduism itself: It appeared to the nineteenth century English Masons in India that the Hindus had a multiplicity of gods and could not therefore satisfy the basic qualification for initiation: belief in a (one) Supreme Being" (Beck 1992: 22 referring to P. C. Chunder, *The Sons of Mystery: A Masonic Miscellany from Old Calcutta* (Calcutta: Jayanti 1973): 19.). The English Provincial Grand Master had predicted as far back as 1841 that the admission of "well educated and respectable natives" would contribute to "the advancement...not only of their moral position but the creation of a stimulus to the acquirement in some measure of an English education" (Grant to UGLE 17 April 1841, UGLE HC 17/D/25). But the Provincial Grand Lodge effectively tabled the issue by passing Provincial Bylaw No. 55 that required the Provincial Grand Master to approve native candidates on a case-by-case basis.

When in 1872 Prosonno Coomar Dutt was finally admitted into the English lodge 'Anchor and Hope' No. 234 it was only after a nine-year campaign of letter writing and petitioning. In 1863 he had been proposed in lodge 'Courage with Humanity' No. 392 (English Constitution) in Calcutta, and the Master of the lodge had asked permission to the Provincial Grand Master, Hugh Sandeman, who, during the Provincial Grand Lodge of September 1863, had ruled "that Hindus were not eligible for admission into Masonry, and further that it was not desirable with reference to social considerations that they should be admitted, and as long as he held a veto under the By-laws he would exercise the power rigidly" (quoted by Walker 1979: 180 and Smyth 1991: 257). Dutt now turned to the Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland, but had to wait fifteen months for a reply. Meanwhile, Sandeman and Zetland were at odds over Sandeman's refusal to give permission to initiate a Muslim Prince (Said-ud-Dowlah), which ended with the Grand Secretary writing to Sandeman that Provincial By-Law 55 "is directly opposed to the spirit of our Institution and to the very words of the Ancient Charges", and thus was illegal and had to be struck out. Clearly the United Grand Lodge was, at this point, offering a broad interpretation of the *Constitutions'* first charge. Dutt now received a letter from the Grand Secretary, stating that there was no objection to his being initiated. Dutt sent a copy of the letter to the District Grand Master, but received no reply. The Provincial Grand Lodge continued to stall, objecting to Dutt's admission on the grounds that there would be "no form of oath which would be binding on a Hindu". Walker relates: "the indomitable Mr. Dutt writes to Grand

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been called in question was, 'by his own statement, delivered to me in person, a Christian'" (Gould 1887: 336, n. 2).

Lodge to enquire ‘whether a Hindu can be initiated into the Craft on the same oath as that by which he assumes charge of the duty of a Judge of the High Court or a member of the Viceroy’s Council, etc’. And the reply comes back: ‘Yes’ (Walker 1979: 181). So he was initiated, and twenty-three years later he was Deputy District Grand Master.

In the course of the discussion, “Hindus were quick to address the polytheism issue by reaffirming the essentially ‘monotheistic’ nature of Vedic religion” (Beck 1992: 22). The Vedic Visvakarman is “sometimes identified with Prajapati, who figures in the *Rig-Veda* (X.81, 2–3; 82, 2) as ‘the divine architect of the universe...’. This conception of Godhead, coupled with the perennial acceptance of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul (re-incarnation), provided support in favour of Hindus being admitted to the Craft” (Beck 1992: 23). And, probably even more important: “with the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj and the influence of Vedantic thought characteristic of the Hindu Renaissance, nineteenth century Bengal had witnessed a strong articulation of monotheism among educated Hindus” (Beck 1992: 23). These neo-Vedantic movements had developed under the influence of Western ideas on Indian tradition. This was the same process which Parsis had submitted to as long as the British had colonised India: they had transformed their older dualistic form of Zoroastrianism (with Ahura Mazda as the good, and Ahriman as the bad God) in a (from the British perspective) much more respectable monotheism by claiming that Ahura Mazda was, of course, superior to Ahriman. Dutt used the monotheism argument explicitly: “I am not a pantheist or a polytheist. I do not identify my creator with any one of his creatures. I believe in the existence of one Great Architect of the Universe, whose wish is the happiness of all creatures, whose will is law...I am not now, nor ever was, an idolater” (quoted in Beck 1992: 23–24). The argument worked for the British Freemasons, who now accepted that Hindus could be initiated.

### Conclusion

Although there can be no doubt anymore that with “that Religion in which all Men agree” Anderson meant Christianity, and with “Denominations or Persuasions” the different Christian Churches, his formulation could potentially be interpreted differently. Those liberal-thinking men who met in the lodges in the 1730s were inclined to initiate also liberal Jews, provided they were capable of playing with them the highly complicated and erudite game involved in the ritual practice of Freemasonry. Given the high value Jews always attached to education, and to a thorough knowledge of the *Tanakh*,

including the stories of the building of the Temple of King Solomon and its parallels in the Old Testament, there were certainly some Jews in London who could participate and properly function in the lodges. Anderson's attempt at reformulation of the first charge in the second edition of the *Constitutions* in 1738,<sup>12</sup> opening up Freemasonry for all 'true Noachida' (the descendants of Noah) confirmed a practice, which in fact existed already.

The rituals created by 1816 for the new 'United Grand Lodge of England' were bourgeois and moralistic, as opposed to the highly erudite Christian mysticism of those in use in the eighteenth century. Although unintended, this shift also made it possible to accept candidates with a much wider range of religious backgrounds. The admission of others than Christians and Jews was not an invitation to join the complex ritual game, based as it had been on the Biblical text about the Temple of Solomon and its many allusions. Rather, they were admitted for political reasons, to help secure their cooperation with the British Empire. Muslims were an important transition group. While the first Muslims were initiated for reasons of state, they did have some familiarity with the Temple of King Solomon from their own holy scripture, the *Qur'an*. While they did not have access to all the implicit references to parallel Biblical texts with their additional dimensions of meaning, they could at least attach meaning to the most superficial layer of the text of the ritual.

Once the number of Muslims initiated increased in the 1830s in India, it was only to be expected that candidates from other religions would be admitted as well. Even though these would not have the slightest idea about the Temple of King Solomon—unless they had strongly assimilated the Western culture—they would be involved in a process of 'brothering', which was assumed to help stabilise the Empire. The Parsis were in India among those who sought the approval of the British by studying British culture and adapting their own culture to it. For example, they had already modified their interpretation of their religion in an explicitly monotheistic way, most likely motivated by the wish to be more acceptable for those in power. That one of them was the first member of a non-Abrahamic religion to be initiated, thus is no accident. From then on, members of all religions, which the colonisers regarded as monotheistic, could be initiated. Accordingly, for example Jains, Sikhs and Confucians were found among the members of certain lodges. Their admittance had not required a separate explicit debate and decision any more.

The hardest nut to crack turned out to be Hinduism, which was, according to the definitions used at that time, polytheistic. Only when the Hindus argued that they too were in fact monotheists, did the British have the required

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12 Though not approved by the Grand Lodge, and reversed in the third edition.

argument to include them as well, as was desirable from the empire-political perspective. How suitable the new rituals of 1816 were for this new situation is probably best shown by the growing participation of Muslims, Parsis, Hindus, and members of all other religions in Indian lodges, their assumption of leadership positions in them, and the flourishing condition of Freemasonry in India. In 1874, “Captain Henry Morland became [Scottish] Prov. G.M. of Hindustan, and was subsequently commissioned as Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India” (Gould 1887: 336). In 1876, the Scottish Lodge ‘Islam’ (now 27 GLInd.)—a Lodge of Muslims—was constituted in Bombay. Ten years later (so, in 1886), Dorabji Prestonji Cama became the first Parsi Grand Officer (viz. Grand Treasurer) of the United Grand Lodge of England. In 1903 there were in India 139 English Lodges and 44 Scottish ones; in 1924 210 English, 68 Scottish, and 12 Irish ones (Gould 1903: 398; Gould 1924, 422). In 1961, an independent Grand Lodge of India was formed, which was composed of 145 Lodges with all together 7,466 members, while 88 Lodges remained English, 29 Scottish, and 10 Irish.

Since India’s independence, the commitment to admitting men of various South Asian religions has been formalized. Remarkable is the text of the “Declaration of Basic Principles” of the Grand Lodge of India, which in some respects differs from the “Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition” of the British Grand Lodges:

Article 3. That all the initiates shall take their Obligation on or in full view of the open Volume of the Sacred Law, by which is meant the revelation from above which is binding on the conscience of the particular individual who is being initiated.

Article 6. That the three Great Lights of Freemasonry (namely the Volume [singular!] of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses) shall always be exhibited when the Grand Lodge or its subordinate Lodges are at work, the chief of these being the Volume of the Sacred Law.

By contrast, Article 5 of the Indian version states:

that the three Great Lights of Freemasonry, the Volumes [plural!] of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses, will always be exhibited when the Grand Lodge or Regional Grand Lodges or daughter Lodges are at labour and that every candidate will be required to take his Obligation on or in full view of the Volume which is binding on his conscience.

In accordance with this statement, Draffen writes in his report of the constitution of the Indian Grand Lodge, that “Among the Officers of the new Grand Lodge of India it is of interest to observe that, following the custom of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, there is an office of ‘Bearer of the V.S.L.’ There were, in fact, five Brethren installed into this office, each Brother bearing a separate V.S.L.—The [Hindu] [*Bhagwad*] *Gita*, The [Islamic] *Koran*, The [Sikh] *Granth [Sahib]*, The [Parsi] *Zend Avesta* and The [Christian] *Bible*” (Draffen 1961: 128), “appointments being made from among brethren of the relevant persuasions” (Frederick Smyth’s comments on Walker, in Walker 1979: 187).

Also reflecting the Grand Lodge of India’s commitment to religious multiplicity is the current Indian formulation of the First Charge, “Concerning God and Religion”:

A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understand[s] the art he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine. He, of all men, should best understand that God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh at the outward appearance, but God looketh to the heart. A mason is, therefore, particularly bound never to act against the dictates of his conscience. Let a man’s religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believe in the glorious architect of heaven and earth, and practise the sacred duties of morality. Masons unite with the virtuous of every persuasion in the firm and pleasing bond of fraternal love; they are taught to view the errors of mankind with compassion, and to strive, by the purity of their own conduct, to demonstrate the superior excellence of the faith they may profess. Thus masonry is the center of union between good men and true, and the happy means of conciliating friendship amongst those who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.

When we compare this with Anderson’s versions, we see that here all references to Christianity or ‘Noachida’ have disappeared. Today, the Grand Lodge of India has 341 Lodges, among which 32 in Mumbai. Some of them have names of Parsis, which were important Freemasons, such as Manockjee Cursetjee, Jehangir Modi, Dr. Maneckji Modi, Khurshedjee Cama, and H.M. Rustomjee. Also the name of the Lodge ‘Light of Zoroaster’ is remarkable in this respect.

Even today, the Grand Lodge of India is still flourishing. It was primarily in India that this development took place, driven by imperial politics. But what was allowed under the United Grand Lodge of England could without problem be applied by other Grand Lodges, especially those of the other colonial powers, such as the Netherlands and France.

Probably a Freemason of the 1740s would not recognise this form of Freemasonry anymore. But then, Freemasonry never was a 'stable product'; it always was, and still is, developing.

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## Freemasonry and Western Esotericism

*Henrik Bogdan*

### Approaches to Western Esotericism

As a scholarly construct, Western esotericism has been defined in a number of different ways, but it is the definition of the French historian of religions Antoine Faivre that became the first paradigm, as it were, in the study of Western esotericism, and which came to dominate the field for over a decade.<sup>1</sup> In 1992 Faivre proposed that currents such as Hermeticism, Christian Kabbalah, and Rosicrucianism, share a family resemblance and that their common denominator is a specific form of thought or way to interpret man's relation to the universe. This form of thought, claimed Faivre, was shaped during the Renaissance, although many of its roots stretch back to late antiquity. According to Faivre this form of thought is characterised by four intrinsic and two secondary constituting components: First, the *idea of correspondences*. These are symbolic and concrete correspondences between all the visible and invisible parts of the universe. Everything is interconnected, and man is seen as a microcosm of macrocosm, as a 'hologram' or reflection of the universe, which is expressed famously in the *Tabula Smaragdina* as "what is below is like that what is above". Second, the notion of *living nature*: the entire universe is a living organism traversed by a network of sympathies and antipathies that link all natural things. Nature is a living organism, with a soul of its own, the *anima mundi*, to which also man's soul is connected. Third, *imagination and meditations*: to the esotericist the imaginative faculty of man is a key-factor in the quest for spiritual enlightenment. Inner pictures, meditation, focused concentration and ecstatic visions are used as means to connect with the Godhead. Related to this is the importance attributed to rituals, symbolic images and intermediary entities between man and the Godhead. Fourth, the *experience of transmutation*: just as it is assumed possible to transform base metals into gold, so it is also considered possible to refine the spiritual properties in man and to achieve enlightenment, gnosis or *Unio Mystica* with the Godhead. This transformation is often interpreted as an initiatory process, which leads 'from

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1 This chapter is partly based on Bogdan 2006 and Bogdan 2007a. A shorter version of this chapter was published in Spanish as Bogdan 2011.

darkness to light', from uninitiated profane to initiated adept. In institutionalised forms of esotericism, such as Freemasonry, this initiatory process is often formalised by a degree system through which the candidates encounter step-by-step the symbols which will lead him to the realisation of salvific knowledge or gnosis. The two secondary or relative components are, according to Faivre, often present but do not have to be so in order for something to be called esoteric. The fifth component, *the praxis of the concordance* is the syncretistic approach to two or more traditions that aims at obtaining a superior illumination. The various esoteric currents are interpreted as leading to the same goal, or as having the same philosophical/spiritual foundation or origin. Sixth, and last, *transmission*: the esoteric knowledge must be transmitted from a teacher to a pupil (Faivre 1994: 10–15; Faivre 2010: 12–13). This last component is significant for the understanding of initiatic societies such as Freemasonry since it emphasises the importance of transmitting a tradition through rituals of initiation to new generations of members (for a discussion on the construction of tradition in Freemasonry, see Bogdan 2010: 217–238).

The main advantage of Faivre's typological and heuristic definition of Western esotericism was perhaps not only that it made esotericism a defined (and for the non-specialist understandable) field of research, but also that it proved to be efficient as an analytic approach to the subject itself. From the standpoint of the study of Freemasonry Faivre's definition can easily be used as an analytical tool to understand many of its aspects. Nevertheless, in the past few years the field has been undergoing a paradigmatic shift in focus and new definitions of esotericism have been put forward by scholars such as Wouter J. Hanegraaff and Kocku von Stuckrad (Hanegraaff 2013; von Stuckrad 2010a).<sup>2</sup> The main criticism against Faivre's definition of esotericism is, according to von Stuckrad, on the one hand that Faivre is not consistent in how he applies it, and on the other hand that he seems to base it on a limited set of sources, which is composed of Renaissance Hermeticism, Naturphilosophie, Christian kabbalah, and Christian theosophy (von Stuckrad 2010a: 48–49).

Both Hanegraaff and von Stuckrad approach the study of Western esotericism from a similar perspective in which they emphasise the construct of identity and claims to absolute knowledge (*gnosis*). To Hanegraaff, "Western esotericism is the historical product of a polemical discourse, the dynamics of which can be traced all the way back to the beginnings of monotheism"

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2 There are other scholarly approaches to the study of Western esotericism, although they have not proven to be as influential as those discussed above. See in particular Monika Neugebauer-Wölk and Andre Rudolph (2008); Arthur Versluis (2007); and Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (2008).

(Hanegraaff 2005: 226). Esoteric currents and notions have been discarded throughout Western history as ‘rejected knowledge’, as something which is connected to the Other. For instance, magic is often dismissed as either something primitive and irrational and thus alien to modern society, or as something which is inherently opposed to the Judeo-Christian tradition of the West, as something incompatible with religion. These sentiments are deeply imbedded in Western culture where magic throughout history has been used to describe the beliefs and practices of the Others (be they imagined non-Christians, heretics, non-Westerners, indigenous, ancient or ‘primitive’ cultures, and so on). The image of magic as connected to the Other has functioned as an important factor in the construction of the self-identity of Western culture—since, by defining magic, one is simultaneously defining oneself, in the sense that properties connected to magic are seen as incompatible with our own culture. The image of magic as something exotic, primitive, evil, deviant or even ridiculous is intimately connected to the self-conception of the West (Bogdan 2012). While von Stuckrad shares Hanegraaff’s understanding of esotericism as a polemical discourse, he remains critical of Hanegraaff’s claim that this discourse can be traced to the emergence of monotheism. Instead, von Stuckrad argues that “what we see at work is an old dialectic of fascination and rejection that gave way to a disjunctive mechanism only after the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment” (von Stuckrad 2010a: 52). Furthermore, von Stuckrad, who prefers to speak of “esoteric discourse in Western culture” rather than Western esotericism (von Stuckrad 2010a: x), emphasises the discursive operations in Western culture. Using discourse analysis and the framework of recent trends in the study of the European history of religions,<sup>3</sup> von Stuckrad strives to “reveal genealogies of identities in a pluralistic competition for knowledge” (von Stuckrad 2010a: xi). Central to the esoteric discourses are the use of secrecy and the quest for perfect or absolute knowledge. Both Hanegraaff’s and von Stuckrad’s understanding of esotericism are wider in scope and more inclusive than Faivre’s, but this also poses new problems to the field. Can we really speak of *Western* esotericism if by this we mean polemical discourses that go all they way back to the emergence of monotheism, or if we include Jewish and Muslim esoteric currents (as von Stuckrad argues that we need to do)? And what is the difference between the emphasis on claims to perfect knowledge or gnosis in esoteric discourses and Western mysticism? Is there a difference at all?

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3 That is, the criticism of understanding the ‘Christian Occident’ as a monolithic tradition, and the importance of acknowledging the religious pluralism of Western culture.

Theoretical considerations notwithstanding, it is clear that Western esoteric currents have, in various degrees, influenced Freemasonry.<sup>4</sup> This fact is evident from symbols and themes encountered in many of the rituals of initiation, particularly in certain high degree rituals, drawn from kabbalistic, Rosicrucian, alchemical, and other sources (Bogdan 2007b; Snoek 2011). It is also evident from interpretative studies of Freemasonry written by a large number of masonic authors, in which the ethics, symbolism and use of rituals are given esoteric interpretations. It should be stressed, however, that there is no consensus among masonic authors as to how symbols should be interpreted.

When analysing the relationship between Western esotericism and Freemasonry it is fruitful to approach it from two perspectives. First, to search for central esoteric discourses such as the concept of secrecy, claims on absolute knowledge, and polemical narratives, and to analyse how these discourses are expressed in the context of Freemasonry. Second, to look for esoteric currents and notions, such as Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, Astrology or Christian Kabbalah within Freemasonry, and to analyse the function of these currents and notions in a specific masonic setting.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter I will thus discuss the use of secrecy in Freemasonry (and its relation to the concept of initiation and claims to absolute knowledge), as an example of an esoteric discourse in Freemasonry, and two examples of the influence of esoteric currents within Freemasonry, namely Rosicrucianism and Christian Kabbalah.

### Secrecy as an Esoteric Discourse in Freemasonry

Freemasonry is often regarded as a prime example of a secret society, but many contemporary masonic writers question this (e.g. Hamill 1986: 146). Instead, they often describe masonry as a society with secrets in order to emphasise that masonry is not an anti-social movement. It should be stressed that the mere strict privacy of a society, be it masonic or otherwise, does not by

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4 As indicated, discussions concerning the definition of Western esotericism are ongoing. For the most significant recent works on the subject, see Hanegraaff (2012); Hanegraaff (2013); von Stuckrad (2010a). The use of the term 'Western esotericism' in this chapter is grounded in the field of research to which these works are related.

5 For a discussion of the differences between currents and notions within the study of Western esotericism see Faivre (1998). See the indispensable *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (2005), edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, et al., for detailed information regarding a wide range of esoteric currents and notions. For a discussion of the most significant esoteric currents and notions specifically for the study of Freemasonry, see Snoek (2011).

definition make it a secret society. It is the ritualistic usage of secrecy that is of interest to us in the present discussion. As Jan A.M. Snoek writes:

Nowadays it is fashionable among Freemasons to claim that Freemasonry is not a secret society. Clearly, that attitude results from the desire to clear Freemasonry of undeserved blames that it would conceal anti-social activities. However, it also betrays that most Freemasons are not aware that the term “secret society” is not only used for groups that try to hide their existence, or of which the members try to hide their membership, but also for groups which guard a secret. And in that last respect, Freemasonry is a secret society.

SNOEK 2003a: 39

Snoek highlights the fact that the notion of secret societies often implies something negative in the public mind, and that Masons therefore often find themselves in a defensive position in which they seek to distance masonry from the popular conception of a secret society. However, masonic apologetics, anti-masonic polemics, as well as authors writing for a popular audience rarely take into account *how* secrecy is actually used, and *why* it is used the way that it is.

In Western esotericism secrecy is used on different levels, as it were. According to Antoine Faivre it is possible to discern three different ways whereby secrecy is employed in esoteric discourses.<sup>6</sup> The first group of esoteric texts “seem to be designed to mean something other than what they appear to mean at face value”, and the author of such texts “seems desirous to give the impression that he conceals while revealing and reveals while concealing” (Faivre 1999: 167). The dialectical interplay between concealment and unveiling forms an important aspect of masonic rituals of initiation as well, where each degree often points toward a further secret for the initiate to penetrate. This is paralleled by esoteric discourses in which the reader is confronted by numerous references to other texts, or as expressed by Faivre:

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6 “Three overlapping or complementary aspects can help us round off a presentation of the esoteric landscape from the perspective of concealment and secrecy: (A) many esoteric texts seem to be designed to mean something other than what they appear to mean at face value; (B) others, oftentimes the same texts described in (A), contain statements on secrecy as an essential element in traditions of the past; (C) contrariwise, others present themselves more as a pedagogical agenda than a praise of secrecy, and some in this category even undertake a systematic *desoccultation of the occult*” (Faivre 1999: 167).

...the person who makes the effort to read all (or, rather, as many as possible) of the texts hinted at, finds himself nevertheless confronted by a circular discourse made of images and symbols, a veil, as it were. It is as if that veil constituted the message itself. The circularity or paradox is that the text says countless things and, at the same time, says one main thing to which we readers are not privy.

FAIVRE 1999: 167

This can be compared with the so-called allusive method, which, according to Snoek, is an intrinsic part of Freemasonry. The allusive method means that a ritual, for instance, always has more than one meaning. Or in the words of Snoek:

The allusive method always refers to more than one layer of meaning. There are not only the primary meaning of the phrase used, and the immediate allusive meaning, but, for someone who is amenable to it, at least one extra meaning is added because the text quoted refers to another text, either from the same, or from another book within the referential corpus.

SNOEK 2010: 59

The idea that the veil constitutes the message itself is important for the understanding of masonic rituals of initiation since it highlights how the rituals are being interpreted. A further aspect of this is that, at least in certain masonic Rites, the understanding of the rituals changes as the candidates advance through the degrees. Furthermore, the use of secrecy in a masonic context is tightly connected to the self-image of Freemasonry, or to put it in a more theoretical way—secrecy can be seen as a significant marker of self-identity, tightly connected to the construct of tradition, legitimacy and authority. The masonic tradition and its rituals of initiation are often interpreted and presented as a ‘secret tradition’, and Masons often see themselves as the custodians and transmitters of this secret tradition. In this context it is, moreover, helpful to view the use of secrecy in Freemasonry as ‘social capital’ along the lines of Pierre Bourdieu (von Stuckrad 2010b: 239–252; Urban 2001: 1–27; see also Simmel 1906: 441–498, on the sociology of secrecy and secret societies).

More importantly, however, it is not so much the ritual itself as the *experience* of it that constitutes the message.<sup>7</sup> It is the experience of the ritual that constitutes the message—or perhaps more adequately, the experience *and interpretation* of the ritual is the esoteric message. It is often claimed that the secrets of Freemasonry and similar orders are non-communicable, despite

7 One of the concerns of psychologists of religion has been the effect of ritual experience on the personality of the performer of the ritual. *Vide* Heimbrock and Boudewijnse (1990).

the fact that the rituals themselves have been revealed to the public. In other words, the purpose of the secrecy is not so much a matter of keeping the rituals secret as to keep that which is non-communicable secret. This conclusion is strengthened by Faivre's second category of esoteric discourses' usage of secrecy, i.e. cases where the secret of a text is the noncommunication of something that is not transmissible. Or, in Faivre's words:

Esoteric transmission cannot, so it seems, unveil secrets. Rather, it is the noncommunication of what is not transmissible that constitutes the secret.

FAIVRE 1999: 170

That is, the secret of a Western esoteric ritual of initiation is the experience of undergoing the ritual; an experience which by definition is non-communicable. The experience of undergoing a ritual of initiation is tantamount to that of a mystical experience, and one characteristic of mystical experience is the difficulty in expressing and describing it verbally. Snoek has commented on the masonic secret:

The secret concerned, however, is nothing unethical, but just the experience of going through the ritual of the first degree, which turns one into an Entered Apprentice Freemason. Like any other experience, this cannot be communicated to someone else in any other way than letting that person go through it as well, which will turn him automatically into a Freemason too. So, this is the kind of secret which cannot be divulged.

SNOEK 2003a: 39

Furthermore, scholars such as Mircea Eliade have stated that a rite of initiation is supposed to change the innermost nature of the initiate and thereby make him or her a new person. In my opinion this is also the case in masonic rituals of initiation, but it is not so much the experience as the *interpretation* of it that has a transmutative effect upon the initiate. Esoteric discourses, and I suggest that this includes masonic rituals of initiation as well, are essentially interpretative (Faivre 1999: 165). It is through an act of interpretation of the experience of the ritual, *and the ritual as such*, that the ritual of initiation becomes an initiation in the strict sense of the word. The interaction of experience and interpretation is essential to the understanding of rituals of initiation. Without the experience there is nothing but meaningless symbols for the esotericist to interpret, and without the interpretation the experience fails to become initiatory.



The non-communication of the experiential aspect of the initiation can also be seen as intrinsically connected to the very nature of esotericism as defined by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, i.e. Western esotericism as gnosis. According to Hanegraaff, Western esotericism is characterised by an emphasis on gnosis, rather than on rationality or the reliance on religious authority, and this gnosis should be understood as a revelatory experience that leads to an encounter with one's true self as well as with the divine aspect of existence (Hanegraaff 2004: 510). The various degrees in a given masonic initiatory system can thus be interpreted as an internalisation of the esoteric form of thought in the sense that the degrees ritually corresponds to the stages in a transmutative process leading to the realisation of gnosis—the non-communicable experience of the self and union with the godhead.

The third and last way whereby secrecy is used in esoteric discourses, according to Faivre, is a more or less systematic “desoccultation of the occult” (Faivre 1999: 170). In the context of esoteric rituals of initiation, the unveiling of explicitly transmissible secrets can be divided into three different sorts. First, the actual ritual of initiation itself. When studying early masonic exposures from the eighteenth century it is clear that it is the rituals that are considered to be the Masons' prime secret, and not some other sort of secret knowledge or hidden agenda. Second, the ‘traditional secrets’ that are communicated during the ritual. These consist of the words, tokens and grips, steps, and some standardised questions and answers (Snoek 2003a: 39). The main object of the ‘traditional secrets’ is to allow Freemasons to recognise each other. Third, certain legends and teachings connected to each degree, such as the masonic legend of Hiram which is to be found in the Master Mason degree as well as in a number of additional degrees. The nature of these legends and teachings varies from ritual to ritual, but generally it can be said that they form the mythological setting of the ritual.

One final word needs to be said concerning secrecy in the sense of privacy of a group. In each and every masonic ritual of initiation the initiates take solemn oaths of never divulging what has happened during the initiation, and sometimes the very existence of the society is to be kept secret. At certain historical periods such oaths were unquestionably of utmost importance since masonic societies were persecuted by the authorities. For the most part, especially today, this type of secrecy is not necessary since there is no persecution conducted against masonry, but the oaths are still used in the rituals. Today, this can be considered as, to use Snoek's words, “part of the elegant game which Freemasonry is”, just as the “traditional secrets” are (Snoek 2003a: 40).

Is masonry a secret society? The obvious answer to that question is: yes. However, as we have seen, secrecy plays a dominant role in esoteric discourses in general, and the non-communicable experience of undergoing a ritual of initiation is universal. In other words, masonic rituals of initiation are intrinsically connected to secrecy, but to a secrecy that ultimately is dependent upon the individual initiate's personal experience and interpretation of the ritual. Secrecy is part of every initiation in the sense that it is only by undergoing the initiation that one will take part in it. But it must be understood that secrecy is part of the initiation, and not vice versa. Initiation is the prime characteristic of this type of organisations—not secrecy. Therefore, I am of the opinion that it is more adequate to speak of Freemasonry as an *initiatory society* rather than as a *secret society*, as this captures what Masonic rituals are all about—initiation.

### Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism

With the publication of the three so-called Rosicrucian manifestos in the early seventeenth century the notion of secret societies as custodians of Western esotericism was firmly cemented in Western culture (*Fama Fraternitatis* [1614], *Confessio Fraternitatis* [1615] and *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (*Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz Anno 1459*) [1616]). Although there probably did not exist a fraternity of the Rosy Cross as described in the manifestos, the belief in the existence of such a society spread across Europe. In the manifestos it is described how a certain Frater C.R. (later identified as Christian Rosenkreutz, allegedly born in 1378) travelled to the Middle East and North Africa where he was initiated into magic and other esoteric practices in Damascus and Fez. On his return to Europe he found, much to his surprise, that nobody was interested in what he had learned on his travels. He therefore decided to found the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross in Germany and to pass on his knowledge to a select few and worthy persons that became members of the fraternity. The members of the fraternity were expected to follow six simple rules, of which the final rule was that the fraternity was to remain secret from the world for one hundred years. The publication of the manifestos in 1614 marked the end of the period of secrecy, but the text nevertheless refers to a secret knowledge whereby the whole of Western religion and society might be reformed. Significantly, the first printed reference to the Rosy Cross in the English language, also contained the earliest printed reference to the Mason Word. In *The Muses Threnodie* (1638), the 'Brethren of the Rosie Cross' are connected with the Mason Word:

For what we do presage is not in grosse,  
 For we be brethren of the *Rosie Crosse*;  
 VVe have the *Mason word*, and second sight,  
 Things for to come we can foretell aright;

KNOOP, JONES, AND HAMER 1945: 30

In the same manner, the earliest-known printed reference to Accepted Masons is also to be found in connection to esoteric topics. In a ‘divertissement’ published in *Poor Robin’s Intelligence* for 10 October 1676, the “Company of accepted Masons” is mentioned in an ironical manner together with the “Ancient Brother-hood of the Rosy-Cross” and the “Hermetick Adepti”:

These are to give notice, that the Modern Green-ribbon’d Caball, together with the Ancient Brother-hood of the Rosy-Cross; the Hermetick Adepti, and the Company of accepted Masons, intend all to Dine together on the 31 [*sic*] of *November* next, at the Flying-Bull in Wind-Mill-Crown-Street; having already given order for great store of Black-Swan Pies, Poach’d Phoenixes Eggs, Haunches of Unicorns, &c. To be provided on that occasion; All idle people that can spare so much time from the Coffe-house, may repair thither to be spectators of the Solemnity: But are advised to provide themselves Spectacles of Malleable Glass; For otherwise ‘tis thought the said Societies will (as hitherto) make their Appearance Invisible.

KNOOP, JONES, and HAMER 1945: 31

The “Modern Green-ribbon’d Caball”, or The Green Ribbon Club, was a political club formed around 1675, probably by Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury. The primary purpose of the club appears to have been to gather political opponents to the court, in what can be called a “debating and intelligence resort”.<sup>8</sup> The “Hermetick Adepti” most likely referred to a group of alchemists, since the English word ‘Hermetick’ in the seventeenth century was often used as synonymous with alchemy. As we shall see, alchemy came to be regarded as an important part of masonry, even before the latter part of the eighteenth century when the so-called alchemical degrees were developed on the continent. However, it was through Rosicrucianism that the public eye most often viewed early masonry as part of what we today call Western esotericism. The first English expositor and defender of Rosicrucianism was Robert Fludd (1574–1637), who in 1616 published his *Apologia Compendiara Fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce*. Fludd’s interpretation of Rosicrucianism, as well as his interpretation of

8 I am indebted to Matthew Scanlan for sharing his research on the Green Ribbon Club.

alchemy, became more spiritualised over the years. English Rosicrucianism during the seventeenth century differed from its German and French counterparts, as it blended with alchemy in a far more outspoken manner. The first English edition of the *Fama and Confessio* was published in 1652, in a translation by the alchemist and mystic Thomas Vaughan (1621–1665). According to Waite, it was Vaughan who two years previously, in 1650, had published the first printed English reference to the Rosy Cross in England (twelve years after the publication of *The Muses Threnodie* in Scotland) (Waite 1924: 373). References to Rosicrucian themes can, however, be found earlier in one of Ben Johnson's masques of 1626, and in Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) which "presented a utopian dream of an ideal scientific and religious society based on an order of priest-scientists pursuing the search for knowledge, a dream which included adaptations of many Rosicrucian motifs" (Stevenson 2001: 101).

A further reference, albeit a casual one, to Rosicrucians and Masons is to be found in a poem entitled *The Knight*, printed as a pamphlet in 1723:

And in the *Rosi-crucian* Trade,  
He knew all has been writ or said,  
And might for an *Adeptus* pass,  
As most Men think indeed he was.  
Well vers'd he was in all the Fancies  
Of *Hydro-pyro-geo-mancies*,  
And many learned Things could tell  
Of Knots and Charms, and the Night Spell,  
Which make the Devil stand as Warden,  
To watch a Deer-park or a Garden...

A Charm for Masons and for Sclaters,  
That should be writ in Golden Letters,  
He had, which, when they us'd their Calling,  
Would keep them from all Harm by Falling;  
*In coming down make no more Haste,*  
*Than going up, Probatum est*

KNOOP, JONES, AND HAMER 1945: 110

By the mid-1720s, we find the first printed references to a supposed Rosicrucian influence on masonry. The references to Rosicrucianism, in connection to masonry, had up till then been restricted to casual remarks, with no clear arguments as to the supposed connection between the two. In a mock advertisement printed in *The Daily Journal* of 27 December 1725 it is claimed that "Masonry" had received a "new light from some worthy Rosicrucians":

*Friday, Dec. 24. 1725.*

The Brethren of the *Shears* and *Shopboard* are hereby Informed, that their Whimsical kinsmen of the *Hod* and *Trowel*, having (on new Light received from some worthy *Rosicrucians*) thought fit to change both their *Patron* and *Day*, and unexpectedly taken up our usual Place of Meeting: The Worshipful Society of *Free* and *Accepted* TAYLORS are desired to meet on Monday next, the 27th Instant, at the FOLLY on the Thames, in order to Chuse a Grand Master, and other Officers, and to Dine.

You are desired to come *Cloathed*, and *Armed* with, *Bodkin* and *Thimble*.

KNOOP, JONES, and HAMER 1945: 156

According to Knoop, Jones and Hamer this is the first known reference that suggests Rosicrucian influence on masonic development. In an anonymous letter printed in *The Daily Journal* of 5 September 1730, it is claimed that the English Freemasons were ashamed of their true origin, which according to the anonymous author was to be found in the building activities of Edward III at Windsor in the fourteenth century, and instead “took great pains to persuade the world” that they derived from, and were the same as, the Rosicrucians:

It must be confessed, that there is a Society abroad, from whom the English Free-Masons (asham'd of their true Origin, as above) have copied a few Ceremonies, and take great Pains to persuade the World that they are derived from them, and are the same with them: These are called *Rosicrucians*, from their Prime Officers, (such as our Brethren call *Grand Master*, *Wardens*, &c.) being distinguished on their High Days with Red Crosses. This is said to be a worthy, tho' they affect to be thought a mystical Society, and promote chearfully one another's Benefit in a very extraordinary Manner, they meeting for better Purposes than Eating and Drinking, or glorying like *Batts*, those amphibious Birds of Night, in their Wings of *Leather*. On this Society have our Moderns, as we have said, endeavour'd to ingraft themselves, tho' they know nothing of their most material Constitutions, and are acquainted only with some of their Signs of *Probation* and *Entrance*, insomuch that 'tis but of late Years, (being better inform'd by some kind *Rosicrucian*) that they knew John the Evangelist to be their right Patron, having before kept for his Day that dedicated to John the Baptist, who, we all know, lived in a Desart, and knew nothing of the *Architecture* and *Mystery*, which, with so much Plausibility, they impute to the Author of the *Revelations*.

KNOOP, JONES, and HAMER 1945: 235–236

From then onwards, right up to the present age, one often finds claims in masonic literature that masonry derives from the Rosicrucians. A standard argument for this theory is the oft-quoted entries in the diaries of the antiquarian Elias Ashmole (1617–1692). In two separate entries he mentions his admittance into masonry in 1646, and a subsequent attendance in a masonic lodge thirty years later.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of certain Rosicrucian manuscripts in Ashmole's collection, now at the Bodleian Library, it has often been claimed that Ashmole was a Rosicrucian himself. Ashmole had copied out in his own hand an English translation of the *Fama* and the *Confessio*, to which he had affixed a petition to be allowed to join the Rosicrucian Fraternity (Yates 1972: 194). Whether or not Ashmole was a Rosicrucian, the fact that Ashmole was a mason, and that he took such a large interest in the *Fama* and the *Confessio* as to copy it, shows that he did not regard the two as incompatible. In fact, one of the earliest Rosicrucian texts published in England, a tract called *Summum Bonum* from 1629, deals with Rosicrucian matters in what appears to be a very masonic manner. In the tract, the Rosicrucian brotherhood is not perceived of anymore as a real secret brotherhood to which one can apply for membership, but rather as a spiritual brotherhood. According to Waite, the *Summum Bonum* defines the brotherhood as a "Company of Spiritual Builders" that is set out to build a "Spiritual Palace, a House founded on the Rock, the Holy Place of a Holy Priesthood" (1 Peter 2:4–7). Furthermore, the "corner-stone of this building is Christ, while those who are integrated in the House are the Living Stones thereof" (Waite 1924: 296–297; *Ephesians* 2:19–22). By interpreting the Rosicrucian brotherhood as a company of spiritual builders the author of *Summum Bonum* echoes a characteristic masonic theme, that of the Masons building a new, spiritual temple. For instance, in the dedication of *Long Livers* (1722), the translator-editor Eugenius Philalethes Jr writes:

Remember that you are the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World, and the Fire of the Universe. Ye are living Stones, built up a spiritual House, who believe and rely on the chief *Lapis Angularis*, which the refractory and disobedient Builders disallowed, you are called from Darkness to Light, you are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood.

KNOOP, JONES, and HAMER 1945: 44

In the light of the fact that English Rosicrucianism of the seventeenth century was heavily influenced by alchemy, it is perhaps not so surprising that masonry

<sup>9</sup> Ashmole noted in his diary, on October 16, 1646: "I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire, with Coll: Henry Mainwaring of Karincham in Cheshire". Ashmole (1966: vol. 2, 395). This is the earliest-known private account of a person becoming a mason.

was not only viewed as connected to Rosicrucianism, but to alchemy as well. The following quotation from *Long Livers* provides us with an illustrative specimen of alchemical writing of the period, in which we find a number of typical symbols:

And now, my Brethren, you of the higher Class, permit me a few Words, since you are but few; and these few Words I shall speak to you in Riddles, because to you it is given to know those Mysteries which are hidden from the Unworthy.

Have you not seen then, my dearest Brethren, that stupendous Bath, filled with most limpid Water, than which no Pure can be purer, of such admirable Mechanism that makes even the greatest Philosopher gaze with Wonder and Astonishment, and is the Subject of the eternal Contemplation of the wisest Men. Its Form is a Quadrate sublimely placed on six others, blazing all with celestial Jewels, each angularly supported with four Lions. Here repose our mighty King and Queen (I speak foolishly, I am not worthy to be of you) the King shining in his glorious Apparel of transparent incorruptible Gold, beset with living Sapphires; he is fair and ruddy, and feeds amongst the Lillies; his Eyes two Carbuncles the most brilliant, darting prolifick, never-dying Fires; and his large flowing Hair, blacker than the deepest Black, or Plumage of the long-lived Crow; his Royal Consort vested in Tissue of immortal Silver, watered with Emeralds, Pearl and Coral. O mystical Union! O admirable Commerce!

KNOOP, JONES, and HAMER 1945: 65–66

As we have seen, there are numerous printed references from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in which Masons, both stone masons and gentlemen masons, are perceived of as linked to Rosicrucianism and/or alchemy. Why then, did the authors of these texts believe that there was some sort of connection between masonry and these particular aspects of Western esotericism? One reason probably lies in the fact that masonry was a closed society into which one could only enter by undergoing a secret ritual of initiation. The parallel to the *Fraternity of the Rosy Cross* as proclaimed in the *Fama* and the *Confessio* (as well as in the writings of the English Rosicrucians of the period) is striking, to say the least. In the same manner, alchemy was seen as something reserved for initiates, for persons who could decipher the alchemical symbols. Furthermore, the masonic initiation could have been interpreted as the alchemical idea of transmutation, which often implied a spiritual refinement of the alchemist himself. Indeed, as Jan Snoek has pointed out, the alchemical process can be seen as a parallel to the masonic initiatory process

(Snoek 2011: 224–225), a process leading from base metals (the profane state) to gold and the Philosopher’s Stone (enlightenment, or gnosis).

With the proliferation of masonic high degrees from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, Rosicrucianism enters the world of Freemasonry in earnest through the creation of numerous Rosicrucian degrees and Rites. The prime characteristic trait of this type of degrees and Rites, is that they, in different ways, allude to the Rosicrucian movement of the seventeenth century. It needs to be emphasised, however, that the masonic Rosicrucian degrees differ considerably both in content and in their relation to seventeenth century Rosicrucianism. In order to simplify matters, it can be said that most (but not all) of the masonic Rosicrucian degrees and Rites of the eighteenth century were focused on alchemy, whereas later Rosicrucian degrees and Rites are more focused on Christian mysticism.

One of the most influential masonic Rosicrucian Rites to appear on the scene was *Der Orden des Gold—und Rosenkreuzes* which was founded at the middle of the eighteenth century in the German-speaking world. This Rite was a masonic offshoot of an alchemical brotherhood called *Der Orden des Gülden und Rosenkreutzes* founded in 1710 (McIntosh 1997: Chapter 6). The Rosicrucianism of *Der Orden des Gülden und Rosenkreuzes* was heavily infused with alchemy (see McIntosh 1990: 237–244), but there was also a political aspect to the Order. Many, if not most, of the masonic Craft lodges of the eighteenth century cherished the ideals of the Enlightenment, whereas the High Degree Rites often were more ambivalent as regards to these ideals. The members of *Der Orden des Gold—und Rosenkreuzes* were to a large extent conservative in their outlook, and the Order can be seen as, to a certain extent, part of the anti-*Aufklärung* movement active in the German-speaking world during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the pursuit of alchemical knowledge, another important characteristic drew people to the new Rosicrucian order: its political stance. Rosicrucianism in the late 18th century became a rallying point for those who were of conservative outlook and who were opposed to the socially radical, rationalistic, and even anti-religious tendencies which were becoming a serious challenge in Germany.

MCINTOSH 1997: 65–66

10 Christopher McIntosh has shown in *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason* (1992) that the relationship of *Der Orden des Gülden und Rosenkreuzes* to the anti-*Aufklärung* movement is more complicated than first meets the eye.



The Order was comparatively successful and lodges were established in the German-speaking countries, Austria, Hungary and northern Italy (McIntosh 1997: 68). The success was due not only to the fact that the order functioned as a “conservative focal point”, but also because it stressed the importance of religion in times when anti-religious sentiments were popular in certain parts of society. Furthermore, the German character of the Order appealed to persons of a nationalistic orientation. Last, but not least, the Order claimed to possess a secret knowledge (alchemy) which was restricted to its initiates (McIntosh 1997: 66). At least since the reorganisation of the Order in 1777, and possibly even earlier, that is, since the reorganisation of 1767 or since that of 1757 (see Snoek 2011: 155), the initiatory system of *Der Orden des Gülden und Rosenkreuzes* consisted of nine degrees, and one had to be a Master Mason in order to be eligible for joining the order (for a description of the second degree ritual [Theoreticus], see McIntosh 1997: 72–74).

Another important masonic Rosicrucian order is *The Royal Order of Scotland*, which was founded in the early eighteenth century, existing at least in 1732 (Stewart 1996: 46). The order fell into a twenty-year long abeyance, from 1819 to 1839, but it recuperated and is today a relatively large Rite with numerous Provincial Grand Lodges (see Lindsay 1971; Draffen of Newington 1977; Bernheim 1999–2000). It was established in the United States in 1877 with the prolific masonic author Albert Pike (1809–1891) as its first Provincial Grand Master. It consists of two high degrees: the Order of Heredom of Kilwinning, and the Knights of the Rosy Cross, the latter of which is characterised by Christian mysticism veiled in Rosicrucian symbolism. According to a legendary history of the Order (*The Royal Order of Scotland* n.d.: 53), the *Royal Order of Scotland* was founded by King Robert the Bruce (1274–1329) in 1314 to commemorate the assistance he received at the battle of Bannockburn on June 24, 1314, from sixty-three Knights Templar. The Knights Templar had showed up unexpectedly at a crucial point of the battle and assisted Robert the Bruce to defeat the English forces of Edward II (1284–1327). The defeat ensured the independence of Scotland until the union of 1707.

The degree which became the seventh of the French Modern Rite in 1786, and the eighteenth of the *Ancient and Accepted Rite* created in 1801 in Charleston (South Carolina), Rose-Croix of Heredom, Knight of the Pelican and Eagle, is probably the most well-known and practiced of all the masonic Rosicrucian degrees. The oldest document pertaining to it is the “Strasbourg Ritual” of 1760: “Chevalier de l’Aigle, du Pélican, de Rose Croix de St. André, ou Le Parfait Maçon, [i.e.] le Chevalier de l’Aigle Souverain de Rose-Croix de Strasbourg 1760” (Library of the Grand Orient of The Netherlands, 240.C.53, Kloss XXVIII-40). Even though the history of this

degree reaches back to the middle of eighteenth century France, it differs considerably in content from other eighteenth century masonic Rosicrucian Rites such as *Der Orden des Gülden und Rosenkreuzes* (see Jackson 1993: 24–30). In 1768 a masonic body was founded in Paris which called itself the First Sovereign Chapter Rose Croix, and in the statutes which it issued a year later it is stated that “The knights of Rose Croix are called knights of the Eagle, of the Pelican, Sovereigns of Rose Croix, perfect Prince Masons free of Heredon” (Jackson 1993: 27). The Eagle and the Pelican are symbols of Christ, which alludes to the Christian nature of the degree. The name Heredon, more commonly spelled as Heredom (and sometimes as Harodim),<sup>11</sup> is the name given to a mythical mountain supposed to exist north of Kilwinning, Scotland.<sup>12</sup> According to a masonic legend, associated particularly with Écossais masonry, the Masons were driven away after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and subsequently found their way to this mountain in Scotland. They remained on this mountain until the time of the Crusades. But this legend is not part of the ritual of this degree.

### Freemasonry and Christian Kabbalah

Prior to 1725 the Craft rituals had consisted of only two rituals, Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft or Master Mason. However, by 1730 the Entered Apprentice ritual had been split into two degrees, Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft, thus inserting a new degree between the two previous ones. The old second degree became the third degree, called Master Mason (see Vibert 1967a: 31–45, and Vibert 1967b: 47–61). With the publication of Samuel Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected* (1730) the development of the Craft degrees had reached its completion in the sense that there were now three degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Samuel Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected*, first published in October 1730, is perhaps the most influential of all masonic exposures published in the eighteenth century, and the text ran into no less than thirty editions. According to the title page of the pamphlet, Prichard had been

11 The version *Harodim* is especially found in French versions of the ritual. It is a Hebrew word, the plural of *Harod*; one who rules or acts as an Overseer (Jackson 1993: 6–7).

12 According to Jackson, the following suggestions have been offered to the meaning of the word ‘Heredom’: *Heres domus*, the Latin for house of the heir, or first-born; *Hieros domos*, the Greek for holy house; *Har Edom*, the Hebrew for (Holy) Mountain of the Earth (Jackson 1993: 7).

a mason himself, a “late Member of a Constituted Lodge”, and his objective in publishing the exposure was explained in “The Author’s Vindication of himself from the prejudiced Part of Mankind”:

I was induced to publish this mighty Secret for the publick Good, at the Request of several Masons, and it will, I hope, give entire Satisfaction, and have its desired Effect in preventing so many credulous Persons being drawn into so pernicious a Society.

KNOOP, JONES and HAMER 1963: 171

Prichard’s assertion that he had published the pamphlet at the request of several Masons appears to be quite odd, to put it mildly. Why would Masons themselves want to publish their “mighty Secret” and thereby prevent persons from joining their “pernicious” society? If there is any truth in Prichard’s claim, then perhaps it is possible to get to the motive of these Masons by examining the result that *Masonry Dissected* had on the later development of masonic rituals. The obvious result of Prichard’s text is the establishment of the three degrees and their related rituals. Since there were no official ritual handbooks at this time—all rituals were supposed to be learned by heart—what better way might there be of implementing a new degree than by making it readily available through its publication? Could the development of the third degree, and the peculiar mysticism connected thereto, have been the deliberate effort of a group of Masons who deemed it necessary to reform the masonic system of initiation? Unless new information comes to light, we will never get a conclusive answer to these questions. It is, however, interesting to note a peculiar part of Prichard’s vindication which seems to imply that the old form of masonry needed to be “repair’d by some occult Mystery”, or would soon be annihilated:

... but it is very much doubted, and most reasonable to think it will be expended towards the forming another System of Masonry, the old Fabrick being so ruinous, that, unless repair’d by some occult Mystery, will soon be annihilated.

KNOOP, JONES and HAMER 1963: 171

What this “occult mystery” might allude to is uncertain, but it is, in my opinion, tempting to interpret it as the legend of Hiram, as will be discussed presently.

The publication of *Masonry Dissected* provoked the publication of responses in which the honour of Freemasonry was defended and the integrity of Samuel

Prichard was questioned.<sup>13</sup> One such answer was the anonymous *A Defence of Masonry*, published in 1730–1731. Apart from a polemic treatment of Prichard's motives in publishing *Masonry Dissected*, the text includes an interesting discussion of masonry's apparent relationship to ancient mysteries.

The Conformity between the Rites and Principles of *Masonry* (if the *Dissection* be true) to the many Customs and Ceremonies of the Ancients, must give Delight to a Person of any Taste and Curiosity, to find any Remains of Antique Usage and Learning preserved by a Society for many Ages, without Books or Writing, by oral Tradition only.

KNOOP, JONES and HAMER 1963: 219

In *A Defence of Masonry* Freemasonry is particularly likened to the Pythagoreans, the Essenes and the Druids—but more importantly masonry is connected to Kabbalah. Significantly enough, Kabbalah is specifically connected to the mason words, and it is thus the literary Kabbalah (that is, *Gematria*, *Notariqon*, and *Temurah*), which is seen as compatible with masonry:

The *Cabalists*, another Sect, dealt in hidden and mysterious Ceremonies. The *Jews* had great Regard for this Science, and thought they made uncommon Discoveries by means of it. They divided their Knowledge into *Speculative* and *Operative*. *David* and *Solomon*, they say, were exquisitely skilled in it, and no body at first *presumed to commit it to Writing*; but, what seems most to the present Purpose, the Perfection of their Skill consisted in what the *Dissector* calls *Lettering of it*, or by ordering the *Letters of a Word* in a particular manner.

KNOOP, JONES and HAMER 1963: 218

The idea of connecting Freemasonry with literary Kabbalah was, however, not new. For instance, in an exposure entitled *The Grand Mystery Laid Open*, printed in 1726, there are references to *Notariqon*. This text is also interesting as it is the first printed masonic catechism that stresses the connection between Freemasonry and Kabbalah as such:

Have the six Spiritual Signs any Names? Yes, but are not divulged to any new admitted Member, because they are Cabalistical? [sic] ... Who is the

13 The perhaps fiercest attack upon Prichard's character is found in *The Perjur'd Free Mason Detected* (1730). It includes a fictitious interview with Prichard in the form of a catechism, in which Prichard is denounced in no uncertain terms.

Grand Master of all the Lodges in the World? *INRI*. What is the meaning of that Name? Each distinct Letter stands for a whole Word, and is very Mysterious ... Who was the first Mason? Laylah Illallah. Who invented the secret word? Checchhabeddin Jatmouny. What is it? It is a Cabalistical Word composed of a Letter out of each of the Names of Laylah Illallah as mentioned in the Holy Bible.

KNOOP, JONES and HAMER 1963: 97–98

It is significant that the peculiar way of lettering certain words found in Freemasonry was interpreted as having a kabbalistic origin as early as 1726; that is, four years prior to the publication of Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*. The earliest known use of Hebrew letters in masonic ritual texts is to be found in the first printed masonic catechism, *A Mason's Examination*, printed in 1723. While the mere use of Hebrew letters does not necessarily have anything to do with Kabbalah, it should be kept in mind that by many Christian kabbalists non-kabbalistic Hebrew texts, were in fact interpreted as being kabbalistic.

Apart from the significant fact that Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* is the first exposure to contain the three degrees of Craft masonry, it also contains the first account of the Hiramic legend.<sup>14</sup> The Hiramic legend remains the most important and characteristic legend of Freemasonry to this day and it plays a key role in the third or Master Mason degree. Briefly, the Hiramic legend centres on the murder of Hiram, King Solomon's chief architect, who was entrusted with the erection of the Temple of Jerusalem. Hiram had divided his workers into different classes according to their skill and in order to differentiate between them, each class had been given a certain password. It was Hiram's custom to pray each day inside the uncompleted temple, and the three villains trapped Hiram inside the temple and demanded that he divulge the Master's Word. Hiram refused and attempted to escape, but the villains struck him forcefully one time each. The third and last blow killed Hiram before he had divulged the Master's Word, and consequently the word—YHVH—was lost. The murderers buried Hiram's body under some shrubs. It did not take long before Hiram's absence was noticed, and King Solomon sent

14 The legend of Hiram is mentioned in Anderson's second *Book of Constitutions*, published in 1738, and in the already mentioned exposure of 1730, *Masonry Dissected*. A reference to the legend might also be found in an advertisement in a London newspaper as early as 1726. See Covey-Crump (1934: 4), referring to Sadler (1910: 325). Regrettably, Sadler gave as his source only that it was an advertisement in a newspaper of 1726. Knoop, Jones and Hamer had not been able to trace the source in 1945 (Knoop, Jones, and Hamer 1945: 192–194).

out search-parties. Upon finding the body of Hiram, which the three villains had buried, a new Master's Word was adopted. The new word was Macbenac (or Makbenak), which is supposed to mean "the flesh falls from the bones" in allusion to the decomposed state of Hiram's corpse. It is still unclear from where the word Macbenac derives, but the pre-1730 texts reveal that different words were used as the Master's Word, such as "matchpin". Another example of a Master's Word is "Mahabyn" which is to be found in the *Sloane MS. 3329* (c. 1700).

Nevertheless, the main aspect of the legend, the search for a lost word, presents an intriguing parallel with Jewish kabbalistic speculations concerning the loss of the proper way to pronounce the name of the Lord, Tetragrammaton (*YHVH*). According to kabbalistic tradition, the proper mode of vocalisation or pronunciation of the Divine Name was a guarded secret reserved for the Holy of Holies within the Temple of Jerusalem. Because of the second siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. (it resulted in the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the beginning of the so-called Babylonian Captivity of the Jews that was to last until 538 B.C.), the High Priest no longer had the opportunity to pronounce the name of God.<sup>15</sup> Subsequently the true way of pronouncing the Holy Name passed into oblivion. Later on, there followed the 'substitution of Adonai for Jehovah in the reading of the Law, and by writing the latter Name with the vowel-points of the former' (Waite 1921: Vol. 1, 418). Thus, we find in the kabbalistic tradition a search for the lost name, or rather for the *true way of pronouncing a known name*.

A.E. Waite (1857–1942), one of the most influential masonic and esoteric amateur-scholars of the first half of twentieth century, has written extensively on the parallel between kabbalistic and masonic search for something lost. Even though Waite lacked academic training, which accounts for his writing being "diffuse, often verbose, and peppered with archaisms" (Gilbert 1987: 12), his firm belief that the originators of Freemasonry were versed in kabbalistic doctrine is worth considering:

For myself I believe that the mystic hands which transformed Freemasonry were the hands of a Kabbalistic section of Wardens of the Secret

15 "The pronunciation of *yhwh* as Yahweh is a scholarly guess. Hebrew biblical mss were principally consonantal in spelling until well into the current era. The pronunciation of words was transmitted in a separate oral tradition. The Tetragrammaton was not pronounced at all, the word *ādonāy*, 'my Lord,' being pronounced in its place; *elōhim*, 'God,' was substituted in cases of combination *ādonāy yhwh* (305 times; e.g. Gen 15:2). Though the consonants remained, the original pronunciation was eventually lost". *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992: Vol. 6, 1011).

Tradition; that their work is especially traceable in the Craft Legend; and that although in its present form this Legend is much later and a work of the eighteenth century, it represents some part or reflection of those Zoharic preoccupations which began in England with Robert Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, were continued through Henry More, and were in evidence both in France and Britain before and about the period of the French Revolution.

WAITE 1911: VOL. I, 39–40

In order to understand Waite's arguments concerning the Craft Legend (*i.e.* the legend of Hiram), one has to take into account his conviction that the object of the masonic initiation is a *Unio Mystica* with God.<sup>16</sup> For Waite, the loss of the Master's Word which occurred at the moment of the murder of Hiram within the uncompleted Temple, and the subsequent masonic search for this lost word, has its parallel within the kabbalistic tradition. According to Waite, the early Christian kabbalists of the Renaissance held that the search for a lost name within the kabbalistic tradition was actually the search of a way for finding Christ. The originators of the masonic tradition, who were cognizant of the kabbalistic search, incorporated the theme of a search for something lost (in this case the Master's Word) to represent the search for Christ. For Waite, *Verbum Christus Est*, the lost Master's Word is Christ.<sup>17</sup> This claim would be unintelligible if not understood against a kabbalistic background. The old Master's Word was the name of the Lord, *YHVH*. According to Christian kabbalistic tradition, the name of God conceals the secret name of Jesus, and thus it is 'kabbalistically proved' that Christ is the Saviour. By including the Hebrew letter  $\Psi$  Shin (which by its shape is considered to allude to the Trinity) in the name of the Lord, Yod He Vau He, the name of Jesus emerges *YHSVH*, Yeheshuah or Jeheshua.<sup>18</sup> This kabbalistic proof has been held in high esteem among

16 Indeed, for Waite, this did not only apply for the masonic tradition, for he firmly believed "that all mystical and hermetic traditions, from alchemy and the Hebrew Kabbalah to the quest for the Holy Grail, contained true paths to be followed in the quest for Mystical Union with God; and God, for Waite, is immanent rather than transcendent" (Gilbert 1983: 14).

17 "It is obvious therefore that the Word in Masonry is Christ, and again that the finding of the Word is the finding also of Christ. In its preliminary meaning, the loss of the Word signifies the death of Christ. The three assassins are the world, the flesh and the devil—to make use of familiar technical and conventional terms. The Master-BUILDER who erected the House of Christian Doctrine is Christ Himself. From another point of view the malefactors were Pilate, Herod and Caiaphas" (Waite 1911: Vol. I, 424).

18 Derives from the Hebrew *yēhošua*, which means "YHWH is salvation" or "YHWH saves/has saved", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992: Vol. 3, 773). See also the Adeptus Minor

Christian kabbalists such as Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522), who ascribed great powers to the Pentagrammaton (IHSUH), which for them was the Christian sacred Name, just as the Tetragrammaton (IHVH) was for the Jews. This name contained the power and strength of all and it was assumed that by this word the kabbalist could perform wonderful works beyond human strength and hold dominion over nature. The Pentagrammaton was further seen as a sign of the divine union insofar as it was the source of Man's superhuman activity (Zika 1976: 107). In discussing Reuchlin's understanding of the Pentagrammaton as the completion of the divine name, however, Moshe Idel has argued that Reuchlin has misunderstood the Jewish kabbalists:

Strangely enough, the Christian Kabbalist who emphasized more than any other the secret of the miraculous name of the Christ, as the Pentagrammaton, misunderstood the most elaborate Kabbalistic attempt to show that the Christian Messiah is connected to an uncompleted form of the Tetragrammaton.

IDEL 1993: xxi

Be that as it may, the importance of the Pentagrammaton for the Christian kabbalists cannot be underestimated, and speculations concerning the secret name of God became an important theme of Christian Kabbalah.

The question now arises: To what extent are both traditions interrelated? Research by Jan Snoek tends to substantiate the theory that the search for the Master's Word is indeed influenced by the kabbalistic quest for the proper way of pronouncing the name of the Lord. In two separate articles, Snoek has made a thorough study of the Hiramic legend and therein reaches several important conclusions (Snoek 2003b: 11–53; Snoek 1998: 145–190; see also Snoek 2011: 95, 228–230). According to the legend of Hiram, the old Master's Word was lost with Hiram's murder and a new Master's Word was adopted, *viz.* *Makbenak*—believed to mean “the flesh falls from the bones” (Snoek 2003b: 14). The old Master's Word was the name of God in Hebrew, the Tetragrammaton, pronounced as *Jehovah*,<sup>19</sup> which is the same name that appears in the kabbalistic tradition. The idea that the old Master's Word was *lost* at the time of

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ritual of Waite's offshoot of the Golden Dawn, *The Fellowship of the Rosy Cross*, in which the name is ritually uttered by the three chief officers (Waite 1917: 11).

19 “The form ‘Jehovah’ results from reading the consonants of the Tetragrammaton with the vowels of the surrogate word *Adonai*. The dissemination of this form is usually traced to Petrus Galatinus, confessor to Pope Leo X, who in 1518 A.D. transliterated the four Hebrew



Hiram's death is indeed perplexing, to say the least, since it is clearly stated in the legend itself that the old Word was *YHVH*. Snoek has unravelled this knot by clearly showing that in the early English versions of the legend there was never a question of *losing* the Word, but that which was lost was rather the way of *pronouncing* the Word (Snoek 2003b: 25 and 40). According to the early versions of the legend, the Master's Word could only be pronounced by the three Masters together, *viz.* King Solomon, King Hiram, and Hiram Abiff. This is why Hiram *could* not, as opposed to *would* not, reveal the word. Since Hiram had not passed on his knowledge before being killed, the proper way of pronouncing the Master's Word was lost. We have thus two traditions, the kabbalistic and the masonic, where a central theme is the loss of the proper way of pronouncing the name of the Lord, *YHVH*. It seems highly unlikely that the choice of the old masonic Master's Word would have been made without the influence of kabbalistic speculations on the name of God. The more so since the speculations concerning *YHVH* are not limited to the Jewish kabbalistic tradition but represent an important aspect of the Christian Kabbalah itself.

There is a further dimension connected to this common theme, namely that of *Unio Mystica*. Snoek has demonstrated in the aforementioned articles that Hiram in the early versions of the legend became identified with the Lord. In my opinion, this identification is of paramount importance for our understanding of the early masonic initiation:

It should be clear by now that placing the name of God on the tomb of Hiram was a functional equivalent to his being buried in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. Both make clear that Hiram is in fact Jahweh. It is precisely that which renders the third degree ritual an initiation of a very well-known kind: the candidate is identified with a hero, who turns out to be (a) God. In that way, the ritual *Unio Mystica* between the candidate and the divinity is expressed and realized.

SNOEK 2003b: 34

Viewing the legend of Hiram in the light of Snoek's findings, it seems apparent that the legend in its original form was an 'initiation myth', as opposed to the later versions in which the legend adopts the function of a 'moralistic story'. The link to the kabbalistic tradition becomes more evident when the initiatory aspect of the legend is emphasised. At the core of the Jewish Kabbalah lies the fundamental aim of the individual experience of the Godhead, or *Unio*

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letters with the Latin letters *jhv'h* together with the vowels of Adonai, producing the artificial form 'Jehovah". *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992: Vol. 6, 1011).

*Mystica*.<sup>20</sup> It is this fundamental aim that links the two traditions together in a *functional* manner. Both traditions focus on a direct identification with, or experience of, the Godhead.

It should be stressed, however, that there are two significant facts that speak against a kabbalistic influence on the Hiramic legend. First, the search for the proper way of pronouncing the Name of the Lord and speculations concerning the spiritual powers connected to it, are in Jewish literature not limited to Kabbalah but can also be found in Jewish non-kabbalistic texts. Nevertheless, in Christian Western esotericism, it is particularly in kabbalistic texts such as Pico's kabbalistic *Conclusiones* (1486), and Reuchlin's *De Verbo mirifico* (1494) and *De arte cabbalistica* (1517) that we encounter speculations concerning the proper way of pronouncing the Name of the Lord. Second, and more intriguing, is the fact that the new Master's Word that is adopted in the masonic tradition is not the Pentagrammaton Yeheshua, but Makbenak. The new Master's Word is thus not Christ, which would have been the logical choice if the Hiramic legend were influenced by Christian kabbalistic traditions. There are several possible explanations to this puzzle, the most obvious being that the true (and thus secret) understanding of the new Master's Word was something that each mason had to find out for himself, and that those who did not realise that Christ was the new Master's Word simply did not deserve to partake of the gnosis.<sup>21</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to discuss the complex relationship between Freemasonry and Western esotericism by approaching the issue from two perspectives. First, by analysing a central esoteric discourse in the specific context of Freemasonry, namely the use of secrecy in Freemasonry and its relation to the concept of initiation and claims to absolute knowledge. Second, by

20 Moshe Idel has shown that mystical union with God is an intrinsic part of Kabbalah, contrary to what Gershom Sholem argued: "... I shall propose an alternative view on expressions of *unio mystica* in Kabbalah: far from being absent, unitive descriptions recur in Kabbalistic literature no less frequently than in non-Jewish mystical writings, and the images used by the Kabbalists do not fall short of the most extreme forms of other types of mysticism" (Idel 1988: 60).

21 There are also kabbalistic implications connected to the two classical passwords in Freemasonry, Jachin and Boaz, and the connected gradual revelation of esoteric knowledge. For a thorough discussion of this issue, see in particular Snoek 2011: 228–230; and Snoek 2004: 11–12.

analysing the influence of esoteric currents on Freemasonry, namely Rosicrucianism and Christian Kabbalah. It should be stressed that these two particular currents merely serve as examples, and that Freemasonry has been influenced by, and interacted with, numerous other esoteric currents, such as alchemy, astrology, magic, and illuminism, to name some of the more obvious currents. The influence of these currents vary considerably from system to system (or more properly, from Rite to Rite), degree to degree, but also between particular times and locations.

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## Freemasonry and New Religious Movements

*Massimo Introvigne*

### Introduction

'New religious movement' is a contested concept in social sciences. It is a politically correct term introduced by British sociologist Eileen Barker, in order to avoid derogatory labels such as 'cult'. However, most religious movements do not like to be regarded as 'new'. They prefer to be seen as contemporary manifestations of an 'old' religious tradition. Or they may claim to have rediscovered an ancient and forgotten wisdom. Social scientists insist that the concept does not involve any judgment on such claims. New religious movements are simply those whose direct origins are comparatively recent. Some scholars distinguish between 'old' new religions (those founded in the nineteenth century) and the more recent 'new religious movements'. In Japan this distinction is quite common: the Japanese terms are *shin-shukyo* ('[old] new religions') and *shin-shin-shukyo* ('new new religions'). These distinctions, however, are not generally accepted. 'New religious movements' remains a politically negotiated and result-oriented category, used as a tool for a number of cognitive and social purposes.

As a mere tool, the concept of 'new religious movements' should not be interpreted through essentialist lenses. New religious movements have nothing essential in common, besides being 'new'. Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Scientology have no common doctrinal or organizational features—except perhaps that they are often the targets of the same critics. In fact, since the 1960s there has been a significant international 'anti-cult movement' that has lumped together a large variety of minority religions regarded as a public nuisance. The 'anti-cult movement' is a basically secular enterprise, which does not criticize the movements for their doctrines. It claims that they subject their members to excessive pressure, perhaps through the use of something called 'brainwashing' or 'mind control'. It is very rare that anti-cultists target Freemasonry, or regard it as a 'cult'. Some prominent anti-cultists, including French psychiatrist Jean-Marie Abgrall, are themselves Freemasons. However, when the anti-cult movement entered the field, it discovered that it was already occupied by a much older *counter-cult* movement, which had been in existence since the mid-nineteenth century. Counter-cultists, unlike anti-cultists, are Christians (mostly Evangelicals) who criticize the

'cults' because of their heretical doctrines. Most Evangelical counter-cult movements do regard Freemasonry as a 'cult', and more often than not connect the lodges with occultism if not Satanism. Unlike secular anti-cultists, Christian counter-cultists are very much interested in determining that some new religious movements are 'similar' to Freemasonry, or have some sort of 'masonic roots'. Since for them Freemasonry is an occult and Satanic enterprise, if it can be proved that certain new religious movements have a masonic origin, they automatically become guilty, by association, of all the evils imputed to the Craft.

It is comparatively rare that this line of attack is used against the more recent new religious movements. Some of them (including a number of those of Japanese origins) are openly anti-masonic. Others do not have any apparent relationship with Freemasonry. Occult-esoteric new religious movements such as Thelema, the movement originating from the British magus Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), do present organizational and initiatory structures similar to (or patterned after) Freemasonry. Quasi-masonic structures are ubiquitous in new religious movements with occult or esoteric interests; in fact, only a minority of them are organized under lines entirely different from Freemasonry. Examples of quasi-Masonic organizations include the renaissance of witchcraft under the name of Wicca under Gerald Brousseau Gardner (1884–1964), and several dozens neo-Templar movements throughout the world. These movements adopted a Masonic structure since many of their perspective members were familiar with it, and perhaps because allusions to Freemasonry conferred to newly founded organizations a certain respectability. What critics are looking for is evidence of a 'hidden' connection between a specific new religious movement and Freemasonry. For several reasons, counter-cultists have focused on three large American new religious movements born in the nineteenth century: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, popularly known as the Mormon Church; Jehovah's Witnesses; and Christian Science. Although often based on quite preposterous arguments, the criticism has been paradoxically helpful, since it has encouraged academic scholars to devote some serious studies to the relationships between these movements and Freemasonry.

### **Mormonism and Freemasonry**

The relationship between Mormonism and Freemasonry remains a very sensitive issue both for Freemasons and Mormons. There have been instances of Mormon scholars counseled by their church's authorities to avoid the issue



altogether (Homer 2014: 353). Masonic scholars are also embarrassed by the fact that, while Freemasonry claims to welcome people of all faith, Mormons in fact have been excluded for decades in Utah.

The roots of the problem lie in the fact that no other new religion has been influenced by Freemasonry in such a crucial way as Mormonism, nor has any other newly arisen denomination threatened Freemasonry with the very real prospect of taking over the Craft in a large area of the United States. Joseph Smith (1805–1844), the Mormon prophet, grew up in Upstate New York, in the so called burned-over district, at a time of Protestant religious awakening. These revivals involved an element of anti-masonry, although many New Yorkers who gathered to hear the preachers were, in fact, Freemasons. William Morgan (1774–1826), whose mysterious disappearance in 1826 fuelled rumors of a masonic assassination, was a former Freemason turned anti-mason living in Batavia, New York, where he wrote for the *Republican Advocate*. Thanks also to the sensational reports of his alleged murder, his anti-masonic posthumous book *Illustrations of Masonry* (Morgan 1826) became a best seller and went into at least twenty editions between 1826 and 1830.

Joseph Smith was familiar with Morgan's anti-masonic classic and for a time evolved in the deceased journalist's circles. Morgan's widow, Lucinda Morgan Harris, later became a Mormon in 1834 and a plural wife of the same Joseph Smith in 1838, after the Mormon prophet had introduced the practice of polygamy (although the status of Smith and Lucinda's marriage has been disputed by some scholars). Among the first followers of Joseph Smith there were Freemasons, including Smith's elder brother and close associate Hyrum, 1800–1844, a member of Mount Moriah Lodge No. 112 in Palmyra, New York. The masonic affiliation of Joseph and Hyrum's father, Joseph Smith Sr (1771–1840) is a matter of dispute (Homer 1994: 15–16). Yet Smith's followers also included anti-masons (such as Martin Harris [1783–1875]).

The anti-masonic influence is apparently more prominent in the *Book of Mormon*, first published in 1830. Mormonism's new scripture was based, according to Smith, on his translation of golden tablets found under Hill Cumorah near Manchester, New York, under the guidance of an angel who later took the tablets to Heaven. In the *Book of Mormon* quasi-masonic 'secret combinations' are exposed and denounced. In the *Book of Moses*, a part of the *Book of Mormon* where the story of Cain and Abel is retold, Satan reveals to Cain that his name is Mahon, and enters into a secret alliance with him; "wherefore Cain was called Master Mahon, and he glorified in his wickedness" (Moses 5: 31). Lamech, an evil descendant of Cain, also "entered into a covenant with Satan after the manner of Cain wherein he became Master Mahon, master of that great secret which was administered unto Cain by

Satan" (Moses 5: 49). "From the days of Cain, there was a secret combination, and their works were in the dark" (Moses 5: 29).

These passages were easily read as references to Freemasonry, and "Master Mahon" clearly assonates with 'Master Mason'. According to a report in *The Geauga Gazette*, Joseph Smith's close associate Martin Harris explicitly advertised the *Book of Mormon* in 1831 as a new "Anti-masonick [sic] Bible" ("The Golden Bible" 1831). Protestant anti-Mormons such as the famous preacher Alexander Campbell (1788–1866) in turn derided the fact that the *Book of Mormon*, allegedly written several centuries before the establishment of modern Craft, "decides all the [modern] great controversies and even the question of Freemasonry" (Campbell 1831: 93).

Critics of Mormonism, in fact, described Mormons both as similar to Freemasons and as anti-masons. While the *Book of Moses* included what appeared as anti-masonic passages, the Mormons' love for ancient rituals made them somewhat similar to the Freemasons. Joseph Smith's judgment of Freemasonry seems to have evolved from the publication of the *Book of Mormon* in 1830 to the completion of the plans for a temple to be built in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1833. Smith became persuaded that the original rituals of Freemasonry could be traced back to the pre-Christian Jewish rites of Solomon's Temple. During the course of time these rituals became degenerated and Freemasonry came to be dominated by 'spurious' Masons of Cain's lineage. Smith's own 'Restoration movement' (that is, Mormonism) would restore also Freemasonry to its pristine, uncorrupted status.

The problem, which has puzzled many interpreters, of how the anti-Masonism of the *Book of Mormon* and of Smith's early New York circle turned into the enthusiastic embrace of Freemasonry by the Mormons in the 1840s, can thus be solved. Smith kept denouncing 'spurious' Freemasonry as a deviation from the Craft's original rituals and aims, while espousing 'genuine' Freemasonry as part of his Restoration. Of course, on which brand of Freemasonry was 'genuine', and which one 'spurious,' Smith and the American masonic authorities of his time had very different views. Ultimately, Smith believed that the endowment rituals that he administered in Kirtland and later in Nauvoo, Illinois did include everything the ancient, 'genuine' Freemasonry was all about. As a symbol of the fact that not only Christianity, but also Freemasonry was in need of a return to its sources and was part of the Mormon Restoration, Smith decided that a certain number of Mormons should be formally and regularly initiated into masonic lodges.

When Smith contacted the masonic authorities in Illinois with this request, they were recovering from a time of difficulties. The Grand Lodge of Illinois had just been re-organized in 1840 under Grand Master Abraham Jonas

(1801–1864). Its Deputy Grand Master, James Adams (1783–1843) had himself secretly converted to Mormonism in 1836. The contacts between Smith and the Grand Lodge were handled by John Cook Bennett (1804–1867), an adventurer who in 1840 joined the Mormon Church, and whose maneuvers were later crucial in the tragic events leading to Smith's assassination in 1844. Bennet was himself a Freemason, and was instrumental in persuading Grand Master Jonas to recognize in 1842 as regular the Nauvoo Lodge, which had been organized (in fact, with several masonic irregularities) at the end of 1841.

Eventually, the Nauvoo Lodge came to include in 1842, with Jonas' blessing, 285 Freemasons, more than half of Illinois' total of 480 (Homer 1994: 30). This alarmed Illinois Freemasons, and gave them the impression that the Mormons were taking over the Craft in their State. Rumours of polygamy, spread in masonic circles by John Bennett after he broke with Smith, contributed to the Freemasons' concerns, although Jonas initially sided with the Mormon prophet in his fight with Bennett. At the same time Jonas ordered an investigation into the activities of the Nauvoo Lodge (or lodges, since at the end of 1842 their number had grown to five). During the course of the investigation the Mormons went on and initiated another 187 men. The idea originally championed by Jonas that the Mormons' benefic influx would simply give new life to the struggling Illinois Freemasonry was gradually replaced by the fear of a Mormon takeover. Jonas himself was voted out of office in October 1843. The lodges in Nauvoo were disenfranchised, and a bitter fight between the Freemasons and the Mormons followed.

The Mormons did not accept the decision and kept appealing to higher masonic jurisdictions. In the meantime, the Nauvoo lodges went on as if nothing had happened, raised the number of their members to more than seven hundred (Homer 2014: 167), and a masonic lodge building was inaugurated with due pomp on April 5, 1844. When Joseph Smith was incarcerated and lynched by a mob in the jailhouse of Carthage, Illinois on June 27, 1844 several of the mob's leaders were, in fact, Freemasons, although the question of the 'clandestine' lodges in Nauvoo was but one among many which led the events to their tragic conclusion. Whether Smith, before dying, really gave the masonic sign of distress and exclaimed, as only a Freemason would do faced by a fatal threat, "Is there no help for the widow's son?" is a matter of historical dispute, while it is true that the lodge in Warsaw, Illinois, was investigated by the Illinois Grand Lodge for its participation in the Carthage tragedy, although none of its members was finally disciplined.

Mormon Freemasonry, now perceived by Masons in good standing in the United States as just another 'clandestine' imitation of the Craft with no regularity whatsoever, continued its activities in Nauvoo even after Smith's death

and by the end of 1845 included 1,366 Master Masons (Homer 2014: 178). Only after the Mormons moved to Utah in 1847 their authorities declared that masonic rituals had been entirely superseded by the Mormon temple endowment and other rites, and were no longer necessary nor appropriate for the followers of Joseph Smith. When Freemasonry arrived to Utah, in 1858, it was a 'Gentile' (that is, non-Mormon) enterprise, shaped by the old Illinois enmity. Although there were a few Mormon Masons in other parts of the United States and the world, they were forbidden from visiting and joining Utah lodges, which had from their very beginnings a strict exclusionary policy against Mormons. This prohibition applied to regular lodges under the Grand Lodge of Utah. Forms of 'clandestine' or irregular Freemasonry open to Mormons also operated in Utah, but did not recruit a large following. Only after World War II individual Utah (regular) lodges decided to open their doors to Mormons. And only in 1984 the *Code of the Grand Lodge of Utah*, which had sanctioned the exclusion of Mormons for more than 120 years, was amended. Mormons were now free to join Freemasonry everywhere, including in Utah, at least according to masonic authorities. Mormon leaders, in fact, kept counseling their members not to join 'secret societies', including Freemasonry, although Utah Mormons who became Freemasons after 1984 were not disciplined by their Church (Homer 1992).

The move to Utah and the building of Mormon temples, first in Utah and subsequently throughout the world, started a new and different controversy. Mormon Temple rituals are in principle secret and cannot be revealed to outsiders. Such a large organization as Mormonism, just as Freemasonry itself, fatally has apostate ex-members who, for different reasons, decide to write exposures. When details of Mormon rituals were published, Freemasons quickly recognized several similarities with their own ceremonies. Not only the rituals but also specific wordings and oaths still present quite obvious parallels (although reforms in the twentieth century have 'de-Masonized' portions of the Mormon holiest ritual, the endowment). Early rituals of the female Relief Society (which have been, however, largely abandoned) also had elements of similarity with adoptive Freemasonry, and the rationale for excluding African Americans (and 'blacks' in general) from the Mormon priesthood (a policy which remained in force until 1978) was similar to early arguments used for excluding them from masonic lodges.

Early Mormon leaders, including Joseph Smith and his first successor Brigham Young (1801–1877), liberally admitted that there was a "similarity of priesthood in Freemasonry", as Smith himself taught according to a letter by Mormon apostle Heber C. Kimball (1801–1868) (Kimball 1842). Things changed when anti-Mormon Freemasons mounted nationwide campaigns accusing the

Mormon Church of being simply a clandestine form of Freemasonry, and anti-masonic Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians claimed that Mormonism derived all its rituals and doctrines from Freemasonry, which they regarded as an evil organization devoted to the occult. This criticism started in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and continues to this day. The Mormon reaction was a denial of any connection between early Mormonism and Freemasonry in publications intended for a larger audience, and a quiet counsel to Mormon academics to avoid the issue in the specialized journals. When in 1974 Reed C. Durham, then Director of the Latter-day Saints Institute of Religion at the University of Utah, devoted his presidential address at the Mormon History Association's annual meeting in Nauvoo, Illinois, to the relationship between Mormonism and Freemasonry, he was counseled not to publish his text in the Association's *Journal of Mormon History*. Durham "even sent a letter of apology to every person who heard his speech" (Homer 2014: 353), although his controversial text was later distributed (without his authorization) in both masonic and anti-Mormon circles, and today may be read on the Internet (Durham 1974).

Several books and articles, however, have been devoted to the issue since 1974 (Homer 1992, 1994, 2014; Brooke 1994; Buerger 1994; Forsberg 2004), and the question is slowly becoming both less sensitive and less controversial. Few scholars of Mormonism would doubt that there are indeed 'similarities' between Mormon and masonic rituals, or deny that Joseph Smith devoted a substantial amount of time and energy to the organization of masonic lodges in Nauvoo, after his earlier contacts with the anti-masonic movement in Upstate New York. The meaning of these 'similarities' should however be explored. Joseph Smith did believe that the rituals of King Solomon's temple were part of the 'original' Freemasonry, and that they were very valuable tools for elevating the human soul to the contemplation of God's deepest mysteries. He also believed, however, that these mysteries and rituals had been lost by Freemasonry through centuries of decadence, just as he thought that the original Christianity had been lost through the apostasy of the churches and reduced to a mere 'priestcraft'. His mission, the Restoration, by restoring religion to its original God-intended meaning, in fact almost automatically also included a restoration of Freemasonry. The idea expounded by Smith's successors that actual masonic lodges were needed only before, and not after, Mormon temple rituals became largely available, i.e. after the Restoration had been truly completed with the Mormons' settlement in Utah, seems to be true to Smith's original teaching on Freemasonry. The Nauvoo Lodge belonged to an intermediary period, before the work of the Restoration was completed in full.

The similarity of the ritual, to some extent and notwithstanding several reforms, remains to this day. Anti-Mormons, however, often read too much into it. In devising the Mormon temple rituals, Smith used a masonic language for both theological and practical reasons. Theologically, he recognized that the 'original' (not to be confused with the contemporary and 'spurious') masonic ritual was part of the pristine tradition of the Old Testament. Practically, he knew that many of his early followers were either Freemasons or familiar with Freemasonry. But Smith used these rituals for conveying a doctrine that was not only different, but antithetical, to nineteenth century Freemasonry. The latter was, in fact, inclusive, while Mormonism was exclusive. Freemasonry preached that men of all religious persuasions should co-operate together, and that truth does not belong to any single denomination. For Smith, the Mormon Church was the only true church, and there was no salvation outside it. It made sense, again, that Mormon authorities after Smith's death consistently counseled their followers not to become Freemasons, with a rationale not very dissimilar from the one used by the Roman Catholic Church. Smith had used the masonic language of the rituals for the purpose of confirming his followers familiar with Freemasonry into a doctrine which had no 'similarities' with anything they had heard in the masonic lodges.

### Jehovah's Witnesses and Freemasonry

Jehovah's Witnesses are a twentieth century development of a movement established in 1878 by Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916), whose followers were known as the Bible Students. Evangelical critics of contemporary Jehovah's Witnesses have often claimed that they have masonic origins, and that Russell was himself a Freemason (Springmeier 1992: viii), though evidence of Russell's affiliation is however scarce. In fact, Russell was occasionally critical of Freemasonry, as evidenced by an article he published on the Bible Students' magazine, *The Watch Tower*, on June 15, 1895. "The Order of Free Masons—Russell wrote—if judged by its past history, has some secret object or scheme, more than fraternity and financial aid in time of sickness and death. And, so far as we can judge, there is a certain amount of *profane* worship or mummerly connected with the rites of this order and some others, which the members do not comprehend but which, in many cases, serves to satisfy the cravings of the natural mind for worship, and this hinders it from seeking the worship of God in spirit and in truth—through Christ, the only appointed Mediator and Grand Master" (Russell 1895: 142). This is a rather standard Christian criticism of

secret societies, and may seem enough to dismiss any hypothesis about a special relationship between Russell and Freemasonry.

There are, however, other texts that show Russell's familiarity, if not sympathy, with masonic language. In the very first sermon collected in the posthumous book *Pastor Russell's Sermons*, the founder of the Bible Student, having mentioned secret societies in general and the "blood-curdling" masonic oaths in particular, states that "it is not part of my mission to attack any of these orders, nor to inveigh against their procedures. I merely refer to them here; I merely call your attention to the fact that this is a common method amongst men which evidently has the sanction of many, because I wish to draw your attention on the fact that the Almighty God Himself is the founder of a secret society. Moreover, while there are certain correspondences between the human secret orders and the one of Divine origin, we shall find as we should expect that the latter is in every way superior to all others" (Russell 1917: 5). In the sermon, Russell goes on to explain that Abraham established an Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood of which he, and later Jesus Christ, became subsequent Grand Masters. And "as in some secret societies there are different steps or grades—for instance, all Masons are familiar with the secrets pertaining to the first degree, yet not all Masons are familiar with the secrets, etc., pertaining to the thirty-second degree, so in God's Secret Order there are first principles of the doctrines of Christ which must be known to all who belong to the order, and there are also 'deep things of God' which may be known only to those who have made advancement" (Russell 1917: 6).

In another sermon later collected in the same volume, Russell claimed that many different traditions did await the Messiah in similar terms. "Freemasons", he wrote, "have waited twenty-five hundred years for the same glorious personage, as Hiram Abiff, the great Master Mason whose death, glorification and future appearing are continuously set before them by the letters upon their keystones. He died a violent death, they claim, because of his loyalty to the divine secrets typed in Soloman's [sic] temple. He must reappear, they claim, in order that the great antitypical temple may be completed" (Russell 1917: 113).

Russell also used symbols similar to those adopted by contemporary Freemasonry, including a cross within a crown (similar to the Evangelical 'covenant ring'; after Russell's death Jehovah's Witnesses repudiated the cross as a Christian symbol altogether), reproduced for several years on the frontispiece of *The Watch Tower*, and a winged sun. Perhaps more significantly, Russell shared with many Freemasons an interest for the Great Pyramid, which he thought may ultimately reveal God's instructions to humankind (Russell 1891: 309/376). These interests were abandoned by the Jehovah's Witnesses after World War I when they uniformly denounced Freemasonry as a Satanic enterprise.

As far as Pastor Russell is concerned, we cannot conclude from the use of symbols such as the cross within a crown or the winged sun that he had the intention of appropriating masonic imagery. After all, these symbols enjoyed a large use by many groups, some of them quite anti-masonic. The sermons tell, however, a different story. They confirm that Russell was familiar with Freemasonry, perhaps because some of his relatives were indeed Freemasons (he came from a family of Pittsburgh merchants). The audience for which the sermons were intended was also obviously conversant with masonic symbols and with characters such as Hiram Abiff. This was to be expected in nineteenth century middle-class America.

Russell, however, used masonic imagery as a mere starting point. To those familiar with Freemasonry he explained that the only 'secret society' capable of guiding humans to salvation was (his own brand of) Christianity. References to Freemasonry were, thus, only a convenient metaphor and rhetoric device for leading the audience to Christianity. Evangelical critics, whose aim is to warn those who presumably are very hostile to Freemasonry against Jehovah's Witnesses by claiming a secret link between the Witnesses and the Freemasons, read these texts out of their respective contexts. Their conclusions may be helpful to anti-Witness controversy, but are not supported by the historical record.

### Christian Science and Freemasonry

Christian Science, one of the three largest nineteenth century American new religious movements (together with the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses), has also been accused by Evangelical critics to be an offshoot of Freemasonry. Christian Science was established in 1892 by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910). Eddy's first husband, and the father of her only child, was George Washington Glover (1818–1844). He died of yellow fever on June 27, 1844, just six months after the marriage. Glover had been a prominent Freemason, and the local lodges tried to help the penniless widow (Peel 1980: Vol. 1, 77). She reacted *inter alia* with a poem, "The Widow's Prayer", which was published in January 1845 in the *Freemason's Monthly Magazine* (Glover 1845). Eddy remained grateful to Freemasonry for all her life, praised the Freemasons' benevolence and regarded Freemasonry as one of the few societies outside their church that Christian Scientists were free to join.

In fact, several prominent members of Christian Science did join. They included Erwin D. Canham (1904–1982), editor of the daily newspaper *Christian Science Monitor* for more than three decades and author of significant masonic



essays; Alexander Dodds (1874–1920), associate editor of the same newspaper; Roland R. Harrison (1878–1949), managing editor at the *Monitor*; Charles E. Heitman (1874–1948), president of the Christian Science Mother Church between 1923–1924; George Channing (1888–1957), long-time Christian Science leader and the father of actress Carole Channing (herself a Christian Scientist); John M. Longyear (1850–1922), a prominent businessman whose wife Mary Beecher Longyear (1851–1931) was an avid collector of documents and memorabilia about Mary Baker Eddy, and whose home in Brookline, Massachusetts became The Longyear Museum, devoted to Eddy's life and teachings (Moramarco 1989–1995: Vol. 2, 57–58) The museum was moved to Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, in 1998.

Freemasonry, in turn, did honor Mary Baker Eddy as a friend both during her life and after her death. In 1892 a group of Freemasons in Toronto (which included some Christian Scientists) donated to her a boat with masonic symbols (Moramarco 1989–1995: Vol. 2, 57). In 1921, local Freemasons donated a monument reproducing the Great Pyramid to be placed near her birthplace in Bow, New Hampshire, to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of her birth. The directors of Christian Science, who apparently did not like the idea of creating an alternate center of pilgrimage in competition with Boston's Mother Church, later had the monument destroyed, a move which generated some protests (“Directors Order Diabolical Destruction of Grand Pyramid Marker at Bow” 1997: 11–12).

There is, thus, substantial evidence of a friendly relationship between Christian Science and Freemasonry. Mary Baker Eddy used the symbol of the cross within a crown and occasionally referred to God as the ‘Great Architect’. On the other hand, Eddy created a coherent system of philosophy and theology based on her original interpretation of German Idealism and American Transcendentalism, whose relations with Freemasonry are tenuous at best. There are no initiations, nor quasi-masonic rituals, in Christian Science. Eddy and her associates evolved in a New England progressive milieu (Gottschalk 1973) where there were many Freemasons. Nothing in Christian Science led Eddy to dismiss Freemasonry as negative or evil, and she was grateful for the help received by her first husband's masonic associates at a difficult turning point of her life. The doctrines and practices of Christian Science, on the other hand, are not masonic.

Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science are cases in point for any serious attempt to distinguish fact from fiction in the relationship between some new religious movements and Freemasonry. The study of this relationship is useful, because it helps us to understand the language of the movements' founders and—more importantly—the language and style their audiences were familiar

with and responded to. In nineteenth century America, Freemasonry or at least masonic symbols and references were an important part of the culture of both the lower and the higher middle class, where both Christian Science and Pastor Russell's Bible Students recruited their early followers. Later, under the populist leadership of Joseph F. Rutherford (1869–1942), twentieth century Jehovah's Witnesses started catering to poorer segments of society, both in the U.S. and elsewhere: significantly, masonic symbols and language were abandoned at the same time, and Freemasonry was exposed as evil and essentially devoted to the occult. Mormonism was a different case, due to the special interest of Joseph Smith in ancient rituals and their restoration through his prophetic mission. Mormonism itself, however, for all its interest in Freemasonry, never went beyond the use of masonic ritual as a mere language, without absorbing at the same time any significant doctrine or ideas from contemporary Freemasonry. The study of the relationship between Freemasonry and these movements remains of interest for a better understanding of the social context in which they were born and were able to grow. The conclusion by Evangelical critics that these movements are essentially 'masonic', on the other hand, does not appear to be supported by the available historical evidence.

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**PART 3**

*Ritual, Organisation, and Diffusion*





# Masonic Rituals of Initiation

*Jan A.M. Snoek*

## Introduction

Although it remains unclear when the first masonic rituals emerged, it is clear that it occurred in a Christian cultural context. Those responsible for it really did not need the accounts of world travellers about initiation rituals in Africa or Australia. The Church practiced such initiation rituals as baptism and ordination certainly many centuries already, and it are most likely those which served as examples for the masonic ones. As stated before (see the chapter by Snoek and Bogdan, “The History of Freemasonry: An Overview,” in this volume), the earliest lodges seem to have practiced only one initiation ritual, but in the course of time, there developed many more. Around 1725 the trigradal system of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason developed. All other ones would soon be referred to as ‘higher’ degrees.

The rituals used to confer these degrees can be grouped in three classes: initiation, emblematic, and investiture rituals. Initiation rituals have a number of characteristics (see Snoek 1987), well known from the literature of such disciplines as anthropology, religious studies, ritual studies and liturgical studies. The most important such characteristics are that, for the individual candidates, such rituals are rituals of passage *sensu* Van Gennep (see Van Gennep 1909), starting with separation rites which symbolise the death of the candidate to his current state, followed by transition rites symbolising the candidate’s spiritual condition and his presence in ‘the other (metaphysical) world’, and closing with integration rites expressing his symbolic rebirth or resurrection, which implies the conferring of a new status upon him, as well as his participation in the group of those with whom he shares this status. Initiation rituals in the strict sense of the word culminate in rites, which express a confrontation, or even identification, with a divinity (see Snoek 1987: 173–174). The clearest examples of masonic initiation rituals include those for the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Master Mason, and the French Rose Croix. Emblematic rituals are primarily characterised by the fact that they make the candidate acquainted with a (sometimes quite large) number of important symbols. Among the masonic emblematic rituals are those for the degree of Fellow Craft and the degrees of the St. Andrews Lodge of the Swedish Rite. Investiture

rituals are those, which aim primarily at conferring an exalted status upon the candidate. Masonic investiture rituals are for example those used for installing a new Master of a lodge, but also those of the knighthood degrees. Obviously, combinations exist. Among the most important modern publications containing transcripts of masonic rituals are Knoop, Jones and Hamer (1943); Carr (1971); Jackson (1986); Mollier (2004); Mollier (2001); and Noël (2006).

As examples of masonic rituals of initiation, the next part of this chapter concentrates on those for the degrees of Entered Apprentice and Master Mason. Because these rituals have developed differently in different countries, and were sometimes dramatically changed, it is not possible to discuss all versions in use today. However, those which developed in the eighteenth century, especially from the 1740s onwards, in France became widely paradigmatic in all countries of continental Europe, eventually developing into the rituals in use there today, and they even influenced the Anglo-Saxon ones to some extent. They furthermore show the characteristics of initiation rituals in a very clear way. I choose therefore to discuss these.

### **The Ritual of the Degree of Entered Apprentice**

Masonic rituals, like all rituals, are framed by rites, which mark the start and the end of the ritual concerned (see Snoek 2006). These are referred to as the opening and the closing ceremony. During the opening ceremony, the basically ordinary room to be used for the ritual is transformed into a sacred space by first verifying if the room is guarded against outsiders getting in and if all present have the degree which will be worked in, and then marking the ritual space and time, proper for performing the ritual. Once this is done, a performative speech act, such as the Master of the lodge pronouncing the words “Brethren, in the name of the Great Architect of the Universe, I declare the Lodge duly open for the purposes of Freemasonry in the First Degree” (Emulation ritual, ed. 1976), followed by knocks with a hammer by the Master and the two Wardens, effectuates the transformation. Now the initiation ritual properly can be performed. The closing ceremony finally inverts the transformation, usually again with a performative speech act, this time by one of the Wardens, such as “Brethren, in the name of the Great Architect of the Universe, and by command of the W[orshipful] M[aster], I close the Lodge” (Emulation ritual, ed. 1976), accompanied by the usual knocks.

Meanwhile, the candidate has arrived and, after being prepared, is brought in a ‘Dark Room’. The preparation of the candidate is usually the taking off of some of his clothes (for example, the left breast and left knee may be made

naked) and of his 'metals' (all valuables, especially money, representing that which you cannot take with you into 'the other world'). In the Dark Room (possibly referring to the classical 'porch of Hades'), the candidate is left alone, sitting at a table with emblems of life (such as a burning candle, salt, bread and water) and death (such as a skull). After the lodge has been opened, the Master sends the 'Terrible Brother' (*Frère Terrible*, representing Death) out to fetch the candidate. Still in the Dark Room, the Terrible Brother blindfolds the candidate (who thus symbolically loses the Light of Life). Then either the Terrible Brother or a separate 'Guiding Brother' guides him towards the door of the lodge room. There the candidate knocks, is interrogated, and finally admitted.

That the lodge room, which the candidate has now entered, represents 'the other world' is confirmed by several questions from the masonic catechisms. For example, according to those, Masons work from high noon to midnight, which, of course, does not represent the working hours of any normal profession. Also, the lodge is claimed to be covered with an azure-blue sky, spangled with golden stars. However, azure-blue is a very pale sky-blue, typically the colour of the sky at daytime when no stars can be seen. Such claims, which cannot be true in our world, clearly point out that we are here in 'the other world'.

The candidate now perambulates the lodge-room three times. Traditionally, the first and third perambulations were clock-wise while the second one went anti-clock-wise, as in the traditional form of the labyrinth (the 'Troja-castle'). The perambulations go round the 'tableau', in English referred to as the 'tracing board', a drawing of symbols on the floor in the centre of the lodge. The Master of the lodge sits at the symbolic East side of the 'tableau', opposite the door of the lodge-room at the symbolic West side. He sits behind a little table, called the 'altar', which originally stood directly at the East side of the 'tableau'. The perambulations went therefore around not only the 'tableau', but also the Master. The perambulations thus clearly marked the centre of the lodge, the most sacred place, where the Master symbolically represented God, the Grand Architect of the Universe, and the 'tableau' His Plan. Later, the Master and 'altar' moved away from the 'tableau' to the symbolic East wall of the lodge room, so that the perambulations could no longer pass behind him but had to pass between him and the 'tableau', something which in some Rites remains even today interdicted on other occasions, thus maintaining the memory of the unity of the 'altar' and the 'tableau'. The moving of the Master to the extreme East of the lodge room came as a result of a shift in stressing the light symbolism rather than the centre symbolism. As the opening ritual formulates it: "As the sun rises in the E[ast] to open and enliven the day, so the W[orshipful]



M[aster] is placed in the E[ast] to open the Lodge, and employ and instruct the Brethren in Freemasonry” (Emulation ritual, ed. 1976).

During the perambulations, the Brethren stand around the ‘tableau’, shielding candidate and ‘tableau’ from each other. But at the end of the third perambulation, the candidate is brought into the lodge, i.e. in the middle of the circle of Brethren, on the ‘tableau’. There, in the centre of the lodge, he kneels at the ‘altar’ and takes his oath. This binds him to the Lodge and the Order and makes him a Freemason for life. In the French (continental) tradition, the candidate was then guided to the West side of the ‘tableau’ again, and placed in the circle of Brethren, before his blindfold was removed. The newly initiated Brother now saw the three ‘Great Lights’ of Freemasonry: the Sun, the Moon (see Genesis 1:16), (both depicted on the ‘tableau’) and the Master (i.e. the Grand Architect of the Universe, symbolically represented by the Master of the lodge). In the English ‘Antients’ tradition, we find from 1760 onwards the form where the blindfold is dropped while the candidate still kneels before the ‘altar’, carrying what in 1730 still was the furniture of the lodge: the Bible, square and compasses, having now become the new ‘Great Lights’ of Freemasonry. Just as his being blindfolded symbolised his death as a ‘profane’, this seeing the ‘Great Lights’ of Freemasonry implies the rebirth of the candidate as a Freemason. Essentially, he here symbolically sees God from face to face, a confrontation with the divinity, which forms the culmination rite of the initiation.

Now a member of the group, he is clothed in the regalia of the degree—in this case: apron and gloves—after which he has the right to be instructed in the group’s esoteric knowledge. In the first place, these are for this degree a sacred word, a sign, a grip, a password, and two of the esoteric questions of the ‘catechism’. The instruction of the new member is then completed by an ‘explication’ of the ‘tableau’ and by a rehearsal of the ‘catechism’.

The ‘explication’ of the ‘tableau’ is not an explanation. The Orator adds verbal symbolism (allusions) to the visible symbols, but—especially during the ritual—no one has the right to pose any interpretation of the masonic symbols as their exclusive meaning. For example, if the Orator states here: “Apart from these two luminaries of night & day [= the sun and the moon], you see in the centre another one that sends out flames, it is what we call the blazing star, which goes before us like that Pillar of fire that blazed to guide the people [of Israel] in the desert” (Wolson 1751, in Carr 1971: 442), then that does not ‘explain’ anything, but it alludes to Exodus 13:21–22, from there to Isaiah 4:5–6, from there to Matthew 2:1–12 and Luke 2:1–20, and from there to Revelation 22:16. This allusive method (see Snoek 2010), where one text from a chain of related ones is quoted, while the hearer is supposed to associate it

at once with all of them, is a main feature of the eighteenth century masonic rituals, and most modern ones still contain a number of those. It is essential, that none of these texts alluded to is regarded the true meaning of the text spoken during the ritual performance; the hearer may select or reject any one of them as meaningful to him or not. All those texts alluded to, which he regards meaningful, together form that what this ritual text means to him.

The 'catechism' is a standardised collection of questions and answers. In the earliest ones of which we still have written texts, these contained primarily esoteric knowledge, i.e. knowledge which was kept secret from non-members, which thus could be used to test if someone was a member or not. In later times, the catechisms were reshaped into descriptions of the rituals to which they belonged. Probably, they were originally used by illiterate stone masons as a memory technique for learning the biblical stories and those related to the Saints, knowledge which they needed in order to be able to create sculptures of the persons involved for the churches they worked at.

Finally, the newly initiated member participates in a ritual meal (called 'Table Lodge'), which integrates him into the group. Eating together is probably the most common rite of integration found at the end of initiation rituals generally.

### **The Ritual of the Degree of Master Mason**

The form into which this ritual developed in the course of the second half of the eighteenth century in France is absolutely fascinating, and—as far as I can judge—unique, at least within Freemasonry, in that the initiation proper of the candidate takes two consecutive performances of the ritual concerned.

When the candidate enters the lodge room, the person who was raised as a Master Mason during the previous performance of the ritual plays the role of the murdered architect of the Temple of King Solomon: Hiram Abiff. His body lies in state in the centre of the lodge room, representing the middle chamber of the Temple. Around Hiram's body, eight Brethren with drawn swords form a guard of honour.

On his knocking, the candidate is asked what he wants, whereupon he answers that he demands the Master's Word. The Master of the lodge, representing King Solomon, concludes that this is very suspect, since one is looking precisely for three Fellow Crafts who have murdered Master Hiram, probably because they wanted to force him to disclose to them the secret Word of a Master Mason. The candidate enters backwards and the Wardens take the

candidate's apron off, since he is supposed to be unworthy to wear it. He has to make two perambulations with his back turned to the centre of the lodge, in order to think about whether he is guilty or not. When he has returned in the West, he is turned around, so that he can see the body of Hiram (which is covered with a cloth). One more perambulation follows, after which the Master asks him for the last time whether he is guilty of the death of Master Hiram or not. The candidate answers consistently to be not guilty.

Now the candidate must walk with three steps over the body, from its West, to its East side. The logic behind this is that, according to what was believed during the Middle Ages, if the body of a murdered person is confronted with its murderer, his wounds are supposed to start bleeding again. Consequently, since this is not the case, the Master now concludes explicitly that he is convinced that the candidate is not guilty and tells the candidate that therefore he will now take the place of Master Hiram. Simultaneously, also the youngest Master stops playing that role, stands up and takes his place among the other Brethren, but since this takes place behind the back of the candidate, he does not notice this.

At this point the mythical time roles back. Usually, the Hiramic myth is now retold up to the point where Hiram was murdered (about the development of this myth, see Snoek 2003). From here on the story is simultaneously retold and performed with the candidate in the role of Hiram, who is killed, buried, searched for, found and raised. Then the rest of the myth is still retold, but without being performed: the body of Hiram is brought into the Temple, where it is placed upon a bier with a guard of honour around it; his three murderers are found and—confronted with his body—admit their crime, after which they are punished; then the body of Hiram is buried in the Temple, either in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* (English version) or with the Old Master-Word (the name of God) engraved in a golden triangle on his tomb (French version). Both versions clearly state the same thing: Hiram is God. And that, of course, is no surprise, since Hiram is the Architect of the Temple of Solomon, and—according to the Bible—that Temple was designed by God (1. Chronicles 28:19). Since the candidate is identified with Hiram, who turns out to be God, the performance actually culminates in a ritual *Unio Mystica*.

Only the next time, the candidate of this time will continue to perform his role as Hiram Abiff, whose body lies in state in the centre of the lodge room. What can be seen from these two examples, is that at least some of the rituals with which candidates are introduced into certain masonic degrees do exhibit the characteristics of initiation rituals as found throughout the ages in all cultures all over the world.

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# Freemasonry and Performance

*Kristiane Hasselmann*

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

From the eighteenth century onwards Freemasonry has aimed to spiritually and morally refine its members and modify their behaviour patterns. In other words, it has striven to create a performative habitus that is consolidated beyond the routine of the lodge to achieve practical application in everyday life (Hasselmann 2009).<sup>2</sup> The struggle for approbation of a private space for civil self-realisation gave rise to the modern ethics of conscience. Its tendency to internalise morals led away from outward modes of behaviour and, thus, away from the body. Yet, the constitutive process of modernity also required a *reformation of manners* that established the modern “performative ethics of habitus” and remained inextricably linked to physical actions (Kalisch 1999; Kalisch 1996; Kalisch 1995). In this sense Freemasonry pursues the formation of an enduring state of character that finds its first expression in—and is thus acquired through—physical action. It is meant to form a firm generative matrix of individual behaviour according to the masonic parameters of benevolence, brotherliness, tolerance and integrity. In its effort for recognition, this programmatic practice and formation of such a masonic habitus is always directed towards performance.

During the eighteenth century transition into a civil society Freemasonry formed an avant-garde of possessive individualism and served as a moral authority. The contemporary context for its continued existence is very different. Given that key elements of the ritual have been preserved until today, the question arises whether this is because of a functional shift or a continuity of meaning. In this chapter, the ethical conception of Freemasonry as a modern ethics of habitus will be discussed, which is possible only with reference to

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1 I thank Saskya Iris Jain and Steven Lindberg for their language checks and translation support.

2 My dissertation analysed the masonic claim to self-invention as a case study of an ethics of habitus rooted in the Aristotelian tradition and renewed in the eighteenth century. The publication of my dissertation was generously supported by the Masonic Research Foundation *Frederik* as well as the German Research Lodge *Quatuor Coronati* and its former Chairman Hans-Hermann Höhmann.

Freemasonry's specific roots in eighteenth century England. Thus, the chapter addresses the question of whether and to what degree functional continuities or parallels exist that are relevant to today's time.<sup>3</sup>

### The Scientific Focus on Ritual Body Stagings

Recent studies on Freemasonry have focused on the interpretation of bodily practices and the social forms of the incorporating practice of a modern ethics of habitus. Thus, they probe further than the known and generic references to the historical proximity of masonic rituals to Enlightenment concepts. These studies clearly reveal that an important aspect of Freemasonry is in a particular way marked by body practices that aim at the internalisation of moral behaviour patterns. According to the cultural theorist Norbert Schindler, the acquisition of civil behaviour patterns is not so much determined by cognitive processes but by an experimental form of appropriation that relies on a latent practice and routine rooted in day-to-day behaviour, making it all the more effective in everyday life (Schindler 1993: 284–318, esp. 291; Schindler 1982: 205–262). This analysis points to the nature of masonic rituals as specific *practices of the self*. In this respect, Florian Maurice's and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann's research fundamentally realigns the historical perspective on Freemasonry to accommodate a more socio-historical and cultural contextualisation. Maurice emphasises the relevance of ritual experiences that seize the entire body by stating:

Like all initiations, the Masonic initiation involves the initiate as a whole; it affects not just his consciousness but also changes his body. The body adopts certain unfamiliar postures and positions which he can henceforth repeat with ease, attesting to this original act that stays with him like an invisible tattoo.

MAURICE 1997: 21<sup>4</sup>

Hoffmann writes, “[t]hese rituals enabled Masonic ideas about moral and political order to be experienced on a physical level. The rituals were supposed to

3 As a non-member my approach is primarily historical. However, we will be able to draw some fundamental conclusions regarding the meaning and potential function of Masonry in today's time in light of the particular historical version of Freemasonry that was deemed 'modern' in eighteenth century England and was adapted across the European continent.

4 I prefer to speak of *engrammic effects* since the initiation ritual aims at an intervention into the deepest structures of the human habitus and is not limited to the body's surface. For further reading on engrams, see footnote 10.

'civilize' members until virtue became, in Georg Simmel's words, 'a constitution governing from within'" (Hoffmann 2007: 8). Max Weber already pointed out, "that the key to a political understanding of sociability was located not in the expansion, connection, and composition of associations like Masonic lodges but rather in the 'influence that the various associational activities exerted on the overall human bearing'. 'How does belonging to a particular association affect the inner life of a person as such?' Weber asked" (Hoffmann 2007: 172).<sup>5</sup>

Within the German-speaking countries, Klaus Hammacher in particular has contributed significantly to the study of performative paradigms in his analysis of a concrete ritual's functionally different signs; the same holds true for his exhaustive study of ritual body stagings and their meaning for the process of self-invention within the context of the history of philosophy (Hammacher 2005). Moreover, new archival findings have now led to the reevaluation of some relevant lines of development in the masonic conventions of representation rooted in eighteenth century Britain (cf. footnote 2). As such, we can now proceed from an analysis of Freemasonry as a specific manifestation of cultural performance in terms of its own genuine traditions, potentials, and practices that extend beyond a mere theatre analogy in its analysis and contextualisation.

### Rituals as Catalysts for Processes of Self-invention

The masonic fraternity's initiation and body staging rituals serve as catalysts for individual processes of self-invention which can be read as a performative, symbolic process along the lines of a collective imaginary. The gentleman's club offers a trans-individual form of regulation within which to acquire a differentiated scheme of action that is initiated through ritual embodiment and rehearsed through social interaction among the brothers. The goal is to acquire an enduring mind-set, a masonic habitus that emerges and is consolidated in the ritual to subsequently unfold its practical application in everyday life. The masonic habitus emerges via a specific symbolic process on the body which is linked to the ritually-induced engram and marks the beginning of a life-long, individual learning process accompanied by images and metaphors.<sup>6</sup>

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5 In the German original Simmel refers to an "overall human habitus" (*menschlicher Gesamthabitus*).

6 Engram literally means 'inscription' and describes a mnemonic trace. In the early twentieth century Richard Semon (1859–1918) developed his influential hypothesis of engrams in his book, *The Mneme* (translated 1921). According to his theory, stimuli produce an engrammatic effect, a mnemonic trace that is "written or engraved on the irritable substance" (Semon 1911: 15).

The neophyte must gradually discover the meaning of these images and metaphors. By living through them, these experiences gradually begin to gel into a coherent whole, which is meant to anchor the associative link between ritual event and directed accompanying concepts in the body's memory. The lived experience endows the ritual event with a deep-rooted, enduring meaning for the entire remaining life context.

The masonic notion of experience (*Erlebnis*) is a very specific one. Experience attests to and is defined as the engrammic effect of the ritual process—it is, indeed, determined by the very intensity of this process. In contrast to the far more complex and subject-oriented modern concept of experience, 'ritual experience' lays emphasis on the immediate present of the ritual event performed on the body of the would-be initiate. Its defining influence on the body thus bears the potential to form the basis for future ethical decisions. The particular constellation of performance and symbolism enables and conditions a comprehension of masonic signs that is determined by an emotional immediacy which goes beyond the mere routine of decoding. This notion informs the core of the experience concept as I use it: The body does not just represent or stage emotional processes; it serves as co-actor and

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Semon states that engrams can be revived through a *pars pro toto* signalling mechanism: "The particular complex of original sensations is triggered and maintained by the simultaneous effect of a complex of stimuli, which we will call the original complex of stimuli. It is not necessary for the complex of stimuli to be revived for the corresponding mnemonic complex of sensations to be released; rather, a minor trigger is usually enough...The complex of stimuli survives in the partial return of the energetic situation that previously bore the engrammic effect" (Semon 1911: 187). In terms of the aggregate of engrams accumulated in a lifetime, Semon distinguished between the inherited and individually acquired wealth of engrams. "An inherited engram describes the product of a stimulus that affected earlier generations" (Semon 1911: 81). More than anything, the notion of the hereditariness of engrams as dispositions has rendered Semon's hypothesis obsolete. Taking into consideration modern research, I am using the idea of engrams in a broader sense. My notion is coterminous with Semon's in terms of exploring the neuro-anatomical foundations of mnemonic traces but does not proceed from the assumption that it can be localised. Rather, multiple regions of the brain collaborate when mnemonic traces are activated (see Gall et al. 2002: 92–94). Moreover, today's usage of the term no longer takes into consideration its hereditariness. David Hartley paved the way for all subsequent engrammic concepts with his association psychology. According to David Hartley, traces of sensations and ideas—which he defines as elements of the brain—form clusters underpinned by linguistic connections in which mnemonic traces are secured and from which they can be retrieved. Reinterpreting the concept of engrams also becomes necessary for conceptual reasons since Freemasons have taken up Hartley's theories of association and memory. See the chapter "Die Macht der Assoziation im Prozess der Formung eines Habitus der Uneigennützigkeit" (Hasselmann 2009).



mimetic generator of lasting changes that culminate in the formation of a virtuous, tolerant, and humanitarian Freemason.<sup>7</sup>

Masonic self-sublimation as one's own cultural achievement relies on its staging and symbolic agency, for which the community has devised an extensive repertoire of symbols and legends. At the heart of the masonic visual repertoire stands Solomon's Temple; a structure "[whose] foundation...was laid prodigiously deep; and the stones were not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to endure all weathers; mortised one into another, and wedged into the rock".<sup>8</sup> The temple follows a divine design—it is, according to Freemasonry, a work moulded by the hand of our world's Maker. As *imago mundi* it acts as "model of and for the world. Thus, working for the Temple of Solomon means working for the world" (Snoek 2004: 25). The temple attests to the desire for permanence and stability of a community erected on truth, virtuousness, and charity, and provides the symbolic cartography for the masonic heterotopia with its hierarchical division into different sections. The initiate is informed during the Entered Apprentice initiation that he has entered the Temple of King Solomon, which he sees indicated on a floor drawing. He is told that the entire structure rests on three pillars—wisdom, strength, and beauty—"the wisdom to conceive of a plan, the strength to carry it out, and the beauty to adorn it".<sup>9</sup> The continuing effort to improve oneself is symbolically represented by moving into the *sanctum sanctorum* of Solomon's Temple in the third degree, where the great builder lies buried. The fraternity conceives a heterotopic space with its own socio-symbolic structure which the Freemasons—to speak with Victor Turner—can use as "drawing board on which creative actors sketch out what they believe to be more apt or interesting 'designs for living'" (Turner 1988: 24). The realisation of these new designs begins with a ritual in which the candidate experiences the interplay of emotional impressions that firmly integrate him into the community and awaken his desire for moral refinement.

7 "Whenever someone completes an action with reference to an already existing world and thus invents a world of his own, a mimetic relationship asserts itself between the two; for example: when one imitates another's movement, when one acts according to a model, when one represents something, when one expresses an image physically. It is crucial to see that these do not just describe imitative acts. Representation is not just simple reproduction that follows the original point by point; – it describes the *creation of something new*" Gebauer/Wulf 1998: 18.

8 Quotation from the Jewish historian Josephus which Hutchinson deems "a happy description...of our [community's] mystical fabric" (Hutchinson 1775: 266).

9 Numerous expository publications mention these descriptions. *Le Maçon Démasqué* (1751) is the first written document reproducing them in an address to a newly initiated brother (Carr 1971: 439).

The raising of the candidate in the third degree ritual, which confers on the member the Master Mason degree, is embedded in a narrative that tells of the murder of one of the three builders of Solomon's Temple, Hiram Abiff, by three journeymen seeking to extort from him the Master Word. According to legend, three journeymen working on the construction of Solomon's Temple decide to extract the Master Mason's secrets in order to themselves work for masters' wages. The attempt fails, and the master is killed. It is now up to the remaining loyal fellow-crafts to rebuild the community. The narrative is recited and reenacted during the ritual, arguably making it the most spectacular of the three rituals. The candidate is assigned the protagonist's role in the ritual drama of Hiram's murder and the community's restitution with the help of a new word. The events are symbolically enacted around him. He must endure the blows—merely implied in the ritual—of the attackers in Hiram's place. Alluding to the master builder's fate, the initiate is laid down on the ground, the symbolic final resting place of Hiram's body, from where he is then reawakened to new life. By taking on the role of the divine master builder Hiram in the ritual and symbolically living through his death and resurrection, the candidate experiences a ritual *unio mystica*. He temporarily becomes one with the divine master builder Hiram and is to prove himself as newly-raised Master Mason and bearer of Hiram's secrets. This knowledge becomes the basis for the sublimation of his own morals and, by extension, for improving the world he lives in.

The candidate is meant to imbibe Hiram's being through the ritual and let it live on within himself. It becomes his task to find an outward expression for this newly-acquired knowledge and resource. Since an immediate expression of this invisible, divinely-attested self is not possible, the body's symbolism is emphasised instead. On the one hand, this becomes clear in the way in which the body is exhibited in the ritual as symbol and, on the other, how social actions are henceforth read as signs for the self. The invisible self is to be expressed through a specific physical habitus within the lodge community as well as in daily life. The club thus not only satisfies a desire for spiritual experience by offering a communal sanctuary from a world dictated by the market, but also takes it upon itself to trigger an enduring process of self-sublimation. The ritual drama draws the candidate away from the 'profane,' offers him a taste of higher values, and initiates change. It communicates specific attitudes and, as Stanley Tambiah aptly put it, offers simulations of the intentions that are to become one's own: "Stereotyped conventions in this sense act at a second or further move; they code not intentions but 'simulations' of intentions" (Tambiah 1981: 124). In Freemasonry, the visualisation of the desired process of acquisition and transformation does not remain within the realm of the

imaginary, of inner show, but the imaginary is realised through performance and thus achieves a symbolic status.

The ritualistic *unio mystica* marks the first level of an extensive process of recognition and self-invention. It functions as the first spark of prolonged self-sublimation, which begins with “the immediate truth, the divine show” but “cannot immediately be represented” (Ebeling 2005: 29). The mythical reenactment opens a direct path to the deep tissue of the human habitus. Familiarisation and the universally pre-logical logic of practice, in which mystical signs are more ‘motivated’ by their sensual shape, inevitably leads to intuitive, practical understanding (Bourdieu 2008: 7, 19). The would-be initiate undergoes defining sensual experiences in a solemn ritual that nurtures emotional involvement and endows the experience with a certain depth extending beyond the given situation. The event is meant to generate engrammic effects that encourage the neophyte to consistently improve himself and simultaneously establish a specific communal value system to henceforth guide and gauge the process of self-invention.

### The Masonic Ethics of Habitus and Its Historical Roots

In the late eighteenth century, the English masonic fraternity understood itself as a corrective institution within the expanding liberal-democratic and consumer-oriented commercial society of England; a necessary complement to the nascent modern society. But while acknowledging the demands of commercial society, it also reflected its dark side. It recognised that a society could not endure merely on the basis of vital egotism, and aimed to reconcile the development of a trading habitus with corrective values. In this way it sought to influence commercial society. Gentlemen masons developed a new, symbolising affiliation to the stone masonry tradition that was now meant to serve the project of reforming interpersonal relationships. The focus here increasingly lay on the concrete realisation and translation of ethical concepts into inveterate behaviour patterns and the required normative forms of intervention. The corrective intervention was to occur through an alternative emphasis on and subsequent internalisation of moral values—that is, through a complex process of habitualisation—which I will briefly reconstruct in the following with the help of historical sources.

In light of the social upheavals on the continent, certain pioneering Freemasons deemed it necessary in the 1790s to once again explain their community’s ‘true’ goals, practices, and intentions in the relevant masonic journals. In doing so, they wished to refute the allegation of being a hedonistic union and

also sought to resist categorisation as a political entity along the lines of what they perceived as the subversive versions of Freemasonry that had emerged in continental Europe. In 1797, the *Scientific Magazine and Freemasons' Repository* published a series of six "Essays on the Masonic Character". The author, writing as *Masonicus*, was a member of the Premier Grand Lodge named Thomas Bradshaw. A lawyer, he was inducted into the 'Amity Lodge No. 224' in Preston in 1792 and was listed as member in London's 'Lodge of Antiquity No. 1' (No. 2 today) since 1795.<sup>10</sup> Bradshaw set himself the task of drawing his readers a faithful picture of the true masonic character while elucidating the guiding principles and performative practices that served the purpose of masonic self-invention. *Masonicus* identifies the three main objectives of the institution as follows: "to regulate and fix our tempers upon a proper basis, to exercise and call forth into action our noblest powers and faculties of enjoyment, and to form and improve an excellent taste" (*Masonicus* 1797a: 334). There is no contradiction whatsoever between beauty and functionality. Instead, they complete each other by serving as yardsticks for life's successes; their point of departure is the human habitus (on the function of the concept of 'completeness' in Alexander G. Baumgarten's aesthetic philosophy and the reformulation of completeness as marker for a successful life, see Menke 2002: 19–48 and Menke 2004: 187–197).

The essays on the masonic character often and explicitly use the term 'habit'. The underlying definition is highly complex; the authors speak not merely of a 'habit of mind', but also of a 'habit of life and character'. This gives insight into historical points of reference for modern interpretations of the habitus concept within the social sciences. *Habit* here can already be read as 'generative matrix' of individual behaviour in Bourdieu's sense: a complex of cognitive, ethical, and affective dispositions (Bourdieu 2008: 64). However, these do not simply emerge by realising and internalising a natural predisposition, but also allow for their correction through continued, active self-invention. The later tendency to de-individualise the habitus has not yet appeared at that point in time. The individual *modi generandi* do not serve merely as structural variants of the habitus of a specific social stratum as established by Bourdieu

10 A Brief Memoir of *Masonicus* (1798: 367). See also Captain C.W. Firebrace's entry regarding the minutes of November 23, 1796: "The October Minute is the last in the handwriting of MacArthur. Owing to professional engagements he now resigned his Office, and Br. Thomas Bradshaw of Garden Court, Temple, who had been admitted in April, 1795, was elected Secretary in his place". (Records of the Lodge Original No. 1 1926: 121). Bradshaw's entry in the membership list as "Bradshaw, Thomas, Counsel" (248). The list also reveals that he worked as Secretary of the Lodge in 1796 and 1797, and as its Junior Warden in 1798. I am grateful to Martin Cherry for his help in identifying the author.

since the 1960s. In light of the mobility of ownership, commerce, and social personality of the eighteenth century, it is impossible to “reduce the complexity of social interrelationships to a mere framework for the individual creation of habitus by spreading it over a very broad pattern”, as Eleonore Kalisch emphasises (Kalisch 2006: 23).<sup>11</sup>

Homogeneous living conditions and interests might dictate special rules of interaction, but they do not provide a basis to formulate a homogeneous habitus within a social class...Of course, fixed social milieus, which are structured by particular paradigms of relationships and cooperative social practices, play an important role in the creation of a habitus, yet similar living conditions, demands for action, and circumstances are each processed with very differently. Inversely, social change does not just affect special classes or sections, but entire societies. Thus, economic and technological upheavals give rise to new conditions of social interaction that address all groups and can lead to new social demarcations through habitualisation.

KALISCH 2006: 23

Social mobility due to economic success or failure, seen in equal measure as opportunity and risk, forms the starting point of the ethical purpose of masonic education and their desire to rarefy social conduct as a whole. Thomas Bradshaw opens his fifth essay on the masonic nature, dealing with the social principle of fulfilling one's duties, with a quote from the Scottish philosopher Henry Home Lord Kames' (1696–1782) *Elements of Criticism* (1762), in which he points out the close link between aesthetic and ethical forms of taste:

Mathematical and metaphysical reasonings have no tendency to improve social intercourse, nor are they applicable to the common affairs of life: but a just taste of the fine arts, derived from rational principles, furnishes elegant subjects for conversation, and prepares us for acting in the social state with dignity and propriety (Lord Kames).

MASONICUS 1797e: 177; see Home 1967: 10

Bradshaw recognises the value and relevance for Freemasonry of Kames' call to the readers of his *Elements of Criticism* to rarefy their social habitus by cultivating an individual artistic taste. Exploring these habits and the specifically

<sup>11</sup> Her arguments strongly allude to Pocock (1985). Dorothy M. George draws our attention to the high degree of social mobility and adaptability arising from the economic instability of living and working conditions (George 1976: 262).

masonic ethics of habitus seems inevitable at this point given the particular choice of words in masonic sources.

Processes of habitualisation in terms of an individual anchoring of moral, balanced codes of conduct are explicitly elaborated in the ethical writings of the Freemasons from the late eighteenth century onwards. As Klaus Hammacher has shown, the Freemasons follow in the Aristotelian tradition in terms of their ethical perspective. They build on Aristotle's ethics of habitus, which Hammacher understands as an *ethics of practice* (*Einübungsethik*),

'habitus' stands for the Aristotelian concept of 'disposition' (Greek *hexis*) and thus refers to the acquisition of ethically determined behaviour patterns through repetition, which used to be called *virtues*... Here we find reversed the ethics of principle: if good habits are practised, the right thoughts will follow naturally.

HAMMACHER 2005: 101

The Freemasons thus adhere to the Aristotelian tradition of *hexis* as a fixed disposition that aims at finding the middle and holding it, thus linking it to Aristotle's *mesotes* concept as study of the middle.<sup>12</sup>

Henry Home, Lord Kames, whom Bradshaw quotes at the beginning of his article, treats the habitus concept with a particular sense of gravity. In his systematic introduction to art criticism with his broad deliberations on morality, good taste, and virtue he distances himself from the prevalent usage of the term by emphasising the difference—rather than similarity—between *habit* and *custom*. Kames clearly defines the relationship between repetitive actions and their effect on the actor: while *custom* refers to the regular repetition of actions, *habit* describes the effects that these repetitions have on the actor's disposition.

*Custom* respects the action, *habit* the actor. By custom we mean, a frequent reiteration of the same act; and by habit, the effect that custom has on the mind or body. This effect may be either active, witness the dexterity produced by custom in performing certain exercises; or passive, as when, by custom, a peculiar connection is formed betwixt a man and some agreeable object, which acquires thereby a greater power to raise emotions.

HOME 1967: 82

12 "[B]y states of character [*hexis*] [I mean] the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions, e.g. with reference to anger we stand badly if we feel it violently or too weakly, and well if we feel it moderately; and similarly with reference to the other passions" (Aristotle 1978: 1105b, 351).

The above quotation describes the evolution of an actor as he subtly begins to find pleasure in something which then gradually becomes anchored in his personality as taste. The concept of habitus thus refers to a need triggered by repetition to deal with things and face certain situations in a specific manner. By *habit* Kames means those behaviour patterns anchored in the personality that remain consistent even when the exterior circumstances that first gave rise to or reinforced these habits disappear. A person endowed with particular *habits* thus strives to restore the production conditions of the habitus, i.e. those conditions that brought about these habits in the first place. Kames illustrates this with the example of a sailor's swaying gait.

A walk upon the quarterdeck, though intolerably confined, becomes however so agreeable by custom, that a sailor in his walk on shore confines himself commonly within the same bounds. I knew a man who had relinquished the sea for country-life. In the corner of his garden he reared an artificial mount, with a level summit, resembling most accurately a quarterdeck, not only in shape but in size; and this was his choice walk. Play or gaming, at first barely amusing by the occupation it affords, becomes in time extremely agreeable; and is frequently prosecuted with avidity, as if it were the chief business in life. The same observation is applicable to the pleasures of the internal senses, those of knowledge and virtue in particular.

HOME 1967: 86

As with Aristotle, Kames deems the social practice of life a considerable factor within the formation of the habitus. "Thus, in one word, states of character [*hexis*] arise out of like activities" (Aristotle 1978: 1103b, 349). No social situation is in its concreteness and mutability completely determined by rules: "[t]he general account being of this nature, the account of particular cases is yet more lacking in; for they do not fall under any art or precept but the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion" (Aristotle 1978: 349). This is why the habitus plays such an important role. It is meant to stabilise the individual, but must go beyond a rigid behavioural pattern to allow for appropriate actions in a variety of situations. Thus, the habitus must be stable and flexible at the same time. It is shaped by one's affective and cognitive predisposition, physical constitution, and concrete actions as well as by social routines and interactions. On the one hand, the habitus is stabilised as a fixed disposition "concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success" (Aristotle 1978: 352). On the other hand, the habitus must be

flexible enough to negotiate diverse and unexpected situations. The *mesotes*-teachings, too, do not convey rigid patterns, “[for] in everything it is no easy task to find the middle” (Aristotle 1978: 1109a, 354).

The basic motivation in Aristotle as in Greek ethics is general happiness (*eudaimonia*). The formation of a habitus refers to pleasure and displeasure as it involves actions and suffering. “We must take as a sign of states of character [*hexis*] the pleasure or pain that ensues on acts” (Aristotle 1978: 1104b, 350). Each action that potentially influences the formation of a habitus could be characterised by a specific functional pleasure. “Now since activities differ in respect of goodness and badness, and some are worthy to be chosen, others to be avoided, and others neutral, so, too, are the pleasures; for to each activity there is a proper pleasure” (Aristotle 1978: 1175b, 430). This also means, that the nature of the action influences the type and object of pleasure.

Kames deems the power of habit “a happy contrivance for our good” that can lead a person to virtuous behaviour regardless of his social status (Home 1967: 106). He advocates the possibility of practising a *generic habit* of virtue that describes not just a reaction to a specific object or situation, but also acts as an overarching disposition in various situations. Thomas Bradshaw uses this notion as his starting point.

The formation of a “solid and rational taste”, which is meant to empower the Freemason to cope with the most important matters of daily life expediently and with determination, depends largely on “the nature and well directed choice of actions and things, as well as the manner in which they are introduced to our attention...It is exceedingly natural, that the habit of mind which is acquired by attention to those more serious duties; that the same dispositions, the same desire to find something steady, substantial, and durable, on which the mind can lean as it were, and rest with safety, should be transferred to the pursuit of lighter amusements” (Masonicus 1797c: 34).

We only change our subjects but pursue the same method in our search after the idea of *Beauty*, by looking for *perfection*—of *Virtue*, by looking forward, beyond ourselves, to society and to the whole—and of *Arts*, by extending our views, in the same manner, to all ages, and to all countries.

MASONICUS 1797c: 34

Thomas Bradshaw, alias *Masonicus*, cites a passage from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to illustrate the acquisition of consistent behaviour patterns. In the passage, the fallen angels are asked to contract their shapes as a mark of respect to their superiors on entry to Pandemonium, while the latter maintain their natural appearance. Bradshaw explains:



This passage embraces another principle—that the man, whose purpose and objects are steady, durable, and great, will ever be open to generous impressions, his habits of life and character will take their colouring from those objects, and his actions and opinions afford an example of uniformity, firmness, and consistency.

MASONICUS 1797b: 401

The citation seeks to illustrate that once a habitus is formed, it cannot be lost simply by turning one's attention to another subject. Within the process of habitualisation, the moderation of passions represents increased autonomy, while independent judgement signifies a rise in competency.

To be free is one of the characteristics of his [the Freemason's, K.H.] profession; but it is that tranquil steady freedom, which prudence feels, and wisdom dictates. To be slave of passion or folly, could never yet call forth a pleasurable emotion in the Mason's breast, or add one cubit to his stature...Wisdom and Prudence form no inconsiderable traits in the Masonic character. By wisdom the Mason 'is led to *speak* and *act* what is proper, and to employ the most effectual means for success'. By prudence, he is prevented from *speaking* and *acting* improperly, and consequently employs the safest means for not being brought into danger.

MASONICUS 1797b: 399

Passion requires due regulation, but “without a certain portion it would be of little avail to attempt to acquire and establish an habitual uniformity of temper, to enlarge the powers of the mind, or to improve the faculty of the soul” (Masonicus 1797b: 399). Key to acquiring a specific behaviour is the transformation of selfish passions into disinterested ones that are initially channelled into positive, social causes before becoming ingrained in the fabric of the habitus. Freemasonry thus counters ecclesiastical invocations of moderation and threats of disciplinary action with a strict transformation of one's personal motivation for action and propagates an ethics of balanced hedonism that grants human passions and needs an entirely new right to exist.

### Historical Roots: Moving Morality into the Inner Private Space

The historical roots of the concept of a performative self-invention can be found in seventeenth century England. Internal processes of differentiation and pluralisation went hand in hand with a redefined relationship between

law and ethics, in which unions and clubs such as the masonic fraternity played a special role in terms of their potential to introduce norm changes (the most insightful study on the socio-political function of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century remains Koselleck 2000 [1959]).

In his *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), John Locke advocates the separation of constitutional and ecclesiastical law and introduces an era of legal thinking that marks a clear demarcation of law and ethics without, however, denying their close interrelationship.

A good life, in which consists not the least part of religion and true piety, concerns also the civil government: and in it lies the safety both of men's souls and of the commonwealth. Moral actions belong therefore to the jurisdiction both of the outward and inward court; both of the civil and domestic governor; I mean, both of the magistrate and conscience. Here therefore is great danger, lest one of these jurisdictions intrench upon the other, and discord arise between the keeper of the public peace and overseers of souls.

LOCKE 1996: 80

Locke sees potential in the space of a civil society held together by constitutional power to exercise subjective rights with respect to indifferent things, i.e. things that lie outside of the Stoical-Christian fundamental opposition of *good* and *evil*, virtue and vice—the so-called *adiaphora*.<sup>13</sup> This includes the form, props, and nature of the church service of every church, defined as “voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to [perform] the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls” (Locke 1996: 18). Membership is voluntary, making the withdrawal from the community an alternative option to fulfilling its norms (Parsons 1971: 24). Yet Locke maintains that statutes, rules of conduct, and fixed norms are necessary within a community to ensure its survival and for a particular ethic to prevail. He asserts that,

13 “[I]t does not therefore follow, that the magistrate may ordain whatsoever he pleases concerning any thing that is indifferent. The public good is the rule and measure of all law-making. If a thing be not useful to the commonwealth, though it be ever so indifferent, it may not presently be established by law... Things ever so indifferent by their own nature, when they are brought into the church and worship of God, are removed out of the reach of the magistrate's jurisdiction, because in that use they have no connexion at all with civil affairs” (Locke 1996: 58).

no society, how free soever, or upon whatsoever slight occasion instituted, (whether of philosophers for learning, of merchants for commerce, or of men of leisure for mutual conversation and discourse) no church or company, I say, can in the least subsist and hold together, but will presently dissolve and break to pieces, unless it be regulated by some laws, and the members all consent to observe some order...But since the joining together of several members into this church-society...is absolutely free and spontaneous, it necessarily follows, that the right of making its laws can belong to none but the society itself, or at least, which is the same thing, to those whom the society by common consent has authorized thereunto.

LOCKE 1996: 20

Private societies can function as voluntary unions only if they formulate their own codes of conduct and safeguard their compliance through internal sanctions. Given that this form of socialisation is based on voluntary and self-determined membership, any form or threat of coercion is rendered useless. With the introduction of a law of opinion or reputation that Locke places side by side with divine and civil law as third norm type and that, unlike the latter two, does not rely on outside force, Locke distinguishes morality and law while taking into consideration their mutual interconnection (Franz, type-script, 11 and 15; Franz 2000: 118–137).

By cultivating the social and communicative nature of their interactive conduct and stressing the function of personal values and value systems, the Freemasons touch upon the problem of values in the community-building exercise formulated by John Locke. The comparison arises from Locke's sharp and thorough description and analysis of newly emerging problems located on the threshold of commercial society, which sets him apart from his contemporaries and allowed him to reach these particular conclusions. Locke also plays an important role in the history of the ethics of habitus, especially due to his reinterpretation of personal identity, the marked dependency of the individual on group norms, and the 'currency' of reputation/stigmatisation. The interaction between self-empowerment and responsibility on the one hand and group dependency and the desire for recognition on the other opens up a space for the civil self to emerge. In accordance with the Freemasons, Locke emphasises the formulation and use of evaluative methods. This does not describe an isolated act of inner morality, but a process within communities and unions that follows certain rules and, thus, goes beyond the silent rehearsal of conventions. Such private societies can function as voluntary unions only when they formulate their own codes

of conduct and can guarantee the compliance with these codes through internal measures.

The Freemasons establish their own closed forums in which they can test their concepts of self and express their mutual, social value systems in a sheltered, like-minded environment in which identities are constituted before and through the scrutinising gaze of the other members. Their union into a closed community does not suggest social withdrawal. Rather, the closed circles serve the early trial of notions of self that have to survive and be recognised in the exoteric sphere, that is, the social routine outside of the lodge. The fraternity constitutes its own ritual sphere of reality that has a direct effect on social routines as permanent frames of reference. The communal secret and rules open up a space outside of constitutional control in which new patterns of action can be tested in order to be implemented publicly at a later point. Secrecy and forensic analysis (lat. *forum*), transparency and opaqueness: these are the extreme poles between which the masonic ethics flourishes.

### The Social Force of Morality

Institutions and their symbols embody communal principles of recognition. Thus, the social imaginary marks the communal experience of a real body reference and symbolic order. Biblical episodes and masonic myths establish traditions and literally give shape to the community. The *corporation* is formed through the communal embodiment of a collective imaginary and the realisation of ethical claims transmitted through personal interactions within and outside of the lodge. The imaginary produces contexts and value judgements that allow one to measure and evaluate the social present. It also provides categorical frames and organisational principles to grasp sensual circumstances (Castoriadis 1987: 161). Freemasonry elevates voluntary self-curtailement to a form of civil autonomy that simultaneously serves as basis for setting new moral standards to take shape through the fusion of value judgements, objects of value, and modes of evaluation. Without the commitment of the pledge, which emerges from the fusion of spectator positions and the link to a numinous life source, this framework of values remains ineffective.

The power Locke ascribes to this self-legislation and its implementation and reinforcement through mechanisms of social recognition and disapprobation transcends the sphere of influence of civil liberties. After all, even if people cede a large part of their self-determination on joining a constitutional community, there always remains the possibility of thinking favourably or unfavourably of others, of approving or disapproving of another's behaviour,

and thus establishing a yardstick for moral actions. Thus an important ethical authority—in addition to the subjective evaluation of chains of action—is projected outward, acting as measure for individual processes of self-invention.

The constitution of self does not occur solely via processes of reflection that become anchored in one's consciousness as self-evident and intuitive knowledge. Rather, actions within a social structure in which a person experiences recognition and disapprobation become the basis for a constant revision of one's personality. In his famous and often anonymously reprinted address of 1735, the school principal and prominent Freemason Martin Clare stated,

[b]y the outward demeanour it is, that the inward civility of the mind is generally expressed; the manner and circumstances of which, being much governed and influenced by the fashion and usage of the place where we live, must, in the rule and practice of it, be learned by observation, and the carriage of those who are allowed to be polite and well-bred. But the more essential part of civility lies deeper than the outside, and is that general good-will, that decent regard, and personal esteem for every man, which makes us cautious of showing in our carriage towards him any contempt, disrespect or neglect. [I]t is a disposition that makes us ready on all occasions to express, according to the usual way and fashion of address, a respect, a value and esteem for him, suitable to his rank, quality and condition in life. It is, in a word, a disposition of the mind, visible in the carriage, whereby a man endeavours to shun making another uneasy in his company...For as peace, ease and satisfaction are what constitute the pleasure, the happiness, and are the very soul of conversation; if these be interrupted, the design of society is undermined....

MARTIN CLARE'S address (1735), cited in Knoop et al. 1978: 328 and 331

Clare identifies a number of characteristics concerning the interplay between inward civility and outward demeanour: firstly, the essential aspect of civility is not limited to the outward appearance of behaviour but lies deeper. General goodwill, decent regard, and personal esteem determine civility; these terms refer to the basic elements of our ethical behaviour shaped and rehearsed through the interaction with others. Secondly, this behaviour is reliable only when it is anchored in a subjective disposition that allows us to show others respect, appreciation, and personal esteem in relation to their respective position or status, their cultural background and living conditions. Thirdly, this inner disposition must be mirrored in outward behaviour and, lastly, is also a subjective condition for establishing a community.

The civil self relies on its outward perception by the public and is at the same time able to modify its patterns of action on the basis of public feedback. The particular ethics of the Freemasons, rooted in performance, is founded on this intimate interaction of inner and outer action, self-reflection, and the public experimentation of patterns of action, morality, and custom (see Kersting 1989: 406). At the outset of this chapter, I located the masonic ethics of habitus in the *reformation of manners*, which not only contributed to a shift in values in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but also questioned the historical separation of the subjective inner and the outer demeanour in order to transcend the duality between morality and custom.

The masonic value system is grounded on a communal experience and impulse for action which can only be imparted through the *manner in which* a 'lesson' is embodied and practised through performance. The key principle is embedded in the notion "that without 'externalising' an inner experience there can be no 'internalising'; that is, no real incorporation of higher effects can take place. Only he whose senses attest to and whose actions reinforce this can say that he has experienced the divine" (Horneffer 1957: 64). August Horneffer's deliberations from 1957 illustrate the lasting effect of ritual principles of embodiment as they extend into modernity.

### Freemasonry and Contemporary Culture

Having sketched the historical lines of the evolution of a symbolic form for coping with a specific historical contradiction between industriousness and an ethical counterbalancing of its negative side effects, and having attempted to get to the bottom of the performative means and their intended effects, we can return now to the question asked at the beginning. Can one derive responses to existential challenges from masonic traditions and experiential contexts to present-day culture—and if so what would they be? To what extent do the ethical standards and performative practices of the Freemasons still have the potential to establish an effective framework of values? What moral value is still attributed today to working on a value-oriented style of behaviour founded on habit? What can reflection on the traditions and values of Freemasonry achieve in the face of today's challenges, and what can Freemasonry contribute to the orientation and implementation of a modern civil society?

In the eighteenth century Freemasonry was a driving force in both Europe and North America with regard to the introduction of the separation of church and state, the attainment of democratic structures and of freedom

of religion and thinking as well as the establishment of civil welfare and educational institutions. In North America during the Civil War, it took up a largely mediating position by not allowing itself to be split. Masonic ideas influenced the US Constitution, after all. According to the Freemason Frederic L. Milliken, Freemasonry carelessly forsook this influential social position in the decades that followed, however:

If Freemasonry had remained socially relevant it could have lead the nation into breaking the color barrier and busting Black discrimination in society...Freemasonry could have led the nation into integration...As one of the only institutions worldwide to actually live peaceful, cooperative brotherhood among people of different races, religions, cultures and economic circumstances, American Freemasonry was in a unique position to encourage and promote world peace.

MILLIKEN 2010

Milliken laments Freemasonry's historical inability to obtain social acceptance of its ambitions to universality, such as the acceptance and equal treatment of all human beings without regard to their origin or skin colour. Milliken attributes Freemasonry's failure to make the most of its competencies to a misunderstanding of its avoidance of "partisan politics" and "sectarian religion". "There is a big difference between broad moral and social issues that define the structure of civil society and specific policies advocated as a remedy", as he objected of Freemasonry that rigorously avoided politics. Freemasonry was itself to blame for its loss of social significance because by refraining from involvement in politics it missed its opportunity to be the "conscience and moral compass of the nation in the area of civil rights and the peace movement" (Milliken 2010).

Already over the course of the nineteenth century, Freemasonry developed a penchant for exclusivity, with the result that the community was increasingly distanced from its socio-political environment. In his book *The Politics of Sociability*, the historian Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann exemplifies how for example in nineteenth-century Germany Freemasonry became "a social refuge for elevated and liberal-minded bourgeois men who felt attracted to its secret rituals and moral teachings" and showed a "heightened sense of exclusivity" busily engaged with themselves while "failing to balance modern politics with a cosmopolitan ethos" (Hoffmann 2007). Freemasons today should, according to the mission statement of the Phoenixmasons, return to their original task of "perform[ing] the duties of Citizenship". That would necessarily entail participation in public and political discourses and the use of new forms of public

exchange.<sup>14</sup> “Freemasonry’s traditional concern with comparative philosophy and thought, tolerance of others, philanthropy, and good will, have a contribution to make in what has become a global dialogue just as it made important contributions in the 18th century”, states the website of the Roosevelt Center for the Study of Civil Society and Freemasonry. “At the same time Freemasonry has much to learn in engaging wider society as it did so well in the age of Enlightenment; drawing in and advancing ideas concerning print culture and the free and open flow of information” (website of the Roosevelt Center for the Study of Civil Society and Freemasonry). The basic tenor is that the future social role of Freemasonry will be measured by whether it can find an appropriate form of interaction with civil society and play a part in shaping it.

Whereas voluntary associations and clubs were established in the context of the budding commercial society in the late seventeenth century by retreating from State and Church into a supposedly apolitical protected space in order to design and try out new standards of civil action, in modern liberal-democratic societies the focus is on questions of social and political cohesion and safeguarding the rights of citizens to participate in shaping their society. Influential concepts of civil society formulate responses to these challenges. The problems today’s commercial society has achieving social synthesis are expressed, among other ways, in a ‘dramatic loss’ of forms of social intercourse on nearly all levels—that is, not only in the area of political and social relationships.<sup>15</sup> In the context of such a loss of form, the masonic regard for forms of social performance based on the ethics of association gains significance.

Since the masonic obligations were outlined by James Anderson during the first third of the eighteenth century, in the wake of the acceptance of comprehensive democratic civil rights in the Western world, the constraints of the State and the Church have receded, while the technology’s dominion over nature has constantly increased. In the meanwhile—according to the supplementary ‘*Neue Pflichten*’ (New Obligations) prepared by the *Unabhängige Freimaurerloge* in Vienna in 1974—the greatest risk of humanity comes from human nature itself. These threats of its own making include not only ecological pollution and the destruction of the environment, worldwide economic

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14 Mission Statement of Phoenixmasonry Inc., an association of e-masons committed to use the Internet as a electronic educational resource. At [http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/main/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=37&Itemid=125](http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=37&Itemid=125). Accessed June 23, 2011.

15 The vacuum of political and social symbolism is, according to Karl-Heinz Bohrer, an “expression of a general lack of political structures and a sign of a definitive dissolution of political culture” (Bohrer 1988: 62, 79ff).



imbalances, the military arms race and the on-going production of weapons of mass destruction but also economic and ideological forms of egoism and amorality that still find expression in risk evaluations influenced by economic and State interests, high-risk capital speculation and the war crimes of highly civilised Western societies. “In order to avert these and other dangers, each of which alone threatens our survival”, states “Die neuen Pflichten”, “there has to be swift, thorough change to the mentality of the people of our time. Freemasonry is called upon to make a contribution to this, much as it did in the eighteenth century. Only if Freemasonry admits responsibility for these tasks will it once again be able to play a leading role in the evolution of the spirit as it did then” (“Die Neuen Pflichten” 1974: 2). It further states that binding rules of coexistence are fundamentally lacking today; “new rights must...be matched with New Obligations if an order worthy of humanity is to be ensured” (“Die Neuen Pflichten” 1974: 1). This call for moral commitments is unmistakable. In this view, moral behaviour has a preventative, protective function. It serves the “minimising of anthropogenic evil, counteracts the spontaneous egoism of individuals and compensates for the limitations of their mutual sympathy; it protects the interests of the other in each case” (Bayertz 2006: 40). A lack of social obligation is a moral problem with political consequences (as the current banking and financial crisis reveals, for example).

Freemasonry is an early model of commitment to civil society based on the logic of reciprocity. We find this ethic, based on the principle known as the Golden Rule, embodied in many masonic statutes, which are based in turn on old constitutional papers and guild rules.<sup>16</sup> The “Short CHARGE To be given to New admitted BRETHERN” reprinted in the *Pocket Companion* of 1734–1735 formulates three main obligations of the Freemason: to God, to our neighbours and to ourselves. Under point two it reads: “To our Neighbours, in acting upon the Square, or doing as we would be done by” (Knoop, Jones and Hamer 1963: 23). The practical ethics inherent in Freemasonry is based on a reciprocity of kind acts that is derived both from the Christian principle of loving one’s neighbour and the economic principle of *do ut des* (I give so that you will give). “The Golden Rule does not presume innate altruistic tendencies and feelings, no moral sense granted by nature, no social passions”, explains Michael Franz. “Rather, it presumes egoistic individuals and makes them aware that the breakdown of egocentric perspectives by changing perspective lies in one’s own interest, yielding a profit, while unchecked egocentrism harms one in the

16 The significance of the Golden Rule for Freemasonry has been studied extensively in the context of the history of philosophy by the Berlin-based philosopher Michael Franz (Franz 2009).

long run. This lends the Golden Rule, in a sense, the quality of a cost-benefit calculation and makes it seem more like a rule of shrewdness than a moral rule" (Franz 2009: 8). In the work of Thomas Bradshaw, alias *Masonicus*, the utilitarian calculation of *do ut des* is generalised socially. The masonic ethic is not limited to the *do ut des*, but it does represent an important point of departure, since this principle can persuade even the most stubborn amoralist by conveying the prospect of personal profit.

Bradshaw described Freemasonry as an associative process of learning in which the expectation of gratification for services rendered is transformed into participation in the well-being of the other. Experiencing another's pleasure, which was originally a tactical measure for receiving a direct act in return, becomes an end in itself with time. The person who performs the kind act begins to associate his or her own pleasure with another's pleasure. This ability to evolve pleasure in another's pleasure becomes anchored in habit, so that generosity becomes a constant option for action without regard to the specific person involved. "Where the selfish passions end, and the social affections are introduced, Masonry begins" (Masonicus 1797d: 107–108). The Freemason is guided by a lively desire

to perform certain acts of gratitude, of charity, prudence &c. without relation to any particular object. This is the characteristic of that *benevolent affection*, or *universal good-will*, which in Masonry so frequently captivates attention. This is that *feeling* which is the great design of the Masonic system to strengthen and mould into *habit*. This is that principle which displays the uniformity of manners, opinions, and actions, in the Masonic Character; the source of sympathy and imitation, by which he becomes humanized and polished; firm, without severity; and indulgent, without caprice.

MASONICUS 1797e: 177

The associative shift of ends and means, based on the reliable reciprocity of kind acts and hence promising profit to the benefactor as well, only functions as long as the social reciprocity of favour and return favour can still be experienced as a personal relationship and is not simply communicated as an objective relationship by means of the market. Because Freemasonry locates the formation of the individual in the context of a functioning society, it cannot be reduced to either a communitarian or a liberalist perspective. It is based on a third principle, a form of solidarity building that has only recently been rediscovered by sociology and political science, one that crosses the voluntary and the obligatory, individualism and communitarianism and elevates the

reciprocity of kind acts to a source of individual pleasure in existence and engagement in civil society (on the rediscovery of the logic of exchange for the practical reproduction of sociality, see Becker 1956; Gouldner 1973; Becker 1990 [1986]; Adloff 2005; Hillebrandt 2009; Marten and Scheueregger 2007; Otto 2003; and Stegbauer 2011 [2002]). In Freemasonry, benevolence and fraternity have their own intrinsic value. “Brotherly Love”, as a contemporary masonic manual explains,

[m]anifestly means that we place on another man [*sic*] the highest possible valuation as a friend, a companion, an associate, a neighbor. ‘By the exercise of Brotherly Love, we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family.’ We do not ask that, from our relationship, we shall achieve any selfish gain. Our relationship with a brother is its own justification, its own reward.

Excerpted from *The Masonic Scholar* 2007

This willingness to participate in disinterested action is ensured and constantly reinforced by the ritual practices of the community—that is, by creating binding procedures. The rejection of amoralism cannot be achieved by argument alone, despite the benefits of cooperation, the minimisation of risk and the possibility of communal well-being. The prospect of quick profit at the cost of those who act morally is too tempting. For rules and plans to acquire effectiveness, to have a force of morality (Locke), there have to be performative sanctions. Just as the experience of brotherly association and social recognition can serve as rewards, annoyance, anger and outrage to the point of a breakdown in communication represent effective ways of influencing people and preventing undesired behaviour (Bayertz 2006: 259). Amoralists seek their own advantage, trying to go unnoticed in the process, since they are not interested in a debate on the principles of moral standards, which in principle they recognise but stand in their way of their interests. The lack of a reaction or false reinforcements that reward uncaring or egoistic actions represent moral hazards, which can then only be curbed by tinkering with legal regulations. “If morality has to be forced, it is abolished as a voluntary regulation of behaviour. It was assumed”, according to Michael Franz, “everything cannot and need not be justifiable, since morality as a voluntarily pursued regulation of behaviour is effective in many areas that cannot be subjected to detailed laws” (Franz 2009: 13). Seen in this way, moral self-commitment is also a guarantee of individual freedoms.

Freemasonry struggles to analyse and clarify ethical problems in a performative context that places its members in an axiological relationship to one another and to the standards of value of their society. Membership in the

association presumes a performative self-commitment that takes the form of entering into a context of values. This provides standards of desired and undesired behaviour and permits reciprocal judgements of recognition and disapproval, which in turn form the basis for working on one's own individual plan for the self. The individual plan for the self on which the Freemason works is based on a re-enactment of enduring ritual contexts of tradition and experience that are renewed every time they are performed because they illustrate symbolic content and make it possible to experience it. The goal of the masonic ethics of habitus is to anchor newly obtained insights in one's own social actions and thus generate at the same time a visible expression of a new or different attitude towards life, which should be registered in society, so to speak. Their moral insights should be embodied in habit and become enduring personal qualifications. The aim is to overcome the duality of morality and custom. The habitus forms the missing link in mediating the two. Therein still lies the unfulfilled potential of the habitus to this day.

Freemasonry counters neoliberal egoism and amorality with an exemplary moral self-commitment from which demands on today's society can be derived. Today more than ever, it is necessary to establish binding values and moral guidelines for a pluralistic society that go beyond tiresome debates of alleged leading cultures and political and ideological narrow-mindedness and instead create standards for tolerance, freedom and fraternity. Freemasons should employ their cultural knowledge and participate in public discourse in order to demand that reliable reciprocities and responsible action be embodied again in society.

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# Masonic Rites and Systems

*Arturo de Hoyos*

## Introduction

The word 'rite', from the Latin *ritus*, is cognate with the Greek αριθμός [*arithmos*], meaning 'number'. In masonic as in liturgical use, the word 'rite' refers to an event, or sequence of events, which govern(s) the prescribed actions or practices of a ceremony or organized group. There are two main types of rites in Freemasonry: (1) a procedure with a symbolic or defining nature, such as the rites of circumambulation, discalceation, or investiture, which may be grouped to form a larger ceremony (or degree), and (2) the linking of masonic degrees, for initiation or instruction, under administrative or governmental authority. This chapter focuses on the latter application. The words 'system' and 'order' also have similar meanings and use in Freemasonry. Throughout this chapter the terms may be used interchangeably, unless other terms are mandated by circumstance, as when they form part of an official title or indicate a specific masonic organization (e.g. 'Swedish System'). It is not possible to describe, or even list, every group which deserves mention in this article. Attempts to do so have resulted in full-length books, such as Ray V. Denslow's *Masonic Rites and Degrees* (1955). Rather, this chapter will of necessity focus on those which are/were the most notable, or may most likely be encountered.

As Freemasonry spread throughout the world modifications were gradually introduced to its rituals at local levels. The basic themes of the three primary degrees have remained relatively uniform, as have the modes of recognition (although 'significant words' may be reordered). However, different locales retained or eliminated some practices and procedures while developing new ones. Just as the evolution of language and customs creates new cultures among peoples, so have masonic practices evolved unique characteristics, or expressions of ritual, which allow them to be classified as separate Rites. In a general sense a Rite is any number of degrees grouped together. A Rite may be compared with a staircase, which is comprised of individual steps. The steps represent individual masonic degrees, whereas the staircase *as a whole* is analogous to a Rite. The degrees of a Rite will usually, although not always, have a numerical designation or fixed position on a calendar or schedule. The Rite may be further divided into sub-organizations ('lodges', 'chapters', 'councils',



and so on), just as a staircase may be divided by a number of 'landings' which connect the stairs between floors. The degrees which comprise a Rite may be arranged in a particular sequence for any number of reasons, including mythology, chronology and/or tradition, or they may appear to be unrelated to each other, having been derived from various sources, or having been aggregated at different times. Even within the same Rite, the degrees may also be grouped or divided differently throughout the world or in different times, as e.g. in the case of the *Rite Ecossais philosophique*. The names and number of degrees conferred and/or included may also vary from country to country, as is the case, for example, with the Allied Masonic Degrees and the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

### The Grand Lodge System

The appointment of William Schaw as 'Maister of Wark' by James VI of Scotland in 1583 played a significant role in the development of organized Freemasonry. His issue of the first and second 'Schaw Statutes' in 1598 and 1599 introduced many concepts which continue today (see the chapter on "The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland" by David Stevenson in this volume). His statutes were founded on the Old Charges, and together they formed the basis of government for modern masonic Grand Lodges. The Schaw Statutes defined a hierarchy of "wardenis, dekynis, and maisteris in all thingis concerning thair craft". Lodges were to be presided over by a "generall Wardene", while William Schaw himself presided over all the masonic lodges in his country, as grand masters do throughout most of the world today. A careful reading of the Schaw Statutes reveals that "prenteissis" (apprentices) were first "buikit" (booked), when their names were added to lodge records. Thereafter, followed two classes of Masons: (1) "enterit prenteiss" and (2) "fellowe of craft" or "maister". Within the lodge a fellow and a master were equal, but outside the lodge the master was the employer. "The distinction that they indicate between the Master and the Fellow is one purely of Gild standing; the Master is the Gild Master, entitled to take contracts, and employ the Craft, fellows and apprentices, on the work he is in charge of" (Vibert 1926: 54).

In 1717 four London lodges met and elected a 'Grand Master', an act which would later be interpreted as the formalization of non-operative Freemasonry, although research by J.A.M. Snoek suggests that the meeting, called a 'Grand Lodge', more accurately represented a 'Quarterly Communication', and was but the continuation of practices which had lapsed (Snoek 2010). Hence, no specific date can now be claimed for the institutionalization of gentlemen's

Masonry. At that time there were still only two classes of Masons. Any Fellow Craft “could become a master-mason, provided he had sufficient skill and the luck to find an employer [to give him a building contract.]” (Speth 1898: 76). By 1725 the Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason were three separate degrees, the earliest known conferral of the latter being May 12, 1725, when Charles Cotton and Papillon Ball “Were regularly passed Masters”. From about this time forward the fundamental masonic Rite, practiced in every regular jurisdiction, is the Grand Lodge system, comprised of the three degrees of 1° Entered Apprentice, 2° Fellow Craft, and 3° Master Mason. Although these three degrees collectively form a Rite in the proper sense of the term, they are not generally referred to as such, but are commonly known as ‘Blue’, ‘Symbolic’ or ‘Craft’ degrees. The three degrees are conferred in constituent lodges, presided over by local officers, which today usually operate under the authority of a Grand Lodge.

In the Entered Apprentice’s Degree the lodge symbolically meets on the ground floor, or checkered pavement of Solomon’s Temple, when he is introduced to the lodge and given his working tools and apron; the Fellow Craft’s lodge meets in the middle chamber of the temple, and the candidate commences intellectual pursuits by becoming acquainted with the liberal arts and sciences, when he is also introduced to a symbol of the Deity; Master Masons meet in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the temple, where the legend of Hiram Abiff (Adoniram/Adoram) is recited. However, the emphasis placed on certain symbols or ritual procedures may vary greatly. For example, the winding stairway, commonly mentioned in the Fellow Craft Degree, may be merely depicted in a tracing board, or may appear as an actual staircase which is ascended during the degree. Again, in the Third Degree the Hiram Legend may be recited by a single officer, or it may be performed as a drama involving a large cast. Differences may appear even within lodges practicing the same ritual. This is most common where Grand Lodges publish a ‘monitor’ or manual including exoteric portions of the rituals, which may be omitted and read at leisure.

### Authority Over the Ritual

Throughout most of the world there is but a single Grand Lodge in each country, although there are exceptions; for example, the United Grand Lodges of Germany which is a cooperation of five distinct Grand Lodges, working different systems. Other countries, including Brazil, Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America have individual state or provincial Grand Lodges. These authorities may prescribe or proscribe rituals within their jurisdictions,

and ritual exemplifications are often performed within 'lodges of instruction.' Although traditional masonic oaths forbid writing or printing the ritual in any manner, adherence to this rule varies widely. The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) permits constituent lodges to select their own Craft ritual, and many are available commercially ('Emulation', 'Stability', 'Oxford', and so on). However, all must include certain essentials in their obligations and modes of recognition. In the United States each Grand Lodge determines its own ritual, the purity of which is maintained by a 'committee on work', and some, for example Illinois, print the ritual in plain text, or in a cipher-text (for example, North Carolina). The rituals of many other states are unofficially printed in small 'cipher books' available from masonic supply houses. Other American Grand Lodges do not permit *any type* of printed ritual (possession is a violation of masonic law), and all work is learned 'from mouth to ear' (e.g. Virginia). And yet other Grand Lodges, such as those using the Swedish system, print the ritual but do not permit it to leave the lodge; members read their parts and memorization is not encouraged.

### Emergence of the High Degrees

The appearance of the Master Mason's Degree c.1725, as separate from the Fellow Craft, represents the emergence of the first uniquely 'high degree.' This remarkable fact extends high degree Masonry to near the beginning of non-operative Freemasonry. In a broad sense the high degrees stand apart from the Craft rituals, although some may be dependant upon them. Their origin lies primarily in London (*Ecossais*/Scottish Masonry) and France (Templar Masonry). *Ecossais* Masonry refers to a type of Masonry practiced, rather than referring to native Scotsmen, and the term is today found in several masonic systems. Whether *Ecossais* Masonry was influenced in any way by early Scottish masonic practices is unknown, although it is not impossible that unique features of Scottish initiation were introduced first as supplementary, and later as an addition to the English practices. Early *Ecossais* Masonry appears to have been preoccupied with the reconstruction of the temple following the Babylonian captivity, although it included Christian elements. As early as 1733 a reference to a 'Scotch Masons' Lodge' appeared in a manuscript list of lodges by Dr Richard Rawlinson; the following year it was again mentioned in a printed list of masonic bodies. Thence, from 1733–1740 the 'Scotch Master Masons' Degree was conferred on 'normal' Master Masons, when, for example, at the Lodge at the Rummer, Bristol, on July 18, 1740, it was "Order'd & agreed That Bro. Tomson & Bro. Watts & any other member of this L[odge]. that are

already Master Masons may be made Scotch Master..." (Ward 1962: 131). Although we do not have a text of the earliest ritual, a French exposé, *Le Parfait Maçon* (1744), describes the essence of *Escossais* Masonry.

It is said among the Masons, that there are still several degrees above that of the masters, of which I have just spoken; some say there are six in all, & others go up to seven. Those called *Escossais* [*Scottish*] *Masons* claim that they form the fourth grade. As this Masonry, different from the others in many ways, is beginning to become known in France, the Public will not be annoyed if I relate what I have read about it...which seems to give the *Escossais* a degree of superiority above the Apprentices, Fellows, & ordinary Masters.

Instead of weeping over the ruin of the temple of Solomon, as their brethren do, the *Escossais* are concerned with rebuilding it.

Everyone knows that after seventy years of captivity in Babylon, the Great Cyrus permitted the Israelites to rebuild the temple & the City of Jerusalem; that Zerubabel, of the House of David, was appointed by him [Cyrus] the Chief & leader of that people for their return to the Holy City; that the first stone of the temple was laid during the reign of Cyrus, but that it was not completed until the sixth year of that of Darius, King of the Persians.

It is from this great event that the *Escossais* derive the epoch of their institution, & although they are later than the other Masons by several centuries, they consider themselves of a superior grade.

CARR 1971: 197

Recent evidence suggests that a masonic Templar Order *may* have been founded between 1728 and 1733 (Kervella and Lestienne 1987). The most enduring of the early masonic Templar legends asserted that several medieval Knights Templars escaped to the Scottish highlands where they joined with stonemasons, and later emerged as the first Freemasons. The rise and/or popularity of chivalric Masonry may in part be traced to a 1737 discourse by Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay, a Scotsman who lived most of his adult life in France. His assertion that crusaders founded Masonry helped establish the chivalric tradition in Freemasonry (Batham 1992; see also the chapter on "Freemasonry and Templarism" in this volume). Other 'high degrees,' such as the 'Excellent Mason' and 'Grand Mason' appeared by 1734–1735.

The Old Charges, which included the legendary 'history' of the fraternity, also provided sources of inspiration for ritual content. They mention, for example, in narrative form, the Garden of Eden, the rise of the seven liberal arts, the

tower of Babel, Enoch's foreknowledge of the flood and his construction of two pillars, Noah's ark, Abraham's sojourn, Solomon's temple, and more. Any number of these would find expression in a variety of ritual systems.

Some Grand Lodges embrace additional degrees. For example, according to the *Book of Constitutions* of the UGLE, the Holy Royal Arch is considered as the completion of the Master Mason's Degree: by the solemn act of union between the two Grand Lodges of Freemasons of England in December 1813, it was "declared and pronounced, that pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees, and no more; *viz.* those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch. But this article is not intended to prevent any Lodge or Chapter from holding a meeting in any of the degrees of the Orders of Chivalry, according to the constitutions of the said Orders" (Hughan 1874: 22). Similarly, in Scotland the Mark Degree is considered the completion of Fellow Craft's Degree, and is conferred in a Craft lodge. Because Rites are autonomous, they are administered and governed by presiding bodies, which are frequently denominated as 'grand' or 'supreme' (so, 'Grand Lodge', 'Supreme Council'). Any constitutions, edicts, laws, or other regulations, may be traditional or self-imposed. The authority of a grand body is limited only insofar as it does not encroach upon the rights and privileges of other masonic organizations. Grand bodies may organize, oversee, and/or control any number of sub-organizations of their same Rite, within their jurisdiction. Any number of Rites and systems may include degrees which have similar names or ritual practices, owing to a common origin. In order to maintain the health of the fraternity, and to preserve the rights of the members of these groups, some masonic organizations practice the doctrine of 'sovereign territorial jurisdiction', which guards against the organization of competing masonic systems of the same type. Under this doctrine a state may have operating within its borders several different masonic grand bodies, but not more than one grand body of the same type. Grand bodies may retain preeminence by acting as a 'parent' in chartering other grand bodies, or they may prefer equality by creating 'sister' organizations. Grand bodies may write their own laws, amend or alter their degree structure, or even yield authority over some of their degrees. It is not known how many different masonic orders, Rites and systems have existed, but several exist whose roots are not too far removed from the days of stonemasonry.

### Common Motifs

There are a number of recurring legends and themes which manifest themselves in various Rites. These include 'quests' which set participants on a

search, or require the performance of a task. Among the principal themes are continuations of the Hiram Legend, such as the discovery of his body and a description of his funeral ceremonies; a vengeance theme (relating to the murderers of either Hiram or Jacques de Molay); the candidate's appointment to replace Hiram; the restoration and preservation of ancient masonry; the discovery of the lost Master's Word; the discovery of the 'True Word'; the passing of a bridge; Zerubbabel and the rebuilding of the temple; Freemasonry as the continuation of Templarism; additional chivalric honors; esotericism (including Rosicrucianism, regeneration, spiritual alchemy); the New Jerusalem, and others.

Many of these motifs found expression in a proliferation of degrees during the eighteenth century. Henry W. Coil's *Masonic Encyclopedia* (1961) lists approximately 1100 degrees by name, although most are no longer practiced. The most popular survived by their inclusion in Rites, orders, or systems, many of which derived from common ancestors, or were simply slight modifications of each other. This explains, for example, commonalities between the Holy Royal Arch, the Knight of the East or Sword, the Princes of Jerusalem, the Knights Masons, and the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross.

### Chronological Development

Tracing the chronological development of Rites is complicated by their simultaneous development and (sometimes intentionally) obscure(d) circumstances of origin. Although most masonic ritual research looks to the rival 'Moderns' (Premier Grand Lodge) and 'Antients' (Atholl Grand Lodge), the nigh-forgotten 'Harodim'—a London tradition of unknown antiquity—may be a source for some of the earliest and most persistent ritual traditions.

Several of the most influential or important masonic rites, orders, and systems are treated below. Want of space requires the omission of several other groups. Omission does not indicate a lack of interesting history, ritual or personalities; rather, it may merely suggest a minimal impact on global Freemasonry. Among the omitted groups are some of the allied, or fringe organizations, such as the androgynous 'masonic' bodies in America, including the *Order of the Eastern Star* (founded 1867), and lesser-known recognized Orders, such as the *Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests*, which may date to the first half of the eighteenth century, and which claims thirty-three degrees *by name*, but lacks rituals for many of them. The following list terminates prior to the twentieth century. Although new rites created after this time are far less common, the last hundred years have witnessed the appearance of several

'honorary' bodies which have their own initiatory rituals, but are not strictly Rites.

### Pre-1732: Royal Order of Scotland

Although information is sketchy, this Order, which may be the oldest 'high degree' system in existence, may date from before 1732, when Joseph Laycock was appointed Provincial Grand Master of the Harodim (later 'Heredom') body in London. Some evidence suggests that the Order migrated to France by the 1740s, and that the Scotsman William Mitchell may have received its degrees there as early as 1749. The following year Mitchell travelled from The Hague (where he worked) to London when he claimed to have received the degrees a second time. Returning to The Hague he carried a patent naming him Provincial Grand Master of the Order, together with other documents. Upon his return to Scotland in 1753, he discovered no trace of the Order, and used the authority of his London patent to found in Edinburgh a Chapter of the Order by 1754. This Chapter elevated itself into the present Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter of the Order in 1767, when the 'Royal' appellation was prefixed. The Royal Order consists of two degrees, the first being *H.R.D.M. of K.L.W.N.G.* (Heredom of Kilwinning), said in the ritual to be "the highest and most sublime Degree of Masonry", which is divided into two steps: (1) the Bridge, from its concluding there, and (2) the admission to the Cabinet. According to its legend, the Order was first established "on the holy top of Mount Moriah in the Kingdom of Judah", and reestablished "At Icolmkill, and afterwards at Kilwinning, where the King of Scotland first sat as Grand Master". Its purpose is "to correct the errors and reform the abuses which crept in among the three Degrees of St. John's Masonry". The second degree is the *R.Y.C.S.* (Knight of the Order of the Rosy Cross), which traditionally dates to the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, when King Robert the Bruce is said to have received help from Masons, and conferred upon them the civil rank of knighthood. As with other rituals of the Harodim tradition, the hallmarks are a doggerel ritual, which attests to its antiquity, and its decidedly Christian nature. The Order was on the verge of extinction c. 1819, but was saved in 1839 by the efforts of Scotsmen Houston Rigg Brown and Dr George Arnott Walker-Arnott. The former recited the ritual from memory, which was found to agree *almost verbatim*, with the French ritual of the *Chapitre de Heredom de Kilwinning du Choix*, warranted in 1786. The agreement supports the view that the English ritual is nearly identical with the original version. After the Order 'resuscitated' in Edinburgh in 1839, its traditional association with Scotland became the more firmly entrenched.

### 1740: Three Globes System

The Grand National Mother Lodge of the Three Globes was founded in Berlin by order of Frederick II, King of Prussia, under the name 'Aux trois Globes'. In 1766, under the influence of Johann Wilhelm Kellner von Zinnendorf, who was then head of the order, the Three Globes came under the influence of the Rite of Strict Observance. However, Von Zinnendorf withdrew from the Rite following a financial dispute. This led to his founding of the 'Grand National Lodge of Freemasons of Germany/Freemasons Order' (GLLFD/FO) in 1770, which practices a version of the Swedish System. Following von Hund's death the Three Globes abandoned the high degrees and adopted unique *Erkenntnisstufen* (steps of knowledge), which are not considered degrees *per se*, but are intended to deepen the masonic experience. They nonetheless include obligations, tokens, signs, and words. The system assumes a decidedly Christian approach, as stated in its Scottish Master ritual, "We strive ever towards the highest knowledge which the Master of Nazareth revealed from God to mankind: religion is the love of God—and mankind". It confers the following grades: *St. John's Degrees*: 1° Apprentice, 2° Fellow, 3° Master; *Steps of Knowledge*: 4° Scottish Master, 5° Elect Brother, 6° Brother of the Inner Temple, 7° Confidant Brother of Perfection.

### C. 1744: Adoptive Masonry

The notion that females could be Masons may be hinted in the *Regius Ms.* (c. 1410), the earliest of the Old Charges. Its tenth article states that "There shall no master supplant another, but be together as sister and brother". The *York Manuscript No. 4* (1693) is explicit: "One of the elders taking the Booke and hee or shee that is to be made mason shall lay their hands thereon, and the charge shall be given". The proscription against women as Masons, found in Anderson's *Constitutions* (1723) was an innovation of the 'Moderns', which was also adopted by the 'Antients', but had no effect upon the Harodim, an ancient London masonic tradition. The earliest known quasi-masonic order for women was the 'Order of the Mopses', which was created in Vienna in 1738. Recent research cited by J.A.M. Snoek reveals that the phenomenon of female Masonry arose in England by 1739, and further suggests that by 1744 the 'Adoptive Rite' rose, which likely had its roots in the Harodim. In the same year the Abbé Perau's exposé *Le Secret des Franc-Maçons* mentioned the existence of an 'order of liberty', in which 'women are accepted according to reason'. In 1759 *The Public Advertiser* (issue 7593) announced the intention of "several regular-made



Masons (both ancient and modern)” to initiate members of “the Fair-Sex” on the grounds that “they have as much Right to attain to the Secrets...not doubting but they will prove an Honour to the Craft...”. A ritual printed “by a Sister Mason”, *Women’s Masonry or Masonry by Adoption* (London, 1765), is the earliest known printed text of the Rite. The lectures, symbols and work were based on Noah’s Ark, the Tower of Babel, Jacob’s Ladder, and the temptation in the Garden of Eden. The Adoptive *Loge de Juste*, created in The Hague (Netherlands) in 1751, stands as the most renowned of the early Adoptive lodges, and was co-founded by William Mitchell, Provincial Grand Master of the Royal Order of Scotland. In 1774 the Grand Orient of France regularized (officially sanctioned) Adoptive lodges, and their existence was common knowledge, largely on account of exposés, which included the rituals, such as Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor’s *La Vrai Maçonnerie d’Adoption*, (1779). Historical details of the Rite in Europe are treated in the book by Snoek (Snoek 2012). A remarkable assertion by Georges Bois in “La maçonnerie des dames” (1892), was that the system was still active. Adoptive Masonry remained relatively unknown to Americans until the Supreme Council at Charleston (creators of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite) claimed authority to confer “Six degrees of Maçonnerie D’Adoption” in its *Circular throughout the two hemispheres* (1802), although this was rarely done, if ever, and an exposé, *Illustrations of the Four First Degrees of Female Masonry, as Practiced in Europe. By a Lady* (Boston, 1827), appeared as part of the Morgan episode. It was only in 1866 that the Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, printed an official ritual of the first four degrees noting that it was “regularly attached to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, under the protection of the Mother Supreme Council of the 33rd degree”. Although full rituals and lectures through the seventh degree were also prepared the system itself was never worked in full and the higher degrees remain unprinted. Adoptive Masonry should not be confused with the so-called ‘American Adoptive Rite’, which is another name for the Order of the Eastern Star, with which it shares no similarities.

### 1751: Strict Observance

This is the ancestor of many Templar-based systems. The Rite was controversial for requiring strict obedience to the ‘Unknown Superiors’, or leaders of the Order. The principal force behind the Rite was Carl Gotthelf von Hund (initiated in 1741), who *may* have received an order of knighthood from exiled Stuart supporters. Baron von Hund claimed he was admitted into the Order by the ‘Knight of the Red Feather’, who may have been the Jacobite Alexander Seton,

also known as Alexander Montgomery, Tenth Earl of Eglinton (Baigent and Leigh 1989: 197). In 1751 von Hund founded a lodge and Scottish Chapter and, following the Seven Years War, he came under the influence of someone named “Johnson”, who claimed to be Grand Prior of the Order of Jerusalem, but was subsequently unmasked as a fraud. Under von Hund, the Strict Observance dominated German Freemasonry, and became a force for influencing the development of other Rites. The Rite asserted that it was a survival of Templarism by reinterpreting Craft Masonry: Hiram Abiff was actually the Templar Sub-Prior Carolus de Monte Carmel, who was murdered by traitorous Brethren, and all the symbols of Masonry were attributed to Templarism. By around 1755 it had six degrees: 1° Apprentice, 2° Fellow, 3° Master, 4° Scots Master; *Inner Order*: 5° Novice, 6° Knight. From 1772 (Convent of Kohlo) to 1778 (Convent of Wolfenbüttel) it was combined with Johann August Starck’s Clerical Order (*Klerikat*) and had the degrees: 1° Apprentice, 2° Fellow, 3° Master, 4° Scots Master; *Inner Order*: 5° Novice, 6° Knight (Eques), 7° Eques Professus. In 1778 it rejected Starck and returned to its 6-degree form. Jean-Baptiste Willermoz introduced the Strict Observance to France by 1772 and reformed it there into the *Rite Écossais Rectifié* (*Rectified Scottish Rite*). Because the Strict Observance claimed to be Templarism, Willermoz may have feared that the Rite’s assets could be seized by the State, which had abolished Templarism under Philip the Fair. At the Convent of Wilhelmsbad in 1782 the Strict Observance was replaced by the *Rite Écossais Rectifié*, but without its until then existing highest degrees of Profess and Grand Profess, and Willermoz (1°–4°) and Jean de Turckheim (5°–6°) modified the rituals of the *Rite Écossais Rectifié* to satisfy the Convent. Willermoz’s infusion of Martinism (Christian mysticism) into the rituals was rejected by the majority of the German lodges whose members soon transferred to Adam Weishaupt’s *Illuminatenorden* (Order of the Illuminati), which had been created in 1776 in Ingolstadt (Upper Bavaria). This, in turn, was interdicted and (at least officially) dissolved and outlawed by the Elector of Bavaria in 1785.

### 1756–1759: Swedish System

In 1731 in Paris, the Jacobite Charles Radclyffe, Earl of Derwentwater, initiated Count Axel Wrede-Sparre. Four years later Wrede-Sparre established the first lodge in Stockholm. In 1735 he received a charter, via Baron Carl Fredrik Scheffer, which was issued by Radclyffe, but the lodge closed in 1747 after Wrede-Sparre left Stockholm. The Count Knut Posse established the Lodge St Jean Auxiliaire in 1752, and many of the former members of Wrede-Sparre’s lodge became members thereof. In 1756 Chancellor Karl Friedrich Eckleff, who

is said to have had a patent to establish lodges, opened the first St Andrew's lodge (which worked a 4° and 5°), called 'L'Innocente', with himself as Master. In 1759, Eckleff formed the *Chapitre Illuminé* (working the 6°–9°), which was the beginning of the Swedish System. The structure of the Order was later set in three bodies: St John's (I°–III°), St Andrew's (IV°/V°–VI°) and the Chapter Degrees (VII°–X°). In 1774 Duke Carl of Södermanland (later King Carl XIII), became Grand Master of both the Grand Lodge and the Eckleff system, when the whole of Swedish Masonry came under the authority of the Grand Lodge. Following the death of Baron von Hund in 1776 Duke Carl was elected head of the Rite of Strict Observance, although he resigned two years later. About 1774–1780 and again around 1795–1800, the King himself turned to revising the rituals, in a system of eleven degrees. Under the influence of the Strict Observance, the Swedish System retains Templar traditions and allusions, although it is reformed along the lines of spiritual knighthood. The Swedish System is practiced in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Germany. In 1766 Johann Wilhelm Kellner von Zinnendorf left the Grand National Mother Lodge of the Three Globes, and received copies of all of the Swedish rituals, which he used in establishing the Grand National Lodge of Freemasons of Germany/Freemasons Order (GLLFD/FO), which works a variant of the Swedish System, sometimes called the Zinnendorf System (or Rite). The Swedish System's Craft Degrees include the traditional masonic motifs and legends, although membership in all degrees requires a belief in the 'Triune Grand Architect of the Universe'. In the higher degrees a progressively Christian and mystical interpretation is assumed, and the traditional (mythological) origin is ascribed to certain Knights Templar, who fled France during the destruction of that Order. The Swedish System shares commonalities with the Rectified Scottish Rite and Three Globe Systems, since all borrowed from the Rite of Strict Observance. The Swedish System, however, is much more coherent, as the Craft symbols of the lower degrees are intelligently and progressively explained in the light of Templarism. One discovers that many of the deepest secrets of the Order were presented in the St John's Degrees, although their full signification was not unveiled. The St Andrew's Degrees awaken the member to his responsibilities in the context of Christian fellowship, and the Chapter Degrees present the summit of hope, unveiling the New Jerusalem. According to the ritual of the Grand National Lodge, "Our method of instruction is thus based on the avowal to an upright and responsible life, according to the examples of singular historical personalities such as Jesus Christ". The current system includes: *St. John's Degrees*: I° Apprentice, II° Fellow, III° Master; *S. Andrew's Degrees*: IV°–V° Apprentice-Companion of St Andrew, VI° Master of St Andrew; *Chapter Degrees*: VII° Very Illustrious

Brother, Knight of the East, VIII<sup>o</sup> Most Illustrious Brother, Knight of the West, IX<sup>o</sup> Enlightened Brother of St John's Lodge, X<sup>o</sup> Very Enlightened Brother of St Andrew's Lodge. The highest degree, worked in the *Grand Council*, is the XI<sup>o</sup> Most Enlightened Brother, Knight Commander of the Red Cross. However, in most countries where the Swedish Rite is worked, this degree is no longer found, the honor of the Red Cross being granted in meetings of the VIII<sup>o</sup>.

### C. 1762: Order of the Royal Secret

In 1732 an English Lodge, appropriately named *Loge L'Anglaise*, was founded in Bordeaux, France. This Lodge was later chartered by the English Modern Grand Lodge and still exists today. An early offshoot of *Loge L'Anglaise* was the *Loge la Française* which, as the name implies, was French. The latter Lodge had a penchant for the so-called *hauts grades* then coming into vogue, and it founded *Loge Parfaite Harmonie* in 1743. Étienne Morin was among the founders this lodge. In 1747 Morin, who was a merchant, founded an *Écossais* lodge in Le Cap Français, in the French colony of Saint-Domingue (now Haiti). The *hauts grades* lodges in Bordeaux introduced concepts and terms which would become part of later systems. For example, they used the term 'Lodge of Perfection' since about 1750. On August 27, 1761, the French Grand Lodge at Paris (the Grand and Sovereign Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem), is supposed to have acted with a body of the superior degrees (the Council of the Emperors of the East and West, Sovereign Écossais Mother Lodge), by issuing a patent to Morin to promulgate Masonry in the New World. Although the original cannot be found the surviving copies—which differ slightly from each other—all agree that Morin was created a Grand Inspector, and that his patent "authorize[ed] and empower[ed] him to establish perfect and sublime Masonry in all parts of the world". There is some evidence that Morin's original authority was limited to the Symbolic Degrees (1<sup>o</sup>–3<sup>o</sup>) and that he amended his patent to grant himself further powers. By 1763 he created and began promulgating a masonic Rite of twenty-five degrees which he called the 'Order of the Royal Secret' or 'Order of Prince of the Royal Secret' (sometimes mistakenly called the 'Rite of Perfection'). This Order included many of the most popular degrees worked at the time, and around this same time efforts were made to bring Bordeaux's version of the high degrees to the American continent. A lodge in New Orleans, Louisiana, called the *Loge de Parfaits d'Écosse*, was the first, being founded on April 12, 1764, by Louise-François Tiphaine. Although it was once commonly believed that the Council of the Emperors of the East and West created the Order of the Royal Secret, recent research suggests that Morin

was personally responsible for its organization. There is also substantive evidence that, to bolster his authority, he created and backdated documents known as the *Constitutions and Regulations of 1762*. Morin remained in Saint-Domingue until 1766 and moved thereafter to Jamaica. In 1770 he created a Grand Chapter of his Order in Kingston, Jamaica, and the following year he died and was buried there. One of Morin's earliest and most important acts, after arriving in Jamaica, was to create a Dutch mason, Henry Andrew Francken, a Deputy Grand Inspector General, with authority to establish Masonic Bodies throughout the New World, including the United States. Francken soon sailed from the West Indies to New York, and in 1767 he began to confer the high degrees in Albany. Fortunately, he also transcribed several manuscript copies of the rituals of the Order of the Royal Secret, some of which survive today. These are generically known as the *Francken Manuscripts*. His zeal to propagate the high degrees caused him to appoint Moses Michael Hays, in 1768, a Deputy Inspector General for the West Indies and North America. Hays, in turn, appointed other deputies which ensured the Order's survival until the early 1800s, when it faded after its absorption with the creation of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

#### **1774: Hermetic Rite of Avignon/Philosophic Scottish Rite (Rite Hermétique d'Avignon/Rite Écossais philosophique)**

The Hermetic Rite “was in fact created in the lodge Saint Jean d’Ecosse in Marseille, where some members of the lodge, which was founded in 1774 in Avignon, received its degrees, and it was this lodge of Marseille that constituted the lodge Saint Jean d’Ecosse in Avignon on 31 July 1774” (Snoek 2003: 32). In 1776 the Rite was moved from Avignon to Paris, when it changed its name to *Philosophic Scottish Rite*. Creation of the Hermetic Rite was long credited to the Benedictine Antoine-Joseph Pernety and, although this is disputed by contemporary scholarship, his name is attached to manuscript copies of the degrees (Pierini 1981). The Rite was one of several which employed alchemical symbolism in its instruction, and was devoted to esotericism. Its degrees were: 4° The True Mason, 5° The True Mason in the Right Way, 6° The Knight of the Golden Key, 7° The Knight of the Rainbow, 8° The Knight of the Argonauts, 9° The Knight of the Golden Fleece. From its creation until about 1843 the Rite changed its degrees several times, and a publication of its rituals, by the Grand College of Rites, USA, of its later state gives the following: 1° [*sic*] Knight of the Black Eagle, or Rose Croix, 4° Chevalier of the Sun—Prince Adept, the Key to Masonry, 5° Knight of the Phoenix, 6° Sublime Philosopher—Chevalier Rose-Croix, 7° Chevalier of the Rainbow, 8° True Mason, 9° Chevalier of the

Argonauts, 10° Chevalier of the Golden Fleece. Although influential, it apparently died out before 1849.

### 1778: Rectified Scottish Rite (*Rite Écossais Rectifié*)

This system perpetuates a tradition of spiritual knighthood, and descends from the *Rite of Strict Observance*, and the *Ordre de Chevaliers Maçons Élus Coëns de l'Univers* (the Order of the Knights Masons, Elect Priests of the Universe), commonly known as *L'Ordre des Élus Coëns* (Order of Elect Priests). The *Rectified Scottish Rite* owes its existence largely to Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, who was initiated into Freemasonry in 1750, joined the *Élus Coëns* in 1767, and the *Rite of Strict Observance* in 1773. The *Élus Coëns* was founded in 1761 by Martines de Pasqually as a Kabbalistic and Theosophic system, which included theurgical practices with the ultimate goal of restoring the initiates' spiritual proximity with God, which was lost through the Fall of Man (Ambelain 1946; Amadou 1988). Following Pasqually's death in 1774 Willermoz continued to direct an *Élus Coën* lodge, until the Order was disbanded in 1781. He and fellow *Élus Coën* initiate Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, reworked and codified the system of mystical Christianity commonly known as Martinism, which survives in various traditions today. By 1778, at the *Convent national des Gaules*, Willermoz had created the *Rite Écossais Rectifié*, which incorporates influences of Martinism. Following the demise of the Strict Observance Willermoz and Jean de Turckheim revised the rituals to conform to the wishes of the Convent of Wilhelmsbad in 1782. Among the changes was a dismissal of the literal assertions of Templar origins. The *Rite Écossais Rectifié* is also known as the Knights Beneficent of the Holy City, or C.B.C.S. (Chevalier(s) Bienfaisant(s) de la Cité Sainte), the name of the sixth degree of the Rite. Its outer order is masonic: 1° Entered Apprentice, 2° Fellow Craft, 3° Master Mason, 4° Scottish Master; the inner order is chivalric: 5° Squire Novice, 6° Knight Beneficent of the Holy City. Two higher degrees, 7° Professed, and 8° Grand Professed, are no longer worked in Europe but are possessed by an American branch of the Rite. This Rite is at home in France, Switzerland and Belgium, and has a limited membership in the English-speaking world.

### 1780: Baldwin Rite of Seven Degrees

Freemasonry in Bristol, England is unique for its unusual traditions. The Bristol Craft ritual is particularly colorful, and retains elements not often encountered in Great Britain, although it shares features with some American and Continental

practices (for example, the ‘writing test’ and ‘circle of swords’). The antiquity of the Baldwin Rite centers around the “Charter of Compact” (traditionally dated 1780, but arguably later), and the Rite enjoys a ‘time immemorial’ status permitting it to confer degrees controlled elsewhere by other grand bodies. The Rite consists of the Craft and Royal Arch, followed by the ‘Five Royal Orders of Knighthood’: I—the three Craft degrees (preferably Bristol form); II—The Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch (with the passing of the veils); III—Knights of the Nine Elected Masters; IV—The Ancient Order of Scots Knights Grand Architects (in Scots dress), and The Royal Order of Scots Knights Kilwinning (in Templar dress); V—Knights of the East, the Sword, and Eagle; VI—Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta, and Knights Templar; VII—Knights of the Rose Croix of Mount Carmel. In 1862 the English grades of Knight of Malta and Knight Templar came under control of the Great Priory of England, and the sixth grade was granted ‘time immemorial’ status. A similar event occurred in 1881 with the seventh grade and the Supreme Council for England and Wales.

### 1786: French Rite

Founded by the Sovereign Metropolitan Chapter of the Grand Orient of France, this Rite includes ‘four orders’ beyond the Craft. Although manuscripts exist from this date, it was only in 1801 that the *Régulateur des Chevaliers Maçons* was printed, to provide instruction to its members. The first order, *Élu Secret*, included the sum of the ‘vengeance degrees’ of the eighteenth century; the second order, *Grand Élu Grand Écossais*, embraced the substance of the older degrees ‘Scot of the Vault’ and ‘Perfect English Master’, which alluded to the ordination of Aaron, with certain purifications, unctions, etc.; the third order, *Chevalier d’Orient*, retained one of the oldest high degree themes in masonry, that is, the story of Zerubbabel and the building of the second temple; the last order was the *Rose-Croix*. Although the Rite underwent several revisions, a traditional version continues. Although the titles vary slightly, the current grades are: 1° Apprentice, 2° Companion, 3° Master, 4° Secret Elect [Master Elect or Elect Master], 5° Scottish Grand Elect [Scottish Master] 6° Knight of the Orient, 7° Sovereign Rose-Croix Prince, Perfect Freemason, Grand Commander of the Temple [Sovereign Prince Rose-Croix] (Mollier 2004; Mollier 2005).

### C. 1797: York Rite or American Rite

Thomas Smith Webb, a Massachusetts native, who served as Grand Master of Rhode Island in 1813–1814, is considered the ‘father’ of this Rite. His book,

*The Freemason's Monitor; or Illustrations of Masonry* (1797), was the first masonic monitor published in the United States. It borrowed extensively from William Preston's similarly titled *Illustrations of Masonry*, six editions of which were published from 1772–1796. Webb created a 'model work' of the Blue Lodge ritual which forms the basis of most rituals used throughout the United States today, and which is often referred to as 'Webb work' or 'Webb form'. Webb's Craft ritual was greatly influenced by the English exposé *Jachin and Boaz* (1762), which he once used to teach his students. Webb's *Monitor* included a description of 'the degrees of masonry' encompassing the original scope of the York Rite (although that name was then unknown). Notably, the degrees of this Rite are not normally numbered, but may be occasionally referred to as such. Today, throughout most of the United States, the York Rite is a cooperative association of several separate and distinct organizations: (1) *Capitular Masonry*, or Chapters of Royal Arch Masons, confer the degrees of [4°] Mark Master, [5°] (Virtual) Past Master, [6°] Most Excellent Master, and [7°] Royal Arch Mason; (2) *Cryptic Masonry*, or Councils of Royal and Select Masters, confer the degrees of [8°] Royal Master and [9°] Select Master. There is also the Super Excellent Master Degree, which is not mandatory in many jurisdictions; (3) *Chivalric Masonry*, conferred in 'Commanderies' or 'Encampments' include the [10°] Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, [11°] Order of Malta, and [12°] Order of the Temple, or Knight Templar Degree. In some states the Capitular and Cryptic degrees are conferred by the same body. There exist a number of 'chair degrees' in the York Rite, including the Order of the High Priesthood (Capitular); Order of the Silver Trowel (Cryptic); the Knight Crusader of the Cross (Chivalric); and the Knight Preceptor (Chivalric). Some American states have their own autonomous grand bodies for these groups; others operate under the authority of the General Grand Chapter, General Grand Council, and Grand Encampment. Several of the York Rite Degrees have a character and presentation which is very much in harmony with Craft Masonry; the ritual sequences and even expressions of language often emulate American Blue Lodge Masonry.

### 1801: Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite

Known as the 'Scottish Rite' in the United States, and the 'Ancient and Accepted Rite' or simply 'Rose Croix' in Great Britain, this is the most successful high degree system in terms of membership and geographical distribution. At its creation it inherited all the degrees of the *Order of the Royal Secret* (effectively rendering it inconsequential), and replaced its loosely-controlled government with a 'Supreme Council' governed by the *Constitutions of 1786*, ostensibly



ratified by Frederick the Great, although this is now accepted as a 'creation of tradition'. It was first organized in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1801, by the Rev. Frederick Dalcho and Col. John Mitchell, both deputies of the *Order of the Royal Secret*. In 1802 Alexandre-Auguste de Grasse-Tilly, a member of the Supreme Council at Charleston, organized a Supreme Council for the Winward and Leeward West India Islands, at Port-au-Prince, Saint-Domingue, and in 1804 he established a Supreme Council in France. In an agreement made that year between this newly-created Supreme Council and the Grand Orient of France (which operated as a Grand Lodge), the title 'Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite' (*Rite Écossais Ancien et Accepté*) was used for the first time. De Grasse-Tilly also organized Supreme Councils in Italy (1805), Spain (1809), and Belgium (1817). The AASR confers thirty-three degrees, the last of which has achieved almost mythical status for its supposed influence within and without Freemasonry. Its degrees include many of the oldest high degree themes and traditions in Freemasonry (de Hoyos 2010). In most cases there is but a single Supreme Council in each nation or kingdom; in the United States, however, there are two Supreme Councils: the 'Northern Masonic Jurisdiction', which embraces fifteen states, and the 'Southern Jurisdiction', which includes the remaining thirty-five states, as well as the American territories and dependencies. The latter, sometimes called the 'Mother Supreme Council' (with headquarters in Washington, DC since c. 1870), is the original creator of the AASR. The Rite's Craft Degrees were written in 1804 in Paris, and are used primarily in Romance-language countries and regions (Noël 2006). In the Southern Jurisdiction the Rite is divided into four 'bodies': the 4°–14°, Lodge of Perfection (the so-called 'Ineffable Degrees'); 15°–18°, Chapter of Rose Croix; 19°–30°, Council of Knights Kadosh; 31°–32°, Consistory of Masters of the Royal Secret. There are also the '32°, Knight Commander of the Court of Honour', the '33°, Inspector General Honorary', and the '33°, Grand Cross of Honour'. The Supreme Council is comprised of '33°, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General', which is a position rather than a degree. The Rite achieved international prominence largely through the efforts of Albert Pike (1809–1891), Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction from 1859 until his death. His revision of the rituals and statutes influenced most Supreme Councils worldwide, as have his many published works on masonic history, philosophy, and symbolism. In the USA Pike's rituals were used in full form until the *Revised Standard Pike Ritual* was introduced in 2000. The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction was created between 1813–1816 to combat 'Cerneauism', a term used to describe a competing form of the Scottish Rite created in 1813 by the French refugee Joseph Cerneau. After fifty years of struggle, the two orders made peace and, in 1867 the groups merged to form the current Supreme

Council, 33°, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (with headquarters in Lexington, Mass.). The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction has a longstanding practice of ritual revision, which includes several modern themes and historical settings, rather than the traditional masonic legends and allegories. The most drastic revisions, introduced in 2004, added degrees never known in Freemasonry, including the 4° Master Traveler, 24° Brother of the Forest, 25° Master of Achievement, and 31° Knight Aspirant. The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction also confers the 'Meritorious Service Award' for distinguished service. In the United States and Canada it is common for members to receive all the 4°–32° of this Rite. A Supreme Council for Ireland was established in 1824, one for England and Wales in 1845, and one for Scotland in 1846. Within these three Supreme Councils only Christians are admitted to the 18° Rose Croix and higher, and the Ancient and Accepted Rite is commonly referred to as the 'Rose Croix'. The higher degrees of 30°, 31° and 32°, have strict eligibility requirements, which progressively limit membership. In contradistinction, in the early part of the twentieth century Goblet d'Alviella, Grand Commander of the Belgian Supreme Council, contributed a more philosophical and political aspect to the highest degrees of the Rite, which influenced the European Scottish Rite with a more liberal philosophical view.

### **1805: Rite(s) of Misraim (Mizraim) and Memphis**

The history of these Rites is convoluted and often intertwined, as they stem from common origins. Their many pretensions require a more detailed study than can be presented here, although the principal facts follow. The Rite of Misraim (or Mizraim) was created in Italy by a Brother Lechangeur, in 1805, after his admission to the Scottish Rite was refused. It originally had eighty-seven degrees, but was soon expanded to ninety, at least five of which were taken from the Scottish Rite. Lechangeur admitted the brothers Bedarride, who became its principal promulgators. After the Grand Orient of France refused to recognize the Rite, the governing body dissolved, but some of its lodges continued to work. Marc Bedarride arrived in France in 1813, and within two years the brothers constituted themselves 'Grand Conservators' of the Rite. The Rite was introduced to Ireland in 1820, and to Scotland about 1840, but with little success. Jacques Etienne Marconis (called 'de Nègre' from his complexion) was initiated into the Rite of Misraim, at Paris, in April 1823, and two months later he was expelled from that Rite. Undeterred, he moved to Lyon and opened a Lodge of the same Rite, when he was elevated to the 66°, since the Bedarrides did not know that 'Marconis' and 'de Nègre' was

the same person. In 1838 he was again expelled, after which he created the 'Rite of Memphis', his own ninety-one degree system, which he eventually increased to ninety-seven degrees. Marconis-de Nègre's Rite merely rearranged the sequence of several of the degrees to disguise their origin. It has been claimed that the Rite of Memphis was brought to France in 1814 by Samuel Honis, but no evidence supports this. Marconis-de Nègre's Rite of Memphis also claimed authority to confer the Thirty-third Degree of the Scottish Rite, which would later cause it many problems. In 1840 the Bedarride brothers succeeded in having the police close all lodges of the Rite of Memphis, but it was revived within a decade. In 1852 Marconis-de Nègre's offer to affiliate the Rite was rejected by the Grand Orient of France, and in 1856 he began promulgating the Rite in New York. However, in 1862 Marconis-de Nègre had transferred absolute control over the Rite to the French Grand College of Rites, effectively delivering his authority to the Grand Orient of France, the country's supreme masonic authority. In 1862 Harry J. Seymour received a patent from Marconis-de Nègre to create a Sovereign Grand Sanctuary for the Western Hemisphere, although the patent was not recognized by the Grand Orient of France, whose Chief of the Secretariat wrote, "it is not permitted to anybody in America, to invoke the name and authority of the Grand Orient of France in anything which concerns the Rite of Memphis" (Cummings 1936: 171). In 1867 Seymour reduced the number of degrees to thirty-three, in order to compete directly with the Scottish Rite, which had expelled him two years earlier for gross misconduct. The creation of this 'reduced' Rite of Memphis caused a schism in his ranks, when Calvin C. Burt, his Deputy Grand Master, refused to accept the change. About this time the Rite was roundly denounced by the Grand Lodges. By Seymour's authority John Yarker (expelled from the Scottish Rite in England in 1870) was given a patent in 1872 over the Rite, and he later became Grand Hierophant over the 'Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis' of thirty-three degrees (the complete rituals appear in *Collectanea*, vol. 19). However, the various edicts issued by the Grand Lodges succeeded in quelling enthusiasm for the Rite, and it languished. In 1931 surviving members of the Rite transferred whatever authority they may have held into the newly-formed Grand College of Rites of the United States.

### 1865: Red Cross of Constantine

The Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine and the Appendant Orders of the Holy Sepulchre and St. John the Evangelist were instituted in England by Robert Wentworth Little about 1865. Its rituals

were created by borrowing from masonic exposures. The name and a portion of ritual was taken from a dormant English system (Carlile 1825: 455), which was combined with the remains of the 'Order of the Holy Cross', which was denounced by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States in 1828 (de Hoyos 1999–2000). The Red Cross of Constantine is an order of Knighthood, which is based upon Trinitarian Christianity. The three grades of the order are 1<sup>o</sup> Knight (Knight-Companion of the Red Cross of Constantine), 2<sup>o</sup> Priest (conferred in a College of Viceroys), and 3<sup>o</sup> Sovereign Prince (conferred in a Senate of Sovereigns). Then follow the two Appendant Orders of (4<sup>o</sup>) Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and (5<sup>o</sup>) Knight of St. John the Evangelist. Above these are the two honorary ranks of Knight Commander of Constantine, and Knight Grand Cross. The Order derives its name and contents from the legend of Constantine's vision of the cross prior to the Battle of Saxa Rubra in A.D. 312.

#### 1866: Societas Rosicruciana

Whether this Order is a masonic Rite, *per se*, or rather a codependent branch of 'Rosicrucianism', depends upon jurisdiction. In some locales it purports to be the latter (although it always recruits members solely from among Master Masons), yet in the United States it is known as 'Masonic Rosicrucianism'. In 1638 Henry Adamson linked Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism in his poem "The Muses' Threnodie", with the words, "For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse; We have the Mason word, and second sight, Things for to come we can foretell aright". Whether this influenced the plethora of 'Rosicrucian' degrees is impossible to say (on Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, see the chapter "Freemasonry and Western Esotericism" in this volume). However, as early as the 1740s the degree of Rosy Cross (R.Y.C.S.) may have formed part of the Royal Order of Scotland. It may have been the inspiration for, or share a common ancestor with the 'Rose Croix' which appeared in France in 1760 as 'Le chevalier de l'aigle souverain de Rose-Croix de Strasbourg'. This latter degree became the 'Seventh and last degree of Scottish Masonry emanating from Heredon' said to have been adopted by the Grand Sovereign Scottish Chapter of Sovereign Princes of Rose-Croix established by the Most Illustrious and Most Respectable *Mère Loge Écossaise* of Marseille. Any older documents referring to a 'Rose Croix' degree in France must be assumed to refer to the R.Y.C.S. degree of the Royal Order of Scotland. Robert W. Little formed the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* [in England] in 1866, on the basis of certain rituals he obtained in Scotland, although no more is known of their

origin. Its nine degrees are divided into three orders: *First Order*: I° Zelator, II° Theoricus, III° Practicus, IV° Philosophus; *Second Order*: V° Adeptus Minor, VI° Adeptus Major, VII° Adeptus Exemptus; *Third Order*: VIII° Magister, IX° Magus; Knight Grand Cross (honorary). The *Societas Rosicruciana*, which is comprised of Christian Masons, borrowed its grade structure from the German *Gold—und Rosenkreutzer* (The Golden—and Rosy Cross), which flourished as a masonic Rite from about 1767. The German Order's rituals and doctrines were a mixture of Alchemy, Hermeticism, and Kabbalah, topics which are shared by the *Societas Rosicruciana*, although the content and procedures differ substantially. The *Societas Rosicruciana* is well known as the arguable ancestor of and inspiration for the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

### 1880: Allied Masonic Degrees

Prior to the formation of the UGLE in 1813 lodges under the Antients Grand Lodge could receive warrants to work a number of unattached degrees. Several of these, which ceased to be worked following the union, were preserved in Carlile's "An Exposure of Free Masonry" (London, 1825); they, in turn, provided content for the formation of the Allied Masonic Degrees (AMD). The two main systems of the AMD are the English and American forms. The English system of the AMD dates to about 1880 and elects its candidates from members of the Mark and Royal Arch. It embraces the degrees of St. Lawrence the Martyr, Knight of Constantinople, Grand Tilers of Solomon, Red Cross of Babylon, and Holy Order of Grand High Priest. Notably, the last degree is virtually identical with the Order of the High Priesthood, conferred as a chair degree in the American York Rite, created around 1802. The Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States of America is "an honorary and invitational body dedicated to masonic research". The Sovereign College of Allied masonic and Christian Degrees was founded in Virginia in 1892, and in 1933 it merged with a similar group in North Carolina. This AMD also now restricts its membership to Royal Arch Masons. In the American system the degrees are: Royal Ark Mariner; Order of the Secret Monitor; Knight of Constantinople, Order of Saint Lawrence the Martyr; Architect, Grand Architect, Superintendent, Grand Tiler of Solomon, Master of Tyre, Excellent Master; Knight Grand Cross (honorary). A further honorary order is the Knight of the Red Branch, and of the Royal Order of Eri and Appendant Orders, conferring 1° Man-at-Arms, 2° Esquire, 3° Knight.

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## Relationships between Grand Lodges

*Jan A.M. Snoek*

### Introduction

Masonic activity takes place within lodges, and these are almost always part of an overarching Grand Lodge. There is, however, no final overarching organisation, which includes all of these Grand Lodges, no matter what conspiracy theorists may have claimed over the ages. As a result, members of a lodge of one Grand Lodge may or may not visit a lodge belonging to another Grand Lodge, depending on what the two Grand Lodges involved have decided. There are two different issues involved in these decisions: *regularity* and *recognition*. Even many Freemasons confuse these two, which is not surprising if we see that today *regularity* is defined in the text called “Basic Principles for Grand Lodge *Recognition*”. Therefore the aim of this chapter is to make clear what each of these terms imply and what the difference between the two is.

### Regularity

The concept of regularity in Freemasonry goes back at least to the eighteenth century. Generally it was used by Grand Lodges to distinguish its own *regular* lodges from *irregular* lodges, which belonged to a rival Grand Lodge or to no Grand Lodge at all.

When in 1877 the *Grand Orient de France* suppressed—as the result of a decades long escalation of a conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and Freemasonry (see the chapter on this subject in this volume)—officially all mention of the ‘Grand Architect of the Universe’, both in its rituals and in the headings of its letters and other documents, the *United Grand Lodge of England* (UGLE) at once declared the *Grand Orient de France* irregular. However, there still was no definition of what ‘regular’ or ‘irregular’ in the masonic context meant.

It was only in 1929 that the three British Grand Lodges (of England, Scotland and Ireland) agreed upon a text, called *Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition*, that the concept of regularity was defined. Ever since, a large number of other Grand Lodges have formulated (almost) identical declarations. Because of its importance, this small text is quoted here integrally, in its English version.

### Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition

*Accepted by Grand Lodge, September 4th, 1929*

The M[ost] W[orshipful] The Grand Master having expressed a desire that the Board would draw up a statement of the Basic Principles on which this Grand Lodge could be invited to recognize any Grand Lodge applying for recognition by the English Jurisdiction, the Board of General Purposes has gladly complied. The result, as follows, has been approved by the Grand Master, and it will form the basis of a questionnaire to be forwarded in future to each Jurisdiction requesting English recognition. The Board desires that not only such bodies but the Brethren generally throughout the Grand Master's Jurisdiction shall be fully informed as to those Basic Principles of Freemasonry for which the Grand Lodge of England has stood throughout its history.

1. Regularity of origin; i.e. each Grand Lodge shall have been established lawfully by a duly recognized Grand Lodge or by three or more regularly constituted Lodges.
2. That a belief in the G.A.O.T.U. [Grand Architect of the Universe] and His revealed will shall be an essential qualification for membership.
3. That all Initiates shall take their Obligation on or in full view of the open Volume of the Sacred Law, by which is meant the revelation from above which is binding on the conscience of the particular individual who is being initiated.
4. That the membership of the Grand Lodge and individual Lodges shall be composed exclusively of men; and that each Grand Lodge shall have no Masonic intercourse of any kind with mixed Lodges or bodies which admit women to membership.
5. That the Grand Lodge shall have sovereign jurisdiction over the Lodges under its control; i.e. that it shall be a responsible, independent, self-governing organization, with sole and undisputed authority over the Craft or Symbolic Degrees (Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason) within its Jurisdiction; and shall not in any way be subject to, or divide such authority with, a Supreme Council or other Power claiming any control or supervision over those degrees.
6. That the three Great Lights of Freemasonry (namely, the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square, and the Compasses) shall always be exhibited when the Grand Lodge or its subordinate Lodges are at work, the chief of these being the Volume of the Sacred Law.



7. That the discussion of religion and politics within the Lodge shall be strictly prohibited.
8. That the principles of the Antient Landmarks, customs, and usages of the Craft shall be strictly observed.

In 1989 a new version of this text was approved:

Freemasonry is practised under many independent Grand Lodges with principles or standards similar to those set by the United Grand Lodge of England throughout its history.

### Standards

To be recognised as regular by the United Grand Lodge of England, a Grand Lodge must meet the following standards.

1. It must have been lawfully established by a regular Grand Lodge or by three or more private Lodges, each warranted by a regular Grand Lodge.
2. It must be truly independent and self-governing, with undisputed authority over Craft—or basic—Freemasonry (i. e. the symbolic degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason) within its jurisdiction, and not subject in any other way to or sharing power with any other Masonic body.
3. Freemasons under its jurisdiction must be men, and it and its Lodges must have no Masonic contact with Lodges which admit women to membership.<sup>1</sup>
4. Freemasons under its jurisdiction must believe in a Supreme Being.

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipédia sub “Régularité maçonnique” leaves out this article, suggesting that in 1989 the UGLE would have opened the possibility that Grand Lodges with female members could be regular. However, that is not the case. Even ten years later, on March 10, 1999, the UGLE issued the statement that: “There exist in England and Wales at least two Grand Lodges solely for women. Except that these bodies admit women, they are, so far as can be ascertained, otherwise regular in their practice. There is also one which admits both men and women to membership. They are not recognised by this Grand Lodge and intervisitation may not take place. There are, however, discussions from time to time with the women’s Grand Lodges on matters of mutual concern. Brethren are therefore free to explain to non-Masons, if asked, that Freemasonry is not confined to men (even though this Grand Lodge does not itself admit women)”. Although with this statement the UGLE recognised for the first time that “Freemasonry is not confined to men”, it did not put out of order masculinity as a criterion of regularity. The view of the UGLE remains that *regular* Freemasonry can only be masculine.

5. All Freemasons under its jurisdiction must take their Obligations on or in full view of the Volume of the Sacred Law (i.e. the Bible) or the book held sacred by the man concerned.
6. The three Great Lights of Freemasonry (i.e. the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses) must be on display when the Grand Lodge or its Subordinate Lodges are open.
7. The discussion of religion and politics within its Lodges must be prohibited.
8. It must adhere to the established principles and tenets (the 'Antient Landmarks') and customs of the Craft, and insist on their being observed within its Lodges.

### **Irregular or Unrecognised Grand Lodges**

There are some self-styled Masonic bodies which do not meet these standards, e. g. which do not require a belief in a Supreme Being, or which allow or encourage their members to participate as such in political matters. These bodies are not recognised by the Grand Lodge of England as being Masonically regular, and Masonic contact with them is forbidden.

January 1989

The essence of this text is to provide criteria against which an existing Grand Lodge may be measured. If it conforms to these criteria it is regular, if not, then it is irregular.

A number of remarks concerning the individual criteria may be useful here. In the first place, articles 4 (1929)/3 (1989) and 7 are directly copied from James Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723: "The Persons admitted Members of a Lodge be...no Women,..." (Charge III) (see the chapter on Freemasonry and Women in this volume) and "...no private Piques or Quarrels must be brought within the Door of the Lodge, far less any Quarrels about Religion, or Nations, or State Policy,..." (Charge VI, point 2).

Secondly, the Volume of the Sacred Law is mentioned here twice (articles 3 (1929)/5 (1989) and 6), but in two completely different functions. In article 3 (1929)/5 (1989) it is that book which is most binding for the candidate who takes his obligation. In that function it does not need to be the Bible, but may be any sacred text. However, in article 6, it is one of the three objects which today are called the Great Lights of Freemasonry, and which in fact play essential roles in the rituals. In this context it refers to that book which contains the stories about the building of the Temple of King Solomon, as well as almost all

those other texts, which the rituals so lavishly quote, i.e. the Bible. As a result, the English understanding of these two articles is that, for the purpose of taking the obligation, a second sacred text may be placed beside the Bible, but as the first of the Great Lights, the Bible should always be present (and opened) on the altar.

Really problematic is the last article, since there exists no definition of “the Antient Landmarks, customs, and usages of the Craft”. Generally, this formulation is supposed to include for example the rituals of the Craft-degrees, but these alone are already extremely variable throughout the world (see Chapter 20, “The Freemason’s Landmarks”, Jones 1977). In fact, therefore, this article cannot be used as a test for regularity. For the time being it is there only as an escape for the case that some organisation, claiming to be a Grand Lodge and fulfilling all other criteria, would in fact follow a ritual practice which no other Grand Lodge would be willing to regard as masonic. For example, in 1905 the Senior Grand Warden of the Dutch Grand Lodge, J. Helder, proposed a new, single, ritual, which alone would replace the rituals for the three degrees in use before, and initiate a candidate for the Order at once as a Master Mason. This ritual was a reconstruction of what Helder thought had been the ritual practice in use in Mithraism in the Roman era. The Dutch Brethren rejected this proposal, but had they not, the UGLE could have declared the Grand Orient of The Netherlands irregular on the basis of article 8 (had the *Basic Principles* been in existence then).

In practice, however, the today existing definition of regularity is the collection of the first seven of the *Basic Principles*. On the basis of this definition, some of the existing Grand Lodges are regular, while others are not. The regular Grand Lodges are inclined to call those who are not, ‘irregular’. These, however, regard themselves as ‘liberal’ and are inclined to refer to the regular ones as ‘conservative’.

### Recognition

In the first decades of its existence, the Premier Grand Lodge of England (‘Moderns’) regarded all lodges outside of England as either belonging to itself, or irregular. If in some country the regular lodges choose a Grand Master, he was regarded by the English Grand Lodge a Provincial Grand Master under the Premier Grand Lodge. Only around 1770 the Premier Grand Lodge of England started to recognise the existence of independent Grand Lodges outside of England. Among the first ones so recognised were those in France (1769) and The Netherlands (1770). This implied not only that the Grand Lodges

concerned—which often existed for several decades already—were finally recognised as such, but also the promise of the English Grand Lodge that it would no longer charter new lodges in the territory covered by the recognised local Grand Lodges. Such recognition is a free decision between two Grand Lodges, which can take place between two liberal Grand Lodges just as well as between two regular ones.

In the course of time certain rules for getting recognized developed. Firstly, it should normally be a younger Grand Lodge, which requests an older one to recognize it. In that process it should start with those Grand Lodges that are only slightly older than itself, and then work its way upwards, until it is recognized by the oldest one. Secondly, although the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) was only formed in 1813 (and created completely new rituals in 1816), it is treated as if it is from 1717, the year traditionally taken to be the one in which the Premier Grand Lodge was founded, since that was the oldest Grand Lodge which merged into the UGLE. As a result, the UGLE counts as the oldest Grand Lodge of all. This is, however, the only case where such a claim on an older than the founding date is accepted. For example, the Dutch Grand Lodge was first founded in 1734, but then reorganized in 1756, and it is that last year which now counts as its start.

Sometimes the delay between the foundation of a regular Grand Lodge and its recognition may be quite remarkable. For example, there is no doubt that the so-called Prince Hall Grand Lodges in the United States were founded as perfectly regular Grand Lodges in the eighteenth century. But it took until the end of the twentieth century before regular non-Prince Hall Grand Lodges started to recognize them (see the chapter on Freemasonry and Blacks in this volume).

Quite obviously, since the *Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition* were formulated in 1929, Grand Lodges, which choose to abide by these rules, tend to recognize only other Grand Lodges which do the same. As a result, they create—besides the opposition between regular and not-regular Grand Lodges—a second division, namely between those Grand Lodges which they do, and those which they do not recognise. However, these two oppositions do not necessarily coincide. For example, a Grand Lodge may decide to apply more criteria than the regularity of an other Grand Lodge when deciding to recognize it or not. For a long time, the UGLE belonged to those Grand Lodges, which prefer not to recognize more than one regular Grand Lodge per country (or, in the USA or Brazil, per state). Therefore, it recognizes in such countries as Greece and Italy only one Grand Lodge, although there are two regular Grand Lodges in each one of them. As a result, two regular Grand Lodges that recognize each other may each recognize different regular Grand Lodges in countries where there is more than one.

At the end of the twentieth century, the public opinion no longer accepted that the UGLE recognized not a single Prince Hall Grand Lodge because it recognized a 'white' Grand Lodge in each of the United States of America already. It therefore modified its unwritten rule into, that a second regular Grand Lodge in any country (or State in the USA or Brazil) where there exist more than one, can only be recognized as well, if the one recognized already recognizes the second one. As a result, the UGLE recognized in 1994 for the first time a Prince Hall Grand Lodge, namely that of Massachusetts. Since then several more have been recognized, all in the northern states of the USA, the recognized 'white' Grand Lodges in the southern states not being inclined to recognize a 'black' Grand Lodge. Also in Brazil, several regular Grand Lodges have since then been recognized by the UGLE.

Not only the regular Grand Lodges may recognize each other, the liberal ones often do so as well. Most of them maintain, just as the regular ones, lists of the Grand Lodges from which they accept visitors. The list of a liberal Grand Lodge may indeed contain the names of large numbers of regular Grand Lodges, although those regular Grand Lodges will not accept visitors from the liberal one. Interdicting in these cases becomes asymmetrical. But liberal Grand Lodges also conclude agreements with each other, just as regular ones. A special case are those Grand Lodges, which initiate (only or also) women. According to the *Basic Principles*, none of them can be regular. But most of them do recognize each other.

Although there does not exist one overarching organization which includes all masonic Grand Lodges, Freemasons have time and again created organizations in which all, or a particular selection of, Grand Lodges were invited to participate. However, since these always had at least some liberal Grand Lodges as members, the United Grand Lodge of England never participated in them. Without wanting to describe the history of all of them, some should at least be mentioned here. The *Bureau International de Relations Maçonniques* existed from 1902 to 1921, when it was integrated in the *Association Maçonnique Internationale* (AMI). This organisation was created during the international masonic Convent in October 1921 in Geneva. It accepted only purely male Grand Lodges as members, but, most notably, it included both regular and liberal ones. As a result of the resistance of the UGLE against such relations over the borders of regular Freemasonry, the AMI was dissolved in 1950. It was succeeded by the *Centre de Liaison et d'Information des Puissances maçonniques Signataires de l'Appel de Strasbourg* (CLIPSAS).<sup>2</sup> In the 1990s the CLIPSAS got into internal troubles, whereupon first the *Association Maçonnique*

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.clipsas.com](http://www.clipsas.com). The CLIPSAS had in 2011 52 male, female and mixed Grand Lodges as members. All accessed at 12 June 2011.

*Internationale Libérale* (AMIL),<sup>3</sup> and then in 1998, the *Secrétariat International Maçonnique des Puissances Adogmatiques* (SIMPA)<sup>4</sup> were formed. The *Ligue Universelle des Francs-Maçons* (LUF), founded in 1905, did not accept female Freemasons, but in 1964 it merged with *Catena*. This *International Masonic Union Catena* had been founded in 1961.<sup>5</sup> It includes mixed gender Grand Lodges. In 1982 was founded the *Centre de Liaison International de la Maçonnerie Féminine* (CLIMAF), which accepts only female Grand Lodges as members.<sup>6</sup> Participating members of such international organisations of Grand Lodges usually recognise each other, of course.

### Organisations of High Degrees

There seem to be no lists of criteria for regularity of organisations of 'high degrees'. If such an organisation accepts as new members only those of regular Grand Lodges, then it is generally regarded as regular. If such organisations work with the same Rite (i.e. the same system of degrees), they may enter into mutual recognition and accept each other's members as visitors. Surprisingly, there are even a few examples where such organisations, working with *different* Rites, still accept mutual visitation. For example, in the 1980s, a number of different Orders, working with different Rites, but all of which included some form of a Knight Templar degree, decided to accept mutual visitation, restricted to that degree. An other example is Germany, where all organisations working with Rites which include 'high degrees' and accepting only members of regular Grand Lodges as candidates, have decided to accept mutual visitation. For that purpose they have set up a table, which shows for their members to which degrees in which Rites they have access if they have which degree in their own Rite.

### Conflicts

Non-recognition is often an indication of the existing of conflicts. For example, when in the middle of the eighteenth century the Grand Lodge of the 'Antients' was formed in England, it condemned the 'Premier Grand Lodge'. Of course,

3 The AMIL had in 2011 7 male, female and mixed Grand Lodges as members.

4 The SIMPA had in 2011 27 male, female and mixed Grand Lodges as members.

5 See [www.catena.org](http://www.catena.org). Catena had in 2011 5 mixed Grand Lodges as members.

6 See [www.climaf.eu](http://www.climaf.eu). The CLIMAF had in 2011 8 female Grand Lodges as members.

the last one thereupon condemned the former as well. And both did as if *The Grand Lodge of ALL England* in York, founded in 1725, did not exist: each one regarded itself as the only proper one. In 1813 the two then remaining Grand Lodges merged into the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE). But in 1823, four lodges, erased by the UGLE, formed *The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of England according to the Old Institutions*. It disappeared in 1913. In 2005 was founded the so-called *Regular Grand Lodge of England* (RGLE), which today refers to itself as the *Masonic High Council the Mother High Council [of the] Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons*. Its founders were not content with how the UGLE functioned. As usually, the RGLE is—despite its name—not recognised by the UGLE and *vice versa*.

Also among the organisations practising 'high degrees' there have been numerous conflicts, often resulting in mutual condemnation. "The popularity of diverse forms of ['high degree'] masonry has resulted in battles over claims to the exclusive intellectual rights to certain degrees, and/or ritual secrets, in spite of the fact that they may have been used by older Rites, orders, and Systems. This competition led to the creation of newer high degree systems [and the] reconstructions of older systems."<sup>7</sup> Luckily, there are cases of opposite actions as well. For example in England, from 1895 onwards, the Order of the Allied Masonic Degrees worked, a.o., the American degree of the Secret Monitor, despite the fact that since 1887 a Grand Council of the Order of the Secret Monitor for the United Kingdom and the Colonies and Dependencies of the British Crown existed. But in 1931, while both Orders happened to have the same Grand Master, Colonel C.W. Napier-Clavering, "a Treaty was signed whereby the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees recognised the Grand Council of the Secret Monitor as the sole authority over the Degree of Secret Monitor and agreed to cease to practice or confer it" (Anon 1988: 7).

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7 Arturo de Hoyos in the abstract of his lecture "The battle to control high grade Masonry in the United States", held for the 3rd International Conference on the History of Freemasonry, Alexandria (VA, USA), 27–29 May 2011, *Programme and Abstract Book*, 25.

# Freemasonry and Friendly Societies

*Daniel Weinbren*

## Introduction

There has been scholarly work on the development of formal mutual aid organizations throughout the world (Van der Linden 1996). This volume is evidence of interest in the development of Freemasonry. However, there has been relatively little focus on the importance of connections between fraternal organizations in Europe (Weinbren 2010b). Perceiving Freemasonry as part of an engagement with fraternity (rather than placing it within conventional religious or political frameworks) aids understanding of its popularity and its structure. Often structured in terms of families, with siblings and parents, fraternal bodies have been formed for a variety of purposes, religion, mutual aid and conviviality often being prominent. A notion of fraternity could link men, and sometimes women, across social and economic divisions and tie individual, familial and communal survival strategies and security to social activities and secrecy. Through drawing on elements often considered distinctive from one another, community, civility, charity and commerce, a pattern can be discerned which connects that which presents itself as ancient ritual to modern economic structures.

The friendly societies of the United Kingdom and the British Empire have long enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the Freemasons. Friendly societies facilitated risk-sharing among members through the organized transfer of money and used pooled money to protect members against the consequences of not being able to work at their normal trade due to problems including injury or old age. In the case of a male member's death they supported widows and orphans. Although they were only formally recognized by UK legislation in 1793 their origins lie at least as far back as the medieval guilds. They were also closely connected to the co-operative and mutual aid movements and the trade unions and have built on developments within the theatre and insurance and on magical concepts. In the UK and its empire among the most popular of these associations were the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity (IOOFMU) and the Ancient Order of Foresters (AOF). There were, however, many more. Some focused on insurance, some served single villages or trades and some had religious or political aims. By the end of the nineteenth century



about six million people, equivalent to half the adult males of Britain, were members (Weinbren 2002; Harris 2004: 82, 194; Hennock 2007: 166–181). In this chapter the similarities in the nineteenth century between the attitudes of Freemasonry and the societies towards rituals and charity are considered, as are the diversion from one another in the early twentieth century and the subsequent further shifts in their alignments.

It was perhaps because of the shared ancestry and continued relationship with friendly societies that the Freemasons have long argued that their organization predate those of other fraternal associations within the UK. In 1858 the *Freemasons' Monthly Magazine* referred to the Oddfellows as “the illegitimate offspring of Masonry” as “the *omnium gatherum* of mock masonry” and also as one of the “illegitimate institutions” (*Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, January 1855: 10; *Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, July 1858: 103, 104). Although the first part of *omnium gatherum* is Latin for ‘all’ the second word has a Latin ending (um) added to the English word ‘gather’. While the Freemasons may have wished to emphasize that the IOOFMU was *mélange*, its name a play on ‘gather ‘em all’, other accounts of the name ‘Oddfellows’ (which was used in the title of numerous friendly societies in the UK) indicate that it was derived from the name given to the labourers who served the Masons, that is ‘hod’ fellows. This foregrounds hierarchy and interdependency between the different forms of fraternal associations. When this tale is combined with another one, about the Oddfellows name being derived from the members’ roles as God’s fellows, then the hierarchy is reconfigured and further complexity indicated.

In the nineteenth century the Freemasons and many of the larger British friendly societies, notably the IOOFMU and the AOF had similar interests, associational forms, systems of connected lodges and esoteric, universalist rituals which blended beliefs from Christianity and science (Weinbren and James 2005). Their common roots in the guilds have frequently been noted (Smith 1870; Brabrook 1898: 57; Walford 1888: 5; Clapham 1926: 296–298; Walker 1986: 345; Gorsky 1999: 115; Prescott 2002; Prescott 2007). Masonic historian Bob Cooper has called the similarities between the Order of Free Gardeners and Freemasonry “striking” (Cooper 2000: 39). These types of organisation enjoyed rapid growth during industrialisation and urbanisation when there was much interest in organisations that could increase social stability and reduce social divisions through the promotion of self-help, reciprocity and patronage. There was cross-fertilisation through an overlapping leadership. Those who joined may have had similar aims; to gain respect, self-confidence, self-discipline, new skills, affection, solidarity or a desire to promote closer links between religious and social welfare. They may have been interested in ‘fraternal charity... an ideology of interdependence, its practical

manifestation being giving and receiving' (Durr 2005: 8–10). Both the friendly societies and the Freemasons encouraged fellowship, conviviality (often they met in pubs) and also respectability (they often fined for swearing and drunkenness and forbid discussion of religion and politics) and a sense that members should help one another and their widows. That the United States Odd Fellows Grand Sire in the 1880s, John H. White denied the connections, stating "it is sometimes said that Odd Fellowship is the offspring of Masonry but this is in no sense true" may reflect the concerns about Freemasonry within the US (Ross 1888: 2). Certainly in the UK there were links between friendly societies and Freemasonry at many levels. In 1815 when a new IOOFMU lodge was opened in Ashton-under-Lyne there was a toast to "The Hon. Society of Freemasons", before the toast to the "The Hon. Independent Society of Oddfellows". In the same year the IOOFMU Grand Committee resolved "that in consequence of information received from the Masonic Grand Lodge, John Wood never be admitted into our Order" and in 1816 another man was rejected for membership on the advice of the Freemasons (Gosden 1961: 128; *Manchester Guardian*, 15 November 1815). In 1829 the *Oddfellows' Magazine* stated:

The Order of Oddfellows was originally initiated on Masonic principles, the object of which is to cement more firmly the bonds of social feeling and sympathetic intercourse between man and man.

*Oddfellows' Magazine*, 1, 1829: 68

For the Oddfellows 'self-help was secondary and the primary purpose was to spread among their members ideas of benevolence, love and charity. The Oddfellows had more in common with the Masons than with the county or village friendly society' (Durr 1987: 97). The gap between the Freemasons and the friendly societies widened during the twentieth century as the Freemasons became more socially exclusive and the friendly societies orientated themselves towards greater engagement in the administration of state insurance. In the post war period there were similar patterns of decline in popularity but their commonality was marginalised as the friendly societies focused on financial services while the Freemasons offered opportunities for fellowship and philanthropy.

### Rituals and Exchanges

Although the IOOFMU and the AOF acknowledged their ancestry in the guilds they shared an interest with the Freemasons in invented traditions (*Oddfellows'*

*Magazine* September 1888; Ward 1906). In 1842 the IOOFMU Board of Directors asserted that the name of Oddfellows was granted by Titus Caesar in 79 CE. In 1909 an IOOFMU Provincial Grand Master suggested “that Adam was an Oddfellow no one can doubt and that Eve was another is a matter of fact; and that they constituted in the Garden of Eden the first Oddfellows’ Friendly Society is a matter of History”.<sup>1</sup> The IOOFMU also drew on a tradition of Jews as symbols of loyalty and power (Moffrey 1910). The convention was retained by the Archdeacon of Ely who told the IOOFMU’s annual delegate conference in 1914 that

St Paul in his day was a member of what it is not an exaggeration to call a great friendly society. The people of Israel as a friendly society [...] was bound up in faith in the God of Israel like modern friendly societies in many of its characteristics

*Oddfellows’ Magazine*, July 1914: 278.

The AOF was formed in 1834 but claimed to have evolved from the Royal Foresters “whose origins are lost in the mists of time” (Cooper 1984: 2). Its regalia and imagery made “considerable use” of Robin Hood (Barczewski 2000: 79–80). There were similar presentations of a long lineage from friendly societies with titles that include words such as Anglo-Saxons, Druids and Ancient Britons. The regalia of the Nottingham Imperial Oddfellows’ included full-length medieval costumes. The Freemasons claimed connections to the building of King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem in 967 BCE and like many friendly societies had passwords, initiation and other rituals, ceremonial impedimenta, notably chairs, aprons and jewels. Like members of many friendly societies, Masons wore regalia, exchanged grips and signs, processed in public with banners and could progress through degree systems. In the traditions of some Oddfellows and Freemasons the doorkeeper was the Tyler, the chairman the Noble Grand and the meeting place, which was laid out in a similar fashion, the lodge. The Masons’ third degree ritual involved death and resurrection. For some of the earliest IOOFMU members the first sight in the lodge was the emblem of death and motto ‘Remember thy end’. The initiate was asked “What do you make of the emblem” and replied “As a guard upon my lips—like unto it be as silent as the grave: recollecting that the day will come when the secrets

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1 George Brindley, Past Provincial Grand Master, Burslem Perseverance Lodge, Pottery and Newcastle District paper read to Mona Lodge of Oddfellows, Isle of Man, August 1909. At <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/mquart/mq07598.htm>. Accessed December 3, 2008.

of all the hearts will be laid open" (Durr 1987: 97). Peter Clark characterised the Oddfellows of the early nineteenth century as 'masonic style' but as masonic ritual was amended in 1815–1816 there may have been some exchange of ideas between the two organizations (Clark 2000: 385).

Ritual was a means to check the status of a stranger, to unite those who had been initiated and remind them of their promises of fraternal fidelity. As Eric Hobsbawm argued, "the nineteenth-century liberal ideology of social change systematically failed to provide for the social and authority ties taken for granted in earlier societies, and created voids which might have to be filled by invented practices" (Hobsbawm 1983: 8). In asserting their ancient lineage the brethren were also indicating the modernity of their associations. In the nineteenth century the legitimacy of divinely-ordained, hierarchical, dynastic regimes was threatened by new notions of the democratic nation. These claimed both deep roots and "deep horizontal comradeship...fraternity" (Anderson 1991: 6–7). This new sense of national identity with fraternity at its centre was bolstered by the friendly societies' and the Freemasons' narratives and practices. They elected their officers and both Oddfellows and Freemasons campaigned for the extension of the franchise. In Nottinghamshire the Hyson Green Friendly Society took part in a Chartist procession in 1838 and Oddfellows gave support to the Chartists in Wales, the north east of England, Dundee, Yorkshire, the Isle of Man and elsewhere (England 2007; Williams 1959: 280; Jones 1985: 31, 108; Turner 1992: 250, 251–253, 255, 263; Chase 2007: 62, 142, 145, 229; Belchem 1992: 607; Thompson 1968: 462–463; Thompson 1986).

### **Fraternal Charity**

In the nineteenth century there was a porous boundary between charity and mutual aid (Gorsky 1999: 18, 117; Prochaska 2006: 11, 10; Harris 2004: 72, 77). In common with many fraternal associations, charities had traditions of democracy (donors, voting in proportion to their donation decided as to the recipients of funds in the box) of surveillance (checks were made on recipients) and of support for travellers (Morris 1983: 107). Several friendly societies maintained a social convention of the eighteenth and nineteenth century and referred to "the gifts" of the lodge or society long after the term "benefit" was introduced (Turner 1992: 328, 329, 360). Although the payments made were a members' right, they incurred a duty in return. Presenting the benefits as gifts was a way of reminding members that they were obliged to the 'donors', their brethren, that an inequitable relationship had been created and, because reciprocation cannot be immediate, the relationship would need to be

maintained. Freemasons, while a charitable body, recognized members' rights to benefits. Freemasons could travel throughout the Empire and expect support from lodges (Burt 2003: 671–677). When a Freemason died abroad the expectation was that costs of his funeral would be reimbursed by his mother lodge in the UK. Speaking at the opening of a lodge in 1872 the Reverend John Halford declared that membership gave men “a claim on the help and sympathy of Freemasons in all parts of the world...we have the right not only to a friendly greeting, but to a brotherly welcome and such assistance as our circumstances require and justify” (Harland-Jacobs 1999: 244). Similarly thousands of pounds were distributed to friendly societies' ‘travelling brothers’ when they sought work in the UK and indeed the British Empire (Weinbren 2010a). In Norfolk in 1891 the Loyal Trafalgar IOOFMU lodge granted ‘clearance’ to Brother Henry Hollis when he went to America and in 1908 made a sick payment to Brother Ward, who, although ‘residing in Australia’, had maintained his membership (Stibbins 2001, 41).

The description of the IOOFMU's White Degree (which was part of an internal system of accreditation) began: “The first point upon which our Order ordains to admonish you is no less than that of the first friendly duty to mankind—Charity” (Anon 1879: 94). When, for example, in Coventry a Tea Party and Ball in 1869 attended by 600 IOOFMU members raised money for Ragged Schools and two local philanthropic societies, the 1870 Annual Report concluded

that while Friendship Love and Truth are the prevailing characteristics of our vast Brotherhood, we are not unmindful of the urgent requirements of our less fortunate and distressed fellow creatures

WELLER 1990: 112–113

Lists of members seeking additional, charitable, help were made available to those who attended the annual delegate meetings (High Court) of the AOF. In common with the Freemasons when the friendly societies gave donations to their own members and to numerous charities they sought to structure their benevolence (Weinbren 2007). John Money has suggested that the Freemasons conceived of charity in terms of mutual aid, that they saw

charity primarily in terms of their own self-realisation. To ‘make’ a mason, archetypically formed and regularly tested to the ‘working’ of his lodge was itself the best form of charity because it conferred those attributes of ‘character’ without which charity was wasted on the recipient

MONEY 1993: 384

The Masonic Benevolent Society, 1799–1830, operated like a friendly society (Gorsky 1995: 151). In 1800 in Warrington, the Masonic Lodge of Lights had both a Masonic Benefit Society and links to the White Hart Benefit Society. In Bristol the Temple Lodge Benefit Society was both a masonic lodge and a friendly society. In general “the friendly society values of Freemasonry are evident throughout in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (Gorsky 1999: 117, 119). The Masonic Lodge of Friendship, Oldham, gave a grant to a Brother whose wife was ill, purchased a coffin for a deceased Brother and made payments to imprisoned Brothers. It started a Benevolent Society in 1828 and a Sick Fund in 1829. The local Unitarian Church, run in the 1860s by a Freemason, had long been involved in welfare work and had its own sick and clothing clubs (Harrison 2002: 39–43, 45). Many scholars have concluded that such notions of reciprocity fell away between the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the face of market forces (Polanyi 1957; Valenze 2006: 258; Gillis 1996: 79; Stedman Jones 1984: 256, 257, 259; Newby 1977: 21, 42, 60, 234). Cordery suggested that the friendly societies grew rapidly “during the shift from paternal reciprocity to the creation of a free market in labour”. Part of the popularity of the Freemasons and the friendly societies during this period may have been because they practiced similar forms of reciprocation and obligation and their rituals ‘smoothed the transition from the old order to the new world of commercialism’ (Cordery, 2003, 181).

### Divergence

In the period since the latter part of the nineteenth century the fraternal brothers have gone in different directions. The shifting relationship can be illuminated through analysis of a single masonic lodge, the Philanthropic Lodge No. 107 of Lynn, Norfolk. It was founded in 1810 and built on local traditions. During the fourteenth century half the men of Lynn were members of religious and merchants’ guilds. After the Reformation craft guilds and Lynn Corporation fulfilled similar functions, providing opportunities for collective self-help, processions, rituals and feasts and the channelling of funds to the poor (Owen 1984: 61–63, 295–317). In the sixteenth century 66% of Lynn merchants left money to the poor by entrusting funds to the Corporation (McRee 1993: 32; Richards 1990: 103; Newman 1940: 33–35; Muldrew 1998: 109). In the eighteenth century six masonic lodges were founded in Lynn before the Philanthropic. Three had closed by 1786 and the other three by 1838. Both the lodges that were formed after the Philanthropic had closed

by 1851.<sup>2</sup> There were also friendly societies. The Sailors Friendly Society was based at a pub owned by William and Thomas Bagge who managed the funds and probably employed the men. William was a member of the first masonic lodge to be established in the town and was three-time mayor while John Bagge, another founding member of the lodge, was also a Lynn mayor. Initially the lodge's future looked uncertain. The oldest masonic lodge in the county closed in 1809 and the Philanthropic's early years were troubled by the theft, in 1823 of the funds and records, by the men who were Worshipful Masters in 1816, 1820 and 1822 (Wykes 1994: 15). The first brethren were artisans and mariners from around the east coast. The cooper, the butcher, the carpenters, pilots, whitesmith, blacksmith and bakers all joined before 1840. These men had left by the 1830s, some possibly to join the IOOFMU which was recruiting mariners (Turner 1992: 225). They were replaced by wealthier seafarers and by clerks (of whom there was one in 1839, six by 1876). A merchant joined in 1835, the first 'gentleman' in 1858 and there were nine of each by 1881. Brewers and farmers joined. A cleric joined in 1861 and there were eight by 1876. Possibly the Philanthropic benefited from being the only masonic lodge in Lynn between 1851 and 1906, a period when the markets of Lynn, which were based around coastal and inland water transportation, faced considerable dislocation as wheat prices, land prices and rental incomes all fell, while grain imports rose, cattle disease spread, and the railway network grew. Indicative of social changes is that John Whaley, one of the eight initiates of the Philanthropic Lodge in 1810 and the Worshipful Master in 1811, 1812 and 1814, was a gunsmith while Sir William Hovell Browne ffolkes, the Worshipful Master in 1880, 1899 and 1910, owned the vast Hillington estate. By that time 13 members of the lodge owned between 20 and 80 acres and 10 had between 100 and 500 acres. Newman noted that the social status of Provincial Grand Masters "illustrates the extent to which normally such offices were restricted to various narrow social groups" (Newman 1998: 33). In Wolverhampton and Leicester "masons were increasingly drawn from professional and business backgrounds in this period [when] it is clear their numbers in many towns were increasing rapidly" and that there was considerable patronage by the gentry (Wykes 1996: 23–25).

As the gentry came to dominate the Philanthropic, the artisanate became more powerful within the friendly societies. There were 95 AOF courts (branches) in Norfolk in 1885 and the jobs of 64 of the secretaries and 42 of the treasurers can be identified in the 1881 Census. In contrast to the general

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2 John Lane's Masonic Records 1717–1894. At <http://www.freemasonry.dept.shef.ac.uk/index.php?lang=1&type=page&level0=244&level1=610>. Accessed January 31, 2009.

membership, only 12 of these 106 officers were labourers. The others identified themselves as craftsmen, tradesmen or farmers. Many small landowners had other interests. Across the county during the late nineteenth century only 17.3% of agricultural holdings were larger than 100 acres and a third of the farms in Norfolk were family farms employing little or no outside labour (Reed 1984: 53–55). A number of other farmers and landowners forged ties with societies through becoming officers in them. The friendly society in Catton, Norfolk had three trustees, all of them farmers. In some cases farmers provided financial support. Many friendly societies encountered problems from the 1870s when the average age of death increased, leaving them with ill, old members. Local societies in Massingham and Hillington collapsed and it was the provision of friendly society services which hastened the demise of the National Agricultural Labourers Union (*Norfolk Chronicle*, 24 July 1875; Scotland 1981: 170). As a Trustee of a friendly society with about 500 members in the Norwich, Norfolk area noted: “We are a plain lot of uncultivated agricultural labourers [who need] 10 or 20 percent of middle class to keep [us] straight” (Stibbins 2001: 46). Newby argued that the impact was that the AOF and the IOOFMU “provided the agricultural worker with administrative experience and an organisational model” (Newby 1977: 67). This social realignment also provided opportunities for Freemasons to forge connections. Between 1867 and 1915 there were 60 men who held the posts of Provincial Grand Master, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, the Corresponding Secretary or Trustee of IOOFMU King’s Lynn and West Norfolk District. The occupations of 29 of them in 1881 can be identified, and a number of those occupations were also held by members of the Philanthropic Lodge. There was at least one cleric, a tobacconist, a gardener, a chemist, a baker, a butcher, a solicitor, a brewer, a coal merchant and a timber merchant in each organisation.

While the social composition of the Philanthropic Lodge may be evidence that Freemasonry was “socially exclusive” and “closely associated with status and respectability” it still provided members with diverse connections (Tosh 1999: 133). In 1880 the IOOFMU held its annual delegate conference in Lynn. Four hundred delegates represented the society in a procession and at a banquet with a reception in the town’s Guildhall. The tradition of fraternity crossing economic lines and enabling men from a variety of economic strata to meet was maintained in that the Oddfellows cultivated links with influential men of the area. The influential Oddfellows Estimates Committee was chaired by a Freemason who was also a civil servant, Robert Moffrey. The 1880 conference was supported by a number of prominent local men including the MP for West Norfolk who was also the Sheriff of Norfolk in 1866, a Freemason, local landowner and patron of at least three local churches while the Prince of



Wales invited conference delegates to Sandringham (*Oddfellows' Magazine*, April 1880: 402–03; *Oddfellows' Magazine*, July 1882: 449–451; *The Times*, 18 May 1880). Hamon L'Estrange, was a Provincial Grand Treasurer 1876–1886, and also a Grand Deacon and a Worshipful Master of a masonic lodge. He initiated an IOOFMU Lodge in the town where he lived, Hunstanton. John Rust, the Philanthropic Worshipful Master in 1892 was another IOOFMU Grand Master and Philanthropic member James Lister Stead was also active in the IOOFMU. In 1901 the IOOFMU's Grand Master Richard Rushton was both a Masonic Provincial Grand Treasurer and member of a supra-lodge grouping of Freemasons, Royal Arch. In 1866 Charles Theophilus Ives became Provincial Grand Master of the Lynn District of the IOOFMU and in 1867, Worshipful Master of the Philanthropic. Ives went on to become Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, Provincial Grand Senior Warden and Lodge treasurer. When the AOF opened its first court in Lynn (in the Freemason's Tavern) it established a benevolent fund 'for brethren in distress'. Charles Edward Ward, a solicitor's clerk in Lynn, was a Master of the Lodge and Provincial Grand Senior Warden in the Freemasons, a patron of the IOOFMU and, in 1906, the AOF High Chief Ranger. The AOF called him "a mason of distinction" and suggested that there could not be 'a more popular member of the craft than he in the eastern counties'. His wife was an honorary member of a female AOF court, which he had helped to found and at the AOF High Court (annual delegates meeting) which was held in Lynn that year he would have met with representatives of many fraternal bodies. The Prince of Wales, a Philanthropic Lodge member, gave land for an AOF hall in nearby Dersingham and provided lunch to fifteen hundred AOF delegates at Sandringham. This was followed by tea at Hillington, home of the ffolkes family. By 1906 there were 2,516 members in the 10 courts in the Lynn area. Between a quarter and a third of Manchester Unity Oddfellows and between 80% and 90% of the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society in Norfolk were agricultural labourers (Stibbins 2001: 48). The ffolkes owned the seat at Hillington and Sir William Hovell Browne ffolkes, was a Lynn MP 1880–1885 and a director of the Norfolk Estuary Company. The rural dean of Lynn, the Rev. H.E. Browne ffolkes (1823–1912) was Rector of Hillington from 1853 and he was followed by the Rev. F.A.S. ffolkes, MVO, JP, a brother of the Baronet. The AOF was proud to announce that a court that it opened in 1899, *Pride of South Lynn*, had

a large number of honorary members, several scales of contributions and benefits and receives its members accumulated savings for investment.

Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society 1906.

Other Philanthropic Lodge members with links to the AOF included Richard Bryant, a Master and Provincial Grand Senior Warder and AOF National Committee member, Hamon L'Estrange, Sir William Hovell Browne ffolkes and Colonel William Patrick (AOF Vice-Presidents) and two other members who were on the AOF executive. In addition, John William Hyner, a Master of the Philanthropic Lodge and Provincial Grand Registrar in the Freemasons, followed Ward and became a High Court Ranger (ie AOF President). William Bennett, a Chief Ranger in the AOF Prince of Wales Court, worked for Philanthropic Lodge member John Dyker Thew. Central to friendly societies was that they provided insurance, and in 1869 Philanthropic members were recorded as being insurance agents for eight different companies, thus providing members with an additional set of potentially valuable connections (Kelly 1869).

Despite the connections and similarities the two fraternal bodies grew apart with the development of political movements that focused on class rather than fraternity. The division can be exemplified by the attitude of those within another body with an interest in fraternity, the British Labour Party. This was established as the political wing of the industrial workers' movement. G.H. Roberts, elected in 1906 as one of the first Labour MPs, said that he "graduated in the university of the friendly societies" and would not have been returned to the House "but for the experience that he had gained in the friendly society movement" (*Oddfellows' Magazine*, November 1914: 701). By contrast, there was so much hostility between the Labour Party and the Freemasons that the latter felt obliged to create a lodge just for Labour Party MPs and officials (Hamill and Prescott 2006: 9–4).

The divisions were made more overt following the passage of the National Health Insurance Act, 1911. The largest friendly societies were offered the opportunity to be 'approved' to administer the state national insurance. Many commentators saw this as detrimental to the societies. In 1913, a year after it came into operation, the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society and an Honorary member of the IOOFMU, Charles Loch, wrote that the National Health Insurance Act was "the death warrant of the friendly societies" (*Charity Organisation Review*, 33: 328, June 1913). In 1949, one year after the Act was superseded, Douglas Cole concluded that "the friendly societies, including the Orders, despite their large membership, have ceased to count as a social force to anything like the extent to which they used to count in the Victorian era" (Cole, *The Economic Journal*, 59: 235, 1949, 400). Another fifty years later David Green came to a similar conclusion, that "when national insurance was introduced it attended only to the material dimension and in separating the cash benefits from the moral and educational role of the societies destroyed

their essence” (Green 1999: 24–25). Paul Johnson said that the legislation speeded the “gradual abandonment of those aspects of mutuality and fellowship that had been the hallmark of friendly societies in Victorian Britain” (Johnson 1985: 68). The new law had this effect because it led to greater tensions between the ‘approved’ societies and the doctors, the civil servants who implemented the Act and the Labour Party, which abolished ‘approved’ status with the establishment of a Ministry of National Insurance in 1944 and the National Insurance Act, 1946. There was also dissatisfaction voiced by members who felt that by becoming part of the state insurance system, their organisation was less able to advance its original aims. David Green concluded that “the welfare state that replaced mutual aid was built on a complex of ideas standing in opposition to older doctrines of reciprocal obligation evolved by the friendly societies” (Green 1999: 24). Simon Cordery saw the legislation as part of a longer process of change, arguing that it “represented another act in the drama of squeezing sociability” (Cordery 2003: 174). Those societies that gained approved status lost some of their points of convergence with Freemasonry. Moreover, concerns about male-only spaces may also have divided the friendly societies from the Freemasons. From the 1890s the AOF and the IOOFMU admitted women and there was a considerable influx of women following the 1911 Act to these and other societies.

### Conclusion

After World War II when the notion of approved societies was abandoned and the friendly societies sought new roles, a IOOFMU Special Conference decided that “every lodge should be built like the nation, upon the basis of the family and be encouraged to have men women and juvenile members” (*Odd Fellows Magazine*, November 1945: 208). However, there was also a call for “the reorganisation of the fellowship side of the Society’ in order to mimic ‘the idea of Masonry, where the Ritual and Social side takes precedence over the charitable or Insurance side” (*Odd Fellows Magazine*, January 1945: 4). Some societies continued to offer social activities. However, in the face of national, state provision that was free at the point of delivery interest in the societies’ health and financial products faded. In 1948 Beveridge described friendly societies as having three important elements, “brotherly aid in misfortune”, charity, and insurance and savings (Beveridge 1948: 62). Despite a survey of friendly society members in 1947 that suggested that they needed to recapture something of “the group spirit and mutual aid feeling”, it was the last of these which

dominated (Mass-Observation 1947: 24–28). The Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies reported in 1952 that:

It would be wrong to attribute the declining membership of friendly societies solely to the impact of National Insurance, or to assume that decline is inevitable. There is evidence in this report that an active and enterprising Society can recruit new members of all ages. It is clear that far more activity is needed than at any time in the past.

IOOFMU 1953

Gaining members through being “active and enterprising” was a difficult task. By 1959 friendly society membership had fallen to 6.1 million. There were about 570,000 IOOFMU members, about half the number of half a century earlier and many of the affiliated orders closed. There were 66 in 1945 and 20 in 1990. In 1966 there was still concern about the direction. One prominent IOOFMU member claimed that the Board of Directors “had a tendency to turn the Unity into a commercial organization instead of a brotherhood” while a Past Grand Master argued that:

[t]hey should get back to the simple things in Odd Fellowship which were exactly the same as they were 150 years ago. We are drifting into commercialism [...] Odd Fellowship is not something to sell—it is something to give for the benefit of the human race [...] fraternity was of greater importance than finance.

*The Odd Fellow* 1966: 99

There were constraints on investment strategies. It was only after the passage of the Trustee Investment Act 1961 that friendly societies had the power to invest in equity investments, and other restrictions were only lifted following further Acts. Legislation categorised the societies with insurance companies and constraints on the decisions that could be made at branch level were introduced. In effect, branch autonomy was reduced. As branches closed, members found it more difficult to attend meetings, which led to further closures. The number of IOOFMU lodges fell from 2,453 registered lodges in 1972 to 1,565 a decade later and 171 by 1992. The Independent Order of Rechabites, at one time the third largest of the UK’s friendly societies, took the decision to close its branches, cease to have meetings for members, to centralize its financial operations and to rebrand as Healthy Investment. This was a shift away from the masonic model in that there were no longer to be

quasi-autonomous 'tents', branches, of brothers and sisters. Freemasonry also declined in popularity. There were areas where alliances could be made with friendly societies, and some connections remained. Leaders of the AOF met as Freemasons at High Court and in a speech nominating David Philips to be IOOFMU Grand Master in 2001 it was noted that he was "a keen ritualist which may stem from his strong masonic connections" (IOOFMU 2002: 38). In recent years the IOOFMU has ceased to trade in financial services, it has sought to become as one former leading officer put it "a mutual, caring Society, but with an up-to-date twist" and to maintain its rituals, which were described by another life-long Oddfellow activist as "a means of explaining to the membership what its fundamental principles are and wrapping that round with some aspects of Freemasonry ritual" (Weinbren 2010a). While friendly societies and Freemasonry have moved away from the associational form from which they both developed, they are still recognisably not father and son but brothers who have shared and exchanged ideas and learnt from one another.

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**PART 4**

*Freemasonry, Society, and Politics*





# Freemasonry and Women

*Jan A.M. Snoek*

## Introduction

So far very little research seems to have been done on the relationships between Freemasonry and gender.<sup>1</sup> Much more can be said about the relations between Freemasonry and Women. Although it is unclear how far the history of Freemasonry reaches back, it definitely existed around 1600 in both London and Scotland. Yet, no interdiction to initiate women has been found so far, prior to that in James Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723.<sup>2</sup> That interdiction comes during the transformation of the 'acceptation', operating within the Masons' Company of London, into the independent Premier Grand Lodge,

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- 1 As I understand it, there are differences between feminist studies, gender studies, and women's studies. Feminist studies are studies with the explicit intention to generate information which can be used in politics for defending the rights of women. Gender studies are concerned with the social processes, which shape the gendered role pattern of individuals of any biological sex, on a scale from extreme feminine to extreme masculine. Included here is research about transsexuals, transvestites, gays and lesbians. Finally, women's studies try to compensate for a traditional history of humanity, written from an exclusively male perspective and restricting itself to the history of men. Here attention is paid to both the role of women in history (women's history), and to how women perceived the events of their time, insofar as we can learn that from such first person documents as diaries. Research about Freemasonry and gender should include the study of such questions as in which way Freemasonry influences its members' gendered behavior, or how homosexuals/lesbians/transsexuals and so on were or were not accepted by lodges. Among the few relevant publications is Clawson (1989). The title of Cross (2010) claims that this volume is about fraternalism and gender, but its contents are predominantly about women's history, though the contribution by Winston-Allen is about ego-documents. There is some relevant literature about fraternalism and masculinity in Victorian America (Carnes 1989; Carnes and Griffin 1990) and Germany (Breuer 2008). But none of this literature deals explicitly with Freemasonry and gender. There are, however, several Internet sites about Freemasonry and homosexuals.
  - 2 A few cases of initiated women from the early eighteenth century are indeed known, such as Elizabeth Aldworth-Saint Leger (c. 1710–1713) in Ireland, Mary Banister (1713–1714), Mrs Beaton (no date known), and Mrs Harvard (1710) (Hills 1920, 66–67; Wright 1922, 84, 87; Jones 1956 77–78; Hivert-Messeca 1997, 129–130).

which took place during the decade 1715–1725 (Snoek 2010). One of the changes involved was that from now on, new members were no longer primarily recruited from among the elite within the Company, but rather among the gentlemen. In order to make Freemasonry attractive to them, it transformed itself into a men's club (on men's clubs in England, see Clark 2000). This new product was then exported to the continent, where lodges were founded from 1726 onwards, especially in Paris.

In France an English vogue prevailed at that time and also Freemasonry soon became popular, especially among the nobility, the well-to-do citizens, and many clergymen. But among the nobility the position of women was distinctly different from that in England. The noble ladies were delighted when their husbands discovered a new English game...as long as they were allowed to join in. It is thus not surprising that we find mention in France of initiations of women into masonic lodges as early as the 1740s.<sup>3</sup> In 1744, a booklet was published containing rituals for a male lodge, which show remarkable similarities to those which would soon after be used by the Adoption lodges.<sup>4</sup>

Around the same time, a rather large number of mixed orders was created, which were not really masonic, but were nevertheless often to some extent inspired by the example of Freemasonry. Among the best known are the Order of the *Mopses* (mops = pug-dog, chosen to exemplify fidelity), which was already active in Vienna in 1738, and the several libertine *Ordres de la Félicité* (Orders of Felicity), founded from 1743–1745 in France (see Le Forestier 1979: 3–17; Ragon [1860]: 106–147; Hivert-Messeca 1997: 15–31; and Raschke 2008: 21–23). Such orders stood in the French philosophical-literary tradition of the *préciosité*, integrating both chivalric and masonic traditions, as well as the pastoral tradition initiated by Honoré d'Urfé's novel *L'Astrée*. Orders like these had both male and female, but always highly aristocratic, members, many of them being members of more than one such order at the same time. The men were often Freemasons as well. This resulted in transfer of ideas between the different

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3 “Br. Lée denounces to the lodge those Lodges of lady Freemasons, called Sisters of the Adoption, which are held in the city; The Lodge decides in its wisdom to warn the other Lodges in this Orient in order to inform them about the abuses which have penetrated these meetings of the adoption” (Minutes of the lodge ‘L’Anglaise’ [Bordeaux], February 6, 1746, in Léchelle [2002, 181]) and “I have just heard from the mouth of Mme \*\*\* herself that she had the honour, yesterday, to be the third to be initiated ...” (*La Franc-Maçonne* 1744, translation in Carr [1971: 120]).

4 *Le Parfait Maçon ou les véritables secrets des quatre Grades d’Apprentis, Compagnons, Maîtres ordinaires & Ecossois de la Franche-Maçonnerie*, Paris 1744. For an English translation see Carr (ed.) 1971: 157–200.

orders involved. These mixed orders will have paved the way for the subsequent creation of Adoption lodges from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards.

### Adoption Lodges

A special position in this spectrum is taken, however, by the Adoption Freemasonry, on the one hand because it existed longer than any of the other early mixed orders, and on the other because only this one maintained a formal relation with the official male Freemasonry. In 1774, the *Grand Orient de France* officially recognised the Adoption lodges and gave them new regulations. It is in this form that they are best known. Whereas ‘adoption’ in this context was originally synonymous with ‘initiation’ (Snoek 2012: 79–82), it was from now on understood as indicating that a regular male lodge had to ‘adopt’ such a lodge in which women were initiated. The men who were members of the associated male lodge had access to the Adoption lodge, which made the latter automatically mixed, even though it initiated only women. It was prescribed that the function of the Master of an Adoption lodge had to be executed by a Brother, whereas other functions could be performed by a Sister if assisted by a Brother, so that an Adoption lodge could not work when only women were present. The Adoption lodges worked in three degrees, in name corresponding to the first three degrees of male Freemasonry, and from the 1760s onwards moved towards working in a number of ‘higher’ degrees as well.

When precisely Adoption Freemasonry was created is not known, but based on its being mentioned in *La Franc-Maçonne* from 1744, I estimate it at about that year (see Snoek 2012; Le Forestier 1979 estimates ca. 1745). After that it is referred to in February 1746 in the minutes of the male lodge ‘L’Anglaise’ in Bordeaux (see above), and we have documentary evidence of Adoption lodges in Jena (Germany), from October 3, 1748 onwards, Copenhagen (Denmark), from April 16, 1750 onwards, and The Hague (The Netherlands) in 1751 (see Snoek 2012: 17–25; and Davies 2008). From the documents available, it is clear that the rituals of the last one, *La Loge de Juste*, were basically the same already as those known from later Adoption lodges. The first booklet with printed Adoption rituals appeared in 1765 in England; France followed seven years later (*Womens Masonry or Masonry by Adoption*, London, 1765, “printed for D. Hookham, in Great Queen-street, Lincoln’s-inn-fields”; *Les quatre grades complets de l’Ordre de l’Adoption, ou la Maçonnerie des Dames*, “à Jérusalem,” 1772).

As stated above, the *Grand Orient de France* recognised the Adoption lodges in 1774 and gave it a new set of rules, making an Adoption lodge effectively subordinate to a male lodge (Snoek 2012: 142–146). Rituals (three degrees) and statutes were published several times from 1774 onwards.<sup>5</sup> The whole system was once more intentionally and seriously revised by Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor, who published his own version of it (containing rituals for four degrees) in 1779.<sup>6</sup> The next thirty years see the publication of probably more than twenty editions and prints of this booklet. Clearly, during this period, this was a *de facto* standard ritual book.

Until the French Revolution, Adoption Freemasonry was strongly dominated by the court nobility. While Louis de Bourbon-Condé, duke of Clermont, was Grand Master of the French male Freemasonry, Madame de Seignelay held the corresponding position over the Adoption lodges (“madame de Seignelay[, ] grande maitresse de toutes les loges d’adoption” [BN FM<sup>4</sup> 1253, ca. 1765, 12r]; see Moreillon and Snoek 2013). But after Clermont had been succeeded in 1771 by Louis Philippe Joseph d’Orléans, duke of Chartres, he appointed first his wife, Louise Marie Adélaïde de Bourbon-Penthièvre, duchesse d’Orléans, duchesse de Chartres, in that position (on her see Snoek and Moreillon 2013a). She, however, was succeeded in May 1775 by his sister, “Son Altesse Sérénissime, la Sœur Louise Marie Thérèse Bathilde d’Orléans, Duchesse de Bourbon-Condé, Princesse du Sang” (see Snoek and Moreillon 2013b). From March 18, 1779 onwards she was at the same time ‘Grande Maîtresse’ of the Adoption lodge ‘La Candeur’, which, in 1778, counted besides her one other princess, two duchesses, three countesses, two marquises, and three not noble (though probably court) ladies ([Tissot], 1778). The Grand Mistress of a second Adoption lodge in Paris, ‘Le Contrat Social’, was Marie-Thérèse de Savoie-Carignan, Princesse de Lamballe, she too of royal blood and one of the two closest friends of Queen Marie-Antoinette (see Burke 1989); the other friend being Gabrielle Yolande de Polastron, duchesse de Polignac, who was a member of the lodge ‘La Candeur’.

Adoption lodges were also founded outside France (Snoek 2012: 17–24, 165–173, 201–202). Among those active in that field was the well-known ‘Count Alessandro di Cagliostro.’ On 29 March 1778, he and his wife visited the Adoption lodge connected with the regular Dutch lodge ‘L’Indissoluble’ in The Hague, which gave her a certificate, stating that “Seraphina Countesse de

5 For example, *La Maçonnerie des Femmes*, Londres (= Paris?) 1774; *Maçonnerie des Dames*, (Paris) 1775 (with statutes); *L’Adoption, ou la Maçonnerie des Femmes, en trois grades* (The Hague); “A la Fidélité, Chez le Silence, 100070075” (= 1775).

6 Louis Guillemain de Saint Victor, *La vraie Maçonnerie d’Adoption*, Londres [= Paris?] 1779.

Cagliostro” was accepted as a visiting Sister and ‘Maîtresse Maçonne’ and had performed the office of *Première Inspectrice* (Senior Warden) in that Adoption lodge. The document is signed “*Par Ordre du Venerable, J.S.B. Sontag, Grand Inspect[eur]*” and co-signed by “*J Buijs Ven[erable]*” and Cagliostro—remarkably with his real name: “Jo[sèph] Giuseppe Balsamo.” A year later, on 27 May 1779, Cagliostro signed a certificate for Agnes Elisabeth von Medem as being initiated “*jusqu’aux grades de Maîtresse Écossoise Maçonne,*” this time as “G[rand] M[âitre] J[oseph (sic)] Cagliostros Z<sup>+</sup> 1255,” that is, as the Master of the Adoption lodge *La Loge des Trois Cœurs Couronnés*, which he had founded only two months before in Mitau in Courland (Collis 2013). In the early 1780s Cogliostro developed his own ‘Egyptian Rite,’ the ‘mother lodge’ of which, *La Sagesse Triomphante*, was founded in Lyon in December 1784. It had three degrees for women: *Apprentie*, *Compagnonne* and *Maîtresse égyptienne* (see Faulks and Cooper 2008; McCalman 2003; Amadou 1996; Brunet [1992]; Kiefer [1991]; Evans 1941, Ragon 1860: 107–114; and Thory 1812: 344, 389–430). It maintained the symbolism of Eve eating the apple from the Adoption Rite, while dropping that of Noah’s Ark and Jacob’s Ladder.

This eighteenth century Adoption Freemasonry has by some authors been described as anti-feminist (see Goodman 1994), and indeed, the subordination of the Adoption lodges to a male lodge, imposed by the *Grand Orient de France* in 1774, may well suggest this. However, Janet Burke and Margaret Jacob (Burke and Jacob 1996) have demonstrated clearly that this interpretation is wrong, and that, on the contrary, the Adoption lodges should be seen rather as a form of women’s emancipation *avant la lettre*, a position, which my own research more than confirmed. Especially the ritual (usually the one for the second degree) based on the story of Eve turns out to be based on a kind of Thomist *Felix Culpa* theology, in which Eve is comparable to Christ. The central concept is Virtue. But doing good without knowing the alternative is only naive. Virtuous is only (s)he who chooses to do good, knowing both alternatives. Therefore, without Eve, we could not be virtuous. But when one tries to be virtuous, then doing that together with others who try to do the same (for example in the Lodge, which is the Garden of Eden or the Ark of Noah), is felicity, bliss. Therefore, by taking the burden of sin on her, Eve has opened us a door to experiencing felicity, not after death, but even in this life. Seen this way, Eve becomes the first initiate, a hero and saviour on a par with Christ. And the Candidate in this degree, by being identified with Eve, is deified, which is expressed by her being placed on the right hand of the Master of the lodge, who, as in all eighteenth century masonic rituals, plays the role of God (Snoek 2012, esp. chapter 3).

After the French Revolution in 1789, masonic activity in France, including that of Adoption lodges, came to a halt, to be resumed only around 1800.



During the Napoleonic era, Adoption Freemasonry was very popular again. While in the pre-Revolutionary period it was ruled by noble ladies of the royal family, now it was the Empress Joséphine herself who consented to be its Grand Mistress. In 1805 she participated in a meeting of the lodge *L'Impériale des Francs-Chevaliers*, of which she then became the Grand Mistress. That same year she was present at the initiation of some of her court ladies (Jupeau-Réquillard 2000: 63ff.). Despite this imperial patronage, Adoption Freemasonry in this period had necessarily a much more bourgeois character; after all, a large proportion of the French nobility had died under the guillotine, and the revolution had strengthened the position of the middle-class civilian population. After Napoleon had been defeated, however, the form of Adoption Freemasonry practised so far, in lodges where only initiated men and women had access, slowly gave way to other forms (see Allen 2003; Allen 2008). For example, normal male lodges would now and then organise an 'Adoption Festival' (*fête d'adoption*) where all the wives of the members would participate, initiated or not. In the lodge *Le Temple des Familles* (1860–1863) of Luc-Pierre Riche-Gardon (1811–1885) (Doré 1981: 134; Doré 1999: 133; Hivert-Messeca 1997: 207–220; Jupeau-Réquillard 2000: 80–82, 90–96; Allen 2003: 822–823; and Allen 2008: 225–227), even not only the wives, but also the children of the members were welcome on such occasions. Rituals for the 'adoption' of such children by a lodge were developed and practiced. Nevertheless, true initiation of women in Adoption lodges also continued in France until probably ca. 1890, and was then revived about a decade later by lodges under the *Grande Loge de France* (see on the nineteenth century also Snoek 2012, chapter 6).

### The Feminist Century (1840–1940)

James Smith Allen examined the remarkable coincidence between masonic reform and the women's movement in France, the roots of which he traces as early as the 1840s (Allen 2003; Allen 2008). The struggle to initiate women into French masonic lodges at the end of the nineteenth century must be seen in the context of the struggle for women's political rights, if only because so many feminists were active in mixed Masonry around 1900. Central to this process, on the masonic side, was the relatively short-lived *Grande Loge Symbolique Ecossaise* (GLSE), which brought together the most progressive Masons of its time (Jupeau-Réquillard 1998). It was this Grand Lodge to which the lodge *Les Libres Penseurs* belonged, which initiated the feminist leader Maria Deraismes in 1882, resulting in 1893 in the creation of what is now the mixed masonic order *Le Droit Humain* (see [www.droit-humain.org](http://www.droit-humain.org)), which adopted the rituals

of the GLSE for the initiation of all its members, male and female. It was again this Grand Lodge, now called *Grande Loge Symbolique Ecossaise Mixte et Maintenu*, which, in 1901, gave its lodges the freedom to choose if they wanted to be male only, or also initiate women with the same ritual as men. And it was one of the mixed lodges of this Grand Lodge which, once its Grand Lodge approached the end of its existence, moved to the *Grande Loge de France* on condition that its female members were allowed to open an Adoption lodge, from which eventually developed the current *Grande Loge Féminine de France*, the largest female masonic order in the world (see Snoek 2012). This rise of mixed Masonry in France, Allen writes, has in fact its origins in the remarkable synergy of men and women feminists, who worked together in the name of women's interests everywhere, not just in Freemasonry.

But not only in France was the historical development of feminism reflected in that of Freemasonry. In other countries, the consequences of this development were at least discussed in the lodges. In America, where a few Adoption lodges had been working before, a new form of Adoption Freemasonry was created in 1850 by the Freemason Rob Morris under the name of the Order of the Eastern Star (see [www.easternstar.org](http://www.easternstar.org)). The central emblem is a five pointed star, corresponding to four biblical women: Adah (Jephthah's daughter), Ruth, Esther, and Martha, plus Electa, an early Christian martyr, each representing a particular virtue. Morris revised his system in 1855 and 1859. A final revision was executed by Robert Macoy in 1868. It is in this form that this order is still working today. It has about one million members world wide. In 1860, James B. Taylor created another adoptive system, the Order of the Amaranth (see [www.amaranth.org](http://www.amaranth.org)), which is not to be confused with the Swedish order of the same name, instituted by queen Christina of Sweden in 1653. Macoy, who was in control of the Order of the Eastern Star around 1870, formed in 1873 the Rite of Adoption, with the 'Eastern Star' as the first, the 'Queen of the South' as the second, and the 'Amaranth' as the third degree. Thus, both Eastern Star 'Chapters' and Amaranth 'Courts' were merged into Macoy's Rite of Adoption. Since 1921, both orders are independent again. Under the jurisdiction of its Supreme Council, the Order of the Amaranth has forty-three Grand Courts (each is state-wide), located in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, Scotland and the Philippines. There are also Subordinate Courts (local) in Hawaii, New Zealand and Ireland. Both orders admit only female relatives of Freemasons. There are several other para-masonic organisations, admitting female relatives of Freemasons, in America.<sup>7</sup> All have in common a primary focus on charity.

7 Such as the Daughters of the Nile with c. 48,000 members. At [www.daughtersofthenile.com](http://www.daughtersofthenile.com). Accessed June 10, 2012.

In England, the feminist developments in the nineteenth century seem not to have influenced main-stream 'regular' male Freemasonry in any way, but that does not mean that it had no influence at all. A number of mixed orders were founded at the end of the nineteenth century, which were in some form or another related to and/or copied from Freemasonry. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is such an order, which did not refer to itself as masonic, but which was founded by three Freemasons who clearly used the masonic orders they were familiar with as their examples (Bogdan 2008; Bogdan 2007). It flourished in the last decade of the nineteenth century and regarded masculinity and femininity as two poles of a basic unity. Based on this principle, women were not only initiated, but had a really equal position within this order. They could even rise to the highest positions and thus wield power over subordinated members, including men. The aim of the Golden Dawn was the personal transformation or enlightenment of its members through the rituals and teachings of the order, and through this also a transformation of society at large. By treating women on an equal basis with men, it reflected as well as contributed to the feminist developments of its time.

However, the largest and most influential mixed order, which developed in France at the end of the nineteenth century and soon found its way to England, is no doubt *Le Droit Humain*. After two women had been initiated in otherwise male lodges in Hungary (countess Ilona = Helena Hadik-Barkóczy in the lodge 'Egyenlőség' (= 'Equality') at Ungvár, working under the Grand Orient of Hungary on November 11, 1875) and Spain (countess Julia Apraxin-Batthyany in the lodge 'Fraternidad Iberica', Madrid, in 1880) (Snoek 2012: 201–202; Ortiz Albear 2005). France was to follow. Here, the feminist speaker Maria Deraismes, refused by the *Grand Orient de France*, asked the lodge *Les Libres Penseurs* to initiate her. In May 1881, *Les Libres Penseurs*, only founded on August 13, 1880, decided that it wanted to initiate women. It asked permission from its Grand Lodge, the *Grande Loge Symbolique Ecossaise* (GLSE, see above), to do so. On September 12, 1881, that was refused. On September 28, *Les Libres Penseurs* asked permission to withdraw from the GLSE, which was permitted on January 9, 1882. On November 25, 1881, Maria Deraismes was proposed as a candidate by seven Master-Masons of *Les Libres Penseurs*, voted upon, and accepted. On January 14, 1882, *Les Libres Penseurs* then initiated Maria Deraismes (only in the first degree), while being an unattached lodge ('loge sauvage'). However, finding itself completely isolated, *Les Libres Penseurs* decided to return to its original Grand Lodge: on August 7 of the same year, the lodge was re-integrated into the GLSE, without Maria Deraismes, and on promising not to initiate any further women. Thus, this experiment could have been branded a failure, had not a former Grand Master of the GLSE, Georges Martin,

together with Maria Deraismes, in 1893—one year before her death—created the first mixed masonic order, working with the usual male rituals, *Le Droit Humain* (LDH). Although nothing proves that she ever received the 2nd and 3rd degree herself, Maria Deraismes conferred these degrees once LDH was founded (Rognon 1994: 51; Benchetrit and Louart 1994: 25–30; Hivert-Messaca 1997: 221–253; Jupeau-Réquillard 2000: 122–125; Prat et al. 2003: 15–24). In 1895, Georges Martin published the first book of *Rituals for LDH* ([Martin] 1895). In 1899 the same edition was issued with a slightly changed title page ([Martin] 1899); it contained the rituals as they were used by the GLSE, only slightly adapted for their use in the new order. These rituals of the GLSE were again revised versions of those which were created in Paris when the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite was introduced in France in 1804 (Noël 2006).

For the first few years of its existence, LDH remained a rather small order. After ten years it still had only a few hundred members, and only one lodge outside France, namely in Zurich (Switzerland). That changed dramatically, once Annie Besant (the head of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, who had published *Esoteric Christianity* (1901), and would in 1907 become the president of the Theosophical Society) was initiated in 1902. That same year she founded the first lodge of LDH in England. Within a year, using her connections and influence in the Theosophical Society, there followed ten more lodges, including one in her home town Adyar in British India. Over the course of the next fifteen years, she founded more than four hundred lodges in Great Britain, continental Europe, South Africa, South America, Canada, British India, Burma, Ceylon, Australia, and New Zealand (Anon 1993; Prescott 2008). Since this initial expansion, LDH has remained a world wide order, organised in local federations.

The ritual for the lodges working in the English language was not created by translating the—atheistic—ritual of George Martin. Instead, probably the Theosophist Annie Besant herself, possibly with the help of some members of the lodge ‘Dharma’ in Adyar, adapted an—explicitly theistic—ritual from the Grand Lodge of Scotland for use by the mixed lodges of LDH. She probably assumed that this would increase the chance that LDH would be recognised (or at least be accepted and respected) in the future by the United Grand Lodge of England, something which never happened. It is significant, though, that she also adapted these rituals to her theosophical (mystical-spiritual) ideas. This resulted in the *Dharma Workings*, published in Amsterdam in 1904, and so called after the lodge in Adyar, where they were created. On October 3, 1904 Annie Besant announced in her lodge in London: “The movement is in future to be styled Co-masonry. In America this title has been adopted [and] the Council considers it advisable that all English speaking Lodges should work

under the same name” (Minutes of the Human Duty Lodge, book 1, in the archive of the British Federation of LDH). In 1915, Charles Webster Leadbeater—since 1896 the personal theoretician of Annie Besant in the Theosophical Society—was initiated into LDH. The next year Leadbeater and James Ingall Wedgwood—another member of LDH and the Theosophical Society—revised the rituals with which the English speaking part of LDH was working ‘according to the astral instructions of the count of Saint-Germain’. In 1925, these rituals were once more (slightly) revised by Annie Besant and Leadbeater (the ‘1916 Working revised’ or ‘Glasgow Rituals’). This version became the standard for all the English speaking lodges of LDH during the next fifty years.

### After World War II

During the second World War, women in large parts of the world, including Europe and North-America, discovered that they could run their affairs quite well, even when their men were at the front. This caused a new wave of self-confidence among these women. It is against this background that we must see the emergence of women-only orders in a large number of West-European countries after 1945. The remarkable fact about this development is that it preceded, rather than mirrored, the second feminist wave of the 1960s. In 1908 some lodges split off from the British Federation of LDH and formed the mixed order, the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Masonry, which somewhere in the 1920s passed a resolution that men should no longer be admitted as joining members or candidates. It took, however, still quite some time before the male members had all deceased. This was the case in or before 1953, but it was only in 1958 that this order changed its name into the current Order of Women Freemasons. Today it has more than 350 lodges and is thus by far the largest women-only masonic order in Britain (Pilcher-Dayton 2002; Buisine 1995a).

In France, what remained in 1945 of the Adoption lodges, which had been created within the *Grande Loge de France* at the beginning of the twentieth century, became a nuisance for its Grand Lodge, which now aspired to recognition by the United Grand Lodge of England (an aspiration which was not realised). As a consequence, these lodges were ‘offered their independence’ as a separate order, the *Union Maçonnique Féminine de France*, which held its first General Assembly on October 21, 1945. In 1952 it changed its name into the current *Grande Loge Féminine de France* (GLFF) and in 1959 it changed its Rite, adopting the rituals of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. A small number of Sisters, refusing to give up the Adoption rituals, founded an independent lodge *Cosmos*,

which in 1977 was reintegrated in the GLFF with the right to continue that Rite. Today it is the last lodge in the world working with the Adoption Rite. Since 1973 the GLFF also has lodges working with the *Rite Français* or *Rite Moderne* (the Rite of the *Grand Orient de France* since 1786), and since 1974 lodges working with the *Rite Ecossais Rectifié* (Rectified Scottish Rite) of 1782. With around four hundred lodges and eleven thousand members, it is the largest women-only masonic order in the world. Also, daughter lodges have been founded in other countries in Europe (such as Luxembourg, Italy, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic), Africa (Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Cost, Gabon, Togo), and America (Canada, Venezuela). In some countries (Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey) even daughter Grand Lodges have been established (on the GLFF see Buisine 1995b; Beaunier 2001; Snoek 2012: 287–300).

In The Netherlands, the discussion concerning the admission of women into the regular Grand Lodge (the *Grootoosten der Nederlanden*) resulted in 1930 in the foundation of the Association of Wives of Freemasons (*Vereeniging van Vrouwen van Vrijmetselaren*; VvVvV). But since this does not use initiation rituals, it did not satisfy a number of women. As a response, the Order of Demeter was created in 1936. This order too had at that time no initiation rituals yet, but it aspired to have them in the future. This future, however, never came, since the second World War stopped all masonic and related activity in The Netherlands. But in 1947, six women founded the order *Vita Feminea Textura* (VFT), and with the help of a few members of the male masonic order created rituals for it. This work on the rituals took them three years; in 1950 the women were initiated—by these and some other male Freemasons—using these new rituals. The significant point about these rituals is that they do not use the symbolism of building, but that of spinning and weaving, assumed to be more appropriate for women. However, in all other respects this order (sometimes referred to as the Order of the Weavers) is clearly masonic. The Netherlands being a small country, this order is relatively small as well: c. five hundred members working in fourteen lodges. Since November 2002 there is a daughter Grand Lodge in France, having one lodge in Paris (see Stegeman 1952; Van Elden-Mulder 1975; Fokker 1997; see also: [www.ordevanweefsters.nl](http://www.ordevanweefsters.nl)).

Although most women-only orders were created between 1945 and 1960, and thus—as stated above—preceded, rather than mirrored, the second feminist wave in the 1960s, this new feminist activity is clearly reflected in the history of the development of some of them. A case in point is the Women's Grand Lodge of Germany (*Frauen Großloge von Deutschland*). In 1949, the Grand Masters of two (of the then approximately twelve) Grand Lodges in Germany decided that it was time to open Freemasonry to women. Therefore, they created a women's 'circle'. Two years later, initiation rituals had been created by

the men, and the women were initiated. These rituals, though masonic in character, were intentionally distinctly different from any form of masonic rituals in use. The men were afraid that, should the rituals with which the women worked be made too similar to those used by them, they would lose their recognition as a regular Grand Lodge. However, the women turned out to develop a clear desire to work with the 'real' rituals. Thus, the women started making changes in that direction, which the men in turn tried to reverse as much as they could. The result was a very gradual development of the rituals in the direction of those used by the men. It took until 1975 before the women received permission to use a truly different ritual, this time an only slightly modified male one. As a consequence, the women were 'granted their freedom' in 1982 and forced to create their own Grand Lodge, which from then on developed into the current *Frauen Großloge von Deutschland* (for the FGLD see Heipcke 2004; see also [www.freimaurerinnen.de](http://www.freimaurerinnen.de)). Today, the FGLD has friendly relations with a large number of mixed and female masonic orders, including the GLFF. It has about 300 members in 15 lodges.

The older mixed Orders had, of course, their own developments after 1945. As a consequence of a conflict within LDH in 2000 over the independence of the Federations to decide with which rituals they wanted to work (a right obtained by Annie Besant from the central order in Paris in 1902), the British Federation (see [www.droit-humain.org/uk/](http://www.droit-humain.org/uk/)) split in two, the break-away faction founding in 2001 the new Grand Lodge of Freemasonry for Men and Women (see [www.grandlodge.org.uk](http://www.grandlodge.org.uk)). This order now works with rituals, very close to those originally written by Annie Besant in 1904 (Anon. 2001). Together with former Federations of LDH in India, New Zealand, the USA, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Brazil, and Spain, they now form the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry (see [www.comasonic.net](http://www.comasonic.net)), which is independent of the International Order LDH.

This chapter obviously makes no claim whatsoever to be complete in any respect. Many more mixed and women-only orders do exist in many more countries than have been mentioned here. However, completeness was not the aim. What was intended is an overview of certain developments which are characteristic of the ways in which women have come to participate in masonic orders, and how they gained and exercised power over masonic rituals.

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# Freemasonry and Blacks

*Cécile Révauger*

## Introduction

The very title of this chapter, “Freemasonry and Blacks”, is somewhat paradoxical: why should race be an issue at all, given the fact that Freemasonry has always claimed to be universal? Besides, it is not relevant in all historical and geographical contexts. Race was obviously an acute problem in the United States and in Caribbean countries while in Europe itself, Freemasonry tended to be more tolerant or at least remained more indifferent.

The roots of the problem are to be found in Anderson’s *Constitutions*, although Mackey’s landmarks certainly added fuel to the fire, as will be contended in the first part of this chapter. One of the reasons why race never was a formal problem for French Freemasons is that Anderson’s *Constitutions* did not cut much ice in France, notwithstanding la Tierce’s efforts to popularize them by providing a rather loose translation from the English into French.<sup>1</sup> The other reason is more political, as the French were strongly influenced by the Jacobin principles of equality and fraternity and never wholeheartedly indulged in communitarian approaches, refusing to consider ethnic groups and always preferring to acknowledge the human rights of individuals rather than the rights—or absence of rights—of communities. This does not mean that racism never existed in French lodges, of course. Before Haitian independence, the French lodges of planters in Saint Domingue had found a ‘compromise’: they would accept black brethren, but only at the first and second degrees in order to allow them to attend to their white brethren as ‘frères servants’ at meals (Combes 1986: 155–180). Toussaint L’Ouverture, however, whose masonic affiliation now seems to have been proved by Jacques De Cauna (De Cauna 2013), was to become active a little before the Haitian revolution and to initiate a new tradition in Haitian Freemasonry. In the French West Indies, Martinique and Guadeloupe, the first lodges were obviously planters’ lodges,

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1 Louis François de La Tierce, “Ceux qui sont admis à être membres d’une Loge doivent être des gens d’une bonne réputation, plein d’honneur et de droiture, nés libres & d’un âge mûr & discret. Ils ne doivent être ni esclaves, ni femmes, ni des hommes qui vivent sans morale, ou d’une manière scandaleuse” (De la Tierce 2002: 130).

but this was not regulated by any kind of text, this was just plain elitist practice. On mainland France neither the Grand Orient de France nor the Grande Loge de France ever brought forward any formal racist consideration and black brethren have always been accepted as a matter of course, even if obviously numbers have been limited in practice. In Britain black brethren have never been barred entry from lodges either, in spite of Anderson's *Constitutions*. The ban was only enforced in the British colonies, in the American ones and in the West Indies, as the Oviton case proves (see below).

Black Freemasonry developed at a fast pace in French-speaking Africa, but this is too long and complex a story to be dealt with in this chapter, and it was not a specifically racial issue either. The scope of the present study has to be limited. Therefore only black Freemasonry in the United States and the British Caribbean will be considered, from the early lodges to the most recent ones, with a few case studies, not in an exhaustive manner, as this would be impossible, although general trends will be suggested.

### The Original Ban

The Persons admitted Members of a Lodge must be good and true Men, free-born, and of mature and discreet Age, no Bondmen, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report.

ANDERSON'S *Constitutions*, 1723, *The Charges of a Freemason*, III Of Lodges

This quotation from the 1723 edition of Anderson's *Constitutions* had an enormous impact in the British colonies, whereas it passed virtually unnoticed in Britain. In France it was largely ignored, but just as the whole text of Anderson's *Constitutions*, no More, no less. The same ban was reiterated in 1738. However, the British Masons paid no heed, probably considering oral tradition as much superior to written constitutions, be they masonic, and accepting a few blacks now and then in their own lodges at home contrary to what took place in their colonies. The British have always declined to provide themselves with a written Constitution for their country, contrary to the French for instance. The Freemasons in a way acted as true Britons, refusing to be tied up by written rules. However in the British colonies, and even more so in the United States, Americans felt the need to provide themselves with laws and constitutions. Similarly the American Freemasons endowed themselves with several by-laws, rules and regulations and not content with abiding by Anderson's *Constitutions*, bound themselves with more and more 'landmarks' throughout the nineteenth century.

Yet the formal, constitutional factor was not the only one. The early days of black Freemasonry in America are closely related to the general context of slavery and abolitionism. Some mystery remains concerning the origins of Prince Hall, who founded the first African American lodge in 1784. Some consider he was born in Western Africa in 1735, others in Barbados in 1748, while Joseph Walkes thinks he was probably born in Africa but might have spent some time as a slave in the West Indies before being conveyed to Boston and sold to William Hall, a Quaker who gave him his name and emancipated him. Walkes thinks Hall emancipated him because he was a philanthropist while others think he was acting upon his religious principles and respecting the Quaker tenets forbidding the keeping of slaves (see Révauger 2003: 19–29, for a discussion of the different hypotheses). The important point, however, is that Prince Hall in all likelihood was an emancipated slave living in Boston, and more important still, that he was keenly aware of the problem of slavery and wrote a number of petitions with his fellow Masons to the Massachusetts assembly. In 1788, three Black men were enrolled by a ship captain who had pretended to need their help because his ship was sinking and had immediately put them in fetters, sailed away and sold them as slaves. One of the captured free blacks was a member of 'African Lodge', and on February 27, 1788, Prince Hall sent a petition to the Massachusetts legislature to protest against this particular crime and against the practice of capturing free blacks, which seems to have been a common one in Boston at the time:

To the honorable, the senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in general Court assembled on the 27th of February, 1788:

The Petition of a great number of blacks, freemen of this Commonwealth, humbly shows:

That your petitioners are justly alarmed at the inhuman and cruel treatment that three of our brethren, free citizens of the town of Boston, lately received. The Captain, under pretense that his vessel was in distress on an Island below in this harbor, having got them on board, put them in irons, and carried them off from their wives and children, to be sold for slaves. His being the unhappy state of these poor men, what can your petitioners expect but to be treated in the same manner by the same sort of men? [Signed] Prince Hall

PRINCE HALL 1936: 428–429

According to the editor of the *Journal of Negro History* in which this petition is quoted, the twenty-three signers of the petition were all members of the

'African Lodge'. More surprising however is the letter he quotes from a white mason to his lodge, 'Portland No. 1', in Maine, explaining that the three men were indeed 'carried to St Bartholomew's and offered for sale', but that the merchant who was to buy them was a Freemason himself and actually rescued them, so that they were sent back to Boston. The letter is indeed quoted but without any reference (*The Journal of Negro History*, 1936: 430). St Bartholomew might be the French island of St Barthélémy, handed over to Sweden in 1784 with four hundred and eight slaves (Thomas 1997: 448). Yet, even if the happy ending sounds too good to be true, Prince Hall's repeated petitions against slavery and the slave-trade, signed by members of his own lodge, are highly significant of the general context. Indeed, at least three names can be identified among the 1,788 petitioners, those of Matthew Cox, Joseph Hicks and James Hicks (or Hicke), if we compare with a letter from Prince Hall to Rowland Holt, deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, dated May 23, 1788, and which is now kept at Freemasons' Hall Library in London:

We have initiated into the Lodge since July 6 1787 to this time four members namely Matthew Cox and a mulatto man aged 22 years on the 11th of December, George Meller 24 and Joseph Hicks 23 on the 24th James Hicke 25 years, all Black men and of good characters and we hope will make good men.<sup>2</sup>

The 'African Lodge', failing to obtain a charter from the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, had secured one from the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), which, although issued on September 29, 1784, only reached Boston in 1787, due to financial misunderstandings. The letters sent by Prince Hall thanking the Grand Lodge of England for this charter are kept in London and are now available, as well as the 'General Regulations of the African Lodge' dated January 15, 1779, with a list of subscribers' (Prince Hall Letters HC 28/A/1). This piece of evidence is very important because it acknowledges the existence of the lodge long before 1784. The regulations of African Lodge stipulate that no man under twenty-one will be accepted and make religious recommendations which are directly influenced by Anderson's *Constitutions*, as Masons should

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2 I have modernized the spelling. I am very grateful to Susan Snell, the archivist of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, who pointed out this set of letters to me: Prince Hall Letters HC 28/A/1–8 and HC. 28/A/10–12. See HC 28/A/6, Boston, May 23, 1788, Thomas Saunderson, Secretary, letter signed 'Prince Hall'. Prince Hall has written 'Hicke' and the 1788 letter mentions a 'Hicks' but the first name is the same, James, so in all likelihood this is the same brother, given the frequent variations in the spelling of names at the time.

not be 'atheists and irreligious libertines' while no specific belief should be imposed to them:

As all Masons are obliged to obey the moral law  
 We therefore exclude from this Lodge all stupid  
 Atheists and irreligious libertines: yet, at the same  
 time we allow every man to enjoy his one religion  
 so that they be men of honesty and honour & free born

Prince Hall Letters HC 28/A/1.

Obviously, the Grand Lodge of England was not deterred by Anderson's third article—"The persons admitted Members of a Lodge must be good and true Men, free-born, and of mature and discreet Age, no Bondmen, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report"—but considered that Prince Hall and his companions were free men, thus forgetting the term 'free-born' and anticipating on the formal change made by the United Grand Lodge of England in the following century. Although the story goes that Joseph Warren, the famous patriot and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, had promised Prince Hall a charter before dying at the Bunker Hill Battle, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts later refused to do so, thus making a literal reading of Anderson's article which suited its purpose.

Throughout the following century, white American Grand Lodges considered Prince Hall and his followers as 'clandestine' Masons, putting forward three reasons: the first one was Anderson's article, the second one related to the validity of the charter: they claimed that although the English charter had been granted in 1784, yet the 'African Lodge' was no longer on the official lists of 1813, on the rosters of the United Grand Lodge, and therefore this implied that it was no longer recognized. It is quite likely that the lodge only failed to pay its dues, and was taken off the registers for purely financial reasons, but this allowed the American Masons to claim its irregularity. The white Grand Lodges put forward a third reason, the principle of 'exclusive jurisdiction': even if this was not meant at excluding black Masons only, it was a very helpful principle in that respect. Only one Grand Lodge was allowed in each state, and therefore as in most states there was already a white Grand Lodge, there could not possibly be Prince Hall Grand Lodge as well. Paradoxically, however, at the time the 'African Lodge' was founded, there existed two Grand Lodges in Boston, both affiliated to English Grand Lodges, 'St John's Grand Lodge', which used to work under the Moderns, and the 'Grand Lodge of Massachusetts', which used to work under the Antients before it became independent. Anderson's article remained one of the major formal obstacles to the initiation

of black men until it was changed in 1847 from 'free born' to 'free man'. Yet ten years later, Mackey's landmarks, i.e. the set of masonic tenets which American lodges have always considered as fundamental, ignored the change and only reinforced the exclusion of black brethren:

Certain qualifications of candidates for initiation are derived from a Landmark of the Order. These qualifications are that he shall be a man, un mutilated, free born and of mature age. That is to say, a woman, a cripple, or a slave or one born in slavery, is disqualified for the initiation into the Rites of Freemasonry.<sup>3</sup>

### Prince Hall Freemasonry in the United States

#### a) *The Beginnings of Black Freemasonry in America*

Not only did 'African Lodge No. 459' receive a charter from the Grand Lodge of England, but the charter is one of the few eighteenth century ones still in existence today. The lodge being the only black one in America, it soon acted as a Grand Lodge as black men naturally turned towards Boston to petition for charters to found other lodges. This was the case of the first black lodge in Philadelphia: the petitioners claimed to have been made Masons by Royal Arch English Masons but to have been refused a charter by the Virginian Masons and were therefore applying for a charter from the Boston Prince Hall Masons (petition reproduced Woodson 1936: 428–426). Prince Hall granted their request on March 22, 1797. Later Prince Hall Grand Lodges were to emerge in several other states: in New York (the 'Boyer Grand Lodge') in 1845; in Maryland, Baltimore, in 1845 as well; in the District of Columbia in 1848; in New Jersey in 1848; in Ohio in 1849; in Delaware in 1849; in San Francisco, California, in 1855; in Indiana in 1856; in Rhode Island in 1858; in Louisiana in 1863;...and in 1967 the forty-fourth Prince Hall Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge of Liberia was created (Walkes 1989: 33–55).

3 Albert Mackey, "Landmark", *Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, 1966 [1946], 561. Albert Gallatin Mackey (1807–1881) was a figurehead of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States and the author of *Jurisprudence of Freemasonry* (1856), in which he promoted the concept of Masonic Landmarks, i.e. tenets which should serve as criteria to determine whether a Grand Lodge was regular or not. French Grand Lodges have been considered as 'irregular' since 1877 because they do not subscribe to the landmark imposing the belief in a supreme being. Similarly, white American Grand Lodges have excluded black Freemasons on account of those Masonic Landmarks.



### b) *Abolitionists*

Prince Hall delivered two famous speeches to his own lodge, which are still kept today at the New York Robert R Livingston Library. He urged his brethren to educate themselves and to promote education among black people. Besides, he advocated the creation of a school for black children in Boston. As early as 1789 'African Lodge' provided itself with a chaplain, John Marrant. Close links developed between the 'African Lodge' and the African Methodist Episcopal Church founded in 1816 in Boston: the first bishop, Richard Allen, was also a member of 'African Lodge'. Black churches and black lodges were the only organizations available to black people at the time, no wonder they worked hand in hand.

Prince Hall and his fellow Masons repeatedly sent petitions for the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery. As early as 1787, Prince Hall himself had signed a petition which was sent to the Massachusetts House of Representatives asking for financial help to create a colony in Africa (Walkes 1979: 4), thus supporting the Sierra Leone project promoted by the British abolitionists and Olaudah Equiano himself, the author of the famous slave narrative (Equiano 1789).<sup>4</sup> Although Prince Hall Masons were rarely directly involved in the Civil War, they brought their support to the abolitionist struggle in various ways. In 1829 David Walker wrote his famous *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* in which he urged the black slaves to rebel against their white masters. After writing this, David Walker settled in Boston. Yet three years before issuing his *Appeal*, he had been made a mason in African Lodge, on July 28, 1826, and the *Appeal* was circulated in Georgia, Virginia, South Carolina and Louisiana, according to Peter Hinks who devoted a book to David Walker (Hinks 1997: 73. Hinks also provides the list of members of African Lodge in 1828, p. 265). In 1847 Prince Hall Masons decided to endow themselves with a national Grand Lodge, the National Grand Lodge, also called the Compact Grand Lodge, thus making an exception in American Freemasonry as Grand Lodges had always existed in single states before and not at a federal level. The Grand Lodge was short-lived, as it disappeared in 1877, yet significantly it operated during a vital period, when abolitionists tried to put an end to slavery in America, as if Negro Masons had then felt the need to strengthen their links at an interstate level. In 1865 a Prince Hall mason, Major Martin Delany, delivered a famous speech calling slaves to rebellion (quoted in Walkes 1979: 34). Grand Master Lewis Hayden, of the Massachusetts Prince Hall Grand Lodge, was a leader of the Boston Vigilance Committee and helped organize the 'Underground Railway',

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4 The narrative was distributed by abolitionist associations in Britain before the 1807 British abolition of the slave trade.

thus organizing the flight of slaves from the southern states towards the northern ones. He helped the governor of Massachusetts, John Albion Andrew, recruit black volunteers for the 54th regiment, an all-black regiment (Walkes 1979: 39). The first black military lodge was attached to that regiment in 1863. Another black military lodge, Lodge Phoenix No. 1, was attached to the 29th regiment of black volunteers in 1864, as Williamson, the secretary of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York and famous Masonic historian showed (Williamson 1956: 34).

American white Grand Lodges repeatedly excluded black Freemasons, alleging they were 'clandestine', refusing to acknowledge the validity of their initial charter and making declarations which would make many Masons ashamed today. Albert Pike himself claimed in 1875 he would give up Freemasonry rather than accept black men.<sup>5</sup> Yet he had nothing against the existence of separate Grand Lodges and in 1877 he even offered a copy of the Scottish Rite ritual to his 'friend' Thornton Jackson to help him launch the first Prince Hall Supreme Council in Washington DC. The case of Nathaniel B. Forrest, however, is a real skeleton in the cupboard: Joseph Walkes reminded his brethren of the fact that the Southern veteran of the Civil War was indeed made a mason in a white lodge, 'Angerona Lodge No. 168' in Memphis, on October 29, 1877, i.e. seven years after he had founded the Ku Klux Klan and become its Grand Wizard (Walkes 1979: 85. Denslow, also mentions the fact in *10 000 Freemasons*, 1958, I: 63).

### c) *Social Actors and Fighters for Civil Rights*

After the emancipation of slaves, two famous black men fought for the education of blacks, although they disagreed on the ways and means, Booker T. Washington and Eugene Du Bois. Booker T. Washington, advocated "education of the hand, head and heart" (Washington 1901, rpt 1986: 85), i.e. both manual and intellectual education and in the 1890s founded the Tuskegee

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5 *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free & Accepted Masons of the State of Ohio at its Sixty-eighth Annual Grand Communication begun and held at Columbus, October A.L. 5875*, Cincinnati, Western Methodist Book Concern Press, 1875, 49–50. I am grateful to Brent Morris for providing me with the full text of this letter. Pike could write both: "Prince Hall Lodge was as regular a lodge as any lodge created by competent authority, and had a perfect right (as other lodges in Europe did) to establish other lodges, making itself a mother Lodge". And a few lines further: "I took my obligations to white men, not to negroes. When I have to accept Negroes as *brothers* or leave Masonry, I shall leave it. I am interested to keep the Ancient and Accepted Rite uncontaminated, in *our* country at least, by the leprosy of Negro association. Our Supreme Council can defend its jurisdiction, and it is the law-maker. There can not be a lawful body of that Rite in our jurisdiction unless it is created by us."

Institute, near Montgomery, Alabama. Du Bois had a slightly different approach as he thought academic and not only professional training should be promoted. He had a political vision and even briefly joined the Communist Party. Most of all he launched both the Niagara Movement in 1907 and its sequel, the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People), which emerged in 1909. Quite significantly both men were made 'masons on sight', (i.e solicited by the Masons to become members on account of their actions in society) by the Prince Hall Masons who felt honoured to reward them with this distinction as they obviously identified with their struggle for the education of black children. Prince Hall Grand Lodges went on subsidizing the NAACP for several years (Walkes 1989: 95; and Muraskin 1975: 230).

Prince Hall Masons often joined and organized friendly societies such as the Oddfellows, which provided their members with financial help at a time when they were totally deprived of healthcare and had to pay for funeral expenses their families were unable to cope with. Besides, they set up their own mutual benefit societies, such as the New England Masonic Mutual Relief Association, attached to the 'Springfield Sumner Lodge' (*Proceedings of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge...Boston, Mass. for the year 1873, Boston, published by Prince Hall Grand Lodge, 1874*) or the Hiram Masonic Relief Association, attached to 'Celestial Lodge No. 3' (Williamson 1951). Prince Hall Masons even funded their own banks to help their members in their professional lives, as Muraskin has showed very well. This was the case of the Grand Lodge of Texas in 1911 while the Grand Lodge of California set up the Liberty Building and Loan Association in 1938 (Muraskin 1975: 141–149 and 170). In 1947, Ashby Carter, the Grand Master of the Prince Hall Illinois Grand Lodge and a member of NAACP, encouraged the creation of the Fair Employment Practices Committee (Muraskin 1975, 228–238). Muraskin examined the *Who's Who in Colored America* for the years 1933–1937 and found out that eighty percent of the names were Prince Hall members (Muraskin 1975: 170). In 1951 Prince Hall Grand Lodges made their links with the NAACP even more official by signing an agreement with a leader of the NAACP, himself a mason, Thurgood Marshall: the Prince Hall Masons Legal Research Fund was set up, a financial fund meant to support the NAACP struggle for civil rights and to promote research on black Freemasonry (Walkes 1989: 95).

Although Martin Luther King was not himself a mason, his widow, Coretta Scott King, wrote the preface of a rather flowery biography of Prince Hall, thus bringing her support to Prince Hall Masons in 1991 (Diamond 1992).

#### d) *Relationships with White Grand Lodges*

Throughout the nineteenth century, white Grand Lodges repeatedly excluded Prince Hall Masons, as the forty-nine official declarations collected by the

Masonic Research Associates in 1960 clearly show: some of them were overtly racist, while most of them tended to put forward formal arguments (*What regular Grand Lodges have said about Negro Masonry*, after 1960. Several abstracts are quoted in Révauger 2003: 313–316.). Luckily there were a few exceptions that confirmed the rule. The Grand Lodge of New Jersey even tried to promote the creation of a black lodge, 'Alpha Lodge' in 1872, which created an uproar in its own ranks as well as among other Grand Lodges. Then two Grand Lodges tried to recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of their respective states: the Grand Lodge of Washington in 1898, chaired by Grand Master William Upton and the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in 1947. Both had to retract. William Upton was so angered that he specified in his will that he refused to have any Masonic monument erected on his grave until the white and coloured Masons in America really stood as brothers (quoted by Williamson 1920: 24). Not until 1989 could a white Grand Lodge officially recognize a Prince Hall Grand Lodge without incurring general discontent. The Grand Lodge of Connecticut was the first one to do so, and was followed thereafter by a considerable number of Grand Lodges. Today forty-one out of fifty-one Grand Lodges have voted in favour of official recognition of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of their own state: 'only' ten southern states still refuse to do so (Paul Bessel's site, updated October 25, 2008: <http://bessel.org/webindex.htm>). The principle of 'blanket recognition' has been adopted in a minority of States, allowing white Grand Lodges automatically to recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of another state providing it has been recognized by the white Grand Lodge of the said state. This facilitates relationships as in many cases Prince Hall Grand Lodges were reluctant to ask for official recognition as they had too often faced exclusion in the past. Quite understandably, Prince Hall Grand Lodges generally feel they should not be required to ask for recognition as some sort of special favour from the white Grand Lodges.

e) ***Concluding Remarks on Prince Hall Freemasonry in America***

Prince Hall Masons have improved the social status of African Americans by promoting their rights, their human rights first in fighting against the beastly system of slavery, their social rights in trying to educate them and to help them play a role in society, as well as their civil rights in training them to become American citizens against all odds. Quite significantly, the largest Prince Hall Grand Lodge is that of Alabama, the state which was the hub of the civil rights movement. Prince Hall Freemasonry was cast in the mould of American history while offering its members the dignity and respect derived from the work ethics of ancient Masons. Prince Hall lodges were eager to position themselves as institutions which promoted the African American cause, either through education or mutual relief, giving academic grants to their members' children

or setting up mutual benefit societies. Although they supported Liberia, black Freemasons were rarely tempted to advocate separation for black people and generally preferred to fight for equality against discrimination.

Prince Hall Masons upheld the same tenets as white American Freemasons. They never departed from Mackey's landmarks on Freemasonry concerning women and religion and adopted the same conservative attitude. No black woman has ever been considered a mason by Prince Hall masonry although the Order of the Eastern Star welcomes Masons' female relatives. They never established official relationships with the Grand Orient de France because the French Freemasons removed the obligation to believe in the immortality of the soul in 1877. Relationships with white American Grand Lodges have largely improved, although some southern white Grand Lodges still prefer to ignore Prince Hall Masons. Yet, in the best of cases, black and white Masons have fraternal relationships but remain separate.

#### *Freemasonry in the British West Indies*

Contrary to Freemasonry in the United States, for obvious reasons black Freemasonry in the British West Indies is not specifically identified to Prince Hall Grand Lodges. Indeed there is a Caribbean Prince Hall Grand Lodge, which is very active in Barbados in particular, but today most Masons in the British West Indies belong to lodges which work either under the English Constitution or the Scottish Constitution, that is, under the aegis of the United Grand Lodge of England or the Grand Lodge of Scotland, through a Provincial or District Grand Lodge. Paradoxically, the fact the same masonic pattern has prevailed since its origins can be accounted for by the global transformation of Caribbean societies. Just as plantation societies naturally gave way to emancipated ones, the old planters' lodges were gradually taken over by the emancipated slaves, the old elites gave way to new ones in Freemasonry as elsewhere. There was little need to create separate Masonic organizations and in most cases local lodges adapted to social and political changes.

#### a) *Freemasonry in Plantation Societies: White Freemasonry*

The first Caribbean lodges followed the progression of the British Empire and emerged as early as 1738 in Antigua ('Parham Lodge'), 1739 in Jamaica ('Lodge of Kingston No. 182'), 1740 in Barbados ('St Michael's Lodge No. 186'). 'Lodge La Sagesse St Andrew No. 253' was the first English lodge constituted in Grenada in 1764, and erased in 1813. Freemasonry appeared much later in Trinidad, at the close of the eighteenth century, in 1794, with 'Lodge Les Frères Unis', imported

from St Lucia.<sup>6</sup> Different historical contexts account for a certain masonic variety at the outset of Freemasonry in spite of common features.

Just as European powers were vying for supremacy in the Caribbean, masonic lodges emerged in the new colonies providing settlers with convivial structures, which were sometimes directly linked to the local garrisons. Military lodges developed along civilian ones and generally lived in good harmony with them. The two English Grand Lodges ('Modern' and 'Antient'), the Scottish and the Irish Grand Lodges all had their military lodges, attached to specific regiments and the Irish Grand Lodge was particularly active. Before emancipation Caribbean lodges were in the hands of planters, officers, merchants and traders but also welcomed artisans, shipbuilders, local shopkeepers, etc. Harland-Jacobs has pointed very well at the 'affective' function of Freemasonry (Harland-Jacobs 2007), which provided the colonial elites with community links far away from home and brought warmth and comfort in an environment which was quite hostile because of the climate and tropical diseases. No black was admitted.

Yet the local context was also very different, accounting for great diversity among the first Caribbean lodges in Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, and Trinidad. Contrary to the other islands, Barbados never changed hands, and remained British until its independence and the lodges were all chartered either by the English, the Scottish or the Irish Grand Lodges. Trinidad used to be a Spanish island, but it was mostly inhabited by French planters, who had been encouraged to settle with their slaves. The more slaves they had brought with them, usually when they fled the French Jacobins in the French West Indies, the more land they had been awarded by the Spanish government before the British captured the island. The first lodge, 'les Frères Unis', bartered its French charter for an American one and then for a Scottish one, adapting to political changes. Jews played an active role in the creation of the first lodges in Jamaica. They had fled Spanish countries as well as Brazil for religious reasons, because of the Inquisition, and were probably quite attracted by the tolerant views of Freemasonry in the British island in which they had taken refuge (Palmer 2003). As to Grenada, it remained French until 1763, when it was ceded to Britain. The French however took back the island for a short interval between 1779 and 1783. Little is known of French masonic activity in Grenada but Gould (Gould 1884–1887: Vol. 5, 80–105) mentions two lodges under the aegis of France in

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6 The lodge owes its French name to the fact that it was founded by French Masons in St Lucia. Moreover for the next fifty years it worked in French, as the members were predominantly of French origin as most planters in Trinidad at the time. See Révauger 2008: 2.

the 1780s as well as the creation of a third one in 1828, 'Lodge La Bienfaisance', chartered by the Grand Orient de France, an amazing instance given the fact the island was now definitely British. However, this can certainly be explained by the popularity of French people there, in the wake of Fédon, a revolutionary mulatto who supported both the French Jacobins and abolitionism. The French revolution actually left its imprint on Caribbean Freemasonry as many planters fled the French colonies to settle in British colonies and escape the guillotine. This was the case of the founder of the first lodge in Trinidad, 'Lodge Les Frères Unis', who came from St Lucia (Révauger 2008: 2).

b) *The Emergence of Black Freemasonry: The Oviton Case and the Revision of Anderson's Article*

Freemasonry in the Caribbean remained very white for a long time. Yet 1823 can be considered as a landmark as for the first time a lodge of planters had to make a decision when a black man, already a mason, applied for admission (Harland-Jacobs, Révauger & Snell 2013). Thanks to Susan Snell, we now have biographical details on Lovelace Oviton (Overton): he was probably born in 1780 in Bridgetown, Barbados, and joined first the Scottish Cavalry, the Ayshire Fencibles, circa 1796, and then the 1st King's Dragoon Guards in Manchester as a trumpeter. In October 1805 he arrived in Brighton, England, and was made a mason in 'Royal Clarence Lodge No. 452' (Grand Lodge of Moderns). From 1805 to 1808 he continued as a member of the lodge and as a trumpeter, as the subscription book of the 'Royal Clarence Lodge' shows (see subscription book of the Royal Clarence Lodge at East Sussex record Office [Susan Snell's biography]). He followed his regiment in Ireland and Scotland and on February 20, 1817, returned to Barbados on leave. He saw a black slave being beaten by a white man, and was sent to prison. A lieutenant who had known him in Ireland interceded for him and he was freed on bail. Yet again he was accused of inciting a rebellion near a planter's estate, the Hackett's estate, and he was sentenced to imprisonment by a magistrate who happened to be a member of 'Albion Lodge'. He was sent back to the King's Dragoon Guards in Manchester but discharged because of 'shortness of breath' in 1818. Oviton went back to Barbados some time between 1818 and 1823. There he naturally asked to be allowed as a visitor at the local lodge, 'Albion Lodge', while applying for a warrant to establish a new lodge with other black men, which made matters worse, given the context of the time. James Cummins, a member of 'Albion's Lodge', probably the secretary, included a copy of Oviton's certificate in masonry in a letter to Thomas Harper, the past Deputy Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England while expressing his concern: "Should their request be complied with, it will tend more materially to injure the Craft in the Western

Hemisphere, than any other event that could possibly take place" (Ovitor's certificate, awarded by Royal Clarence Lodge, on 10 April 1807, Library and Museum of Freemasonry [GBR 1991 HC 23/B/23]). Ovitor was not allowed as a visitor and the 'coloured men' were not granted a charter either, of course.

Yet the same Albion Lodge sent a letter to the United Grand Lodge of England on April 7, 1840, pointing out to the impossibility of accepting black men as Masons in Caribbean lodges: the members of Albion Lodge considered the phrase 'free born' of the masonic Constitutions as problematical because many black men now wished to join lodges and were not allowed to do so (*Annual Returns*, 7 April 1840, Albion Lodge to UGLE). Yet the members of Albion Lodge thought that the rule had never been enforced in England. Indeed the 'coloured men' they were referring to had been slaves until the British abolition of 1834 but were now 'free men' if not 'free born'.

The United Grand Lodge of England took its time. Although Britain had abolished slavery in all her colonies thanks to the 1834 law, although the United Grand Lodge of England lent its premises to abolitionist associations from 1814 onwards and housed the big anti slavery convention precisely in 1840, when the letter was sent by 'Albion Lodge', no satisfactory answer was provided and the article was not changed until 1847, after considerable pressure from a British mason, Robert Crucefix as well as from a number of Caribbean lodges. 'Free born' was eventually replaced with 'free man'. Emancipated slaves could at last enter the white lodges and most of all create new ones.

### c) *Concluding Remarks on Caribbean Freemasonry Today*

When black Masons were admitted into Caribbean Freemasonry and allowed to found their new lodges, they also started playing a modest but significant role in the reconstruction of their countries after the abolition of slavery, by promoting benevolence, mutual aid and education and thus contributed to the building up of national identities and to emancipations. Lodges often provided grants to allow Masons' children to attend schools or universities, such as the Austin Belle programme financed by the Prince Hall Masons in Barbados or the De Vere Archer Scholarship provided by the Grenada Masons. Masons encouraged the creation of new lodges in the neighbouring islands. Members of Albion Lodge in Barbados helped revive 'St George's Lodge' in Grenada in 1904 and a little later 'St George's Lodge' helped open 'Abercrombie Lodge' in St Lucia. Solidarity has been effective in case of natural catastrophes, such as fires and hurricanes. Their involvement in local religious life is a sign Masons worked hand in hand with the local institutions. In 1831, in Grenada they organized a subscription to build the Scottish Presbyterian Church, St Andrew's Kirk, and the corner stone was laid by Sir James Campbell, the governor of



Grenada and a Freemason himself (the event was reported in the *Grenada Free Press and Public Gazette* on Nov 30, 1831). Local Masons have been strongly represented in political life, through members of the local assemblies or governors and governor generals. Two major figures of Barbadian politics were Freemasons: Grantley Adams and Errol Barrow. Freemasons, although never taking any public stance, seem to have accompanied all the moves in favour of emancipations. Significantly, the Grenada lodges were not in the least affected by the very popular revolution led by Maurice Bishop in 1979. On the contrary, they went on celebrating the 75th anniversary of 'St George's Lodge', the only annoyance coming from the fact the Barbados delegation cancelled their visit.

Although Freemasonry was originally imported from England, Scotland and Ireland into the British West Indies, lodges have now developed features of their own and contributed to the emergence of national identities, without severing the links with the European Grand Lodges. The British Grand Lodges have devolved most of their power to the Provincial and District Grand Lodges while the Prince Hall Caribbean Grand Lodge officially works on an independent basis, but in practise is very close to the sister organizations in the United States. Caribbean Masons of different affiliations visit one another, and solidarity is at work among the islands. Yet only the Prince Hall Masons have lodges in a French island as well (Martinique). The majority of lodges in the French speaking West Indies are held at bay by the lodges in the British West Indies, because they do not subscribe to the traditional landmarks as they sometimes allow female visitors and as they do not make the belief in the Supreme Being a requisite. Race is no longer a factor of exclusion, except in nine southern states including Florida, but Freemasonry is not quite *universal* yet as there still remains a divide, along gender and ideological lines.

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# Freemasonry and Colonialism

*Jessica Harland-Jacobs*

## Introduction

It is not surprising that an institution that claimed to be “of all Nations, Tongues, Kindreds, and Languages” would eventually achieve a worldwide presence (Anderson 1723). But how it became a global brotherhood is a topic not often addressed. Perhaps this is because Freemasonry, which declares that its members meet on terms of equality, found its way into the world through that most unequal of polities, empire.

The lack of attention to and debate regarding Freemasonry’s relationship with colonialism is perplexing given that the masonic and colonial worlds were fundamentally intertwined and mutually dependent.<sup>1</sup> Empires provided the brotherhood with a vast field of operation and expansion. Indeed, without the imperial networks built by armies, merchants, and colonists, Freemasonry would not have spread as rapidly and successfully as it did. Freemasonry, in turn, benefited empires. It helped soldiers, seamen, merchants, officials, and colonists of all social classes move around the world and establish themselves abroad. It served a wide variety of functions in colonial societies, and it worked hand-in-hand with western colonial states as they extended their power over Native Americans, Asians, Africans, and other colonized people. That said, the relationship between Freemasonry and colonialism has not always been symbiotic. At times, Freemasonry (despite regulations against the discussion of politics) was put in the service of colonial nationalism. Its ideology of fraternal cosmopolitanism could be interpreted either to support imperialism or challenge it.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first traces Freemasonry’s spread through and via the overseas empires of the British, Dutch, and French. Freemasonry was present in the empires of Spain and Portugal, but it

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1 For the purposes of this chapter, colonialism is defined broadly as the process by which nations extend their power outward over other nations and peoples with the intent of maintaining that power indefinitely to the advantage of the metropole. It includes, but is not limited to, the establishment of overseas settlement colonies. Colonialism therefore involves the formal incorporation of territories and governance of distant subjects as well as less formal activities such as the extension of economic spheres of influence.

encountered fierce resistance from the Catholic Church and became widespread and politically significant only as the empires were disintegrating and independent Latin American nations emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The brotherhood was also a significant feature of the United States' overseas colonial empire and its informal empire in Latin America. But the American colonial empire was a product of a much later period than that examined here (1720s–1920s). As a result, the history of Freemasonry unfolded in a much different context. Finally, the vast land-based empires of the Habsburgs and Russia, where Freemasonry was also in evidence, lie beyond the scope of this study.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the focus in part one is on the British, Dutch, and French, with particular emphasis on the British case. British Freemasonry—in its English, Irish, and Scottish forms—warrants the closest attention, first, because Freemasonry was a British invention and export, and, second, because the relationship between Freemasonry and colonialism was arguably more close, multi-faceted, and mutually beneficial in the British Empire than in any other empire.

The second part of this chapter examines the role of Freemasonry in western empires and colonial societies. It argues that the brotherhood achieved great success because Freemasonry's brand of fraternalism (defined as both an ideology and a practice) was particularly well suited to meet the needs of men engaged in empire building. Part three explores what happened when Freemasonry's ideology of cosmopolitan fraternalism encountered the rich diversity of western colonial empires. It discusses the circumstances in which non-Europeans were admitted into Freemasonry, analyzing both the justifications European Masons offered for either excluding or including indigenous men and the reasons why indigenous men joined the brotherhood. Once again, we see Freemasonry attracting a wide range of men, some who collaborated with imperial states and others who sought to subvert them (on collaboration as an analytical concept in the study of imperialism, see Robinson 1972: 118–140).

### “Wherever Our Flag Has Gone”

#### *The British Empire*

During the 1720s, the newly formed Grand Lodge of England (1717) instituted many practices to extend its control over the brotherhood; devising a well-thought

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2 Notably, Freemasonry was officially suppressed in totalitarian empires of Nazi Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union. A comparative study of imperial states' attitudes and policies toward Freemasonry, including those that supported and those that persecuted the brotherhood, is much needed.

out plan for how it would spread Freemasonry through Britain's growing empire was not one of them. Freemasonry did spread to the American colonies, on both the North American mainland and in the Caribbean. But this transfer was not the result of grand lodge intentions and planning. The young English Grand Lodge was just too distracted by other concerns to oversee Freemasonry's growth outside England (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 23–31, 103–104).

Rather, Freemasonry made its way to the colonies because a growing number of English, Scots, and Irish were making their way to the colonies. Many were in the army regiments that flexed Britain's muscle abroad. The War of the Spanish Succession took British soldiers and officers to the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic to North America and the Caribbean. British victory in 1713 brought key colonial prizes, including Gibraltar, Minorca, Hudson's Bay, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the French half of St. Kitts. Military success stimulated hunger for trade and empire building. More and more military men, merchants, and colonial administrators ventured abroad; many among them were Freemasons. Heeding the clubbing instinct so common to eighteenth-century men, they constituted lodges in their regiments and in the colonial societies of Britain's growing empire.

By the 1730s, the British Grand Lodges did start responding to the opportunities colonialism presented for extending Freemasonry beyond the British Isles. The Grand Lodge of Ireland (founded 1725) took the lead. Irish authorities invented two mechanisms that facilitated Freemasonry's global diffusion: certificates and traveling warrants. Certificates essentially acted as passports, which individual brethren could use—along with their knowledge of masonic passwords, grips, and rituals—to prove their membership in the brotherhood when they ventured abroad. The Irish Grand Lodge also began constituting lodges in British Army regiments and issuing traveling, or ambulatory, warrants to their members. The traveling warrant enabled members to hold lodge meetings anywhere in the world. In time, both the English and the Scottish grand lodges adopted both practices, thereby furthering British Freemasonry's growth throughout the empire. A third mechanism that helped take British Freemasonry abroad was the appointment of Provincial Grand Masters, a system pioneered by the English Grand Lodge but also adopted by the other British grand lodges. Provincial Grand Masters were appointed for regions where lodges had multiplied to such an extent that they required local oversight, and regions where metropolitan authorities expected lodges to proliferate (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 23–44).

All of these mechanisms were in place when European rivalries escalated into the increasingly globalized conflicts of the period between 1740 and 1815. British Freemasonry was therefore perfectly positioned to spread as the empire expanded. Hundreds of military lodges accompanied their regiments around

the world in this period. Historians estimate the total number at around 500, with the Grand Lodge of Ireland leading the way with 190 military warrants issued between 1732 and 1813. One of the most famous and well-traveled lodges was the 'Minden Lodge' in the 20th Regiment of Foot. Established in 1748, the lodge was active when the regiment was stationed in Scotland, Canada, Egypt, Malta, Ireland, Spain, India, and Bermuda during the subsequent century (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 37; Clarke 1849: *passim*).

As Freemasonry took root in and spread to the colonies via the British Army, metropolitan grand lodges issued more and more warrants for Britons to form lodges in the colonies. Between 1727 and 1740, the English Grand Lodge had warranted lodges to meet in Gibraltar, Bengal, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Georgia, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Nova Scotia, New York, Antigua, Jamaica, St. Kitts, and Barbados. After 1740, lodges were set up in Newfoundland, St. Eustatius, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Minorca, Madras, Virginia, North Carolina, St. Croix, Bombay, Maryland, Quebec, New Jersey, Surinam, Bermuda, Detroit, St. Helena, Grenada, Delaware, Sumatra, Canton, East Florida, Dominica, Nevis, Upper Canada, New Brunswick, the Bahamas, northern India, Malta, Gambia, Prince Edward Island, Martinique, Ceylon, St. Vincent, the Straits Settlement, Haiti, Ghana, Cape Town, Trinidad, New South Wales, and Mauritius. Meanwhile, the grand lodges appointed Provincial Grand Masters throughout the empire. A typical example is the Provincial Grand Master of Bengal, Samuel Middleton, who oversaw the activities of twelve lodges during the early 1770s (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 2, 38–44).

As the era of British global predominance dawned, therefore, Freemasonry was firmly rooted in Britain's North American, Caribbean, and Asian colonies. It had also begun to emerge outside the formal empire, in the port cities of Latin America and China. The new century witnessed Freemasonry's rapid growth in the settlement colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and southern Africa. The fraternity was so vibrant in these colonies that local Freemasons would eventually set up independent grand lodges. The Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, for example, came into being in 1855, while the movement to establish the Grand Lodge of New South Wales took off during the 1880s. Meanwhile, lodges multiplied through the Indian subcontinent and appeared in the new crown colonies of Ceylon, Singapore, and Burma. British lodges were established along Africa's Gold Coast and in Egypt. Contemplating the brotherhood's remarkable success abroad, a Scottish Grand Master justifiably claimed: "Wherever our flag has gone, we are able to say there has Masonry gone, and we have been able to found lodges for those who have left our shores to found fresh empires" (Grand Lodge of Scotland 1888: 157).

During the early twentieth century, British Freemasonry continued extending itself throughout the empire, which grew further still with the acquisition of African, Pacific, and Middle Eastern territories of the defeated Ottoman and German empires. The brotherhood's growth in Africa was significant enough to warrant the establishment of English District Grand Lodges in Nigeria, East Africa, Rhodesia, and Ghana between 1913 and 1930. In 1926, an English Grand Lodge official reported that lodges in Africa included over 5000 African members. Freemasonry also continued to grow in South Asia, where by 1930, there were 78 Scottish and 229 English lodges. Meanwhile the independent grand lodges of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa maintained close relations with Freemasons in the British Isles, encouraging an imperialist identity among their members and helping to rally colonial citizens to the empire's cause during the age of high imperialism (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 285–286, 267–279). With a history of imperial expansion extending back two centuries, Freemasonry had become a well-established feature not only of the Dominions but also of Britain's Indian Raj, its crown colonies and mandates, and its informal empire.

### The Dutch Empire

Freemasonry accompanied Dutch traders, sailors, and settlers to the Caribbean, Asia, and southern Africa during the mid eighteenth century. In 1761, the Dutch Grand Master issued a warrant for 'Lodge Concordia' in Surinam. 'Concordia Lodge' was not firmly established until the following decade, when five additional lodges came on the scene. At the end of the century, membership in Dutch lodges peaked at about 200 members. Lodges were also established on Dutch-held islands in the Caribbean in this period, though records of their activities are scarce (Provincial Grand Lodge of Surinam, personal communications with the author, March 8, 2009; Gould 1886: 363–368).

Meanwhile, Dutch Freemasonry was appearing in the Dutch East Indies. In 1762, J.C.M. Rademacher, whose father was the Dutch Grand Master in the 1730s, established the first lodge, 'La Choisie', in Batavia (Van der Veur 1976: 5).<sup>3</sup> Additional lodges emerged in the late 1760s, one catering to sailors and another founded by prominent settlers and Company officials. By 1786, masonry was sufficiently established to warrant the construction of a lodge building. From Batavia, Dutch masonry spread to northeastern Java with lodges established in

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3 Rademacher was a Chief Merchant in the VOC and a naturalist; when he returned to the Netherlands in 1764, the lodge went into abeyance.



Semarang and Surabaya. Meanwhile, the Dutch Grand Lodge, recognizing Freemasonry's success, appointed a Deputy Grand Master for the Indies in 1798. Despite metropolitan support, lodges were temporarily suspended during the early 1810s, when the governor suspected local Masons of sympathizing with the British. Dutch masonic activity remained confined to the main European settlements on Java until the late nineteenth century (Van der Veur 1976: 4–7).<sup>4</sup>

Dutch Freemasonry was evident in other parts of the Indian Ocean basin. Dutch traders set up lodges in Bengal (at Chinsurah, whose governor was a mason) and Ceylon in the 1770s (Gould 1886: 326, 328, 337; Butterfield 1978: 7). But, given the growing British presence on the subcontinent, Dutch trading and masonic activities were limited. Dutch Freemasonry would eventually become much more firmly established at the Cape. Sailing home from Java in 1764, Rademacher (who, as we have seen, founded the first lodge in Batavia two years earlier) stopped off at the Cape. With its well-established Afrikaner communities, the Cape appeared to Rademacher to offer fertile ground for Freemasonry. Once in The Netherlands, he alerted the Dutch Grand Lodge to this potential. The Grand Lodge appointed Abraham van der Weijde as a Deputy Grand Master and, within ten days of his arrival at the Cape in 1772, he assembled a meeting of ten Masons and warranted the colony's first lodge, 'De Goede Hoop'. But Freemasonry was slow to take off, in large part because of the hostile attitude of the colony's Dutch Reformed clergy. Moreover, many viewed masonic principles, such as the equality of brethren within the lodge, as threatening to the established social order. The lodge ceased working 1781 "owing to paucity of members" (Cooper 1986: 16–17).

By the time war had once again broken out between Britain and France, the 'Lodge de Goede Hoop' was active again, and it welcomed British officers during the first British occupation of the Cape in the 1790s (Butterfield 1978: 9–10). When the colony reverted to the Dutch in 1803, Freemasonry was further solidified by the appointment of Jacob Abraham de Mist as Commissary-General of the colony. Commissioned Deputy Grand Master National of Dutch Freemasonry by the Dutch Grand Lodge prior to his departure for the Cape,

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4 According to Van der Veur (1976: 5), the VOC initially displayed hostility toward Freemasonry and meetings were held in secret. As more and more high-ranking Company officials joined the brotherhood, however, it emerged as a sanctioned and public institution. Its members included governors-general, officers, writers, and landholders (Van der Veur 1976: 10). T.H. Stevens estimates that at its height Dutch Freemasonry in the East Indies included about 1500 members working in 25 lodges (Stevens 1994: 370). On Freemasons and the VOC, see also Kroon (2003).

de Mist actively promoted Freemasonry among the Dutch and British communities alike. He officiated at the ceremony to consecrate the 'Lodge de Goede Hoop's' new lodge building, attended by a crowd of several hundred. Even when the British took permanent possession of the colony in 1815 and British lodges came on the scene, Dutch Freemasonry remained strong. For the next several decades, Dutch and British Freemasons visited one another's lodges and attended public ceremonies together. The Dutch Deputy Grand Master, Johannes Truter (the colony's Chief Justice), agreed to serve simultaneously as the English Provincial Grand Master when the Provincial Grand Lodge was established in 1829. By mid-century, however, tensions between Dutch and British Masons emerged, as British governance became more heavy handed and increasing numbers of British settlers arrived (and set up British lodges) (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 193–194). Nevertheless, Dutch Freemasonry had become a permanent feature of the South African landscape.

As the focus of Dutch colonial efforts shifted east, so too did the proliferation of Dutch lodges. Lodges were established throughout the Indonesia archipelago in the second half of the nineteenth century, making the Dutch East Indies the epicenter of Dutch Freemasonry outside Europe. According to Van der Veur, lodges on Java had a combined membership of over 500 by 1894. Membership continued to grow on Java and throughout Indonesia during the early twentieth century (Gould 1886: 337–338; Van der Veur 1976: 8).

### The French Empire

Given the persistent and increasingly globalized conflict between France and Britain during the eighteenth century, it would not be surprising if the French Army played as important a role in spreading Freemasonry to the colonies as the British army did in the British case. According to Gould, dozens of lodges were working in the French Army during the second half of the century (Gould 1899: 199–215). But the connection between Freemasonry, the army, and the empire remains an under-studied topic. Some historians speculate that military lodges brought Freemasonry to New France, but definitive evidence of French masonic activity in Canada before the 1760s remains elusive. Most historians credit the British with establishing Freemasonry in Canada, first in Nova Scotia and then in Quebec. The Seven Years' War was the crucial event: at least nine lodges were operating in the army that captured Quebec from the French in 1759 and military brethren helped constitute the first civilian lodges in the city (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 35).

Easier to document is the spread of French Freemasonry to the Caribbean. According to Gould, the first French lodge in the Caribbean—'La Parfaite Union'—was established on Martinique in 1738. Seven other lodges appeared before the British occupations of 1794–1802 and 1809–1815. The Irish and Ancient Grand Lodges warranted lodges when the British Army occupied the island, but they did not last long beyond the occupation. The Grand Orient issued warrants for additional French lodges on Martinique in the early nineteenth century. The French also constituted three lodges on Cayenne (French Guiana) between 1755 and 1844; ten lodges in Guadeloupe between 1766 and 1862; and two lodges on St. Lucia during the 1780s (Gould 1886: 365–367, 387). Freemasonry became particularly well established in the flourishing French colony of Saint Domingue. The world's principal sugar and coffee producer by the 1780s, the colony was populated by 40,000 whites, 450,000 slaves, and 30,000 free blacks. The substantial settler population gave rise to dozens of lodges and chapters in the period before the Revolution. James McClellan estimates a total of a thousand Masons in the colony during the 1780s. As David Nicholls observes, "Masonic lodges...were a familiar feature of colonial Saint Domingue" (McClellan 1992: 187; Nicholls 1996: 23).<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, French Freemasons were active in setting up lodges in parts of the empire which focused less on settlement and more on trade. By the 1780s, French lodges were operating on the Indian subcontinent (at Pondicherry and Chandanaggar) and in the Indian Ocean (on Reunion and Mauritius). French Freemasonry also established a presence in North Africa: in the Senegambian trading port of Saint Louis and in Egypt. The Grand Orient warranted two lodges in Alexandria in the first decade of the nineteenth century (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 85–86; Gould 1886: 343, 341–342; Wauthier 1997: n.p.). Thus, even though Britain had emerged as the world's preeminent colonial power in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars and British lodges proliferated at a significantly higher rate than those of other jurisdictions, Freemasonry and colonialism—in their French guises—continued to reinforce each other as the new century proceeded.

This trend continued as the French renewed their colonial ambitions first during the July Monarchy and then during the second half of the nineteenth century. French colonists strengthened Freemasonry in existing colonies and established it in new ones. French Freemasonry took root in the Pacific—in Tahiti, Hawaii, and New Caledonia—at midcentury. It also emerged in North

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5 For a listing of some of these lodges, Gould (1886: 353; Gould 1886: 354–355) also discusses the confused state of masonic affairs as American and British grand lodges began warranting lodges during the revolutionary period.

Africa. The first lodges were set up in Algeria within a year of the 1830 invasion. Several additional lodges, established by rival French jurisdictions, emerged in Egypt during the second half of the century. The 1860s and 1880s were especially crucial decades for Freemasonry's infiltration of Egypt (with lodges established by the Grand Orient of France, the French Supreme Council, the Grand Lodge of England, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland) and Tunis (Gould 1886: 394, 342–343).

By the 1880s, Freemasons were actively involved in the Third Republic's colonization program. From the metropole, Freemasons like Leon Gambetta and Jules Ferry became ardent champions of empire building. In the colonies, Freemasons took the lead in defining and implementing republican versions of France's civilizing mission. In *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880–1914*, J.P. Daughton examines French colonialism in turn-of-the-century Polynesia, Indochina and Madagascar. Freemasons, he argues, were active proponents of republican colonialism in all three regions. The brotherhood was particularly strong in Indochina. From the first lodge established in Hanoi in 1886, Freemasonry spread to every urban center under French control. Daughton estimates that over 500 colonists and administrators, including several governors general, were involved in the fraternity at the turn of the century (Daughton 2006: 89). It was at this point that masonry established a presence in Madagascar, with five French lodges set up between 1903 and 1917 (Mackey 1946: 609).

### “In Every Clime A Brother”

The preceding survey suggests that Freemasonry was a colonial institution *par excellence*. It thrived in western colonial empires, whether British, Dutch, or French. Why did Freemasonry achieve such success? Why did so many men in so many different colonial empires find membership and participation attractive? How did Freemasonry become part and parcel of the western colonial enterprise?

Fraternalism was the key. By undergoing initiation, a man joined a brotherhood that could fulfill wide-ranging social, emotional, spiritual, and material needs. These needs were particularly acute for men involved in colonization: traders, military men, explorers, settlers, and colonial officials. Having left his kinship networks behind in Europe, a colonist found in Freemasonry an institution that provided him with opportunities for fellowship, growth, and recreation; facilitated his travels; eased his adjustment to foreign environments; gave him resources when he could not make ends meet; and helped him advance in

the world. Freemasonry could offer all this and more because its members viewed one another as brothers, connected by shared ritual experiences and pledges of mutual obligation. Indeed, by performing masonic rituals and abiding by masonic principles, members transformed themselves into a fictive family, one that was even perceived to be superior to actual families. According to *A Dissertation on Free-Masonry*: “United by the endearing name of *brother*, Free-Masons live in an affection and friendship rarely to be met with even among those whom the ties of consanguinity ought to bind in the firmest manner” (A Free and Accepted Mason 1790: 78).

Before turning to the benefits of masonic membership, a word on the lodges themselves is in order. The term ‘lodge’ has two meanings. It is the most basic unit of masonic governance: the local group of members who meet regularly to progress through the degrees of the brotherhood. Over time, ‘lodge’ also came to refer to the physical space in which members gathered. All over the colonized globe, Freemasons erected lodges, structures that provided space for members’ activities, provoked the curiosity of the uninitiated, and even performed public functions. A masonic lodge was often among the first community structures built in frontier towns. When the land board of Niagara, Upper Canada met in 1791 to develop a building plan for their town, it prioritized the building of a masonic hall over the construction of a church and a school. Freemasons’ Hall became the center of community life in Niagara where colonists held community dances, church services, and meetings of the agricultural society. The governor also used the hall as the meeting place of the first Upper Canadian legislature and a site for holding councils with local native leaders (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 53–54). When the brotherhood became firmly established in a locality, local Masons often pooled their resources to construct temples—bigger, more elaborate buildings that could house multiple lodges and host large gatherings (of both Masons and the general public). In Batavia, for example, the members of the Dutch ‘Loge La Vertueuse’ spent the impressive sum of 12,000 rijksdaalders on the construction of a temple in 1786 (Van der Veur 1976: 5). As lodges and temples multiplied, the architecture of Freemasonry helped solidify the presence of European colonial empires in all parts of the world. (See also the chapter by James Stevens Curl on ‘Freemasonry and Architecture’ in the present volume.)

Colonial men underwent initiation in these lodges for many reasons; among them was the desire to improve oneself. The cult of improvement was a defining aspect of the era that gave birth to speculative Freemasonry. A mason participated in masonic rites—which sometimes involved a significant degree of study and memorization—in order to build himself into a better man. According to Freemasonry’s *Constitutions*, “A mason is oblig’d, by his Tenure, to

obey the moral Law...that is, to be good Men and true, or men of honour and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguish'd" (Anderson 1723). Masonry provided members with opportunities to learn not only about himself, but also about history, moral philosophy, perhaps even ancient knowledge. By participating in Freemasonry, men in the colonies were exposed to the ideas and practices of the Enlightenment. Margaret C. Jacob has argued that they literally lived the Enlightenment in their constitutionally bound, proto-democratic lodges (Jacob 1991: 4–5, 15–17, 20; see also the chapter on 'Freemasonry and the Enlightenment' by Margaret Jacob and Matthew Crow in the present volume). Moreover, masonry connected members with like-minded men in other parts of the world. Freemasons in colonial Saint Domingue, for example, were in regular contact with lodges in France and the United States. They were also involved in the founding of intellectual societies such as the *Cercle des Philadelphes* (Nicholls 1996: 23).<sup>6</sup>

Freemasonry also met men's spiritual needs. Living the enlightenment did not necessitate a questioning, let alone an abandonment of faith.<sup>7</sup> While Freemasonry was especially popular among deists like Benjamin Franklin, men who belonged to both established and dissenting churches had no trouble reconciling Freemasonry and faith. In fact, the brotherhood's apologists consistently described Freemasonry as "the handmaid of religion". "We offer no man a new religion", noted an English mason speaking in 1865, "nor do we interfere with his own. The only progress we are concerned in is the progress not of our own brothers only but of all mankind in true religion, in virtue and in learning" (Hyde Clarke, English Provincial Grand Master of Turkey, quoted in Dumont 2005: 487). Faith in God was one of the few requirements for membership in British Freemasonry. While the brethren were not allowed to discuss religion (or politics) during lodge meetings, the Bible occupied a prominent place in the lodge room. And, in the British case, the rituals designed to promote moral improvement could easily be interpreted in religious terms. Thus, meetings of the fraternity offered opportunities, if a man so desired, to experience the spiritual. Whether for a soldier stationed on a remote island or a colonist settling the frontier, Freemasonry provided an institutional setting for spiritual contemplation. And, as noted above, its lodge buildings might even serve as houses of worship for congregations in new colonial settlements.

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6 While agreeing that many *Philadelphes* were also Freemasons, McClellan (1992: 187) argues that "the *Cercle des Philadelphes* must be taken at its institutional word strictly as a scientific society, rather than as a political and moral conspiracy perpetrated by Masons".

7 Freemasonry can arguably be described as a key institutional bridge between the religious and secular enlightenments.

Freemasonry provided an institutional space and program for intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual improvement, but many men participated in the brotherhood for less lofty reasons. Conviviality is among fraternalism's most appealing benefits. In the empires, masonic conviviality came in two forms: private and public. In the privacy of their lodges, Freemasons worked rituals that provided relief from the often-dull routines of life and labor in the colonies (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 51–58). The historian of the 'Minden Lodge', writing in 1849, observed: "None but those who have sojourned in the isolated scenes amid which it is the soldier's lot to be stationed in that distant land, where there is nought to redeem the monotony of an every day existence, nought to satisfy the yearnings of the mind after the knowledge which befits man as an intellectual being" could appreciate "the freshness and the beauty of Freemasonry" (Clarke 1849: 29). Once the work of the lodge was complete, brethren typically adjourned to the 'festive board', sharing a meal and conversation until the early hours of the morning. A. Schinas, a Freemason in mid-nineteenth-century Istanbul, reported in a letter that "the British residing in Constantinople founded in a restaurant-confectioners a lodge called the 'Oriental'; in accordance with their custom, before and after workshop meetings, a lot of gin and cognac was drunk". Historian Paul Dumont observes that "this kind of 'table works' contributed to the success of freemasonry" in places like Istanbul, where entertainment possibilities for Europeans were limited (A. Schinas quoted in Dumont 2005: 486).

In addition to their private lodge activities, Masons conducted public processions and ceremonies and hosted banquets and balls. Freemasons took the lead in the ceremonial life of their empires. Wearing full masonic regalia and displaying the symbols of their order, they welcomed and bade farewell to colonial officials. They conducted countless ceremonies to consecrate new buildings, such as when the brethren of 'Loge La Vertueuse' (discussed above) laid the foundation stone for their new temple in 1786 "in the presence of 'members of the government and many other important citizens of Batavia with their ladies'" (Van der Veur 1976: 5). As part of annual St. John's Day observances, Freemasons marched in procession from their lodges to church and back again. Indeed, aside from the colonial state, no other institution made as significant a contribution to the ceremonial life of western empires. Through Freemasonry, the power of Europeans abroad was regularly put on public display. Lodges also offered welcome recreational outlets not only for members of the brotherhood but also for the European public. Masonic balls, which of course included women as well as men, were highlights on the annual calendars of many colonies. Women, denied membership in lodges, were often a target audience for these affairs (on Freemasonry

and imperial ceremony, see Harland-Jacobs 2007: 12–15; on women's presence, see 55, 61–62).

Men also joined Freemasonry because membership offered material benefits. Writing to the English Grand Lodge from New South Wales in 1827, a recently arrived colonist expressed optimism about Freemasonry's prospects in the colony because "the greater part of the free community have been admitted as Masons in England from the prevailing notion of the *necessity* of being so on becoming Travellers" (John Stephen to the Grand Lodge of England, September 1, 1827, Grand Lodge of England, HC 21/C/1). Indeed, since the first lodges had been founded abroad in the early eighteenth century, the brotherhood developed a well-earned reputation for providing assistance to brethren in need. The Reverend Joshua Weeks, speaking to assembled brethren in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1785, told his audience: "Were the providence of God to cast you on an unknown shore; were you to travel through any distant country, though ignorant of its language, ignorant of its inhabitants, ignorant of its customs, you will...have a key, which will give you admittance to the brotherhood, and which will open the treasures of their charity" (Weeks 1785: 23–24).

Masonic charity included providing assistance to brethren who fell on hard times; taking care of a mason's funeral, widow, and children if he died; and helping communities recover from wars and natural disasters. Freemasons in the Dutch East Indies established libraries, banks, and orphanages and supported military homes and other charities. They were particularly active in establishing schools (for Javanese as well as European students) (Stevens 1994: 371–372; Van der Veur 1976: 21–22; for the charitable activities of Freemasons in the Ottoman Empire, see Dumont 487). The fraternity, by providing passages and temporary lodging, also helped members and their dependents get around empires. Finally, membership in Freemasonry facilitated one's social mobility in fluid colonial societies. Joining a lodge could help confer respectability on rising men, ease their transition into middle-class or elite circles, and give them access to powerful social and political networks (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 58–63; on the role of Freemasonry in facilitating social mobility in the British colonies, see Harland-Jacobs 2007: 162–203, and Van der Veur 1976: 10–12).

As Freemasonry worked to the benefit of individual members, it also supported empires and European imperialism more broadly. Its role in lubricating merchant networks, for example, is a crucial, though understudied, topic. The fact that the network of lodges extended beyond the limits of formal empires attests to its importance to traders. Moreover, Freemasonry sometimes provided a forum for men of various European empires to associate, even in periods when imperial rivalries were intense. In Bengal during the 1770s, English and Dutch Freemasons attended each other's lodges and marched in public



processions together. During the 1780s, French and British Masons throughout the Indian Ocean region regularly corresponded and interacted with one another. Some masonic certificates were printed in both English and French. Charles Wallington, who belonged to the 'Lodge of True Friendship' in Calcutta in the early nineteenth century, carried a certificate urging "all Men Enlightened, wheresoever spread on the Face of the Globe, that they treat [Wallington]... with Hospitality and Brotherly Love" (Certificate of Charles Wallington, Lodge of True Friendship No. 315, Calcutta, Bengal, 1813, Library and Museum, Freemasons Hall, London). The earl of Minto, Governor General of India, visited the Dutch lodge 'Virtutis et Artis Amici' on Java during the early 1810s; the same lodge later initiated Stamford Raffles, founder of the British settlement at Singapore, into Freemasonry (Van der Veur 1976: 7; see also Karpel 2001: *passim*). Sometimes, it seems, Freemasonry transcended national rivalries, allowing Europeans in the colonies to provide mutual support and hospitality and thereby extend the collective power of Europeans abroad.

Finally, Freemasonry was a crucial institutional buttress of western colonial empires during the age of high imperialism (1870s–1930s). In the British case, men in the highest echelons of the colonial service and the military, as well as three of Queen Victoria's sons, were active members of the brotherhood. So involved in Freemasonry were the empire's proconsuls that the *Canadian Craftsman* boasted: "Did it ever occur to the brethren that in building up the British Empire to its present grand position in the world that the very leaders of the various achievements, that have made it such a mighty factor in the settling of the affairs of nations were members of the Craft" (Smith 1900: 364). For more ordinary Masons, the brotherhood provided a far-reaching network of lodges that facilitated people's movement around the empire, spread information about it, and fostered support for it. Masonic meetings, ceremonies, social gatherings, and periodicals became primary outlets for the expression of imperialist identity and promoted the notion that the diverse peoples of the empire could unite under the British monarchy. Finally, Freemasonry served the crucial function of cementing relations between Britain and the Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa), especially in times of war.

The mutually supportive relationship between Freemasonry and colonialism was also evident in the Dutch and French Empires. T.H. Stevens identifies "a new enthusiasm" for Freemasonry in the Dutch East Indies as more and more settlers arrived, Dutch territory extended, and the colonial government expanded after the 1870s (Stevens 1994: 371). Freemasons were also at the forefront of France's expanding empire in this period. According to J.P. Daughton, the Third Republic was deeply divided over the ideological basis and governing practices of its expanding empire. Catholic missionaries had long been an

important feature of French colonies; colonial administrators and even some of the most committed republicans felt they continued to play an important role in the maintenance and extension of the empire. But others, most notably Freemasons, rejected the idea that Catholics should have any part in France's colonial enterprise. In Indochina, for example, they took the lead in an anti-clerical campaign, advocated the secularization of education, and promoted a colonial ideology based solely on republicanism. In this way, Freemasons became key players in heated debates "over the nature of France's relationship to the world, the form colonialism would take, and the very meaning of French civilization" (Daughton 2006: 6–7).<sup>8</sup>

In sum, Freemasonry achieved remarkable success in western colonial empires because fraternalism was an ideology well suited to the needs of empire builders and their dependents. While Freemasonry's forms differed from place to place, its functions were consistent: it offered opportunities for spiritual and moral development; it provided welcome diversions for members and the wider public; and it taught men to view and care for each other like brothers. But how far did this fraternalism extend? Did it ever bridge the gap between colonizer and colonized?

### Universal Brotherhood?

Since the eighteenth century, Freemasons have consistently claimed that masonic brotherhood transcends the differences that divide men. The Reverend Thomas Davenport, delivering a sermon in 1764, summed up the masonic ideal of universal brotherhood: "What am I to understand by the term 'brother'? I am not to confine it to him that is born of the same Parents, not to a Fellow-Member of any particular Society in which I may happen to be engaged; nor am I to bound it within the Limits of my Fellow-Citizens, or those of my own Country or nation, much less to any Sect or Party. No, the relation is far more extensive, stretching itself, like the Benevolence of our one God and common Father, even to the Ends of the Earth" (Davenport 1765: 6, 8). As European colonial empires stretched to "the Ends of the Earth" and became increasingly diverse, European Freemasons were faced with the question of considering colonial "others" as brothers.

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8 According to Jean Suret-Canale 1971, Freemasons in the colonial ministry in west Africa had a different view of missionaries, whom they supported as "good servants of the colonial venture".

Indigenous men were initiated into Freemasonry, in small numbers at first, but with increasing regularity after the 1860s. The first non-Europeans admitted were elites whom the British hoped to secure as allies of the empire. These included South Asian princes, Native American chiefs, and Persian ambassadors (see Harland-Jacobs 2007: 78–80, and Snoek and Harland-Jacobs, “Freemasonry and Eastern Religions” in this volume). British power abroad could not be sustained without the cooperation of such highly placed indigenous men, and Freemasonry was seen as a valuable means of encouraging their collaboration.

During the turbulent 1770s, in Britain’s North American colonies, African Americans also joined the brotherhood. In 1775 an Irish military lodge (No. 441) in the 38th Regiment of Foot had initiated fifteen African Americans into Freemasonry in Boston. The primary mover behind this event was Prince Hall, a skilled craftsman and African-American community leader in Boston. The newly initiated brethren attended meetings of Lodge No. 441, but when the regiment departed Boston, Hall established ‘African Lodge’. He secured a warrant for this lodge from the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) in 1784. Although English authorities recognized the masonic membership of Hall and his fellow African Americans (and corresponded regularly with the lodge for many years), white Masons in Boston did not view them as brethren. Facing insurmountable prejudice, Hall began issuing own warrants for new African-American lodges along the eastern seaboard (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 80–83, 217).

The admission of Native Americans, Asians, and African-Americans was not a widespread phenomenon during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most lodges operating in the colonies were composed exclusively of Europeans (of various religious, political, and social backgrounds). It was only during the second half of the nineteenth century that indigenous men began entering lodges in significant numbers, and only then after a period of extended deliberation on the part of British Freemasons. While the occasional admission of a Muslim prince or ambassador was acceptable and practical (especially for political reasons), the proposition of admitting men who practiced non-Abrahamic religions was problematic to contemporary European Freemasons. They had to be convinced, first, that such candidates were monotheists (see Harland-Jacobs and Snoek, this volume), and, second, that their admission would not undermine the imperial project. These discussions and negotiations played out between the 1840s and the 1870s. Instrumental were two South Asian candidates who pushed and pushed until they were admitted. The first was Maneckji Cursetji, a prominent Bombay civil servant, who became the first Parsi initiated into Freemasonry in Paris. After he finally secured admission to a lodge in India, thanks to the support of Scottish Provincial Grand Master James Burnes, the door was open to Parsi candidates. The second individual who played a key role was Prosonno Coomar Dutt, a Calcutta

merchant who waged a nine-year campaign to become the first Hindu admitted into Freemasonry; he was finally admitted to a Calcutta lodge in 1872.

The debates over the admission of Parsis and Hindus into British lodges in India reveal much about the complex mix of 'othering' and 'brothering' that formed the basis of western colonial ideologies in the mid nineteenth century. Fraternalism was an effective imperial ideology because it allowed Europeans to reconcile universal claims with the imperatives of colonial rule. European Freemasons could uphold the idea of universal brotherhood while arguing that their young indigenous brethren required extensive, perhaps indefinite, tutoring in western ways before they achieved adulthood. Arguing on behalf of the admission of Hindus in 1871, the English Grand Lodge claimed that through education and institutions like Freemasonry Hindus would come "to adopt the faith and manners of Englishmen; until that day arrives, there can be but little hope of friendly intercourse between the dominant and subject races". Of course, 'that day' was at some unspecified point in the future (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 237–239). Dutch Freemasons made similar arguments when first confronted by the prospect of admitting Chinese men into Freemasonry. In 1856 The Boen Keh, a sugar producer in Surabaya, was rejected by Dutch Masons who argued that "Chinese concepts of virtue and vice, life and death, promises and secrets" were "diametrically opposed to Western tenets and conceptions". The local lodge, however, agreed to set up a special committee to observe his behavior. The committee confirmed his openness to western ways, and he was eventually admitted on the condition that he learn Dutch (Van der Veur 1976: 14–15).

Once European Freemasons convinced themselves that their brotherhood was an ideal vehicle for westernizing indigenous men, greater numbers of Asians were accepted into British and Dutch lodges. Approximately one fifth of the lodges working in the India in the 1870s included indigenous members. They were even accepted as high-ranking officers in the district grand lodges of both the Scottish and English constitutions (Harland-Jacobs 2007: 230–232). Dutch lodges also increasingly opened their doors to Chinese and Indonesian elites during the 1870s. 'Lodge Mataram' in Yogyakarta was particularly receptive. Its members welcomed Ko Ho Sing in 1871 and rapidly conferred on him the Master's rank for his expert knowledge of Confucian teachings. In 1875, 'Lodge De Vriendschap' in Surabaya initiated its first Javanese members, including the Sultan of Kutei and three of his sons (Van der Veur 1976: 15–16).<sup>9</sup>

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9 The first Javanese Freemason, a descendant of the Sultan of Pontianak, had been initiated in 1844. Several members of the House of Paku Alam (in the Yogyakarta Sultanate) belonged to Freemasonry.

Meanwhile, indigenous men were joining masonic lodges in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. In 1865, Hyde Clarke, Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Turkey, cited India as a precedent for native admissions in Istanbul: "Masonry will here help to unite the various nations, races and sects on a common basis of divine worship, charity, virtue and above all brotherly love carrying out here a great work as it does in India" (Clarke quoted in Dumont 2005: 487). According to historian Paul Dumont, three 'mixed lodges' (composed of Muslim Turks, Egyptians, and Persians) were working in Istanbul in the 1860s. 'Loge Union d'Orient' boasted a membership of 143, with 53 Muslim brethren, in 1869. Many members of the Ottoman elite, including the Imperial Prince Murad, belonged to 'Lodge I Proodos', headed by the Greek banker Cleanthi Scalieri. Ottoman bankers, merchants, and professionals were active in Freemasonry in this period; their European brethren were usually army officers, diplomats, and even craftsmen (Dumont 2005: 484).

As with Europeans, Freemasonry appealed to Asian men for many reasons. One Javanese member, writing in the early twentieth century, explained that he became a mason because he was seeking "greater spiritual awareness" and an "exchange of ideas". Similarly, Ottoman lodges were popular, according to Dumont, for the role as "places for discussion and exchanges of ideas, probably on contemporary questions such as socialism, feminism, venereal disease and the progress of science" (Van der Veur 1976: 18–19; Dumont 2005: 487). Indigenous men, like Europeans, became Freemasons because they were drawn to its rituals, ceremonies, and conviviality; they also realized the value of its fraternal network in providing a safety net and facilitating upward mobility.

But Freemasonry also attracted indigenous men for its ability to put them on terms of intimacy and equality with Europeans. K.R. Cama, prominent Mumbai citizen, religious scholar, and author, wrote that "One of the happy results attained by introducing natives into Masonry has been that of bringing them to closely associate, socially, with their European brethren—I was almost going to say, masters" (Cama 1877: 5). Cama's postscript is notable, for it reveals how membership in Freemasonry encouraged indigenous men to think of Europeans in new and radical ways. Likewise, the Javanese Freemason quoted above described his acceptance as "something very special, a privilege": "When the blindfold was taken off, I stood in a circle of men who called me brother, who reached out to shake my hand, and who took me into their midst. At that moment I felt myself bound to the Order by an invisible and unbreakable link" (R.M.A.A. Poerbo Hadiningrat quoted in Van der Veur 1976: 18–19; see also Stevens 1994: 371).

Once the colonized began seeing their colonial masters as brothers and equals, it was but a short step to using Freemasonry to challenge the colonial

relationship itself. This was, of course, a political act, which contravened Freemasonry's rule requiring members to avoid politics when they associated as Freemasons. But such regulations did not stop many Freemasons, realizing the remarkable organizational potential of masonic networks, from using the fraternity to forward political agendas. American, Irish, and Latin American Freemasons had done just that during the age of revolution. So too could colonial nationalists of later eras. Historians of Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, India, and the Philippines have begun exploring the role of Freemasonry in colonial nationalist movements (for North America and Ireland, see Harland-Jacobs 2007: 112–127; for the Ottoman Empire, see Dumont 2005 and Campos 2004; for India, see Fozdar 2006; for the Philippines, see Schumacher 1966 and Karpel 2001). According to Juan Cole, for example, both Syrian Christians and Muslims (bureaucrats and intellectuals), began joining lodges in Egypt from the 1870s. While these groups advocated different programs of reform, “Muslim and Syrian Christian Masons shared an anti-imperialist rhetoric” and used masonic lodges as political clubs to mobilize support for their leaders (Cole 1993: 153). But the work on Freemasonry and colonial nationalism remains in its infancy and many questions remain unanswered. Given the broadly divergent contexts in which Freemasonry operated, what, if anything, was consistent about the brotherhood's role in promoting colonial nationalism? What aspects of fraternalism were most important: the ideological, the social, or the practical? And did Freemasonry continue to serve as an interface between nationalists and Europeans once independence was achieved? The answers to these and other key questions await not only detailed studies of Freemasonry in specific countries but also broadly comparative analyses of Freemasonry in the context of twentieth-century nationalism and decolonization.

### Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, Freemasonry found fertile ground in the empires of Britain, France, and the Netherlands. The first lodges were established in these nations' colonies during the eighteenth century. From that point on, each constitution constructed an expansive network of lodges that performed a variety of functions in colonial societies. Men who built Europe's most successful and powerful modern empires turned to Freemasonry to fulfill wide-ranging spiritual, moral, social, and material needs. Fraternalism, as both an ideology and a practice, helped make empires work. But fraternalism also included ideas, such as the universal family of man and the equality of brothers who “meet upon the level”, that undermined the fundamental basis of

imperialism. Interpreted in some quarters as an anti-imperial ideology, Freemasonry ultimately contributed to the demise of the very empires that had taken it “to the ends of the earth”.

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# Freemasonry and Nationalism

*Jeffrey Tyssens*

## Introduction

The theoretical debate on nations, national identities and nationalism of the last decades (for a comprehensive overview, see Smith 2001) has evidenced a long struggle between a modernist or ‘constructivist’ approach (nations and national sentiment as recent creation) against older ‘primordialist’ or ‘perennialist’ interpretations (nations and national sentiment as natural, age-old configurations), with a set of newer, perhaps more subtle approaches trying to go beyond the classical axes of that first antinomy. Despite the constructivist approach eventually gaining the upper hand over the perennialist approach, and certain highly important new insights emerging, not every problem has been solved. One might even ask if, at a given moment, a new orthodoxy has not sought to install itself. The basic issue with the constructivist stance, i.e. that national identities are more or less invented from scratch, presenting national identities and nationalist discourse as a set of signifiers without firm grounds in historical reality, does pose a series of empirical historical problems. Are national identities really constructed out of thin air? Ethnosymbolism by contrast stressed the importance of pre-modern ‘ethnic’ pasts out of which modern nationalism could extract myths and memories and dig for different cultural particles by which a tradition could be reinvented. That was a significant new insight, but a number of problems of interpretation and fact still remained, as ethnosymbolism more in particular did not give sufficient attention to the multifaceted nature of nations and nationalism, something which is to be related mainly to its cultural focus and *prima facie* non-political line of analysis.

Definitely, the debate must move away from this presumed homogeneity of nations and nationalisms. No doubt, one can detect the existence of state-sponsored nationalism, of nation-states keen on crushing local identifiers, other languages, or whatever cultural marker that does not fit their overall project (see de Certeau, Julia and Revel 2002), but this is by no means the only form one can observe. Indeed, too strong a focus on this first variety would neglect the nationalism of dominated groups, the nationalism of the ones Montserrat Guibernau qualifies as ‘nations without states’ (Guibernau 1999),

a nationalism which stands for different forms of cultural and social emancipation, even if it is definitely so that this last variety of nations and nationalisms is constituted by social spheres where 'construction' of identities, 'invention' or 'reinvention' of tradition takes place as well. Consequently, there will be a good deal of 'artificialness' to be detected here too, but again, that does not imply that everything is merely a discursive construct, that the identities in question are just products of conspiring elites, let alone that they are nothing more than particularistic anachronisms. That 'artificialness' does not at all lessen the importance of invented traditions.

In a 2006 conference paper, historian Andrew Prescott refers to that same invented tradition in Freemasonry and to the famous volume edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992). If it is often narrowly read, their research project did go beyond the scope of mere nation-construction or relatively recent epochs. If that project was not really applied by these authors to the case of Freemasonry—which is merely looked upon as a recent invented tradition—the pre-history of the masonic lodges indeed shows fairly old examples of the invention of tradition that were meant to legitimate social, economical and political objectives. Referring to results of recent mediaeval studies which seem to support a number of ethnosymbolist approaches, Prescott also proposes Freemasonry as a kind of 'laboratory' (a rather ideal one, as the documentary richness allows precise reconstruction of complex contexts) for the long term study of invented tradition in an explicitly cross-national perspective: "In investigating the role of Freemasonry in the invention of tradition, we can start to appreciate that nations, while constructed, are nevertheless the product of complex cross-connections and transformations over very long time periods" (Prescott 2006).

This view connects well to Guibernau's perspective, which goes beyond a limited conception of nation and nationalism that refers basically to just one particular variety: it rejects an a-historic, de-contextualized view of nations and nationalism and opts in stead for an analytical cluster where nation, state and nationalism appear, not as fixed categories, but as clearly distinct social phenomena whose respective definitions are made through their inter-relatedness and the tensions which characterize that interrelatedness, whose definitions are thus changing in time and space.

How does Freemasonry fit into this global picture? It is certainly tempting for a specific strand of analysis to show Freemasonry exactly as an instrument in the hands of elites for the construction of these national identities as a means of domination. That would give a quite remarkable resonance to an older tendency in the interpretation of the social role of Masonry, i.e. to represent it again as an instrument of the ruling classes to weaken class struggles,

notably as a presumed meeting ground of the liberal bourgeoisie and labour aristocracy. Just as this last preconceived answer—which amounts to nothing more than to Leninist orthodoxy—proved empirically false, a more subtle approach will be needed just as well where the nationalism issue is concerned. That does not imply that social and political elites did not use Freemasonry for their particular purposes in this register, but scholarly investigations should pay due attention to balancing movements of different kinds and natures. If we continue along the line of analysis of national identities we referred to before, that would imply that Freemasonry as a historical agent has to be studied in connection to this triad of state, nation and nationalism and their mutually influencing transformations.

The implication of Freemasonry in this field of tension immediately poses a basic question: how did a quintessentially cosmopolitan society, founded and spread over Europe (or even beyond), before the elaboration of the modern nation-state or at least in the early period of its emergence, get entangled in processes of configuration of national identity, in the making of nation-states, in nationalist politics? (Beaurepaire 2002: 223; Baycroft 2010: 10–22). This might seem to be a fundamental contradiction, but must this necessarily be so? It is not an ‘either/or’ type of question which has to guide the investigation. It is far more relevant to ask how, in one context, Freemasonry became an instrument of state-sponsored nationalism, or by contrast how, in another context, it was used by counter-movements as a tool of liberation for oppressed identity groups. So, instead of preconceiving an answer, one has to investigate truly if and how Freemasonry became a competition ground where different or even contradictory identity projects confronted each other, all with their own idea of at least partly instrumentalising Freemasonry; one has to try and reconstruct truly how Freemasonry, in very diverging ways no doubt, became a kind of ideological palimpsest where different identity projects have been written one over the other, one through the other, with older scriptures eventually shimmering through, cosmopolitanism being one amongst them for that matter.

To get a grip on these highly complex combinations within a masonic historical context (where nation and nationalism are obviously not the only preoccupations), Guibernau’s analytical triad of state/nation/nationalism does not only serve as a societal context in which Freemasonry is acting. It can also be utilised as a reading frame allowing us a structured analysis of dimensions which mirror masonic positions and attitudes towards state/nation/nationalism, positions and attitudes which can show integration, opposition, variety, vanguard roles and so on. One might advance a set of seven dimensions: (1) discourse, (2) political action, (3) organizational setup, (4) membership,

(5) language, (6) symbols and finally (7) ritual. One can study these with a classical chronological set-up, but nevertheless it seems preferable to privilege particular historical stages or events with high semiotic density. Periods of war—as they arouse high mobility and intense sentiment, national or other—are certainly one of those privileged stages, war as such and perhaps even more the immediate post-war years (see Maes 2010: 94–119). The same goes for regime changes, independency, transformation of state structures in a more federal or a more unitary way, changes in the way suffrage is organised (an extremely important matter), transformations of key institutions with particular relevance for the construction of identities, the (national) educational system and so on.

Obviously, one must be aware of the limitations of such modelling and one should furthermore be cautious not to fall into the illusion that it would be possible to construct a globally applicable explicative model. But what is certainly necessary for any analysis, is at least to elaborate a descriptive frame that can be shared and that can transcend the narrow national focus which too often limits—or even handicaps—the historiography of Freemasonry. Network analysis and transfer awareness is one instrument, comparative modelling and a *histoire croisée* perspective—an essential step in avoiding the trap of ‘methodological nationalism’—is a complementary one (Werner and Zimmermann 2006: 30–50). With respect to the latter item, one might plead, to attain an analytical leap forwards, that the history writing around Freemasonry would be performed no longer in a narration treating several squares of the analytical frame for one country, but that a serious attempt would be made to get a grip on one square for several countries, then move along to the other squares, in order to arrive at an analysis of transnational intersections. Pierre Bourdieu once suggested that making sweeping theoretical elaborations without paying due attention to the methodological consequences to be drawn from them is often a futile activity. This would at least imply that we should adapt our own historian’s individualised day-to-day practice and engage to some extent in genuinely collective research actions.

### Cosmopolitans, Patriots or Nationalists

Studying the specific tension between cosmopolitan and national identifications, one can only be struck by the profound process of change one must observe within European Freemasonry in the last years of the eighteenth century and even more in the first decades of the nineteenth. Freemasonry had developed in the eighteenth century as an essentially cosmopolitan

project and was successful in forming a trans-national network, allowing persons, ideas, books and other cultural artefacts to travel and to be translated across boundaries. Specific social, often aristocratic, groups with high levels of geographical mobility and often a common intellectual *lingua franca* (i.e. the French language) were most active in developing a masonic sociability with a fairly stable outlook in very different settings. Historian Andreas Önnersfors showed how little relevant the concept of 'Swedishness' was for eighteenth-century Masonry in the Swedish kingdom, not only because of the composite nature of the state as such, but just as well for the completely different symbolical frame in which Freemasons actually operated (Önnersfors 2006). Specific ritual regimes, such as the Strict Observance, were even consciously developed to transcend state boundaries and to come to genuinely transnational structures, which, in a contemporary setting, might be considered as international non-governmental organizations. The profoundness of this cosmopolitan project makes the relatively quick shift to a Freemasonry that was more closely related to national boundaries or that was even actively instrumentalised to serve the formation of the new nation-states, all the more remarkable. Two elements come back time and again: the importance of the Napoleonic wars (see Mollier 2007) and the reshaping of the European state system during the Restoration period on the one hand, and the transformation of membership structure of the lodges in the different states on the other.

In this specific period, certainly after the Vienna Congress, different political actors took a most active stance with respect to Freemasonry and in a most voluntary fashion approached it as a possible means of enhancing cohesion amongst the nation-state's elites. This instrumentalising of Freemasonry has been well studied for Napoleonic France (Saunier 2007: 139–148), but there are many other examples to be quoted. Anton van de Sande described with respect to the Netherlands how other monarchs and their aristocratic advisors had an important part in that process. Indeed, the sheer appointment of the very young Prince Frederic as Grand Master of the whole of the masonic order in the reunited Netherlands was a deliberate policy with that objective (Van de Sande 2001: 103ff.). In a very subtle manner, Jef van Bellingen demonstrated in his research on transnational masonic intersections in the early nineteenth century, how 'innocent' discussions on ritual to be used in the Low Countries' setting revealed clear political goals, that is; to give shape to a proper type of Freemasonry, to impose a breach with all ritual traditions with too 'French' a flavour, even to transform elements derived from such ritual traditions with clearly cosmopolitan traits as the Strict Observance in order to use them in a specific national setting, or even better, to help them produce that

national setting (van Bellinghen 2013). With respect to this last example, one cannot but be struck by the fact that the element of ‘constructed-ness’ and of the ‘imagining’ of tradition was indeed based on the outright forgery of historical documents, on the uninhibited manipulation of masonic history.

If princes and aristocrats played an important role in this development, the social group that was to become the most important base of this nationally related Freemasonry was the middle class. The eighteenth-century cosmopolitan Masonry had derived its particular outlook from what Önnersfors described as an “all-European mobile functional elite”, as “privileged people, diplomats, officers, artists, merchants, to the largest extent belonging to the high nobility or the new emerging state nobility”, who used Freemasonry to promote “their mobility across different semiotic zones of Enlightenment Europe” (Önnersfors 2006). In contrast, the post-1815 states actively engaged in the formation of a new national functional elite, which proved progressively far less aristocratic but more and more bourgeois in nature, whose cultural identification with the French language became ever less evident, vernaculars taking the place of the former European *lingua franca*. In more than one case, adhering to Freemasonry looks like a kind of distinction strategy. These remarks hold for Sweden, but there is no doubt that very similar shifts have taken place in other European countries. One of the best examples of the involvement of a liberal and profoundly bourgeois Freemasonry in the construction of a national identity is certainly the Italian case. As Anna Maria Isastia has convincingly demonstrated, Italian Freemasons did not construct the young and unified kingdom as such, but they certainly engaged themselves most actively in a host of activities aimed at the making of Italians. In many profoundly pedagogical activities, reaching from the so typical ‘statutomania’ to the shaping of national systems of education, Italian Freemasons developed a repertoire which was to mark the new secular state, e.g. the semiotic points of reference of the ‘Roma laica’ until today (Isastia 2010: 36–48). In this respect again, the Italian example did not stand alone: in such countries as Belgium or France very similar phenomena are to be observed.

### National Identities, Colonial Realities, Regional Sub-Identities

The level on which the construction of national identities is to be studied where Freemasonry is concerned does not limit itself to the geographical boundaries of the nation-state as such. Investigating the crossing of national identities and colonial realities, for example Bayly’s seminal work on the

long nineteenth century world history (Bayly 2004) has shown what high degree of complexity actually characterises the relationships between Freemasonry, national identity, Empire building and the transformation of former colonial territories into new states. As far as these last developments are concerned, Freemasonry does not seem to have played a significant direct role in the struggles for independence by new states in Latin America, as José Ferrer Benimeli has shown throughout his work on the matter (Ferrer Benimeli 2006), but its organisational forms were quite broadly imitated by these early nineteenth-century nationalist groups. Hosts of secret societies with structures similar to Freemasonry and specific political goals can be found in that epoch of South American history, but it seems that Freemasonry itself took no direct part in these movements. On the other hand, as Cuban scholar Torres-Cuevas made clear, masonic involvement in the construction of new civil societies in Latin or Central American countries could be rather important. The Cuban case is a clear example of this type of engagement (Torres-Cuevas 2005).

Colonial contexts still generate other ways of fostering national cohesion, that is, as a unifying force in colonial empires as such. A study of Freemasonry in the British Empire by Jessica Harland-Jacobs showed how networks of lodges constituted a metropolitan link, offered similar British national repertoires in symbols and ritual practices, and created a common sentiment in which there was no tension between national identifications and (theoretically) supranational ones like Masonry. A most striking element that comes back time and again, is how Freemasonry, in these colonial contexts as well as elsewhere, constituted for important quantities of people a way of managing their geographical mobility. Becoming a member of a Lodge before departure to the colonies immediately offered a network in the place of destination which could provide for hosting facilities, sociability or even a decent funeral if need would be (Harland-Jacobs 2007). If these cohesive forces appear to be quite clear and unambiguous in the global context of the British Empire, Freemasonry could by contrast be a setting for more complex and fluid identifications, national or other.

The research results presented by British economic historian Roger Burt on migratory Masons in a non-colonial context showed how new groups of mobile Masons, i.e. not aristocrats or business men but working class Freemasons, developed very similar practices as the ones detected by Harland-Jacobs, more in particular when (temporarily) migrating from Britain to North American mining regions in the nineteenth century (Burt 2003). Similar phenomena were most definitely present in hosts of other fraternal societies in nineteenth century America: Freemasonry appears less as a forerunner here than as a



variety of a broader model.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, mobility remained an important element in the attractiveness of Masonry way beyond the eighteenth century, with the *homo economicus* as a major motive for adherence, as well as clearly gendered sociability needs. Most interesting as well, is how regime changes in colonial settings were translated in masonic activities. In the context of the transfer of political control from one state to another, in such specific cases as those of the Caribbean isles, where Spain, France and Britain took control in different periods, masonic activity was pragmatically related to subsequent national obligations but at the same time continued to offer a meeting place for people with different national backgrounds, the French language often remaining a privileged means of communication for a long time (Révauger 2009: 79–93).

If Freemasonry had this complex position in colonial settings outside the actual territory of the nation-states as such, then the reverse question about levels of regional or even local identity construction offers an image just as divers and complex. The implication of masonic structures in the formation of national or more specifically sub-national identities was far from evident or stable. For hosts of aristocrats in the eighteenth century, Freemasonry was by no means an instrument to construct some kind of national, let alone regional or local identity, but rather functioned as a bridge to Europe. Their identifications were cosmopolitan and intellectual, with masonic and scientific networks intimately interwoven, books and ideas travelling across borders, national and linguistic. But things could prove to be quite different. Petri Mirala's account of the fascinating Irish case sheds a new light on the alleged incompatibility between a supposedly protestant and British-minded Freemasonry and an Irish national identity thoroughly marked by Catholicism. In the eighteenth century Irish Catholics did enter masonic lodges. Further, Irish ecclesiastical authorities even favoured a weakening of the condemnations of Masonry in order to allow Irish Catholics to adhere to a sociability close to the polity. It is just as striking that such early nationalist groups as the United Irishmen did count a number of Freemasons among their militant members (Bric 2004: 81–106). A major break did occur after the rebellion of 1798 when the Catholic clergy changed direction on this matter, and started condemning Freemasonry ever more violently, turning it into just one incarnation of the 'other' against whom Irish identity was to be constructed

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1 I analysed the case of the United Workmen with regard to their ways of organizing communities and social protection in a society with a high degree of geographical mobility such as the American one of the late nineteenth century. See Tyssens (2010: 113–129).

(Mirala 2007). Where more regional identifications are concerned, the patterns are even less univocal.

The pioneering study of French historian Saunier on the possible sensibility in masonic lodges of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Normandy with regards to specific concerns of the region in which they operated showed a remarkable absence of this kind of concerns, despite the fact that Normandy was a region with a rather strong regional identity. Although Normandy's lodges acted fairly autonomous from the Parisian centre, regional references lack on all levels and national issues remain the essential concern. The quite important differences between lodges of different parts of Normandy with respect to their social, cultural and political stances, apparently precluded a common identification (Saunier 2009: 49–64). This identification with sub-identities sometimes proved a little stronger though. The Belgian example shows how an exclusively French speaking Freemasonry eventually had to give way, in Flanders and partly also in the capital city Brussels, to Dutch speaking lodges since the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. If generally rather moderate in their stance on the Belgian state structure and hardly connecting to militant Flemish nationalism, Freemasons did prove to be active promoters of specific initiatives supporting forms of cultural autonomy for Flanders within the Belgian contexts, notably where higher education was concerned (Tyssens 1998: 3585–3594; Tyssens 2009: 306–327).

### Conclusion

Although, since the eighteenth century, Freemasonry had a clearly cosmopolitan ambition, it nevertheless constituted a potential instrument for the fostering of national cohesion. It is clearly shown by recent research that this needs to be no contradiction. Freemasons combined different levels of identification, changing contexts leading to different configurations of those same identifications. In the European frame, however, the Napoleonic wars seem to have led to a rather sharp chronological division between an eighteenth century with rather weak national identifications of masonic bodies and a subsequent period where national identity or even outspoken nationalism was to colour the order. The strategies of instrumentalising Freemasonry for the French Empire's needs were followed by similar ways of using the lodges as supports of national union and authority, princely or otherwise. Language shifts (e.g. away from French as a European *lingua franca*) and new practices of inventing traditions (sometimes in the shape of outright forgeries of masonic history) were to exclude foreign, that is, again mainly French, references. If the

direct role of Freemasonry in the actual building of new, independent nation-states seems to have been rather limited, the lodges were definitely present in the construction of the young nation-state's citizens. This is shown by the Italian example, but the same goes for Latin America and no doubt also for the United States (Tabbert 2005). Colonialism often had Freemasonry available as an instrument as well. Freemasonry participated in that deep mechanism of fraternal societies as mobility organising devices and as such had a considerable cohesive potential to link centre and periphery in imperial configurations. It is less clear, however, how Freemasonry interacted with local and regional sub-identities (potentially conflicting with the national ones). As far as current research allows one to say, the interface is complex and ambiguous. In such strongly centralized countries as France, lodges seemed less prone to explicit regional identifications than in such countries where the Jacobin, monolingual state set-up was less successful, as Belgium, where sub-identities were mirrored, at least to a certain degree, in the cultural outlook and societal engagement of Freemasonry.

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# Freemasonry and War

*François Rognon*

## Introduction

Anderson's *Constitutions* (1723) can be considered as the founding charter of modern non-operative Freemasonry (Anderson 1723). The two authors, James Anderson (1684–1739) and Jean-Théophile Désaguliers (1683–1744), were very much exercised by the religious tensions which persisted in England. They drew on the old charges, the ancient duties of the stone masons, of which the oldest are the Cooke and Regius manuscripts, written between 1425 and 1450 (see the chapter on the “Old Charges” in this volume). In addition to setting out the physical and moral organisation of the building site, they suggest, in order to make it more effective and harmonious, that the workers, true to their obligations—a term adopted by Anderson—which were more persuasive than punitive, should develop an *esprit de corps* where each one was responsible for the smooth running of the lodge. Henceforth the obligations would be defined by reference to a constituted body and no longer to a single religious or political authority, bishop or king. Anderson's *Constitutions* made reference to those ancient charges in order to legitimise and give an air of antiquity to the brotherhood, but certain words which they add and which do not appear in any of the Medieval texts demonstrate the desire to envisage a kind of universal religion: “that religion in which all men agree”, that is to say: Christianity, as is clearly stated in article 1 (see Chakmakjian 2008 and Impens 2008).

## Some General Remarks Concerning Freemasonry and War

Meanwhile, between the building sites for the cathedrals and the philosophy of Enlightenment, between the Regius Manuscript and Anderson's *Constitutions*, Europe had been the theatre of bloody religious wars. After the Renaissance and the European humanist movement which followed it—with Rabelais, Erasmus, and Thomas More—the sixteenth century saw Europe torn asunder by the Reformation. For Paul Hazard, its moral unity was split with the population divided into two groups, which confronted each other (Hazard 1935). Wars, persecution, bitter disputes, insults became the daily life of these ‘enemy brethren’.

Closely tied to the struggles for political influence, the religious wars from 1523—the year of Luther’s excommunication—to 1648—the end of the Thirty Years’ War—would turn Europe into a bloodbath. In the seventeenth century, in an attempt to rediscover Christian unity, people like Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) put forward the idea of political absolutism which, in order to prevent civil war and preserve the peace, proposed absolute power, suppressing individual rights and radically denying freedom of choice, or, like Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), proposed a religious absolutism which, adhering to the council of Trent, imposed a return to the bosom of the Church before addressing any questions of principle or dogma. Others however, in increasing numbers, developed the idea of Tolerance. Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716) wanted to bring together the protestant churches and then reunite them with the Catholic Church. For him, the love of God and charity should lead Christians to seek to re-establish unity. Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) demonstrates in the twentieth chapter of his *Theologico Politicus* (1670), “that it is impossible to take from men the freedom to say what they think”. The idea of Tolerance would be developed by David Hume (1711–1776) and John Locke (1632–1704) who predate by a short time the drawing up of the *Constitutions* of the Order of Freemasons. It should not be forgotten, moreover, that one of the authors of those constitutions (perhaps the real author), Jean-Théophile Désaguliers, was strongly influenced by the ideas of Isaac Newton (1642–1727), whose secretary he was, and his notion of a Great Architect of the Universe. We can therefore read the first article of Anderson’s *Constitutions* as a fundamental statement of principle concerning the prime motive for war which divides men—religion.

Anderson’s *Constitutions*, Charge I. *Concerning God and Religion*.

A *Mason* is oblig’d, by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid ATHEIST, nor an irreligious LIBERTINE. But Though in ancient Times Masons were charg’d in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet ‘tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in wick all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be *good Men and true*, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish’d; whereby Masonry becomes the *Center of Union*, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain’d at a perpetual Distance.

ANDERSON 1723: 50

The final words imply that it is religions, understood as the various forms of Christianity, which, at that time created “perpetual distance”, which prevent

men from meeting each other as friends. We could even conclude from this that religions divide men who, but for Freemasonry, would perpetually remain strangers, even enemies.

However, even if religions could be removed as a cause of war between different states, they are nonetheless still likely to enter into conflict for political or economic reasons. So the *Constitutions* set out precisely the attitude of the mason as “a peaceable Subject to the Civil Powers” who should not take part in a revolution or a civil war and thereby become, in terms of the *Constitutions*, a “Rebel against the State”. However, this situation, although blameworthy, does not imply exclusion from the Order and the case is handed over to the lodge where the ties, which bind it to the brother, are believed to be indissoluble.

Anderson's *Constitutions*, Charge II. *Of the Civil Magistrate supreme and subordinate.*

A Mason is a peaceable Subject to the Civil Powers, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concern'd in Plots and Conspiracies against the Peace and Welfare of the Nation, nor to behave himself undutifully to inferior Magistrates; for as Masonry hath been always injured by War, Bloodshed and Confusion, so ancient Kings and Princes have been much dispos'd to encourage the Craftsmen, because of their Peacableness and *Loyalty*, whereby they practically answer'd the Cavils of their Adversaries, and promoted the Honour of the Fraternity, who ever flourish' in Times of Peace. So that if a Brother should be a Rebel against the State, he is not to be countenanc'd in his Rebellion, however he may be pitied as an unhappy Man; and, if convicted of no other Crime, though the loyal Brotherhood must and ought to disown his Rebellion, and give no Umbrage or Ground of political Jealousy to the Government for the time being; they cannot expel him from the *Lodge*, and his Relation to it remains indefeasible.

ANDERSON 1723: 50

Emphasis on the loyalty of a Freemason to his country is evident in masonic documents, as we have seen, from the very outset of non-operative Freemasonry. In times of conventional war a Freemason does not hesitate, it is believed, but enlists for his country as his duty dictates. His ideals identify with the defence of freedom. A Freemason defends the country in which his lodge can meet and work freely, a country in which Freemasonry can prosper. This understanding of loyalty has evolved over the course of time and the ways of seeing things have changed, especially since the Second World War. But let us return to the



origins of Freemasonry. Even before the official date given for the creation of the first Grand Lodge in London, 1717, modern non-operative Freemasonry was very quickly adopted by serving soldiers. What is more striking is that the first men to be admitted as members who were not stone masons, were military men: Robert Moray (1609–1673), quarter master general in the Scottish army in 1641 and, to a lesser extent, Elias Ashmole (1617–1692), artillery officer in a Royalist regiment in 1646. The theory that Freemasonry arrived in France via the Scottish and Irish regiments loyal to James II (1633–1701), exiled to St. Germain en Laye in 1688 has never been fully disproved (see Bord 1908: 489–504). Many serving military officers were quick to be admitted into an Order that was spreading throughout Europe, where the philosophy of the Enlightenment offered a new justification for military conquests. The atrocities of war are framed within the strategy of the battlefield. The rules of the Order correlate to military virtues: order, fidelity, courage, and brotherhood. The appearance of military lodges soon followed, around 1744–1745, with travelling lodges composed of members of a particular regiment (for France see Le Bihan 1967: 279 et sq.).

The international masonic scene of today was built up gradually over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The United Grand Lodge of England only finally taking shape (and its name) in 1813. The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the most widely practised masonic system throughout the world, only acquired its definitive form in the United States from 1801 onwards and ‘disembarked’ on European soil in 1804. Its governing bodies, the Supreme Councils, met in Lausanne in 1875 and drew up a statement, a ‘manifesto’ which, although not adhering to the founding values of Anderson’s *Constitutions*, nevertheless remains an important landmark in the way in which it fits the masonic order into the everyday life in which it exists and in which it participates. The duties which it demands of its members, institutionally, are still underscored by a reference to a Newtonian God: mathematical and universal, and the rejection of those sources of division, not to say conflicts, which bring men into opposition with each other: religion and politics.

Manifesto of the Lausanne Congress, Declaration of Principles:

Freemasonry proclaims, as it has done since its origins, the existence of a Creator Principal known as the Great Architect of the Universe.

It imposes no limits on the search for truth and in order to guarantee that freedom for all it demands of everyone, tolerance.

Freemasonry is therefore open to all men of whatever nationality, race or creed.

All discussion of religious or political topics is forbidden in the lodge; all are welcome regardless of their political opinions or religious beliefs, which are not its concern, provided he is a free man of good report.

The aim of Freemasonry is to combat ignorance in all its forms; it is a school of mutual instruction whose curriculum can be summed up as follows: obedience to the laws of one's country, live honourably, practise justice, love one's neighbour, work tirelessly for the good of humanity and pursue progressive and peaceful emancipation.

This is what Freemasonry adopts and wishes all who are desirous of being part of its family to adopt.

LAUSANNE 1875: 75

After having reiterated the opportunity offered to every mason to "practise his own religion" and to "follow the dictates of his own conscience", the commentaries which follow the declaration of principles deal with the precautions Freemasonry recommends to its members:

To all those who for so many reasons dread political discussion, Masonry says: I forbid in any of my meetings all political debate: be a true, loyal and dedicated servant of your country, you have no other duty. Love of one's country is perfectly aligned with practice of every virtue.

LAUSANNE 1875: 75

Although the two Supreme Councils of the United States (Northern jurisdiction and Southern jurisdiction) had been behind the development and expansion of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in North America, it was in Western Europe and especially in France that it developed its 'doctrine' and laid down its definitive ritual for the 'blue' lodges, working the first three degrees (see Noël 2006).

If Freemasonry spread like a powder trail throughout the world over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its message and its *raison d'être*, although universal, were modelled differently in the different countries where it took hold. The subject, which is of interest to us, 'Freemasonry and War', gave rise to thoughts steeped in the customs, culture and character of those countries. Thus the American Freemason Albert G. Mackey (1807–1881), in his *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, frames his thinking according to what he sees around him, but at the same time relying heavily on Anderson's *Constitutions*, especially the "Old Charges":

The question how Freemasons should conduct themselves in time of war, when their own country is one of the belligerents, is an important one. Of the political course of a Freemason in his individual and private capacity there is no doubt ... But so anxious is the Order to be unembarrassed by all political influences, that treason, however discountenanced by the Craft, is not held as a crime which is amenable to Masonic punishment ...

The Freemason, then, like every other citizen should be a patriot. He should love his country with all his heart; should serve it faithfully and cheerfully; obey its laws in peace; and in war should be ever ready to support its honor and defend it from the attacks of its enemies. But even then the benign principles of the Institution extend their influence, and divest the contest of many of its horrors. The Freemason fights, of course, like every other man, for victory; but when the victory is won, he will remember that the conquered foe is still his Brother.

MACKEY 1946, Vol. II: 1089

The German authors Lennhoff and Posner outline in their *Internationales Freimaurerlexikon* the problem from the sociological point of view:

The moral judgement of war can only lead to its condemnation: war is barbaric, bestial, stupid, bad, adverse to culture, immoral, incompatible with human dignity, true culture and morality. But humanity—also so-called civilised humanity—is still largely at the stage of barbarism, both intellectually and morally. Therefore—but only therefore—war is still possible and, according to historical-sociological causality, inevitable, sometimes even ordered by moral teleology: as war of defence or liberation.

QUOTING HEINRICH SCHMIDT, *Philosophisches Wörterbuch* [1931], Lennhoff and Posner 1975: 878

For Lennhoff and Posner, this statement justifies the pacifist stance of Freemasons and certain masonic associations, such as the Universal League of Freemasons founded in 1905, which is still in existence today and which played an important role between the two world wars.

### The Masonic Lodge and Its Role

The institution of Freemasonry was built on the platform of lodges already in existence. The Grand Lodge of London and Westminster was formed in 1717 by the union of four existing lodges who took their names from the inns where they each met: the Goose and Grid Iron, and so on. The Grand Lodge of Scotland, the Grand Lodge of York and the Grand Lodge of Ireland were established using the model of the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster, but the lodges that these grand lodges grouped together were far older and some of them could be considered to be the bridge between stone-masons' and gentlemen's lodges.

The doctrine and regulations of institutionalised Freemasonry were drawn up, like that of other bodies, in order to endow it with the moral and social setting it needed to gain recognition in the society in which it was growing. The ethical code of the corporation became identified with the ethical code of the lodge, of the socio-professional body charged with the governance of a craft and its technical mastery. The Regius and Cooke manuscripts, as well as other Old Charges from which the compilers of Anderson's *Constitutions* drew their inspiration (see above) defined the duties of the workmen for a particular building site and legislated the professional and moral life of the lodges.

The lodge, the basic organisational element of Freemasonry, demands of its members that they love one another as brothers. The concept of fraternity is part and parcel of the lodge; the lodge is itself a fraternity. We have seen in Article II of Anderson's *Constitutions* that the brotherhood (the institution of Masonry) cannot support rebellion; it should even oppose it with respect to the government of the day under whose rule it is allowed to prosper. But this same article, in fine, states that if a brother is not convicted of any crime other than political opposition to the existing government, the lodge cannot expel him and his links to it remain indissoluble. Which is not to say that the lodge supports the brother in his rebellion. It is not for the lodge to become embroiled in political affairs and/or matters of war. Political discussion is banned in the lodge, as is discussion of religious matters. The latter are, as we have seen, relatively easy to avoid even if in certain rituals for some masonic degrees they come to the surface as a result of the content of those rituals; the Jewish tradition in certain Salomonic degrees, the Christian tradition at certain times in the Rose-Croix degree, and so on.

Political discussion is less easy to avoid. As a good citizen, a mason is not supposed remain indifferent to the events taking place in the world around him. Obviously the sound of gunfire and warring cries should not, it is believed, cross the threshold of the lodge, but the mason taking part in the ritual of the opening of the lodge brings with him from the world outside all the trials and triumphs he has just lived through. Masonic rituals are arguably designed to create a sacred time and space. The opening ceremony re-creates each time a scenario, which is seen as always new yet forever the same. In order to enter into this peculiar space-time scenario, it is said, the Freemason must leave all his metallic items at the door of the lodge. The explanation of the symbolism involved in this expression would take up too much of our time here but suffice it to say that according to standard masonic interpretations, in order to rid himself of the dross which would contaminate a masonic initiation, as in an alchemical process, the candidate needs to remove all egoistical, profane and partisan thoughts. But at what point is the line drawn which defines a profane

thought? Can a mason who, in a legitimate war, fights for liberty and honour be allowed to show his great joy in the lodge? Can a conquering brother forget that a defeated brother is still a brother? In the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite the Worshipful Master and his two Wardens each utter in turn the following prayers: "Let peace reign over the Earth!", "Let love reign among men!", "Let joy be in every heart!" (Rituel du premier degré du Rite Ecossais Ancien et Accepté, Grande Loge de France, 1962: 30). Masonic rituals often direct the mason towards cultivating and spreading over the entire world the brotherly love he has discovered and strengthened in the lodge. The masonic lodge is interpreted as an ideal world, a place where all men are brothers. During many masonic ceremonies of a 'craft' or 'blue' lodge, whatever the nature of the ritual being worked, a so-called chain of union is formed. Does this chain of union, which symbolises the brotherly love that unites all Masons, unite by extension all human brothers?

We have seen that the constitutions of the masonic order emphasised the loyalty of the Freemason to his native country. The masonic lodge into which the candidate was to be received equally underlined the importance of this loyalty but made this attachment personal: the Freemason must of his own free will undertake this attachment (or not at all). Masons argue that every masonic initiation is based on the free will of the individual candidate who accepts the symbolic trials and moral precepts, which form part of the ceremony of initiation, but it is also based on the freedom and on the intention that he seeks and builds up throughout his life. It is through this step, taken freely, that the lodge makes the brother demonstrate unquestioning loyalty to his country, but one that is the result of his own free choice. Before being admitted into a lodge the candidate is placed in the 'chamber of reflection' where he meditates on the passage of time, the brevity of life and the need to transform the old man in himself into an enlightened being. This is in some lodges the moment when he writes his 'philosophical will'. Also, ever since this practice was introduced, and still today, one of the questions to which he must answer now is in some lodges: "what duty does a man owe to his native country?"

Another of the precepts of masonic usages, it is argued by Masons, inculcates in the Freemason a peaceable and grateful regard for his native land, the country that allows him freely to belong to the masonic order and permits this order to prosper. The festive board is one of the most widespread of masonic customs, and in the banqueting rituals for the festive board the first toast is always to the head of the nation, the head of state or the person in charge of the country in which the lodge is held. This first toast at the festive board is one of the methods by which we can date the ritual according to whether it

is proposed to the king or the emperor or as in our time to the head of state, the president of the republic.

### **The Freemason and His Masonic and Civic Duties**

Can a victorious brother forget that the man he has defeated is still a brother? We now come to the final stage of reflections upon 'Freemasonry and War', that of personal thoughts and individual conscience. The terms of Anderson's *Constitutions* make it very clear: Masonry is "the Center of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance" (Anderson 1723: 50). The masonic order, as keeper of the tradition, which allows its adherents to be fulfilled as initiates, in the world outside, is believed to show them a way of doing it. Freemasons often emphasise that Freemasonry then benefits from the gratitude of the outside world for the good deeds of its members, thus demonstrating its ideas and 'enlightening the world' as to its 'noble cause'. And the institution of Masonry is proud to list the famous men who have graced its ranks. The initiation of Voltaire (1694–1778), into the order occurred just a few months before his death and stands out more as an symbolic act of a coming together of ideas rather than as a positive engagement on the part of the philosopher who for a long time had been regarded as a 'mason without an apron'. But also among the famous names of which Freemasonry was so proud one can list great generals, great warriors. To Masons, these men personified the masonic ideals of liberty, but their attitude towards military action, towards war, always remained within the bounds of personal opinions and duties. Furthermore, it is because of freedom of thought, free will and personal duty that many Freemasons came to the defence of their native land or became involved in armed 'ideological' movements, revolutions or wars of independence.

### **Some Examples of Masons on the Battlefield**

At Crefeld, in the Rhineland, on June 23, 1758, Louis de Bourbon, the Count of Clermont (1709–1771) was defeated by Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick (1721–1792), the former being the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of France and the latter the Grand Master of the Order in Germany. Neither questioned whether their duty on the field of battle was contrary to the principles to which they adhered. They were, supposedly, motivated by virtue, courage and fidelity, but neither of them apparently felt in any way bound by any duty as

a 'representative' of Masonry. As Grand Masters, they defended and made prosper, each in his own country, a masonic order that preached universal brotherhood, and as soldiers they acted according to their own conscience for the defence and prosperity of their kingdom. As already mentioned, the institution of Masonry is implicitly opposed to the outbreak of any war but leaves the individual mason, be he Grand Master or not, free to choose his own course of action.

Official intervention by a duly constituted masonic institution, such as a Grand Lodge, in conventional armed conflicts is very rare. Mackey quotes the (isolated?) case which we can use as an example, of a circular letter sent out by the Grand Secretary of the Scottish Grand Lodge, dated February 2, 1778:

At a quarterly meeting of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, held here the second instant, I received a charge to acquaint all the Lodges of Scotland holding of the Grand Lodge that the Grand Lodge has seen with concern advertisements in the public newspapers, from different Lodges in Scotland, not only offering a bounty to recruits who may enlist in the new levies, but with the addition that all such recruits shall be admitted to the freedom of Masonry. The first of these they consider as an improper alienation of the funds of the Lodge from the support of their poor and distressed Brethren; and the second they regard as a prostitution of our Order, which demands the reprehension of the Grand Lodge. Whatever share the Brethren may take as individuals in aiding this levies, out of zeal to serve their private friends or to promote the public service, the Grand Lodge considered it to be repugnant to the spirit of our Craft that any Lodge should take a part in such in business as a collective Body. For Masonry is an Order of Peace, and it looks on all mankind to be Brethren as Masons, whether they be at peace or at war with each other as subjects of contending countries. The Grand Lodge therefore strongly enjoins that the practice may be forthwith discontinued. By order of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. W. Mason, Gr. Sec.

MACKEY 1946: Vol. 2, 1090

Thus the Grand Secretary castigates the lodges and not the individual Masons. The freemason, being "a free man of good report", is supposed to act according to the dictates of his own conscience upon the principles set out by the laws and constitutions of a masonic body, which proposes, which 'communicates' to the world, an ideal of peace in manifest opposition to the warrior ideal; but which leaves each member free to adopt the latter in order to defend those causes it adopts in order to arrive at the former. What may seem a paradox can

be resolved for the Freemason within the lodge, where he is supposed to pause and reflect before committing himself to action.

### The Lodge Reflects

During the eighteenth century numerous military lodges began to appear and the only difference between them and civilian lodges is that the former are itinerant; the same brotherhood, the same practice of virtue unites all the members. Civilian lodges held in garrison towns welcomed soldiers and military lodges welcomed civilians in the towns where they held their meetings so that the notion of war became tinged with the feeling of brotherhood, of respect for the dignity of the conquered. This sentiment was developed during the Napoleonic Wars and we can quote the speech by Mangourit du Champ-Daguet (1752–1829) on the occasion of the inauguration of the lodge ‘Les Commandeurs du Mont Thabor’ on November 6, 1808 in Paris:

When a wounded man gives the sign of distress you will fly to his aid whatever his nation or creed ... how many heavenly shields has she (Masonry) not delivered to the brave soldiers fighting under our flags to save from death the defeated enemy in whom the victor recognised his brother.

CHEVALLIER 1974: Vol. 2, 95

In addition to the encouragement within the lodge to adopt an individual attitude, military lodges at the time of the Empire felt that they had a mission to liberate and federate: the lodge ‘L’Heureuse Rencontre’ in Milan, into which Joachim Murat (1767–1815)—at that time the general, heading the Italian army—was initiated, wrote to the Grand Orient of France in June 1802 asking it to “establish a Grand Orient in Italy, which would recognise that of France and would cement the fraternal bonds between the two nations, just like those which exist between the two governments” (Quoy-Bodin 1987: 199). Thus the lodge puts forward a way of thinking about war, as an intermediary between the institution of Freemasonry and the individual; examples ‘on the battlefield’ are numerous: “on the eve of the battle of Austerlitz a lodge meeting unites both French and Austrian officers...a similar thing happened after the battle of Waterloo when several English officers became joining members of lodge ‘Saint Frédéric des Amis choisis’ in Boulogne sur Mer” (Chevallier 1974: Vol. 2, 97).

At that time, the case of the war prisoners may serve as another example of those reflections from the lodge, actually intermediating between the



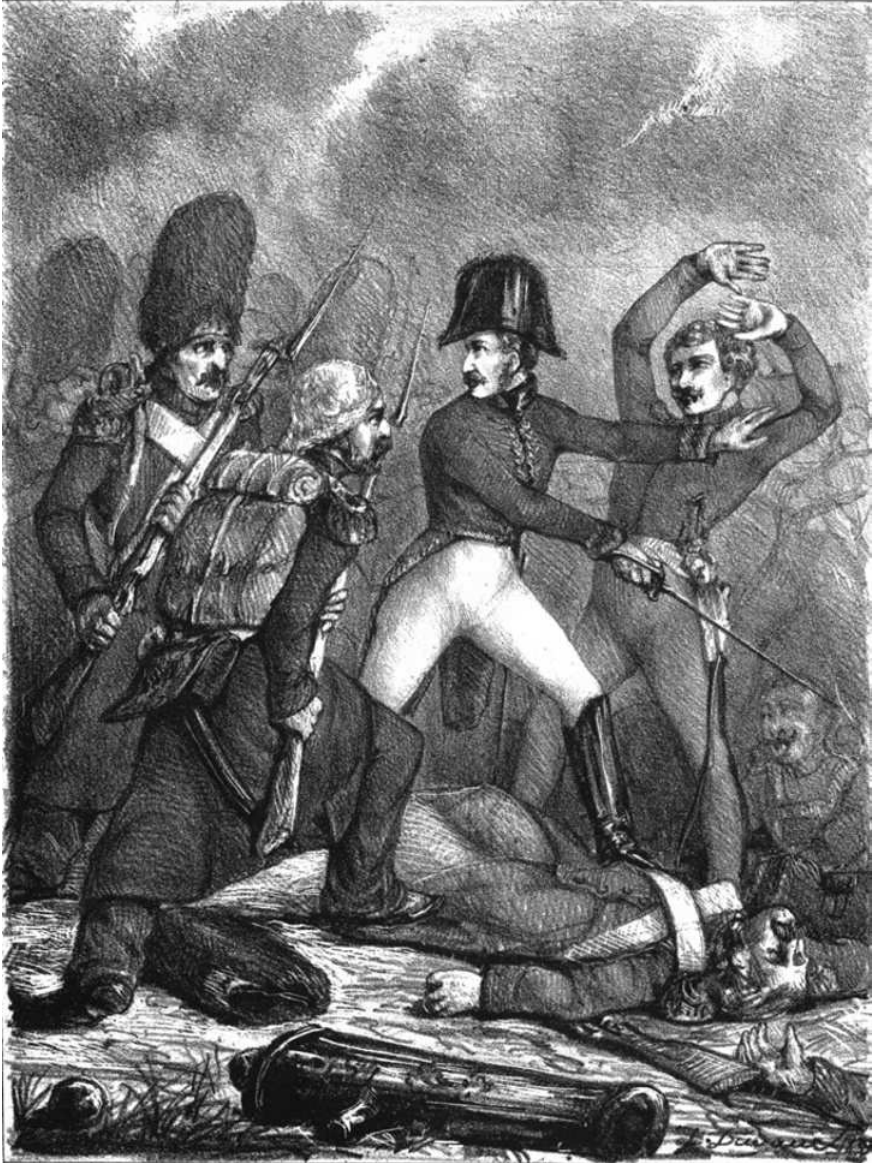


ILLUSTRATION 26.1 *"The Sign of Distress at Waterloo".*

institution and the individual. In Great Britain many lodges were created during the eighteenth century in towns where prisoners of war were held or on board prison hulks. Some towns accommodated prisoners who were on parole and whose living conditions were relatively comfortable and who benefited

from a measure of connivance with the native population. The prisoners on board the hulks lived in much harsher conditions in such places as Plymouth, Arelsford, Ashby and others in the United Kingdom. The prisoners' lodges allowed brethren to meet each other, but they also allowed English and French Masons to fraternise. The names of the lodges spoke for themselves: 'Friends in Captivity', 'The Consolation of Friends Re-united', 'The Hope of Peace', 'Benevolence', 'Longed for Peace', and so on (Quoy-Bodin 1987: 230).

The American war of independence, the wars of liberation in South American countries, or the war over Italian unification can be classed as conventional wars where Freemasons positioned themselves in those camps which seemed the right one for them—English, Spanish, Austrian on one side, Washington, Bolivar and Garibaldi on the other—and where their course of action was foremost a result of personal reflection and decision. By contrast, revolutions do not provide such clear cut and 'safe' boundaries, and the Freemason might find his own ideas in conflict with those of other brethren. It is then that the lodge supposedly reacts to outside events. It is expected to support or guide the course of action chosen by its brethren.

The situation in France in 1870–1871 is a good example, on the one hand of the attitude of the Freemason in a conventional war and on the other of the role of the lodge in shaping the attitude of the mason in time of revolution—in this instance the French mason faced first with the Franco-Prussian war and then the same mason faced with France in the revolutionary turmoil of the Commune. In July 1870 France, for reasons that had to do with the Spanish succession, declared war on Prussia and Napoleon III (1808–1873), Emperor of France, lost the battle of Sedan and was taken prisoner. Léon Gambetta (1838–1873), a Freemason, declared the Republic and decided to continue the war. The Prussians bombarded and lay siege to Paris, which finally surrendered on the January 28, 1871. The starving Parisians revolted against the new laws and created the council of the Commune of Paris on March 26, 1871. Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877) headed the 'legitimate' government, which withdrew to Versailles. The Commune was violently repressed. After the bloody week of May 21–29, the repression continued for a long time with death penalties and deportations to follow. The 'book of architecture' (Minute book) of the lodge 'Justice' No 133 (manuscript of 185 folios in a hard-back copybook, from November 1868 to November 1872) followed the events, meeting after meeting. What more striking example could there be than the living reports of the meetings with the very words spoken by the brethren of the Lodge? At the meeting held on March 3, the attitude of the lodge towards the 'classical' war situation is true to the freedom of thought and action it allows to the brethren of whom it is made up: some will propound an approach where the spirit of

patriotism will predominate, whilst others will remind brethren of the supra-national nature of Freemasonry. In the meetings which follow, the discussions are much more complicated and demonstrate the way in which, during a time of civil war, a lodge can think and how its individual members can come to terms with their thinking. Several of them, among whom was Jules Vallès (1832–1885), who had supported the Commune, were forced into exile in order to flee the reprisals.

Minute book of Lodge No 133 'La Justice':

**3 March 1871:** 8 present: Bro: Vallès asked that the Lodge unite with others which have joined the anti-Prussian league and declare that it will not initiate or receive as a visitor any Prussian. Bro.: Schafer opposes the proposition by Bro.: Vallès: the nationality of its members is not the concern of Mas.: ...

**7 April 1871:** 21 present, Bro.: Guénin asks if anyone has anything to report concerning events of the day in the outside world. He affirms that for his own part, while still a mason within the Lodge, he remains a citizen outside it...he reminds brethren that he predicted the events which took place since yesterday but he believes that from today we should affirm universal humanity in anticipation of dreadful circumstances. Bro.: Rouillé objects to these last words and affirms that those circumstances are the distinction of a very new and fortunate revolution. Furthermore he deplores the fact that within the lodge where all the Bre.: come only to find peace and harmony, political matters which inflame passions are discussed. Bro.: Guénin brought the debate to a close.

**21 April 1871:** Fraternal remembrance of Bro.: Beausillon who died fighting for the ideas he had always upheld.

**5 May 1871:** 24 present W.M.: Godfrin. Correspondence contains a letter from the Lodge of Belleville inviting other lodges, under certain conditions, to join the commune.

–Bro.: Moullé: I do not propose pure and simple support for this cause but it think there is a case for drawing up, in the name of the Lodge, a declaration both communal an federalist.

–Bro.: Rouillé is in favour of this proposition as there is no longer any possibility of reconciliation. Civil war is legitimate, if Masonry has accomplished its grand purpose conscious of what it was doing.

–Bro.: Shaffer: ... if Masonry stood aloof from quarrels between people, well then I ask how could it not be aloof from civil disorder. I think there is a case for continuing to seek for conciliation within our Lodge without

acting as judge between Paris and Versailles any more than we sat in judgement between Paris and Berlin. Of course Masonry did the right thing in trying through our mass demonstration to put an end to this daily act of suicide, which we call civil war. We have failed, I agree, but this is merely the first attempt. Let us continue our efforts; perhaps we shall have greater success another time. But let us not set aside our peaceful protests, for warmongering is anti-Masonic.

–Bro.: Moullé: I do not agree with Bro.: Schaffer. For me demonstration by Masons only has any meaning if it is seen as war against Versailles. It is an alliance with the idea of the commune. I say the idea of the commune and not the commune itself in order to demonstrate to you that I distinguish between men and the ideas they represent. I do not want to discuss the men themselves since the merit of this revolution lies in that it is anonymous and men are so carried along by the tide of events that they act without fully knowing what they are doing. It is not just to the communal movement that I ask Masonry to help and give its support but also to the Social which follows it. What is more, I do not have to ask Masonry for its help, it has already given it and I thank it for that. With Masonry we have moral justification and as I heard a small boy say on the day of the demonstration “now they will not be able to say at Versailles that the movement consists only of criminals”.

–Bro.: Schaffer says that by behaving in this way Masonry loses its identity. So what? It is clear that if the commune comes out the winner, it will have no reason to exist since oppression will have come to an end. And if the commune fails, well, I shall not be unhappy to see it disappear along with the law. As for searching after our banner, I protest, it should remain on the field of honour.

–Bro.: Salles says that all those who took part in the demonstration knew full well what they were doing. They cannot now withdraw today; the banners are riddled with bullet holes, they must fight.

–Bro.: Shaffer: I maintain the absolute opposite. Neither Lodge 133, any more than Masonry itself was consulted, and if it had been it would not have had the right to engage itself in any battle since it is exclusively a peaceable organisation. I object to the formation of masonic battalions, which would rob Masonry of its moral justification.

–Bro.: Griffe does not share Bro.: Schaffer’s ideas. 16 years ago when I was initiated into this lodge I was interrogated about duelling and I replied that there was only one legitimate contest: that of people against monarchs. Today we must march alongside the Commune. (*In the minutes the word ‘commune’ is sometimes written with a capital C, sometimes not.*)



ILLUSTRATION 26.2 *"Masonic banners on the ramparts of the Commune".*

–Bro.: Coulaugeon said that the Lodge had certainly not been consulted as to whether or not the banner should be unfurled on the battlements but what was beyond doubt was that there had never been as many members present at a lodge meeting as were present at the demonstration.

–Bro.: Rouillé: I never expected to take part in such an important debate but I must say to Bro: Schaffer that he has misunderstood what Masonry is all about. I know that thirty years ago it had the reputation in the outside world of being little more than a drinking club. But it is to have a very strange idea of what the spirit of Masonry is to conclude that it must remain outside of any debate. If it has become a secret society, that is because it was born to fight and it proved that in 1789. Established to defend throughout the world Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, it punished with the sword those brethren who violated their oath. I am not here to defend such harshness, but I wish to prove that Masonry is an arm in the struggle. Without any real value for many years, last Saturday Masonry finally acquired one; it became popular and will remain so if it continues down the courageous path it has freely chosen. I say freely because I recall the speech given by Bro.: Thirifocq, which had the approval of all

the demonstrators. I recall also that the next day it was resolved, in the Dourlans room, not to form masonic battalions but to invite masons in full regalia to stand shoulder to shoulder with the battalions of the national guardsmen. And why should Masonry not be in favour of communal federalism, since it is, itself nothing other than a federation of lodges and rites?

–Bro: Schaffer opposes this merging of the essential principles of Masonry and those of the commune by giving a brief history of the formation and organisation of both.

–Bro.: Parent: I speak reluctantly but am driven to do so by my conscience as a Mason. I want to put the question another way. I certainly do not share my friend Schaffer's views, but I do have several points in common with him. I shall endeavour to stick to the philosophical point. How did this impressive demonstration of some 7 to 8000 masons come about? How did those citizens who, at the meeting at the Chatelet, had arranged to meet in the court of the Louvre without in so many words determining the purpose of the meeting, come to be led to the Commune and to the ramparts to unfurl their banners? It is all due to the terrible circumstances through which we are living. We found ourselves meeting because we are already an organisation. From this meeting of honest men has been released a current far greater than the Republican Union League (*Ligue d'Union Républicaine*). We told ourselves: this bloodshed is dreadful, let us try to stem the source and as we are the defenders of the right in this struggle between the Republic and the Monarchy we leaned towards the Commune. By taking this course of action we have become political. When battle is drawn there is no reason to intervene when the two sides are evenly matched, justice will triumph on its own, but if the sides are unequal there is a case for supporting the weaker, all the more so if its cause is just. We, members of a fraternity, wanted to lend our moral support to the justness of the cause of the Commune, we wanted to find the means of conciliation. And what was the reply of Versailles to this magnificent gesture? Inflammatory words. There will be deaths, there will be houses destroyed, but right will triumph in the end. But if things are as they are, we should no longer hesitate; we should defend the right and make those wicked people who force us into this ugly fight wash in the blood they have shed in our defence of it. Let us not forget either, brethren, that there are some amongst us who will choose to fight. Let us not condemn them but respect their scruples. I myself fought against the Prussian army, even though I was married and had children, but I am still unable to engage in a civil war. But on the day

when the murderous enemy breaches our walls, I will defend my wife and child.

–Bro.: Schaffer: on the day when the Republic is under threat, old as I am, I will defend it, but as a citizen and not as a mason.

The Commune had not divided the Masons; it had put them in opposing camps. Those Masons supporting Versailles held out their hand to those on the side of the Commune, but logic of the non-masonic world with its important vested interests did not allow the dream of fraternisation, begun on the ramparts in the shadow of the banners of the lodges, forced out of the lodges by circumstances, to become a reality.

As far as we know there were no lodges of prisoners of war during the First World War. European masonic bodies were marking time. But several instances of fraternisation have been recorded, even in the trenches as well as behind the front.

A lodge of German soldiers in the 1914–1918 war was held in a French masonic hall where we can see the banner of the lodge ‘Justice’ and the bust of Marianne, symbol of the French Republic.

During the Second World War, there were not formally Masons on both sides, although there were certainly initiated Masons among German, Italian and other Axis soldiers, but Freemasonry as an organisation had been banned in their respective countries. German Nazism, together with the other fascist regimes in Europe, Spain and Italy had persecuted Freemasons for many years



ILLUSTRATION 26.3 *Postcard entitled "Example of masonic morals".*

and eradicated all official masonic activities. Naturally, American and English Masons found themselves fighting the enemy without having to wonder whether there might be a brother within its ranks, without having to look for possible signs of recognition on the battlefield. But perhaps there were some? French Freemasons could join De Gaulle's Free French Force or become involved in the resistance operating on French soil. Several of these resistance networks were built up directly from masonic lodges, with the brethren knowing each other as much from the moral standpoint as from the level of commitment as well as the level of practical details which were very useful in this type of struggle: professional expertise, an address in Paris or in the provinces and so on. The most effective of the masonic resistance networks were put together gradually over the period of occupation and some of them evolved into complete masonic lodges after the war. The lodge 'Ajax', named after the resistance network of that name, was absorbed into the Grande Loge de France in 1945 and given the number 680. The *Patriam Recuperare* network, made up exclusively of brethren, was set up in the autumn of 1940. The lodge 'Patriam Recuperare', almost entirely made up of former members of the network, was solemnly inaugurated in the Grand Orient de France on April 22, 1945. Bro. Bonnard in his speech paid tribute to "the Resistance, which enhances the individual at the same time as it enhances the nation" (Hivert Messeca 2000: 716). The network of the lodge was the foundation, but it was each individual brother, each link in the chain, by his commitment and personal actions, which gave it its strength and effectiveness.

### Conclusion

Since the eighteenth century Freemasonry spread first and foremost as a result of brethren themselves spreading the word, some of them famous, others simple anonymous men, yet all filled with the same ideal and all meeting in lodges and recognising each other as worthy men. Freemasonry has produced great men and has benefited from it. Their names in the registers are often underlined and their masonic life studied by historians of Masonry. These great men have, supposedly, enjoyed the atmosphere of the lodge where liberty, equality and fraternity are supposed to reign supreme. There have been men of letters, artists and there have certainly been soldiers of whom some (such as Lafayette, Washington, Wellington, Bolivar, Garibaldi) became great statesmen. The Napoleonic Wars brought many prominent European Freemasons to light. The World Wars saw Masons taking part in diplomatic negotiations at the highest level as well as humble acts of heroism from 'rank and file' Masons.



In times of war the mason is expected to act according to the dictates of his conscience as a Freemason, in respect for the principles of the order which have been demonstrated to him since his initiation, in respect for the solemn engagements he has entered into in his Lodge, and most of all according to the knowledge that his masonic activities supposedly have allowed him to obtain and the reconciling, as harmoniously as he can, of values that at times seem to be in opposition, on one side loyalty, determination, commitment, courage and on the other thoughtfulness, moderation, compassion, brotherly love. At the ceremony of his installation the Worshipful Master receives a collar from which is suspended a square, symbol of his duty. As he invests him with it, the Installing Master says: "Receive this jewel, emblematic of the reconciliation of necessary and fruitful opposites". According to a masonic understanding, these words not only allude to the harmony which the Worshipful Master should maintain between the brethren during the ceremonies, but they also address each Mason's freedom of thought as he confronts his doubts, his reflections, confronts his inner tensions which his commitments may give rise to, confronts his conscience when faced with the decisions and actions which events may dictate.

Freemasonry is believed to be a school of virtue. Every ritual since the eighteenth century reiterates this. The brother who lives through this ritual at every meeting, who attends his lodge regularly year after year, cannot, it is maintained, but be imbued to his very core with the values of the masonic tradition. Values which the masonic Order defends and wants to spread, to which he freely adhered from the very moment he first entered. Values which his lodge teaches and transmits and which he has made his own over the time he has been attending its meetings. Values which he has discovered and cultivated in himself, personal and beyond expression, save through action and example. Even though it may be in a lodge on a battlefield, the Freemason will always, it is said, fall back, in his judgement and his actions, on the memory of those solemn engagements to the Order, to the oft-repeated practice of reflection and of fraternity in the body of his lodge, to the daily confrontation with himself, with his own conscience.

- Are Masons better men than others?
- Some masons are not so virtuous as some other men ; but for the most part, they are better than they would be if they were not masons.
- Do masons love one another mightily, as is said?
- Yea verily, and that can not be otherwise: for the better men are the more they love one another.

Questions and answers from a ritual said to have been found in the Bodleian library, in 1696 [sic!], quoted in Lawrie & Thory 2001: 283



ILLUSTRATION 26.4 'Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt' (Photograph taken from Hamill and Gilbert 1992: 89, 127).



AUDIE MURPHY (1924-1971). HE RECEIVED 24 MEDALS FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, 3 FROM FRANCE, AND 1 FROM BELGIUM.

ILLUSTRATION 26.5 'Audie Murphy' (Photograph taken from Hamill and Gilbert 1992: 89, 127).

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**PART FIVE**

*Freemasonry and Culture*





# Freemasonry and Music

*Malcolm Davies*

## Introduction

The Liberal Arts and Sciences; grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy have always been important in Freemasonry. Many musicians have been drawn to Freemasonry and their signatures, confirming membership, can be found in lodge records.<sup>1</sup> Composers whose music is still sometimes played<sup>2</sup> include: Carl Abel, Thomas Arne, Johann Christian Bach, William Boyce, Luigi Cherubini, Joseph Haydn, Ferenc Liszt, Henri-Charles Litolf, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Leopold Mozart, Niccolò Puccini, Willem Pijper, Ignaz Pleyel, Louis Spohr, Jean Sibelius, John Philip Sousa, Daniel Gottlob Türk and many others. In nineteenth-century Britain Sir Arthur Sullivan, Dr. Joseph Parry and Sir Frederick A. Gore Ouseley were not the only celebrated musician Freemasons. Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, and Irving Berlin are just four of the popular twentieth-century American musicians who were Freemasons. The conductor-composers Alexander von Zemlinsky and Otto Klemperer were also Freemasons.<sup>3</sup> This is evidence of a shared experience of masonic ritual and an understanding of masonic symbolism. However, in many cases there is no evidence that their music was directly influenced by their masonic ideas.

Music is not usually specified in masonic ritual. Its use is usually ex-ritual though its use may be suggested by rubrics. Typically there might be an opening and closing hymn that becomes standard usage within a lodge or group of lodges. Other instrumental or vocal music may be added at various moments in the ritual. Processions and some ritual actions may be accompanied by music. The use of specific pieces for designated parts of rituals may also be suggested or even required by a Grand Lodge or governing body. Other moments

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- 1 For some composers, such as Beethoven or Rameau, there is only circumstantial evidence for them having been Freemasons. Such cases have not been included in the present study.
  - 2 Examples of the (non-masonic) music of each of these may be found at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (accessed April 10, 2009).
  - 3 Vandevijvere (2008) catalogues over 750 composers and performers who were Freemasons.

for music may be provided during the meal that follows a ritual. Many extended pieces of vocal music, often with soloists, male choir and orchestra have been written for occasions such as the consecration of a new lodge (room or group of brothers), Masonic Temple, a Lodge of Sorrows, or a St John's Festival. In many countries it is still normal to sing in the lodge. Lodges may have an Organist or 'Brother of Talent' to plan and provide the music. Today this might simply involve the choice of recorded tracks to be played during the ceremony.

There have been many lodges that have been specifically for, or that have attracted performing artists. The violin virtuoso and composer, Francesco Geminiani,<sup>4</sup> became 'musical dictator' of a special London lodge named *Philomusicae et architecturae Societas Apollini*, in 1725.<sup>5</sup> This only existed for two years but during that time it had an orchestra and amassed its own library of music. The celebrated French chess player and successful opera composer, François André Danican Philidor (Cotte 1987: 90–95; Gefen 1993: 131–132), was a member of the Parisian Lodge *Les Neuf Soeurs*, which had an allied society for musicians and artists, the *Société Apollonienne*.<sup>6</sup> Other examples are *L'Egalité des Frères*, and *Les Coeurs Unis* in The Hague. In 1784 another masonic-based society, *Les Concerts de la Loge Olympique* in Paris, commissioned six symphonies from Haydn. In Paris, from 1775 to 1790 somewhere in the region of 200 professional musicians were members of a lodge (Gefen 1993: 63ff.).

By the time the English collection, masonic *Miscellanies in Poetry and Prose in three parts* was published in 1797, it could boast that the first part, 'The Muse of Masonry', contained 'nearly 200 masonic songs' including: cantatas, duets, catches, glees, oratorios, anthems, eulogies, odes, sonnets, prologues and epilogues, with appropriate toasts and sentiments.<sup>7</sup> This is representative of many similar collections printed in various languages in other countries. In addition lodges had countless songs and cantatas printed for the use of their own members and for distribution among allied lodges. Most often these were written by lodge members and for a specific occasion.

4 (1687–1762). He was initiated as a Freemason on 1 February 1724.

5 February 1724 old style. Before the English Parliament adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1751, the year began on 25 March. The masonic year continued to begin in March.

6 As the leader of the Muses (Apollon Musagetes) and director of their choir, Apollo functioned as the patron god of music and poetry. Hermes created the lyre for him, and the instrument became a common attribute of Apollo.

7 In fact this catalogue is a little optimistic: there is but one glee, one oratorio (Solomon), one catch, two cantatas etc. and there are 92 songs. But this book (selected purely for its delightful list of poetical forms) demonstrates the important place music and poetry rapidly gained in post-1717 Freemasonry.

As a general rule there is nothing intrinsically ‘masonic’ about the music. In fact the music for songs is often a contrafact: an existing tune (timbre) with new words. When masonic composers have written new music especially for masonic lyrics there is usually no masonic symbolism embedded in the music. Occasionally masonic composers have introduced masonic symbolism into their compositions. One of the most often used devices is to imitate the pattern of ritual knocking or clapping (‘batterie’) into the rhythm of the music. A number of pieces apparently use ‘three’ symbolically: three beats in a bar, three bars in a phrase or three voice parts, and so on. Unless the composer has documented his ideas we cannot be certain that symbolic interpretations of musical phenomena were intended. For example the use of the ‘masonic key’ of three flats (E flat major or C minor) by Mozart, Haydn and others might or might not represent the three-dot abbreviation sign used in Continental Freemasonry (e.g. Fr.: means ‘Brother’, L.: means ‘Lodge’ and so on).

For some composers and musicians Freemasonry has been an important force in their lives, but not all masonic composers wrote music for Freemasonry. Some of those who did so only wrote a small number of masonic pieces. As with Freemasons from other walks of life, some masonic musicians had only a passing interest in Freemasonry, their interest in Freemasonry decreased, or due to other commitments they were not able to attend lodge meetings regularly.

### Freemasons’ Songs and Their Character

The 1723 *Constitutions of the Free-Masons* by Anderson included four songs: ‘The Master’s Song’—a ‘history’ recounted in twenty-eight long verses by Anderson. ‘The Warden’s Song or another history of Masonry’ (this time in only thirteen verses) also by Anderson. Two shorter songs: ‘The Fellow-Craft’s Song’ by Charles Delafaye and ‘The Enter’d ’Prentice’s Song’ by Mr Matthew Birkhead, deceas’d’ (To be sung when all grave Business is over, and with the Master’s Leave)—(see Figure 27.1).

Seven more songs were added to the 1738 edition. The lyrics range from doggerel to skilful poetry. Their content includes references to the mythopoeic masonic history, the proposal of toasts and the expression of an ambition to attain virtue. Thousands of songs, in many languages, have followed.

The 1751 edition of *The Ancient Constitutions and Charges of the Free-Masons* published in London by Brother Benjamin Cole is not alone in exhibiting a rich mixture of low- and high-minded masonic and religious thought. A speech by Brother Entick quotes from the King James version of the Bible (James 3:17),



( 84 )

T H E

## Enter'd 'PRENTICES SONG.

By our late BROTHER

Mr. MATTHEW BIRKHEAD, deceas'd.

To be sung when all *grave Business* is over, and with the  
M A S T E R ' S *Leave*.

<p>I. C O M E let us prepare, We <i>Brothers</i> that are Assembled on merry Occasion ; Let's drink, laugh, and sing ; Our <i>Wine</i> has a Spring : Here's a Health to an <i>Accepted M A S O N</i>.</p>	<p>IV. Great KINGS, DUKES, and LORDS, Have laid by their Swords, Our <i>Mystery</i> to put a good Grace on, And ne'er been asham'd To hear themselves nam'd With a <i>Free</i> and an <i>Accepted M A S O N</i>.</p>
<p>II. The <i>World</i> is in pain Our <i>Secrets</i> to gain, And still let them wonder and gaze on ; They ne'er can divine The <i>Word</i> or the <i>Sign</i> Of a <i>Free</i> and an <i>Accepted M A S O N</i>.</p>	<p>V. Antiquity's <i>Pride</i> We have on our side, And it maketh Men just in their Station : There's nought but what's good To be understood By a <i>Free</i> and an <i>Accepted M A S O N</i>.</p>
<p>III. 'Tis <i>This</i>, and 'tis <i>That</i>, They cannot tell <i>What</i>, Why so many G R E A T M E N of the Nation Should <i>Aprons</i> put on, To make themselves one With a <i>Free</i> and an <i>Accepted M A S O N</i>.</p>	<p>VI. Then join <i>Hand in Hand</i>, T'each other firm stand, Let's be merry, and put a bright Face on : What <i>Mortal</i> can boast So N O B L E A T O A S T, As a <i>Free</i> and an <i>Accepted M A S O N</i> ? ‡</p>

FIGURE 27.1 'The Enter'd 'Prentice's Song', Page 84 of the 1723 Constitutions.

'the *Wisdom* by which *Masons* contrive and conduct their Lord's Work... descends from Heaven, and is first *pure*, then *peaceable*, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocrisy'.<sup>8</sup> He also quotes from the 'Magnificat', an Anglican evening service canticle: 'he scattereth the proud in the imagination of their hearts'.

<sup>8</sup> See *Constitutions* 1751. This begins with 'A true representation of Free Masonry in a Lecture, delivered at the King's-Head Lodge in the Poultry, London on March 20, 1751, by Brother

The language throughout is prayer book or biblical in character, even though the main subject is the masonic triad of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. However, the songs in the same volume (by 'celebrated masters') are not as serious in intent as Entick's speech. References to virtue are few and far between. 'Wine, women and song' dominate. The 'free-Mason's Health' is no exception with its:

Let malicious People censure:  
 They're not worth a Mason's Answer.  
 While we drink and sing  
 With no Conscience sting  
 Let their evil Genius plague 'em  
 And for Mollies Devil take 'em  
 We'll be free and merry  
 Drinking Port and Sherry  
 Till the Stars at Midnight shine...

It is fascinating to trace the route by which masonic songs and songbooks spread throughout Europe. There was a single initial source, the French Union Lodge in London formed by French Huguenots in 1732.<sup>9</sup> Several members of this lodge were instrumental in establishing lodges in other countries that printed the French version of the four 'original' songs: Vincent la Chapelle at The Hague in 1735, John Coustos<sup>10</sup> (together with the professional musician Jacques Christophe Naudot) in France in 1737 and Louis-François de la Tierce in Frankfurt in 1742.

The Worshipful Master of the French Union Lodge, Lewis Mercy, was himself a professional musician who wrote some music for 'The Fellow-craft's Song', the words of which were published in Anderson's 1723 *Constitutions*.<sup>11</sup>

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ENTICK, M.A.'. The quotation is from p. 2. John Entick (c. 1703–1773) was commissioned to revise Anderson's *Constitutions* to produce a third edition that was published in 1756.

9 The lodge first met at the Prince Eugene's Head. Between November 1732 and May 1733, the new lodge changed its meeting place to The Duke of Lorraine's Head (the location of these lodges was within easy walking distance of the French Church at Spring Gardens). The 1730 membership-list of this French lodge is reproduced in *Antigrapha* (1913: 192–193).

10 John Coustos was arrested and examined by the inquisition in Portugal c. 1742. In 1746 he published a book *The Unparalleled Sufferings of John Coustos* (reprinted London: Dundee c. 1950).

11 Wonnacott 1928. Mercy, in the service of James Brydges, Marquess of Carnarvon and third duke of Chandos, who later became Grand Master, was well known in his own day as a fine recorder player and composer for the instrument.

Another member of the French Union lodge, Thomas Lansa, is mentioned in the *Chansons originaires des Francs-Maçons* published in The Hague in 1744 and 1749. The lyrics of the four original songs were free paraphrases of the four songs in Anderson mostly bearing very little relationship with the original, The *Chanson des Maîtres Maçons: Tous de concert* and *Chanson des Apprentifs: Frères et Compagnons* by Lansa, the *Chanson des Surveillants: Adam à sa posterité* and *Chanson des Compagnons: Art divin* were by De la Tierce.

The first masonic songs in all countries in mainland Europe were in French and shared the common source of the four '*Chansons originaires*' but they soon went their own way. During the eighteenth century French remained important as the language of lodges in most European countries and their colonies and many collections continued to include French songs. However, lodges increasingly added songs in their own native language. The songs, written for a variety of occasions, continued to vary in character from light-hearted to serious. The largest eighteenth-century collection of masonic songs with music, *La Lire Maçonne*, was first published in The Hague in 1763 (*La Lire Maçonne* 1763; other editions from 1763–1787). The last, 1787, edition contained 270 songs, 219 in French and 51 in Dutch. It included many songs displaying a more serious approach to Freemasonry. The lodge increasingly became a temple or a sanctuary; a place of peace and equality set aside from the outside world. A song written by De Vignoles, one of the co-editors, says:<sup>12</sup>

Quel éclatant spectacle  
Vient s'offrir à mes yeux!  
C'est le plus beau miracle  
De la bonté des cieux.  
Un immense Edifice,  
Par l'amour habité,  
Fondé par la justice  
Qui fait sa beauté.  
Temple de la raison,  
L'asyle du Maçon.

*(What shining spectacle comes to offer itself to my eyes!  
It is the most beautiful miracle of the goodness of the heavens.*

12 His two songs for the Hague and Amsterdam lodges to the tune Carillon de Dunquerque (Davies 2005, numbers: F 222a and F 222b) begin in this way.

*It is an immense edifice inhabited by love  
and founded by justice who makes it beautiful.  
Temple of reason, sanctuary of the mason.)*

The lodge was also seen as a temple of virtue. There were attempts to define what was meant by virtue. In *La Lire Maçonne* it is depicted as being something rather vague but highly desirable: 'La vertu fait nos délices, C'est l'objet de nos désirs.' Virtue is understood as being an amalgam of all the various masonic qualities, such as honesty, being receptive to learning, supporting the Brother or widow of a Brother who has come upon hard times, and so on. A Dutch song says:<sup>13</sup>

Gy, die den Broeder ziet in nood,  
Weeduw en wees in armoê weenen;  
Nog uit uw mond niet spaart wat brood,  
Maar voor hen u hart laat versteen;  
Weg, weg, want gy niet waardig bent,  
Voor Metzelaars te zyn erkent.  
*(You, who see a Brother in need,  
widow and orphan weeping in poverty,  
but do not spare some bread from your own table,  
but allow your heart to turn to stone against them,  
go away, go away, for you are not worthy  
to be recognised as freemasons.)*

In English-speaking countries masonic songs gained a hymn-like character. The Opening Ode still used in some lodges will serve as an example:

Hail! Eternal! by whose aid  
All created things were made;  
Heaven and earth Thy vast design;  
Hear us, Architect Divine!  
May our work begun in Thee,  
Ever blest with order be;  
And may we when labours cease,  
Part in harmony and peace.

13 *La Lire Maçonne* 1787, p. 106, verse 6 of 'Laaten wy voor 't onkundig Wust' (a translation of the French song titled 'Caractère du Maçon' found in several contemporary collections).

By Thy Glorious Majesty-  
 By the trust we place in Thee-  
 By the badge and mystic sign-  
 Hear us! Architect Divine! So mote it be.

The tune would normally be familiar from church use. In this case it is often sung to the tune 'University College',<sup>14</sup> 'St. Bees', or sometimes 'Vienna', 'Innocents', or 'Dix'.

### Music for Instruments

Instrumental music was also performed in the lodge. At the *Coustos-Villeroy* lodge<sup>15</sup> on 9 May 1737, Jacques-Christophe Naudot performed a Freemasons' March which he had composed (see Gefen 1993: 40). The same year his short collection of songs, the *Chansons Notées De la très vénérable Confrerie des Francs Maçons* (*Chansons Notées* 1737) was published in Paris and soon an extended collection was issued with a supplement.<sup>16</sup> There are two masonic marches by Naudot, the earliest extant examples of instrumental music written specifically for use in the lodge.<sup>17</sup> The flute virtuoso and composer Michel Blavet (1700–1768), from about 1730 the superintendent of music to Louis de Bourbon-Condé, Count of Clérmont (who became Grandmaster in 1743), wrote a 'Marche de la Grande Loge'.

The minutes of the lodge *La Bien Aimée*, one of several Amsterdam lodges to have an orchestra of professional musicians, refer time and time again to 'Accourez tous' as the lodge's 'usual march'. This can be traced to a collection published in 1752 (*Recueil* 1752). It was played or sung at lodge meetings in *La Bien Aimée* as a kind of anthem from about 1754 when it was published in a lodge song book. In a set of manuscript orchestra part books for the same lodge from about 1785 as well as minuets, gigue, *presto's*, *andante's* and other pieces, 27 out of the 50 items are marches (Davies 2005: 297–300).

In America the *Bellamy Band Book* of 1799 contains a Freemason's March in two versions, one for instruments only and another with the words of the

14 For University College, see [http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/masonic\\_music.html](http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/masonic_music.html) (accessed May 3, 2009). The other tunes will be found in sources such as *The English Hymnal*.

15 The minutes of the first few meetings of the Coustos-Villeroy lodge provide us with the oldest extant lodge records in France. See Gefen (1993, 39–41).

16 *Recueil de Chansons*. The revised edition was in one single volume containing ninety pages of words and music. The exact date of this edition has not yet been determined.

17 Henri-Joseph Taskin (1779–1852) wrote a masonic funeral march (see below).

Apprentice's song. *Masonic music Selected and Composed for the Installation of Merrymack Lodge, Haverhill, Massachussetts* has three instrumental pieces of which one is a march by William Dubois. This was later reprinted in various versions for piano and for violins, clarinettes, horns and bass (Gefen 1993: 135–136). *The Masonic Harp* (Boston, 1858) has three marches: an arrangement of the popular 'Pleyel's Hymn', a *Masonic Funeral March* and a *Templars' Grand March*. The last two of these were specially composed for the collection by Samuel M. Downs (Chase 1858: 141–142). A number of Souza's (1854–1932) marches are 'masonic' including: *Nobles of the Mystic Shrine*, *The Thunderer*, *The Crusader*, *The March of the Mitten Men (Power and Glory)* and *Foshay Tower Washington Memorial* (<http://www.masonmusic.org/souza.html>, accessed April 30, 2009).

Marches were not the only form of non-vocal masonic music. Johann Gottlieb Naumann (1741–1801), the *Oberkappellmeister* of the elector of Saxony's musicians in Dresden, successful Opera composer and member of the lodge *Zum Goldenen Apfel*, added two pieces for keyboard to his celebrated *Vierzig Freimäurerlieder* (Berlin 1784) (Naumann 1784: 104–105, 110–111). The *forte* and *piano* markings would make it most suitable for piano or organ, though some lodges may still have used harpsichords. The first is 'Beym Eintritt in die Loge' (for use when entering the lodge). The predominant rhythm is two semi-quaver, one quaver rhythm (two sixteenths followed by an eighth note) which spell out the rhythm of echoing ritual knocks (o o —, o o —, o o —). This ritual rhythm, used at various points in lodge proceedings, has varied from time to time and from place to place (Autexier 1997: 179–180). Naumann's other piece, 'Die Kette' was almost certainly for use during the chain of union. This displays the musical symbolism of suspensions (a consonant interval becomes a dissonance and is then resolved). This is often used by Germanic composers to represent chains (Figure 27.2).

The respected Anglo-American composer from Philadelphia, Alexander Reinagle (1756–1809), composed a Masonic Overture (Gefen 1993: 136). Johann David Holland, a composer active in Sweden has left a manuscript 'Sinfonia der Freimäurer' (Lund University Library, Sammlung Barnekow 26: 2 flutes 2 oboes, 2 bassoons 2 trumpets, 2 horns, tympani, strings and continuo). The Indonesian composer and pianist of Hungarian origin, Alfons Becalel has written a masonic piano concerto: *Concert Maçonniqque pour piano avec orchestre ou piano II, Op. 2, No. 2* (Bandoeng 1958) (CMC 124 D 15). The Dutch composer and organist Herman Nieland (1910–1993) has written an attractive suite for piano (1967) with three movements on the theme of wisdom, strength and beauty: *intrada*, *intermezzo* and *finale* (CMC 27 E 77). Without a doubt, these works only represent the tip of the iceberg. Throughout the world lodges and grand lodges will have instrumental music written for masonic use in their archives.

FIGURE 27.2 'Die Kette' by Johann Gottlieb Naumann from *Vierzig Freimäurerlieder* (Berlin 1784). By permission of the Cultural Masonic Centre, Prince Fredrik, The Hague.

### Funeral Music

One of the most extended compositions for a masonic occasion was written by the superintendent of the King's music, François Giroust in 1784. The words are by the poet and past master Félix Nogaret. Both were from the lodge *Le Patriotisme* (at the court of Versailles), the membership of which was in the

hundreds, and included about 40 singers and instrumentalists from among the Royal and Regimental musicians. It is more than a cantata, it is a whole funeral ritual with incidental music and song, called *Le Déluge* (*The Flood*) lasting about half an hour. The solos, choruses and trios are a versification of an existing and widely used ritual, called the 'tenues de deuil' (order of mourning or lodge of sorrows) (Cotte 1987: 95ff.).

In the United States the slow march 'Roslin Castle' was played as a dirge by 'Col Proctor's Band of Musicke' on St John the Baptist's Day, 1779, near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, when two Masons of Military Lodge No. 19, who had been killed in action by warriors of the Six Nations,<sup>18</sup> were reinterred with proper masonic services. It was also played at the funeral procession for Bro. George Washington in 1799 at Mount Vernon.<sup>19</sup> The *Masonic Harp* (Boston, 1858) as well as containing the Funeral March by Downs (see above) interestingly also contains a 'Masonic Funeral Ceremony' and a 'Burial Service of the Orders of Masonic Knighthood' each with appropriate songs (Chase 1858: 145–160).

Of course, the best known-funeral music is Mozart's *Mauerische Trauermusik* (Kv. 477/497a). It is usually assumed that this was written to commemorate the deaths of Brethren Mecklenburg and Esterházy and that it was performed at a lodge of sorrows of the lodge *Zur gekrönte Hoffnung* on 17 November 1785. However Heinz Schuler has pointed out that the date in Mozart's catalogue, 12 August 1785 coincides with the raising of some Masons to the degree of Master in *Zur Wohltätigkeit* and suggests that it might have been performed first on this occasion (Schuler 1992: 46–70). Once again it displays all the elements of mourning, the minor key, the feeling of wandering in darkness. The sacred character is underlined by the use of plainchant. This is the tone that the Roman Catholic Mozart would recognise from the chanting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The major chord at the end represents resurrection and hope.

The *Marcia Funèbre* by W.F.G. Nicolai, composer and director of the Royal School of Music in The Hague, written for the lodge mourning the death of prince Frederik of The Netherlands (1797–1881, who had been Grand Master for

18 The Iroquois Confederacy: Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas and the Tuscaroras.

19 Julius Sachse, *Old masonic Lodges in Pennsylvania; the Moderns and the Antients* (1912). Information from <http://www.masonmusic.org/marcher.html>, accessed April 18, 2009, where tune and harmonies are given. It is a well-known anonymous Scottish folk tune and is still popular today. It is known as 'House of Glamis', 'House Of Glams', 'Roslin Castle' or 'Rosslyn Castle'. See <http://www.thesession.org/tunes/display/4150>, accessed April 18, 2009.



65 years) is preserved in versions for full orchestra and as a piano arrangement. The slow piece begins in the ‘masonic’ key of C minor (three flats), with a tritone—the most jarring melodic interval—followed by the rhythmic but broken pattern of incomplete masonic knocks (Figure 27.3). The number three is further emphasised by three note chords and triplets. The piece is in three sections as when the first section comes to an end it is followed by a trio—a movement of a different character in E flat major (3 flats). This section is a subtle variation on the Dutch National Anthem. Then the first section is repeated leading to a coda in which sad, broken masonic knocks are once again featured.

By the time the *Marche funèbre*, from the *Musique Religieuse Op. 113* (a collection of masonic music, see below) by Jean Sibelius was played at the conclusion of his own funeral on Monday, 30 September 1957 it would already have been familiar to the Freemasons in the cortège. This quotes from the chorale melody *Herzlich thut mich verlangen* that Bach uses in his St. Matthew Passion (Matthäus-Passion). These are just a few examples of the many cantatas and instrumental pieces written for masonic mourning.

### Odes, Cantatas and an Oratorio

In the age of Handel (and later Haydn) brothers wanted masonic odes, cantatas, oratorios and operas. There are odes in many masonic collections of songs and poetry in various languages. The ode was often similar to a short cantata with recitatives, arias and choruses.

A ‘cantata’ is a dramatic poetical and musical work in which the action is told in recitatives and states of mind are portrayed in solos, duets etc. and

FIGURE 27.3 *The opening of the Marcia Funèbre 1881, by W.F.G. Nicolai. By permission of the Cultural Masonic Centre, Prince Fredrik, The Hague.*

choruses. *Les Francs-Maçons* by Louis-Nicolas Clérambault published in 1743 was one of the earliest masonic cantatas. This well-written and attractive cantata consists of three recitatives alternating with three arias. It is scored for baritone solo, violin and continuo. The first section addresses the envy and misconceptions the wider world has of the Order, whose laws were dictated by Virtue from the celestial realms above. The divine Astraea will appear among us for a second time. The second section, reflecting on the arrests of several Freemasons, is angry and regretful. The third talks of the menace of the jealous imaginations of the fair sex: ladies, please be assured that the laws which demand mystery form tender, loving hearts (short quotes in Cotte 1987: 82–83; for the full text, listen to track 8, CD2 of *Musiques Maçonniques*, [compilation of music recorded 1958–1990 digitally remastered in 1996] EMI classics 7243 5 69567 2 8).

In his time Haydn was seen as being the first composer to consciously make ‘musical poetry and paintings’.<sup>20</sup> His oratorios *Die Schöpfung* and *Die Jahreszeiten* with words translated and adapted by the Freemason Gottfried baron Van Swieten<sup>21</sup> were re-translated and performed in Amsterdam by Freemasons. The overture and beginning of *Die Schöpfung* specially would seem to have masonic overtones. Such was the popularity of Haydn’s works, that they were imitated on a smaller scale in Jacob Rauscher’s manuscript music for the numerous cantatas with words from the *Gezangboek voor Vrijmetselaaren* of 1806 (Davies 2005: 164–165).

The cantata written for a St John’s feast *Kantate für die Hohe Johannes-Feyer* by Johann Philip Degen (Copenhagen, 1779) is of a high quality (Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, catalogue no. M/18). In two acts it tells the story of an uninitiated man, who overhears the happy and peaceful sounds of a masonic choir as it sings. The musical forces are varied, solo, trio, quartet and choir. The first act concludes with a conversation between the uninitiated man and a Freemason. As the second begins the newcomer is welcomed, shown the light and becomes overjoyed. Near the end an older Brother sings, and then the last word is given to the Worshipful Master. After an extended responsorial choir and soloist ‘Lobesang’ (Hymn of Praise) the work ends with a ‘Schlusschor’ (Final Chorus):

Heil dem dreymal grossen Orden  
der das Glück der Welt geworden

20 This was the view of the celebrated Dutch author Johannes Kinker. See Hanou (1988: 511–515) for a detailed account of Kinker’s views on Haydn.

21 Born in Leiden in 1734, died in Vienna, 29 March 1803.

Schalle laut durch dreymal drey  
 Preis der edlen Maurerey.  
 (*Hale the thrice great Order  
 that has become the happiness of the world.  
 Through the loudly sounded three times three  
 [clapped signal rhythm]  
 praise the noble masonry.*)

The masonic cantatas of Mozart are still occasionally performed. In his thematic catalogue for 1785 he included: *Die Maurerfreude* (KV 471) a cantata for tenor, male voice choir and orchestra first performed at the lodge *Zur gekrönten Hoffnung* (Crowned Hope) in honour of Ignaz von Born; *Lied zur Gesellenreise* (KV 468) for voice and organ written in honour of his father, Leopold Mozart; the incomplete cantata *Die Seele des Weltalls* (KV 429/468a) for tenor, male voice choir and orchestra. Two days before his death Mozart conducted a performance of the joyful *Laut verkünde unser Freude* that is also the last complete work entered in his catalogue. This cantata for soloist, chorus and orchestra was performed on the occasion of the consecration of the temple for *Zur neugekrönten Hoffnung*. In December, 1785 Mozart wrote two songs for male voices *Zerfließet heut, geliebte Brüder*, (KV 483) and *Ihr unsre neuen Leiter*, (KV 484), which were written to commemorate the opening of the new combined lodge *Zur neugekrönten Hoffnung* and the closing of *Zur Wohltätigkeit* after the reorganisation ordered by Joseph II. *O heiliges Band der Freundschaft (Lobegesang auf die feierliche Johannisloge*, KV 148/125h) although explicitly masonic, was probably written in 1772, long before Mozart was initiated.

The cantata 'Singt mit frohen Feuertönen, Brüder!' composed in 1811 for the reopening of the lodge *Modestia cum Libertate* in Zurich is typical of the many cantatas that rarely see the light of day today. The music is by the Swiss composer Anton Liste (1772–1832) who was well known in his day. In 1813 his piano works were described as being 'among the most excellent, both with regard to their originality and appropriateness of form, as well as their attractiveness of style' (quoted from Gerber's dictionary by Chris Walton in the booklet (p. 4) accompanying the CD *Anton Liste, Piano Sonata Op. 8, Piano Duet Sonata, masonic Cantata and Three Songs*, Guild Music, GMCD 7184, 2000). The words were by fellow mason Heinrich Lavater. The content is religious in character and refers to the lodge as a temple, a quiet place of wisdom, for example: "Geweih't sey nun dies stille Heiligthum/Zu deinen Tempel" (Let this quiet, holy place now be consecrated as your temple). Those who enter the temple are consecrated to God, his tongue shall never cause injury; his heart shall remain good and true. He shall strive fervently towards light and truth, to live

for God and virtue....Let the sad complaint of the poor find a ready ear here. The cantata concludes: "Mit Mäurertru, ein Werk zu bau'n/Das Engel selbst mit Wonne shau'n" (Build up with masonic fidelity something that even an angel will look upon with awe). During the following century many important musicians in Zurich were members of this lodge.

There are an immense number of masonic cantatas in libraries and lodge collections, many with music written by professional composers, demonstrating a close relationship between Freemasonry and the musical profession. An 'oratorio' is similar to, but longer than a cantata. It also has recitatives, arias and choruses. Often a complete story is portrayed in the music but unlike opera it would be performed in a concert setting without any acting. *Ahiman Rezon's* 'choice collection of mason's songs', from the first edition of 1756 right through to 1813, contains the oratorio *Solomon's Temple*. The oratorio was first performed on 15 May 1753 at the Philharmonic-Room, in Fishamble Street, Dublin, for the benefit of sick and distressed Freemasons. The words were by Mr James Eyre Weeks. The music by Mr Richard Broadway, organist of St. Patrick's Cathedral, has been lost. The story told is of the building of the temple and a visit by Queen Sheba. The characters are Solomon (The Grand Master), High Priest, Hiram (The Workman), Uriel (Angel of the Sun), Sheba (Queen of the South) and a Chorus of Priests and Nobles. There are many masonic references in the text which ends:

*Hiram (Recitative):* Wisdom and Beauty both combine,/Our art to raise, our hearts to join.

*Chorus:* Give to Masonry the prize,/Where the fairest choose the wise;/Beauty still should wisdom love;/Beauty and order reign above.

### Operas and Other Dramatic Works

The three-act *The Generous Freemason* by Henry Carey (1687?–1743) is not an opera (also republished as *The Generous Freemason*, Kessinger Publishing 2003) in the strict sense but a ballad opera. In this genre the spoken action is broken off and a more or less well known tune is fitted to the words of a song describing the situation or emotion. It is more similar to a modern musical than to what we usually think of as opera. 'The Generous Freemason' was printed with the tunes. The adaptations, some new material and presumably the orchestral arrangements needed for the performances were made by three composers: Henry Carey, (b.?- d. 1734) who wrote the melody of the 'Ode'; Richard Charke (1709–1737, a violinist and singer at the Drury Lane Theatre) and John Sheeles (1688–1761) a distinguished harpsichord teacher. The words

were by William Rufus Chetwood a prompter at Drury Lane Theatre. The title refers to a moor, Mirza, who, after recognising a masonic cry for help, rescues the hero, Sebastian, and the heroine, Maria, from a dungeon in Tunisia. Mirza, it seems, is also a Brother.

The *Harlequin Freemason* of 1780 with words and music by Charles Dibdin (1745–1814) was a pantomime (Hextall 1908). It was a great success with 63 performances being put on at Covent Garden during the following year and with 24 more performances in 1789 and 1793.

It is possible that several operas were influenced, in their librettos at least, by the ideas and symbolism of Freemasonry. This has been asserted in the case of *Zoroastre* (1749, revised 1756) by Jean-Phillipe Rameau (1683–1764) (see Sadler 2002). The opera *Les Fra-Maçonnnes* was first performed at the *Théâtre de la Foire S. Laurent* on 28 August 1754. The anonymous libretto was set to a selection of well-known vaudeville tunes and three new dance tunes.

The Opera *Osiride* by Johann Gottlieb Naumann was first performed in 1781 in Dresden to celebrate the wedding between prince Anton of Saxony and princess Caroline of Sardinia. The theme of the opera is the idea of creating a kingdom on earth where everyone strives to complete the ideal kingdom that can benefit everyone. The libretto was by Naumann himself with the help of Lorenzo da Ponte, who was later to become Mozart's librettist (see Buch 2008: 199 ff.). The opera has an initiation ceremony, a choir of priests and portrays the opposition of good and evil forces (Lenhoff-Posner 1932, column 1099; Nettl 1930: 197).

*Der Stein der Weisen oder Die Zauberinsel* (*The Philosopher's Stone or The Enchanted Isle*), with a libretto by Schikaneder and music by a team of composers (Mozart, Johann Baptist Henneberg, Benedikt Schack, Franz Xavier Gerl and Emanuel Schikaneder), shared some features with *The Magic Flute*. Both were written for Schikaneder's *Theater auf der Wieden*. There are many musical parallels between the two works that were essentially written for the same cast of singers to perform. It is full of alchemical symbolism and some aspects could be interpreted as oblique references to Freemasonry (the two were not always seen separate in eighteenth-century Vienna). It begins in a setting including a pyramid and an altar. After trials by air, water, earth and fire characters (including the heroine, Nadine) that have died are brought back to life. Nadir is presented with the Philosopher's Stone by an eagle. Nadir, accused in the beginning of the opera of desecrating the temple is transformed into the heir of the god Astromonte. The opera ends in a magnificent temple, where Nadir and Nadine are married.

There is no room to discuss the masonic and alchemical implications of *The Magic Flute* here. It was first performed on 30 September 1791, just two months

before Mozart's death. There are obvious masonic allusions, from the unambiguous masonic knocks rhythm in the overture (bar 69) that comes back twice later as 'Der Dreimalige Accord' (Figure 27.4.) through to the last chorus: *Strength* has triumphed and rewarded *beauty* and *wisdom* with an eternal crown!

There are many articles and whole books devoted to searching out the masonic, alchemical and mystical implications of Emanuel Schikaneder's words and Mozart's music.<sup>22</sup> Stage sets for this opera and other operas by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Karl Benjamin Schwartz, Fridrich Christian Beuther and Simon Quaglio seem to have been influenced by both the mysteries of Freemasonry and the architecture of Egypt.

Adagio.

The image shows a page of musical notation for the orchestral piece 'Der Dreimalige Accord'. The tempo is marked 'Adagio.' The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with staves for Flauti, Oboi, Corni di Bassetto, Fagotti, Corni in F, Trombe in B, Tromboni Alto e Tenore, and Trombone Basso. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte). The piece is characterized by a strong, rhythmic pattern that is a reference to the masonic knocks.

FIGURE 27.4 'Der Dreimalige Accord'.

22 See the books by Jacques Chailley and Van den Berk. David Buch, in his interesting and informative article *Die Zauberflöte, Masonic Opera, and Other Fairy Tales* provides us with an interesting starting point for further study. However, his cynicism is ill founded. For instance the 3 x 3 repeated chords in the middle of the overture are passed over in his analysis. This has no other possible interpretation than a quotation of a lodge 'batterie'. Similarly unambiguous is the reference to Wisdom, Strength and Beauty in the final chorus. There are many other strong reasons for claiming a subtext based on the experience of Freemasonry.

In 1801, an extraordinary version of *The Magic Flute*, entitled *Les Mystères d'Isis* was produced in Paris. As well as music from the score of *The Magic Flute* the arranger, *citoyen* Lachnith, included fragments from other works (*Don Giovanni*, *Figaro*, *Clemenza di Tito*) and even quotes from Haydn symphonies. He wrote the recitatives. The words were by E. Morel. Not only was this opera a great success, it was revived more than a quarter of a century later, and the real *Die Zauberflöte* was not performed in Paris until 1829. A 'Planche à Tracer' from the lodge 'St Napoleon' in 1805 records that the overture and some songs from *Les Mystères d'Isis* were performed during the single meeting incorporating the Winter St John's Feast, meeting of the Grand Loge and inauguration of a bust of Napoleon (Morison collection, Grand Lodge of Scotland).

### Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Jean Sibelius was one of the founding members of the first Finnish language lodge *Suomi Loosi No. 1*, Finland. On 18 August 1922, when it was warranted by the Grand Lodge of New York, Sibelius, was initiated, passed and raised in a ceremony on the same day. Sibelius was appointed Grand Organist for the new Grand Lodge; a post he held throughout his life. It was immediately suggested that Sibelius should write music for the Order. This proposal was repeated in 1926 (Weigel Williams 2008: 6). This culminated in the ritual music known as 'Musique religieuse', opus 113 of 1927. Initially there were eight pieces.

In 1935 an ornate leather-bound manuscript version was presented, with the permission of Sibelius, to the Grand Lodge of New York as a token of gratitude for reintroducing the idea of Freemasonry in Finland (Weigel Williams 2008: 27). The chorale 'Den höga himlen' was added. It was published the same year by the Grand Lodge with an English text by R.W. Marshall Kernochan, a past Grand Trustee of New York, who also arranged some of the music which had been for a solo voice, or in the case of the chorale, for mixed choir, for male quartet. A second edition appeared in 1950, which was revised with three additions including the well-known 'Finlandia'. A critical edition, with the original Finnish texts, but with translations as an appendix,<sup>23</sup> and without the quartet arrangements by Marshall Kernochan, was published by Suomi Loosi in 1969. This also contains lower pitched versions of some pieces and a supplement including other appropriate music by Sibelius.

23 Swedish, English and German. The English translation is Marshall Kernochan's revised 1950 version, which is radically different from the 1935 edition.

The texts of songs are by a variety of authors. The first vocal piece (*Beredning av altaret*, 'Adjusting the Altar') is usually attributed to Schiller but is in fact by Franz von Schober (1798–1882) (Weigel Williams 2008: 73) via a paraphrase by Sibelius of a translation by Eino Leino. The text for the music of the first degree is by Pao Chao (Confucian, but not by Confucius). Other poems are by Samuli Sario, Viktor Rydberg, Simo Korpela, A. Simelius and (Finlandia) Wäinö Sola. The text for the third degree music is from Johan Wolfgang von Goethe's 'Harfenspieler: II'.

Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen aß,  
 Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte  
 Auf seinem Bette weinend saß,  
 Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte!  
 (*He who never ate his bread with tears,  
 He who never, through grief-stricken nights,  
 Sat weeping on his bed,  
 He does not know you, O Heavenly Powers*) (author's translation.).

Most of the texts are not overtly masonic, the exception being the two 1946 additions with lyrics by Samuli Sario, the Ode to the Fraternity and the Hymn of Praise. The first expresses the goodness of brotherly unity and that Masons who help each other will prosper and stand united. The second addresses the Supreme Architect, the Sum of Totality, the Light of Light (for a good recording [in English] see *Musique Religieuse, Opus 113, masonic Ritual Music, Jean Sibelius*, Suomi Loosi IV. & O.M. 2004). These two pieces are, as far as is known, the last compositions by Sibelius.

### The Six Adagios by Willem Pijper

The Six Adagios (1940)<sup>24</sup> by the Dutch composer Willem Pijper (1894–1947) are unusual in the depth of masonic thought and symbolism that has been worked into the music (see Thoth 1953: *Willem Pijper-nummer*, Maçonnieke Stichting Ritus en Tempelbouw. This includes a reprint of an article by Pijper on the

24 The orchestration is 2223 2330 piano, percussion, strings. The whole work lasts about 11 minutes. It is published by Donemus. (576004800). Donemus have also published a CD containing Pijper's Symphony No. 2; String Quartets Nos. 4 & 5; Piano Concerto and the Six Adagios; Roelof van Driesten (Conductor), Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra (Orchestra), Theo Bruins (Piano).



symbolism embodied in his Adagios.). No note, rhythm or element of form has been left to chance. Every detail has a masonic symbolism (Figure 27.5).

The adagios were written as ritual music. It was Pijpers intention that his music should be used in the lodge during the ritual of initiation, and that when it was used no other music would be used. The Adagios are still quite often performed by orchestras, although the masonic symbolism is usually ignored. The concert version, for full orchestra, could hardly be played live in the lodge and Pijper began to score the set for piano and strings. This was never finished by him, but a version by one of his pupils Jan van Dijk has been published (six adagios for piano and string quartet: 1940/version 1992: opus 839a/Willem Pijper; [arr. by] Jan van Dijk, Amsterdam: Donemus 1997).

The first adagio, *Parodos* or *Intrada*, is in the key of C and it is intended for the solemn entry into the Temple. The repeated series of ascending notes is symbolical of the ascent from darkness to Light. The tempo is Grave. The piece consists of 27 bars with three beats per bar (3/4) three times 3 x 3 bars with the climax in the penultimate three-bar group of bars in which a symbolic hammer rhythm is played in the percussion. The whole piece is based on what Willem Pijper calls the 'so-called profane knocks rhythm' used by Mozart at the beginning of the overture of *Die Zaubeflöte*. The end brings a spread five-note chord on C that may be considered the simplest tone for the ear. Immediately after this chord fades, the Worshipful Master should give his

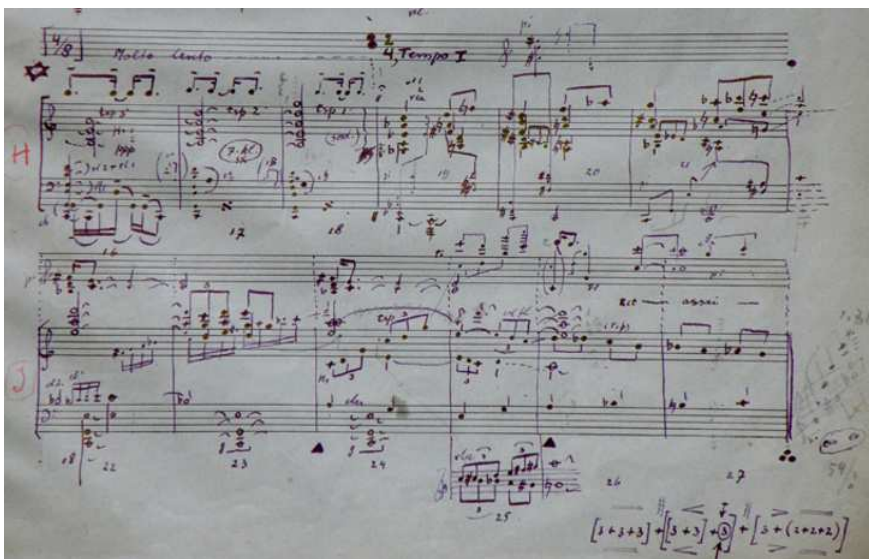


FIGURE 27.5 *The fifth adagio (bar 16 to the end) from the composer's manuscript. By permission of the Cultural Masonic Centre, Prince Fredrik, The Hague.*

rhythmic taps with his hammer to announce the opening of the Lodge and in doing so create order out of chaos.

The music for the three perambulations is based on a shared *cantus firmus*. In the music to accompany these three symbolic journeys that a candidate Freemason will make during his initiation the number 12 dominates; each journey has 48 beats; in the first two journeys 2 x 12 bars of two beats (2/4) and in the third journey 2 x 8 bars with three beats (3/4).

The second Adagio represents (and is written to accompany) the first journey of the Candidate. The Candidate passing the different aspects of his own spiritual life, his eye turned inwardly and feeling his way, knocks against obstacles in himself. In the first bars the freely wandering cello solo depicts the seeking and searching of the Candidate. In the second half there are contrasting lines in the trumpets, horns and later, the violins. The cello has been chosen because of its male sound and pure timbre: the Candidate being free and of good report.

The third Adagio represents the second journey and has similarities to the preceding piece. However, the Candidate has already undergone a transformation; he has discovered and overcome his inward resistances. He has reached a higher level, therefore the melody (of the viola) lies an octave higher. Immediately at the beginning of this Adagio a sense of opposition can be heard representing the factors that resist spiritual progress that are present in the outer world and which are more overt than the internal resistances within the candidate. The meditation is more extrovert, more directed toward the second degree. The sounds representing opposition in the music are regular pizzicatos (short abrupt plucked notes). In the second dozen bars of this Adagio the counterpoint is carried by two flutes, which indicate with their smooth, neutral tone, that these 'resistances' are of a quite different character than the internal resistances. The Adagios during the first and second journeys both finish on the dominant of the key on which the melody is based, and this sense of imbalance leads the ear to want to move on to the next journey.

The fourth adagio is for the third journey. It is written in 3/4 time and consists of 2 x 8 bars. The Candidate's theme can be heard in the first half, in three-voice polyphony played by the strings. It is as if the theme loses itself in the polyphony in the same way the initiate sublimates aspects of his individual personality in order to enter into the harmony of the brotherhood. The Candidate rises to the alliance with the Universe; by learning to know himself he can be delivered from his sub-individuality and see the higher reality of the hidden spiritual world. Therefore this Adagio is written in a major key and the music of the 1st and 2nd journey in minor. In the second half of this Adagio, parallel crotchets (quarter notes) on the piano, in six-note chords, give the suggestion of flashes of light, as the Candidate, according to the ceremony in the Netherlands,

first sees a glimpse of the Light. The music of the third journey ends with a combination of the tonic and the dominant, which means that a certain stage has been reached but not yet the complete conclusion of the tonic.

The fifth adagio, for use during the formation of the 'Chain of Union' consists of three times 3 x 3 binary measures and is not built, like the other Adagios, on a complete theme, but on a short motif of only a few notes. Out of the multitude of the repetition of this motif in numerous variations, there sounds in the end the unity of the final chords in 12 notes, just as the diversity of the individual brethren finds its unity in the Brother Chain. But before these final chords resound, that is to say: before the perfect Unity is arrived at, the magic of the fraternal grip must have been felt and therefore is expressed in the music before the final chords.

The sixth Adagio, *Exodos* has the same structure as the *Intrada*, but with a musical representation of an about turn in the middle bar. In the *Intrada* there is the entry from the uninitiated world into the Temple, in the *Exodos* there is the return into the profane world, though as a different man: wiser and more silent, more aware of his own possibilities. Therefore the Adagio ends with a single C in 3 octaves. This Adagio again consists of 27 bars in 3/4 time and it ought to follow the Worshipful Master's final words: 'Brethren, depart in peace'.

### Contemporary Masonic Music

Contemporary masonic music includes works by the Swiss composer Andreas Pflüger (<http://www.geocities.com/fmisrael/music.html>, accessed May 3, 2009) and the Polish composer Christophe (de)Voisé (<http://chrisvoise.net/samples.php>, accessed May 3, 2009). The CD *The Temple of Humanity* (<http://www.free-stone.org/> [seen May 3, 2009], examples on YouTube), (2008, containing 12 songs in English) is by the Dutch composer and musicologist Harm Timmerman who wrote the (contemporary pop genre) music and lyrics. Made with modern multi-tracking techniques he also played electric guitar, acoustic guitar, synthesizer, bass guitar and made the midi programming. He was joined by Diederik Huisman voice, Alex Simu sax and flute, Floor Groeneveld cello, and Ton Supheert drums. As with the music of Willem Pijper a tremendous amount of masonic symbolism has been worked into the music and, especially, the lyrics. In addition the CD box and booklet contain interesting masonic artwork. The first song, for example, contains the words (second verse):

A peculiar system of morality  
Point within a circle, between compass and square

I came from nowhere  
 I found a way to  
 Turn the key  
 To be what I should be  
 Can I know the unknown?  
 Can't do it on my own.

The 'peculiar system of morality' is an old description of Freemasonry (written in the 19th century 'peculiar' means 'special'). The full quotation 'A Peculiar system of Morality, Veiled in Allegory and Illustrated by Symbols' is still an often-used definition of Freemasonry.

A choral piece with a Latin text refers to the Christian tradition having been built on Egyptian foundations. Monks found an Egyptian obelisk on a place where there used to be an Isis-temple somewhere in the Middle Ages. On that spot they build a monastery. Later they put the obelisk on an Elephant designed by Bernini. On top of the pyramid there is a cross, meaning two things: Christianity is on top of the Egyptian religion and the roots of Christianity lie in Egypt. The Latin text 'Documentum intellige robusta mentus esse solidam sapientiam sustenere' means 'Let this symbol remind you that it requires a strong mind to handle (to be confronted with) the truth'. The accompanying artwork for this track is a picture of the statue now located near the centre of Rome on the base of which this Latin phrase is carved.

Inside the lodge has often been seen as a sanctuary—a place separated from the outside world where Masons can work with a deep sense of peace and safety. This sentiment is expressed in a great number of songs from the eighteenth century and later. The theme comes back in this collection:

Walking through this sacred place  
 Vengeance can't be found  
 If you may fall, you'll be embraced  
 with love he'll stand and get around  
 keep on going by a guiding hand  
 Feeling free and accepted in a better land  
 Walk within these sacred walls  
 where you will come to know  
 that allies will be installed  
 one can Forgive his Foe  
 if these matters all can be explained  
 Feeling Free and accepted a link within the chain

The song, as we recognise from the line 'Walk within these sacred walls', contains a reference to Emanuel Schikaneder's:

In diesen heil'gen Hallen  
 Kennt man die Rache nicht,  
 und ist ein Mensch gefallen,  
 führt Liebe ihn zur Pflicht.  
 Dann wandelt er an Freundes Hand  
 Vergnügt und froh ins bessre Land.

### Conclusion

Freemasonry has attracted many renowned and lesser composers, musicians and poets. In the eighteenth century the typical masonic musician was young, itinerant and living in an uncertain, fast-changing world. When the blindfold was removed, darkness and chaos gave way to light and order. The lodge revealed to him was a meeting place and a sanctuary; a place of conviviality and harmony. It was a place of liberty, equality and brotherhood. The lodge was part of a world-wide international, visionary and idealistic movement. To be a musician in a lodge was to be part of the dynamo powering the changes to society. In writing and performing music for use in the lodge and as Freemasons Mozart, Giroust, Naudot, Naumann and their colleagues were giving musical expression to the Enlightenment.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries musicians who have been at the centre of making music in the public sphere have found a home in the private space of the lodge. Conductors, organists, orchestra members, music academy directors, music teachers and jazz musicians have all used their gifts behind closed doors in the service of Freemasonry.

As we can see from this short outline masonic archives contain real cultural treasures, like the music of Mozart, the cantata by Degen, the funeral music by Giroust and the Adagios of Pijper. To find a list of eighteenth and nineteenth-century music we can consult Wolfstieg (the works written by later composers remain unlisted). For a list of composers and musicians the book by Paul Vandevijvere may be useful. But such lists do not tell us anything significant. We have very little information about the musical works themselves. With a few exceptions no analysis has been made of the larger works by earlier composers and the full extent of the contribution made by twentieth century composers is unknown. Only through the process of examining and analysing this repertoire can we begin to appreciate the role of these musicians in Freemasonry and of Freemasonry in their lives.

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# Freemasonry and Literature

*Robert A. Gilbert*

## Introduction

Literature is an unfortunately vague word that is usually taken to define writing—poems, stories, novels, plays and essays—that has some degree of cultural significance. In this sense Freemasonry is largely absent from literature, but in the sense of writing of various kinds on a given subject there is a rich and extensive body of masonic literature, some of which has been drawn from ‘literary’ sources or has, on occasion and to varying degrees, been drawn upon by poets, novelists and others in their work. It is thus possible to distinguish between Freemasonry in literature, and the literature of Freemasonry. This essay will survey the history and development of the latter, placing significant examples of the former into their appropriate places, and consider the nature of the relationship between ‘cultural’ literature and masonic writing over the past three hundred years.

## The First Century: Britain

With the exception of a very small number of casual references to Freemasons and their Craft<sup>1</sup> there is no printed literature of Freemasonry, and little enough in manuscript form,<sup>2</sup> before its birth, or perhaps its transformation, in 1717

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1 The earliest deliberate reference to masonic activity appears in *The Muses Threnodie* (Edinburgh, 1638), a satirical poem by Henry Adamson that contains the lines:

For we be brethren of the *Rosie Crosse*;  
We have the *Mason word*, and second sight.

The only references by a writer of any note are casual remarks made by Sir Richard Steele, in his journal *The Tatler*, for June 7–9 1709 and May 2, 1710.

2 The early manuscript literature consists almost entirely of examples of the formal regulations governing operative Masons in England, and later in Scotland. These are known as the ‘Old Charges’ of Freemasons, and almost seventy of the surviving examples, fifty-six of them English and eleven Scottish, were written before 1717. Of these two are from the first half of the fifteenth century and three are of the sixteenth century.



when a Grand Lodge of Freemasons was established in London.<sup>3</sup> This momentous event passed almost unnoticed by the literary world, and while there are some twenty references to masonic activities in weekly newspapers over the next six years, and two incidental references in printed books to the initiation of Elias Ashmole, only four books with a significant masonic content appeared before the publication in 1723 of the first official masonic work: James Anderson's *The Constitutions of the Free-masons*.

Of these four works, two make use of unrelated texts as pegs on which to hang masonic comment and two are dedicated to Freemasonry, albeit from very different perspectives. One of these is a pedestrian pamphlet of 1722 that reproduces the text of a version of the regulations of operative Masons: *The Old Constitutions belonging to the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons* (1722). The other is an anonymous, obscene poem that pokes ribald fun at Freemasonry: *The Free Masons; an Hudibrastick Poem: illustrating the Whole History of the Antient Free Masons...By a Free Mason*. ([London], for A. Moore, near St. Paul's, 1723) (three editions appeared in rapid succession early in 1723. See McLeod 1995: 9–52.). The partially masonic works are, by contrast, less ephemeral in nature.

The masonic content of Charles Johnson's *Love in a Forest, a Comedy* (1723) is confined to his dedication 'To the Worshipful Society of Free-Masons', but the author was perhaps the only literary figure of his day to announce openly in print that he was a Freemason. None of his fellow literary Freemasons of the period—Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and James Thomson—paraded their masonic membership, although Pope did satirise Johnson in *The Dunciad*, and Swift has been credited—without certain proof—with being the author of a satirical pamphlet, *A Letter from the Grand Mistress of the Female Free-Masons*, published in Dublin (1724).

The remaining title in this small group is the most interesting, in that it contains the longest, sustained essay on Freemasonry published up to that time: *Long Livers*, by Eugenius Philalethes Jr. (1722). The text is a translation from the French of Harouet de Longeville, and the long introduction is the only part written by 'Eugenius Philalethes' (generally thought to be a pseudonym of Robert Samber), outlining the merits and (mythical) history of Freemasonry. It thus acted as an effective curtain-raiser for Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723 (Anderson 1723), the first 'official' masonic publication and the first work written specifically *by* Freemasons *for* Freemasons. It is indeed a work of immense importance in the history of Freemasonry, although when it appeared

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3 The event took place on St John the Baptist's Day, June 24, 1717. It should be pointed out that there is little evidence of the earlier history of the four masonic lodges concerned.

the non-masonic public seem to have taken little or no notice, not even to deride it. But the *Constitutions* did set the seal on the establishment of Freemasonry as an institution and acted as a stimulus for many more publications, both for and against the Craft, with the majority of the latter—sermons and satirical pamphlets—being ephemeral in nature.

And as Freemasonry expanded, so did its internal literature. The *Constitutions*, with its rules, regulations and history—this being largely mythical, even with respect to supposedly recent events—had reached its third, revised edition by 1756, in which year Laurence Dermott published the *Constitutions of the rival English Grand Lodge, that of the 'Antients', under the title of Ahiman Rezon* (Dermott 1756).<sup>4</sup> Four further editions of this appeared up to 1800, as did two more revisions, in 1767 and 1784, of the *Constitutions of the Premier Grand Lodge*.

These official printed regulations were rapidly supplemented by printed lists of lodges<sup>5</sup> and by instructional handbooks for Freemasons that contained the basic regulations augmented with masonic songs, laudatory addresses and more detailed 'histories' that took in developments and lists of lodges up to the date of publication. These began to appear in 1728, when Benjamin Cole's *A Book of the Antient Constitutions of the Free and Accepted Masons* was published. This was engraved throughout, but later issues have added letterpress in the form of various masonic speeches.

Handbooks that were completely typeset were published from 1735 onwards, but they were unofficial publications and the earliest of them, Smith's *A Pocket Companion for Free-Masons* (1735), was condemned by the Grand Lodge.<sup>6</sup> These *Pocket Companions* were, however, extremely popular with Freemasons and by the end of the century thirty-five editions, with suitably revised texts, had appeared in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin and elsewhere (see Adams 1932: 165–231).

Equally unofficial, and even less welcome, were exposures of masonic practices that printed the complete ritual texts of the three degrees of Craft Freemasonry. Such works were nominally published with hostile intent—their professed aim was to warn the public of the wickedness of Freemasonry—but

4 In addition to those published in England, there were five Irish editions of *Ahiman Rezon* by 1800, and from 1804 it became the official *Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of Ireland*.

5 The independently printed lists, which were engraved throughout, were published with the sanction of the Grand Lodge from 1723 onwards. The earliest known list, for 1723, was engraved and published by Emmanuel Bowen; the earliest surviving example is that for 1724.

6 It may be noted that the Dublin reprint, of the same year, was sanctioned and adopted by the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

in effect they served largely to provide Freemasons with cheap and convenient *aides memoire* to rituals that they were supposed to learn orally and by heart. The first significant exposure was Samuel Prichard's *Masonry Disected* (1730), of which four editions were printed within a year and a further twenty by the end of the century. It was followed by numerous other exposures, mostly accurate reflections of ritual developments within Freemasonry, but none of any literary merit and almost all anonymous. Many of these were also frequently reprinted, indicating a probable significant demand among the growing, although far from substantial, numbers of British Freemasons.<sup>7</sup>

More acceptable to the masonic authorities were the small number of dedicated songbooks<sup>8</sup> and occasional masonic plays and operas, the most notable being Charles Dibdin's *Harlequin Freemason* (1780). There was also another, more substantial strand in the somewhat simple tapestry of British masonic literature. This was a series of discursive works, published by various authors in the second half of the eighteenth century, that were designed to educate the intelligent and enquiring Freemason as to the history of his institution and to elucidate for him its moral and spiritual philosophy. Some had a limited circulation and were rapidly forgotten<sup>9</sup>—perhaps deservedly so—while others received official patronage and ran to numerous revised editions. The earliest of these was Wellins Calcott's *Candid Disquisition* (1769), which was followed rapidly by William Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry* (1772) and William Hutchinson's *The Spirit of Freemasonry in Moral and Elucidatory Lectures* (1775). Hutchinson's work is perhaps the more speculative and interesting of the two, but Preston caught the more prosaic mood of the bulk of Freemasons and his book was regularly reprinted, and posthumously revised, up to the middle of the nineteenth century.

In general it may be said that early masonic literature in Britain was characterised by being prosaic. It was written essentially for Freemasons and, with

7 The two most important of later eighteenth century exposures are *The Three Distinct Knocks, or the Door of the Most Ancient Free-Masonry opening to all Men...* by W – O – v – n [supposedly William O'Sullivan] (London, A. Cleugh [1760]), of which at least six editions were printed by 1800, and *Jachin and Boaz: or an Authentic Key to the Door of Free-Masonr* (London: W. Nicoll, 1762) which had run to thirty editions by 1800, not counting at least four American editions.

8 The most extensive collection was William Riley's *Fraternal Melody: consisting of original Odes, Cantatas, and Songs for the use of...Free and Accepted Masons etc.* (London: 1773). However, most masonic songs were printed in larger collections of songs and glees, such as Thomas Hale's *Social Harmony* (1763).

9 Examples of less successful titles are Robert Trewman's *The Principles of Free-Masonry Delineated* (Exeter, 1777) and George Smith's *The Use and Abuse of Freemasonry* (London, 1783).

the exception of the more sensationally presented exposures, it held no appeal to the public at large. Masonic writing had no pretensions either to elegance of style or to literary significance and, as a genre, it formed only a minuscule part of the total output of printed books during the eighteenth century. This should not seem surprising, for Freemasonry itself was very much a minority pursuit, followed by a tiny segment of the adult male population of the United Kingdom, exerting no political, social or religious influence and, despite its smattering of royal and aristocratic members, perceived by the public at large as only one social institution among many. But its reception and perception in the non-Anglophone world beyond the shores of the United Kingdom and its empire was more complex, and the masonic literature of Europe would, inevitably, become richer and more diverse.

### The First Century: Europe and Beyond

By the end of the 1730s Freemasonry had followed in the wake of diplomacy and trade and established itself in continental Europe and in North America, but for the first twenty years of its presence it generated little in the way of masonic writing. There was an American edition of Anderson's *Constitutions* printed in Philadelphia, by Benjamin Franklin, but it had little impact on colonial life and stimulated no immediate literary creativity among the early American Freemasons. The first masonic text of any real significance to be written and published outside Britain appeared in Rome, where in 1738 the first papal Bull condemning Freemasonry—Clement XII's *In Eminenti*—was promulgated and printed.

If this Bull had little effect in stemming the advance of Freemasonry it did have an oblique effect upon masonic literature. In 1736 the Chevalier Andrew Ramsay, a respected Scottish writer, Jacobite and convert to Catholicism, who was best known for his discursive novel *The Travels of Cyrus* (1727, first published in French, in Paris, in the same year), delivered an Oration that included the suggestion that Freemasonry had originated among the Crusaders, and although Ramsay, in obedience to the Pope, had left the Craft in 1738, his Oration was subsequently published as a '*Discours Prononcé à la Réception des Frée-Maçons*, par M. de Ramsay, grand Orateur de l'Ordre' (hidden in *Lettres de M. de V[oltaire] avec plusieurs pieces de differens auteurs*, La Haye 1738: 47–70).

Ramsay's text was then reprinted, quite inappropriately, in an obscene publication, *Almanach des Cocus* (1741), and again within a year in the first significant French masonic text, the *Histoire, Obligations et Statuts de la Très Vénérable*

*Confraternité des Francs-Maçons* of 'Le Frère de la Tierce' (1742). This work served much the same purpose as the English 'Pocket Companions' and was followed by Jean Jacques Naudot's *Apologie pour l'Ordre des Francs-Maçons* (1742). Naudot had previously published, in 1737, a collection of masonic songs and poems, but these rather anodyne productions did not properly mirror the changing nature of French Freemasonry.

One apparent effect of Ramsay's Oration was further to stimulate the development of the *Hauts Grades*: masonic Rites and ceremonies based not on Operative Masonry, but on a Romantic interpretation of the history and purpose of ancient chivalric Orders,<sup>10</sup> supplemented by ideas and myths derived from the Rosicrucian manifestoes of the early seventeenth century. These texts—the *Fama Fraternitatis...des Rosenkreutzes* (1614); *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615), both anonymous, and *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz* (1616), an allegorical novel by Johann Valentin Andreae—are essentially a form of allegorical clothing for Lutheran Pietism and for various aspects of Western esotericism, but they are quite distinct from masonic theory and practice and do not contain any ritual element. The association of Rosicrucians with Freemasons became a popular theme within Freemasonry in the later eighteenth century, and is best represented by H.H. von Ecker und Eckhoffen's *Der Rosenkreutzer in seiner Blösse* ('The Rosicrucian in his Nakedness') published under the pseudonym of 'Magister Piano' (1781).

But however misunderstood, and unjustly intertwined, these two mythic streams of Templars and Rosicrucians flowed into European Freemasonry with dramatic results. New and complex rituals, including those of 'Adoptive' Orders for women, and such quasi-masonic Orders as the Mopses, were rapidly developed and soon put into print. Some ritual texts were for internal use, others, as in England, were exposures to the world and the first to appear.

The earliest of these was the *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons* (1742) that has been attributed to the Abbé Perau. It was rapidly followed by an anonymous but better-known, and much reprinted work, *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi, et Le Secret des Mopses Revelé* (1745).<sup>11</sup> Other ritual and critical works, for example, Travenol's *Nouveau Catéchisme des Francs-Maçons* (1749) and Larudan's *Les Francs-Maçons Écrasés* (1747) were also much reprinted but never achieved Perau's popularity. Over the following decades many other printed texts of exotic rituals appeared that reflected the growth of a spectrum of Scottish

10 They can be dated from at least 1743, if Baron von Hund's claim to have been then initiated into a masonic system based on the Order of the Knight's Templar is taken at face value.

11 There were at least twelve printings of four distinct editions between 1745 and 1781, and four impressions of a variant title with a very similar text.

Rites, and of the various forms of ‘Rosicrucian’ and ‘Templar’ Masonry,<sup>12</sup> Although they were intended to be read and used in masonic circles, they had a wider circulation and coloured the image of Freemasonry in the literary if not in the popular mind.

There was certainly a literary base to such rituals, in the form of the Abbé Terrasson’s novel *Sethos, ou vie tirée des Monuments Anecdotes de l’ancienne Egypte* (1731). This romance was taken by many to offer a detailed account of the initiation ceremonies of ancient Egypt and was drawn upon by Emanuel Schikaneder for the libretto of Mozart’s opera *Die Zauberflöte* (‘The Magic Flute’) of 1791, which is often described as a ‘masonic opera’. The Templar theme also provided the basis for *Nathan der Weise* (‘Nathan the Wise’), a play by the German dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1779). Lessing was a Freemason, and although this is not a specifically masonic play, the themes of friendship and religious tolerance reflect masonic principles—which are at the heart of another of Lessing’s works, *Ernst und Falk, Gespräche für Freimaurer* (‘Masonic Dialogues’) of 1778–1779.

There are numerous other German masonic *Aufklärung* authors, such as Goethe (explicitly masonic, only some shorter texts, such as two orations at the occasion of the death of a Brother (Wieland [1813]; Ridel [1821]) and several poems, such as *Bundeslied* (1775), *Symbolum, Dank des Sängers* (1815), *Verschwiegenheit* (1816), *Trauerloge, Gegottoast der Schwestern* (1820), three poems for the Lodge meeting of September 31, 1825, *Spruch* (1826), *Fünfzig Jahre sind vorüber* (1820). But many of his texts, especially *Wilhelm Meister, Märchen, Geheimnisse*, and *Großkophtha*, include recognizable masonic traits; Herder (*Über eine unsichtbar-sichtbare Gesellschaft, und Adrastea*); Knigge (for example, *Ein Brief über die Freimaurerey von einem erfahrenen Mitgliede dieses Ordens an einem profanen Freund geschrieben* (no date), *Beitrag zur neuesten Geschichte des Freymaurerordens in neun Gespräche* (1786); Nicolai (*Versuche über die Beschuldigungen, welche dem Tempelherrenorden gemacht werden, und über dessen Geheimnis, nebst einem Anhang über die Entstehung der Freymaurergesellschaft, and Einige Bemerkungen über den Ursprung und die Geschichte der Rosenkreuzer und Freimaurer...*), and Wieland (three orations for his lodge: “Über den Zweck und Geist der Freimaurerei,” “Wie verhält sich das Ideal der Freimaurerei zu ihrer dermaligen Beschaffenheit,” and “Über das Fortleben im Andenken der Nachwelt,” all after his initiation when he was 76).

12 Among the most significant of these works are: *Les plus secrets Mystères des Hauts Grades de la Maçonnerie dévoilés; ou le vrai Rose-Croix* (1766). It was anonymous, but attributed, without firm evidence, to either Berage or Karl Friedrich Köppen. See Tschoudy, *L’Étoile flamboyante* (1766) and Guillemain de St. Victor, *La Vraie Maçonnerie d’Adoption* (1779).

Popular enthusiasm for all things Egyptian also stimulated the 'Egyptian Freemasonry' of the masonic charlatan Count Cagliostro (Giuseppe Balsamo), the first lodge of which was established at Strasbourg in 1779. Cagliostro's activities, and his imprisonment by the Pope, generated an extensive contemporary literature with a considerable masonic content.<sup>13</sup> One popular work was the Marquis de Luchet's *Mémoires authentiques pour servir à l'histoire du comte de Cagliostro* (1785), which he followed with an equally popular, more sensational and more influential book, *Essai sur la Secte des Illuminés* (Paris, 1789). The short-lived Bavarian Order of the Illuminati was widely perceived, at least outside masonic circles, as having revolutionary aspirations—a view puffed up by de Luchet and others—and inspired a general fear of secret societies in the wake of the French Revolution. This led, in turn, to a number of highly successful anti-masonic books that linked Freemasonry with the Illuminati and with revolution. Two such works were highly influential.

The Abbé Barruel's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme* (1797) ran to six editions by 1803 and was translated into both English and German. Barruel's hostility to Freemasonry was paralleled in John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1797), which was widely read—and believed—in the English-speaking world. It was even more popular than Barruel's work: there were five editions within two years and it was reprinted in Ireland and in the United States of America, where it helped to stoke the Illuminati panic of 1801. Because of such works it became increasingly necessary for Freemasonry to present a positive image of itself in print—a task made easier, at least in Europe, by the ending of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which ushered in a period of relative masonic stability.

### The Second Century: The Rise and Decline of Romanticism

In the United Kingdom Freemasonry gave literary form to its respectability with a series of revised editions of Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry*,<sup>14</sup> the standing of its author being illustrated by his inclusion in Watkins and Schoberl's *Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain*

13 The most often reprinted and translated work was Francesco Barberi's *Compendio della vita, e delle gesta di Giuseppe Balsamo denominato il conte Cagliostro* (1791). More than thirty editions, in Italian, French, German, English and Spanish appeared within two years. They effectively determined the popular view of Cagliostro and to no little degree, in Catholic Europe at least, of Freemasonry.

14 Seven successively revised editions were published between 1804 and 1861.

and Ireland (1816). Extracts from Preston's work also appeared in the first dedicated masonic journal to appear in Britain: *The Freemasons' Magazine or General and Complete Library*, which was published monthly, survived for six years from 1793 to 1798 but finally failed because of its lack of interest to the non-masonic public.<sup>15</sup>

Although such journals provided a literary forum for Freemasonry, their commercial viability depended on literary appeal, and it was presumably a lack of this that had caused the demise of earlier masonic journals, from the first—*Der Freymäurer*, which was published weekly in Hamburg from 1737 to 1743—to the brief flurry of German masonic magazines in the 1780s.<sup>16</sup> It was not until the 1830s that masonic journals began to find sufficient content of literary merit to stay the course. They were designed for the masonic market, but not exclusively so, and their editors were well aware that a purely masonic content would not be enough. Thus poetry, fiction and essays gained a regular place in such journals as *The Freemason's Quarterly Review* (London, 1834–1870, under various titles), *Le Monde Maçonique* (Paris, 1858–1886) and *The Freemason's Monthly Magazine* (Boston, 1841–1873). Where this element was less prominent, as in *L'Univers Maçonique* (1835–1837) and *Le Globe: Archives des Initiations* (1839–1842), the journals did not survive.

Masonic literature *per se* also expanded, not only ritual texts and instructional handbooks, but also analyses of the philosophy of Freemasonry and masonic history that ranged from objective studies, such as C.A. Thory's *Acta Latomorum, ou Chronologie de l'Histoire de la Franche-Maçonnerie* (Paris, 1815), to such romantic works as Clavel's *Histoire pittoresque de la Franc-Maçonnerie* (Paris, 1843). The most popular authors were also prolific, engaging with their subject very broadly; thus between *The Antiquities of Freemasonry* (1823) and the posthumous *The Discrepancies of Freemasonry examined* (1875), George Oliver produced more than twenty original and edited works on every aspect of Masonry, most of which went into revised and American editions. Oliver's work was paralleled by two equally prolific masonic contemporaries. In France J.M. Ragon published solid works, such as *Orthodoxie Maçonique* and *Maçonnerie Occulte* (both 1853) and a series of nineteen ritual texts from 1860 onwards, while Albert Pike, the dominant figure in American Freemasonry of the nineteenth century, poured out a constant stream of masonic works—mostly

15 The title was changed for Vol. 11 to *The Scientific Magazine and Freemason's Repository*. A contemporary Irish journal, *The Sentimental & Masonic Magazine*, was published in Dublin, 1792–1794.

16 Examples of these are *Freimaurer-Zeitung* (Berlin, 1783), and *Journal für Freymaurer* (Wien, 1784–1787).



ritualistic or controversial—from 1853 until his death in 1891. His most important work, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (New York, 1871) had an immense circulation and remained in print for over a hundred years.

But however wide their circulation, none of the works of these authors reached far beyond their intended masonic readership, all of them can best be described as imaginative or fanciful, and none of them can be construed as ‘literary’ in the strict sense of the term. The only masonic books that did circulate to a significant degree among non-masons also were the English and American popular ritual exposures, notably Richard Carlile’s *Manual of Masonry* (London, 1836) and Avery Allyn’s *A Ritual and Illustrations of Freemasonry* (Boston, 1831). Allyn’s exposure was one of a number published in the wake of the Anti-masonic movement of the 1830s in the United States,<sup>17</sup> but it became popular in England, where both works were constantly reprinted up to the 1960s—a consequence more of the insatiable public demand for ‘secret’ knowledge than of any masonic demand for *aides memoires*.

That demand would also ensure that Freemasonry as a theme was regularly, although not frequently, introduced into the work of a wide range of non-masonic poets, novelists and essayists, but only rarely into the work of the major writers of the literary canon. ‘Gothic’ novels and other popular fiction of the Romantic era occasionally took sinister secret societies, and historical characters associated with them, as their themes, but only a few can be treated as masonic. The best known of these is Karl Grosse’s *Der Genie, oder Memoiren des Marquis von G—* (1792–1795), a story of the Illuminati, which in English translation by Peter Will, as *Horrid Mysteries* (1796), is one of the seven ‘Horrid Novels’ of Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* (1803, published 1818) and figures also in Thomas Love Peacock’s satirical novel *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), so the theme was evidently popular.

Sir Walter Scott, who was a Freemason, introduced a secret society theme into his novel *Anne of Geierstein* (1829) in the form of the secret and vengeful courts of medieval Germany, the *Vehmgericht*,<sup>18</sup> and in his more famous novel *The Talisman* (1825), the Knights Templar play a crucial role, but neither work is truly masonic. Characters from the mythical history of Freemasonry—Solomon and Hiram—are central to one episode of Gérard de Nerval’s novel *Voyage en Orient* (1851), but this too cannot legitimately be classed as masonic

17 Bernard (1829) is, historically, a more important product of American anti-Masonry, but it was not so widely reprinted as Allyn’s work.

18 The *Vehmgericht* also supplied the plot of Christiana Naubert’s *Hermann von Unna* (1788, English translation 1794), another highly popular ‘Gothic’ romance.

fiction, and De Nerval was not a mason. It may be noted that the only significant example of Freemasonry associated with wickedness in fiction of the early nineteenth century, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" (in his *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, 1840), is also by a non-mason, and in the story it is the victim, not the murderer, who is a mason.

Throughout much of the century the general view of Freemasonry, both in literature and society, was neutral if not always positive. It figures as an element in the work of a number of writers who were Freemasons,<sup>19</sup> and to an equal degree among those who were not. Thus it plays a background but liberating role to revolution in Valentin Gutierrez' novel *Sandoval; or, The Freemason: a Spanish Tale* (1826). It is a force for good in J.F. Smith's *Amy Lawrence, the Freemason's Daughter* (1851), and masonic membership overcomes enmity in war in *Newton Forster* (1832), a novel by another masonic author, Captain Frederick Marryat. Drama is supplied by variants of Freemasonry in Charles Monsélet's *La Franc-Maçonnerie des Femmes* (1856) and in *Mémoires d'un médecin: Joseph Balsamo*, (1846–1848) by Alexandre Dumas, père, in which Cagliostro is the central character. But Leo Tolstoy was the only author of the first rank of literature to make effective, albeit slight, use of Freemasonry in his work. The masonic episode in *War and Peace* (1865) is both a necessary element of the plot and a skilful portrayal of masonic initiation.

But however important these authors were, Freemasonry held little significance for the literary world and there was a clear gap—a chasm—between the literature of cultured society and literature *of* and *for* Freemasons. In the sense of poetry, fiction and essays, this was concentrated in masonic periodicals, notably in *The Freemason* (1869–1951), which was published weekly and sold openly to Masons and non-Masons alike. Attempts to promote specifically masonic fiction almost invariably, and deservedly, failed; it is thus unlikely that even his most ardent readers would have considered that the works, fiction or non-fiction, of the prominent American masonic writer, Rob Morris, for example, *Lights and Shadows of Freemasonry* (1855), merited the label of 'literature'.

Masonic writing was directed inwards rather than outwards, observable in the growing concern to produce definitive histories of the Craft. Stimulated, perhaps, by J.G. Böhle's historical study, *Ueber den Ursprung...der Orden der R.K.[= RosenKreuzer] und Freymaurer* (1804) and by Thomas de Quincey's more famous essay derived from it, "Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origins of the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons" (*London Magazine*, 1824), the fancies of Oliver and the 'Romantic School' gave way to more sober work.

19 There are, for example, masonic references in the fiction of Anthony Trollope, Arthur Conan Doyle, Douglas Jerrold and George Grossmith, but they are mostly incidental.

Emmanuel Rebold, *Histoire Générale de la Franc-Maçonnerie* (1851) and G.J.G. Findel, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei* (1861–1862), provided the foundation, increasingly so after 1866 when English translations of both works became available, on which the English ‘Authentic School’ of masonic history, with its own large and influential body of writing, would be built.

The most important of the ‘Authentic School’ historians, who rejected myth and relied on primary sources, were R.F. Gould, W.J. Hughan, and G.W. Speth. Their extensive literary output was, and still is, little known outside masonic circles, with the exception of Gould’s monumental and meticulously researched *The History of Freemasonry: its Antiquities, Symbols, Constitutions, Customs &c.* (1884). This work remained in print, in various revised forms, until 1951 and outsold all other masonic works of its time. It has yet to be superseded, but the debt of masonic literature to these men is even greater for the lodge they founded—Quatuor Coronati Lodge—and the literary forum they established with its annual *Transactions: Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*.<sup>20</sup>

European masonic historians, notably Wilhelm Begemann, also took up the objective study of masonic history, but the majority of American masonic writers remained steeped in Romanticism. The most prominent and prolific of these was Albert Gallatin Mackey, who had an engaging style but a penchant for credulity. His immense *History of Freemasonry* (1898), published posthumously, has a leaven of ‘authentic’ material, but it still propagated much masonic myth to its very large readership (it was often reprinted and attained a huge circulation).

For other reasons—religious and political hostility—a false and bizarre view of Freemasonry was promoted in novels, and in fiction posing as fact, in France, in Catholic countries and in others with repressive regimes. The classic example of this playing to the gallery is the work of Gabriel Jogand Pagès, written under the name of ‘Leo Taxil’ and other pseudonyms. His major sensational works were *Le Diable au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (1892–1895, with and as ‘Charles Hacks’) and *Mémoires d’une ex-Palladiste* (1895–1897, as ‘Diana Vaughan’). They are absurd and amusing, but were widely accepted as being serious portrayals of universal Freemasonry.

The schism between Church and Freemasonry, identified with the secular state, did not exist in the English-speaking world (except to a limited degree in Ireland), but sensational writing about Freemasonry still occurred. It varied

20 Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 was founded in London in 1886 and the annual *Transactions* are still published. Its prime mover was the Rev. A.F.A. Woodford (1821–1887), who was a constant contributor to *The Freemason* and other masonic periodicals, and the author of *Kenning’s Cyclopaedia of Freemasonry* (1878).

from popular satirical works<sup>21</sup> to fictional distortions for effect, either in a positive way, as with Rudyard Kipling's "The Man who would be King,"<sup>22</sup> or in a hostile or subversive manner. These two latter approaches can be exemplified by *Irish and English freemasons and their Foreign Brothers* by 'Michael di Gargano' (Dublin, 1876), a supposedly factual account with very lurid illustrations, and Allen Upward's "The Royal Freemason" (in *Secrets of the Courts of Europe*, 1897). There are also very many fictional masonic settings and occasional references, but very few by authors of note—the principal exceptions being Arthur Conan Doyle, who was a mason, and H.G. Wells, who was not.<sup>23</sup>

Another strand in the literature of Freemasonry was the growth of serious, if not always objective or masonically orthodox, studies of its philosophy, its spirituality and its association with esotericism. These can be traced back to the Romantic era, but they proliferated with the growth of newly created additional masonic rites and degrees, in both Europe and America. Such works as J.E. Marconis's *Le Sanctuaire de Memphis* (1849), John Yarker's *Notes on the scientific and religious mysteries of antiquity* (1872), K.R.H. Mackenzie's *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* (1877) and J.A. Weisse's *The Obelisk and Freemasonry* (1880) are typical, but although admired by esoterically minded Freemasons, they had a limited circulation even within the masonic community. To the literary, and wider, world at large Freemasonry—whether esoteric or not—was of little significance.

## Conclusion

To a marked degree the decade preceding World War I was, socially and culturally, a continuation of the previous century. Freemasonry, as a minor element in society, was recognised and generally tolerated but masonic writing did not figure, to any significant degree, in the literary world. Few novelists or poets of this period were also Freemasons, and only a very small number of the rising authors who would form part of the literary canon of the twentieth century brought it into their work. The best-known major novelists of Continental

21 A mid-nineteenth century example is Douglas Jerrold's *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures* (1845), and a later, crudely illustrated tale is the anonymous *Free-Masonry Exposed* (1876).

22 Printed in *Wee Willie Winkie* (1895). There are also masonic references in his novel *Kim* (1901).

23 There are numerous references to Freemasonry in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, and H.G. Wells's story, "The Inexperienced Ghost," in *Twelve Stories and a Dream* (1903), involves masonic signs and Quatuor Coronati Lodge.

Europe to utilise Freemasonry in their work were Thomas Mann and his elder brother, Heinrich Mann.

In Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924; English translation as *The Magic Mountain*, 1927), two of the allegorical characters employ masonic motifs—among many others—in the course of their instruction of the hero, because the author believed that Freemasonry best represents ancient initiatory rites. The masonic references are, however, few in number, as is also the case with Heinrich Mann's *Der Untertan* (1918; English translation *Man of Straw*, 1946, and *The Loyal Subject*, 1998). In this the author refers to masonic lodges and their members as a minor part of the social and political setting of his novel.

Popular novels continued to make occasional use of Freemasonry for social settings, and in the aftermath of the war the more outré masonic and quasi-masonic bodies continued to provide colour for sensational fiction based on themes of secret societies and world revolution. These usually reflect extreme right-wing politics, as with Nesta H. Webster under the pseudonym 'Julian Sterne', *The Secret of the Zodiac* (1933), and Dennis Wheatley, *The Prisoner in the Mask* (1957). Not all popular fiction, however, presents Freemasonry in a negative light, more often it is portrayed in neutral manner, as in the long passage of dialogue about Freemasons in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), which serves simply to illuminate the characters concerned.

Some authors, major and minor, have taken masonic ritual as a theme or for dramatic effect in their writing: thus it pervades Roger Peyrefitte's *Les Fils de La Lumière* (1961), is used as a plot device in Evelyn Underhill's *The Lost Word* (1907), and provides necessary colour in Robert Heinlein's story 'If This Goes On' (in *Revolt in 2100*, 1954). Heinlein takes liberties with masonic orthodoxy in that his 'masonic' society includes women. They were, however, poorly represented in the US, and current regular masonic attitudes would concur that masonic orthodoxy does not include 'mixed' Freemasonry, and are also illicitly initiated in such minor popular novels as *Love and the Freemason* (1915) by 'Guy Thorne' [C. Ranger Gull], and Katherine Kurtz's *Two Crowns for America* (1996).

But 'masonic' fiction of this kind formed only a minute proportion of creative writing; the already small significance of Freemasonry in society was declining still further, so that novels and short stories dedicated to Freemasonry were confined to what was produced by Masons for Masons. Most of this was written and published in America, but while such efforts as Carl Claudy's *These Were Brethren* (1947) and P.W. George's *The Lodge in Friendship Village* (1927) were well-intentioned, they do not qualify as great literature.

There has yet been a continuing public fascination with secret societies and esotericism, and thus with Freemasonry as popularly misunderstood. One aspect of masonic writing successfully fed and fuelled this fascination,

although this was not what the authors involved had intended. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century a small group of masonic writers produced books that propounded individual theories, of varying degrees of improbability, on the origin and nature of Freemasonry. They were not written solely for a masonic readership and they were published by non-specialist publishers, with the result that they circulated widely among an uninformed and uncritical public that believed them to present Freemasonry as it really is. The works of Albert Churchward, Manly P. Hall, and J.S.M. Ward all fall into this category; supplemented by overtly speculative philosophical works by writers such as A.E. Waite and W.L. Wilmshurst that represent only personal opinion. It is books by these authors, not those by objective masonic scholars, that have been, and are still, read by the public. They are the forerunners of much recent popular writing about Freemasonry, albeit better written and less foolish than their successors.

The work of contemporary poets and novelists does not appear to concern itself, even to a small degree, with themes of the practices and beliefs of Freemasonry. So it is that the genre of masonic literature has become almost entirely confined to two opposing types of published texts: the truly academic study, written for scholars, and sensational works of ill-founded speculation. Among the latter, some are presented, mistakenly but honestly enough, as factual accounts—Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln's *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (1982), Knight and Lomas's *The Hiram Key* (1996), and their authors' later titles are prime examples—while others, overt fiction and published as such, are perceived as presenting a true picture of contemporary Freemasonry. This is an unhealthy situation for masonic literature; when Dan Brown's novel *The Lost Symbol* (2009) is perceived as masonic reality, it must be conceded that in the world of the printed word, Freemasonry and literature are set firmly upon divergent paths.

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# Freemasonry and Modern Art

*Marijo Ariëns-Volker*

## Introduction

“Let us merely remember that art provides an expression of the spiritual life of man and that it prophetically establishes what is to be expected in that respect in the future. Moreover, art enhances the beauty of life and the joy of man. Thus, Freemasons have the duty to be aware of the development of beauty and of art—and of the difficulties and fortunes encountered by its perpetrators” (Wegerif 1951). These words were spoken by the famous Dutch architect and Freemason Anton Wegerif. Freemasonry has always been greatly attractive to visual artists. Thus, ever since Freemasonry came into being, it has counted a fair number of sculptors and even more painters among its members, particularly in France. Painter Jean-Baptiste Creuze (1725–1811) was a member of the ‘La Concorde’ lodge in Dijon. Jean-Baptiste Isabey (1767–1855) was member of both the ‘Saint-Napoléon’ lodge and ‘Les Amis Réunis’ and Hubert Robert (1733–1808), member of the Academy of Arts and curator of the *Musée du Louvre* belonged to the lodges ‘Les Amis Réunis’, ‘L’Olympique de la Parfaite Estime’ and ‘La Société olympique’. Sculptor Pierre David Angers (1788–1856), who was awarded with the *Prix de Rome* among other feats, was a member of the atelier ‘Le Père de famille’ for some time, before he went into state politics. Another *Prix de Rome* laureate and Freemason was Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828), member of ‘Les Neuf Soeurs’. The Czech Alphonse Mucha (1860–1939) was Sovereign Grand Commander of the Czechoslovakia Supreme Council and the Russian painter Marc Chagall became a Freemason in 1912. The Belgian painter Félicien Rops (1833–1898) and the Spaniard Juan Gris (1887–1927) were Freemasons, too. At the end of the nineteenth century, the influence of Freemasonry and related esoteric movements, culminated. In present-day art such an influence can hardly be perceived in a material sense; however, there is an ideological influence to be noticed.

Among the contemporary museological arts that refer to Freemasonry, the work of American artist Matthew Barney has recently attracted attention. In his ‘Gesamtkunstwerken’, built up out of various disciplines such as film, photos and collages, he emphatically refers to masonic rites and alchemy. The five-part film-series *Cremaster* in particular is full of masonic symbolism (Spector



and Wakefield 2002). The film *Cremaster 3* is in fact the pivot in the *Cremaster* cycle, a so-called ‘cultural performance’ taking place in New York that shows the construction of the Chrysler Building. We see sculptor Richard Serra and Matthew Barney himself play the roles of Hiram Abiff and a pupil, who both work on the building and then get into a fight, which constitutes a direct reference to a well-known masonic myth.

### Romanticism and Martinism

In *Le Romantisme et l'Art* (1928) Hautecoeur describes how the character of art changed during Romanticism: “To romanticists, the matter of art is no less sensitive than intellectual ... An artist must invent and compose”. Those were the times when Illuminates, Martinists, Theosophists and Philaletes recruited adepts. “If ever there was a time when society was romantic, it was right then” (Hautecoeur 1928: 1–22). By Martinists, Hautecoeur refers to the ‘Ordre des Chevaliers Maçons Elus Cohen’ of Martinès de Pasqually. His *Traité de la réintégration des êtres dans leurs premières propriétés, vertus et puissance spirituelles et divines* (1770–1772) holds a central place for the doctrine of the recovery of the kingdom of heaven. He described a cosmologic system in which God “for the time”, emanated “free” spiritual beings in mythic temporality. At the very moment of Lucifer’s wishing to equal God’s creation, a number of them were dragged along in his downfall, after which they were punished through being imprisoned in matter. Consequently, God created man to effect reintegration. Although he was superior to other spirits and invested with an androgynous body, this “Adam” failed to complete his assignment and was also seduced by Lucifer, after which, with Adam’s fall, the whole of the universe was dragged along in a process of materialization (see Von Baader 1900; Van Rijnberk 1938[1935]; Amadou 1946).

From 1769 onwards, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803) who entered history as the *Philosophe inconnu* was regularly found in the vicinity of Martinès de Pasqually, and worked as his secretary during 1771–1772. After his master’s death he stayed in Lyon for a few years as an active Freemason, just like another important disciple of Martinès’s, Jean Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824). Saint-Martin greatly valued the role of art and the artist. Arthur Edward Waite considers that Saint-Martin also got his popularity from his worldliness, a feature which distinguished him remarkably from other mystics. Thus, he was regularly found in mundane circles. He was an amateur-musician and a poet and a passionate reader, and as such profiled himself as a formidable critic (Waite 1901). He considered earthly phenomena to be ‘signs’ to be interpreted by the

'artist-man', whereby the 'sign' is not only the necessary *trait d'union* between man and matter, but also between man and his awareness. Poetic language might provide an eminent opportunity to reiterate the original act of Creation (Von Baader 1860; Matter 1862; Waite 1901; Amadou 1946; Amadou 1961; Van Rijnberk 1937[1935]; Benz 1955; Faivre 1973; Le Forestier 1928; and Jacques-Lefèvre 2003). This was one of the reasons why philosophers and writers such as Honoré de Balzac, Madame de Staël, Joseph de Maistre, Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, Friedrich von Schlegel, Gérard de Nerval and Charles Baudelaire were inspired by his ideas (Mercier 1974[1969]; Viatte 1969; Bénichou 2004: 93–110). Viatte concluded that "Illuminism is turning into a mundane curiosity" (Viatte 1928: 470–471). In *Les Sources occultes du romantisme* he explains how Romanticism can be traced back in large part to the writings by Saint-Martin and Emmanuel Swedenborg, which landed in fertile soil, particularly among Freemasons (Viatte 1928; Viatte 1969). Among others, Sainte Beuve played a role in spreading these theories, with a long chapter on the subject in his *Causeries du Lundi*. For example, painter Eugène Delacroix quotes a few lines from this work by Saint-Martin about the soul (Delacroix 1996: 435–436; Sainte Beuve cited in Delacroix 1892: 225).

Silk manufacturer Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824) from Lyon, who had been initiated by Martinès around 1766, was—beside Saint-Martin—his main follower. In 1772, Willermoz was admitted into the Strict Observance, a masonic system founded by Karl Gotthelf von Hund. At the Wilhelmsbad convention in 1782, Willermoz devoted himself to the abolition of this Rite and to have it replaced by the Rite Écossais Rectifié which he had introduced in France in 1778 at the *Convent des Gaules*. While working on this system he sought inspiration from Martinès' illuminism and the doctrine by Saint-Martin. The title of the initiated person, 'Chevalier Maçon de la Cité Sainte' or 'Chevalier Bienfaisant de la Cité Sainte' (Jerusalem) indicates an order of knighthood, with a reference to the legendary Order of the Temple (Joly 1986; Joly and Amadou 1962; Faivre 1975; Amadou 1993: 28).<sup>1</sup> In this *maçonnerie templière* the initiated person becomes an 'Elu' and the "ego" is proclaimed to be a creator founded on the qualities of the 'spirit'. Daniel Beresniak calls this almost divine proclamation of the ego for its creative powers one of the most typical characteristics of Romanticism (Beresniak 1987: 87–88; Hasselmann 2002). Indeed, these romantic and idealistic considerations concerning art and the artist's

1 According to Amadou in the course of the Rite Écossais Rectifié's history, there were always members who belonged to the so-called Ordre intérieur, de Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte, who were not Freemasons, until the Geneva Convention put an end to that in 1969 (Amadou 1993).

role have had a much larger influence than is generally assumed, and upon closer consideration they still appear to be valid in a certain sense.

### Papus

During the nineteenth century Freemasonry and Occultism tended to mutually influence each other. In these days many occultists were Freemasons too (Laurant 1992: 101–107). Among the artistic elites we recognize a longing for spiritual ‘regeneration’ at the beginning of the twentieth century that translated into religious terms and social and political terms, too, and that was characterized by a search for rebirth, for a mythical “primal situation” (Kieft 2009: 159). This longing for ‘regeneration’ appears to have been largely inspired by Freemasonry and movements closely connected to it, such as the Theosophical Society and the *Ordre Martiniste*. An important role in this respect was played by Gérard Encausse, also known as Papus. Originally, he was a member of the Theosophical Society but he was disappointed with the eclectic character of this movement. Besides, the lack of spirituality within Freemasonry in these days irritated him. This brought him to found a new order, the *Ordre Martiniste*, for which drew inspiration from eighteenth-century theosophical systems by Pasqually and Saint-Martin. Besides, he drew lavishly from works by occult authors such as Antoine Fabre d’Olivet (1767–1842), Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse Louis Constant, 1810–1875), Hoené Wronski (1776–1853) and his contemporary Joseph Alexandre Saint-Yves d’Alveydre (1842–1909) (André and Beaufile 1995). At about the same time the *Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix* came into being at the instigation of the marquis Stanislas de Guaita (1861–1897) and Joséphine Péladan (1858–1918). During the first years the Rose-Croix and the *Ordre Martiniste* existed alongside each other, but with practically the same members. In 1892 this led to a *traité d’alliance organique*, stipulating that only the people holding the first three degrees of Martinism were given access to the Rose-Croix, a rule which is still valid today (Official notice of the *Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix* in *L’Initiation*, Juillet-December 1900: 85).

The *Eglise Gnostique Universelle* was active in the same surroundings. It was founded by Jules Doinel (Jules-Benoît Stanislas Doinel du Val-Michel [1842–1902]) who, after he discovered a gnostic manuscript dating from 1022, studied early gnostic systems. Not only did the new gnostic church refer to the twelfth-century Albigenian heretics concerning its rituals, but it also presented itself as a mystical masonic system. From its foundation onwards, efforts were made to bring about a connection with Freemasonry and to build a bridge toward the lodges practicing the Scottish Rite (Le Forestier 1990). The *Traité* by Martinès

de Pasqually was first published in 1899 by René Philipon (1870–1936), a rich banker, one of the greatest art-collectors in France and a close friend of the artist Odilon Redon. He was also bishop of the *Eglise Gnostique Universelle* and one of the financiers of the *Bibliothèque Rosicrucienne*, which provided re-editions of esoteric works (Pasqually 1899). Over the past years, exhibitions and the publications that accompany them have been paying a lot of attention to the importance of the Fine Arts within these movements (Tuchman *et al.* 1978; Ehrhardt, Bischoff and Wolter 1995; Bax and Van Tuyl 2008).

### Métaphysique du Sexe

One of the central points of attention in Barney's *Cremaster Cycle* is the pluriformity of male sexuality, the conditions of creation and the relation between them. The name *Cremaster* refers to the male muscle that regulates testicular descent and retreat in situations of fear or cold. Barney emphasizes the strength of the male body, which is not only destructive but also creative, by the identification in his work of man with black and woman with white. This refers to alchemy in which the phase of the *Destructio* or *Putrefactio* is part of the process. This phase, 'the blackening' or *Nigredo* of the matter must ultimately lead to the stage of the *Coniunctio*, the merger between the male component Sulphur—black—and the female component Mercurius—white—that leads to the Philosopher's Stone, otherwise known as philosophical gold. Such a fascination with both alchemy and the creative principle of the male sex is not new; Surrealists in particular were very preoccupied with these subjects. Critical articles about the *Cremaster* regularly point to the influence of Surrealists such as Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí. Furthermore, a striking example is found in the work *Etant donnés* (1946–1966) by Marcel Duchamp (see Pierre 1990; Evola 2005; Bataille 1981). John Richardson notes that the *Bateau Lavoir* circles in Paris, where many artists among whom Picasso had their atelier, were remarkably phallogocentric (Richardson 1996: 8; Ariëns-Volker 2004).

In 1925 the poet Guillaume Apollinaire described author Alfred Jarry's apartment "that was so tiny that everything resembled a reduction of the reality". On Jarry's mantle-piece there was a large phallus in stone, a gift from Freemason and painter Félicien Rops. Apollinaire mentions how there was a shocked lady who supposed that this was a mere sculpture mould, to which Jarry allegedly replied, "No, it is a reduction" (Apollinaire 1925: 172–173).<sup>2</sup> Rops

2 On January 7, 1861, Rops was initiated into Freemasonry in Namur and became a member of the 'Bonne Amitié' lodge (Kunel 1960).

participated several times in the *Salons de la Rose-Croix*, organized by Joséphin Péladan between 1891 and 1897 (see Pincus-Witten 1976; Beaufile 1993). Moreover, he was a frequent visitor of the bookshop *L'Art Indépendant* belonging to publisher and poet Edmond Bailly (Henri-Edmond Limé). Bailly was responsible for the publication of the magazine *la Haute Science*, which featured articles by representatives of the *Eglise Gnostique Universelle* among others. And from July 1901 onwards he tended to the publication of the magazine *L'Initiation* of the Ordre Martiniste. Thus, the circle around Bailly was sometimes compared to the circle of the "Gnostics round Plotinus in Alexandria, the Platonic Academy of Marsilio Ficino and Pico delle Mirandolla and the Rose-Cross meetings in London under the direction of Robert Fludd and Francis Bacon" (Michelet 1937: 65–67).

The doctrine of the founder of the *Eglise Gnostique Universelle*, Doinel and the masonic system of Pasqually and Saint-Martin both contain a sexual component. According to stories traditionally originating from the speculations of Spermognostics in late antiquity, sexual organs were considered to be the sacred parts of the body. Just like man is a reflection of the universe as both have been created from the same matter, in relation to the phallus man is a macrocosm (Ambelain 1946: 42–44; Le Forestier 1990: 367–394; Jacques-Lefèvre 2003: 73–94). Concerning the phallus, the influential occultist Eliphas Lévi writes,

Adam is the human tetragram which summarizes in the mysterious Jod, image of the cabbalistic phallus. Now add the ternary name of Eve to this Jod, and you form the name of Jehova, divine tetragram, the cabbalistic and magic word par excellence. ... The creative principle is the ideal phallus; once the principle created, it is the formal cteis. The insertion of the vertical phallus in the horizontal cteis forms the stauros of gnosticism, or the masonic philosophical cross.

LÉVI 1856: 123–124

Marc Fumaroli's statement that art and particularly surrealism, as clearly formulated by André Breton but also by André Malraux, were indebted to the Gnosis, seems to be justified (Fumaroli 2009: 394–431; Carrouges 1947: 194–218).

### **The Recovery of the Rite Ecossais Rectifié**

Over the first years of the twentieth century, the masonic element within the Ordre Martiniste was gradually strengthened. In 1908 Papus and his collaborator

Téder (Charles Détré) organized a *Convent Maçonique des rites spiritualistes* which resulted in the foundation of a *Fédération Maçonique Universelle*, with Téder appointed *chef du secrétariat*. It was also decided that the Egyptian Rite would be reintroduced in France. In order to work at this, a *Suprême Grand Conseil et Grand Orient du Rite Ancien et Primitif de la Maçonnerie pour la France et ses Dépendances* came into being for which the Patent was obtained from the Sovereign Sanctuaries of the Memphis-Misraïm Rite in Berlin. The Grand Master here was Theodor Reuss, also representative of the *Ordre Martiniste* in Germany. Pierre Mollier clearly states: "From this time onwards, the life of the Rite of Memphis-Misraïm is confounded with the ups and downs of the occultist current (martinism)" (Mollier 2000: 745–748).

In 1910 the Rite Écossais Rectifié, which had been dormant in France since 1828, was rehabilitated. In 1914 Papus and the French Grand Master of this Rite Écossais Rectifié, Edouard de Ribaucourt, decided to work in close cooperation. Thus, as a *trait-d'union* between ordinary Martinism and the Maçonnerie Écossais Rectifié, a *Grand Chapitre Martiniste* was created, accessible only to highly graded Freemasons (Faivre 1975; De Ribaucourt 1911: 426; De Ribaucourt 1912; Hess 2001; *Symbolisme* 1968). The execution of this project hardly got off the ground because of the 1914–1918 war (Amadou 1993: 16–41).

### René Guénon and André Breton

The significance and the role of René Guénon (1886–1951) within the artistic and literary circles of those years has been effectively demonstrated in a few solid studies (James 1981; Chacornac 1958; Laurant 1985; De Maistre 2004; Sedgwick 2004; Accart 2005; and Laurant 2006). Between 1906 and 1908 he was a dedicated disciple of Papus's. Very soon he became his particular protégé. In 1908 he acted as secretary to the *II<sup>e</sup> Congrès Spiritualiste et Maçonique* in Paris. This was an enterprise set up by Papus with the objective to bring the various occult groups together, such as the gnostics under the direction of Fabre des Essarts, the theosophists à la Blavatsky, and the kabbalists and alchemists under Jollivet-Castelot. Not long after this congress, Guénon secretly founded an *Ordre du Temple Rénové*, for which he recruited members among the Martinists. This brought about a rupture with Papus. But his excommunication should merely be seen as a disciplinary measure, which did not affect the pure intentions of either of them. Peyrefitte's allegation appears to be justified: "There are secular guenonions and christian guenonionas, masonic and anti-masonic guenonins, martinist and anti-martinist guenonians, buddhist guenonians, muslim guenonians, in short guenonians for all the successive Guénon avatars" (Peyrefitte 1961: 102).

In the same period a series of publications by Guénon under the pseudonym of Palingénus, about “le symbolisme de la Croix” in the magazine *La Gnose* (co-founded by himself) which was published by the Eglise Gnostique, a body closely connected to Martinism. Another collaborator at *La Gnose* was Swedish painter Ivan Abdûl-Hâdi (John Gustaf Agueli or Aguéli), who initiated Guénon into Sufism around this period. During a previous stay in Paris around 1890, Agueli had worked at Emile Bernard’s atelier, who had introduced him to the Theosophical Society in 1891. In *La Gnose* he published articles under the title “L’Art pur”, in which he paid attention to Cézanne and Picasso, among others (Abdûl-Hâdi 1911: 34–35, 66–72). In 1913, Guénon was asked to collaborate in the magazine *La France antimaçonnique*. The editor-in-chief, Abel Clarin de la Rive, was—although one supposes differently from the title of the magazine—very much interested in Freemasonry in the eighteenth century, which in his eyes was worlds apart from the political and anticlerical Freemasonry in his own days (Désaguliers 1983: 239–266). Thus, Guénon was in the position to write extensively about Martinism. Under the pseudonym of *Le Sphinx*, he published a series of articles on the Rite Écossais Rectifié, and the so-called ‘Supérieurs Inconnus’ (S\*I\*) and the Elus Coëns of the Order of Martinès de Pasqually (*La France antimaçonnique*, 14 Août, 20 Novembre and 4 Décembre 1913).

From 1904 onwards, Guénon lived in a small apartment in the *Rue Saint-Louis en l’Isle* in Paris (Sérant 1977: 11). According to the director of the *Musée de l’Art Moderne*, Jean Cassou (a Freemason), the whole of the literary and artistic world gathered on *l’Isle Saint Louis* (Cassou cited in Accart 2005: 81). Guénon’s publications drew a lot of attention, for example, from the group centred around the author André Breton, who played a decisive role both in Dada and in Surrealism. In his conversations, Breton regularly shows his interest for Guénon. “If I have been quoting René Guénon and will undoubtedly be doing so again, this is because of my respect for the disciplined way in which he unfolds his thoughts; however, I am not willing to take upon me the act of faith on which he originally founded his line of reasoning” (Breton 1970: 128). Indeed, the literary and philosophical world was very much interested in Guénon. The surrealist Antonin Artaud in particular, who belonged to the group around the magazine *Philosophies*, turned out to be a great admirer of Guénon’s ideas (Accart 2005: 81; Borie 1989; De Mèredieu 2006).

It appears from both Breton’s and Jean Paulhan’s writings and archives that they greatly appreciated Saint-Martin’s work, possibly also inspired by Guénon’s articles. Thus, Paulhan particularly admired Saint-Martin’s *Homme de Désir* (Tappy 1995: 62, 101; and Catalogue, 2003, *Vente André Breton*, part II: 219). Jean-Louis Biasi describes how after the First World War Breton and later

the surrealists, too, under his guidance, effectuated a revival of *fin-de siècle* occultism. Papus, Péladan, Guaita and Eliphas Lévi became fashionable again (De Biasi 1997: 203–204). When Breton's library came up for auction in 2003, it turned out to be a true *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*. His bookcase held the two parts of the biography on Pasqually by the Dutch martinist Gérard van Rijnberk, *Un thamaturge du XVIII siècle: Martinez de Pasqually* (1938), a work that Breton had extensively studied, considering the great many annotations in it (Van Rijnberk 1938[1935]). Besides, he owned various works about Martinism by contemporary writers such as Robert Ambelain and Robert Amadou, generally with personal annotations and dedications. Breton extensively annotated Ambelain's *Le Martinisme. La franc-maçonnerie occultiste et mystique (1643–1943)* (1946) (Van Rijnberk 1938[1935]).<sup>3</sup> In 1946 together with Pierre Mabille he left for Haiti in the footsteps of Martines de Pasqually, "whom I believe to be one of the most enigmatic and captivating personalities" (Breton 1970: 200).

## Dada

The Dada art movement, in particular, provided artists with new criteria, and it had had an influence on later generations that should not be underestimated. Artists belonging to 'Dada' such as Kurt Schwitters and Marcel Duchamps are generally considered as being the founding fathers of pop-art and conceptual art, fluxus and multimedial art. In 1915, in the Swiss town of Zürich a number of emigrants gathered around the Romanian Tristan Tzara, among whom the Germans Hugo Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck. The group gathered at the Cabaret Voltaire where lectures and exhibitions were organized and manifestoes spread under the name of 'Dada'. Simultaneously, a similar movement was launched in New York by Frenchman Marcel Duchamp and the French-Spanish artist Francis Picabia, who was soon to join the Zurich group. Slightly apart from them, Kurt Schwitters operated in Germany. In his turn he remained in contact with Theo van Doesburg, who propagated Dadaism in the Netherlands.

This revolutionary art movement broke with the art of the past. Everything was ridiculed in an inscrutable way, understandable only by those who had been 'initiated', as it has sometimes been put. The characterization of the Dadaists as having been 'initiated', even though the term was often unconsciously used,

<sup>3</sup> See also *Vente André Breton* (2003); and Amadou (1946). Some of these studies are in the author's possession, acquired at the auction André Breton at Calmels Cohen in April 2003.



seems to be closer to reality than is generally assumed. In 1913 a *Rituel de l'Ordre Martiniste* had appeared, also at the request of foreign lodges, which brought the rituals out into the open in order to attract new 'Supérieurs Inconnus'. This publication also paid attention to the black mask as a ritual attribute. The person wearing it demonstrates his willingness to abandon his worldly personality with the objective of becoming an 'inconnu' among other 'inconnus' (Téder 1913). At the same time, Guénon published articles that drew the attention of André Breton's circle. In various illustrations in 'Dada'-movement writings 'Dada' was typified as a *Société Anonyme*, a synonym for *Inconnu*. One also regularly sees a mask depicted beside the words 'Superieur Inconnu', 'SI' and 'Initié'. One poster significantly states: "Dada ist für Ruhe und Orden!" (Le Bon 2006). The poet Guillaume Apollinaire was a personal friend of Tristan Tzara's and widely respected among Dadaists. In his library there was a so-called *Catalogue des Bons-Enfants*, which carries the letters S.I. in monogram. The same monogram is to be found on the catalogue *Les Peintres Futuristes* (Boudar and Caizergues 1987, dl. II: 144; Cat. *Delaunay* 1999: 34; Amadou 2000; Haven 1912). Italian futurist Tommaso Marinetti who was in close contact with the Dadaists, too, also signed his publication *Zang Tumb Tuuum* (1912) with "Ct DASSIISME", which literally is interpreted as "Das SI isme". During World War I, theatrical author Serge Basset, a Martinist, traveled to Italy as a war correspondent, where he was very warmly received by Marinetti (Ribon 1915; André and Beaufile 1995: 332). Esotericism and spiritism played a large role in the birth of Futurism. Thus, it is well-known that Arnaldo Ginna, responsible together with his brother for various texts defining the ideology of futurism, came to Paris to purchase works by Eliphas Lévi, Papus and other occultists (Hultén 1986).

Upon closer study, the swirling lines on the painting *Culture Physique* (1913) by Francis Picabia form the monogram S.I. Breton called Picabia's contributions to the Dadaist magazine *391*: "soaked in vitriol". This notion (V.I.T.R.I.O.L. = "Visita Interiore Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultem Lapidem" ("Visit the interior of the earth and rectifying (purifying) you will find the hidden stone") is directly connected to alchemy and some of the forms of Freemasonry (Breton 1952: 54).<sup>4</sup> The second issue of the same magazine featured an article by Max Goth with the title "D'un certain esprit" in which there is question of "a glorious thinker, too little well-known" and "Essential and occult realities" (*391*, 10 Février 1917). By 'unknown philosopher' Goth appears to refer to the 'philosophe inconnu', the pseudonym of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin. Also, one of the magazines linked to Dada was bestowed with the significant title of *SIC*. (= *S.I. Cahiers?*).

4 In Freemasonry, Vitriol is sometimes used as a symbol in the Dark Room (Chamber of Reflection).

According to Jacques-Lefèvre it was the epic-magical poem *Le Crocodile* by Saint-Martin in particular that contributed to the birth of the so-called *écriture fantastique*. At the end of the nineteenth century, this bitter comedy ranked highly on the list of works popular among Martinists, who considered it to be a veiled exposition of Saint-Martin's esoteric doctrine (Waite 1901: 448). Jacques-Lefèvre suggests that this influence possibly stretched out further than only the eighteenth century, and indeed, this appears to be the case. Studying Saint-Martin's works was compulsory before one could possibly qualify for initiation into Martinism. André Breton quotes a few lines from *Le Crocodile* in *Perspective Cavalière* (Breton 1970: 147). Picabia, too, was well aware of these publications as appears from the titles he gave to his works of art, which were often literally borrowed from them. Thus, the title *Le Thermomètre* refers to the chapter in *L'Esprit des choses* with the same name in which it is a metaphor for the human soul, "le véritable thermomètre de Dieu". *Le Crocodile* and *Ecce Homo*, titles he gave to two other works of art, are also the titles of influential works by Saint-Martin (Saint-Martin 1799; Saint-Martin 1975–1990). *La Marche nuptiale pour un crocodile* was the name of one of the acts during the Dada tour of the Netherlands.

In 1923, during the evening when Theo van Doesburg read out his manifesto, Kurt Schwitters uttered a strange series of sounds such as: *iiii* and *èèè*, causing Van Doesburg to state that there were no rules for Dada, but that it was a mere "état d'esprit" (state of the mind) (Ewig cited in Le Bon 2006: 938; Schippers 1974). These so-called sound poems were characteristic of Dadaist manifestations. Hugo Ball, in particular, introduced these 'Verse ohne Worte' or 'Lautgedichte' with which he intended to return to "the most intimate alchemy of the word, and even to go beyond it in order to preserve for poetry its most sacred domain" (Hugo Ball cited in Elderfield 1974: 74). Language constituted one of the central points of focus in Saint-Martin's work, which was also inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom he greatly admired (Jacques-Lefèvre 2003: 210). Saint-Martin considers the invention of conventional language as being connected to the loss of privileges after Adam's fall, that is, with humanity's entrance in times when the function of language was merely a means of communication and had lost its primary creative function. Thus, the first words by Adam, 'the first of poets', had no other function than to point at things (Jacques-Lefèvre 2003: 214). Saint-Martin attached great value to the education by wet nurses who teach a child its first utterances, which, in his eyes, were purer than the language they were taught later on (Saint-Martin 1990, vol. II: 212–214).

After the Dada movement had relocated to Paris, the magazine *Littérature*, directed by Louis Aragon, André Breton and Philippe Soupault connected its

name with to the Dada manifestations. Although a rupture between Breton and Tzara took place in 1922, the magazine *Littérature* continued to appear under the name of Dada. The October 11–12, 1923 issue features a picture with the names of the writers and thinkers who provided inspiration. Besides Sade, Alfred Jarry, Comte Lautréamont and Charles Baudelaire, one also notices the names of Saint-Martin, Nicolas Flamel, Cornelius Agrippa and Raymond Lulle (*Littérature* 1923: 24–25).

In the essay “Les Hommes inconnus” from the volume *Risques et Périls* (1930) Pierre Reverdy regrets the fact that surrealists Breton, Aragon and Radiguet did not want to remain ‘inconnus’ (Hubert 1988; Hubner-Bayle 1993: 28). In a bitter exchange of letters with Jacques Doucet he regrets the failure that Dada has become. “The man with the mask did not want to lose the benefits of success, and showed his face” (Chapon 1984). The poet Max Jacob, who was not directly involved with Dada but who was regularly quoted, wrote to Tzara in 1924:

To me it is enough that I possess some knowledge of man. There are new men. No-one has been new like you ... I told you a short while ago: ‘You are a new man’, which is quite different from being ‘original’ ... A new man can be recognized from the fact that he is not a little ‘go-getter’ because he is certain of himself. Nothing has been found since Dada, and nothing else could be found, because Dada is the truth.

GARNIER 1953: 346–347

During his initiation as an Elu Coën, the candidate is addressed with the words, ‘To hear and to spread new truths, new men are needed’ (*Annales Maçonniques des Pays Bas*, 1826: 200).

In art-history literature, the word Dada refers to a child’s babbling, whereas in French it means ‘favorite pass-time’. One of the Dadaist meeting-places in Zurich was the Café Odeon, where Dadaists came into contact with Erich Unger, who was interested in Kabbala. Unger introduced them to Dr. Oscar Goldberg, a numerologist working on an esoteric interpretation of the Pentateuch (Webb 1974). According to Breton, the expression “dictatorship of the mind” was a Dada “key-word”. Cubism would have been a school of painters, futurism a political movement and Dada a certain state of mind (Breton 1924: 15 and 73). Considering the Dadaists’ common interests, the word Dada seems to have been borrowed from the Kabbala. According to Papus, the Hebrew character *Da* in the Kabbala stands for the active animating principle of the universe. He refers to the “dominion of Mind (the *Esprit*) over Matter” (Papus 1926: 125–128). This literally coincides with German Dadaist Richard Huelsenbeck’s words, “Dada ist der Sieg der kosmischen Vernunft über den

Demiourgos". And Hugo Ball remarked: "what we call Dada is madness from nothing, involving every single superior question" (Elger 2005: 15).

In his extensive study *Dada East*, Sandqvist reaches the same conclusion. He points out the influence of poet Alexandru Macedonski (1854–1920) who was in close contact with French symbolists. Among other things, he worked for *Symbolul*, founded in 1912, the magazine in which Tzara made his debut. Sandqvist remarks that Macedonski received his disciples at a Salon in Bukarest dressed as a Master Mason, where he would regularly quote from lectures by French author and Rosicrucian Joséphin Péladan. Sandqvist sees a clear connection between Dada and the divine and believes that everything indicates that the movement was inspired by both oriental and Christian mysticism. However, the main basis for his theory is that he points out the Romanian background of various Dada artists, from which he concludes there is a direct connection between Romanian modernists and the role of Kabbala within the Eastern European Yiddish tradition (Sandqvist 2006; Mercier 1974: 199–200).

Considering the influence of Saint-Martin's linguistic philosophy on Dada manifestations, from a semantic point of view the name of Dada seems to indicate both 'Esprit' and 'babbling'. After their publication, Dada-manifestations are generally received as being mockery, scandalous banter and resistance against the establishment. In the end, it is this form of anarchy that would also bring about the downfall of this innovative artistic trend, which is nevertheless considered as one of the great sources of inspiration for the next generation of artists. "Liberté, volonté, action", particularly action, hold a central place in Saint-Martin's doctrine (Jacques-Lefèvre 2003: 152). The names of the German Dadaist magazine *Die Aktion* and the French avant-garde magazine *Action* simultaneously appearing in France, do not seem to have been chosen haphazardly. Indeed, man is an "organ of God" to Saint-Martin, but nevertheless an "active organ, responsible for its fate". Not for nothing, was he supposed to be the author of the French Revolution motto, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' for a long time, although this turned out to be untrue. Saint-Martin was not averse to revolution, but in fact considered it to be the ultimate means for reintegration (see in particular Deschamps 1880; Mellor 1974: 158; Encausse 1949: 92–93).

Similar dialectics appear from Tzara's words in his 1918 manifesto: "True DADAS are against DADA" (Tzara 1918). Statements by Jean Paulhan (1884–1968, one of the collaborators on *Littérature*, the Dada mouthpiece) are also illustrative in this respect: "Claude de Saint-Martin observes that man would never succeed in defining an exact and penetrating view of the world, if he could only dispose of illnesses, dreams and various other types of rapture or madness" (Paulhan 1982).

## Conclusion

Returning to our point of departure, “Contemporary Art and Freemasonry”, it appears not to be too audacious to state that the slightly anarchistic characteristics inherited from Romanticism, by which the artist has been promoted to an original creator with almost divine status, are still relevant today. One of the doctrines that appear to rule the academies of art is the urge to innovate, whereby the originality of the young artists has been promoted to dogma. Without wanting to judge, it is interesting to conclude that this mantra of innovation and originality, among others, has its roots in Martinism, a form of Freemasonry inspired by Saint-Martin. In any case, against that background a lot of important art came into being, as will certainly be the case in the future, too (Beresniak 1987: 87–88).

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# Freemasonry and Architecture

*James Stevens Curl*

## Introduction

Architecture (for definitions see Curl 2006: 39–40; Papworth 1852: 90–91; Murray, Bradley, Craigie, and Onions 1933: 434–435), in its historical sense, especially Classical architecture, is central to Freemasonry: Modernist architecture, however, having no coherent language or vocabulary, and wholly divorced from the ancient techniques of working with stone, has no connection whatsoever with the Craft. James Anderson (1679–1739) explicitly identified Freemasonry as Architecture in his *Constitutions* (Anderson 1723) of 1723, and it is perhaps worth while to note just a few obvious connections made overt by allusions to the Classical Orders of Architecture and to the various instruments, implements, and tools associated with drawing (designing and planning) and constructing a building. The three basic Orders (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian), with their associations connected to strength, wisdom, and beauty, as well as to the principal officers of a masonic lodge, provide clear demonstrations of links. The working tools of an apprentice (the gavel, chisel, and gauge) are connected with carving and measuring, but they also suggest passion, energy, education, and intellectual capacity. Those of the fellow-craft (plumb-line or -rule, level, and square) are not, like those of the apprentice, associated with action, but with testing: the first is concerned with checking if a wall is vertical, the second with a piece of masonry being level, and the third with right-angles, but they are inter-connected in that the square defines the relationship between the vertical and the horizontal. In masonic terms, the vertical has associations with licence and the horizontal with restraint, so the square defines how the vertical and horizontal are joined in a manner that would be sound construction in a building made of stone. Thus these implements are representative of morality. The tools of a master-mason are the pencil, the skirret, and the compasses, and so are connected with design, and therefore with the creation of works of architecture in its earliest stages. The pencil enables a drawing to be produced, so suggests the creativity of the architect; the string on a reel (the skirret) enables a straight line to be drawn, so restrains and acts as a guide for the pencil, alluding therefore to the control of creativity, constructively channelling it towards some satisfactory end. The compasses repeat dimensions, set out circles and arcs, and enable

identical lengths to be set down, but they also balance the other two tools. Thus the symbolism of practical implements or tools is of immense significance in Freemasonry, not only in terms of meaning, but as teaching-aids and in initiation-rituals of the various grades in Craft Masonry.

Of course these tools and instruments were connected with traditional methods of draughtsmanship, and specifically with the design of *stone* buildings. So, with the increasing reliance on computers, engineers, and methods of construction that are far removed from the ancient craft of stonemasonry, these symbolic links are not only very much weaker, but have been virtually sundered (they make no sense whatsoever in relation to the contemporary fad of Deconstructivism, for example), doubtless giving heart to those who ignore them or pretend they never existed. In a review of Knoop and Jones's *An Introduction to Freemasonry* [1937] in November issue of *The Economic History Review*, the fact that the Craft had spawned a vast range of decidedly unscholarly and fanciful speculations, thereby creating problems for genuine historians (who tended, therefore, either to steer well clear of it or be unaware of its importance [Stevenson 1988: xii]), was pointed out in no uncertain terms (Saltmarsh 1937: 102–104). The sundering of architecture from building techniques using stone and the rejection of the Classical language of architecture have complicated matters further, making the task of the scholar even more difficult. And when Deconstructivism (Salingaros 2004) abolished the right-angle, the horizontal, and the vertical, the whole meanings of the level, plumb-line, and square were lost, leaving an entire tradition marooned, on course thereafter to drift into realms of forgotten and lost meanings.

### Geometry and Architecture

It was not possible to design or to construct elaborate stone buildings which can be described as Architecture without knowledge of geometry and familiarity with the instruments of the draughtsman-architect and the tools of the stonemason. Architecture *is* (or, until the *tabula rasa* demanded by Modernism, historically *was*) concerned with the creation of Order out of Chaos, a respect for organisation, the manipulation of geometry, and the creation of work in which aesthetics plays a far greater rôle than anything likely to be found in a mere building. And Order out of Chaos, geometry, and the instruments and tools associated with the conception and realisation of sound, beautiful, works of Architecture are all profoundly connected with Freemasonry and with the teachings of the Craft.

The Roman author Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (*fl.* late first century BC) left the only substantial treatise on Architecture to survive from Antiquity, and from 1414, when Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) publicised the existence of the fine manuscript in the library of the Abbey of St-Gallen, Switzerland, *De Architectura* began to be taken very seriously, and was the basis for the important book (published complete in 1486) (Alberti 1486) by Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472). From Vitruvius came the insistence that Architecture derives from Order, Arrangement, Eurythmy (that is, harmony of proportion, which of course has geometrical and mathematical aspects), Symmetry, Propriety, and Economy. Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639), whose *The Elements of Architecture* (1624) (Wotton 1624) was indebted to both Alberti and Vitruvius, famously identified the “Three Conditions” for “Well Building” as “Commodity, Firmness, and Delight”,<sup>1</sup> and Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723) spoke of “Beauty, Firmness, and Convenience”<sup>2</sup> in Architecture, which have resonances with the Strength and Beauty of Freemasonry. These definitions suggest that there is much built fabric that must be regarded as non-Architecture. True Architecture might be described as the art and science of designing a building having qualities of beauty, coherent geometry, emotional and spiritual power, intellectual content and complexity, soundness of construction, convenient planning, many virtues of different kinds, durable and pleasing materials, agreeable colouring and decorations, serenity and dynamism, good proportions and acceptable scale, and many mnemonic associations drawing on a great range of honourable precedents. Real Architecture, in short, has *meaning*. Masonic writers have stressed the importance of Architecture to the Craft: Albert G. Mackey stated that “something more than a superficial knowledge” of the principles of Architecture “is absolutely essential to the Mason who would either

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1 Which come from *Firmitatis, Utilitatis, Venustatis* in Vitruvius's *Ten Books on Architecture*, I, Chapter 3, 2.

2 *Tracts of Architecture I* in the *Appendix to Parentalia. The Wren Society*, Volume 19, 1942, 126–139. See Soo (1998: 153), which cites *Parentalia* in the 1750 edition, pt. 2, appendix 351–368, and manuscript versions such as Royal Society MS/249 fols. 475v–501v. In addition to the Royal Society MS/249, the Society also holds the 1750 edition of *Parentalia* and the 1965 facsimile of the Royal Institute of British Architects 'heirloom copy' (an insert to which, printed in the facsimile, lists Wren's *actorum*, and, under 1700, states *Dissertationes. De Architectura* with a note stating *vide Parentalia: vel Wrennarum Commentaria P351,362, 354*: these page-references correspond with the papers as they appear in *Parentalia*, so it would appear that the original date of Tract I is 1700). I am obliged to Nichola Court, Archivist (Modern Records) of the Royal Society Library and Information Services, and Lucas Elkin, Deputy Head, Reference Department, Cambridge University Library, for help with these matters, from which it seems Wren's *Tract* dates from after May 18, 1691, when he was initiated as a Freemason.

understand the former history of the institution or appreciate its present objects” (Mackey 1883: 24). Mackey also succinctly observed that as “Geometry is the science” on which Masonry “is founded”, Architecture “is the art from which it borrows the language of its symbolic construction” (Mackey 1883: 24). Quite so, and it is instructive to study various works of Architecture which allude in some way or ways to the Craft. For the purposes of this chapter we will ignore those buildings in which a ‘masonic’ aspect may be no more than a representation of a symbol on some part of the structure, but will concentrate on the more subtle aspects that suggest a masonic thread.

Many masonic authors have or have had a proprietorial attitude to the Craft, and deeply resent investigations by Cowans, believing that such probers will not understand Freemasonry and be hostile to it. It is true that some biased commentators have been responsible for sowing suspicions about the Craft, and this has unquestionably created a reaction within, and a closing of ranks among, Freemasons. The most vociferous critics have included those of totalitarian Leftist political persuasion (following precedents set by the National Socialist German Workers’ Party and the Stalinist régimes in the former Soviet Union); the Roman Catholic Church (notably in Ireland, but in other countries as well [not least in France], where there has been vile talk of ‘Judæo-Masonry’ among anti-Semites of many kinds); assortments of fantasists, conspiracy-theorists, and paranoiacs; and the more fanatical elements within other religions, all backed by entrenched positions protected by bastions of invincible ignorance. Freemasons themselves have often been guilty of claiming for the Craft an antiquity that does not stand up to scrutiny, and an importance in the shaping of great events for which there are only chimaerical tales and vaporous musings to give them dubious credence. Then there have been the attitudes and beliefs of conventional academic historians, many of whom disapprove of the Craft and feel the best way of dealing with what they regard as a dodgy subject is to ignore it altogether: this in itself is a disreputable, shameful stance, for if historians only bothered to investigate matters of which they approved, history would be hopelessly distorted (for a measured review of anti-Masonic and anti-Semitic matters see Gilbert 2006: 75–92; for a sample volume containing much misinformation and more than a stench of Irish religious bigotry see, for example, Cahill 1929).

### **The Case of Soane**

To give but one example of a curious reluctance to even mention Freemasonry, Sir John Soane (1753–1837), who was not only a convinced Freemason (from

1813), designing the Council Chamber, Freemasons' Hall, London (1828–1831—destroyed 1863), and the Ark of the Masonic Covenant (1813–1814—a triangular structure with a Classical column at each point of the triangle, one Doric [strength], one Ionic [wisdom], and one Corinthian [beauty]—Plate 30.1),



PLATE 30.1 *Design for the Ark of the Masonic Covenant by Soane, drawn (1813–1814) in pen with coloured washes by George Allen Underwood (1792–1829), who worked in Soane's office 1807–1815. It features the three basic Orders of Architecture (By Courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, London, SM 14/4/6).*

but even had his portrait painted (1828) by John Jackson, RA (1778–1831), which shows Soane wearing his masonic regalia as Grand Superintendent of the Works (a post he held until his death) (Taylor 1982: 194–202; Curl 2011: xxv, 125–130). Yet very few conventional historians have even mentioned Soane's masonic affiliations, despite the fact that the portrait hangs in Sir John Soane's Museum, London (Soane Museum P142). It is particularly odd that Sir John Newenham Summerson (1904–1992), who was Curator of the Museum for many years, avoided any references to Freemasonry at all when writing about Soane (whom he clearly found unsympathetic). This is even more strange in the context of an important paper (Summerson 1978: 147–155) Summerson published on Soane and Death (a subject central to an understanding of Soane and the Craft), in which he never once alluded to Masonry. Others give the impression of being embarrassed by the merest whiff of the Craft, and seem to regard the entire matter as unworthy of their attentions.

Apart from the Ark (which bore no resemblance whatsoever to the Biblical Ark, a portable object made of shittim wood [acacia]), Soane prepared other designs in which his favourite sarcophagus-lid motif played no small part. The first was his design for the Council Chamber, mentioned above (Plate 30.2). The elements of the walls were articulated by means of pilaster-strips, and those portions of the walls containing windows and fireplaces were linked to the opposite wall by broad segmental arches between which were coffered



PLATE 30.2 *Perspective view of the Council Chamber, Freemasons' Hall, by night, drawn by J.M Gandy, 1831. Pen and watercolour (By Courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, London, SM P268).*

vaults. Segmental arches were associated with Isiac temples: they do not occur in Classical design until the first century AD (when the Egyptian deities were absorbed into the Roman Empire), and appear as segmental pediments on aedicules connected with the great *Isaeum Campense* in Rome itself (for a detailed discussion with illustrations of this phenomenon, see Curl 2005: 31–39). As with other interiors by Soane, the vaulted ceiling was a singularly important feature of the entire scheme: the segmental vault sprang not from solid supports, but from the heads of the windows, so the architect challenged what might be described as structural propriety. And it was not only this that was strange and original, for in the centre of the ceiling floated a shallow dome-like canopy, apparently unsupported, pierced in its centre by a lantern from which illumination poured in through coloured glass. Glazing in the four clerestorey windows was painted with representations of the Five Orders of Classical Architecture (Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite).<sup>3</sup> This shallow floating canopy form is really based on the lid of a sarcophagus or ash-chest for calcined human remains, one of Soane's almost obsessively employed motifs, and contributed to an extraordinary interior of truly remarkable intensity,

probably a more complete physical expression of Masonic metaphor than anything achieved by Soane's contemporaries. Responding warmly to the Masonic love of ceremony and fraternal affection, he felt at home in the world of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment as expressed in the ideals of continental Freemasonry.

WATKIN 1999: 264

The destruction of this marvellous room in 1863 was a major loss. Fortunately, two pen-and-watercolour perspective views of the interior by Joseph Michael Gandy (1771–1843) survive in Sir John Soane's Museum, one (1831) showing the room at night (Soane Museum P268), and the other (1828) by day (Soane Museum P89).

The 'sarcophagus-lid' motif also recurs on the tomb (Plate 30.3) Soane erected (1816) in the overspill burial-ground of St Giles-in-the-Fields, adjacent to Old St Pancras churchyard, London (now St Pancras Gardens) (Stroud 1984: 102–103, 108, 114, 207, 275; and Summerson 1975: 51–54). This in many ways is

3 There are actually eight (not three or five) basic Classical Orders: Tuscan, Roman Doric, Greek Doric, Roman Ionic, Greek Ionic, Roman Corinthian, Greek Corinthian, and Composite. In addition, however, there are many other variations of these essential eight, as any study of the collections in the Pergamon Museum, Berlin, for example, will prove. See Curl (2003).





PLATE 30.3 *Soane's tomb in the burial-ground of St Giles-in-the-Fields (now St Pancras Gardens), London (James Stevens Curl).*

one of his most intriguing designs. The die on which the inscriptions are cut is one block of stone, protected by a cap, square on plan, with triangular pediments terminating in scrolls on all four sides supported at each corner by Ionic columns. This altar-like element (suggesting a double cube) is in turn protected by a larger canopy carried on four square columns with primitivist incised capitals (suggestive of the proto-Ionic types found at Larissa or Neandria known as Æolic) and panelled shafts: these support a massive block with segmental pediments on all four sides, so the cap looks like a sarcophagus-lid, on top of which is a drum around which is a serpent, an unusual type of *ouroboros*,<sup>4</sup> and over the drum is a pine-cone finial.<sup>5</sup> But around all four of the segmental faces of the capstone are incised wavy lines, suggesting the strand of rope symbolising kindness, courtesy, and free-will, that link all hearts in unity, and which is found on many eighteenth-century representations of lodges, notably in the so-called French 'exposures' (see Plate 30.4) (see, for example, Gabriel-Louis Calabre-Péreau, *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi et Le Secret des Mopses révélé* [1745]).

### The Lost Temple

So there are certainly aspects of Soane's work that can be seen as specifically connected with Freemasonry and with a sober contemplation of Death,<sup>6</sup> but other architects influenced by ideas promoted by the Craft also responded in differing ways: in a chapter such as this, one can only skim the surface, but there is no doubt that Freemasonry was the catalyst for much that emerged in eighteenth-century Architecture. Central to masonic lore is the sense of loss, and no loss is more poignant than that of the Temple in Jerusalem, originally erected by Solomon, restored or rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and again rebuilt under Herod. The need to rebuild the Temple as a metaphor of perfection, in hearts and minds, has been central to the aspirations of the Craft. Tantalisingly, though, architectural descriptions are notoriously difficult to decipher, and those we have, in the Bible, are infuriatingly vague: true, there are dimensions given in Cubits, so we have some idea of the essential sizes of main elements, but when we come to 'pillars', 'lily-work chapiters', and other matters, we face difficulties. A pillar (for architectural definitions see Curl

4 Eternal Recurrence, Infinity, the Descent of the Spirit into the Physical World and its Return. A Symbol of Changing Matter.

5 Fertility, related to the Tree of Life: from such a small object grows a vast tree.

6 A subject which also gave thought to W.A. Mozart, as a perusal of his letters demonstrates.



2006) is a free-standing unadorned *pila* or pier, monolithic or composed of many stones, usually on a rectangular or square plan, with no allusions to the Orders of Architecture, so it is incorrect to call an object such as the triumphal column of Trajan in Rome, or the monument celebrating Lord Nelson in London's Trafalgar Square, a *pillar*: both are *columns*, both have Classical bases, and both have capitals; the Antique version is in essence a version of the Tuscan Order, but with a shaft enlivened with sculpture arranged in a spiral the entire height of the shaft; and the Nelson Monument of 1839–1843 (designed by William Railton [c.1801–1877]) is of the Corinthian Order with a fluted shaft. Now references to 'pillars' in the Biblical accounts may suggest two large free-standing columns with some sort of exotic capitals standing in front of and flanking the entrance to the Temple. These have their parallels in the twin obelisks that flanked the entrances to Ancient Egyptian temples (and, it seems, sundry pagan temples the remains of which have been found in the Middle East). In the case of the Jerusalem Temple, however, interpretations have varied: the Jachin and Boaz 'pillars' (which probably meant columns with some sort of ornate capitals) have been shown as free-standing uprights or as columns *in antis* (that is, two columns set between flanking walls to form part of a porch). So, in masonic iconography, we have two columns, the three Orders of Architecture associated with strength, wisdom, and beauty (and with the three Craft degrees), the chequered pavement (sometimes called Mosaic), and other elements that are associated with the idea of the lost Temple. When we see two columns *in antis* associated with masonic buildings, this would seem to be an attempt to suggest Jachin and Boaz as mnemonics of the Temple, but they also appear in a subtle way to demonstrate (without shouting about it) a rebuilding of the Temple, somewhere in which masonic work can proceed, with each tool of the architect and stonemason acquiring moral, educational, exemplary, and mnemonic resonances.

There have been numerous (and improbable) attempts to show what the Temple of Solomon looked like (see Curl 2011: 71–96), and, by a curious process of association, despite Biblical descriptions, the Temple became circular in the minds of many, a fact connected with the Islamic Dome of the Rock which many thought actually *was* part of the Temple. The appearance of circular or polygonal buildings in numerous Renaissance paintings, and the evolution of temples that looked like smaller versions of the Roman Pantheon in masonic iconography (with porticoes applied to the drum of the building proper—Plate 30.4) must have come from somewhere, and the most likely source is the Dome of the Rock or descriptions of it. Through images both the Islamic Dome and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre began to become merged in the collective imagination, and so the Temple itself became Pantheon-like, even acquiring

columns with spiral or twisted ‘barley-sugar’ shafts standing before it or appearing *in antis* as part of the portico (Plate 30.5). The twisted columns, of course, were associated with the tomb of the Apostle Peter in Rome, and were said to have come from Jerusalem, though that is disputed, so they acquired especial meaning. How else does one explain an extraordinary building such as the Karlskirche, Vienna, with its great portico, elliptical domed central space, and wide front with twin spiral columns standing before it? Designed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723), and built from 1715, it suggests Roman (and Imperial) Antiquity, the Pillars of Hercules leading out of the Mediterranean (and therefore the gateway to the Habsburg territories in the New World), and the deeds of St Charles Borromeo (1538–1584—as inscribed on the spirals of the columns [which, in turn, suggest the triumphal columns of Trajan and others, and also the ‘Solomonic’ columns associated with the Apostle’s tomb in Rome]) (Plates 30.6–30.7). It is a complex business. Fischer, of course, also produced his extraordinary *Entwurf einer historischen*



PLATE 30.5 *The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, engraved by Philip Galle (1537–1612) after a drawing by Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574); it should be noted that not only are there twin columns standing in front of the Temple (which is of the circular type, contrary to all Biblical evidence), but there are twisted barley-sugar ‘Solomonic’ columns in antis at the entrance to the porch. This is an example of Renaissance syncretism (Collection James Stevens Curl).*

*Architektur* (1721), which included a reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon, so there were indeed all sorts of connections.

Such convoluted cross-references are alien to the present day, for which emblems, complex iconographies, and associations pose great problems. Nevertheless, in the course of the eighteenth century, there were many instances in that supposed Age of Reason when very curious buildings were designed, not least those clearly intended for esoteric purposes. Taking the work of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806), for example, his utopian town of Chauv (which means 'lime', the main ingredient of mortar, the agency by which stone is securely joined together, and therefore a metaphor connected with the binding together of the Brethren of Freemasonry), was to have had several 'temples' set in gardens employing stereometrically pure geometries and a stripped Neo-Classical style, each for a particular purpose: there was a *Pacifère* in which mediation was to replace punishment; a *Panarèthéon* (School of Morals), in which the Duties of Citizens were taught, and Degrees of Perfection were to be earned, like the grades of Freemasonry (Plate 30.8); a Temple of Memory (to

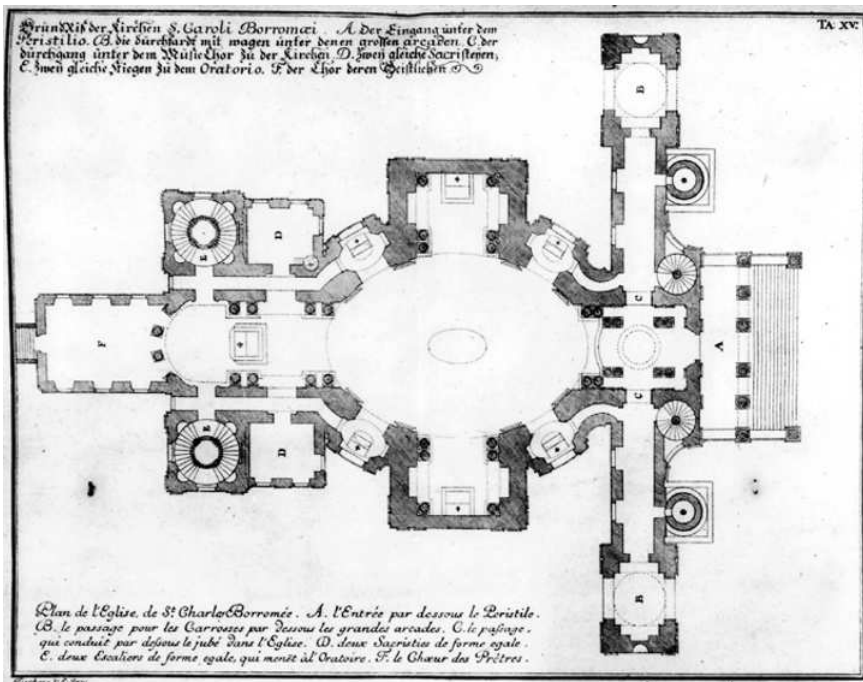


PLATE 30.6 *Plan of the Karlskirche, Vienna, by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach. Plate 15 from his Entwurf of 1725. Note the elliptical space, the prostyle portico, and the twin columns flanking the portico attached to the very wide front (Collection James Stevens Curl).*



PLATE 30.7 Elevation of the Karlskirche, Vienna, by Fischer von Erlach. Plate 12 from his Entwurf of 1725. Note the twin spiral columns flanking the Antique Roman portico (Collection James Stevens Curl).

serve as the Lodge of Adoption for women), which encapsulated memories of childhood yet taught the inevitability of death, and had four banded columns, one at each corner,<sup>7</sup> the sculpture tracing the virtues of women (Plate 30.9); and an *Oikéma*, or public brothel, a workshop of corruption intended, by the promotion of vice, to lead individuals to paths of virtue through revulsion and disgust (Plate 30.10). These remarkable *fabriques* were exemplary, associated with ideas of rational Deist religion freed from superstition, and clearly had more than a flavour of masonic ideals within their enthralling, pure forms (Ledoux 1804; see Ramée 1847; Vidler 1976: 76–97; and Vidler 1990).

If some of Ledoux's designs were startling, the *esquisses* of Jean-Jacques Lequeu (1757–1825) were even odder. He produced an extraordinary drawing of a lodge, which he unaccountably called a 'Gothic House' (possibly because of the connotations Gothic had acquired in England), illustrating a route along

7 Reminiscent of the triumphal column of Trajan.

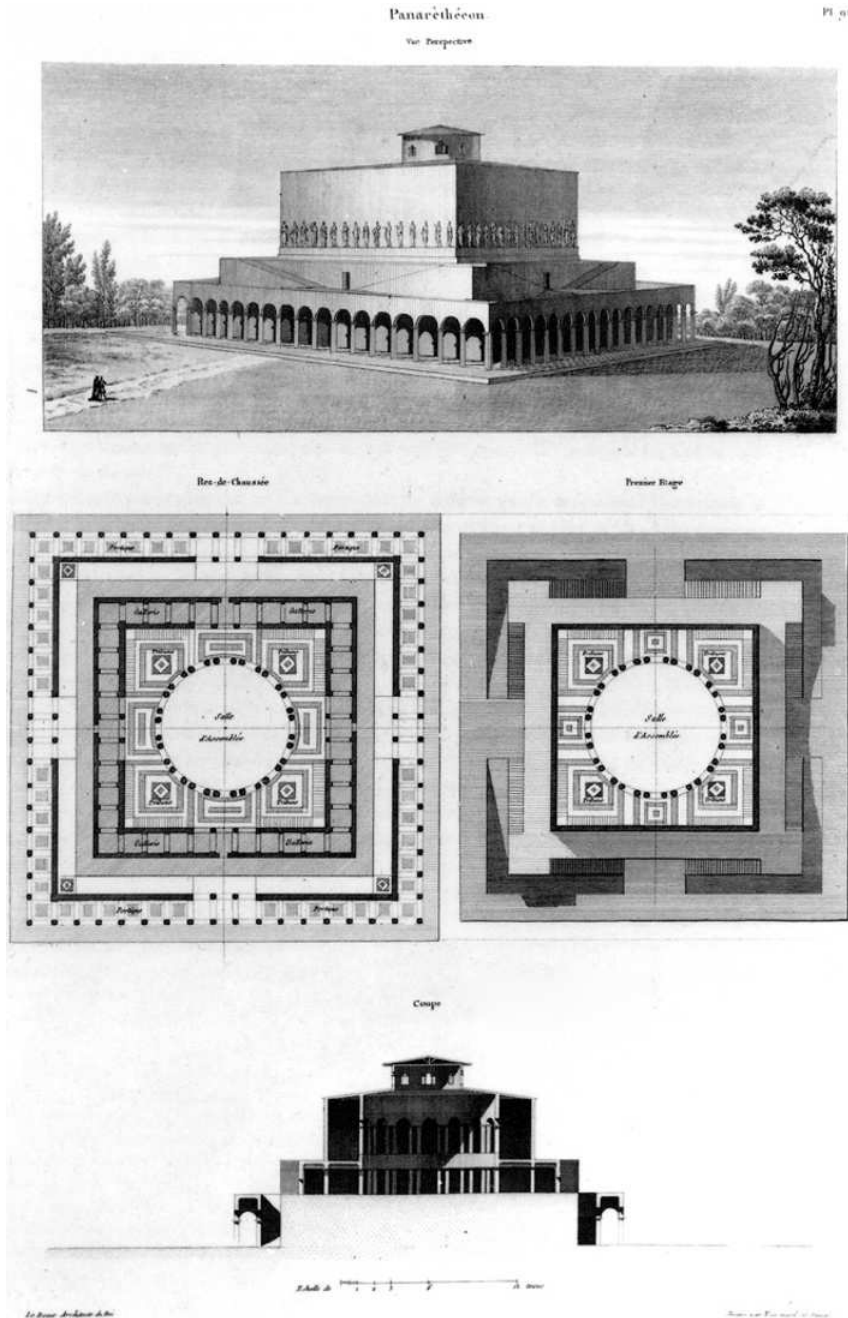


PLATE 30.8 Panaréthéon or Temple of Virtue and School of Morals by Ledoux. From James Stevens Curl, *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry*. London (Batsford) 1991 174 (Collection James Stevens Curl).



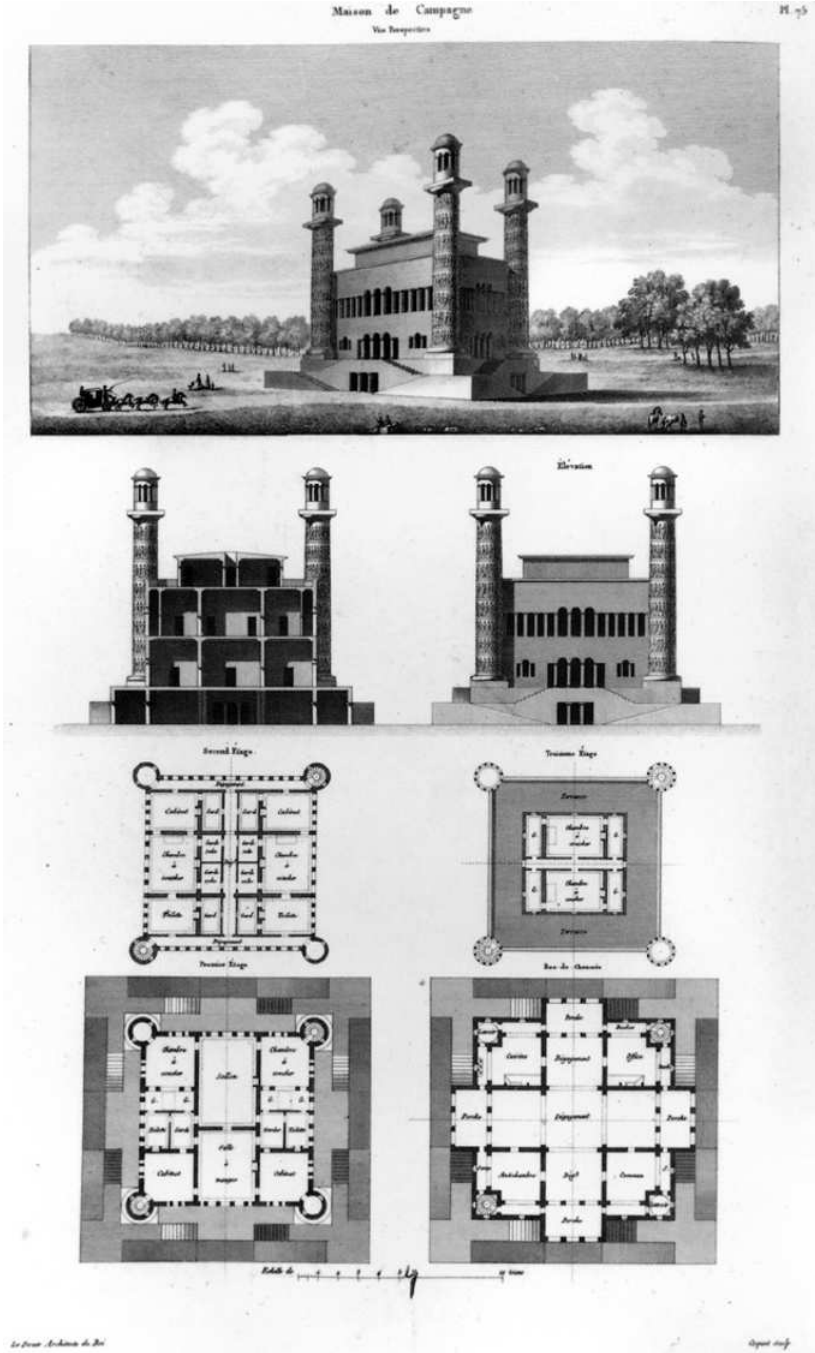


PLATE 30.9 *Temple of Memory by Ledoux from Curl, Freemasonry. 1991 175 (Collection James Stevens Curl).*

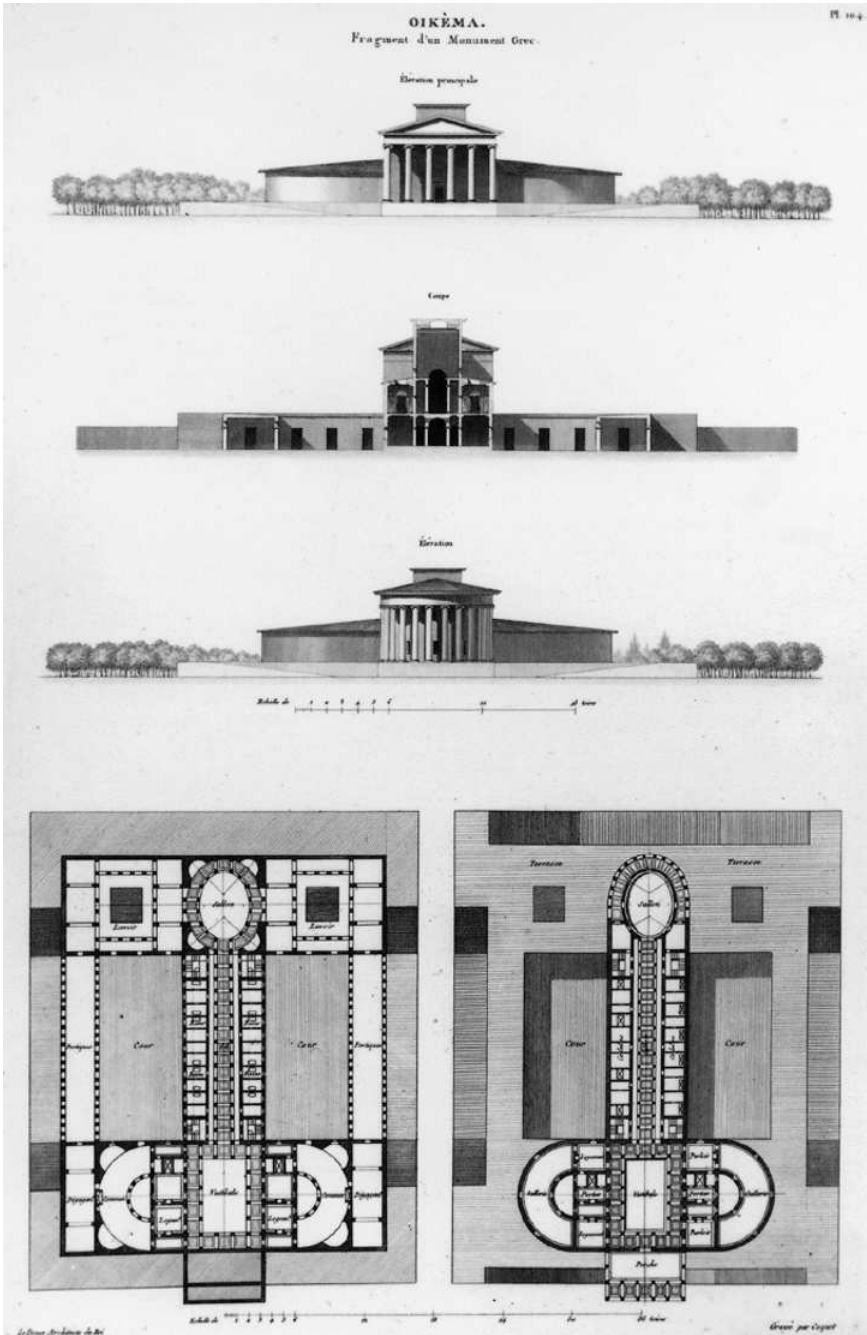


PLATE 30.10 Oikéma or Temple of Sexual Instruction by Ledoux from Curl, Freemasonry. 1991 173 (Collection James Stevens Curl).

an axis in which stages of initiation could take place: these stages were the trials by fire, water, earth, and air, and ended in a room presided over by Isis, in which the candidate was faced with the cups of memory and forgetfulness. This route of trials clearly derived from the Abbé Jean Terrasson's prolix novel, *Séthos* (1731), a work which rapidly became identified with 'Egyptian Mysteries', and informed numerous other publications, including *La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable Origine, ou l'Antiquité de la Franche-Maçonnerie prouvée par l'explication des mystères anciens et modernes* by Alexandre-Marie Lenoir (1761–1839) published in 1814 (Plate 30.11). Lequeu's designs for *fabriques* suggest an obsession with esoteric matters, knowledge of aspects of Freemasonry (in its French guises), and the unreasoning of Reason to an extreme degree (Duboy 1986; Lenoir 1814).<sup>8</sup>

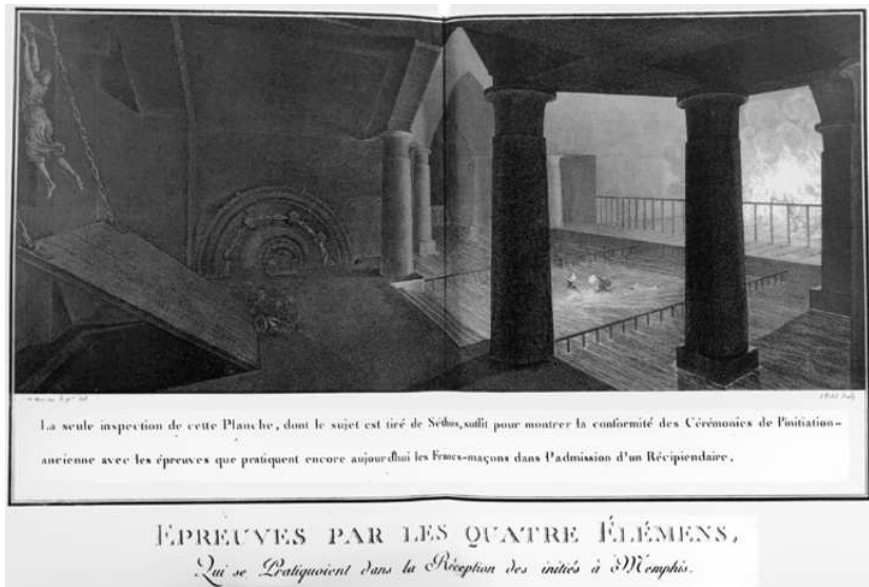


PLATE 30.11 *Trials by fire, water, earth, and air (Quatre Éléments) for the reception of initiates in Memphis. Plate from Alexandre-Marie Lenoir, La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable Origine, ou l'Antiquité de la Franche-Maçonnerie prouvée par l'explication des mystères anciens et modernes. Paris (Fournier, etc.) 1814, showing ceremonies as described in the novel Séthos by Terrasson (Collection James Stevens Curl).*

8 See also Lequeu's "Architecture Civile" drawings in the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Lequeu's "Gothic House" is illustrated in Curl (1991: 157–158 and Colour Plate IX).

### Buildings in Gardens

Now *fabriques* in gardens could actually have messages and meanings: they were often there for a purpose, to trigger memories and associations, and promote thought. The idea of a route, a way to be followed by the visitor to a garden, in order to obtain stimulation of ideas and to make visual and intellectual connections, is a very ancient technique associated with the Art of Memory, something closely connected with the history of Freemasonry. Ledoux's *fabriques*, on his own admission, were intended as agents for the improvement of Man, and had a moral and didactic purpose. We also find exhortations over the entrance to the labyrinth in the *Gartenreich* (a beautiful creation, an England-by-the-Elbe, redolent with meaning, allusion, and sensibility) at Wörlitz, near Dessau, telling the Wanderer to choose his way with Reason (see McIntosh 2005: 92, 96–102, 105, 150). There, we also find many technical solutions to the problems of designing bridges, including a scaled-down version (Plate 30.12) of the famous Iron Bridge in Shropshire (1777–1779), designed by Thomas



PLATE 30.12 *Iron Bridge at Wörlitz modelled on the first Iron Bridge in Shropshire: it was just one of many exemplary bridges in the Gartenreich intended to show different solutions to the problems of bridge-building (James Stevens Curl).*

Farnolls Pritchard (1723–1777): Wörlitz was all about raising tone, teaching by example, and demonstrating a rejection of bigotry. One could hardly get anything more akin to the tenets of Freemasonry than that.

At Arkadia, in Poland, another garden with *fabriques* was created by an aristocratic female connected with a Lodge of Adoption: the garden points to lost freedom (Poland's subjugation and disappearance as an independent political entity), to distant visions of perfection seen from ruins (Plate 30.13), to tombs on islands, and to other matters associated with loss, death, and keeping memories alive (Curl 1995: 91–112). It might be helpful to those who dismiss the possibility that there could be any connection between Freemasonry and gardens if they should start by perusing certain not-exactly-unknown masonic texts: William Preston (1742–1818), for example, states near the beginning of his seminal work that were

a man placed in a beautiful garden, would not his mind be affected with exquisite delight on a calm survey of its rich collections? Would not the groves, the grottoes, the artful wilds, the flowery parterres, the opening vistas, the lofty cascades, the winding streams, the whole variegated scene, awaken his sensibility, and inspire his soul with the most exalted ideas? When he observed the delicate order, the nice symmetry, and



PLATE 30.13 *Temple of Diana framed by the 'ruined' 'Greek' Arch at Arkadia (Collection James Stevens Curl).*

beautiful disposition of every part, seemingly complete in itself, yet reflecting new beauties on the other, and all contributing to make one perfect whole, would not his mind be agitated with the most bewitching sensations; and would not the view of the delightful scene naturally lead him to admire and venerate the happy genius who contrived it?.

PRESTON 1792[1772]: 1–2

There are also numerous other gardens in which the *fabriques* are there for a *purpose*: at Stowe, Buckinghamshire, for example, the Gothic Temple of Liberty (1741–1744) by James Gibbs (1682–1754) promoted the idea of English Freedoms<sup>9</sup> compared with Continental Absolutism; at Edge Hill the Gothic machicolated tower (1745–1748) by Sanderson Miller (1716–1780) stands high above the first battlefield of the English Civil War, and invites us to contemplate the making and unmaking of kings, but it takes no sides (Plate 30.14) (Curl 2007, Ch. I); and at Schwetzingen in Germany the ‘ruined’ Temple of Mercury (on an equilateral triangular plan) is connected with Hermes Trismegistus, supposedly the inventor of hieroglyphs, the Messenger, associated with St John (the One who went Before), and has an upper winding stair (itself masonic) of thirty-three steps (a significant number in Freemasonry). From this ‘ruin’ (Plate 30.15) is a view over the lake to the vision of perfection, the so-called ‘Mosque’, a domed structure with two minaret-like elements before its façade recalling the composition of the Karlskirche to mind, and therefore, in its exotic garb, alluding to the Temple of Solomon and Jachin and Boaz (Plate 30.16) (Förderer 2006).<sup>10</sup> The masonic aspect is made overt by the blazing star in the centre of the façade of the ‘Mosque’. The landscape designer for this part of the garden (1777–85) was Friedrich Ludwig Sckell (1750–1823), and the *fabriques* were designed by Nicolas de Pigage (1723–1796). There are many other *fabriques* in this magical garden, many of which would seem to have agendas other than providing mere lightweight amusements for the visitors to the Court of the Prince-Elector Carl Theodor (1743–1799) (for some of these Gardens of Allusion see Curl 1994: 92–118; Curl 1995: 91–112; Curl 1997: 325–342; Curl 2004: 83–126; and Curl 2011: 175–245, for esoteric aspects see Snoek, Scholl, and Kroon 2006; for Carl Theodor see Wiczorek, Probst, and Koenig 1999).

9 Exemptions from arbitrary, despotic, or autocratic control: civil liberty, derived from a people's being governed by laws made with their own consent, evolved from the various Settlements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (notably 12 and 13 Will.III c.2), by which liberties were asserted in the Act of Settlement whereby the Crown passed to the House of Hanover and the monarch reigned by the consent of Parliament.

10 I am indebted to Herr Dr Förderer for his kindness in providing images and other material.

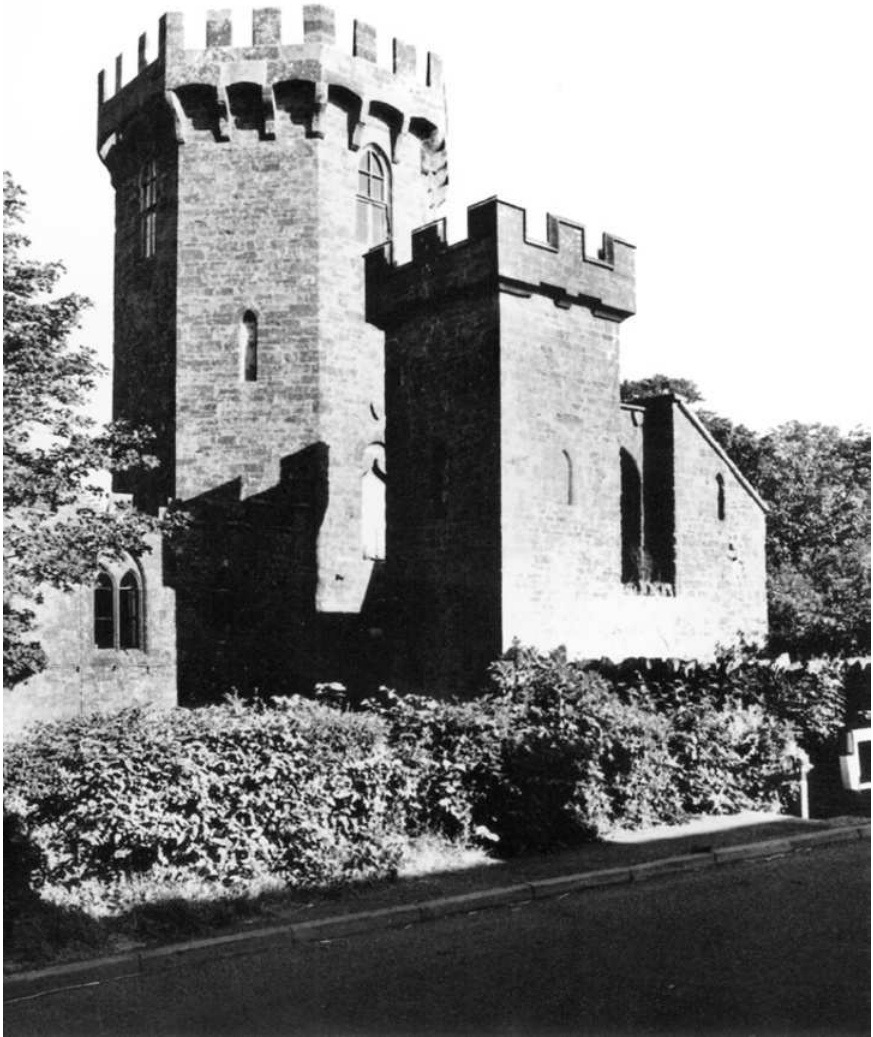


PLATE 30.14 *Tower at Edge Hill, Warwickshire (James Stevens Curl).*

### Architecture and the Craft

The Five Orders of Roman Architecture seem to have become extremely significant in British Freemasonry during the eighteenth century, as is borne out by the importance given to them by Preston (Preston 1792, Section IV). They appear in the famous frontispiece (Plate 30.17) by John Pine (1690–1756) in *The*



PLATE 30.15 *'Ruined' Temple of Mercury at Schwetzingen (Bernd Hausner RPS/LAD).*



PLATE 30.16 *'Mosque' at Schwetzingen (Andreas Förderer).*



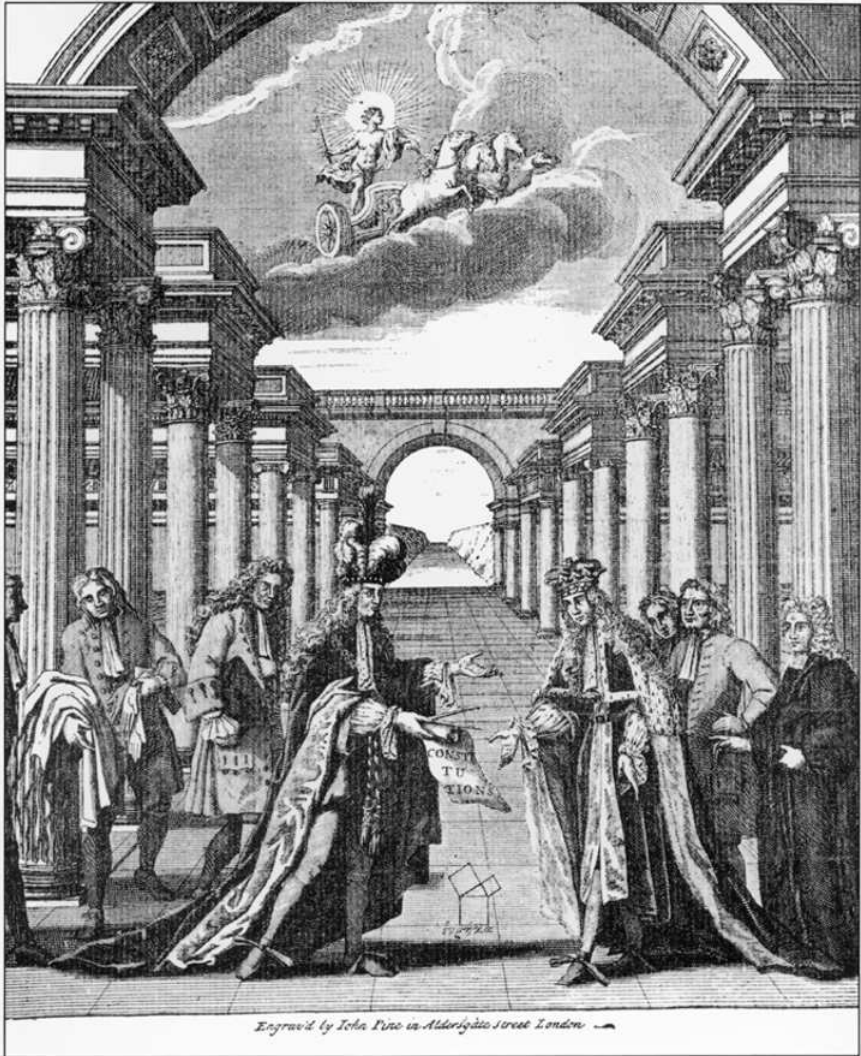


PLATE 30.17 *Frontispiece to Anderson's Constitutions (1723) showing Five Roman Orders of Architecture and the Proof of Euclid's 47th proposition (United Grand Lodge of England).*

*Constitutions of Freemasonry (1723)*, and recur in printed summonses, certificates, and the like (Plate 30.18). When we consider Architecture, however, matters become somewhat tricky, because although masonic symbols may be used on buildings, purpose-built lodges did not often advertise what they were. One of the most important masonic buildings of the eighteenth century was the hall designed by Thomas Sandby (1721–1798, a Freemason himself) for the Grand



PLATE 30.18 *Summons to attend the duties of the West India & American Lodge of the Most Ancient & Honourable Society of Free & Accepted Masons at the Queen's Arms Tavern in St Paul's Churchyard, London, 1760. Note the Three Orders of Architecture. On the left are the three theological Virtues (Charity [with putti], Hope [with anchor], and Faith [with book]), and on the right are Fortitude and Wisdom as Minerva, Strength as Hercules, and Beauty as Venus (with putto). The Motto Fidelitas Moribus Unita (referring to fidelity, morals or customs, and unity) is associated with the Phoenix, and therefore with the Art of Memory. Design by Thomas Marriott Perkins, engraved by W. Tringham of Castle Alley, Royal Exchange (fl. 1764–94) (Guildhall Library, Corporation of London).*

Lodge of England in what is now Great Queen Street, London. Prior to the realisation (1775–1776) of Sandby’s design, Grand Lodge had met in Livery Company halls, inns, taverns, and similar venues. The new hall, however, with its Order of robust Roman Doric, lavish entablature, elegant lunettes, and elaborate ceiling (Plate 30.19), did not have much about it that suggested the Craft, apart from emblems in the metopes of the Doric frieze and the golden sun with signs of the Zodiac on the ceiling. Sandby’s building was situated behind the Freemasons’ Tavern, which again had nothing ‘masonic’ about it except for the inn-sign, which featured the Arms of the Freemasons including the Motto *Vide, Audi, Tace*.<sup>11</sup> There exists an extraordinary illustration of Sandby’s hall by Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727–1785), engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi (1727–1815) and James Fittler (1758–1835), which shows various allegorical figures in attendance (Plate 30.20): in Cipriani’s vision, where the reality of the Architecture



PLATE 30.19 *Freemasons’ Hall, London, by Thomas Sandby, in 1900 (Reproduced by permission of English Heritage. NMR BB71/4486).*

11 It became *Audi, Vide, Tace* (from *Audi, Vide, Tace, si vis vivere in pace* [use your ears and eyes, but hold your tongue if you would live in peace]).

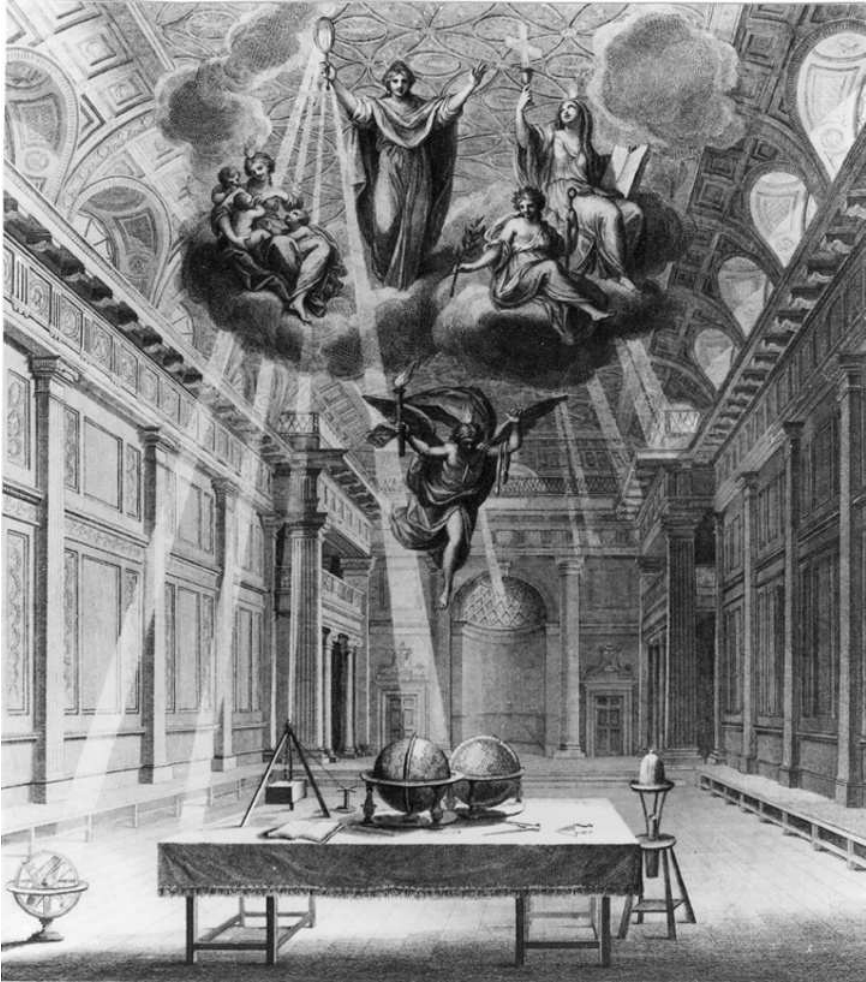


PLATE 30.20 *Allegorical print showing Freemasons' Hall, London, with Truth with her mirror reflecting its rays on diverse elements including the globe, an orrery, an air-pump, and a tripod supporting an ashlar carried using a lewis. Truth is attended by the three theological Virtues (Charity, Hope, and Faith), while the Genius of Freemasonry is descending into the hall (Collection James Stevens Curl).*

is intermingled with masonic allusions, two globes are set on a table with compasses, a trowel, and other paraphernalia, including a demonstration of the lewis, an orrery, and an air-pump (part of the period's obsessions with scientific experiments in the pursuit of knowledge). Sandby's hall survived the drastic rebuilding to designs by another Freemason, Frederick Pepys Cockerell (1833–1878), whose work (1863–1869) ensured the loss of Soane's superb

chamber. Although Cockerell's building was a showy pile, and had sculpture by William Grinsell Nicholl (1796–1871), there was very little about it that could be considered as specifically 'masonic'.

Before the catastrophe of 1914–1918 there had been talk of further expanding Freemasons' Hall as a memorial to King Edward VII (reigned 1901–1910), who had been Grand Master from 1874 until his accession to the Throne. After the war it was decided to create a new and magnificent building as the Masonic Peace Memorial, and, following a competition (1926), designs by a partnership of two Freemasons, Henry Victor Ashley (1872–1945) and Francis Winton Newman (1878–1953), were chosen: in 1933 Sandby's hall was demolished, leaving part of Cockerell's flashy façade intact, although a fragment of the central pediment of his design was left, ludicrously chopped off, after the new building was completed. Ashley and Newman's building contains the library and museum, as well as many fine rooms, many decorated with masonic emblems, but apart from a few allusions, its 'masonic' aspects are subtle. The first is the *in antis* arrangement of two columns held between solids (Plate 30.21), clearly derived from earlier images of the Temple, and the connection is emphasised in the gentlest way by the capitals which do not conform to the Classical Orders, but are abstractions: the exquisite polished *in antis* columns framing the Memorial Window and Shrine (a fine work by Walter Gilbert [1871–1946, another Freemason, whose work in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral is important], which features pairs of winged seraphim) have capitals and lower parts of the columns that clearly allude to the 'lily-work' referred to in Biblical accounts of the Solomonic Temple. But the most visible part of the building is the great tower above the ceremonial entrance (again flanked by *in antis* columns) which rises high above surrounding structures at the junction of Great Queen Street and Wild Street, terminating in a square element featuring pairs of *in antis* columns on each elevation flanking small shrine-like aedicules (Plate 30.22).

The *in antis* arrangement of two columns can again be seen in the former Masonic Hall in York Street, Bath, Somerset, erected 1817–1819 to designs by William Wilkins (1778–1839) shown in an engraving (Plate 30.23) by Henry Sargent Storer (1795–1837). The severe Greek Revival style of the building was seen at the time to be of strict masonic appearance. So why should this be so? Clearly the Greek Revival style (of which Wilkins was an early protagonist) was untainted by associations with Absolutism, or indeed with any European style connected with Absolutism, so it lent itself to the Craft, with its benevolent, liberal ethos: but there was another obvious connection, and that was the distyle *in antis* arrangement of the Ionic columns between the *antae* of the portico which suggested the columns Jachin and Boaz of Solomon's Temple in



PLATE 30.21 Architects' drawing showing part of the treatment of the façade of the Masonic Peace Memorial, London (now known as Freemasons' Hall), with its in antis columns (United Grand Lodge of England).



PLATE 30.22 *Perspective showing the Masonic Peace Memorial, London (United Grand Lodge of England).*

its Renaissance variants. It recurred in Sandby's hall, and again in many places in the present Masonic Peace Memorial. That is not to suggest that a distyle *in antis* arrangement is *always* indicative of a masonic connection, for that would not be true. However, its recurrence in buildings erected specifically for masonic purposes indicates that the Solomonic Temple as an idea could be alluded to by this subtle means, not overtly, but perhaps slyly, missing those who were uninformed.

Buildings where ceremonies of the Craft are performed are necessarily inward-looking, so that masonic halls are frequently top-lit (if illuminated by daylight at all). Any fenestration in outside walls therefore occurs where office, executive, or non-ceremonial uses are required. Both the Greek and Egyptian styles of architecture lent themselves admirably to the windowless façade, but Egyptian styles especially suggested the early history and legends of Freemasonry. One of the most overtly Egyptian of all British masonic halls, with fine architectural qualities, was erected at Mainridge, Boston, Lincolnshire, in 1860–1863 (Plate 30.24). It is of gault brick with stone dressings, again has



PLATE 30.23 *Freemasons' Hall, Bath, Somerset, by William Wilkins, again showing the in antis arrangement of columns in a Greek Revival building (United Grand Lodge of England).*

the distyle *in antis* arrangement of columns (this time with palm-capitals and tall *abaci*), and although the designer has so far not been discovered, the architect clearly knew what he was doing, and was conversant with the work of Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (1747–1827) (Denon 1802) and of the Commission des Sciences et Arts d'Égypte (Commission des Sciences et Arts d'Égypte, *Description de l'Égypte*. Paris [Imprimerie Impériale] 1809–1813 and Paris [Imprimerie Royale] 1817–1828). A connection between Freemasonry and Egyptomania was amply demonstrated in Belgium, where several rather startling exemplars were built, including the Grand Temple of the 'Amis Philanthropes Lodge' (1877–1879), rue du Persil, Brussels, by Adolphe Samyn (1842–1903), and 'Les Vrais Amis de l'Union et du Progrès Réunis', 79 Lakenstraat, Brussels (1909–1910), designed by Paul Bonduelle (1877–1955). In Paris, of course, is the celebrated *Temple du Droit Humaine*, 5 rue Jules Breton, of c.1912, a building for a mixed order, the façade of which features elongated palmiform columns, a balustrade of alternate *Ankhs* and *Djed* columns, a





PLATE 30.24 *Masonic Hall, Mainridge, Boston, Lincolnshire, of 1860–63, in the Egyptian style with two columns in antis (James Stevens Curl).*

crowning crenellation of vaguely Moorish type, and the inscription *Ordo ab Chao* over the entrance-door: the architect was Charles Nizet (1841–1925) (Plate 30.25).

Egypt also features in the Grand Royal Arch Chapter Room of Freemasons' Hall (Masonic Grand Lodge), Molesworth Street, Dublin (Plate 30.26), with painted engaged columns having reeded and foliated capitals, an Egyptianising



PLATE 30.25 Temple du Droit Humaine, 5 rue Jules Breton, Paris, by Charles Nizet (United Grand Lodge of England).



PLATE 30.26 *Grand Royal Arch Chapter Room, Freemasons' Hall, Dublin (Image reproduced by permission of The Grand Lodge of Freemasons of Ireland).*

canopy guarded by brightly coloured *couchant* sphinxes and flanked by a pair of free-standing columns (an obvious reference to Jachin and Boaz). Facing Molesworth Street, the exterior of the building is articulated over its three storeys by superimposed Orders, and in the crowning pediment is the all-seeing eye, square, and compasses set in a roundel in the centre of the tympanum (Plate 30.27). Thus the façade incorporates the three basic Classical Orders in one, symbolising the unity of the three Craft degrees: it was designed by Edward Holmes (1832–1909).

One of the saddest losses in recent years (actually 1984) has been the Masonic Temple (1900–1901), designed by Peter Lyle Barclay Henderson (1848–1912), a Freemason who practised architecture independently in Edinburgh from 1873. It was sited at 78 Queen Street in that city, was used by the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland, and was shown in a fine pencil-and-watercolour perspective by Robert Forbes Sherar (*fl.* 1880s–c.1910) of 1901 (Plate 30.28). It was a thorough exercise in Egyptianising interior-design, and, like many such masonic temples in Belgium and elsewhere, served to emphasise the connections with ‘Hermeticism’ that had been made from the eighteenth century, no matter how spurious the sources turned out to be.



PLATE 30.27 *Exterior of Freemasons' Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin, showing the superimposed Orders (Image reproduced by permission of The Grand Lodge of Freemasons of Ireland).*

Many halls for Freemasons in the twentieth century became very grand. One of the most lavish was that in the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, London, of 1911–1912, designed by the Freemason Alexander Burnett Brown (1867–1948) and his professional partner, Ernest Robert Barrow (1869–1948). It glowed with



PLATE 30.28 *Chapter Room of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland at 78 Queen Street Edinburgh, of 1901 (demolished) (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland).*

mahogany and rich green marble, was furnished with splendid Classical aedicules, and had a large sunburst on the ceiling. It was photographed by Harry Bedford Lemere (1864–1944) on completion (Plate 30.29).

Some most magnificent masonic buildings may be found in the United States of America: among them are some outstanding works of Architecture,



PLATE 30.29 *Masonic Temple in the Abercorn Rooms, Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, London, photographed by Bedford Lemere in 1912 (Guildhall Library, Corporation of London).*

including the headquarters of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, the House of the Temple in Washington, D.C., a noble essay in Greek Ionic of 1910 by that master of Classicism, John Russell Pope (1873–1937), influenced by the fourth-century BC Mausoleum at Halicarnassus (Plate 30.30). Some are vast, and vastly eclectic, such as the Romanesque extravaganza of the ‘Temple’ on the north side of Penn Square, Philadelphia, PA (1868–1873), designed by James Hamilton Windrim (1840–1919), with rich interiors in different styles (including a colourful Egyptianising hall [Plate 30.31]) designed by George Herzog (1845–1913). Mention should also be made of the twenty-two-storey Masonic Temple in Chicago, IL (1890–1892—then the tallest building in the world [destroyed]), designed by Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846–1912) and John Wellborn Root (1850–1891), and of the massive Neo-Classical George Washington National Memorial (1922–1932), designed by Frank J. Helmle (1868–1939) and Harvey Wiley Corbett (1873–1954), which stands on Shuter’s Hill, Alexandria, VA, and alludes to the lighthouse of the Egyptian Alexandria in its mighty tower featuring three storeys of superimposed Orders (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian), the whole capped by a stepped pyramidal roof (Plate 30.32).

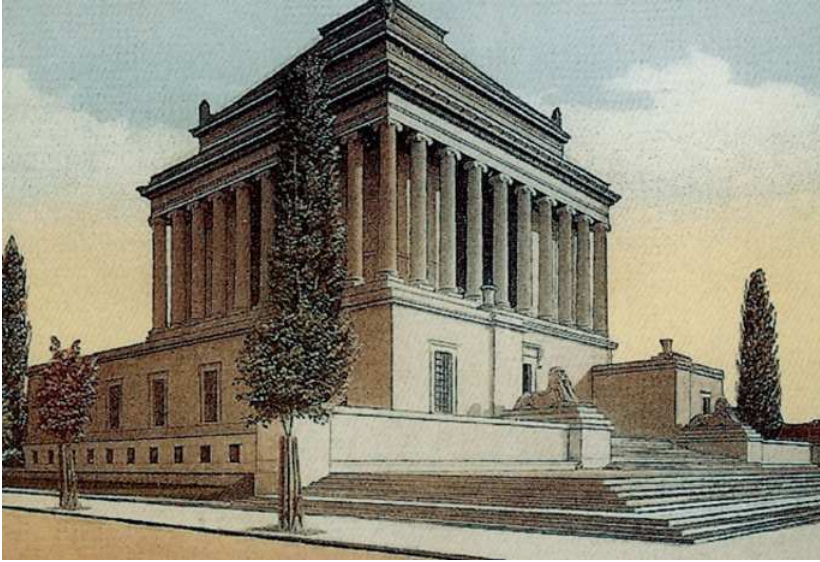


PLATE 30.30 *Headquarters of the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction, Washington, D.C., designed by Pope, a sophisticated exercise in Hellenistic Ionic, alluding to the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. (From a postcard dating from just after the building was dedicated in 1916, Collection James Stevens Curl).*



PLATE 30.31 *Egyptian Room in the Masonic Temple, Philadelphia, PA, dating from 1889, within a building begun in 1868 and completed in 1873 (Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA).*

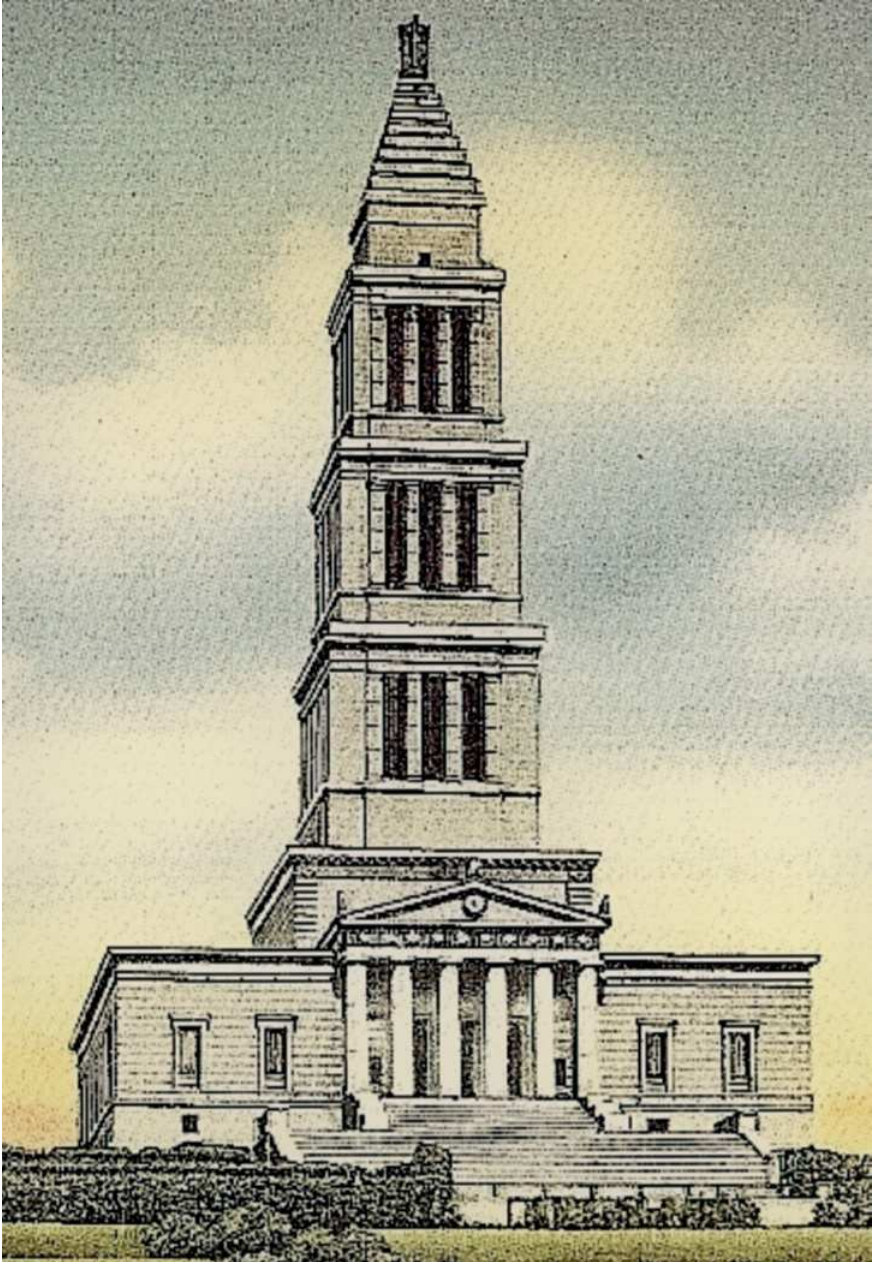


PLATE 30.32 *George Washington (1732–1799) National Memorial, Alexandria, VA, designed by Helmle & Corbett, 1922–1932 (From a postcard of c.1948, Collection James Stevens Curl).*



Another tall building, at the junction of 23rd Street and 6th Avenue in New York, was erected 1911–1913 to designs by Harry Percy Knowles (1871–1923): the interiors were eclectic, with Ionic, Doric, Gothic, and Egyptian ‘Temples’. Knowles designed several buildings for the Freemasons, including the Mecca Temple Mosque, New York (1923–1924), just one of several American masonic temples that leaned stylistically towards Islamic precedents, presumably because of the association with Jerusalem, but nevertheless very odd (Culot *et al.* 2006: 85–117; Moore 2006). When it came to adopting Modernistic tendencies, with streamlining, curved walls, and strip-windows following the curves of the walls, a good example was the temple at 1895 Creswell Avenue, Shreveport, Louisiana, of 1937, designed by Theodore A. Flaxman (*fl.* 1919–1970), a symmetrical composition which demonstrates the difficulties of attempting some sort of monumentality when the vocabulary has been severely diminished: the obvious influence was Erich Mendelsohn (1887–1953). The Masonic Memorial Temple, Nob Hill, San Francisco, CA (1955–1958), designed by Albert F. Roller (1891–1981), eschewed all traditional forms, apart from a panel with sculpture in relief featuring four figures representing four American fighting services, and fourteen smaller figures engaged in opposition on either side of a globe. This sculptured panel is in memory of Freemasons who died in war. However, the exterior of these last two buildings demonstrate the problem of conveying meaning: whereas the Washington National Memorial alludes to the Pharos of Alexandria (and therefore to the shedding of Light), overtly demonstrating the three basic Orders of Architecture as well, and the House of the Temple in Washington, D.C., makes references to Greek Ionic and to another of the Wonders of the Ancient World, later buildings without such connections to Antiquity, employing fashionable modes that never evolved into coherent languages, cannot speak to us with anything like deep meaning.

### The Monument

There is clearly a vast wealth of architecture realised to accommodate activities by Freemasons. As Marcel Gossé has correctly pointed out, many eighteenth-century architects concerned themselves with the design of imaginary Temples of the Mind, goals to be aspired to, longed for, and given honoured places in an intellectual Utopia: he observed that a Temple should reflect the World and Order of the Universe, and his own designs clearly allude to the Solomonic Temple (Culot *et al.*, 2006: 180–193). Sometimes the buildings make their affiliations obvious, but mostly they only suggest them by the

most subtle of means. For those who wish to pursue the architecture produced for use by Freemasons, there are several titles which can be inspected with benefit.

It is in the monument, however, that we often find masonic allusions set out: many are in cemeteries, such as Père-Lachaise in Paris (see Normand 1832), but others stand proudly in positions where they are not hidden or lost among many. One of the most amazing is the tall memorial in the Square at Comber, County Down, in Ireland, commemorating Major-General Sir Robert Rollo Gillespie (1766–1814, who was killed commanding the Meerut Division of Bengal troops before the fortress of Kalunga in the foothills of the Himalayas during the war against Nepal). Gillespie was a Freemason,<sup>12</sup> and his monument was built 1844–1845, crowned with a statue by ‘Johnston—of Belfast’ (Gunnis 1968: 220). This was John Johnston, whose residence and place of work was the Steam Marble Works, Great Patrick Street, Belfast, but the architect seems to have been William Walker (of whom little is known) and the civil engineer was John Frazer of Downpatrick (*fl.*1838–45) (Bendall 1997, vol. 2: 188). The names of all three men are inscribed on the monument. The foundation-stone was laid on St John’s Day 1844, and the composition is really a square (rather than circular) Tuscan column, the shaft divided into five panels on each face, thus suggesting ladders (Plate 30.30). In one of the recessed panels of the blocky base is an astonishing relief showing Jachin and Boaz, masonic tools and instruments, Euclid’s forty-seventh proposition (i.e. the sum of the squares of two sides of a right-angled triangle equals the square of the hypotenuse), an apron, the sun, the moon, the all-seeing eye, the seven stars, a pentalpha surrounding G superimposed on an open book inscribed St John’s Gospel, the hexalpha with triple tau (T over H, suggesting *Templum Hierosolymae*), a plumb-line, level, and rules, and the Mottoes *Audi, Vide, Tace*<sup>13</sup> and *Sit Lux et Lux Fuit*.<sup>14</sup> One can hardly find more overt masonic statements than those (Plate 30.31).

### ‘Greek’ Thomson

In many cases, there are very curious aspects to architecture that most persons fail to spot. For example, the Scots architect Alexander ‘Greek’ Thomson

12 He became a Freemason in 1783, probably in the 3rd Irish Horse Regimental Lodge No. 577.

13 Hear, See, Be Silent.

14 Let there be Light: and there was Light (from Genesis 1 verse 3).

(1817–1875),<sup>15</sup> arguably one of the greatest Romantic Classicists of the nineteenth century, employed cyclopean masonry in the plinth of the Caledonia Road Church, Glasgow (1856–1857), and also for the plinth of his monument (c.1867–1870) to the first minister of St Vincent Street Church, Glasgow, which was erected in the splendid Glasgow Necropolis. Now cyclopean masonry consists of irregularly shaped very large blocks of stone, sometimes approximating to polygons, dressed sufficiently for them to fit tightly together, and it is also termed Pelasgic or Megalithic masonry. It was used by some nineteenth-century architects to suggest rock-like foundations and very early historical origins, perhaps to allude to the Rock on which the Church was built, but to the ordinary observer it is not very obvious, and may not be noticed at all: so what was the point of going to all the trouble of creating it? It must be regarded as almost secret work, an allusion to esoteric notions that were not accidental, but were deliberately incorporated in the Architecture. In addition, Thomson's remarkable St Vincent Street Church (1857–1859, with hall completed 1867–1869) has many strange facets, mixing Greek with Oriental and primitive motifs, so much so that he could just as easily be called 'Semitic' as 'Greek' Thomson. The great tower, for example, has two Classical Cherubim facing each other within a T-shaped opening (a Tau cross), alluding, perhaps the Cherubim within the Temple (Plate 30.32). There are many other odd things about the building which might suggest it was some sort of mnemonic of the Solomonic Temple, but that is a convoluted story.<sup>16</sup> It should not be necessary to remind readers that the rebuilding of the lost Temple of Solomon is no stranger to masonic aspirations.

Thomson also used two items in his domestic architecture that deserve note: these are stars on one ceiling and the sunburst on another. Now stars suggest the Canopy of Heaven, and therefore the Covering of the Lodge. In this sense, the room becomes a mnemonic of the Temple of Solomon and of the origins of Architecture itself. Stars suggest fellowship, divinity, resurrection, and light shed in the night: in this sense, therefore, the stars preside over illuminating conversation in good fellowship, an appropriate symbolism for a drawing-room. The sun at its highest point suggests high twelve, or noontide,

15 Who may or may not have been a Freemason (many Scottish masonic records are incomplete, or have been destroyed), but his brother-in-law, John Baird (1816–1893), who became his professional partner in 1849 when they set up an independent practice, most certainly was a Freemason, and rose to high rank within the Craft.

16 See, for example, *The Alexander Thomson Society Newsletter*, 11 (October 1994: 5, 12; January 1995: 6–8, 12; 14, December 1995: 5, 9; 16, May 1996: 15–16; 18, February 1997: 5; 28, February 2001: 16). See also Curl 2011: 296–299.



PLATE 30.33 *Monument to Gillespie in the Square at Comber, County Down, Ireland (James Stevens Curl).*

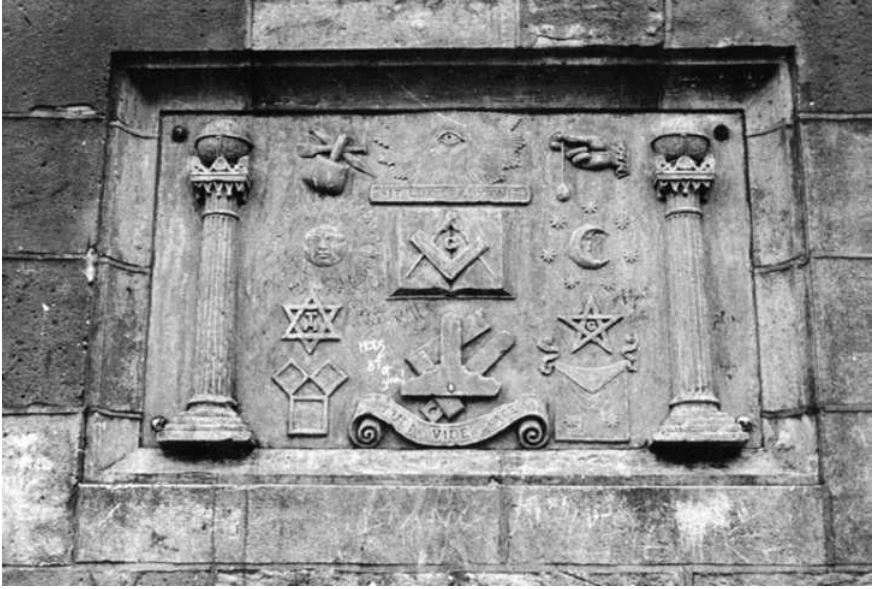


PLATE 30.34 *Detail for the Gillespie monument at Comber, County Down, showing Jachin, Boaz, and other Masonic symbols (James Stevens Curl).*

when work stops and refreshment is taken (an obvious theme for a dining-room). The sun also represents enlightenment, wisdom, power, and goodness or benevolence, and its warmth is likened to hospitality, good cheer, and the ever-present Deity. It also suggests the master-mason, watching with wisdom over the proceedings, and presiding over the fellowship and the lodge. In such contexts the colours of fire-surrounds may also be important. White, representing purity, truth, innocence, and hope, is therefore the colour of a Freemason's apron. Black can symbolise grief, sorrow, and death, but in masonic terms it can refer to prudence and wisdom, silence and secrecy. Wisdom in conviviality and guarding against idle chatter for mischievous purposes might be suitable for a dining-room after all. Thomson designed such rooms, and he was a thoughtful, brilliant architect: his creations did not spring to realisation without meaning. Nor, it is submitted, did *fabriques* in gardens, nor any other work of Architecture mentioned here.

### Modernism

Finally, there is the problem of Modernism: if the vocabulary, grammar, and language of the great traditions of Classical Architecture are jettisoned by

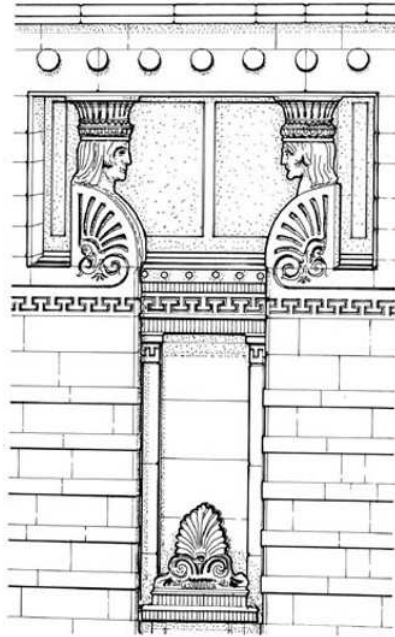


PLATE 30.35 *Two Cherubim facing each other within a Tau Cross opening in the tower of St Vincent Street Church, Glasgow, designed by 'Greek' Thomson (James Stevens Curl).*

Modernism, how relevant can Freemasonry (drawing meanings and lessons in so many ways from tools and implements used by craftsmen working in stone and by architects who could draw and knew about stone) actually be today? Some have suggested that figures such as the self-publicist Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (1887–1965), who, in conformity with the totalitarianism fashionable in the 1920s, reinvented himself as 'Le Corbusier', was profoundly influenced by the Loge L'Amitié in Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, where he grew up. Le Corbusier was later to describe the ideas promulgated by this francophone lodge as providing his guide, his choice of the path he would travel, from time-honoured ideas, ingrained and deeply-rooted in the intellect, like entries from a catechism. That does, admittedly, sound familiar (see Birksted 2009), but one would be hard-pressed to detect masonic traces in his work.

It must be emphasised that Freemasonry draws on the Classical language of Architecture and on various tools and implements associated with building in *stone*, and there is little enough of that these days, while the architect's instruments of pencil, T-square, set-square, compasses, and so on have passed into the realms of the fabulous, except where traditional skills are valued and necessary (as in the conservation of historic buildings,

something to which Modernism is inherently opposed). It is very odd that the world seems to have renounced an Architecture that has cultural and emotional resonances responding to the established grain and geometries of old towns and cities, and instead embraced a non-Architecture that makes us uneasy and even unwell (as well as making no economic sense at all). Deconstructivism, with its jagged, acute angles, leaning walls, violations of elementary serenity, balance, rhythm, and respect for context, and alien, threatening forms (all underpinned by incomprehensible jargonese that the ill-educated confuse with profundity), has no links with the great cultural achievements of those who created the monuments of Classicism, Gothic, or Romanesque Architecture. It is obvious that the level, the square, the plumb-line, and so on, have played no part in the threatening, anti-humane, jagged, knife-like stabs of Deconstructivism, a cult that must be described as anti-Architecture, inhuman, and very likely unbalanced (unless one takes into account the self-promotion eagerly sought by those who misuse the word 'iconic' for their own nefarious ends).

It is no accident that traditional buildings and those who propose them arouse outrage in architectural circles, and that the Craft of Freemasonry is regarded with such ill-informed hostility by many commentators: Classical, traditional, learned buildings that respect ancient systems of ordered geometries are closely connected with the symbols of Freemasonry, and so both the buildings and the Craft are regarded with vicious intolerance. A whole vocabulary of symbol, a language of ordered Architecture, a geometry of serenity and calm, and a rich system of cultural allusions making connections through history, mythology, and ancient civilisations, all have been jettisoned as the virus of Modernism, essentially destructive and hostile, spreads and multiplies. Architecture, or rather non-Architecture, now does not have a language: its incoherence, bred in the infantile playgroups of the nurseries they call architectural schools, has descended to monosyllabic grunts, a cacophony of meaninglessness totally divorced from the rich heritage of building that was once such a major part of our culture.

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# The Material Culture of Freemasonry

*Mark J.R. Dennis*

## Introduction

Freemasons describe their fraternity as being concerned with moral and spiritual values, but it quickly becomes apparent that there is a dimension to this in the material world. In the Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London, the collection of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), is a set of crudely made lodge officer jewels fashioned in metal. These were made using pieces of a bombed out bus in a Japanese internment camp in the 1939–1945 war. Even in conditions of extreme hardship, where Freemasons practised their Freemasonry in a lodge of instruction, they were seemingly compelled to create physical objects to assist them. Freemasonry requires material culture to function at its full potential as an organisation whose ceremonies are “veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols” (Claret 1838). This allegory and symbolism is reinforced by the physical objects in the lodge room, ranging from the jewels and wands of the officers, to the working tools and room fittings.

Material culture, in the context of this chapter, is the study of the values of a community through its artefacts, which are themselves primary data for study rather than merely illustrative material (Prown 1982). The creation of material culture is of importance in evidencing unwritten norms of behaviour and in transmitting these across time.

There is evidence of the use of objects from soon after the development of Freemasonry organised under the Grand Lodge system in 1717. Bernard Picart’s well known engraving of 1736 (Picart, Bernard, 1673–1733 *Ceremonies et coutumes religieuses de tout les peuples du monde* [Amsterdam, 1723–1743]) shows members in regalia, already wearing collar jewels, and holding various tools such as compasses and set squares. Surviving records of lodges meeting in the 1750s include frequent references to the presentation of jewels made for the lodge; many such jewels have survived. These records also provide evidence of members commissioning ceramic pieces, glassware and silver for use in the lodge. Many of these items also survive, either in the lodges themselves or in masonic museums. By the end of the eighteenth century the quantity of surviving material indicates that there was a considerable market for masonic items and that these were being produced commercially. By the later nineteenth

century, certainly in Britain and the USA where Freemasonry was relatively public and where there were a significant number of members, masonic items were being produced for locations outside the lodge room, including the home, and for personal, social adornment. This large scale manufacture continued during the twentieth century but, because of economic depression and the rise of the totalitarian regimes in Europe, the volume decreased and outward physical expressions of membership diminished, especially outside the ceremonies. The period after 1945 was a low point in the UK for production of items, partly due to an ethos of confidentiality encouraged actively by the UGLE in the wake of the overt anti-masonry demonstrated in continental Europe in the preceding years. From the 1980s onwards, masonry in the UK progressively emerged from this phase, and commercial production of wares for sale to members began to expand again. In the twenty-first century the wearing of items proclaiming membership is again common, but the large industry creating ceramics and other items for home use has not yet recovered.

### *Studying Masonic Material Culture*

The most readily accessible masonic items for researchers and non members are to be found in masonic museums, which have existed since the 1830s at least (Library and Museum of Freemasonry 2006). The experience of visitors and researchers seeking to access and examine masonic material culture in museums is mixed. An understanding of the issues behind this is, in the view of this author, key to informed use of museum collections of masonic material culture. General history museums frequently under-represent fraternal history as a part of the wider story of their areas, and where they do display it there is frequently misunderstanding or misattribution. The masonically held collections are generally strong in breadth and quality, but often lack adequate interpretation for non members—quite literally the ‘uninitiated’—in this author’s experience this is as often from over familiarity with the material on the part of those responsible for the displays as from any wish to conceal or obfuscate. Freemasons are encouraged to increase their masonic knowledge but the collecting policies of masonic library and museum bodies reflect the material culture of the organisations and the interests and concerns of their members at a given moment—in the 1930s the museum of the UGLE showed jewels, regalia and decorative art materials alongside curios. Items of lower value or which exhibited lesser degrees of craftsmanship were left in store; preference was given to didactic displays of high-quality items of craftsmanship and items associated with celebrated individuals.

Philip Morbach, Curator of the *Grande Loge de France* in conversation with this author at the AMMLA Conference, Edinburgh 2001, commented that

“The interpretation of Masonic history is a dream that has yet to be realised”. (Interpretation in a museum context has been described as “An educational activity which aims to reveal meaning and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” [Tilden 1984]). The reality is that the staff of masonic museums are increasingly examining the approaches that can be taken to interpreting the fraternal and masonic world to a broad range of audiences. Andrea Kroon of the OVN (the Foundation for the Advancement of Academic Research into the History of Freemasonry in the Netherlands), suggests that study of masonic heritage “requires an interdisciplinary approach, combining perspectives from art history, anthropology, social and religious studies” (Kroon 2005). Hillary Stelling, curator of the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, which was established by the masonic Supreme Council 33° Northern Jurisdiction, asserts that “when you delve into the context surrounding a fraternal object, there is often much to learn, not only about the organization and the people who participated, but about the larger culture that produced them” (Stelling 2009).

The employment of professional, non-masonic, staff in a number of these museums has given an external perspective to the range and targeting of collecting, and the combination of member and external viewpoints is producing a dialogue on methods of interpretation. This can lead to parallels being drawn between Freemasonry and other organisations, such as medieval guilds or non-masonic fraternities. External museums that do choose to display fraternal material can make even more striking comparisons; the Museum of Brighton in the UK has grouped masonic items with mayoral chains and Gay Pride clothing under the umbrella of group and visual identities. The Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London has themed exhibitions around the Folk and Popular Art basis of much of the culture, the exhibition brochure pointing out that “History is written by those that have the power to do it but it is created by all of us” (Dennis and Durr 2007).

A potential barrier to any systematic study of material objects is that there are no specific classification methodologies for fraternal material culture despite the growth in strategies for interpretation and display in other subject areas within museums. The main museum classification for social history in the UK, the Social History and Industrial Classification (SHIC), offers only one page of options (*Social History and Industrial Classification: A subject classification for museum cataloguing* [Second edition. The Museum Documentation Association, Cambridge, UK. 1993, revised 1996]). This reflects the lack of knowledge, and perhaps acceptance, by external academic and museum staff. This is also an issue with other types of collections; particularly those relating

to cultural groups under-represented in museum displays including LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered) and disabled. The report 'Buried in the Footnotes' published by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester says of museum staff: "Their inability to mount more adventurous displays of material relating to disabled people is largely the result of three factors—uncertainty, lack of confidence and fear of criticism" (Dodd, Sandell, Delin, and Gay 2004). This author has experienced similar attitudes regarding Freemasonry.

Seeking a model for fraternity in published records, this author considered first the project work of the Museum of East Anglia in its efforts to understand the issues in working with traveller communities (Martin 2001), which are parallel in that they are not ethnically homogenous but do have codes of behaviour and aspects of material culture that are opaque to outsiders. This did not, however, deal adequately with the critical aspect of ritual behaviour and material culture; so this author settled on the methodology used by the Government of Australia to interact with indigenous communities (Museums Australia Inc. 1998). The use of an anthropological model rather than a sociological one was appropriate, since Freemasonry does not, in principle, divide along the more normal lines of social class, race or religion. The similarity in the internal hierarchies and organisational roles, and the cultural issues around collection and display of ritual and ritual objects are strong; moreover this model allowed for the sensitivity given to indigenous peoples by cultural institutions to be invoked, countering to some extent the refusal of other professionals to accept Freemasonry as a group whose cultural norms should be respected. There is a similar but inverse situation in the curation of military collections where the historical significance of items and events differs between museum historians and veterans; even to the point of conflict, as in the controversial display of the Hiroshima Bomber Enola Gay at the Smithsonian where the original display featuring multiple viewpoints was replaced by one taking only the views of the veterans into account (Henderson and Kaeppler 1997). However, it proved difficult to find a completely accurate direct parallel in the non-masonic world which would allow existing techniques and published research to be applied to masonic collections (Dennis 2002).

This author also examined the potential availability of such a methodology in masonic literature. There is a tradition of cataloguing methodologies being developed for masonic collections in a form which reflects their particular structure and internal logic. Sir Algernon Tudor-Craig, however, then Librarian and Curator of the United Grand Lodge of England, singularly failed to impose any overall structure on the collection in the volume of his catalogue relating to museum objects written in 1938 (Tudor Craig 1938), and the contents were

organised in a combination of masonic and general museum categories, based partly around the display cases then in existence and partly by object type regardless of origin and usage. The classification system developed for masonic libraries by Hewitt (Hewitt 1964), and extended to prints and other items, is primarily a management system enabling users to find items. The system for prints and photographs, the 'P' series, has more than 80 divisions and is thus unable to give an overall structure to the subject.

As far as we can reconstruct earlier exhibitions intended for an audience including non Masons, the one held at Worcester Guildhall in 1884 was grouped around the private collectors providing exhibits (Taylor 1884); more recently a display at the Masonic Hall in York in 1979 separated the various orders of Freemasonry alongside some thematic cases such as "Humour and Social Occasions" but also had generic cases such as 'pottery' (*The Pillars of Solomon A York Masonic Treasury*, 1979). Masonic museum exhibitions staged internationally have likewise not addressed this overarching issue of structure; the History of English Freemasonry Exhibition (now closed) in London taking a chronological approach (Hamill 1986), and others grouping items by type. However, the exhibition held in Tours during 2001 "The Freemason's Raiment of Light—Spirit and Matter" grouped items by masonic Rite rather than the superficial grouping of national masonic obediences and was, in that respect, groundbreaking (Association Tours 5005, *The Freemason in his Raiment of Light* [Association Tours 5005, 2001]).

The availability of computerised cataloguing in many institutions now permits more extensive cross referencing of objects and academic researchers may be exposed to the material culture of their research field as a by-product of their search. The Library and Museum in London has this type of tri-domain (Museum, Library and Archive) search facility, for example. The users can now group items in ways that are meaningful to them with full data and images of the objects captured. However, this still leaves the users to determine the structure around and within which this material fits, and makes the assumption that they are equipped to do so in a very unfamiliar world.

The Library and Museum in London attempts to explain and interpret Freemasonry and other fraternities both in its own displays and in partnerships. In 2003 this author guest-curated an exhibition at the museum of the Grand Lodge of Austria entitled 'Living with Symbols—the Four Worlds of the English Freemason' (Dennis 2004). The title encompassed an experimental classification system, devised by this author, that reflected, not the objects in isolation, but the role and audience for them from a masonic perspective; and thus, by extension, linked to the extent of their symbolism and comprehensibility to a profane (non-masonic) audience, further contextualised by the date

and place of their manufacture and use. The four worlds selected were: the closed ceremonial space by whatever name it is known, e.g. 'lodge room'; structured activities by the lodge to which non Masons are invited or which they can view freely; the Freemason's home; and finally the individual mason in the outer or 'profane' world, not acting in a masonic capacity. This methodology continues to be tested and increasingly appears to form a valuable indicator of the nature of Freemasonry in any given context. The methodology is based on masonically used and generated items. It could, perhaps, be argued that anti-masonic material culture forms a fifth world, interacting with the other four (Dennis 2007); but that is outside the scope of this chapter. Freemasons also have an impact in the built environment, with lodge halls, masonic gardens and decoration being common. This is outside the scope of this chapter but was addressed by the conference "Masonic and Esoteric Heritage" held in the Hague in 2005 (Kroon 2005). Stripped of the background to their masonic context, even items for use in the 'profane' world can become opaque (Morton 2003), and lodge activities carried out in public view may still not be entirely comprehensible to the non-masonic viewer. On December 28, 2009, Pennsylvania Grand Master Tom Sturgeon was installed and for the first time the public was admitted to the ceremony. In spite of this open access, Holly Brubach remarked in *The New York Times* on "aprons embroidered with esoteric symbols, swords—all telegraphing distinctions of rank legible only to insiders" (Brubach 2010). This issue is not unique to masonic items. Internal significance exists in other items; for example military uniforms, where slight variations can commemorate events or point to the status of the wearer or their unit in a way that is not evident to outsiders (Myerly 1996).

Masonic material culture often transcends the distinction between 'modern' and 'historic', with items made in the 1700s continuing to be used, worn and collected while new objects drawing on older forms continue to be made. English Freemasonry, indeed, shows a strong attachment to nineteenth-century aesthetics—perhaps unconsciously harking back to the age of its greatest extent—and has largely rejected twentieth century style and design; jewels and other items in Art Deco and Art Nouveau style, for example, are extreme rarities with the exception of Freemasons' Hall in London itself (Library and Museum of Freemasonry 2006). This has not been the case in continental Europe where a strong modernist element has entered freemasonic iconography; the highest honour awarded by the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy, the Order of the Cornerstone (Ordine Pietra Angolare), is a minimalist depiction of a square and segment made from a flat silver disc fitted with a faceted gem. The Female Grand Lodge of Germany (*Frauen Großloge von Deutschland*) uses New Age symbolism, including Yin and Yang, and actual moonstones in some



of its jewels. The *Grande Loge Nationale Française* has commissioned artworks for its Grand Lodge building including a neon representation of the All-Seeing Eye framed by mirrors. Masonic artists including the Belgian Ferenc Sebők and the German Jürgen Ecker create symbolic images in a modern idiom, with Sebők specialising in lodge tracing boards including those for lodge 'Quadrum Leonardi' in Budapest (Rees 2009). Even in more traditional expressions of masonic culture, modernist artworks can be commissioned; for the historical Freemasonry and Faience exhibition held in Nevers during 2000, a modern piece of pottery in traditional techniques was created for sale alongside a wider range of items imitating eighteenth century forms.

The creation of a body of objects intended to be seen only by the members of one lodge and their guests, is a distinctive element of this culture (Dennis 2009). This is, in some lodges, a cumulative process, with the commissioned, created and purchased items co-existing in a mutable hierarchy of monetary, historical and spiritual value. The 'Lodge of Antiquity No. 2' maintains a collection of items amassed over three centuries. Their lodge jewels were commissioned and are of a distinctive form with a ceramic centre; these are worn by initiates and by joining members only on a permissive basis. They are prized as a unique distinction awarded to the lodge by HRH the Duke of Sussex, but are also intrinsically valuable; they are to be returned to the lodge on the death or resignation of the member concerned. The associated 'Chapter of St James No. 2' possesses a jewel worn by the early Egyptologist Belzoni who died in 1824, which continues to be worn at meetings but whose historical nature is underlined by its loan to the Library and Museum for public display at other times.

As previously remarked, the presence or otherwise of these four worlds and the balance of material in them can be an indicator of the nature of Freemasonry at a given time and place; but this needs to be adjusted for external factors that may have distorted the quantity and range of surviving material culture. In European countries the body of material for study has been distorted by the destruction and seizures under the National Socialist and Communist regimes of the twentieth century (Dennis and Saunders 2002). Surviving material is now held in museums and private collections, not necessarily masonic. The relative prosperity or otherwise of members is also a critical factor for, as Kipling says in his poem 'Mother Lodge' of a fictionalised lodge in India, "we 'adn't (sic) good regalia and our lodge was poor and bare" (Kipling 1916); this must be borne in mind. There is work needed on the variety of workmanship and production in lodge items.

Now follows a review of some examples of items under the four worlds methodology.

### World One: In the Lodge

The lodge (or chapter, preceptory, etc.) is the basic unit of Freemasonry; within its ritual space the full regalia, 'props' and symbolism of Freemasonry are exhibited. Even in this space there are gradations of explanation and revelation, as illustrated by the evolution of the tracing board. These are diagrams used to enhance the ceremony by providing a concise visual reference to the issues and the symbolism described. During the 1700s they developed from ephemeral drawings on the lodge room floor to painted cloths, and from this to painted or printed boards that could be displayed or stored (Haunch 2004). They depict the content of the ritual dramas and were traditionally not displayed outside the lodge. Inside the lodge they were only revealed when the initiate reached the appropriate level, and in some cases wall-mounted versions were covered by curtains to achieve this. Their symbolism is masonic by virtue of the way it is interpreted and used but individual images may have external sources. Durr (Durr 2006) illustrates that even the square and compasses, universal emblem of Freemasonry particularly in the popular imagination, have parallels and origins outside Freemasonry in the emblem books of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

Progression and rank in Freemasonry are signalled visually by means of regalia. In craft Freemasonry an apron is worn, allegorically representing the stonemason's apron. This use of a tradesman's apron as a visual signal was commonplace in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; a portrait of the actor R. Suett in the role of 'Dicky Gossip' as a 'Jack-of-all-trades', painted in 1797 and now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (Cunnington and Lucas 1967), depicts him wearing the natural brown leather apron of a woodworker over the white apron of a barber; a costume detail that a contemporary theatre audience would have readily understood as a visual indicator of two different occupations. The wearing of aprons by gentlemen was a social inversion that was mocked by Laurence Dermott, Grand Secretary of the Antients Grand Lodge, in their constitutions, *Ahiman Rezon*. He asserted satirically that in the rival Moderns Grand Lodge "the wearing of aprons, which made the gentlemen look like so many mechanics (sic)...it was then proposed that...they should be turned upside down...in such a manner as might convince the spectators, that there was not a working mason amongst them" (Dermott 1764: 24–31). The apron itself evolved from a full lambskin to a range of stylised forms elaborately decorated with symbolism. In England the creation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813 abolished this range and produced standardised regalia. This was one of the first concerns of the newly amalgamated Grand Lodge, as evidenced by a letter from the Grand Secretary on behalf

of the Grand Master HRH The Duke of Sussex in 1814, just three months after the amalgamation, telling individual lodge masters that he “requests your early and fraternal attention to the reports of the several Boards with respect to the Masonic Clothing and Ornaments, for the sake of that perfect unity which ought to subsist throughout the Craft, and by which the English Mason will be recognized as uniform with the Antient Brotherhood throughout the world” (Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Regalia subject file, printed circular addressed to ‘Worshipful Master’ issued by William H. White and Edwards Harper concerning an enclosed report by the several boards with respect to masonic clothing. Freemasons Hall, Dated March 20, 1814). Here, as in many aspects of masonry, caution is needed; a further letter, dated 1908 (Library and Museum of Freemasonry, Regalia subject file, printed circular addressed ‘Dear Sir and Brother’, issued by Edward Letchworth regarding incorrect regalia being manufactured. Dated June 12, 1908), draws members attention to incorrect regalia being supplied to members, and I am aware of items of regalia in the collections of the Library and Museum in London that are wholly against the regulations then in force. Internationally, regalia reflects the ceremonies and structure of individual Grand Lodges and ritual systems. The degree of individuality permitted varies; Scotland, for example, permits individual lodges to fix the colour of the apron rosettes and trimmings and to alter this at will. The additional degrees of Freemasonry sometimes abandon the apron in favour of sashes and collars.

One specific category of items which exists mainly in this world is that of objects created during warfare or in internment and prisoner of war camps. These form part of a wider field generally termed ‘trench art’ (Dennis and Saunders 2002). I previously mentioned the jewels from Changi camp in Singapore, but similar sets exist from prisoner of war camps elsewhere. Warfare is commemorated in the creation of unique pieces of art such as the collecting box of ‘Royal Naval Anti Aircraft Lodge No. 3790’, fashioned from a shell case and decorated to indicate the places where the lodge’s parent naval unit served. The largest single body of objects in this category is that of gavels and working tools. Even complete lodge equipments exist in this form; notably the ‘Aegean Lodge of Instruction’, whose working tools were fashioned on board a Royal Naval repair ship in the First World War and whose pedestals were made from painted canvas. The lodge equipment is still used annually at the November meeting of ‘Phoenix Lodge No. 257’ in Portsmouth in memory of the Armistice of 1918 (Dennis, Saunders and Cornish 2009).

Lodges require, in addition to the working tools for the ceremonies, items such as collection boxes, alms plates and ballot boxes which are common to many membership organisations. These are frequently decorated with masonic

imagery or made from appropriate materials to make them distinctive and meaningful to the members of the lodge concerned. The gavel of 'Edifice Lodge No. 4509', made from part of the blitzed London Guildhall, and the ballot box of 'Grenadiers Lodge No. 66' made from the timbers of the wrecked HMS Lutine, are typical examples.

### **World Two: The Lodge/Grand Lodge Interacting with the Profane World Voluntarily and on Its Own Terms**

Some masonic organisations choose to interact with non-members in a controlled manner. The wearing of regalia is restricted, symbolic elements of the ceremonies are not revealed, and even ceremonial such as toasts is limited. These interactions may be invitation events indoors or participation in masonic and non-masonic events including processions, religious and civic ceremonies and social activities.

The 2009 Prestonian Lecture by John Wade summarises the range of English masonic processions. The appearance of English Craft Freemasons in public, clothed as such and bearing some of the lodge fittings has, historically, been a relatively uncommon occurrence compared with other fraternal organisations such as the friendly society the Independent Order of Oddfellows or the Masonic Knights Templar in the USA. Wade groups these processions under 'display', 'ceremonial' and 'building' (Wade 2009).

Stone laying with masonic ceremonial requires that a trowel, level and plumb line are available. These are frequently made in presentation form, and most masonic museums contain a range of these. The regular working tools of the masonic body involved can also be displayed, as in the stone laying at the Royal Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford upon Avon in 1929 where the UGLE consecration vessels and processional sword were carried (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre 1929).

In the twenty-first century in England it has become conventional to wear aprons only at stone layings, collars sufficing on other occasions such as accompanying a float in the Lord Mayor's Show in London.

The external relations of masonic bodies vary in different parts of the world. In the UK the white table (a meal where non-Masons are permitted to attend) and the ladies' nights and masonic balls from which it derived were all occasions to show regalia until this was suppressed by Grand Lodge at the end of the nineteenth century. The tradition of gift giving at such events led to a wide range of items, including butter dishes and ceramics, being created with images of the lodge. This is for many people their major point of contact

with Freemasonry. The English masonic charities raise funds through 'festivals'; these were originally simply ceremonial meals with the Stewards at table being given embroidered favours to wear. Today they are formal fundraising events held over several years, and members purchase the right to become Stewards (now an honorific rather than an actual role). Some of the charities permit lewises (the sons of Freemasons) and wives to contribute to them and also gain the status of Steward to the charity. In the case of members this entitles them to wear a distinctive jewel; non-members are generally presented with a certificate but there is now a trend for a badge to be offered, similar to the jewel but with a pin fitting, more suited to wear with civil clothes. The giving of teddy bears to children in hospitals or in other situations of distress has grown in recent years. The Grand Lodge of Wisconsin in the USA has taken this one step further by dressing 'Cuddles the Care Bear' in a masonic themed t-shirt, thus distributing its material culture to non members in a very overt way.

In common with many other organisations Freemasonry has generated publicity items to be given away at public events. In the USA a vast range of pin badges exists, often themed around the outline of US states. Grand Masters of US State Grand Lodges traditionally create a medal (as distinct from a jewel) that can be given away to a wide range of people as a commemoration of their time in office. A parallel but more restricted example is the 'Kent Cube', a medal embedded in resin as the official gift of the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, HRH the Duke of Kent. In recent years this has been replaced by the plain medal, not for masonic reasons but because 'green' legislation has prevented manufacture of the transparent resin previously used. This is a further pointer to external pressures that can vary masonic material culture.

### **World Three: In the Home**

Masons traditionally purchased items to commemorate membership that could be used or displayed in their homes. The scope of these, and the degree of display, has varied across time and the relative status of the member.

The third quarter of the 1700s produced a wide range of ceramics, from the majority of the fashionable pottery makers. Liverpool creamwares are particularly prevalent, their transfer printed decoration being suited to the production of items following the current visual trends in Freemasonry. The creation of transfer prints was only suited to items with a relatively large production run as the engraving of the plate was costly; the prevalence of these

is a testament to the larger disposable income of the membership at this time.

Individual images could be enduring. An image of craft symbolism with a very distinctive anthropomorphised sun rising over the Volume of the Sacred Law can be found on export porcelain commissioned in 1813, polychrome wares from the 1830s and finally on lustreware from the mid nineteenth century. The image was, by then, redundant as a piece of masonic iconography possibly as a result of the standardisation of imagery in lodges under the UGLE during the century but images relating to the two Grand Lodges of the eighteenth century did not die out immediately and indeed can outcrop in unexpected fashions as in a painted panel apparently of the Antients Grand Lodge, which ceased to exist as a separate entity in 1813, but which is actually from the Order of Stagorians c. 1820, a fraternal body in Norwich at that time. This blurs the accepted chronology. In the same way, presence of a material culture can evidence activities that are, in the historical record, anachronistic or forbidden. The wide range of Oddfellow mass-produced transfer-printed ceramics, proving the continued existence of the Oddfellows during the first decades of the Unlawful Societies Act, is a case in point (Dennis 2005).

Items were created that reflected the multiple identities of their owners: transfer printed bowls bearing the images of the various unities of Oddfellows, the Ancient Order of Foresters and the Freemasons simultaneously exist, as do horn cups with the masonic emblems joined by the four linked arms of the Chartists (a political movement seeking universal emancipation), thus blending Freemasonry and radical politics in an unexpected fashion.

In the USA particularly the creation of Bourbon decanters in earthenware was adopted and these exist in a wide range of shapes, intended for open display. The only parallel in the UK are salt glaze mauls produced for sale as whisky decanters.

The decoration of items by individual Freemasons for use in the home is extensive, but dating is difficult. Typically these are carved or engraved examples of more general objects which are not otherwise masonic. Caution is needed as some items which are hand made and appear to be 'one offs' actually exist as multiples and may have been commercially produced.

In the twenty-first century these traditional forms of material culture have been revived with the manufacture of a wide range of souvenir items, including some that may have been thought inappropriate in the past, such as Christmas decorations. Some discretion remains, however, with a reluctance to sell items (including a greetings card and a teddy bear) alluding to the symbolic clothing of the candidate in the first degree.

### World Four: In the Profane World

In day to day life English Masons traditionally have used great discretion, urged by *The Book of Constitutions* (*United Grand Lodge of England Constitutions* 2007). Items indicating membership tended to be concealed by use of ‘spinner’ fronts to rings, unfolding ball charms, snuff boxes or flasks with imagery for display in a discretionary fashion, or were discreet: rings, watch fobs. The low point of display was in the years after World War Two—a masonic charm for a watch chain in 9ct gold was presented to Grand Lodge in 1962, the then Grand Secretary James Stubbs passed it to the Librarian with the following qualification:

I suggest that it should not be put on show in the museum, for fear that it might encourage Masons generally to wear Masonic charms on their watch chains, but I think it should be put away in safety and marked clearly as to its provenance. JWS 15.2.62.

Library and Museum of Freemasonry. Hand Written Note from J.W. Stubbs Dated February 15, 1962, Attached to a Masonic Fob Seal, Accession Number 2010.503

This raises several issues. Firstly the museum was, at that time, closed to non-members and so this was a wholly masonic matter. Secondly the need to retain the item and its provenance (it was owned by Lord Harewood, the previous Grand Master), even if not displayed, references the respect due to the object. Finally the changed reality, in that wearing of charms had been extremely prevalent in the Victorian period and other items such as buttons and shirt studs were also available for use. These charms continued to feature in the catalogues of suppliers up to the Second World War and have, in recent years, returned to popularity with Masons wearing pocket watches in formal dress.

In the USA this distinction does not exist, and items such as bomber jackets bearing branches of acacia are worn, and Masons drive vehicles with masonic number plates but even here the message can be oblique—a large branch of acacia on a bomber jacket sends a powerful visual signal, but only to those who already know the significance of the image. Masonic and fraternal items often form a part of collections of folk art in the USA (Wertkin 2004).

The creation of the ‘Grand Lodge Tie’ in 2003 (*MQ Magazine Edition*, January 4, 2003) was the most recent example of UGLE commissioning an object, and possibly the only example to date of one that was to be produced in large numbers and intended purely for sale. Its design was decided by open competition. It exposed assumptions about dress in the membership (Bell 2002: 52) and was a potential watershed in the sale of items for open wear by Masons under

the English Constitution. The tie has a repeated design of the square and compasses, which is very distinctive at a distance when known to the viewer but is nonetheless discreet enough to pass unremarked by the passer-by. In contrast, the Order of the Scarlet Cord is one of many masonic orders and jurisdictions which has created a tie with no indication of its significance. It should be pointed out however that old school ties do not give onlookers any specific visual clues, so this is not a solely masonic custom. (There are ties for other orders which combine a woven and striped design with an actual woven image of the order's logo at the point of the tie.) There is, perhaps, an underlying conscious or unconscious thought process in choosing between designing a tie that has iconography which will be understood and possibly provoke comment and enquiry, and a tie that is not obvious to the casual observer. This may relate to the attitude of the potential customer as well as the self image and culture of the masonic body concerned.

### *Influences on Masonic Material Culture*

Having reviewed the four worlds, some qualification is required. Some masonic objects inevitably exist or are used in more than one of the four worlds: for instance, the personal adornments from world four are habitually worn in the lodge or at public events. Freemasonry, as previously remarked, is likewise influenced by the non masonic 'profane' world. The masonic jewel is a good example of this; the evolution of the styles of masonic jewels during the eighteenth century shows external influences pulling in different directions. A jewel presented to Thomas Marriott Perkins of 'Sea Captains' lodge in 1757, and purchased by the Library and Museum in London in 2009, is of a size and form more normally seen in civic regalia and atypical of masonic usage. Much masonic structure derives from the city guilds, and they may have been an influence on the design of this jewel. Conversely, the use of ceramics set in metal frames or watch glasses to preserve the metal finish, particularly easily-tarnished silver, mimics contemporary practice in the military and civil worlds. The central buckle on the ribbon of the Royal Arch jewel, now decorative, derived from the military custom of having a buckle that allowed the medal or decoration to be removed from the ribbon which was permanently stitched to the garment. This is one example of a practical feature that has atrophied to become purely decorative.

The plate and pierced jewels of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century were made from silver or sometimes gold sheet, engraved and sawn to create designs which were often ornate but nonetheless, discreet; much of the symbolism would have only been recognised by the membership. These constitute a distinct masonic form of jewel-wearing, emulated by other fraternities



to a limited extent but not by external bodies such as court or chivalric orders. (There is a limited parallel in regimental medals of the period privately issued by regimental colonels which are similar in form but the prevalence of later Victorian forgeries makes this uncertain. [Balmer 1988: 21–23].) They may represent Freemasonry influencing other fraternities rather than being acted upon by external influences.

From the 1860s the wearing of jewels expanded to include commemoratives, the near-universality of past master and founder jewels, and the formalising and standardising of centenary (and later bicentenary) jewels. These were worn en masse, with successive rank jewels being retained for breast wear while the current rank was on the collar. The most elaborate of these was the Grand Lodge Charity Jewel, which in its final state had more than 80 possible combinations of ribbon, rosette and jewel. This paralleled the expansion in jewel wearing in the friendly and fraternal societies, but also in military and court life, and the continuous elaboration of medals and orders to commemorate service, courage and achievement in the services and the public sphere during the Victorian period and the first half of the twentieth century. The naming and iconography of lodges is also a reflection of external historical and cultural factors as demonstrated by Royle in her study of imagery on English craft jewels in the period around the 1939–1945 war (Royle 2005). This is an area of study that merits further attention.

### *Obtaining Masonic Material Culture*

The commercial sale of masonic items has tended to be undertaken not by general shops, but by specialist retailers or by jewellers' shops which also provide ornaments etc. for commemorating membership organisations. Supply of masonic items requires the purchaser to enter these premises or request 'behind the counter' items and makes this a conscious action, difficult for non Masons to undertake. These wares are produced entirely speculatively and their use and display is not regulated. The rise of Internet selling may alter this situation by making the purchase of these items less intimidating due to the relative anonymity granted to the purchaser. The increasing prevalence of items on Internet auction sites such as Ebay is a further factor. There is a thriving collectors' market, not only among Freemasons, but views of it vary. The museum of the Grand Orient of The Netherlands took drastic action on relocating to a new site: redundant items were 'ground to pulp to prevent them reaching the commercial market' (Kroon 2005).

In the twenty-first century the material culture of Freemasonry continues to expand but the range of items does not. Regalia is substantially fixed in design; ephemeral items such as commemorative medals are not materially

different to those produced by other organisations—they are not masonically distinctive. This was also the case in the nineteenth century, when much material was bought ‘off the shelf’ from manufacturers like George Tutill who produced a range of items aimed at the fraternal and trade union market with stereotyped forms and decoration (Dennis 2005). Souvenir items and collectables vary widely, with modern manufacturing techniques producing elaborate items such as an animated masonic snow globe containing models of lodge buildings in the USA which rotates to the sound of the Star Spangled Banner! But as a category they are intrinsically no different in function from the Meissen statues and decorated ceramics of the past, being merely a subset of a more general type of object for collectors.

### Conclusions

The comparative analysis of material culture of Freemasonry is in its infancy. There is a prejudice against the use of three dimensional material in academia, partly because of the difficulties of citing it. The perceived role and actual role of such material may well vary. Nonetheless, on the basis that “History is written by those that have the power to do it but it is created by all of us” the material culture of Freemasonry has a role in researching the nature and membership of the fraternity. Material culture is central to the practice of Freemasonry, and Freemasons have been influential in generating its design and creation; it varies according to the country and historical period involved and its analysis is critical to understanding the nature of Freemasonry in any given nation. The model of the ‘four worlds of the Freemason’ is a potential starting point for the categorisation of this world, in a form that will allow deeper study of the messages it is trying to communicate.

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1 If the same entry is mentioned in the text and in a corresponding footnote on the same page, the footnote does not have a separate entry in the index. Titles of publications and manuscripts have been included only in exceptional cases; those of publications are written as in original and set in italics. Words in other languages than English have been set in italics. 'Freemasonry' (and related terms such as 'Masonry' and 'masonic') does not have a separate index entry, as the term appears on almost every page. Generally all names of geographical places, Lodges and Grand Lodges were included. But on the other hand, terms that occur very frequently (such as Behaviour, Constitutions, Degrees, England, France, Germany, USA / America, London, Paris, Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason, Fraternalism, Fraternal societies, Fraternity, God, Meaning, Power, Practice, Religion, Ritual, Symbols, Tolerance, Tradition) have not been included. Lists of references have not been indexed either.

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