MASONIC COFFEE

STAR OF THE TWO WORLDS LODGE #5379 G.∴O.∴D.∴F.∴
ORIENT OF FORT LAUDERDALE (FLORIDA) Volume 1, 2022

MASONIC COFFEE

STAR OF THE TWO WORLDS
LODGE #5379 G∴O∴D∴F∴

ORIENT OF FORT LAUDERDALE (FLORIDA)

Volume 1, 2022

In Memoriam Brother P.PRO∴(1954-2020) founding member of our Triangle and Lodge, Brother G.KRA∴ (1939-2021) attendee and benefactor, and Sister S.RAM∴ (1965-2021) founding member.

Masonic Coffee

Vol. I
2022

Star of the Two Worlds **Orient of Fort Lauderdale**
G∴O∴D∴F∴

Participants	Guests	Editor
D.Ers∴	D.Har∴	J-S.Veg∴
J-P.Gui∴	I.Kas∴	
D.Kra∴	A.Mar∴	
N.L.Lav∴	M.Tra∴	
P.Lec∴		

Star of the Two Worlds Inc
web: www.staroftheworlds.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/cercle357
lodge.sot2w@gmail.com
sec.sot2w@gmail.com
Zelle: treas.sot2w@gmail.com
Paypal: treas.sot2w@gmail.com

© Masonic Coffee

First edition: October 2022, Fort Lauderdale – Florida

Cover design by:
© P.LEC∴, RL∴ Star of Two Worlds

Edited by:
J-S.VEG∴, RL∴ Star of the Two Worlds
Layout designer:
M.PAT∴

Published by:
Lodge Star of the Two Worlds
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33334, USA

This book is not for sale.
Published with the financial supports of the Regional Congress,
Region 03 "The World" and the G∴O∴D∴F∴

No segment of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or shared in any way
without the authorization of the publisher Lodge Star of Two Worlds.

Contents

The masonic approach of the Continental Liberal and non-dogmatic freemasonry of the Grand Orient de France 17

America, where freemasonry gave birth to a nation 27

History of Prince Hall 61

Freemasonry in Italy 71

Freemasonry in Russia 83

Questions we study in lodge: what do freemasons think about? 95

Ladies and masons 109

Masonic transmission: its values, and specificities via the various means of communication 135

United States of America: a wall of separation between Church and State 141

National Committee of Public Health and Bioethics 153

Masonic Genesis 161

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Anderson's Constitutions state that freemasonry was founded in order to unite the High Moral Values which otherwise would still be unknown to us, and to be the center of union "and the Means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance" [1].

The Respectable Lodge Star of the Two Worlds, Orient of Fort Lauderdale (Florida), #5379 of the Grand Orient de France, one of the six lodges in North America, with its brothers and sisters from multiple origins (Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Cameroun, Chile, Colombia, France, Haïti, Israël, Italy, Morocco, Romania, Russia, USA) and locations (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mexico, Texas) proudly claims the universality of freemasonry without exclusion (roots, gender, belief, language).

With 21st century technology, and despite the pandemic, thanks to its specificity and unicity, our lodge, according to the laws of the Great Architecture of the Universe, adapted itself with flexibility and reason to remain alive, to give us the opportunity to continue to work and to transmit to those in search, the light we have received.

With this publication of some of the Pieces of Architecture (P.O.A.) shared during our non-ritualic meeting "the Masonic Coffee" since March 2020, we wish to expand outside the temple the principles of the liberal, non-dogmatic and continental freemasonry, A∴N∴E∴S∴L∴A∴D∴G∴O∴D∴F∴ (in the name and under the auspices of the Grand Orient de France), defined by article one of its Constitution:

1 Anderson's Constitutions: The charges of a freemason, I, (1723), edimaf, 4th ed, p. 178.

"The purpose of freemasonry, an essentially philanthropic, philosophical, and progressive institution, is to seek the truth, study morality and practice solidarity; it strives for moral and material improvement and the intellectual and social development of humanity.

Its principles are mutual tolerance, respect for others and for oneself, and total liberty of conscience.

- It recognizes that religious beliefs are a personal matter for members, and so it rejects any dogmatic assertions.
- It attaches particular importance to secularism.
- Its motto is: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"[2].

With my Triple Fraternal Embrace,
Worshipful Master N.L.Lav∴

2 Constitution and General Regulations, 2020-2021, English ed February 2021, G∴O∴D∴F∴

We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law, and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal, in the same way as we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of the slave trade, as criminal.

Karl Popper

The Masonic Coffee was an initiative created during the 2020 covid-19 lockdown. It resembles an instructional meeting where one member of the lodge Star of Two Worlds (Sot2W) or a guest member from The Grand Orient de France (G∴O∴D∴F∴) gives a conference about a specific topic. Thanks to the multiculturalism of the lodge located in 26.1224° N, 80.1373° W, we were able to participate in lectures about the history of freemasonry in different part of the world. Given by members from different cardinal points, telling the stories of remarkable humans in their home countries and some of their accomplishments, which were the spirit of the organization reflected in a discreet way.

Sot2W was founded in 2012 and since, it has worked in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, practicing the continental freemasonry. Here, men and women get together to learn and improve themselves in the philosophical and spiritual way of freemasonry. A stunning difference the continental freemasonry has to offer is the inclusion of women in their lodges, showing a social advance and evolution thinking of their member when they realized that we cannot work for the improvement of humans excluding half of humanity.

Now, there are six lodges in North America affiliated to the G∴O∴D∴F∴, spreading the inclusion of women to freemasonry, teaching, and working alongside one to another. Thanks to this, the G∴O∴D∴F∴ has an exceptional human capital in their ranks, more tolerant to different points of view and with a bigger spectrum to learn how to build an inclusive society suited for everyone.

Continental freemasonry is open to people from different lines of thinking and promotes academical debates when two or more of them get together to discuss about a topic of common interest. The idea of confronting different points of view enriches all who are present in these conversations, with the knowledge share between people who understand the importance and power of the words. Therefore, everyone is welcomed to participate in the masonic work, learning the way to enlightenment of the masons.

Freemasonry can be seen as one way to work in yourself, studying the meaning of the masonic symbols, way that the masonic knowledge is spread among the brotherhood. To accomplish this goal, the G∴O∴D∴F∴ has several committees where members work on topics of their interest such as, history, public health and bioethics, secularism, philosophy and so on. Those are some of the topics shared in this book.

Working in the lodge Sot2W is meeting people with the spirit of creating something better, not just for themselves but for who surround them. Hardworking masons who have personal life, regular jobs, kids, and everything that being alive represents. Nevertheless, they presented to the members of the lodge and other brothers and sisters invaded to the masonic conference their results of what they learned, contributing to create this book, and we are thankful for their efforts and willingness to freely participate in a project meant to grasp what we do during our masonic journal.

• • •

There is an invisible chain connecting all freemasons though time and space, so learning the different situations our brothers and sisters from the past had to deal with in certain periods of time, and the lack of written evidence due to several ups and downs in the order, either due to intolerance or radical political views. These stories were our oral inheritance until this project along with other published articles and books written during in a more peaceful era we are living now.

Governments around the world have taken different approaches to the so-called "new world order" guided by freemasons. Some afraid to what will come with it and others with open arms and ready to embrace it. What you will see on the following piece of architecture will clarify the freemasons' intention to society. Ideas like the "Napoleonic Project", the construction of cathedrals, libraries, universities and so many other buildings, as well as charities done by different members and masonic institutions, will provide a better perspective of what is the truth masonic spirit.

The United States of America is a good example to start with. This country was built under masonic principles. The founding fathers as well as many celebrated Americans have spread the masonic values of liberty, freedom, and knowledge. "We the People", a phrase used on the letter of independence is an example of union shared by the brotherhood, showing the determination of creating a society ruled by the people who live in it. Massachusetts enforced the responsibility of education of children to their parents. Puritans were in favor of education for everybody as they were against to reserve this privilege to the clergy, nobility, and upper classes of society.

Prince Hall on the other hand, fought against slavery and denial of rights for the black community. They presented the petition of Lancaster Hill to the Honorable Counsel & House of Representatives for the State

of Massachusetts Bay in General Court assembled, signed by eight black freemasons demanding the abolition of slavery.

Masons such as Giuseppe Garibaldi, Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, and Giuseppe Mazzini were involved in the foundation of Italy. Despised this fact, the religious influence over the country has banned freemasonry, making the progress of the organization more difficult. The fascists did not make it easier either. Benito Mussolini arrested and exiled brothers such WWI hero General Luigi Capello, sentenced to thirty years in prison.

Peter the Great, Tsar of Russia was the founder of freemasonry in that country according to Russian masons. An organization founded and influenced by the monarchy will have different political views than others founded by scholars, military, and bourgeois members of society. Freemasonry was also illegal during the Soviet Union, as it has been during several autocratic governments such as Francisco Franco in Spain, Benito Mussolini in Italy, or Adolf Hitler in Germany.

The involvement in politics by freemasons have given birth to new social changes such as, the independence in America, the creation of the bill of rights, public education, and so on. In France, masons were involved in the republican ideal and a democratic government during the french revolutions. Ideals of Liberty, Equality and, Fraternity, are core values to be a continental freemason.

The G∴O∴D∴F∴ encourage it members to engage resolving questions that ended up becoming laws in France such as Law on the freedom of Assembly, Law of recognition of the principle of the right of repair for the disaster victims, Law of separation of the churches and the state and Law on workers' and farmers' pensions.

Freemasonry was founded as an initiatory male organization banning women as read in Anderson's constitution. Nevertheless, there are

records of female freemasons such as Ms. Elizabeth St. Leger, initiated in Ireland between 1713 to 1725. Imréné Pottornyay was not happy of her husband's meetings and was initiated along with two other women to make them inclined to the Order. Women were involved in different initiatory mystery rites of the human esoteric history.

The first amendment of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights are examples of secularism. The wall of separation between the state and church let people to express their believes freely and with no fear. The word "laïcité" in french does not have translation in english language. The synonym used is "secularism" signifying the respect by the State for the principles of freedom of conscience and moral equality of citizens. Therefore, it does not exclude religion from politics or academic field, it just ensures the peaceful coexistence of all believes by not privileging any one over the others.

The National Committee of Public Health and Bioethics is composed by a diverse group of individuals from healthcare service member providers affiliated to the G∴O∴D∴F∴ to volunteers such as physicians, nurses, social services providers, and members of the Center for Healthcare Ethics. A committed and multidisciplinary committee working on topics such as the formulation of Medical Staff Rules and Regulation, Policy and Procedures documents pertaining to ethical considerations, Administrative Policy and Procedures, and provides a forum for discussion of ethical considerations associated with the organization's clinical, educational and research mission.

Freemasons have tried to help humanity using their moral structure and values to improve and develop society thought their member who committed to the masonic cause. As our brothers and sisters in the past, we keep on working on today's questions and growing ourselves looking for the answers within us and our brothers and sisters beside us.

• • •

www.godf.org

Grand Orient de France

An initiatory approach ...
and a Republican commitment

The Grand Orient de France in 7 Points

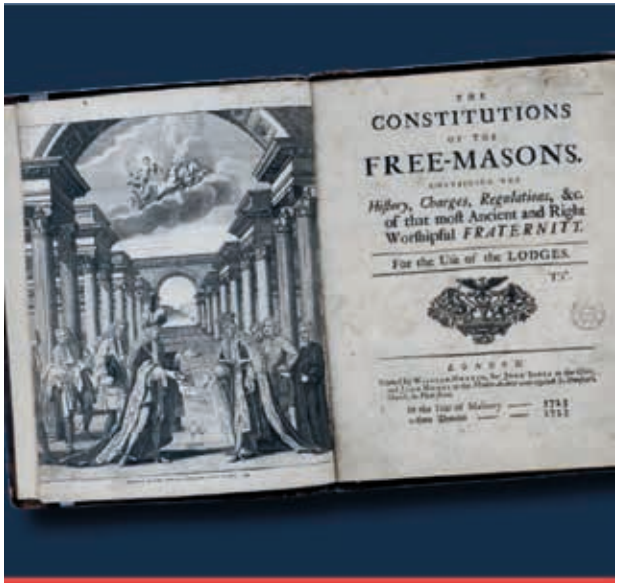
LIBERTÉ ÉGALITÉ FRATERNITÉ

The masonic approach of the Continental Liberal and non-dogmatic freemasonry of the Grand Orient de France

What is the masonic approach?

"If you are different from me, brother, far from impoverishing me you enrich me." It is with these words inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (*Letter to a Hostage*, 1943), who was not a freemason, that visitors are welcomed to the Grand Orient de France in Paris.

These words embody the masonic spirit. To be enriched by others, and by their differences, without ceding to naivety or complacency, is the road that leads to knowledge.



Original edition of the Constitutions of Anderson (1723)

Becoming a freemason in the Grand Orient de France is a personal decision, one which requires careful consideration. The rituals, myths and symbols of freemasonry remain relevant today: they enable us to exercise our total liberty of conscience as we strive to bring meaning to the world and to life.

For example, the freemasons of the Grand Orient de France, organization to witch our Floridian Respectable Lodge Star of the Two Worlds belongs, are also intransigent defenders of republican ideals. They have taken as their own the french Republic's motto of "Liberty - Equality - Fraternity", vital for solidarity and secularism.

The lodge is a place for thought, questioning and debate, where generational, social, spiritual, and political diversity meet fraternally to create a unique and intense chemistry.

Why becomes a freemason?

In article 1 of its Constitution, the Grand Orient de France affirms that, "The purpose of freemasonry, an essentially philanthropic, philosophical, and progressive institution, is to seek the truth, study morality and practice solidarity […] The principles of freemasonry are mutual tolerance, respect for others and for self, and total liberty of conscience. It holds that metaphysical concepts are exclusively personal, and therefore rejects all dogmatic affirmations. It is committed to the fundamental importance of the secularism. […]"

That says it all!

Initiation

Freemasonry offers something unique to contemporary society: initiation. To be initiated means both to join a fraternity and to commit to a path of personal progress through a ritual and symbols. The new initiate uses these tools to start his or her masonic work, which is essentially sharing and self-development, all carried out with total liberty of conscience. You may have heard references to the masonic method. It consists of the shared work done in the lodges, which is never-ending, and which is complemented by the individual research which is the hallmark of the freemason. The light sought by each freemason (in the 18th century sense of the term) enlightens his or her path and eliminates social distinctions: initiation and the practice of the ritual thus aid individual emancipation.

So, what exactly is freemasonry? - An open organization

Freedom of membership, freedom of opinion, freedom to believe or not believe.

Becoming a freemason requires approval by the members of a lodge. This long and demanding process includes three investigations, an interrogation, and a qualified vote. Leaving the Order simply entails writing a letter. Freemasonry is, in fact, the opposite of cults, which are easy to join, require members to sacrifice their freedom of thought and their possessions, are hard to escape, and rarely leave ex-members undamaged.

Grand Orient lodge members are required to pay annual dues and attend two monthly meetings, known as "Tenues".

Stay on your guard: cults do sometimes borrow elements of freemasonry in order to expand, but they have nothing to do with freemasonry!

A place for thought

Freemasonry strives for material and moral improvement,
the intellectual and social perfection of humanity.

Freemasonry provides the tools for personal, philosophical, and spiritual work. It is not an ersatz religion. The Order's rituals, and many of its founding legends, are rooted in the Bible. Freemasonry neither imitates nor rejects religion. It is non-dogmatic and does not require any belief in a higher power, putting it on a different plane: it questions Man, encouraging him to find his truth within himself. Many members of the Grand Orient de France are believers and actively practice their faith – something which does not keep them from defending the corollary of liberty of conscience: separation of church and state.

Protecting freedom

Learning about oneself, learning from others and their differences,
inspired by a shared republican ideal.

While the Grand Orient de France does address social issues, it never takes a partisan approach to debate.

Liberty of conscience is as essential in terms of politics as in terms of religion. Freemasonry brings together men and women of diverse convictions: all beliefs are represented within the Order, except those which are contrary to the values of the Republic and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

The G∴O∴D∴F∴ and the masonic landscape

Georges SERIGNAC
Grand Master of the Grand Orient de France

The root of the Continental, Liberal and non-dogmatic freemasonry is the Grand Orient of France.

Formed in 1773, out of the first Grand Lodge, founded in 1728, the G∴O∴D∴F∴ is now the largest obedience in France. It has 52,413 members in over 1,372 lodges, which offer a broad palette of rituals, practices, and social or symbolic areas of study. Its diversity fosters rich and fruitful exchanges.

The Grand Orient de France operates on a democratic model. Its lodges are sovereign. All leadership positions (Grand Master, Councilors of the Order, Lodge Presidents, etc.) are elected offices and are subject to rules on cumulation, re-election and duration. The lodges are represented at the general assembly (the Convent) under the rule of "one lodge, one vote".

Various commissions take a more in-depth approach to areas like secularism, bioethics, and sustainable development.

The Grand Orient is also...

- Public events:
  - Les Chantiers de la République,
  - Les Utopiales Maçonniques
  - Les Université Populaires Maçonniques.
  - Journaux: *Humanisme, La Chaîne d'Union, Chroniques d'Histoire Maçonnique.*
- A certified charitable foundation (www.fondation-godf.org).
- The freemasonry museum (registered as a "Museum of France"), home to a collection of objects dating as far back as three centuries (www.museefm.org).
- A public library and unique document collections and masonic archives.

A little history

A modern organization anchored in tradition.

The history of "modern" freemasonry is said to have begun in England on 24 June 1717, with the meeting of four London lodges, heirs to the proto-masonic tradition which already had a robust presence in the emerging United Kingdom, after developing starting in the late 16th century, particularly in Scotland.

Freemasonry reached France in 1725, with the creation of Saint Thomas au Louis d'Argent, a Parisian lodge formed by English jacobite (pro-Stuart) exiles. French freemasonry shook off its English roots in 1738, with the first french Grand Master, the Duke of Anton. In 1743, he was succeeded by his great-uncle, Louis de Bourbon-Condé, who remained Grand Master until his death 1771.

The Masonic cipher, which is easy to decipher, is based on a very simple principle and today is used solely for historic, symbolic, or decorative purposes.

The Duke of Montmorency-Luxembourg then undertook a full reorganization of the Order, which became the Grand Orient de France in 1773, under Grand Master Louis-Philippe-Joseph d'Orléans (the future Philippe Égalité), with a vast merger of the first national Grand Lodge and the Scottish Mother Lodge.

The first remarkable measure: contrary to the customs of the era, the office of Venerable Master of the Lodge (president) was made an elected office "A modern organization anchored in tradition" rather than a life-long, hereditary office like positions under the ancient regime.

The Grand Orient was born. It created a democratic legislative body (the word "democratic", highly unusual for the period, was used by Montmorency-Luxembourg): each lodge is represented by a delegate at the annual general assembly, known as the "Convent", a revolutionary organization which enshrined the separation of powers (executive and legislative). It has stood the test of over two and a half centuries and inspired the political organization of the french Republic.

• • •

The G∴O∴D∴F∴ today

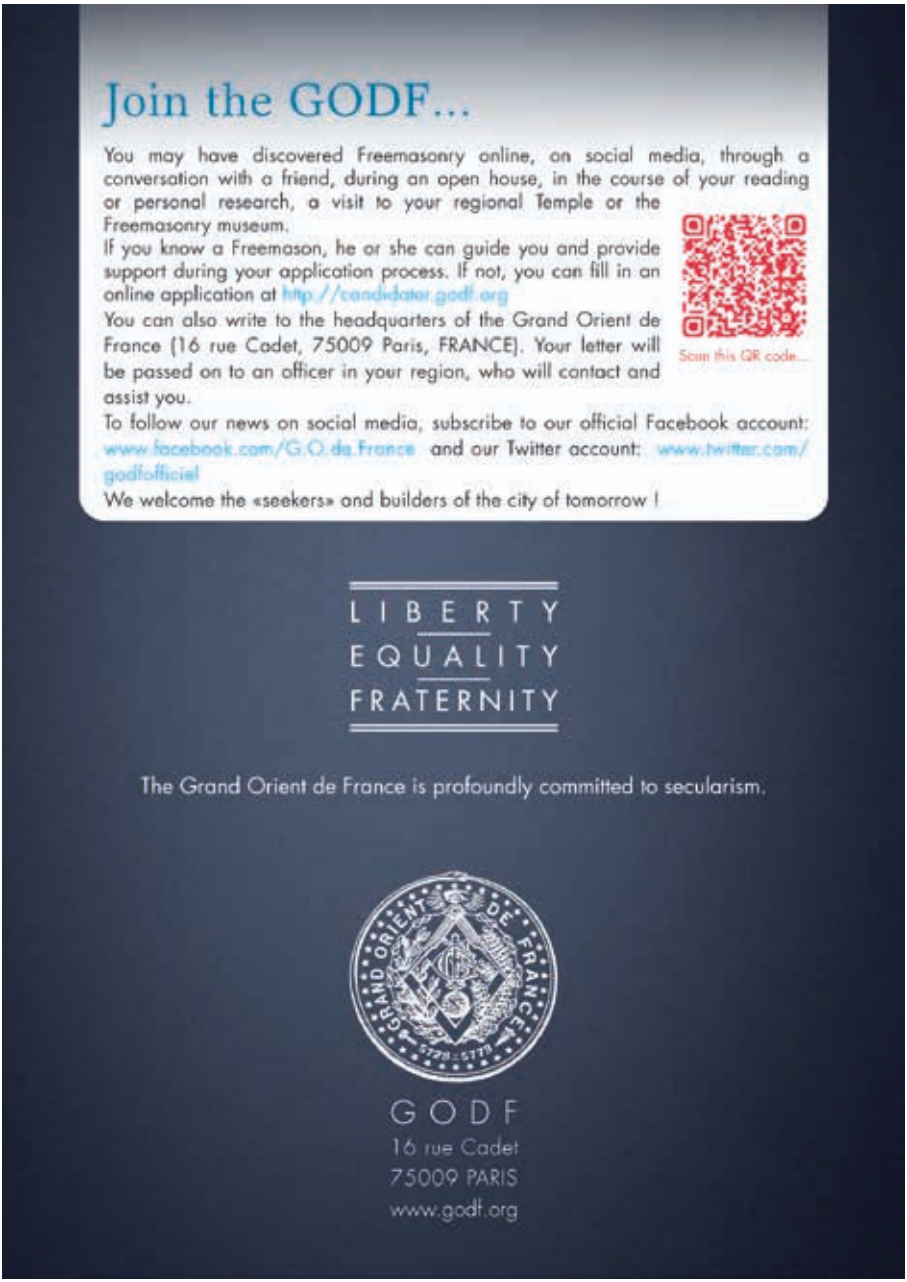
A quest for progress that benefits everyone.

Following in the footsteps of the men and women who, each in their own ways, worked for the progress and improvement of humanity, the Grand Orient de France actively promotes the principles enshrined in its motto, which is also that of the french Republic: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity".

The Grand Orient de France is profoundly committed to the constitutional principle of secularism, which offers citizens the freedom to believe or not believe. Total freedom of conscience is guaranteed by the neutrality of public institutions. It is no less committed to its opposition to racism, religious fundamentalism, and the enemies of democracy.

We strive to spread and enrich the humanism of the enlightenment by addressing a wide range of social issues. The topical questions submitted to all of the lodges each year cover topics such as family planning, youth, bioethics, public education, republican challenges, peace, solidarities, freedoms, death with dignity, secular schools, hunger worldwide, democracy, differences, contribute to building worldwide

humanism and brotherhood. Their work is available in the annual report on the "Questions studied by the lodges", published in the form of a collection.



America, where freemasonry gave birth to a nation[3]

FREEMASONRY HAD AND STILL HAS A UNDENIABLE INFLUENCE ON THE AMERICAN SOCIETY

– 56 of the Declaration of Independence signers were regular freemasons, that meant members of lodges recognized by the English freemasonry, further 24 were not regular freemasons.

– 33 of the Continental Army Generals were freemasons.

3 Masonic Coffee May 15th, 2021, and September 11th, 2021.

– In 1960, there were 4 million freemasons in the USA.
– In 2012, only 1.2 million, but now perhaps the tide is changing and there are about.
– 2 million of freemasons in this country, on 6 million of brothers and sisters worldwide. Just to compare, in England there are about 200,000 freemasons and further 150,00 in the other parts of the U.K. and 30,000 in Italy.

How did this start?

At the borderline between story and History, Initiate and masonic clues in America before the Grand Lodge of England Charter.

This is the story of some clues we can find in the history about the presence of Initiation traditions and freemasons in the American continent; it is history because of some existing and accepted historical facts, but it is story because of some amazing things that could (or could not) be the truth hidden behind the veil of the Academic, but sometimes boring, lectures, we can easily find in many books and internet sites.

There are two approaches to this issue, the former is historical, strictly bound to the regular lodges based on Charters from England and described by well-known documents and minutes, the latter, we are on the story side of the borderline, trying to connect documents, old papers and, sometimes, not completely proved traditions and facts, clearly disclosing an eventually uncertain origin, to rebuild possible masonic presences in an era when freemasons did not care to keep well-ordered archives and to file the meetings minutes safely.

Freemasonry does not grow overnight like a mushroom: it is necessary a strong ideological and philosophical background and a tradition of initiatic organizations.

In France, for instance, the strong development of freemasonry was possible because of the Illuministic cultural background.

In Europe there is a "fil rouge" which starts in Egypt, goes through the Mysteries of the Greek and Roman world, links the Collegia Fabrorum and the Middle Ages Mastri Comacini.

Alcinus tombstone: Square and Compasses Emperor Nero's craftsman

And in North America?

Brother Manly P. Hall in the second chapter of *The Secret History of America* writes that the pre-Columbian American cultures had concept and features we could define proto-masonic, since we found that in our masonic lore; in the following text I am not speaking of those very interesting hypothesizes. But what about America? is it true that American freemasonry and the culture that supported it started only after the granting of the Charter by the Grand Lodge of England? The official history tells that in 1733, Henry Price, the Provincial Grand Master over all North America for the Grand Lodge of England, granted a Charter to a group of Bostonian freemasons; this lodge was later named St. John's Lodge and was the first duly constituted lodge in America.

It is also of strong interest how the masonic principles were received by Native Americans; the Native American lore is worth of a deep discussion.

Let's go on step by step

The first step is to examine the cultural background, to ascertain if there was the base for the development of an idea, freemasonry in our case, because some basic principles were diffused in the society under exam, or if the new concepts are unrelated to the local tradition.

The second step will examine legends and facts that do not find universal approbation, or that have little historical foundations, but that are anyway useful, since even a legend may mirror a truth or, at least, to pose some questions about the reason why it has been diffused.

The historian, amateur or professional as well, following the great French scholar March Bloch, studies the world of the people and of the civil society, and no more the important historical characters only.

Just some cases to show that in colonial America that background existed, and it was strongly represented. Education was very important to the early colonists; from the very beginning, institutions of learning were established in New England, from town-subsidized grammar schools to universities. The first emigrants to New England brought books with them and they continued to import printed materials directly from London, including works of history, classical literature, science, and theology.

Education

At the end of XVIII century there were more newspapers in Philadelphia than in London. Philadelphia is in Pennsylvania but our story starts in Boston in 1643 the renowned Harvard College was already in activity and George Starkey enrolled to study classical languages, theology, in addition to courses in logic, physics, mathematics, politics and history. Harvard College was founded in 1636.

Alchemy and science

We know that many English masons were skilled alchemists, for instance Elias Ashmole; Sir Isaac Newton himself was more an alchemist than an astronomer.

But the "king of alchemist" was Irenaeus Filalete, obviously a nickname; now the scholars identified him: he was George Starkey.

John Winthrop the Younger (February 12, 1606 – April 6, 1676), the son of John Winthrop, founding governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1663, became a fellow of the newly organized Royal Society.

Secularism

Roger Williams: he began the settlement of Providence Plantation in 1636 as a refuge offering freedom of conscience. Williams was also a student of Native American languages, an early advocate for fair dealings with American Indians, and one of the first abolitionists in North America, having organized the first attempt to prohibit slavery in any of the British American colonies. He is best remembered as the originator of the principle of separation of church and state, that is the basis of any modern democracy and of our fraternity too.

Just legends

There are many legends, based on more o less persuading clues, about Europeans traveling to the Americas; I do not mean the Viking warriors, that is history, but the ones that speak of monks of Knightly Orders, for instance the Knights of the Temple or the Knights of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, born in 1572 through amalgamation of the Order of Saint Maurice, founded in 1434, with the medieval Order of Saint Lazarus, founded circa 1119. I report two of those legends, to male clear what I mean, but, in my opinion, freemasonry was not directly generated by those Monastic Orders, even if it shares many principles with them.

The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Phodes and of Malta - An Enigma on the Alps

This fresco can be seen visiting an old abbey on the Alps; it was painted in the early XV century, before Columbus, and there is a native American headdress. Another fresco of the same abbey represents a caravel,

with non-European savages. Many Templar nights entered this monastic Order after the disbandment ordered by Clemen.

Henry St. Clair, first Prince of Orkney

An old tradition tells that Henry St. Clair, first Prince of Orkney, commissioned twelve ships, with the help of money from the Templar coffers, which were used to sail to a New World (Northern America). With him sailed Antonio Zeno, a member of one of the most illustrious families of Venice. According to this old hearsay, Antonio Zeno was the navigator who led St. Clair to America, toward Nova Scotia (now Canada), in 1398 (therefore before Columbus). Some Scholars have doubts about the Zeno's map and Henry St. Clair's expedition to America. Later, according to the old tradition, he sailed Southwest following the coast now known as Massachusetts, where his strict friend and Knight Sir James Gunn passed away. Prince Henry had Sir James's crest carved on a rock facing the Massachusetts Western

part; the carving is still visible. This image was enhanced by means of a computer program to make it more visible: nice effect, but an exceptionable procedure on the historical point of view; some scholars think that it is not a manmade carving, but the result of natural phenomena and this could be a reasonable solution of the enigma.

And a bit more than a legend

We have now something more concrete, possibly the earliest trace of masonry in America is on a flat slab of stone discovered on the shore of Goat Island, in the Annapolis Basin, Nova Scotia, by Dr. Charles T. Johnson in 1827.

Cut into one face are the square and compasses, or something that was thought to be the square and compasses and the date 1606. Likely it was the grave marker of a french stonemason, who had settled at Port Royal with De Monts and Champlain in 1605.

Nova Scotia 1606: Square and Compasses Compare it whit the carving found in a XII century Church at Moutariol, Southeast France.

Lord Alexander, Canada 1634

There is some claim that Lord Alexander, Viscount of Canada (d. 1638), who was admitted into the lodge of Edinburgh on the 3rd of July 1634, established a lodge in the colony on the banks of the St. Lawrence

1658 Newport, the first Lodge in the future United States?

The earliest account of the introduction of masonry into the United States is the history of a lodge organized in Rhode Island, A.D. 1658, seventy-five years before the establishment of the first lodge in Massachusetts. The authority cited is the Rev. E. Peterson, in his *History of Rhode Island and Newport*. In the spring of 1658 "Mordecai Campannell, Moses Pockeckoe, Levi, and others, in all fifteen families, arrived at Newport from Holland. They brought with them the three first degrees of masonry and worked them in the house of Campannell; and continued to do so, they and their successors, to the year 1742". This record is not universally accepted.

John Skene 1685

The first undoubted accepted, on this side of the Atlantic, was John Skene. On the membership roll of the lodge at Aberdeen in 1670, he is listed as "Merchant and Mason" He served as Deputy Governor of East Jersey from 1685 to 1690.

Johnathan Belcher 1704

Jonathan Belcher, born in Boston in 1681, was initiated into an "occasional lodge" while travelling in Europe in 1704, making him, in some scholars' opinion, upon his return to Boston in 1705, the "Senior Freemason of America". He was governor of Massachusetts and New Hampshire from 1730 to 1741 and of New Jersey, from 1717 to 1757.

Sir William Keith 1715 and before

Hannah Penn appointed Sir William Keith Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania. He served from 1717 to 1726 and he was a mason. Major Patrick Gordon, who served as Governor from 1726 until his death in 1736, succeeded him, and he too was a mason.

John Moore 1715

The History of freemasonry and Concordant Orders, written in 1890, reports that: "In 1680, there came to South Carolina one John Moore, a native of England, who before the close of the century, removed to Philadelphia, and in 1703 was commissioned by the King as a Collector

of the Port". In a letter he wrote in 1715, he mentioned having "spent a few evenings in festivity with my masonic brethren".

Mr. Benjamin Dowse – before 1720

Consider these words from the Boston Gazette for 29 August 1720, about the death of Mr. Benjamin Dowse in a hunting accident: "He was very much beloved and is universally lamented, being a Person of Exemplary Piety and Industry, and Good Temper, and a Widow's Only Son".

What governed the masonic behavior before the Charter from England?

It appears that "the formation of a lodge in the pre-Grand Lodge period must have been a very simple, elementary, and informal affair, probably arising from the habitual meeting of brethren at some eatery they favored". Clearly, they used those occasions to initiate new members and to conduct business. They no doubt used the "Old Charges" as their governing law. The first lodge meeting in the western hemisphere, the knowledge of which is supported by something more than pure tradition, was probably held in King's Chapel, Boston, in 1720.

In his Pennsylvania Gazette NO.108 (Dec 5th to 8th 1730) Benjamin Franklin wrote: "As there are several Lodges of Free-Masons erected in

this Province, and People have lately been much amus'd with Conjectures concerning them; we think the following account of freemasonry from London, will not be unacceptable to our Readers".

This document was written after 1717, but, from the text, it is clear that freemasonry had a noteworthy diffusion in the colonies in 1730. Colonel Daniel Coxe had strong ties with the Sovereigns of England, which he never hesitated to use.

On June 5, 1730, the Duke of Norfolk, then Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, issued him the Deputation as Provincial Grand Master for the Provinces of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. This was valid for two years "from the Feast of St. John the Baptist next following" namely, June 24, 1730. Because of that, lodges constituted before 1730 could be considered autochthones and not lodges chartered by the Grand Lodge of England.

Henry Price (1697-1780), tailor, storekeeper, man of business, came from England to Boston, 1723; about 1730 he returned to England where, April 13, 1733, he was deputed "Provincial Grand Master of New England and Dominions and Territories thereunto belonging".

He organized the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, July 30, 1733. His authority was extended, 1734, to cover all British North America. The Provincial Grand Lodge he organized was historically known as St. John's Grand Lodge; furthermore, he chartered numerous lodges in the colonies. The first one, which was chartered in Boston in 1733, was known and recorded as First Lodge in the English rolls of 1734, and it is now known as St. John's Lodge.

The American modern freemasonry has started with a Charter by the Grand Lodge of England, but the PGLU was not alone on this side of the ocean.

In 1784, on a Charter of the Premier Grand Lodge of England was formed the African Lodge #459, which was the origin of the Prince Hall lodges. In America there were french speaking lodges too and the influence of France, even if not strong as the British one, is not negligible; for instance, Franklin and Jefferson as well, attended at meetings in France and George Washington himself had an apron made in France, a gift from Lafayette.

The architect who designed Washington on the basis of the masonic symbology was a French Mason... Actually, the USA won the revolutionary war with an undeniable support from France and from the freemasons of France.

In the second part of this report, I will speak of the development of the American freemasonry, of its crises, for instance the captain Morgan "affaire" and of its shining moments.

I will give you my vision about the differences among the English, the European and the American Ffreemasonry, I will make a short list of the most relevant American masonic authors.

Anyway, this historical part, in my opinion, is necessary to set the foundations to understand a multifaceted and complex phenomenon like the American freemasonry.

The American freemasonry origins, one well known, and one not known enough:

American modern freemasonry has started with a Charter by the Grand Lodge of England, but the PGLE (Premier Grand Lodge of England) was not alone on this side of the ocean.

• • •

In fact, we will find Grand Lodges or lodges founded on Charters by:

- Premier Grand Lodge of England – est. June 24, 1717
- Grand Lodge of Ireland – est. June 24, 1775
- Grand Lodge of Scotland – est. 1736
- Ancient Grand Lodge of England – est. 1751

It is a diffused opinion that, in North America, freemasonry was originated by English speaking countries only, but this is not true. In America there were french speaking lodges too, in the Northern part of the future USA and even more in the Southern one.

An amazing tip: at the Worshipful Master right side there is the flag of the United States of America, which is saluted, the hand on the hearth, at the opening of a meeting declaiming the "Pledge of Allegiance" by our American brothers; in Grand Lodge meetings the American National Anthem is sung too. But this is the amazing part: some Old Lodges still have the Union Jack on a side: it means that their columns were erected before the Revolution. The oldest American Lodge still in activity perhaps (there are arguments about that) is the Saint John in Portsmouth (1734).

From the site of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana

The French first brought freemasonry to the Great Lakes
at a time when it was Indian Territory.

Louisiana was a french colony until 1818 and its masonic tradition has a strong relationship with the french one.

The first lodge in New Orleans was Parfait Union (Perfect Union). A group of masons organized in New Orleans in 1793. These men petitioned the Grand Lodge of South Carolina in 1794 and received a Charter under their auspices. As a lodge chartered in South Carolina, they became Perfect Union #29. Also in 1794, a group of masons formed a lodge, Étoile Polaire (Polar Star). They petitioned the Grand Orient of France for a Charter. The

french Revolution complicated that petition. Étoile Polaire then petitioned the Provincial Lodge in Marseille, in 1796. They constituted under that authority in 1798. In 1804, they finally received a Charter from the Grand Orient of France.

Since the Roman Catholic Spain governed Louisiana at this time, both lodges were forced to meet outside the city limits. They gathered just outside the city's ramparts, just to north and east of the original city. Étoile Polaire eventually built a Lodge Hall there. Its location is at Kerlerec and North Rampart Street. In Louisiana many lodges did not hold their meetings in English:

The original two lodges of Louisiana, as we have seen, did their work in french, Germania and Kosmos Lodges in german, Cervantes in spanish, and Dante Lodge in italian. In terms of ritual and traditions, however, they took their clues from the two french speaking #1 lodges.

In the future USA there were two distinct styles of Ritual Lodges: in the thirteen colonies, the lodges were chartered under the authority of the Grand Lodge of England and inherited their traditions from that Grand Lodge. In Louisiana were well diffused the more-Scottish traditions of France, via Haïti. Haïti, still called Saint Dominique, was a french colony where in 1791 the African slaves revolted, by setting fire to plantation houses and killing whites.

A former slave, the educated well-read and trilingual Toussand L'Ouverture – he spoke french, creole, and some latin – took the leadership of the revolt and ruled the country. Although Saint Dominique remained ostensibly a french colony, Toussand ruled it as an independent state and drafted a constitution in which slavery was abolished.

Many white slave and plantation owners fled to Louisiana and some of them where freemasons: this is how the french masonic tradition arrived in the future USA via Haïti. Here is another way that brought the Scottish French Rite to America: The English Glorious Revolution.

In the England of the late XVII century, the competition between catholic and protestants was still alive and, when the King James II and VII showed tolerance toward the former, the latter revolted against him, starting the so-called Glorious Revolution in 1688.

James II and VII, the king of England and Scotland, was deposed and succeeded by William of Orange, a protestant, who was married to James's daughter Mary; Anne, Mary's sister, became Queen of England and, with the Act of Settlement in 1701, the throne passed to the Hanover.

James Stuart lived in France; his son and heir James Francis Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, was supported by the freemasons of Scotland, called Jacobite; the English freemasons supported the new dynasty and were called Hanoverians. When it was clear that the Jacobite would never regain the power, many Scots moved to America, from Scotland and from France as well, and with them the masonic Scottish Rite arrived at the New World.

By 1812, at the formation of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, both styles of lodges existed. To this day, there are ten "Scottish Rite Blue lodges" in New Orleans:

Étoile Polaire #1	Persévérance #4	Cervantes #5
Germania #46	Kosmos #171	Dante #174
Galileo-Mazzini #368	Albert Pike #376	Paul M. Schneidau #391
Union #172		

A Step Back to 1733

But now we must go back to the first part of the XVIII century, since the first part of our history ended in 1733, when, in Boston, the St. John Lodge was chartered. Freemasonry spread in a fast way in the thirteen colonies, and, by the middle of the XVIII century, there were four Provincial Grand Lodge chartered by European Grand Lodges:

Provincial Grand Lodge of New England (Moderns) - Est. 1733 by warrant given to Henry Price. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts dates itself from the formation of this Provincial Grand Lodge. Provincial Grand Lodge of South Carolina - Est. 1736. Provincial Grand Lodge of New York (Moderns) - 1738-1780s - Warrants issued by GLE (Moderns) to Francis Goelet (1738–1753), to George Harrison (1753–1771), to Sir John Johnson (from 1771).

Since Johnson was a loyalist during the american Revolution, he is believed to have taken his warrant with him when he fled to Canada, thus leaving the Modern's Lodges without a Provincial Grand Master. Provincial Grand Lodge for North America (Scotland) - Est. 1757 - By warrant issued to Colonel John Young.

Freemasonry found a fertile ground in America, since the average literacy rate and the diffused education were higher than in Europe, thanks to the Reformed Churches approach to books and reading; on the other side, Roman Catholic, in those years, strongly opposed the reading of books and interpretation of the sacred text by the people, but its influence was really limited in the thirteen colonies.

The Massachusetts School Laws were three legislative acts of 1642, 1647 and 1648 enacted in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

These laws are commonly regarded as the historical first step toward compulsory government-directed public education in the United States of America; the remaining New England and the mid-Atlantic colonies enacted similar laws pretty soon, just some Southern colonies established publicly funded schools about a century later.

Since 1642 Massachusetts had required parents to ensure their children's ability to read, and five years later the State mandated community schooling. This 1717 image shows a colonial school, where a lady teaches at her home.

Since the puritans were strong supporters of literacy and education expansion to the whole population and they believed wrong to reserve it to clergy, nobility and upper classes of society, the religion inspiration is at the base of the difference as among the European and the American freemasonry of those years.

As in England, since the Holy Bible was widely studied and everybody was familiar with it, American freemasons adopted its personages and stories as a reference for symbolic purposes, but, in America, freemasonry was diffused in the whole society, in a transversal way, and nobility had no influence and privileges.

Farmers, reformed pastors, and Harvard scholars were masons as well. In the Northern part of the USA, still survives, even if it is extremely rare now, the Lunar Cycle, that means to close the lodge activity in winter, when it was too difficult reach the lodge, and to work the whole summer; in New Hampshire there are commemorative meetings and initiation held on the farmyard, as in the XVIII century. As for the nobility, we must remember that, still today, a naturalized American citizen has to renounce to any nobility title, when in England all of the Grand Masters, but the first two, were nobles very close to the Royal family.

Americans believed that the source of the power were the people, the English monarchy saw God and the King's right as the fundament of the state; this different point of view made the XVIII century American freemasonry closer to the french enlightenment ideals than to the "ancient regime" traditions. We could see two branches of freemasonic thinking in the future United States of America: The masonic lodges of the English Army, faithful to the monarchic idea, and the ones where colonists believed that the consent of the governed were the only foundation of right and power.

French and Americans at war

In any case, the colonists of the thirteen colonies took part in the wars of the King of England and, in the french and indian war, as the American historians call the Seven years' War, a young officer, whose name was destined to become a key character in our story, George Washington, fought for his king.

During the last act of the war on this continent, the Battle of Plains of Abraham, in Quebec, Nouvelle France, both brother James Wolfe, Major General of the British and brother Louis-Joseph de Montalcam, commander of the French Forces in North America, passed to the Eternal Orient.

I dream that they too are now sitting in the lodge were The Great Architect himself acts as Worshipful Master and that, free from the weight of the metals, they can be in peace and brotherly love forever.

American Masonic Tenets: The 1734 dissertation of Boston

Brother Shawn Eyer published on *Philaletes* an interesting article commenting a masonic "DISSERTATION" held on the 24th of June 1734, the Feast Day of St. John the Baptist, in Boston; we know of only two Dissertations, held in England, older than this one, which is known as C.W. Moore MS, since it was published by the *Freemasons Monthly Magazine*, edited by brother More, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in 1849.

If the reader is familiar with the language and the way used in the first XVII century to communicate, under the veil of Christian and respectful words, he will find that the world of spirit is accessible to any good man, independently from his religion, that in a world still dominated by kings and nobility, freemasons held the social status of no relevance. Not enough: the Dissertation teaches that the masonic way, based on the election of the Worshipful Master, is superior to any form of government and that freemasons, by means of the symbols, had received a common universal language able to unite all the brothers, independently from their country, language and education.

Truths that could have made a guest of the London Tower (or invité de la Bastille en France) of you; not enough, in those dark years, when in prison, you had to pay for your food too. About 100 years before, a book speaking of the consent of the people was banned in James I and VI England and the incautious reader could have been sentenced to death: this book was of inspiration to Thomas Jefferson, we will see more about it soon.

This is the first page of *Freemason's Monthly Magazine*, volume VIII, year 1849, where brother Charles W. Moore published his transcription of the manuscript of the 1734 Boston Dissertation, he found in the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts library.

Where inspiration came from

The inspirations of the American freemasonry are well known, the contacts with France and enlightenment thinking as well, were well known too, but there are some amazing historical events that are not part of the common cultural background. Thomas Jefferson was a very educated man and though self-taught in Italian, he was able to converse easily in that language; he could speak, read, and write in a number of modern languages, including french, greek, italian and german and he claimed to have taught himself spanish. He knew also latin, classic greek and anglo-saxon.

Thomas Jefferson

He was a freemason; we know that from a french document. Brother Joseph Guillotin reported that he attended meetings at the prestigious Lodge of Nine Muses (known also as La Loge des Neuf Sœurs) in Paris, France – the same lodge of the Grand Orient de France attended by Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin and John Paul Jones. By the way, Benjamin Franklin was elected Worshipful Master of the lodge in 1779 and re-elected in 1880.

Thomas Jefferson owned a personal copy of *Patriarch, or the Natural Power of Kings* by Robert Filmer, now conserved in the Library of Congress, full of handwritten annotations, commenting some quotations about democracy. Sir Robert Filmer wrote *Patriarch* with the purpose of confuting the revolutionary ideas of "Disputationes de Controversies Christianae Fidei adversus hujus temporis haereticos", where it is written: "It depends upon the consent of the multitude to constitute over itself a king, consul, or other magistrate. This power is . . . vested in a particular ruler by the counsel and election of men.... The people can change the government". Let's compare this sentence with: "Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.... Whenever any forms of government become destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government", that we can find in the Declaration of Independence.

Saint Roberto Bellarmino

An amazing discovery

The author of the book, so strongly refuted by Filmer, was an Italian: he was Roberto Bellarmino, Cardinal and Saint of the Roman Catholic Church, the same who wrote that the pope was not infallible in matter

of science, the same who, in 1615, wrote that, if the scientists could actually show the heliocentric theory rightness, it would mean that the Church made a mistake in its interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. As an inquisitor, he saved Galileo Galilei in 1616; Galileo was condemned in 1633 because of his heliocentric theory, but Roberto Bellarmino had passed away twelve years before.

Thomas Jefferson, with his notes, gave an example of masonic, adogmatic approach, since he listened to the words of the man, with no prejudice because of his belonging to an organized religion, moreover not so friendly to freemasons.

I would like to tell you that Bellarmino was a proto mason in disguise, but it would be a lie. In any case we find a freemason among the men who supported Tomas Jefferson's thinking:

Dr. Filippo Mazzei (1730-1816), often cited with the name Philippe Mazzie, was born in Tuscany, but spent long time in London and had to move to America because of his philosophical and political views; he contributed to diffuse within the thirteen colonies many continental Europe's ideas and he was a Thomas Jefferson's close friend; for sure, he influenced some of the Founding Fathers, for instance Thomas Adams and Benjamin Franklin; his relevance is well recognized by historians and he is also remembered by J.F.K. in his book *A Nation of Immigrants*.

Mazzei fled Tuscany, his homeland, after getting in troubles because found in possession of some forbidden books, for instance the writings of

Giordano Bruno. With the contribution of many men from many countries, united by the same concepts, the most of them freemasons, these immortal words were on their way:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Dr. Filippo Mazzei

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION

BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People "to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another," and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station "to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them," a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires "that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, "that all Men are created equal," "that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, "deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed," that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, "it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursu-

representation: "No taxation without representation". This sentence is well known everywhere in the world! 56 of the Declaration of Independence signers were regular freemasons, that meant members of lodges recognized by the English freemasonry, further 24 were not regular freemasons, as in the USA are called the brothers not recognized by the Grand Lodge of their State. 33 of the Continental Army Generals were freemasons.

Was the American Revolution American only? And was it a masonic revolution?

Some English voices still claim that the American Revolution was the selfish act of a bunch of selfish Bostonian smugglers, reluctant to pay their taxes, and unwilling to contribute to the expenses of the War of the Seven Years, when their independence from France was granted by the British Army. Everybody knows how partisan the English may become, when they have to face the consequences of a defeat; an unbiased scholar cannot help of enhancing the deep ideological fracture between the two societies and human relationships. The idea of monarchy and nobility by blood was unacceptable to the colonist; remember the hard reaction of George Washington to the proposal of making him the King of America and his answer to the proposal of a bombastic appellation for him as President of the USA: "Call me mister President".

Four unforgettable words because of their meaning. We can find these concepts veiled in many American masonic documents, the *1734 Dissertation of Boston*, for instance, but similar concept is present in masonic documents written in France, for instance in an explanation Chevalier Ramsay gave to Anton Von Gesnau, who reported it in his journal.

It is not possible to write the full list of the founding fathers that were freemasons and even more impossible to report the names of the brothers that had a role in the American Revolution.

Anyway, here are some interesting examples...

George Washington, leader of the Revolutionary Army and First President of the United States of America. He supported the concept of one Grand Lodge per State, which still rules the American freemasonry.

Thomas Jefferson: we know that he was a freemason because of a french document of La Loge des Neuf Sœurs, where Benjamin Franklin became Worshipful Master. Samuel Adams, Brewer and Patriot. John Hancock, President of the Second Continental Congress; any fan of American history remembers his large and stylish signature on the Declaration of Independence. Paul Revere, from a french family, was a genius from many points of view; he was the first "forensic expert", since he was able to identify, by means of his dentures, the corpse of Joseph Warren, Grand Master of the Massachusetts Provincial Grand Lodge from 1769 until his death in 1775, during the Bunker Hill battle.

Betsy Ross, Washington's niece, according to the legend, sewed the first American flag, but she was not a mason, since American freemasonry followed, and still follows, the sometime obsolete English Landmarks; in the USA no lady can be made a mason. Sure, there are para masonic organization as the Rainbow Girls, roughly correspondent to the De Molay, the Eastern Stars and the Beaucenant, connected to the York Rite, but none of them can be seen as a true masonic organization. Hopefully, quoting Bob Dylan: "the times, they are a-changing".

European freemasons who supported America's Revolution

Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette (6 September 1757-20 May 1834), here in the uniform of a major general of the Continental Army.

Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau (1 July 1725 – 10 May 1807), was the commander-in-chief of the French Expeditionary Force.

François Joseph Paul, Comte de Grasse, Marquis of Grasse-Tilly (13 September 1722 – 11 January 1788) landed the french reinforcements in Virginia. Immediately afterward he decisively defeated the British fleet in the Battle of the Chesapeake in September 1781. He drew away the British forces and blockaded the coast until Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (24 January 1732 – 18 May 1799); before France officially entered the war in 1778, he played a major role in delivering french munitions, money and supplies to the American army. He also paid for the trip of Von Steuben from Prussia to America.

Frederick II (24 January 1712 – 17 August 1786) was a Prussian royal, military leader, writer, and composer who was King of Prussia from 1740 until his death in 1786. As prince, he was initiated, passed and raised without his father's knowledge or permission in 1738. Frederick II granted the Grand Lodge of Germany his protection. He agreed to send one of his army instructors to help the American Army.

Friedrich Wilhelm August Heinrich Ferdinand von Steuben (born Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben; September 17, 1730 – November 28, 1794). He was one of the fathers of the Continental Army in teaching them the essentials of military drills and tactics. After his training at Valley Forge, the efficiency of the Continental Army improved dramatically.

Freemasonic America!

Freemasonic influence was interwoven in the denim of the new nation, and Washington, the Federal Capital, was designed following masonic concepts and symbology. The plan of the city is work of Pierre Charles L'Enfant (Paris, August 2, 1754 – Maryland June 14, 1825), a french military Engineer, recruited by Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais.

George Washington posing the Capitol Cornerstone. In his hand the common gavel, he and all bystanders wear the masonic apron. This well-known image is emblematic of the relationship between the USA and freemasonry in the XVIII century. We can conclude that the above quoted english opinion has no foundation: the American Revolution had strong philosophical bases and it was supported by many educated men, many of them were freemasons, from everywhere in Europe, especially France, Italy, Germany and in England too.

The revolution was successful, and America freemason gained in relevance and reputation, the number of lodges increased fast, but that made enmity and envy grow too. They grew so much that, in the first half of the XIX century, an "Anti-Masonic Party was born".

The Morgan case: the man who made freemasonry tremble

William Morgan was a brick-mason in Batavia, New York. After he announced his intention to publish a book with the publisher Miller, exposing freemasonry's secrets, he disappeared, and he was believed to have been kidnapped and killed by masons from western New York. The allegations surrounding Morgan's disappearance and presumed death, sparked a public

outcry and inspired Thurlow Weed and others to harness the discontent by founding the new Anti-Masonic Party, in opposition to President Andrew Jackson, a freemason.

There is no proof or witness to support those allegations beyond any reasonable doubt, and a serious historian cannot tell if Morgan was killed by some fanatic masons or if the whole Morgan Case was just a scam with commercial or political purposes. Anyway, after his disappearance, the book was published by Miller and became a bestseller, thanks to the notoriety surrounding the events.

Protests against freemasons took place in New York and the neighboring states; masonic officials disavowed the actions of the kidnappers, but all masons were under a cloud of suspicion. From a Memorial prepared by Brother Charles W. Moore, the editor of *Freemasons Monthly Magazine*: "In 1831, when the Anti-Masonic excitement was in its meridian, and the brethren of Massachusetts were subjected to the grossest personal insults, and the most scandalous charges were preferred against theim as a Body, and when flagrant violations of their rights as citizens were threatened, they felt that some measures should be taken to repel the attacks to which they were thus wantonly and constantly exposed".

By 1835, the party had lost his force everywhere, but in Pennsylvania, since other issues, such as slavery, had become the focus of national attention. In 1847, John Quincy Adams published a book titled *Letters on the Masonic Institution* that criticized the masons' secret society and achieved a wide diffusion. Thurlow Weed, a New York politician, gathered discontented opponents of President Andrew Jackson, a mason, into the Anti-Masonic Party, which gained the support of such notable politicians as William H. Seward and Millard Fillmore.

In the 1828 campaign, other Jackson's rivals, including John Quincy Adams, joined in denouncing the masons. In 1832, the Anti-Masonic Party fielded William Wirt run for President, supported by the Anti-Masonic Party; Amos Ellmaker was his running mate, but they received just Vermont's seven electoral votes. Anyway, many masons left the Institution because of the Morgan Case; in some States, in New Hampshire for instance, the Initiation Ritual was modified and the penalty for the mason who had illegally revealed the Ritual, was defined expressly "symbolic".

History of Prince Hall[4]

The brotherly love and affection of freemasonry can't be taught or explained... it has to be experienced. It's to be expressed, not just talked about Antonio Allen, Grand Lodge Secretary

The story of Prince Hall starts in Boston and ends – well, it hasn't ended yet – because his influence is still being felt all around the world. Historians cannot agree exactly when or where he was born, but it was sometime between 1735 and 1738, somewhere between Boston and Barbados. Following an article of brother George Draffen, widely based on William H. Grimshaw's *Official History of Freemasonry*, Prince Hall was freeborn on September 12, 1748, in Bridgetown, Barbados, West, the son of Thomas Prince Hall, an Englishman; his mother was a free colored woman of french heritage.

In 1765, at the age of 17, Hall worked for his passage on a ship to Boston, where he became a leatherworker. Eight years later he had acquired property and was eligible to vote. Other sources report that he was a slave by age eleven owned by William Hall, living in Boston, and that his owner taught him the leather tanning trade.

4 Masonic Coffee June 19th, 2021.

His certificate of manumission is not clear, and we have to remember that in the colonies there were free men, indentured servants and slaves as well; the indentured servants' position was not so different to the slaves one, but it was temporary and essentially it meant years of work to repay the owner of the cost of the travel by sea.

In 1768, the thirteen colonies known as New England were occupied by King George III's red-coated armies. They were tasked with keeping the peace and collecting taxes. Friction, fights, and unrest were common between the two sides, and nowhere more so than Boston. Boston's residents behaved in a reserved, caste-conscious, religious manner, whereas the typical British enlisted man was uneducated, ill- mannered, and reputedly spent much of his free hours seeking pleasure in the city's public houses.

• • •

The Boston Massacre

Newport June 16. 1996 This may Certify all whom it may Concern That the Bearer Negro Man named Jack who Hath lived in my Family as a Slave for many years as a Slave having purchased him when young, is hereby manumitted and set free and is from this time his own Master, to enjoy his part fruits of his labour, and his supporting himself for the future without any Lawful Claim
Witness
Wm R Ashton
Samuel Ayrault

The Red Coats fired a ragged series of shots which hit eleven men. Three Americans died instantly: rope maker Samuel Gray, mariner James Caldwell, and Crispus Attucks. Samuel Maverick, a 17-year-old apprentice ivory turner, was struck by a ricocheting musket ball at the back of the crowd and died early the next morning. Irish immigrant Patrick Carr died two weeks later. Apprentice Christopher Monk was seriously wounded.

The Boston Massacre happened here. Boston's atmosphere was like a tinderbox just waiting for a spark. This is the chaos that Prince Hall lived in. Following some interpretations, in April 1770, William Hall freed Prince from slavery. This took place just over a month after the bloody "Boston Massacre". His certificate of manumission read that he was "no longer reckoned a slave, but [had] always accounted as a free man".

Other hypotheses suggest that Prince Hall was seized in Africa and sold in Boston as a slave, but there were a number of Prince Halls in Boston at this period and the Certificate of Manumission deposited in the Boston Athenaeum Library, dated 9 April 1770, cannot be positively identified as referring to our Prince Hall.

Sidney Kaplan, a founding member of the Department of African American Studies at U. Mass Amherst, in his book *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution 1770-1800*, describes him this way: "Prince Hall, Boston's most prominent black leader of the era of the Revolution,

was not a poet, or an artist, nor he was a preacher or a scientist. He was the founder of the world's first lodge of Black masons. But more than that, he was, in a sense, the first black organizer in American history.

His gift was to show some of his people, in the new climate of independence, how they might get together in defense of their social, political, and economic rights. Prince Hall is perhaps the most influential man of color, cumulatively, that ever lived in America, since he lived during the Founding period of the Nation and his influence continues to this day. He is the founder of African American freemasonry, the most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and a worldwide affiliation of lodges and Grand lodges, sometimes called Prince Hall masonry.

Boston St. John, the first Grand Lodge in America

Sometime in 1775, a group fourteen African citizens of Boston approached the local lodge, Saint John, seeking to be initiated, but the members voted against their joining. There were fourteen English military lodges stationed in Boston at the time, nine of them were from Ireland. Lodge 441 of the Grand Lodge of Ireland initiated Hall and others on March 6, 1775. This enabled Hall to create African lodge N° 1. African American freemasons used to meet in a house on beacon Hill. This is an image of the original African Meeting House built in 1806. The Meeting House was remodeled in 1855. The African Meeting House on Smith Court off Joy Street housed a Baptist church and a school.

Back then, black men who wanted the same advantages offered by a fraternal masonic organization were denied entry into white masonic halls, and white masons did not freely accept their black counterparts, despite their

claims to liberty, fraternity and love of God. The black masons therefore had a limited power. When lodge 441 and the other military lodges left the area to go and fight in New York, African lodge 1 was left behind, with only a permit allowing them minimal powers to meet as a lodge, to take part in the masonic procession of St John's Day, and to bury their dead with masonic rights, but they could not confer masonic degrees or perform any other essential function of a fully functioning lodge.

Nevertheless, on September 29, 1784, Prince Hall petitioned for the formation of an independent black lodge to the Grand Lodge of England, the premier Grand Lodge of the World. His charisma and honesty led to the issue of a Charter to the African lodge, making it a regular lodge with all the rights and privileges of any regular lodge in the world.

Prince Hall African lodge was so popular that the Grand Lodge of England made Prince Hall a provincial Grand Master on January 27, 1791. He was given the job of reporting on the conditions of the lodges in the Boston area – white and black as well. Eight years later, on March 22, 1797, Prince Hall organized a lodge in Philadelphia, called African lodge # 459,

which was then given permission to work under Prince Hall's Charter. Thus, the first black freemasonry temple was born. Prince Hall would serve as its Grandmaster until his death in 1807.

The exact circumstances surrounding Prince Hall's admission into freemasonry are obscure. According to the traditional story, he and fourteen others were made Master masons on 6 March 1775. This statement by Grimshaw is, with high probability, accurate. The older existing freemasonic document among African American people in the United States is a sheet of paper in the archives of African lodge in Boston. The document is dated 6 March 1775 – but the final digit is only just legible.

The anti-slavery campaigning

Prince Hall was active in the affairs of Boston's black community, using his position as "Worshipful Master" of the black masons to speak out against slavery and the denial of black rights. For years, he protested the lack of schools for black children and the battle for equal education still goes on.

The anti-slavery petition

The Revolutionary war ended in 1783. In 1780, Massachusetts had added a freedom clause to its Constitution, effectually ending slavery in Massachusetts. In 1784, Connecticut and Rhode Island passed gradual emancipation laws. These actions were greatly influenced by Prince Hall and his followers. An example, as historian Kaplan writes, "Two years later, on January 13, 1787, eight blacks of Boston and nearby signed a petition to the general court 'humbly' demanding the abolition of slavery".

Transcription of the petition of Lancaster Hill, Peter Bess, Brister Slensler, Prince Hall, et. al., to the Honorable Counsel & House of Representatives for the State of Massachusetts Bay in General Court assembled, January 13, 1777: (Taken from Herbert Aptheker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1951), volume I, 9-10.)

Requisite to Render Life Tolerable is far worse than Nonexistence. "The petition of A Great Number of Blacks detained in a State of slavery in the Bowels of a free & Christian Country Humbly sheweth that your Petitioners apprehend that they have in Common with all other men a Natural and Unamiable Right to that freedom which the Great Parent of the Universe hath Bestowed equally on all mankind and which they have Never forfeited by any Compact or agreement whatever–but that where Unjustly Dragged by the hand of cruel Power from their Deist friends and sum of them Even torn from the Embraces of their tender Parents–from A populous Pleasant and plentiful country and in violation of Laws of Nature and of Nations and in defiance of all tender feelings of humanity Brought hear Either to Be sold Like Beasts of Burthen & Like them Condemned to Slavery for Life–Among A People Professing the mild Religion of Jesus A People Not Insensible of the Secrets of Rational Being Nor without spirit to Resent the unjust endeavors of others to Reduce them to a state of Bondage and Subjection your honor Need not be informed that A Live of Slavery Like that of your petitioners Deprived of every social privilege of Everything (omissis)"

• • •

Hall was also a businessman. His leather tannery was located not far from Boston Commons and was called "The Golden Fleece". William Bentley, Harvard professor and pastor of the East Church of Salem, in praise of Hall writes: "He was also the foremost caterer, a sort of Wolfgang Puck of his day. Prince Hall, a tall, lean Negro of great dignity, always carried himself with the air of one who ruled many. Indeed, he did, for whenever a well to do person wished the best catering job in Eastern Massachusetts, he sent word to Prince Hall in Boston, and when the time came, he appeared with a dozen of his black men, or two dozen if the banquet was a large one".

The Cambridge (Massachusetts) Historical Society recently studied why men, who were Prince Hall masons, also were the principal leaders in the civil rights movement from the beginning of our recorded history to the present day. It was discovered that "no one group was more influential in effecting social change than men who were known as Prince Hall masons". When they looked at the Founding Period of our nation, the number one "Organizer" and the most influential black man of that time, especially in Massachusetts and New England, was Prince Hall. When we began to compare what the vision of America was destined to be, and those who best exemplified those virtues, Prince Hall stood out like a beacon. We realized that we did not just have a black representative to symbolize the black experience, but a true patriot and everything you wished in a Founding Father.

The Prince Hall masons are the oldest and largest group of masons of African origin in the world. Today there are forty Grand Lodges of Prince Hall freemasonry in the United States, Canada, the Bahamas and Liberia. These Grand Lodges preside over more than 5,000 lodges. Most of the American Grand Lodges and many Grand Lodges in the world are in

fraternal recognition of the Prince Hall lodges. Only nine American Grand Lodges still do not recognize the Prince Hall lodges.

Who to become a Prince Hall freemason?

To become a Prince Hall freemason a person needs to:

1. Be a law-abiding person;

2. Have a belief in a Supreme Being, and;

3. Have made his decision to join freemasonry by his own free will and not for any personal gain or reasons of idle curiosity.

Does Prince Hall admit African Americans only?

For sure no! everybody is allowed to join Prince Hall freemasonry; I asked, and this is R.W. Antonio Allen, Grand Lodge Secretary, Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Kansas, clear answer: "Prince Hall freemasons do accept petitions for membership from any man that meets our minimum requirements. This acceptance is regardless of nationality, religion, race or ethnicity."

All together in UNITY Dedication
Prince Hall masons
Monument at Cambridge Massachusetts,
Sept 13, 2008

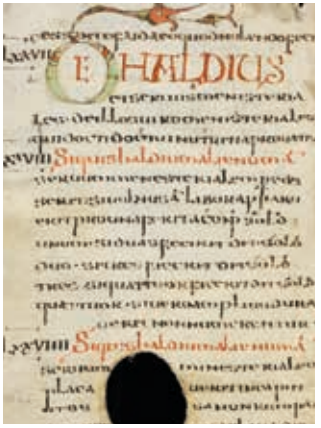
Freemasonry in Italy[5]

As an American and Italian freemason, my history starts in 1717, but every tradition has to be founded on a cultural background, a lore transmitted by mouth to ear; because of that, our journey starts when people spoke proto-latin in a small area close to Rome; Southern Italy was populated by italic tribes and by greek colonies, Central Italy by Etruscans and Northern Italy was a celtic speaking area. Rome was founded in 753 BC and in 715 BC Numa Pompilius became the second king of Rome: he constituted a Craft Organization, called "Collegia Fabrorum".

Numa Pompilius instituted in Italy the Collegia Fabrorum, Guilds; the "Collegia Fabrorum" had their rules, degrees and initiation rites. The builders were a relevant "Collegium". The Craft had a respected place in Roman Society. The gravestone of Alcinus, a member of a Roman Collegium, who lived during Emperor Nero's times: look at the arrows! Square and Compasses. On November 22nd 643 AD in the Lombard king Rothari's Edict (Edictum Rothari), we find for the first time the expression "Magister Comacini (the Masters of Como)", where the operative Master Mason charges are specified.

5 Masonic Coffee October 17th, 2020.

The Mastri Comacini, who perpetuated many aspects of the Collegia, became the most important Guild or Fraternity of masons. In 713 AD King Liutprand's Memoratorio we find reference to the Mastri Comacini and many texts everywhere in Europe refer to North Italian Craftsmen. The "Statuti di Bologna (Statutes of Bologna)", issued in 1248 AD, are the oldest written documents that rules the Masonic Craft.



Anyway, our time machine is ready for another stop at the first part of the XVIII century; the War of Spanish succession is over and Europe map is partially reshaped. The Duke of Savoy, a small land on the two sides of the Western Alps, finally makes the old dream of his dynasty come true, becoming king of Sicily first, then he changed Sicily with Sardinia, a safer place and by far closer to his traditional harbor, Nice (now France). In Savoy and Piedmont, the spoken languages are french and piemonteis a local idiom that Dante Alighieri (De Vulgari Eloquentia) refused to recognize as Italian; in some valleys of the Western Alps people speak occitan (langue d'oc). Anyway, I am considering the Kingdom of Sardinia as Italy, since its king became King of Italy about a century and a half later.

The iconic 1717

In 1688, James II of England and VII of Scotland, defeated at Reading by William of Orange, flees to Paris, followed by many Scottish freemasons, faithful to the "Old Pretendant"; they will be called Jacobite. The

freemasons who remained in England supported the new dynasty: they will later be called Hanoverians. In 1717, since they believed the papal influence had ended forever in their "blessed island", the Hanoverian brothers of London came out and founded the Grand Lodge of England. Jacobite and Hanoverians founded Lodges in Italy, the formers in Rome, the latters in Florence, to support their political views.

A minute of 1845 records a lodge called Fidelitas being founded at Girifalco in Calabria, Southern Italy in 1723. In spite of the lack of earlier records and documents, this is often cited as the first masonic lodge in Italy; in any case, the Grand Orient of Italy, G∴O∴I∴ had origin from the RL Ausonia in Turin (Ausonia is the old name of Italy), still active. This lodge is the descendant of the first Charter issued in the kingdom of Sardinia: we have a good documentation about this part of our history.

Charles Emanuel II of Savoy, called "the Hardworking", king of Sardinia, governs an area on the two sides of the Alps, thanks to the union of his many titles: Duke of Savoy, Duke of Monferrato, Marquis of Saluzzo, Prince of Piedmont and Count of Aosta, Nice and Maurienne.

The Bellegarde family of Chambery had a very important role in the birth of freemasonry in the kingdom of Sardinia, because of its European ramification. It was a Bellegarde, Joseph François, Marquis of Marques, who started the first lodge of the kingdom, and founded in Chambery, Les Trois Mortiers (The Three Mortars) in 1752, on the basis of an English Charter.

In 1719, Joseph-François Bellegarde had married the daughter of a mason, the General Brigadier Sir Theophilus Oglethorne; for some time, he lived in London, and he was initiated there; in 1723, his name appears in the Grand Lodge of England registers. He became a friend of the Duke of Richmond, past Grand Master of that Grand Lodge, who recommended him to Lord Raymond, serving as Grand Master in 1739; on the 13th of June 1739, Lord Raymond granted him a Charter that constitutes him as Provincial Master of the Duchy of Savoy and of the Principality of Piedmont, with the power:

To create, constitute lodges in the above-mentioned Lands,
to correct, to suspend them, to nominate a Deputy Grand Master,
his representative, his Grand Wardens and other Dignitary Brothers.

Piedmont and Savoy freemasonries were born by means of an English Charter

At "La Grand Maîtresse Lodge, aux Trois Mortiers" the meetings were held in french, not in english, but in abide of the Anderson's Constitutions.

The Chambery Mother Lodge created more lodges, among them, on the 27th of December 1765, the R∴L∴ "Saint-Jean" with no mother lodge rights nor the exclusivity in Piedmont, since two new lodges were constituted in Pinerolo. An amazing heritage: in Pinerolo still operates a G∴O∴D∴F∴ lodge.

The esoteric and perhaps occultist interests of the R∴L∴ "Saint-Jean La Mystérieuse", caused the distancing from Chambery; the Grand Lodge of England ("Les Trois Mortiers" vehement protests notwithstanding), granted the subalpine brothers a provincial lodge Charter for Piedmont.

In 1771, the Count Asinari of Bernezzo was elected Grand Master for Piedmont, in full autonomy from Chambery.In other parts of the future kingdom of Italy, new lodges were born, but in 1738 the Roman Catholic Church forbid freemasonry and the Inquisition even persecuted freemasons. Among others, Tommaso Crudeli, the Secretary of the lodge founded in Florence by Lord Charles Sackville, was imprisoned, tortured, and died. In Rome, the Jacobite lodge was closed down by the Inquisition and its members arrested. In the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, in 1751, king Charles VII of Bourbon prohibited freemasonry.

Italy during the Napoleonic Era

The continental part of the kingdom of Sardinia is now France, the former Cisalpina Republic is a kingdom and Napoleon Bonaparte is its king. Southern Italy is called kingdom of the Two Sicilies, union of the kingdom of Naples and the kingdom of Sicily, and their reigns Joachim-Napoléon Murat.

The king of Sardinia has still a part of his kingdom, just the Sardinia Island, well protected by the Royal Navy.

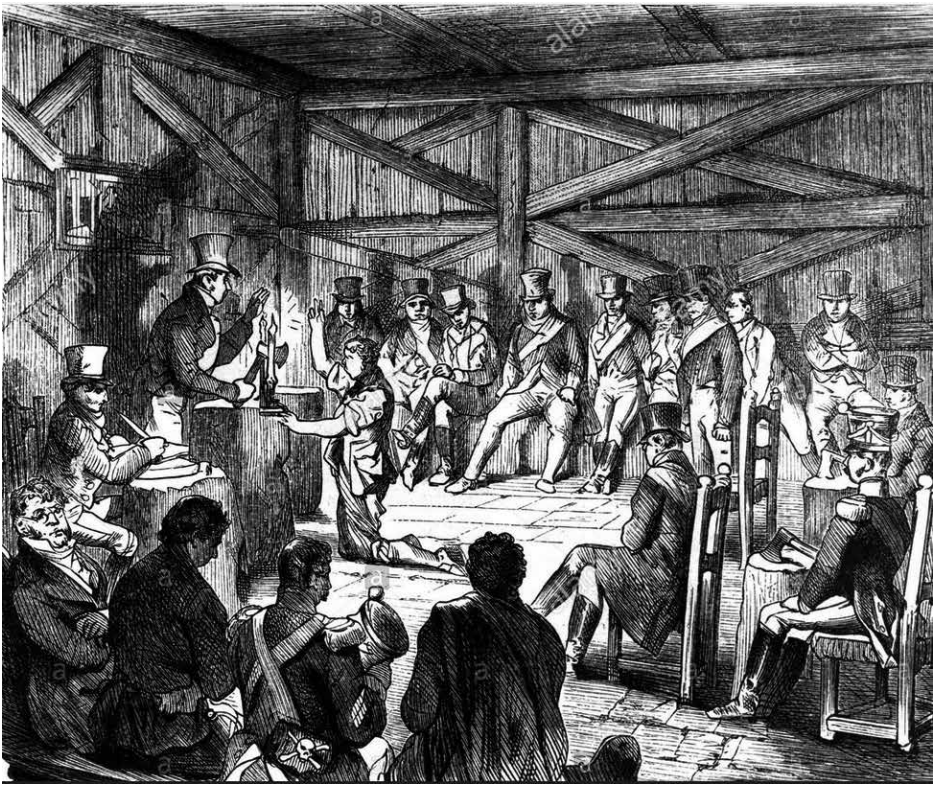
• • •

In 1801, the Grand Orient of France created the first lodge in Milan. In 1805 Milan also hosted a Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. The Grand Orient of Naples amalgamated with the new body, and a new Grand Orient was born, promptly recognized by Paris. Freemasonry briefly flourished, until the kingdom of Italy was broken up and freemasonry suppressed in 1814.

Southern Italy was an independent kingdom, Joachim-Napoléon Murat was made king by Napoleone Bonaparte in 1808. In 1809 Joachim Murat founded the Superior Council of Naples of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite; he was the first Sovereign and Grand Commander until 1815. The French Army founded lodges in Tuscany and in Liguria too and we have proof of lodges in Venice, Verona, Vicenza, Florence, Rome.

French or english Charters and of a Chapter of the Rite of Strict Observance in Padua 1815, after Waterloo the Restoration arrives; the reborn Ancient Regime will blow freemasonry away, forcing the masons to work underground. The Italian freemasonry did not completely disappear, but its surviving part had to work clandestinely, sometimes perhaps in symbiosis with the Carbonari Shops (Italian revolutionaries disguised as coal traders).

Freemasons and Carbonari were persecuted by the governments, but, with the "Risorgimento", the process of Italian unification under the banner of the king of Sardinia, Vittorio Emanuele II, the lodges were able to leave their underground activities. Many of the fathers of the Unified Italy were freemasons.



In the image, an initiation in a Carbonari lodge: a new member is taking his oath. There are many similitudes to a masonic initiation.

Italy Founding Fathers

In America and in Italy as well, many of the Country Founding Fathers were freemasons. In Italy, among them: Giuseppe Garibaldi, Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, and Giuseppe Mazzini the masons of England strongly supported the birth of Italy as a unified nation. The powerful Royal Navy made possible the landing of Garibaldi's army at Marsala, Sicily, which was a decisive step towards the unification of Italy under the banner of the strong and independent kingdom of Piedmont, whose capital was Turin.

Giuseppe Garibaldi

Camillo Benso Conte Di Cavour

Giuseppe Mazzini

Ausonia, the first masonic lodge of the new country

On the 8th of October 1859 was born in Turin the Ausonia lodge; the minutes start with the following words: "Seven dispersed brothers met in this city of Turin and agreed to lay the foundation stone of a Temple, to proceed in their works". Those brothers considered that act a "refoundation in continuity", that means the research of a tie between freemasonry in the kingdom of Sardinia and the "Ausonia" lodge, and between the "Ausonia" and the kingdom of Italy.

The Ausonia program proposed, as well as in 1752 in Chambery, the Anderson's Constitution, the use of the French Rite and the fundamental principles of Freedom, Unity and Fraternity among all countries, the complete religious tolerance, the absolute Equality of the cults in face of the State, and the moral and material progress of the country and of Mankind.

Costantino Nigra was initiated as a freemason in the Ausonia lodge on the 4th of February 1860; from the same file we know that Costantino Nigra became Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy. Brother

Costantino Nigra had strong ties with the Anglo-Saxon world: he was the Italian ambassador in London, and he was awarded a honoris causa graduation by the University of Edinburgh. In a letter to brother Ernesto Nathan, brother Nigra provided a precious clarification about the Ausonia's Founding fFathers and the G∴O∴I∴ purposes:

"Brother Govean had conceived an Italian Grand Orient in which different lodges had to merge to realize, like in France, a National Masonic Organization able to support and serve the Political Institution (House of Savoy) to melt, like in England, the masonic and State powers". Therefore, the Ausonia lodge's ancestor was a Lodge of English Right operating in french and the oldest Piedmontese lodges were born by a Charter from London; at the foundation time they followed the guide of Constitutions written in England, using a french ritual, but keeping a watchful eye on the British freemasonry function inside the State. After the Italian Unification they adopted Italian as official language.

On 26th of December 1861, twenty-two lodges met and, on January 1st, 1862, proclaimed the Grand Orient of Italy. The diplomat Costantino Nigra was elected Grand Master, and Garibaldi was named honorary Past Grand Master. By 1867 the Grand Orient was based in Florence and had about one hundred and fifty lodges. Two Scottish Rite Councils existed in Palermo and one in Milan. Garibaldi personally intervened. In 1867 a masonic congress in Naples started a process of unification of the Grand Bodies, which was completed in 1873 when the Supreme Council of Palermo amalgamated with the Grand Orient. On April 21, 1901, the Grand Orient opened its new headquarters in Palazzo Giustiniani in Rome. In 1908

a disagreement over secularism in elementary schools led to the secession of the Supreme Council of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

March 21, 1910, the Supreme Council established the Grand Lodge of Italy, with Protestant pastor Saverio Fera, a former adherent of Garibaldi, as Grand Master. From its headquarters, it became known as the Grand Lodge of Piazza del Gesù. Anyway, freemasons had a relevant place in Italian Society: many politicians, administrators, poets were our brothers; also, the mayor of Rome, making the Pope cry for the outrage, was a lason and a Jew: Ernesto Nathan.

A storm was coming, fascism

1925: Benito Mussolini bans freemasonry, the brothers who refused were arrested or forced to live in remote parts of Southern Italy or removed from their positions. General Luigi Capello, a hero of the WWI, refused to leave his lodge and was sentenced to thirty years of prison by means of fake allegations. The Grand Orient Grand Master and forty four of our brothers were exiled, without a trial, in the Lipari Island.

When fascism seized the power, Selassie, alias Domenico Mondelli, who was the first black pilot to fly in a war mission during WWI, who became commander of a bombers group and gained two silver and two bronze medals and who was created "Knight of the Order of the Italian Crown", was at first confined

Luigi Capello

Domenico Mondelli

into a marginal position and, at the end, he had to quit the active service. Racism? No, he had to endure all that because he was a mason; anyway, our brother Mondelli, the name of the family that adopted him, survived fascism and was made General of the Italian Army. At end of the WWII, the Italian freemasons started once again and, the Roman Catholic Church notwithstanding, finally they reopened their lodges.

Toda, there are many masonic organizations in Italian "Obbedienze" in Italy; the more relevant are: The Grand Oriente d'Italia, about 28,000 members, recognized by the UGLE in 1972; in 1993 the UGLE cancelled its recognition, but the American Grand Lodges continued to recognize the G∴O∴I∴; the G∴O∴I∴ brothers can join the York and the Scottish Rite as well, but there is no connection among the Rites and the Order.

The Gran Loggia d'Italia degli ALAM (Ancient Free Accepted Masons), about 6,000 members, is a mixed masonic obedience, with no discrimination based on sex. The Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite also holds the office of Grand Master of the Order and the "High Degrees" have a hierarchical position above the blue lodges members. In its statutes, the G∴O∴I∴ is defined as a Knightly Order.

The Ordine Massonico Tradizionale Italiano, about 3,000 members, was born in 2017 when the previous G∴M∴ went out of the Gran Loggia d'Italia. The Gran Loggia Regolare d'Italia, was born by a splitting from the G∴O∴I∴ in 1993; it was founded by the previous G∴O∴I∴ Grand Master and it obtained at once the UGLE recognition, because of the good relationship between the founder Giuliano di Bernardo and the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England.

Freemasonry in Russia[6]

According to the legend, the founder of Russian freemasonry was the Russian tsar Peter I, who was allegedly accepted into the Order of freemasons in Amsterdam in 1697 during the Great Embassy. Stories claim that the English mason, builder of St. Paul's Church in London, John Verne, initiated Peter I as freemason. Stories say that after his return to Russia, Peter I founded a masonic lodge in Moscow, the master of which was Franz Lefort, and the orator was Count Jacob Bruce, while the senior warden was Patrick Gordon, and junior warden was Peter I himself. Unfortunately, there is not a single documentary confirmation of this version, the first real mentions of the existence of freemasonry in Russia date back to 1731, when the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, Lord Lovel, appointed captain John Phillips as the "Provincial Grand Master for Russia". Masons in the Russian Empire at that time were mainly foreigners – military officers, who were in the imperial service, diplomats, and merchants.

Information about Russian freemasonry in the first half of the 18th century is incomplete. According to the words of the founder of Russian freemasonry Ivan Elagin, until 1770 freemasonry in Russia was not of a serious nature, for, "They paid attention to the ritual side, did a little charity, engaged in empty disputes that sometimes ended with the Bacchus festivities". For that period, there is information about the existence of the Silence lodge in St. Petersburg, where Count Roman Vorontsov was the Worshipful Master of the lodge, and among its members there were thirty

6 Masonic Coffee July 10th, 2021.

five representatives of the best Russian princely and noble families, while in Riga was the Northern Star lodge.

Also, there is information in various sources that the future emperor Peter III, before his accession to the throne, was a member of the German Grand National Maternal Lodge "To Three Globes" and an ardent admirer of its Grand Master, king of Prussia Frederick II. There is another legend that emperor Peter III established a masonic lodge in Oranienbaum and donated the house to the St. Petersburg Constancy lodge, unfortunately, there is no confirmation of this information either.

In any case, until 1770 freemasonry in Russia was of a non-systemic nature, it was completely affiliated with foreign masonic lodges and members of Russian freemasonry were representatives of the most aristocratic strata of society, or foreigners. The total number of freemasons in the Russian empire at that time is unknown, but it hardly exceeded several hundred people.

Everything changed in 1770, when Ivan Elagin received permission from the Berlin Royal York lodge to open the first Provincial Grand Lodge in Russia and became its Grand Master. Then, in 1772, this lodge fell under the control of the Grand Lodge of England, and Ivan Elagin, who was at that time senator and director of the Imperial Theaters, became a provincial Grand Master under the jurisdiction of English freemasonry with the title "Provincial Great Master of all and for all Russians". In total, under the control of the Provincial Grand Lodge, headed by Elagin, in the first half of the 18th century, there were fourteen lodges and four hundred

freemasons. These lodges received the historical name Elagin lodges and the period from 1770 to 1822 was the heyday of freemasonry in Russia.

Here is a list of fourteen Elagin lodges

1. Muses lodge
2. Astrea lodge
3. Modesty lodge
4. Lodge Equality
5. Erato lodge
6. Urania lodge
7. Mars lodge
8. Clio lodge
9. Catherine lodge
10. Lodge under the direction of Roman Vorontsov
11. Bellona lodge
12. Minerva lodge
13. Thalia lodge
14. Three pillars lodge

In addition to the Elagin lodges, which were based on English masonic rules, an alternative appeared in the early 1770s. It became the so-called Swedish or Zinnendorf system, founded by the former headmaster of the Braungschweig court Johann Gottlieb Leonard, who came to Russia from Berlin in 1771, better known in Russia as Ivan Reichel. He founded eight masonic lodges in Russia.

List of lodges that used the Zinnendorf Rite

1. Apollo lodge
2. Harpocrates lodge
3. Apollo lodge
4. Isis lodge
5. Horus lodge
6. Latona lodge
7. Nemesis lodge
8. Osiris lodge

Separately, these two systems did not exist for long thanks to the participation of the famous Russian educator Nikolai Novikov, there was a rapprochement between the Elagin lodges and the Swedish or Zinnendorf system lodges. In 1776, after negotiations between members of the Elagin and Reichel, the lodges united into one. On September 3, 1776, they declared themselves subordinate to the Great Lodge of Berlin – Minerva. This system dominated Russian freemasonry for two years.

At the same time, Ivan Reichel saw his main goal in the work in the evolving further from "the Templar" of Russian lodges, "Charter of Strict Observance", which was probably the first occult masonic Charter and, of course, had nothing to do with any Templars. In Russia, at that time, the Swedish system, which was in opposition to Ivan Reichel, prevailed, and in 1778 most of the lodges began to use the "Charter of Strict Observance", which led to a very deplorable result in their near future (kotchoubey.com, 2016).

In 1780, Russian freemasonry fell under the strong influence of the ambiguous ideas of the Rosicrucian's and Martinist's which leaded them to search for a "philosopher's stone" for creating gold and performing other "magic", after which it fell out of favor with Empress Catherine II, who ridiculed this kind of activity in her comedies "The Deceiver", "Seduced" and "Shaman of Siberia", as well as the work "The Secret of an Anti-Absurd Society".

As a result, Nikolai Novikov was imprisoned in Shlisselburg in 1792 and remained there until the death of Empress Catherine II in 1796, while the open activities of masonic lodges were prohibited by the Empress in 1794. Many masons ended up in exile at that time, or even in madhouses.

The new Emperor Paul I was quite loyal to freemasonry, and after his coronation, all sanctions were lifted from the freemasons, but the former open active work of the masonic lodges during his reign never resumed, apparently due to the new Emperor's enthusiasm for the Order of Malta, of which he was the Grand Master, until his death in March 1801. After a short break, the open activities of masonic lodges in the Russian Empire began under the new Emperor Alexander I, who ascended the throne after the murder of his father by the conspirators in the Mikhailovsky Castle. By the way, the author of these lines personally and repeatedly visited the room where Emperor Paul I was killed. Now it is one of the buildings of the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. (Юрьевич, n.d.)

Alexander I not only officially re-allowed freemasonry in the Russian empire in 1802, but according to some sources he himself joined it, joining one of the newly opened Russian lodges. This period became the peak of the development of freemasonry in Russia. Many remarkable buildings that have survived to this day were designed and built by the freemasons of that era. For example, the ambitious project of emperor Paul I, who dreamed of surpassing the Vatican, is the Kazan Cathedral. It was designed and built after Pavel's death by the freemason Andrei Voronikhin under the supervision of the largest Russian philanthropist, senator and freemason Alexander Stroganov. In addition to construction, freemasons in the Russian Empire during this period founded institutes, universities, opened public libraries, and developed Russian art. lodges were opened in many provinces of the Russian Empire. The finest hour was the "lighting of the fires" of the

Grand Astrea lodge, which had an independent status from foreign lodges. In fact, from that moment started a short period of primordially Russian freemasonry.

The Astrea Grand Lodge was founded on August 30, 1815 and closed on August 1, 1822. At the time of closing, it included nineteen lodges uniting one thousand four hundred four freemasons. Several different rituals were practiced in it, there was no control and submission from the higher degrees, and those higher degrees were absent. The reason that prompted the Russian masons to create the Grand Astrea Lodge was the attempts to return the order of the 1780th year. In particular, the actual departure of the Directory Lodge "Vladimir to order" from the Swedish "Charter of Strict Compliance". On August 10, 1815, Count Vasily Musin-Pushkin-Bruce announced the consent of the Minister of Police SergeiVyazmitinov to divide Russian freemasonry into two independent structures. And on August 30, 1815, out of four German lodges Peter to Truth, Palestine, Isis

and Neptune to Hope, a new masonic order was established – the Grand Astrea Lodge. Vasily Valentinovich Musin-Pushkin-Bruce was elected Grand Master of the Grand Astrea Lodge. Soon three more lodges joined the Grand Astrea Lodge: Alexander to the Crowned Pelican, Elizabeth to Virtue and United Friends.

The Grand Astrea Lodge and associated masonic lodges included such prominent Russian masons who had a huge impact on the history of the Russian Empire in the first half of the 19th century, such as Alexander Griboyedov, Peter Chaadaev, Alexander Pushkin, Avraam Norov, Alexander Benkendorf, Pavel Pestel, Alexander Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky, Fedor Glinka, Nikolai Grech and many others.

The history of Russian freemasonry ended because of the same person, thanks to whom it reached its prime – Emperor Alexander I. On August 1, 1822, he issued the highest rescript addressed to the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Count Viktor Kochubei, "On the elimination of masonic lodges and all kinds of secret societies". "All secret societies under whatever name they exist, such as masonic lodges or others, shall be closed and their institutions will not be allowed to exist in the future". I would like to add that the great-grandson of Count Viktor Kochubei, prince Viktor Viktorovich Kochubei, will become a founding member of the masonic lodges Golden Fleece and Northern Lights (No. 523) in Paris. (kotchoubey.com, 2016)

Now it is difficult to unequivocally assert the reasons why Alexander I decided to destroy Russian freemasonry. Personally, I believe that the position of the Russian Orthodox Church, which never had any sympathy for freemasonry, played a huge role in this, and first of all, Archimandrite Photius, who raved about the theories of a "world masonic conspiracy" and urged the emperor to believe in this. The involvement of individual masonic

lodges in the revolutionary events in Spain and Italy also played a role. It was the repetition of this kind of event that Alexander I feared in the Russian empire.

In any case, on August 11, 1822, Count Vasily Musin-Pushkin-Bruce notified the St. Petersburg military governor-general that the Grand Astrea lodge and eight masonic lodges dependent on it in St. Petersburg were now closed. From that time on, freemasonry in Russia practically ceased to exist. Despite the repressions, some masonic lodges operated in Russia for some time. But the former greatness was long gone.

An attempt to recreate freemasonry in Russia was made at the beginning of the twentieth century by Grand Orient de France. Thus, lodges of Grand Orient de France were opened under the names: Renaissance, Northern Lights, Polar Star and Astrea. Also, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Phoenix lodge was opened under the Grand Lodge of France. All these lodges were few. There were no more than a hundred masons in the Russian empire at that time. The lodges of Grand Orient de France did not last long and were closed in 1910, as most of their members joined the unrecognized para-masonic political organization, Grand Orient of the Russian People. There is no reliable information about Phoenix lodge.

After the Bolshevik coup in the fall of 1917, freemasonry was not welcomed in Russia. There is information that in the 1920s at least eleven lodges of the masonic or semi-masonic nature were active in the USSR. Among them are Order of Light, Order of the Spirit, Order of the Holy Grail, Order of the Martinists, Order of the Templars and Rosicrucian, United Labor Brotherhood, Brotherhood of True Service, Sunday, Hilfernak, Russian Autonomous Freemasonry and Space Academy of Sciences. It is also known that membership in the United Labor Brotherhood was attributed to the employees of the Soviet special services Gleb Bokiyand

Yakov Blumkin, who were executed during Stalin's Great Purge. In any case, none of the above organizations has any relation to any real freemasonry.

Georgy Dergachev – The first Russian freemason in modern history

Some of them, most likely, never existed at all, according to official information, Georgy Dergachev became the first Soviet citizen to pass-masonic initiation. He was initiated in the french lodge L'Ouevre Fraternal on March 9, 1990. And on April 28, 1991, the first Russian masonic lodge was established under Grand Orient de France, which was named North Star. The first worshipful master of this lodge was Georgy Dergachev. (Танатарова, n.d. Autor translation).

In fact, after the prohibition of freemasonry in Russia on August 1, 1822, only Grand Orient de France tried to restore it here at the beginning and end of the twentieth century. In total, from 1991 to 1997, six lodges of Grand Orient de France were opened – North Star, Free Russia, Nine Muses, Northern Brothers, Polar Star and Moscow. To this day, only the Moscow lodge has been working under Grand Orient de France.

Also, from 1991 to 1993, Grand Orient de France opens its lodges. It opened three lodges: Nikolay Novikov, Sphinx and Lutetia. The Grand National Lodge of France also begins its activities in Russia. In 1992-1993 it opened four lodges: Harmony, Lotus, New Astrea, Gamayun. On their basis, on June 24, 1995, the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Russia takes place, where most of the Russian masons are transferred. Georgy Dergachev was also elected the first Great Master of the Grand lodge of Russia.

Further, new lodges in Russia are opened mainly only by the Grand Lodge of Russia, and the lodges of liberal freemasonry are gradually disappearing. This process slowly takes place until 2001, when lodges Harmony No. 1, Lotos" No. 2, Astrea No. 3, Jupiter No. 7, Four Crowned No. 8 and Orion No. 15 leave the Grand Lodge of Russia. They form the Russian Grand Regular Lodge. In 2008, this whole structure, supplemented with some new elements, merges into the "United Grand Lodge of Russia" and receives a patent from the Grand Lodge of France for the right to carry out activities according to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Charter.

Andrei Bogdanov – The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Russia
The first Grand Master

In 2007 there was the seize of the Grand Lodge of Russia. By orders from the Presidential Administration of Russia and with the force of police special forces units, Russian political strategist Andrei Bogdanov becomes the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Russia. About half of the freemasons left from the Grand Lodge of Russia after such events. These people, together with the Russian Grand Regular Lodge, formed the United Grand Lodge of Russia a year later. After 2007, the Grand Lodge of Russia turned into something that hardly resembles a masonic structure, but something more resembling a Rotary Club. Andrei Bogdanov is still the Grand Master of this organization, although he does not understand any concepts of freemasonry.

Also in 2012, the Astrea Lodge No. 3 moves from the United Grand Lodge of Russia to Grand Orient de France and in 2013 becomes the lodge Astrea No. 6032 of Grand Orient de France. I was accepted to this lodge in September 2017.

Grand Orient de France is now not the only representative of liberal freemasonry in Russia. So, in September 2013, emerged the New World Lodge No. 1989 of the Order of Human Rights in Moscow. And in September 2019, the Aurora lodge of the Order of Human Rights in the city of St. Petersburg, where I had the honor to be present, was established as well (Танатарова, n.d. Autor translation).

Today in Russia there are about two hundred brothers in eleven lodges of the United Grand Lodge of Russia, about fifty brothers in two lodges of the Grand Orient de France, about twenty brothers in one lodge of the Grand Lodge of France, about thirty sisters in the "Gamayun" lodge of the Grand Women's Lodge of France, and about fifty brothers and sisters in two lodges of the Order of the Human Rights. The Grand Lodge of Russia has about a thousand brothers in forty lodges. But due to dogmatic politics and regular insults in the mass media of all liberal freemasonry on the part of Grand Master Andrei Bogdanov, none of the other lodges have official relations with the Grand Lodge of Russia.

As we can see, apart from the Grand Lodge of Russia, today there are about three hundred and fifty freemasons in the Russian Federation. And only about fifty freemasons of Grand Orient de France. Thirty years after the fall of the communist regime, freemasonry in Russia did not even come close to the level that it had in 1822. And there is no changing of that situation in the nearest future. There are several reasons for this. The first reason is the anti-masonic propaganda that took place in the USSR, which continues in modern Russia. It is also actively carried out by the Russian Orthodox Church. The second reason is the lack of understanding regarding freemasonry among broad strata of Russian society, and often even among those who want to be on a lodge and some active brothers. The third reason is that most of the Russian population cannot afford to

pay membership fees due to the economic situation in the country, which is now worsening every month. But all this has one positive point. The Russian leadership of freemasonry is not out of the spotlight, therefore, there are no repressions, as, for example, like the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and many other organizations are subjected to.

Questions we study in lodge: what do freemasons think about?[7]

What do freemasons do in a lodge?

We erect temples to virtue and dig dungeons for vices[8].

Some grandiloquence to describe the ethical dimension of the masonic order. But the masonic activity is not reduced to the study of morality and self-improvement. To this initiatory work is added a reflection on our humanity and our involvement in the great architecture of the universe. When the FM of the G∴O∴D∴F∴ declares in article 5 of its

7 Masonic Coffee December 11th, 2021.
8 Memento 1st degree, ASSR, G∴O∴D∴F∴, 2016.

Constitution that "work is an essential duty of man"[9] , and that he has the obligation to be an example to his brothers and sisters as much as to the profane world, the FM actively participates in the questioning that allows him to search for the truth.

What do freemasons (in liberal, non-dogmatic, continental freemasonry) work on?

To seek the truth, study morality and practice solidarity; it strives for moral and material improvement and the intellectual and social development of humanity[10].

This love of humanity that the Chevalier de Ramsay emphasizes in his famous speech, to which the necessary acquisition and increase of knowledge contributes to establish a universal republic "of which every nation is a family, and every individual a child"[11].

This is one of the projects on which liberal freemasonry works on, and it does so, in lodge, by collectively dealing with questions. It then spreads the answers to the profane world, where "(...) the moral, interior, spiritual dimension of the masonic commitment is never absent. Despite the multiple points of view which experience it, these reports demonstrate that a different approach of the problems is possible. No definitive or closed discourse, we can see here or there, metaphors or symbols allowing to get out of the confrontation and to find convergences around shared convictions"[12].

---

9 Article 5, Constitution of the G∴O∴D∴F∴, ed. 2020-2021, p. 5.

10 Article 1, Constitution of the G∴O∴D∴F∴, ed. 2020-2021, p. 4.

11 Chevalier de Ramsay, December 26th, 1736, manuscript 124 of the Bibliothèque municipale d'Épernay, p. 1.

12 Jean-Philippe Hubsch, *Questions à l'étude des Loges*, Conform édition, 2019, p. 5.

Each lodge MUST work on at least three/four questions and send a report of one-and-a-half-page maximum signed and stamped by the lodge. The regional Congress will summarize the reports which will be sent to the Council of the Order. Some questions give rise to commissions, to additions to more substantial documents.

Wishes and questions

First in the form of wishes (1844) and then questions to the study in the lodges (1900) the Grand Orient of France, followed by the Grand Lodge of France (1902), the Women's Grand Lodge of France (1947), Le Droit Humain (1907) and other non-dogmatic obedience, reflects on issues that will lead to many laws of the french Republic:

Laws on the abolition of slavery

Law of brother Victor Schœlcher

Freedom of association
Social laws

Laws on compulsory secular and free primary education

Law of brother Jules Ferry

Laws on the communal organization

Convent G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1882

1848 — 1881 — 1882 — 1884 — 1884

Laws on the freedom of Assembly

Convent G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1879

Laws on the authorization and legislation of professional unions

Convent G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1879-1882

Legilation of the divorce

Law of brother Alfred Naquet

Regulation and limitation of the work of women and children

Convent G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1890

Laws on the communal organization

Convent G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1891 and 1892

1884 — 1886 — 1892 — 1894 — 1898

Laws for the development of pension funds for elders

Convent G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1882

Law on low-cost housing

Law of brother Paul Strauss

Law of recognition
of the principle
of the right of repair
for the disaster victims

Law of legal aid

1898 — **1901** — **1901** — **1905**

Law on the freedom
of association

**Law of brother
Alfred Groussier**

Law of separation
of the Churches
and the State

**Question to study in lodges
G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1889**

Law on workers' and farmers' pensions

Law of brother René Viviani
Question to study in lodges
G∴O∴D∴F∴ 1890

Liberalization of contraception

Law of brother
Lucien Neuwirth

1910 — **1945** — **1967** — **1974**

Creation of the Social security

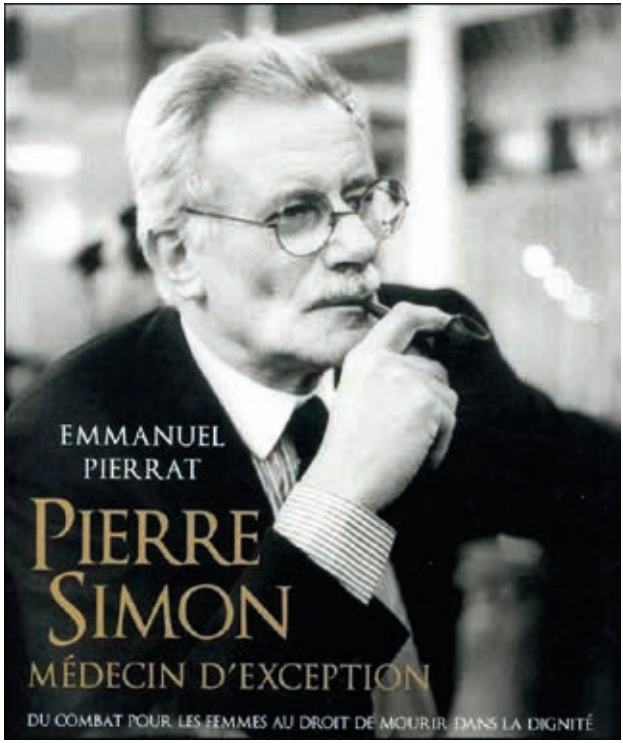
Law on the majority at 18 years old

1975 — Voluntary interruption of pregnancy
Law Simone Veil under the impulse of brother Dr. Pierre Simon, twice Great Master of the Grand Lodge of France

1981 — Abolition of the death penalty
Brother Victor Schoelcher's 1851 Book, question to study in G∴O∴D∴F∴, 1886!

1982 — Laws of decentralization
Law of Gaston Defferre

1999 — Civil pact of solidarity
Partnership or civil union



Then among the projects currently under study: Right to die with dignity (CNSPB National committee about public health and bioethics of the G∴O∴D∴F∴), European construction, Returning justice to the citizens, defense of the freedom of scientific research, and since 2002 immigration, globalization, freedom of expression, national identity, security and public liberties.

In addition to the works that freemasons are led to produce in the form of symbolic or philosophical works (essays or POAs, pieces of architecture) in relation to the instructions of the degrees or personal research of each, the QSL (Questions to Study in Lodge) encourage members to reflect collectively on subjects on which they would not necessarily have worked, like frequenting in the lodge individuals they would not necessarily have met outside of it.

An incentive to open the field of their knowledge and to share the diversity of their points of view for the benefit of all.

"This is precisely made possible because the lodge, refusing any partisan attitude, is made up of committed masons belonging to different schools, different movements, but animated, in a mutual respect of their diversity and their commitments, by the same will, the same ideal: to build day after day a brighter, more united and more just city. This, higher than the parties, above the churches, beyond even the countries" [13].

Each year, "We The Lodges" propose subjects that the regional Congresses select, and that the lodges as a whole, choose in the Convent (for the G∴O∴D∴F∴) by dividing them into questions of symbolic

13 A.Bauer, *À quoi réfléchissent les francs-maçons ?*, ed. Dervy, 2020, p. 220.

order, history, philosophy and themes of society. In the G∴O∴D∴F∴, they are grouped in:

I. General interest and prospective,
II. Of masonic or symbolic interest
III. On secularism (French laicity)
IV. On peace and human rights
V. From the international lodges
VI. On Europe.

As you can see, the topics are diverse and in adequacy with our modern world.

The year 1962

To be more specific, let's take the example of a particular year sixty years ago: 1962 ("We choose to go to the Moon", Viet Nam, atmospheric nuclear weapons testing, Cuban Missile Crisis, Ole Miss Riot). Well, not so much more particular than another one. Meanwhile, the freemasons of the french non-dogmatic obedience G∴O∴D∴F∴, G∴L∴D∴F∴, G∴L∴F∴F∴, D∴H∴ dealt with:

- The safeguarding of the dignity and integrity of man: improvement and perspective of the human condition, according to and as a consequence of the evolution of science and the progress of techniques (nuclear energy, cybernetics, astronautics, etc.) (Grand Orient of France).
- Freemasonry has for object, among others, the practice of solidarity. How was this principle applied in the past in the obedience? What were the results? How is it currently applied? (Grand Orient of France).

- What measures should be taken to make this solidarity more effective and more active? Should this solidarity have limits? How can these be set? (Grand Orient of France).
- The civic and moral training of youth and the corresponding education of adults in the face of new conceptions of the nation, Europe and the world. To what extent and by what means can objective information and the rational use of leisure contribute to this? (Grand Orient of France).
- Contraception and freedom. (Grand Lodge of France).
- A new ethic for youth. (Grand Lodge of France).
- Freemasonry is not a doctrine; it is a method of culture and spiritual elevation. Its influence on progress, ideas and morals. (Grand Lodge of France).
- On the Masonic responsibility. (Philosophical question, Grand Lodge for Women of France).
- The two columns of the world: East and West. (Symbolic question, Grand Lodge for Women of France).
- The conflict of generations. (Societal question, French Federation of Human Rights).
- The study of the masonic virtues and principles evoked by the symbolism of the three pillars, or the rights and duties of the freemason (man stripped of his metals), in a fraternal society with a democratic basis. (Question "Maçonisme", French Federation of Human Rights).

The previous examples show that the subjects do not stick directly to the immediate current events of 1962. No hot reaction about the news of the profane world, but an adequacy with the preoccupation of the epoch, more globally. They approach of the societal interrogations by stepping back or with prospective. The questions of symbolism or masonry being timeless.

Finally, always as an example, for 2021-2022, the lodges of the G∴O∴D∴F∴ are called to reflect on:

Question A - General interest and foresight: In what way would the legislation of active euthanasia in France be a humanistic advance?

Question B - Of masonic or symbolic interest: Freemasonry is a method, a discipline, and the assiduity to reach its objectives, a duty. Is one a freemason without working in lodge?

Question C - On secularism: (french laïcité) Can we speak of secularism without religion?

Question D - Peace and human rights: Can we combat inequalities without questioning the relationship between capital and labor?

Question E - From the international lodges: For a freemason, is what happens at the end of the world as important as what happens at the end of the street?

Question F - On Europe, lever, or mesh for absolute freedom of conscience?

- The reproach made to this work of collective questioning is that it does not lead to anything. Frankly, the examples given in the foreword seem to demonstrate historically the contrary, but it is reasonable to note that the influence of the freemasonry on the course of the world dominated by economic power (and its political and even religious puppets) declined at the end of the 20th century, and we can question ourselves about this reality.
- The young utopian mason who quotes article one of the Constitution loud and clear, learns with wisdom that it is by applying it first to himself, in lodge, with his brothers and sisters doing the same work of self-improvement, that he can make his positive contribution to this constitutional proclamation.

• • •

- To that end, I always try to encourage our new members to volunteer to participate in these questions, even more so if they do not cover the field of their expertise, to bring a different perspective and to reflect on a topic that is unusual for them. This always requires an effort.
- Being a mason is not a holiday or a posture.
- Moreover, the collective work participates in the process of progressive initiation to the masonic methods.
- In addition to the content of the work, it is also the method of masonic work that is transmitted in a progressive and initiatory way. On the substance as on the form, and by the exchange within the commissions, opportunities of exchanges and non-ritual fraternal meetings, then of the workshop. That the mutual enrichment and the opening of mind is carried out.
- In fact, the masonic initiation is a real method of support and development of the person.
- As far as the dissemination of the work is concerned, it should not be overlooked that the retuned works are published and accessible to all, in the profane world.
- This is also the case of the reflections on great themes gathered in White Books, the one on the International which has been important for our lodge – as well as the one on The After Covid, which is still relevant today.
- "These summaries prepare today and will thus complement tomorrow, the works of the Chantiers de la République, the Commitment of Humanism or public meetings for a Humanity assemble, which will culminate in the Masonic Utopiates"[14] as put it the Grand Master Christian Habas, refering to the major public actions that you see posted on the homepage of the

14 Christian Habas, *Questions à l'étude des Loges*, Conform édition, 2016, p. 5.

portal of the G∴O∴D∴F∴, (in french of course), which bring together symposia, conferences and debates on a regular basis in all cities of France.

- Distributed in the form of public works, these reflections of We The Lodges are deposited on the desks of governing authorities (Presidency, ministerial departments, assemblies, organizations) and national or European leaders and the media.

These works of Lodges are deeply rooted in the Masonic tradition,
they allow us to continue outside our walls a part of the work we do,
they are addressed to those who have the desire to discover,
and may be to share, what can be the collective work in Lodge
for "material and moral improvement of humanity"[15]

15 Jean-Philippe Hubsch, *Questions à l'étude des Loges,* Conform édition, 2019, p. 5.

Ladies and masons[16]

May a woman become a freemason? This is an idle question for us, but the masonic organizations operating in abide of the old English Landmarks do not admit ladies and, if we look at the number of members, there are by far more brothers in those self-defined "regular" organizations than brothers and sisters in those organizations that refuse the "no women" Landmark.

In France and in Italy there are male only and mixed masonic organizations as well; the first french organization, G∴O∴D∴F∴, welcomes ladies in its lodges, in Italy the first one, G∴O∴I∴, is a "male only", but the second and the third one are mixed; if we move to the anglo-saxon world, the english UGLE is the "guardian" of the Landmarks and in the USA no native organization admits ladies.

In the USA and in Canada there are mixed lodges, chartered by the french Le Droit Humain, a masonic organization, founded by Maria Deraismes in 1883 and others chartered by the Grand Orient de France and ladies only by Grande Loge Féminine de Belgique; according to some hearsay, there are other masonic bodies or isolated lodges, Anyway, since

16 Masonic Coffee November 20th, 2021.

the "regular" American freemasonry has about two millions of members, the relevance of the feminine and mixed lodges is little, at least for now. Anyway, a certain number of brothers, who joined a "regular" organization, actually believe that the "no-ladies" Landmark has no fundament.

Paolo Lucarelli, a famous Italian alchemist (pupil of Canseliet and friend of Zolla) as well as a G∴O∴I∴ freemason, wrote the preface to the Italian edition of *La Symbolique maçonnique du troisième millénaire*, by Irène Mainguy. Here is an abstract of brother Lucarelli words. "… As we know, the so-called regular lodges, which arise from the great British lodges, place as landmarks that their members are not atheists, must operate on an open holy book and must not accept women, which does not prevent there being Grand Lodges recognized by other Grand Lodges, such as the G∴O∴D∴F∴: a situation has arisen which is more political than ideological or philosophical, and from there further disputes arise. Anderson published the Constitutions in 1723, and they explicitly stated that a person admitted to a lodge must not be a woman, so even today most of the freemasonries in the world abide by this rule, considering irregular those who do not…".

The reasons given. Here they are.

1. Because there were no women in the construction sites of the masons. In medieval literature it turns out that there were, and they often carried out delicate works, such as preparing the mortar, cordage, retouching sculptures, etc.

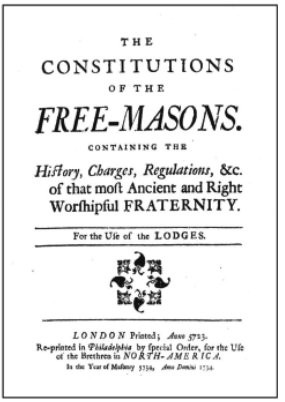
2. Because freemasonry is a solar initiatory order, but many solar cults, such as those of Apollo and Dionysus, had mostly priestesses.
3. Because women can be initiated, but not in turn transmit the masonic initiation: that is such complex, refined and subtle reasoning, that I am forced to declare my total incomprehension and incompetence!
4. Because freemasonry is a chivalrous order. Unexceptionable if you accept the assumption, but the statement is very controversial.
5. Because the presence of women could disturb the serenity of masonic works. That explanation is from Ramsay.

Fact remains that this work, by Irène Mainguy, which shines in each page not only of profound knowledge, but of genuine passion for the life and teachings of the Lodges, was written by a woman… Following Brother Lucarelli's clues, to solve the argument, it is necessary to give an answer to the following fundamental questions: before answering the questions above, it is necessary to clarify the root of the problem, the "NO WOMEN" Landmark.

English freemasonry and Anderson's Constitutions

In 1717, freemasonry was born in London as an organization, with the ambition of uniting all the lodges of England under the same rules and James Anderson was put in charge of writing the Constitutions, the document that is the base of the new freemasonry.

Since we are in America, we refer to the American edition published in 1734 by Brother Benjamin Franklin.


THE
CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
FREE-MASONS.
CONTAINING THE
History, Charges, Regulations, &c.
of that most Ancient and Right
Worshipful FRATERNITY.
For the Use of the LODGES.
LONDON Printed; Anno 5723.
Re-printed in Philadelphia by Special Order, for the Use
of the Brethren in NORTH-AMERICA.
In the Year of Masonry 5734, Anno Domini 1734.

Title page of the 1734 Philadelphia edition, which measures approximately 5 ¾ x 8 inches

In the following sentence it is clear that ladies were not seen as possible masons: "Yet the great Care that the Scots took of true masonry, proved afterwards very useful to England; for the learned and magnanimous Queen Elisabeth, who encouraged other arts, discouraged this; because, being a woman, she could not be made a mason, though as other great women, she might have much employed masons, like Semiramis and Artemisia". Anderson's Constitutions prescribe the characteristics of a freemason in relation to God and religion and state who can take part in the meetings of fremasonry, in particular: "A lodge is a place where masons assemble and work: Hence that Assembly, or duly organized society of masons, is called a lodge. 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"[17].

The analysis of the Constitutions shows no initiatic, philosophic or esoteric reason to exclude a lady from a masonic lodge nor states that a woman cannot be initiated: it just states that a woman cannot be a mason in a "regular" lodge. Today, to be considered regular, a lodge shall be recognized by the UGLE, but, before the Constitutions, this Landmark was not strictly enforced or universally accepted.

17 The Constitutions of the Free-Masons, by J. Anderson, London, 1723, The Charges of a Free-Mason. III. Of lodges, p. 51.

Ladies who became freemasons in a male lodge

It is relevant to find out if there were ladies in the past who received a masonic initiation in male lodges. We have the famous case of Ms. Elizabeth St. Leger, daughter of Viscount Doneraile and spouse of brother Richard Aldworth, Esq: she was initiated in Ireland in 1713 or perhaps in 1725. The date of her initiation into freemasonry is uncertain, but her *Memoir of a Lady Freemason* indicates that it was between 1710-1712, before her marriage (1713). A paper by Edward Conder (Ars Quatuor Coronatorum in 1895), states that it was sometime between 1710–1718, but other scholars suggest different years. It seems she had fallen asleep while reading on a dim winter evening in the library, which was located next to the room in which the lodge was meeting. In consequence of constructions going on in the library, she was woken by the voices she heard next door, and the light shining through the loose brickwork. She removed some of the bricks and watched the proceedings.

Discovered, after a long discussion, they decided to initiate her, and she was even passed on the degrees in use at the time. She died at the age of 80, and always had great veneration for freemasonry. Her descendants still keep her Apron; she was known in her time as "The lady freemason" and was the first recorded woman to be initiated into freemasonry. Sister Elizabeth case remained isolated, and it had no influence on the English freemasonry. By the way, the Grand Lodge of Ireland was founded in 1725

and the first edition of Anderson Constitutions was printed in 1723, but Ireland became a part of the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with the Acts of Union, only in 1800.

Sister Elizabeth was not the only example of an initiated woman in the XVIII century. According to Ludwig Aigner, historian of the Hungarian and Austrian freemasonry, three ladies were initiated as freemasons, but a further development was forbidden by the masonic organization in Vienna. We do not know their names, but we know that they were not happy of their husbands meetings; to make the ladies more conciliatory and more inclined to the Order, Màrton Heinzeli, Worshipful Master of the "Virtuous Traveler Lodge" initiated three of them into the first degree of freemasonry in 1778.

Since one of those husbands was brother Emerich Pottornyay, we can suppose that one of the three sisters was Imréné Pottornyay. History records other cases, even relevant if not always well documented. Madame de Xaintrailles The German born Marie-Henriette Heiniken, better known as "Madame de Xaintrailles", who disguised herself as a Ms. Imréné Pottornyay man in order to serve in the military during the Napoleonic Wars, asked to join a lodge of French Adoption Rite, therefore a female one, but the brothers decided to initiate her in a male lodge, because of her brave service.

Countess Helene/Ilona Hadik-Barkóczy de Szala. She was initiated in 1875 in Hungary, but the Grand Orient declared her initiation void, the absence of any mention of candidates' gender in the Constitution notwithstanding; later, the Grand Orient supported its decision by means

of bureaucratic pretenses, this is amazing, not by means of philosophical or initiate motivations. Further records, indicate Countess Júlia Apraxin, initiated in Madrid in 1880, and, in the USA, Salome Anderson of Oakland, California, and Catherine Babbington, whose stories are perhaps too close to the Elizabeth St. Leger's one.

History shows then that female masonic initiations happened in the past, but, since the cases above were not followed by a widespread practice, this does not answer the question about female initiation in general on the philosophic and initiatic point of view. Some brothers support the theory that, since no woman can receive any initiation, as a consequence, no woman might receive the masonic initiation, but this is clearly wrong. Even René Guénon, at the time strongly opposite to female freemasonry, in his book *Perspective on Initiation*, chapter 14, admits that: "… Thus if Masonic Initiation excludes women in particular (which as we have already said, does not mean that they are unqualified for every Initiation) as well as men with certain infirmities…"

According to René Guénon, our masonic way is just one of the many possible initiations.

Some scholars, (f.i. the UCLA Egyptologist Kara Cooney or Stephanie Jost of the Lindenwood University, Missouri USA) support the concept that, in the Egypt of Pharaohs, ladies were allowed to the highest initiation degrees. Women who became Pharaoh, f.i, Hatshepsut and Sobekneferu, had to go through the same initiate ordeals of male Pharaohs: the initiation depended by the function, not by the sex of the candidate. The logic consequence is that if a woman can perform the same initiate path, she is worth to be initiated.

Sobekneferu

We also have proof of female initiations in Mystery Rites, in India and in other times and places of the human esoteric history. In his article "The Dance of Śiva: Fourteen Indian Essays" Coomaraswamy reports the subordinate condition of women in India; but, in a short paragraph, he writes of an Indian Scripture, where the initiation of a son made by his mother is eight time more effective than any other initiation (this interpretation is not clear). To this purpose, Shamanism is interesting too; in certain areas of the world this tradition has roots older than the human History as it is recorded by legends and written texts.

In Siberia, Shamanic tradition was at least 20,000 years old, before being almost erased by the Russian Revolution. In *Shamanism of Natives of Siberia* by Immanuel M. Casanowicz, written a short time before the Revolution of October, there is a relevant information: even if frequently the Shaman is a male figure, there were also female figures. Native American Shamans, probably of Siberian origin, are predominantly males, but women are not excluded; according to Casanowicz, among the Shamans of Patagonia, the male Shamans too had the prescription to wear feminine clothes.

A female Shaman

The consecration, or initiation, of the Shaman is accompanied by particular ceremonies, often elaborated and expensive, where he-she contracts

obligations and becomes property of the spirits, with teachings and sacrifices; the candidate has to declaim the precepts of his mentor and undertake to observe them. Shamanism was particularly widespread in northern Asia; Buddhism, Islam and Christianity have tried to erase it, but there are still areas where vestiges of Shamans era are still found, such as in the tribes of Siberia. It is interesting to note that the reconstructed Indo-European root from which as much Sun as Sonne (and also the Russian солнце solnce) derives was neutral. In Slavic, its gender is neutral, in the Romance languages it is masculine and in the Germanic languages it is feminine. But the dualism sun / male / light and moon / female / dark is found in many Southern European traditions, which derive from the Gnostic (but not all) and Orphic philosophies.

The Great Mother, also Great Goddess, or Mother Goddess, is a primordial female deity, found in a wide range of cultures and civilizations. Her figure refers to the maternal symbolism of creativity, birth, fertility, sexuality, nourishment and growth (for example by the Phoenicians as Ashtoreth, in Mesopotamia as Ishtar, by the Semites as Astarte, in old Arabia like Atar, from the Egyptians like Hathor, from the Greeks and Romans like Cybele).

The Sun: Male-Female

We find female solar deities on every continent, as well as male lunar deities. The solar deity of the Hittites, one of the oldest Indo-European

peoples, was the female goddess Arinna and the earliest goddesses of the Egyptian pantheon wore a symbol of a sun on their heads. Amaterasu-ō-mi-kami, literally "Great goddess who shines in the heavens", is the sun goddess in the Japanese Shinto and she is considered the mythical direct ancestor of the Japanese Imperial family; her Sanctuary is in the city of Ise. A Saiō, an unmarried female member of the Japanese Imperial Family, was sent to Ise Grand Shrine, from the late 7th century until the 14th, and initiated to serve as a High Priestess on behalf of the emperor, conducting three rituals per year, praying for peace and protection.

Amaterasu is also credited with inventing the cultivation of rice and wheat, the use of the silkworm and weaving with the loom. In the Ise Shrine she is represented by a mirror, which contains her spirit. Ise Shinto is a philosophical and esoteric branch, and it means "The way of the Gods". Its foundation is the belief that all natural phenomena are an expression of divine forces, called Kami, which represent the divine spark hidden in everything, being or person.

The Tendai school is another esoteric school: the head of Tendai Buddhism in America is a woman. One of oldest masterpieces in Japanese culture is "The Tale of Genji", the world's first novel, written in the early XI century by a woman, Murasaki Shikibu; it was translated into modern Japanese by Jakucho Setouchi, a 77-year-old Buddhist priestess with shaven head and twinkling eyes, and became a huge best seller.

Women in traditional society

For centuries women were confined to subordinate positions in society, even if this is true specially for the lower classes; out of nobility, we find redoubtable ladies who became queens by their own right, led armies or conditioned the politics. Think about Matilde di Canossa, Elenoire of Aquitanie, Queen Elizabeth I and Isabel of Castille, who were powerful and not in a subordinate position. Ladies have often been protagonists, or heroes if you prefer, in the wonderful and magic world of brother Hugo Pratt, Corto Maltese's creator, often by far braver and steadfaster than their masculine counterparts.

Hypatia

From The *Fable of Venice*, to Corto, who is looking for Solomon's Clavicle, a magic formula and also a precious stone, Hypatia says: "Do you believe in magic? ah Corto, the real great magic is love and harmony. But which love and which harmony? Love for eternal beauty and harmony that embraces the universe. The larger and deeper a soul is, the longer it takes to know itself. Getting to know oneself without a shadow of doubt is more important than all magic". The real Hypatia (born c. 350–370; died 415 AD) was a Greek Neoplatonist philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. She was probably the most prominent figure in the culture of the time, a shameless and charismatic master of thinking and conduct. As shown by the letters of her pupil Synesius, to Hypatia and others, the Alexandrian heroine led a circle of initiates throughout her life to whom she dispensed "the mysteries of philosophy".

Teaching philosophy is "a lifestyle, a constant, religious and disciplined search for truth". Hypatia's philosophy was absolutely disturbing for those who wished to impose a universal truth, because, as the mathematics of Alexandria taught, there is an ideal of research which is preferable to the possession of Truth itself and which is always an unquestionable starting point. She was massacred and her body was horrendously mangled by a crowd of fanatical Christians.

In our Medieval Tradition, we find ladies emerging in any part of society, which was divided in three main legs: (Clergy, Knights and Labourers, as we find in Adalberon of Lahon "Carmen ad Robertum regem"); women were represented in all those legs and often with relevance and with the same functions as their male counterpart.

Orators were the higher casta, link between Humane and Divine and that gave them control over mankind: e.g. the Pharaoh, or better the Royal couple, of Egypt, the Emperor of China and the Emperor of Japan or the Pope of the medieval Roman Catholic Church represented that link. But a lady too can be the intermediary between God and Man, especially if there is a real separation between the world of Spirit and the power of politics.

In the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, we read: (114) Simon Peter said to him, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life". But Jesus said that she too may become a living spirit like males. In the medieval image from a Chapel in Northern Italy we see Jesus giving St. Peter the keys, but Mary of Magdala is receiving the "Scroll of Light", that symbolizes the revealed Wisdom and Knowledge.

How about Hildegarde von Bingen (XII century) or St. Catherina of Siena's spiritual and even practical influence on the Church, the Bishops and on the Pope himself?

• • •

In Egypt we know women initiated as Pharaoh and of the power of the High Priestess of Hator, who had for long time the supreme influence on the Land of Kenet. In this statue from the Metropolitan Museum, the woman Pharaoh Hatshepsut is represented with a fake beard, but with undoubtedly feminine traits; the beard is a symbol of the Pharaoh power, based on the union of masculine and female nature: in this case, since there was no male king, she had both features.

The Roman Catholic Church often disregarded the female nature as a source of sin and always considered a woman's duty to be submitted to a man, father, husband and even to her own elder son, when of major age, following the Roman and Greek legal status of women. Mary of Magdala, by means of an unfaithful translation, was degraded to the rank of a prostitute by Pope Gregory I, Gregorius Magnus, in 591 A.D.

Viking ladies and warrior

Freemasons as a Knightly order Some Grand Lodge Constitutions state that freemasonry is a Knightly Order, but who believes that women cannot be initiated nor transmit initiation, objects that in the Middle Ages we find no lady fighting as a Knight, and that women are not represented in this leg of society.

Instead, many historical documents show that there actually were fighting ladies and some of them were officially knighted, in a form of an initiate ceremony. Archeology shows us Viking ladies warriors, buried with their weapons and we know that they had the whole female attributes, some of them becoming mothers. A very old Italian book, *The Italian heraldic-genealogical-diplomatic Journal,* produced historical documents and evidence of

women made "Cavalieresse" (Lady Knights) and not only from nobility or because of their wedding with a Knight.

Elizabeth I of England was knighted in her coronation day, to became head of the Orders of her reign and to be able to confer the knighthood, that is an initiation, upon her male subjects and this is just one of the many examples reported in that book.

The following example is from Elias Ashmole: "The prince Raymond Berengar, the last count of Barcellona, in 1149 founded a Knightly Order, the Order of the Hatchet, for the Ladies of Tortosa, who bravely fought the Moors when a Muslim army showed up. y showed up, laying siege to Tortosa, the women of the city, instead of surrendering, as they were told, dressed as men, took hatchets and whatever other weapons they could get, and successfully attacked the Muslim camp, driving the army away" [18].

The women in the Order of the Hatchet were knighted and had all the privileges of knights. They went ahead of all common men in processions, they were given preferential treatment in meetings, and were allowed to speak. Elias Ashmole comments: "These women (saith our Author) having thus acquired this Honor by their personal Valour, carried themselves after the Military Knights of those days". In 1387, John I of Castille bestowed a Knigtly Order, on the ladies of Palenza, who with a brave sortie forced the besieging English to retreat in disorder.

There were many female Knight Orders, but the thing by far more relevant of the examples above, is the fact that those women warrior virtues were the motivation to confer upon them the title of knight. Today ladies are allowed on the fighting line, can ride choppers and become top guns, join the US Marines or command a battleship, are they not fit for a Knightly order?

---

18 *The Institution, Laws, and Ceremony of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* (1672), Ch. 3, sect. 3.

We are often told that operative masons had no women in their fraternity; this is not true, since we have old documents about ladies in the operative masons ranks in Germany and in England for instance. Women in Medieval and Renaissance Europe were legally assumed to be subject to their fathers, then to their husbands. The women status within Medieval trades was largely dependent on the local interpretation of femme sole, the legal term for a single woman. She usually was the widow of a tradesman, who was allowed to continue her husband's business after his death, and often she was established in the rights and privileges of his trade guild or company too.

More rarely, single women would achieve success in their father's trade. Exceptions occurred mainly in trades linked to traditional women's occupations, such as haberdashery and needlecraft. Over the centuries women, although certainly to a lesser extent than men, as we can see from documents found in France, like *Livres des Métiers* of 1268. A Gunnilda of Norwich was listed as a mason in the *Calendar for Close Rolls* in 1256. It is reputed that Sabina von Steinbach, the architect's daughter, worked on Strasbourg Cathedral in the early part of the XIV century, although the first reference to her work comes three hundred years later by means of a Latin inscription, now lost: Thanks to the piety of this woman, Sabina, who has given me form from this hard stone.

In England, hints of female participation appear in the *Regius Manuscript* (ca. 1390-1425), and in the *Guild records at York Minster* in 1408. Women were employed in administrative roles in the London Masons' Company, and, as such, received the benefits of membership. Also, the charge in *York Manuscript* No 4, dated 1693 and used as a warrant by the later Grand Lodge of All England at York, contains the phrase "hee or shee that is to be made mason". While a number of masonic historians have

categorized this as a “misprint”, Adolphus Frederick Alexander Woodford, who studied and catalogued these documents, considered it genuine.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the status of women amongst masons in Britain is likely to be similar to the one codified in the minutes of the lodge at St. Mary's Chapel in Edinburgh. A burgess could pay for the Freedom to employ and instruct masons. The widow of a master mason could accept commissions from his old clients, provided that she employed a journeyman of the lodge to supervise the work.

Today many women are architects, civil engineers and work at construction sites, but also in the past we can find a good number of ladies Architect, a position that corresponds to the Worshipful Master of the two degrees era. It is amazing that the Architect of the seat of the Grand Lodge of Italy, a no-ladies masonic organization, in Rome was Plautilla Bricci (1616 -1705). In France, Katherine Briçonnet (ca. 1494-1526) was influential in designing the Château de Chenonceau in the Loire Valley, while her husband was at war.

Lady Elizabeth Wibraham (1632-1705) studied the work of Palladio and, according to John Millar designed up to four hundred buildings and she tutored Sir Christopher Wren, brother and architect; Mr. Millar has traced chunks of possible Wilbraham buildings in an American Museum. Those examples are relevant, since the ladies above worked at the same time modern freemasonry was born and many other followed.

We have seen above how many examples of female initiation there are in the traditions of many countries, cultures and ages; furthermore, history shows that in the past ladies were not always barred from any position and today we see women as head of powerful and rich countries, or working as doctors, engineers, pilots of choppers and Air Force fighters as well, captain of warships and astronauts: six of them will fly to the Moon in 2024.

All that notwithstanding, some brothers believe that initiation should fit the candidate physical and psychological features; because of that, they believe it should be different between the female and the masculine nature. Indeed, attempts have been made to give an esoteric justification to women exclusion by resorting to the concept of Lunarity and Solarity, the first for woman and the second for man. The Initiation Ritual of the G∴O∴I∴ justifies female exclusion by reaffirming the "radiance" (the masculine character) of its own masonic initiation. This "clause" was inserted only in 1969 by the Rituals Commission in order to make the exclusion plausible.

The opinion above is supported by the old initiation procedures of an old Knightly Order, still alive under the Catholic Church patronage, where men and women are eligible as Knight and Dames and have equal dignity inside the Order, but they are initiated by means of different ceremonies. Those brothers remind that the Knights of the Temple had a female Order, called "Sisters of the Temple": their initiation rite was different like different were the duties inside the organization. Instead, history shows that even in the past, ladies were able to fight or preach or superintend buildings construction as well. Furthermore, how many freemasons could properly work today in a building site? Since some masonic organizations define themselves as Knightly Orders, how many to-day freemasons could fight with a sword, controlling a 2000 lbs. war horse?

Also, we have seen in many traditions that women were initiated to Sun cults and in many languages, the word Moon is masculine, and the word Sun is feminine! The masonic path should direct us toward a world of Spirit, above the weight of metal and passions, where sex and other earthly limits have no influence on our path toward Wisdom and Knowledge, where the masculine and the feminine nature are united.

The idea of different initiations is irrelevant and does not fit the humanistic and spiritual purposes of freemasonry; the claim that a woman cannot transmit the spiritual influence, that is seen as the core of initiation, is based on even more feeble foundations. Tradition and Reason prove that a woman can be initiated and can transmit the initiation with no masculine intervention, support or help, since the Spiritual force of human nature makes it possible: we work to achieve Unity beyond any human barrier.

In Continental Europe there was a Jacobite freemasonry and Hanoverian freemasonry that worked in abide of Anderson's Constitutions; because of that, no lady was accepted as a freemason. According to Jan Snoek in his *The Adoption Rite, its Origins, opening up for Women, and its 'Craft' Rituals*, in the 1740s appeared the lodges of adoption, ladies lodges that admitted female relatives of freemasons. From 1744 to 1774 those lodges initiated both men and women. For example, according to its financial administration, the Loge de Juste in The Hague initiated between February 5th and May 1st, 1751, ten men and two women.

The first known adoption lodges that initiated women, such as those in Jena (1748), Copenhagen (1750) and The Hague (1751), were completely independent and had no relationship whatsoever with a male only lodge. The word "adoption" in this context had a completely different meaning than generally assumed. An "Adoption lodge" is synonym of an "Initiation lodge" as opposed to a "Lodge of instruction" or a "Table Lodge". On the 10th of June 1774, the Grand Orient of France regularized the lodges of adoption and gave them a four degrees system: "Apprentie, Compagnonne, Maîtresse and Parfaite Maçonne". These lodges had to be subordinated to a regular "men only" one; from 1774 onwards, men were initiated only in that male lodge.

The officers of the adoption lodges were partly male (especially the Masters!), partly female. As far as the mainstream male lodges are concerned, male masons (having at least the second degree) had free access to the adoption lodges, but female masons, however, never had access to the male lodges. The adoption system had no diffusion in England but was successful in France and was joined by important and influent ladies. The Empress Josephine herself was the Grand Mistress of two lodges of adoption in Paris and she was made a member of the Lodge of Virtue, Strasbourg, in 1805.

In 1808 the Grand Orient of France declared the Adoption system not in abide of its Constitution, but the G∴O∴D∴F∴ reactivated the feminine lodges in 1901, this time allowing a woman to occupy the "Chair of King Solomon".

Here is an abstract from Wikipedia about some Orders, working in support of the "regular" lodges, admitting women and whose members are not considered freemasons in their own right:

- **Order of the Eastern Star**

  In 1850, Rob Morris created the Order of the Eastern Star for freemasons and their female relatives; a male M∴M∴ shall be present during the meetings. Amazing the time coincidence with the first National Women's Rights Convention in the USA.

- **Order of the Amaranth**

  The ritual of the Order of the Amaranth was conceived in 1860 to be loosely based on a society with a similar name instituted over two centuries earlier by Queen Christina of Sweden. It is open to Master masons and their female relatives.

• • •

• **Ladies' Oriental Shrine of North America**

Founded in 1903 in Wheeling, West Virginia, the Order has over sixteen thousand members in seventy six courts across North America. To be accepted, a woman must be related to a member of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine or to a Master mason by birth, marriage, or adoption.

We also remind the Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem, the Heroines of Jericho, and the Order of Cyrenes, offshoots of Prince Hall freemasonry; these two latter orders are open to the Royal Arch and the Templar masons respectively and their female relatives.

• **Order of Weavers**

Formed on 17 July 1947, the Orde van Weefsters Vita Feminea Textura, or the Order of Weavers was the creation of the wives of Dutch freemasons relatives.

• **The Social Order of the Beauceant**

Limited to the wives and widows of Knights Templar of the York Rite; the Beauceant Initiation Rite is close enough to the American Masonic.

The following Orders are masonic ones, even if they are not considered "Regular":

• **The Order of the Pug**

The Order of the Pug, or Mops-Orden, is believed to have been founded in Bavaria in about 1740, to circumvent the Papal ban on Catholics becoming freemasons. It admitted both men and women.

• **Cagliostro's Egyptian Rite**

In 1784, in Bordeaux, the man calling himself Count Alessandro di Cagliostro opened the first lodge of his Egyptian Rite Masonry; the ceremony for the two sexes differed only in minor points; males were admitted by Cagliostro (the Grand Copht) and females by his wife (the Queen of Sheba). After their Initiation, women were told that they were now freemasons.

• **Rite of Memphis-Misraïm**

Proceeding from Cagliostro's rite, the Rite of Misraïm (from Arabic مصر Misr = Egypt) continued as a form of mixed, esoteric masonry. Banned in 1817, it was reformulated as the Rite of Memphis in 1838. During the 1880s the two rites were fused by Giuseppe Garibaldi into the Rite of Memphis-Misraïm.

• **The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn**

The membership and ritual of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn were strongly linked to freemasonry, but membership was open to non-masons and to women.

• **The International Order of freemasonry Le Droit Humain**

On 4 April 1893, Maria Deraismes, with the help of Dr Georges Martin, created in Paris the first mixed-gender lodge which gave birth to what would eventually become the International Order of freemasonry for men and women, Le Droit Humain, a global masonic Order, membership of which is available to men and women on equal terms, regardless of nationality, religion or ethnicity. In 1902, the Order was established in Great Britain by Annie Besant. Le Droit Humain has about thirty-two

thousand members in more than sixty countries around the world and on all five continents.

Today there are many masonic organization in the world that admit ladies as freemason and also mixed lodges, where brothers and sisters work together and where any position in the lodge and any function during the Rites may be covered with no sex prejudice, for instance the Grand Orient Of France and the Gran Loggia d'Italia; usually those lodges are part of the nondogmatic freemasonry, and are members of the Centre of Liaison and Information of Masonic Powers Signatories of Strasbourg Appeal or CLIPSAS.

Finally doubt: can mixed lodges be a cause of disorderly behavior?

This could be a strong point for the critics of mixed freemasonry, especially if we consider brothers and sisters at the first legs of their path. Anyway, as we learn from Dante Alighieri, we have to face and twin human vices and transform them into virtues, our path implies that we can be able to find in ourselves reasons and strength to confine vices into dark dungeons.

Times are slowly a' changing

The United Grand Lodge of England softened his position towards female freemasonry; in the UGLE Masonic Museum of London, there is a lady Dorothea Irving's picture as Worshipful Master of the Golden Rule #1 lodge, even if that obedience was not recognized. Recently their position

evolved further; the following sentences are downloaded from the UGLE official internet site:

"Women Freemasons have been meeting across the country for more than 100 years. There are two female-only Grand Lodges: The Order of Women Freemasons and HFAF – Freemasonry for Women. They both follow the same ceremonies and wear the same regalia as male Freemasons, and they often work closely with community and charity projects. The United Grand Lodge of England has an excellent working relationship with both Grand Lodges. Members from Freemasonry for Women and The Order of Women Freemasons have both taken part in Open House London at Freemasons' Hall in recent years to showcase female Freemasonry, as well as taking part in joint Freshers' Fairs up and down the country as part of the Universities Scheme".

The UGLE tells more. The Order of Women Freemasons is the oldest and largest masonic organization for women in this country and works on the lines of regular male freemasonry. It was constituted as the Grand Lodge of the Honorable Order of Ancient Masonry in 1908 and adopted the title "The Order of Women Freemasons" in 1958.

The Order originally included men and women but in the early 1920s a decision was made to restrict admission to women only, and by 1935 it was an exclusively female organization. The Order's headquarters have been situated in Noting Hill Gate, London, since 1925 and are run by the Grand Master and her secretariat, who undertake their duties on a voluntary basis. Women of any race or faith can join – they should be 21 years or older, be of good character and believe in a Supreme Being. The Order has approximately four thousand members in more than three hundred Craft lodges spread throughout the UK and overseas, which meet a minimum of four times a year. The Order also actively encourages all members to join the further and higher degrees.

• • •

Freemasonry for women, founded in 1913 as The Honorable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons is a masonic fraternity for women and it has lodges in the UK and overseas, and about eight hundred members. The lodges have the same aims and ideals as their male counterparts and have identical organizational structures. Their members are encouraged to practice charity, both publicly and privately, and to always treat each other fairly.

HFAF is a small but vibrant community of individuals, with members of all ages, backgrounds, and religious beliefs. Freemasonry has evolved over the centuries as a system of moral guidance and education, characterized by allegory and symbolism, enabling its members to follow a common purpose of living a moral life for the good of themselves and society.

It promotes the ideals of masonic brotherhood with special emphasis on three benefits for women: friendship, inspiration and empowerment. Being a member of a lodge creates a special bond between women, no matter what their background.

Friendship is important in today's increasingly online world, where we can often feel isolated and lonely. HFAF aims to inspire its members to become the best version of themselves possible and in turn inspire those who come after them. Everyone needs a role model in their lives.

HFAF believes that every woman should be empowered by increased self-confidence and belief in her abilities. Taking part in the lodges and ceremonies provides many opportunities to discover both new and latent talents. In common with our fellow masons in the United Grand Lodge of England, it is part of our core beliefs that we give to charity.

In conclusion

Reasoning on the documents above, it seems evident that the only standing reason against women in freemasonry is the English tradition; in England there still are Clubs where ladies cannot enter, and we all know how much Englishmen love their traditions. After dinner, the old English tradition wanted the male invited guests in a lounge drinking whisky and Cognac and the ladies in another lounge for a glass of Porto. Furthermore, we should think with the mind of an early XVIII century man and take in account the social position of women in those times.

Last but not least, most of the meetings were held using a tavern hall (e.g. see Charles H. Merz book *Guild Masonry*) and those places were more appropriate for a Phryné follower than for an English lady. In any case, like that or not, UGLE still does not accept ladies in its ranks, even if it recognizes that a woman may follow a true masonic path, but in another organization: how could we use reason against a freely accepted tradition, especially if it has no rational or esoteric foundation?

The old Landmarks still stand in many masonic fraternities and not few brothers hold them as never obsolete and forever lasting, social evolution or more correct reasoning notwithstanding. Is this opinion anchored in the past reasonable? For instance, the Landmarks also ask a Candidate to be "freeborn": obsolete requirement, isn't it? Serfdom was abolished by Queen Elizabeth I, who freed the remaining serf in 1574 and, in Scotland, the few remaining serf born where emancipated in 1799.

Slavery was finally abolished in the United Kingdom, colonies included, with the Abolition Act in 1833. Even if to be freeborn could have any sense in the XVIII century or it had any initiation or philosophical foundation, today it is clearly obsolete, at least in its original meaning.

• • •

Should the "no women" Landmark be examined by means of the same criterion? Sadly, many brothers hold this Landmark as not obsolete.

Masonic transmission: its values, and specificities via the various means of communication[19]

The editorial of the T∴R∴ Grand Master (T∴R∴G∴M∴) of the public site of the Women's Grand Lodge of France (G∴L∴F∴F∴) invites us to reflect:

Dare, the woman of the 21st century, connected, multitasking, social chat, forum exchange, tweeting and retweeting. Active life of all kinds of exchanges and yet, the smartphone does not receive a network for existential questions. The answers are to seek in themselves, in its network of inner and intimate reflections. A small voice then rises in the disconnected silence that calls the woman to align her different activities, the roles she plays, and to compare them with her deep self.

Today, women are present and active in all political and economic sectors such as medical, legal, financial, industrial, educational, administrative fields, among others, modifying their lifestyles and masonic landmarks. sociological, scientific, technological, and industrial advances have been accompanied. New technologies have invaded our daily lives, are constantly developing and everything is going very fast. We are drowned by images and information; we evolve in instantaneity. To date, almost everything is dematerialized. We were convinced that all these advances would free up time for us to invest in new activities, but that is not the case, and sometimes it is impossible for us to respond to a request.

19 Masonic Coffee August 15th, 2020, and November 28th, 2020

Yet, every link that we are committed to himself but also towards the collective. Giving of one time, is an inherent duty of commitment, under penalty of seeing the collective barter as a "club", renouncing the essential of this commitment, we manage daily constraints to the best of our ability because we are determined to assume our commitment and to pursue this spiritual and initiatory reflection. It is within the lodge, this privileged place out of time and space, where we allow ourselves to "pause" free from profane pressures, that "we will be able to carry out our work in complete serenity".

"Stand my Sister, you will never kneel before anyone again, a freemason lives standing and dies standing", this invitation, expressed in a mandatory form "Live Standing" and "Die Standing" involves individual behavior in an unknown time-space. It is a dynamic movement during which each new link will join those in the chain constituted, and, at the appropriate time, will contribute to the achievement of the joint action to achieve "The Ideal of Perfection".

The transmission starts from this first step of the initiatory path on which we have made the choice to engage us progressing imperturbably out of time and space.

We are attached to the ritual introduced to the G∴L∴F∴F∴ in 1973 by sister Edith Hakoun and sisters, founders. They will mobilize determined to overcome taboos and prohibitions, for the creation of Phenixia with a paraplegic Worshipful Master. We are faithful to this transmitted ritual which calls for no modification, to the values it conveys to our symbolic tools and to our methodology which gradually unfolds. How, at the moment when the immediate dictates its law, wherever faster is the rule, how to make

understand to our young sisters that the initiation is inscribed in a long time, that this inner journey is carried out sometimes in retreat on oneself, sometimes in openness towards the world, at a personal space. How to even get typed what "Initiation" means, that this implies availability spirit, listening and participation in the ritual. For a ritual, therefore an initiation, is fully alive body and spirit, it cannot be considered by the bias of a screen.

There can be no question of holding virtual ceremonies tomorrow. But let us imagine that one of our sister is unavailable from time to time and prevented from attending meetings of Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts or later at the Masters degree, or someone who cannot move for medical reasons, all wishing to continue their masonic journey. Shall we send them on the index? Or shall we have to exclude them for lack of information due to their disability or current situation? We should adapt these new technologies to allow them to remain the masonic link that is dear to us.

How to manage these new supports that are pushing us? What rules do we have to adopt so that we are not overwhelmed (and therefore disappear) but at the same time keep the heart of what makes us who we are? How match the match between the masonic ideal and reality? To preserve the egregor since the disembodied presence does not allow the transmission of energy, as this transmission goes mainly through oral, proximity, intonations and looks, a point of view that enriches us mutually. To remain a progressive institution that is not confined to the past, it might be enough to accommodate certain aspects of our methodology and to put the new technologies at the service of our commitment and our initiatory path.

The G∴L∴F∴F∴ in general and lodges in particular, must remain this dynamic crucible in which progressive, innovative ideas are born, overcoming useless and sterile quarrels. Each sister would find the means to

progress on the path of knowledge as a free and responsible woman, within a community whose rules and values ensure that all its members pursue one and the same objective; improve and work for the betterment of humanity. Let us be imaginative because the answers will be the result of a common research and reflection.

In conclusion, we quote an excerpt from a board presented in 2014, by a sister of the lodge le Figuier: "This century of technological development must not hinder our initiatory and spiritual commitment. it must be accompanied. Digital is changing the economic and political organization of any institution or organization. In a faster and more complex world than ever with individuals who have become demanding, knowledgeable and zapper, our obedience must seize this opportunity, if not, it takes the risk of moving away from the future lay people of today and tomorrow".

These essential information technologies could allow us, depending on how they are understood and used in the coming years, to ensure the sustainability of the G∴L∴F∴F∴, to retain the new generations of sisters given their constraints. Strengthening our communication culture would allow us to adapt our masonic method to demographic, sociological and economic changes. Access to information, the legitimate desire to evolve, to be able to express oneself freely, the thirst for truth, and the concern for security, are all factors that must be taken into consideration, not to mention that a "freemason lives standing".

Let us keep in mind this sentence of the Union Chain: "This chain links us in time as in space, it comes to us from the past and tends towards the future". The conclusions of sister Orator: "It is a road, a secret path to seek to penetrate the depths of us". At the bottom of this path, we can of course, use modern techniques, digital tools, getting closer to all kinds of information, and save time. Let us dare to tame these new technologies

that plunge us into instantaneity. But it is an incompressible time, the time to find oneself, deeply. As is the case today, where we are all gathered, the moment of an outfit, in this privileged place out of time, around our ritual. Each lodge expressed its feelings, its experiences and transmitted its ideas and energy.

Humanisme et Laïcité, Laïcité, Le Figuier,
Philadelphia, Le Fil à Plomb, Libre Arbitre,
Hespéros, Louise Michel, Lumière des Amers,
Amer de Lumière, Synergie, Constantia,
Delphes, Compostelle, Egalité,
Mandala, Phenixia,
have said.

United States of America: a wall of separation between Church and State [20]

The fundamentals: a wall of separation

1789 resonates universally as the date of the French Revolution but it is, for us, residents of the United States of America, the year of the ratification of our Constitution which will be followed, in 1791, by the Bill of Rights of the young American nation, drawn up in a legal and constitutional desert (apart from the colonialist framework which preceded its independence). It is written by men – the Founding Fathers – from the culture and history of Western Europe, enlightened by the light of the philosophy of their century, in particular, that of the Second Treaty of Civil Government (1690) and particularly from the Letter on Tolerance [21] (1686) by John Locke.

Locke was deeply receptive to Spinoza's ideas, most particularly to the rationalist's well thought out argument for political and religious tolerance and the necessity of the separation of church and state. The Bill of Rights

20 Masonic Coffee October 9th, 2021. Published in french in *Énergies Laïques* #61, June 2021, pp. 36-41, CNPL, G∴O∴D∴F∴, Paris, France.

21 Locke distinguishes *"what concerns the civil government, what belongs to the religion"*, and wants to *"mark the just boundaries that separate the rights of one and those of the other"*, Slatkine France, collection ressources, 1980, p. 19.

makes no reference to a god[22] or establishes an official religion, concerned, according to Thomas Jefferson, "with erecting a wall of separation between church and state"[23]. It was not until 1940 that these principles were extended from the federal government to all federal states[24].

The 1st Amendment: "Congress shall not make any law giving preference to any religion or prohibiting free exercise, restricting freedom of speech, freedom of the press or the right of citizens to assemble peacefully and to address the state of petitions to obtain compensation for wrongs suffered"[25] will since be subject to interpretation, and possibly applied to

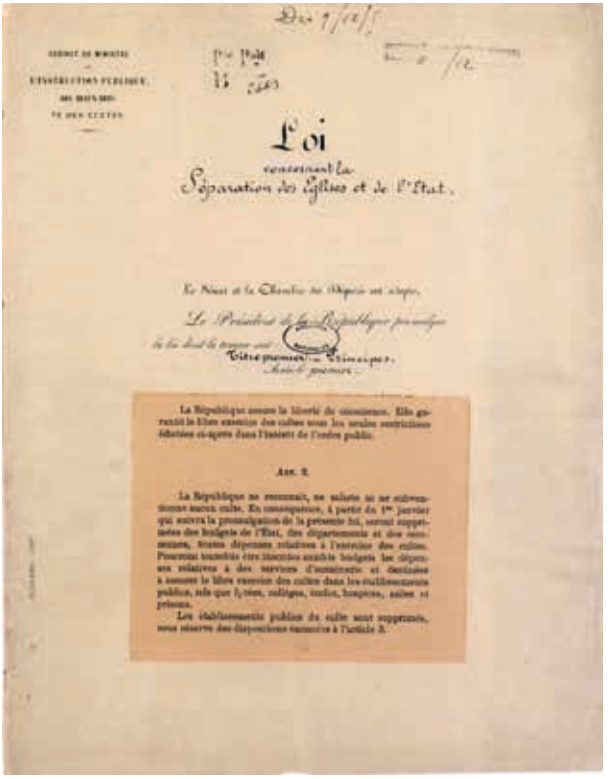
22 Contrary to the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America (Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America, Thomas Jefferson, 1776, french translation of Th. Jefferson, 1st paragraph). The Constitution, however, refers to religion in its art. VI: *"No profession of religious faith shall be required as a condition of fitness for public office or office under the authority of the United States"*.

23 Letter from Thomas Jefferson to danbury baptists, January 1, 1802.

24 This is definitely part of the Jurisprudence of the Supreme Court in 1947, Supreme Court decision Emerson vs Board of Education, 1947 *("Neither a state nor the federal government can establish an official religion. Neither can pass laws that help one religion, all religions or prefer one over the other".)* which concerned the reimbursement of public transportation for students at religious schools in New Jersey.

25 Written by James Madison (1791). Recently, on 27 June 1994, in The Board of Education of Kiryas Joel Village School District v. Grumet, 512 U.S. 687, Judge David Souter concluded that *"the government should not prefer one religion to another, or one religion to the absence of religion"*.

the other two powers, executive and judicial, of the federal state. It is notable that across the Atlantic, it is therefore a strict separation regime that prevails, much more radical than its European equivalents, including in France. It is important to point out that this is seen, on this side of the Atlantic, above all as a safeguard to protect the freedom of religions to exercise against the authoritarian hold of the state[26].



Loi
concernant la
Séparation des Églises et de l'État.

26 The neutrality of the State between believers and non-believers does not require that *"the State be their adversary. Nor should state power be used to annoy religions than to promote them"*. (Everson, *supra*).

A "secularism" which does not exclude religion from the public space

The word "laïcité" (secularism) does not exist in English, the synonym used in the USA is secular (like the French *secular* antonym for *regular*) to signify the respect by the State for the principles of freedom of conscience and moral equality of citizens. American *secularism* therefore does not aim to exclude religion from the political or academic field, but to ensure the peaceful coexistence of all believers by not privileging any religion.

We can therefore speak of civil religion in public life where ceremonies and religious symbols are supposed to bring Americans together without referring to a particular religion[27]. For example: swearing-in of the elect on a holy book[28], biblical references in speeches that end with "God bless America"[29]. From their foundation, the USA, which considered itself to be the new land of the "elect", professed a providentialism discourse of Protestant inspiration, invested with a universal mission: this is the notion of *Manifest Destiny*[30].

---

27 According to the sociological theory of Robert Bellah, Civil Religion in America in Dædalus *(Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences)*, No. 96, 1967, Boston, Massachusetts, pp. 1-21. (Translated into french in 1973).

28 Since George Washington all American presidents have been sworn in on a sacred book, such as the Bible (closed), except J.Q. Adams (1825) and Theodore Roosevelt (1901).

29 Since April 30, 1973 with the speech of R. Nixon during the Watergate scandal then by R. Reagan and following, in *The God Strategy*, by David Domke and Kevin Coe, Oxford Univ. Press 2007.

30 *The Manifest Destiny*, an expression by John O'Sullivan in *United States Magazine* and *Democratic Review*, 1845

The institutional public life to which we have referred reflects the religious presence in daily public life where thousands of billboards sell religious messages[31] as well as newspaper pages[32], where the radio and television media are invaded by megachurch[33] programs and strategic crossroads of cities occupied weekly by religious, nationalist or ultra-conservative demonstrators; where religious institutions (which are untaxed properties, among other benefits such as exemption from VAT) flourish on every street[34] and where a copy of a bible is left in every hotel room[35].

31 $20 million for Answers in Genesis' campaign on *"the bankruptcy of the theory of evolution"*.

32 Recent example of my local newspaper *Sun Sentinel*, to the pro-Democrats editorials and its full color page *"Jesus I trust in you"* Sunday, April 11, 2021, section 1, p. 25.

33 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_megachurches_in_the_United_States

34 1110 religious' organizations (churches, temples, mosques, synagogues...) listed for the city of Fort Lauderdale, FL (May 2021).

35 The evangelical Christian association Gideons International is credited with the investment of 2 billion Bibles in the world. The association Freedom from religion offers hoteliers the label: *"The literal belief in this book seriously harms health and life"* https://ffrf.org/search-results/?q=sticker.

Finally, "We the People"[36], we agree on the principles of absolute freedom... against a majority government that would impose itself on us, on the consumerist ideology that the reason of the strongest (or of the one who speaks the loudest, or who makes money talk – money talks –) is always the best, and on the unanimous veneration of the god Ploutos and his materialist motto: In Gold we trust!

Confirmation of the fundamentals

Despite this peculiarity of American "secularism", the firmness of the separation wall is too often underestimated. Several major cases around the public school illustrate the durability of the principle of separation. First, there are the attempts by "creationists" to ban the theory of evolution in public schools. In 1928, the state of Arkansas had passed a law which, to put it simply, prohibited teaching that "man descends from a lower order of animals" without explicit reference to the Bible and Divine Creation.

In 1965, the Little Rock School adopted, on the recommendation of its biology teachers, a textbook with a chapter on evolution, only a young, newly recruited teacher seemed aware of the dilemma. She must use the manual, but then incurs a conviction under the 1928 law. Susan Epperson will decide to challenge the constitutionality of the law, which was to ensure eternal fame for her surname, at least among those interested in American constitutional law. In 1968 before the Supreme

36 *We, the people*, preamble to the Constitution of the United States.

Court which, in the famous Epperson v. Arkansas, will deliver the so-hoped ACLU and Scopes advocates ruling: the teaching ban on evolution, in that it adapts education to the principles of a religious group, violates the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Another illustration of the Supreme Court's firmness on the state's ban on favoring a religion. The ban on prayer in school.

In 1940, members of various Protestant, Catholic and Jewish denominations formed an association called the Champaign Council on Religious Education. This association has obtained permission from the Champaign Education Council to offer voluntary religious education classes to public school students.

McCollum, an atheist, opposed religious classes, saying her son James had been ostracized for not attending. After complaints to school officials to stop offering these classes went unheeded, McCollum sued the school board in July 1945, claiming that religious instruction in public schools violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment - the principle of separation of church and state in the United States. In his lawsuit, McCollum demanded that the Board of Education be ordered "to adopt and enforce rules and regulations prohibiting all instruction and teaching of religious education in all public schools in the District of Champaign, as well as in all schools and public buildings in the said district when it is occupied by public schools".

On March 8, 1948, the court ruled 8-1 in favor of McCollum, ruling that religion classes in public schools were unconstitutional. In the majority opinion, drafted by Judge Hugo Black, the Court concluded that "The First Amendment rests on the premise that religion and government can work better to achieve their lofty goals if each is left free to the other in its respective sphere".

Recent fundamental breaches: In God we trust, Under God and National Day of Prayer

The US Congress passed a law in 1956 making *In God We Trust* one of the national currencies. During the Cold War, an America that is doubtful and losing confidence in its certainties and power, resorts to the scapegoat and the instrumentalization of fear (proven technique of the churches, here: fear of communism and its atheism and its infringement of the freedom to believe in God)[37]. From 1957, the formula was legally hammered on all coins, then in 1964-66 printed on American banknotes[38]. The motto appears in capitals behind and above judges in courts, on official buildings and some schools[39].

37 Matthew W. Cloud, One Nation, Under God: Tolerable Acknowledgement of Religion or Unconstitutional Cold War Propaganda Cloaked in American Civil Religion? *Journal of Church and State*, Spring 2004, 46#2, pp. 311-40.

38 A 2-cent coin minted in 1864 coated it, other coins followed irregularly before spreading from 1938.

39 E.g.: Hardin County Court of Justice, Texas (January 11, 2016): https://newtools.cira.state.tx.us/page/hardin.Commissioners.Court; Lambeth v. Board of Commissioners of Davidson County (M.D.N.C. 2004) for inscription on a government building; Louisiana Revised Statutes § 17:262 (May 2018) for enrollment in every school in Louisiana, ditto in the state of South Dakota as of 2019.

The addition of "Under the authority of God", "Under God" in the oath of allegiance to be recited every morning by American students was added in 1954, in reference to Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, but for the same reason[40]. Likewise in 1952, a National Day of Celebration was established for turning to God in prayer and meditation: *The National Day of Prayer*[41].

These congressional rulings were challenged for violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, on the grounds that the oath of allegiance, for example, was turned into a religious prayer[42]. From the 1990s, the application of the principle of separation by the Supreme Court was in fact particularly relaxed, a consequence in particular of the legal activism of the groups of the Christian right and of the appointment of conservative judges by the Republican presidents, from Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush to Donald Trump[43].

---

40 President Eisenhower said of this: *"We thus reaffirm the transcendence of faith in america's heritage and future; we will thus constantly strengthen the spiritual weapons that will forever be our country's most powerful resource in times of peace and war"*.

41 *"Turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals"*. Loi 36 USC § 119 - US Code - Unannotated Title 36. Patriotic and National Observances, Ceremonies, and Organizations § 119. National Day of Prayer.

42 Including Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow, 542 U.S. 1 (2004), Myers v. Loudoun County Public Schools (2005).

43 In 2002, the Court authorized indirect public funding through vouchers used by parents in the school of their choice, whether public, private non-denominational, or religious (Zelman v. Simmons-Harris, 536 U.S. 639 (2002). In 2014, in Town of Greece v. Galloway, 572 U.S. 565 (2014), the Court ruled that the opening of monthly sessions of the City Council of Greece, NY, with Christian prayers delivered by members of the local clergy was constitutional. This decision was not without provoking the fury of secularism groups and revived debates on the real compatibility of this type of public expression of religion with the requirements of neutrality and pluralism induced by the First Amendment.

The Supreme Court ruled that these religious symbolisms are compatible in that they constitute "a tolerable recognition of the beliefs mainly shared by the inhabitants of this country"[44], that they do not force anyone to adhere to a religion and refer to God in general, and not to a particular religious tradition. In response, several local and federal laws have been introduced over the past two decades in order to strengthen the rights of religious minorities. The main objective was to expand the possibilities of accommodation for individuals indirectly discriminated against in the exercise of their faith through the application of a neutral and general law[45].

The political polarization of the United States and the question of separation

With the extreme polarization of American political life, certain societal questions are considered hostage to become the trophies of either side. Principles once thought to be well established are thus in danger of being called into question with the rise of right-wing populism which has practically taken control of the Republican Party. This is the case with the emblematic right to abortion targeted by Donald Trump and which

44 *Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783 (1983).

45 This is the case, for example, of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) passed by Congress in 1993 in response to a controversial Supreme Court decision involving two members of the Native American Church and also the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), enacted in 2000 in order, inter alia, to strengthen the religious freedom of prisoners. Under the RLUIPA, for example, the Supreme Court ruled in January 2015 that an Arkansas prison had "severely" impeded a Muslim detainee's freedom of religion by prohibiting him, for security reasons, from growing a one-centimeter beard in accordance with his religious beliefs. Holt v. Hobbs, 574 U.S. 352 (2015).

implemented a deliberate strategy of appointing conservative judges so that the case law of *Roe vs Wade* (1973) which had seen the Supreme Court rule that the United States Constitution protects the freedom of pregnant women to choose to abort without excessive government restrictions.

The Principle of Separation also creates a strong rift between conservative and liberal Supreme Court judges. In a recent Supreme Court decision *Espinoza vs Montana Department of Revenue* (2020) the Supreme Court decided, 5 to 4, that public funds dedicated to schools (including private) should be accessible to private religious schools, while the Constitution of Montana expressly prohibits public funding for religious groups. Judge Sonia Sotomayor (appointed by Barak Obama in 2009) said in the minority judgment that the Supreme Court ruling "Weakens a long-established principle of separation of churches and state, mutually beneficial to one like to the other".

Finally, in a context of the diversification of religious identities, the balance of liberal-pluralist secularism is sometimes difficult to find between reinforced protection of religious freedom and maintenance of the principle of state neutrality[46]. The expression of liberal-pluralist secularism of J. Maclure and Ch. Taylor, if it guarantees the neutrality of the State, "Is not formalized by the simple presence of religion in the public space and admits the need to resort to accommodations aimed at […] allowing the exercise of religion"[47].

---

46 This is shown by the limited impact, if not the failure, of certain legislations. The scope of the RFRA was thus limited to federal statutes only by the Supreme Court in 1997, while the Workplace Religious Freedom Act, under discussion in Congress since 1995 and which aims to promote *"reasonable accommodation"* in the world of work, has still not been adopted.

47 Charles Taylor, Jocelyn Maclure, *Laïcité et liberté de conscience*, ed. La Découverte, 2010, 164 p., EAN : 9782707166470, auteurs membres de la Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodements related aux différences culturelles du gouvernement du Québec.

National Committee of Public Health and Bioethics[48]

Freemasonry is a "peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols".

CNSPB: Moral values

- Freemasonry instils in its members a moral and ethical approach to life.
- Our values are based on integrity, kindness, honesty, and fairness. It also teaches and practices concern for people, care for the less fortunate and help for those in need.
- Public health and Bioethical issues are discussed according to our moral and ethical approach of life.

Public health and medicine approach the challenge of health and health care from distinct, complementary perspectives.

In public health, the focus is on the health of populations, with the expression of illness found in the lives of individuals.

In curative medicine, the focus is on the individual patient, within the context of family and community.

48 Masonic Coffee March 20th, 2021.

The success or failure of any government in the final analysis must be measured by the well-being of its citizens. Nothing can be more important to a state than its public health; the state's paramount concern should be the health of its people.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Ten Essential Functions of Public Health

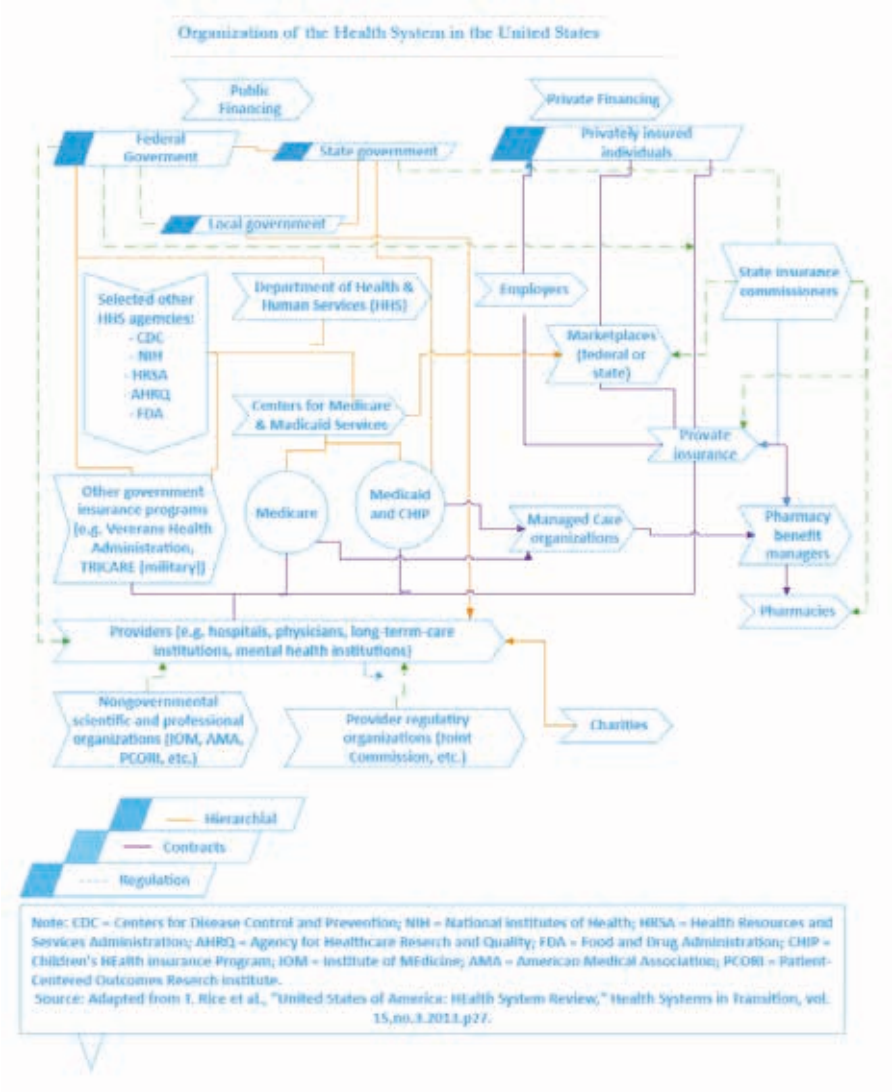
Difference between Public and private financing in the health system: France *vs* United States

1. France: Public financing

The French experience shows that a health care system, especially a hospital system, can be public and universal without health services being provided and insured almost exclusively by public sector bodies and establishments[49].

49 *The private sector within a public health care system: the French example* (PDF). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230710584_The_private_sector_within_a_public_health_care_system_the_French_example [accessed Mar 16, 2021].

2. USA: Private sector



Besides, funding and governance of public health services are distinct from the social health insurance system.

3. Public Health

- Primary focus on populations.
- Public service ethic, as an extension of concerns for the individual.
- Emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion for the whole community.
- Our concern as F∴M∴.
- Give everyone access to the best medical care (but also pharmaceutical, surgical, etc.).
- So, we need to participate to the national debate about public health policy (Priorities, Financing, etc.) as a group.

Other Public health issues

- Geographic distribution of hospitals, laboratory, etc. (access to good quality medicine).
- Cost-effectiveness of drugs, surgical procedures, Prognosis Technics.
- Developments in Biomedicine: Impact on social and ethical level.
- Advances in medical technology have the potential to create disproportionate disadvantages for some social groups, either by being applied in ways that harm members of the groups directly or by encouraging the adoption of social policies that discriminate unfairly against them.

Questions of discrimination in bioethics have arisen in several areas. Why do we need a Bioethics committee? The "Bioethics committee" is a committee that systematically and continually addresses the ethical dimensions of: a) The health sciences, b) The life sciences and c) Innovative health policies. The term "Bioethics committee" simply signals that a group – a chairperson and the members will meet to address issues that are not simply factual but are profoundly normative. That is, they do not convene to determine only what is or is not the case regarding some realm of interest.

The concern of the committee goes beyond the factual level of empirical data. It is established to answer not only the question, "How should I decide and act?" but the broader question, "How should we decide and act?" This will move us from ethics to a traditional branch of philosophy to politics: "How ought a government to act?"

The job of the Bioethics committee

- It is to advise on matters consistent with Administrative Policy and Procedures.
- To advise in the formulation of Medical Staff Rules and Regulation and Policy and Procedures documents pertaining to ethical considerations (written informed consent).
- The Bioethics committee provides a forum for discussion of ethical considerations associated with the organization's clinical, educational and research mission.

Bioethics committee membership

Normally, its membership is multidisciplinary, drawing individuals from all elements of healthcare services within the organization, including, but not limited to, representatives from the faculty and voluntary medical staffs, nursing services, social services, administration, chaplaincy, various ancillary care staffs and faculty of the Center for Healthcare Ethics. In addition, the committee includes representatives from the lay public (patients associations, etc.)

Bioethics issues

1. **The right to voluntary terminates a pregnancy:**
   - abortion: what do you think about women who decide by themselves if they want to keep their babies?
   - abortion can be seen as a method of birth controlling overpopulated countries such as India and China, where there is considerable social and legal pressure to limit family size.
2. **Reproductive medicine** has recently developed techniques that enabled parents to choose the sex of their child:
   - This new power should be considered liberating or oppressive?
3. **In the field of genetics**, the use of relatively simple tests for determining a patient's susceptibility to certain genetically transmitted diseases has led to concerns in the United States and other countries that the results of such tests, if not properly safeguarded, could be used in unfair ways by health-insurance companies, employers, and government agencies.
4. **Assisted suicide** (Death with dignity)
5. **Organ donation**
6. **Assisted reproduction/surrogacy** (PMA/GPA):
   - sperm and ovule donation,
   - delay of sexual maturity in female,
   - frozen eggs,
   - homosexual couple.
7. **The future of medical and paramedical data** collected through social network and connected objects

CNSPB is calling for publication

- Has a representative of each region (17) and Counselor.
- Has several publications:
  - Press review related to Bioethics and Public Health policy,
  - Trimester publication,
  - Citizen day: annual celebration on given topic,
  - Bioethics conferences with speaker from outside.

Recommendations of new Chairman brother G∴Pr∴

- more lodge's participation,
- nominate or election of a local representative of CNSPB,
- set up for a specialized dictionary (Thesaurus) about Public Health and Bioethics special terms,
- addiction, obesity, assisted reproduction/Surrogacy (PMA/GPA), patient at the end of life),
- for 2021, based on Convent request, the topic of the year will be: "access to healthcare/vaccination".

Masonic Genesis

Western humanity had just survived the turn of the millenium. The Great Fear had vanished; the apocalypse had not taken place. In a common impulse, medieval Europe was more than ever keen to venerate and honor God's immense goodness. In only a few centuries, the landscape would be covered with a white cloak of churches and cathedrals. This Opus Dei (God's work) would become a reality thanks to a handful of extraordinary builders.

These men regrouped into corporations. Each member was carefully selected, trained and introduced to the secrets of the profession. An oath, punishable by death, bound them forever to their specific group. The ultimate goal of the young entered apprentices was to create a masterpiece and to become fellow craft. The most educated became master mason and directed constructions alongside the architects. They were free men, moving unconstrained from one building site to another within a politically fragmented Europe. They worked from the beginning until the end of the day and sheltered in modest wooden lodges attached to the walls of sacred edifices that were still unfinished.

This universe would disappear with the great religious schism of the 16th century, namely the emergence of protestantism. In those days, in Scotland, brotherhoods of masons or freemasons tried very hard to make a living from their art. With the advent of the Reformation on the island, especially anglicanism, the construction of cathedrals had suddenly ceased. It was then that these Scottish stonemasons admitted in their lodges rich and influential people who did not belong to their profession. In return for

substantial donations, these accepted masons or gentlemen masons were to be introduced to the secrets of operative masonry. Having done so, they usually did not return to their mother lodge.

However, these new speculative masons were going to establish initiating societies of thoughts that will continue to call themselves masonic lodges. The tools of the profession were now used in a symbolic framework of philosophical significance. Moreover, the morals of the former operative masons were preserved their professional constitutions as well: the Old Charges or Landmark. This type of speculative freemasonry will lead to the creation in England of the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster, the starting point of nowadays Freemasonry. In 1723, the Scottish pastor James Anderson gave this society its own constitutions, true founding texts of freemasonry based mainly on tolerance and fraternity.

As early as 1688, a massive jacobite exodus to the kingdom of Louis XIV had allowed freemasonry to gain a foothold on French soil. The speech of the Knight of Ramsay (a Scottish jacobite) in Paris in 1736 became the founding document of french freemasonry. This text, which invites to the progress of knowledge, philosophy and humanism while referring to chivalrous orders, crusades and religions from antiquity, will give a new dimension to freemasonry. It will also be to the origin of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite which would later become the most practiced masonic rite in the world.

NOTES

Completed printing in October 2022

To continue working together no matter what!

Anderson's Constitutions state that Freemasonry was founded in order to unite the High Moral Values which otherwise would still be unknown to us, and to be the Center of Union "and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance" .

The Respectable Lodge Star of the Two Worlds, Orient of Fort Lauderdale (Florida), #5379 of the Grand Orient de France, one of the 6 lodges in North America, with its brothers and sisters from multiple origins and locations proudly claims the universality of Freemasonry without exclusion (roots, gender, belief, language).

With 21st century technology, and despite the pandemic, thanks to its specificity and unicity, our Lodge, according to the laws of the Great Architecture of the Universe, adapted itself with flexibility and reason to remain alive, to give us the opportunity to continue to work and to transmit to those in search, the Light we have received.

With this publication of some of the Pieces of Architecture shared during our non-ritualic meeting "the Masonic Coffee" since March 2020, we wish to expand outside the Temple the principles of the liberal, non-dogmatic and continental freemasonry, in the name and under the auspices of the Grand Orient de France.