

# THE BONSEIGNEUR RITUALS



**A Collection of 18th Century  
New Orleans Masonic Rituals**

**Edited by Gerry L. Prinsen  
Foreword by Michael R. Poll**

**The Bonseigneur Rituals**  
**Book I**  
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*A Collection of 18th Century*  
*Ecossais Rituals*



## Foreword

In the late 1980's I began a detailed study of the early history of Louisiana Masonry. Tied to that study was one of the early history of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. It was (and is) my opinion that a complete understanding of one requires an understanding of the other. The archives of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana would prove to be only minimally beneficial to my study due to the loss of so very many of their documents prior to 1850; the possible result of several fires and many years of poor record storing and keeping. It became necessary to expand my search to public and Masonic sources outside of Louisiana.

During my search for documents, I met Dr. Caryn Cossé Bell, then an assistant professor of history at the University of New Orleans. Dr. Bell directed me to the Amstead Research Center in Tulane University. In that center, I found the George Longe Collection. The Longe Collection turned out to be a literal gold mine of information on early Louisiana Masonry. George Longe served as Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of Louisiana from 1936 until his death in 1987. In truth, I felt as a child discovering a hidden candy factory. One significant find followed another. In one box, I found two old books (unfortunately, with some pages torn out). In handwritten French was a Masonic ritual (minus the Master Mason degree). I did not recognize the ritual, and due to time constraints, I elected to have the two books photocopied by the center so that I could better examine them at a later time.

Several months later I did examine the rituals. The initial examination proved interesting. Clearly the ritual was not the York Rite (American Webb) or AASR rituals. It also became obvious that this was a very old ritual. Exactly what type of rituals were in these books? Who used them? Where did they originate? Why were they in this collection? These and many more questions were born from this discovery. Peppered throughout the book was the signature "J. Bonseigneur." Who was this individual?

I sent copies of the ritual to a few researchers in various parts of the US and Europe to try and better understand the find. The ritual turned out to be one of the so-called "Rite of Perfection" (Order of the Royal Secret) dating somewhere in the mid to late 1700's. Several European researchers initially felt it possible that the ritual was the one used by the oldest known lodge in New Orleans, the 1752 "Perfect Harmony." I was a bit skeptical of this initial theory because not only was there no lodge name associated anywhere in the ritual, but the name "J. Bonseigneur" was nowhere to be found in any of the Sharp-Bordeaux Documents which gave information (including membership) of this early New Orleans lodge. Then a line from the EA degree was noticed by Bro. Alain Bernheim, "By the power invested in me by this respectable lodge, under the authority of our Respectable Grand Master the Duke of Orleans, I make you Apprentice Mason." The Grand Master was identified as Philippe de Chartres, but it was noted that he did not take on the title of Duke until the death of his father on November 18, 1785. This ritual could not have been used by any lodge earlier than that date.

Regardless of the other unanswered questions, it became clear that this was a significant ritual. Bro. Gerry L. Prinsen requested that it be published by the Latomia Foundation in the Netherlands providing a photo reproduction of the ritual along with a French transcription and an English translation. It seemed to be a wonderful study tool. Bro. Prinsen requested that I provide him with as much background information as possible on both the ritual and "J. Bonseigneur." Through civil and Masonic records, I was able to provide some information on the brother and members of his family.

The research on Bonseigneur was difficult and slow. With a publication date nearing, it became necessary for Bro. Prinsen to draw conclusions from the already provided data. Unfortunately, nearly coinciding with the release date came a new discovery. I learned that there was not one "J. (Jean) Bonseigneur" but *two* living in New Orleans at the same time with identical names - an uncle and nephew. Both were Masons. Without a signature clearly identifying the uncle from the nephew, it was impossible to determine which was the actual owner of the signature in the ritual. It was also possible that both owned and made entries in the books. The Bonseigneur family is an old New Orleans family and the rituals were most likely passed down in the family. Alfred Bonseigneur, 33<sup>o</sup> was an Active Member of the Supreme Council of Louisiana in the 1960's. It is most likely that these rituals came into the possession of George Longe from this member of the Bonseigneur family.

Regardless of who was in possession of this ritual, Philippe de Chartres, the Duke of Orleans, was the Grand Master of the Grand Orient of France. This ritual was a commonly worked and established ritual in French-speaking lodges. The presence of the "Bonseigneur Ritual" in New Orleans makes it the ideal candidate for not only the original ritual of the New Orleans French-speaking lodges created in the late 1700's and early 1800's, but also a strong candidate for the original French language ritual used by the Grand Lodge of Louisiana.

Special thanks should be given to Bro. Gerry Prinsen and all the members of the Latomia Foundation for permission to release this North American edition and for providing Cornerstone with a PDF copy of the final work. It can only be hoped that, by a study of this work, a greater interest in understanding early Louisiana Masonry develop, but, also, might further research be undertaken in this largely undiscovered subject. We have much more to discover, learn and understand.

Michael R. Poll  
Cornerstone Book Publishers  
December, 2008



he documents we present here are preserved in Tulane University at New Orleans, USA, and belong to the George Longe collection in the Amistad Research Center. They are registered under the name "*The Bonseigneur rituals Box 11 f 3*". They consist of two volumes, one with one hundred sixty-five pages, the other of one hundred and fifteen pages. Several pages have been torn out, others have been "*decorated*" and contain notes without any relation to Freemasonry. It seems as if the books, after being used, as other notes show regarding passwords and sacred words, lost their importance and remained in the drawers of a lodge because they had no further importance.

The contents of these two volumes is:

<i>Volume I</i>		<i>Volume II</i>	
degree	page	degree	page
Apprentice .....	1	Parisian Ecosais .....	1
Fellow craft .....	24	Grand Ecosais .....	7
Master .....	32	Fellow craft Ecosais .....	8
<i>(the pages 39 and 40 are torn out)</i>		Master Ecosais .....	9
Secret Master .....	51	Grand Trinitarian Ecosais .....	9
Perfect .....	54	Grand Ecosais of the Bro. Werwantes .....	12
Perfect Irish Master (sixth degree) .....	67	Apprentice Ecosais .....	13
English Master (seventh degree) .....	75	Fellow craft Ecosais .....	13
Lodge of English Master .....	80	Master Ecosais .....	14
History of Freemasonry .....	100	Sublime Ecosais .....	17
Knight of the Temple .....	120	Architect .....	22
Perfect Elect Master .....	136	Royal Arch .....	33
Suite of the Elect, Elect of the Unknown ...	152	Sublime degree of the Choice .....	33
Suite of the Elect, Elect Master of Fifteen ...	158	First degree of the Choice (Levite) .....	38
Illustrious .....	163	Second degree of the Choice (Knight) ...	47
		Knight of the East or of the Sword .....	58
		<i>(page 71 to 94 were torn out)</i>	
		Supreme Elect (incomplete) .....	95

***One or more copyists***

In total the documents of the Bonseigneur Rituals, including the tornout pages, contain two hundred eighty pages, which represents more than sixty hours of writing. One of the first questions arising is to know whether there was one copyist or more. The picture shows the writing of certain words occurring in the course of the documents. It will be observed that there are noticeable differences in certain letters like the b, the l, the g and the n in the word, "*obligation*", the h and the m in the word catechism.

One of the criteria adhered to is that of mistakes in the writing. Certain of them will be found in all rituals, such as "*qu'elle*" instead of "*quelle*" in expressions like "*what is the hour ?*" or "*accaccia*" instead of *acacia*. Others seem, however, to be incidental. So, the word "*profane*" in the three Craft degrees is written as "*prophane*". But this mistake is also found at random in the book of Knight of the Temple. Also the word "*aperçu*" is written "*apperçu*" in the first volume, but not in the second. Equally the word "*faiblesse*" is written "*faiblisse*" in the rituals of the Craft degrees and in the normal way in others.

Based on these elements it seems likely that several copyists did the work, but that they took turns more than once. Thus, the very peculiar "*h*" on page I-41 is found on page I-76 and I-150. And the writing of the word obligation links the pages I-9 and I-150, or the pages I-84 and I-144, but also the pages I-60 and the pages II-43 and II-107.

What makes it worse is to have to admit that these turns may have taken place within the same ritual, indicating that the copyists changed after a certain lapse of time instead of after a certain text.

Another supposition which can be presented is the continuous development of the writing of the copyist.

To verify the supposition we therefore examined the evolution of the form of the letters D and R, occurring manifoldly in all of the rituals as they abound in the lectures. These letters are presented under very different aspects at the left. The letter D<sub>1</sub> bears a well-formed knot on the top, whereas D<sub>2</sub> written in one single movement of the pen does not have this. The letter R<sub>1</sub> was drawn in one stroke and the letter R<sub>2</sub> implies two movements of the pen.

We hoped by an identification of these letters to show different copyists, but a more detailed inquiry shows that where the second volume only shows the letters D<sub>2</sub> and R<sub>2</sub>, the first volume shows a mixture of the different forms.

In the ritual of the Apprentice some eighty D's and R's show about the same percentage of each form, being D<sub>1</sub> (57,5%) and D<sub>2</sub> (42,5%), whereas the form R<sub>1</sub> (92,5%) is quite superior over R. This distribution develops then and in the ritual of the Master some sixty four D's and R's show a majority of the form D<sub>2</sub> (68,7%) and the form R<sub>2</sub> (80%).

So the originally dominant forms give way to the two others from the beginning of the higher degrees onward. The substitution is complete from the ritual of Illustrious on. It is completely substituted from the ritual of Illustre onward.

The analysis of the writing is not an easy matter and leads only seldom to certainties. It is therefore impossible to definitely dismiss the supposition of several copyists who substituted each other, taking up the work where the preceding one had left off. However, the extent of the task does prefer the supposition of one single copyist whose writing developed in the course of his work. The forms of the D and R finally stabilized, but the other words show continuous changes in the writing. As far as the mistakes are concerned, it will be evident that they are rather common in the manuscripts of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. An analysis of the abbreviations used for the "*Grand Architect*" shows only that in most cases these abbreviations, often of different types, are the same in the documents and other copies of a different origin.

### The Masonic notes

In the rituals of the symbolic degrees, and in them only, we find Masonic notes written in different hands. So on page 10 the word "*Jakin*" was added on a blank space in the manuscript of the Apprentice degree. Page 27 in the Fellow craft ritual has two phrases "*the word is Booz*" and "*the password is Shibolet*", written on a blank line; finally the ritual of the Master degree shows in a primitive writing at the base of the page 32 the phrases "*the sacred word is Mac-be-nald*" and "*the password is Jehova*", the same Macbenald being added on page 45 on a blank line.

These notes are in fact a kind of extract and were written by brethren who had "*completed their ritual*", as is nowadays done as well. The most interesting point remains the corruption of the Master word, written here as Macbenald. It betrays a certain isolation of the lodge which used these rituals, for in the time when these documents were copied the form Macbenak was very well established.

### The graffiti

Apart from the notes we find graffiti in the documents which denote, especially if they were made in a lodge, a definite uninterestedness for the rituals. A first series identified by its very dissolute writing begins on page 14 and 15 of the first volume, in the midst of the lecture of the Apprentice. On page 15 the words "*mille*" (thousand) and "*oysters*" and several phrases:

Formes des D	
B	forme D <sub>1</sub>
∞	forme D <sub>2</sub>
Formes des R	
A	forme R <sub>1</sub>
∞	forme R <sub>2</sub>

The letters

<i>Obligation</i>	I, p. 9
<i>Obligation</i>	I, p. 50
<i>Obligation</i>	I, p. 60
<i>Obligation</i>	I, p. 84
<i>Obligation</i>	I, p. 144
<i>Obligation</i>	II, p. 43
<i>Obligation</i>	II, p. 107
<i>Catechisme</i>	I, p. 41
<i>Catechisme</i>	I, p. 52
<i>Catechisme</i>	I, p. 62
<i>Catechisme</i>	I, p. 76
<i>Catechisme</i>	I, p. 150
<i>Catechisme</i>	I, p. 164
<i>Catechisme</i>	II, p. 4

Some examples of writing

"I am going"

"I am going barway from you poor found Oy"

"I am going farway from you to find oysters"

This writing is again found on the pages 80 and 81 in the ritual "*Lodge of the English Master*" The word oysters 50 and the signature of Duncan five times.

On page 100 of this volume in the ritual, *The History of Freemasonry*, is written in another hand "*Bonsoir*" resembling very much the writing "*Je meurs*" (I die) which is written upside down on page 30 of the second volume, on a blank space in the lecture of the Architect. Many suppositions could be made as regards the latter; from a last message to a brother to a kind of protest against intense boredom.

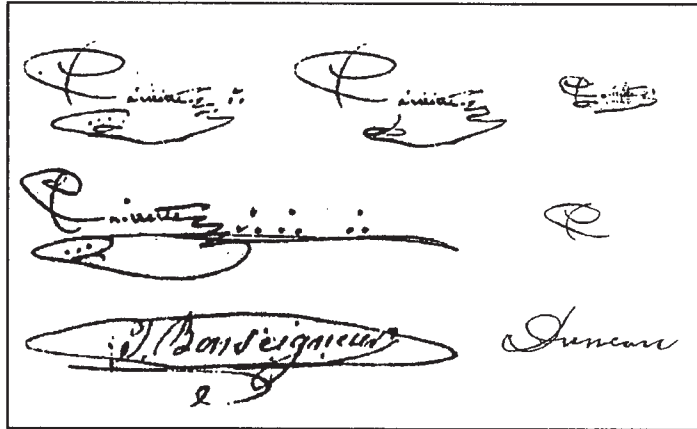
### *The signatures*

In addition to the notes and these graffiti, we find a series of signatures in the documents. One of them is that of Duncan written on the pages 80 and 81. The two others are more interesting.

On the pages 17, 27 and 93 of this volume, as well as on page 29 of the second volume, there appears in the margin vertically to the text and carefully avoiding the text the clearly legible signature of a certain J. Bonseigneur.

At the end of all the rituals except those of Secret Master, Parisian Ecossais, Architecture and Royal Arch, is the signature of a certain Painette, often adorned with additional signs or the talon.

We saw that the signature of Duncan, after all, was but graffiti expressing a certain disinterest for the ritual on which it was written. That is different with the two others. We think that these signatures of Bonseigneur are the marks of propriety, confirming his possession of the rituals, whereas those of Painette, clearly written as a confirmation after writing the copy, are an authentication by which Painette attests that the copies were identical with the original. We do not know why certain rituals were not signed in this way, but it may be supposed that Painette supplied the majority of the rituals and authenticated only those.



*The signing*

### *The date of the copies*

It is always difficult to specify the date on which a copy was made, especially when the copied texts are apparently ancient. However, in the case of these documents, the ritual of the Apprentice gives us an important clue. When the candidate has taken his oath, the Worshipful Master says:

*"By the power invested in me by this respectable lodge, under the authority of our Respectable Grand Master the Duke of Orleans, I make you Apprentice Mason".*

Well, we know that Philippe de Chartres, solemnly installed as Grand Master of the Grand Orient de France on 22 October 1773, became Duke of Orleans only after the death of his father on November 18, 1785. We may add that the same ritual of the Apprentice contains, in a different hand, the note "*copied at Paris*" without being able to confirm that it relates to this copy, or being a note on the copy from which this one was copied. In both cases this document can hardly have been made before 1786.

We may add here that the ritual of the Supreme Elect, with which the second volume ends, cannot be dated before 1785, the reasons of which will be explained in the analysis of the ritual. This date seems to confirm by its nature the supposition of one single copyist.

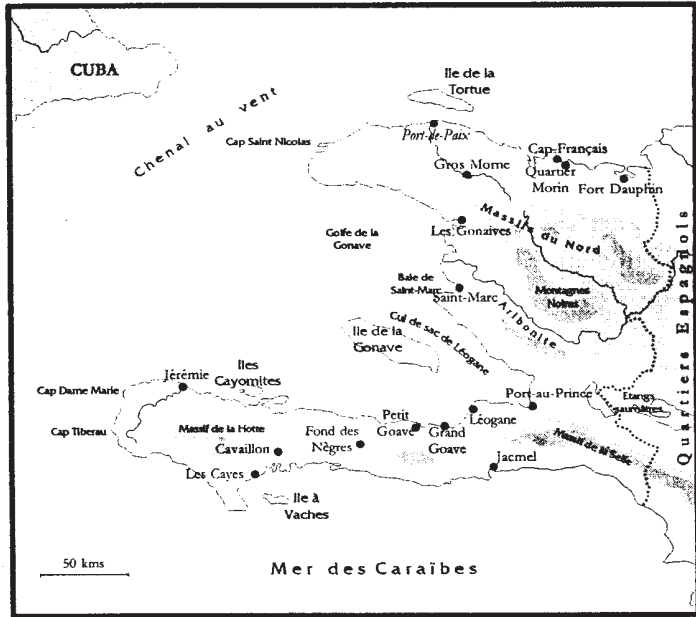
**The origin of the Bonseigneur rituals**

It seems now well founded that after 1786 copies of a collection of older rituals were made for French-speaking freemasons and that these copies were found at New Orleans after unknown vicissitudes.

*About what seems practically certain.*

Well, what do we know of Freemasonry in that town in the 18<sup>th</sup> century? The SHARP documents taught us that Louis-François Tiphaine, master confectioner, arrived in Louisiana in the course of 1751, founding the lodge *La Parfaite Harmonie*<sup>1</sup>, of which he became the first Master and who received the constitutions granted by *La Parfaite Union* of Saint Pierre de la Martinique, his old lodge in July, 1752. We know as well by the letter sent on 2 April 1756 by Tiphaine to *Les Elus Parfaits* of Bordeaux<sup>2</sup> that he was Perfect Ecosais and Knight of the East and that he solicited constitutions for a perfect Lodge Ecosaise. These constitutions which were granted in April 1757<sup>3</sup>, arrived in New Orleans much later because of the Seven Years War (1756-1763). On April 12, 1764 *La Parfaite Loge d'Ecosse* of New Orleans was installed<sup>4</sup>. But New Orleans, which could no longer be defended against the English attacks, was already ceded to Spain in 1762 and in July, 1769 putting an end to the desperate revolt of the French, the condottiere O'Reilly took possession of the town. By disloyalty he trapped on 24 October 1769 the chiefs of the conspirators, among whom the principal members of *La Parfaite Loge d'Ecosse*. He had some of them executed and others put in jail, who were not liberated until the King of France intervened in 1770. There was no Masonic lodge anywhere in New Orleans after the return of the Spaniards.

When in 1791 the slave revolt broke out in Santo Domingo many "*habitants*"<sup>5</sup> fled to North-America. Some, like Moreau de Saint-Méry<sup>6</sup>, fled to the new United States. Others installed themselves at New Orleans. In 1793, those French Mason refugees created the Parfaite Union no. 29 based on a patent granted by the Grand Lodge of South Carolina. The installation for the York Rite<sup>7</sup> was presided over by Jason Lawrence on March 30, 1794. It worked in French until the 1810's and participated in the foundation of the



*The french part of San-Domingo in the 18<sup>th</sup> century*

<sup>1</sup> All documents regarding this lodge were published in Latomia 129

<sup>2</sup> Document SHARP 102, published in Latomia 129.

<sup>3</sup> Document SHARP 54, published in Latomia 129.

<sup>4</sup> Document SHARP 61, published in Latomia 129.

<sup>5</sup> This the proprietor of an agricultural enterprise.

<sup>6</sup> Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry (1750-1819), lawyer administrator, was an important Mason in Santo Domingo as well as in France. Het was the delegate of the important Lodge Vérité at Cap-François and married in 1781 Louise Catherine Milhet, daughter of the Senior Warden (1754) of La Parfaite Harmonie at New Orleans.

<sup>7</sup> Even if historically there has never been a York Rite, this name was given in the United States to a system which contained the three Craft degrees, the Mark, the Royal Arch and, sometimes, the Knight Templar. The rituals of the Craft degrees were quite similar to those of the Antient Grand Lodge. Even today this York Rite in the United States is distinct from the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite

Grand Lodge of Louisiana in 1812 <sup>1</sup>.

Consisting exclusively of French-speaking people, mainly refugees from Santo Domingo *La Parfaite Union* no.29, it had need of rituals and it is practically certain that they were the rituals which became those now called "*Bonseigneur rituals*". It seems, therefore, that we have to search for Bonseigneur and Painette in Santo Domingo.

The person to be found easiest is Bonseigneur <sup>2</sup>. Moreau de Saint-Méry mentions a Jean Bonseigneur, born in Marseille, arriving in Santo Domingo before 1758. Being a "*habitant*"-owner at Port-de-Paix on the heights of Moustique, he married, on 13 November 1758, Marguerite Pouplié, kinswoman of the important family Atty. They had sixteen children between 1759 and 1768. One of the girls, Anne, born in 1773, married a Chanceauline. Taking refuge on the near Isle of Tortue, Jean Baptiste Bonseigneur, born in 1759, was assassinated in 1796 at Saint Louis Nord by the revolting blacks. From 1791, one part of the family Bonseigneur emigrated to New Orleans, the last definitively leaving Santo Domingo in 1802.

The Bonseigneur family was related to the Atty family, a military family living in Jean-Rabel and Port-de-Paix, to the Chanceauline family, merchants from Nantes of whom one branch had installed itself as "*habitants*"-proprietors at Port-de-Paix. With the Audigé family, who possessed two coffee plantations at Port-de-Paix, an indigo factory and a cotton factory at Jean-Rabel and with the Sauvalle, the Desmé-Desjournières, the Roulin, the Sauvalle, their neighbours in the Moustique, the Souty, who also stayed until 1802, and the Gauché, the Bonseigneur formed in the north-east of the island from Gros-Morne to Cap Saint Nicolas a kind of micro-society visiting each other, marrying among each other and taking good care to avoid those who married beneath themselves, like Louis Guillet who married a mulatto.

The surviving sons of Jean Baptiste Bonseigneur died at New Orleans, after having found there a new settlement. We found there a Jean Baptiste Deterville Bonseigneur, born in 1798 and deceased in 1871, who participated in 1815 in the battle at New Orleans, and a Jean Bonseigneur, born in 1804 and deceased in 1875. Jean Baptiste Deterville Bonseigneur was a rich man and owned among other things a large grocery at New Orleans.

Jean Bonseigneur was a Freemason and at his death three necrologies were published, one by the Lodge *Fusion Maçonnique* n° 23, operating under the jurisdiction of the Sovereign Chapter of Louisiana, the second by the Lodge *Fraternité* no 20, and the third by the Sovereign Chapter itself. At the beginning of these necrologies we find Paul Bonseigneur, 33°, together with Marius Bonseigneur, secretary of the first mentioned lodge.

Finally the signature of J.Bonseigneur, identical to the one which so often occurs in the rituals, is found on the attendance list of the Royal Arch Chapter *Harmony* n° 3 on the isle of Haiti, however of no value for precisising the origin of the documents.

All this began in our opinion in 1748, when Jean-Baptiste Trutié, "*habitant*"-proprietor at Cap-Français wrote to *Les Elus Parfaits* at Bordeaux <sup>3</sup> :

*"As some children of our Wor. Lodge have installed an Ecossais Lodge here, and as this growing lodge desires to be reckoned among your children, it sends the request for this purpose, to you Wor. Lodge as its veritable Mother. I would like to take the liberty, Wor.Bro., as one of its members to beg you to be kind to us and to spread the rays of your Light, which causes the admiration for your lodge. Bro. Morin, who will visit this country again, will gladly receive your instructions."*

Upon the instigation of Morin, who signed the second letter <sup>4</sup>, it was necessary to have *Les Elus Parfaits* decide on March 1, 1749 to grant the Ecossais constitutions they asked for <sup>5</sup>. Morin, who had taken matters into his own hands, signed the request and the reply as well! *Saint Jean de Jérusalem* of Cap-Français was created and it was to last as long as the French domination.

In 1753 the procedure was repeated. At the start, Debrune, the Ecossais Grand Master wrote in a letter <sup>6</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Albert G.Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, Macoy, Richmond, Virginia (1966), page 604.

<sup>2</sup> Médéric Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'île de Saint Domingue*, Philadelphia, 1797, page 1455. We also profited by the assistance of a scholar from Laval (France), whom we want to thank in this place.

<sup>3</sup> SHARP document 6, dated 29 June 1748, published in *Latomia* 128.

<sup>4</sup> SHARP document 7, dated 17 February 1749, published in *Latomia* 128.

<sup>5</sup> Alain Le Bihan, *Loges et Chapitres de la Grande Loge de France et du Grand Orient de France*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, (1967), page 390.

<sup>6</sup> SHARP document 38, dated 7 June 1752, published in *Latomia* 128.

*"It is with infinite satisfaction, that we inform you of our setting in this town. Our Wor. Mother Lodge of Cap, from which we received our authority and Constitutions by the intermediary of Bro. Morin, whom she has deputed in order to receive and install us regularly, will give you, as we do, the information, in order to enable us to correspond with you, which will be extremely profitable by the Light, which we beg you to grant us, and which we shall regard as a law to follow, too happy that we can, with your example, let receive and give a new glory to the sublime order of Freemasonry."*

But the circumstances had changed. Morin being no more persona grata for *Les Elus Parfaits* they then delegated Lamolère de Feuillas with the true consular authority for Santo Domingo <sup>1</sup>. Dupin Deslèzes dryly notes on the letter of Port-de-Paix:

*"Written on the 6th of January to Bro.Morin that we would not recognize that Lodge, until after it would have been constituted by the Wor.Bro.Feuillas, our representative."*

The lodge at Port-de-Paix never received its constitutions...

But things did not stay so, not at all. Bordeaux had treated the matter of Port-de-Paix very badly and had it made known. In August 1753, Saint Jean de Jérusalem did no longer assemble as the letter from Lamolère de Feuillas to Dupin Deslèzes informs us, dated at Cap-Français <sup>2</sup> :

*"As far as the Ecossais Lodge <sup>3</sup> in these quarters is concerned, there is no more question about it. I talked about it with some brethren, who told me that they had ceased to meet. I believe that they made the right decision and that it is of much more value to us that they stay inactive. As I know now the character of the people of this country, I see how difficult it would have been to reconcile them and, in truth, we are very happy that they want to forget us. This means that as far as this subject is concerned, everything has been said."*

But Lamolère de Feuillas made a mistake. Rivière, upon becoming Grand Master, wrote in a letter to *Les Elus Parfaits*, pleading for his lodge <sup>4</sup> :

*"If the Wor. Lodge over here has not sufficient Light, it flatters itself that you are well prepared to serve as an interpreter and as her father in the case, which presents itself, and of which she makes the story equally true, as one can be in this letter."*

and continues in a rather sibyllic way:

*"As the keepers of Constitutions from your Wor.Lodge we do not believe we can let this occasion pass, in order to make known, according to their support, those brethren who not only violate their oath, but moreover their character, that they be punished without beating them, according to the principles of our fundamental laws."*

To understand well what happened one should listen to the letter Lamolère de Feuillas addressed to Dupin Deslèzes in 1755 <sup>5</sup> :

*"I have finally seen Bro.Rivière. He came a few days ago to Fort Dauphin with some other brethren, in order to found a Craft lodge. I profited from that circumstance to talk to him. I told him about the authority with which I was charged, as well as about the reply I sent to you. It happened effectively that they had ceased their work for reasons of convenience and to eliminate those who kept causing troubles and discord, but that they had not decided to stop it. In truth, they still meet, though rarely, because of the difficulty they have in bringing the brethren together, who are dispersed in the different quarters of the plain. However, he asked me to inform them of the first time I would go to the Cap so that we could arrange everything."*

So after an internal struggle, between 1752 and 1754, *Saint Jean de Jérusalem Ecossaise*, and finally Rivière, supported by Lamolère de Feuillas <sup>6</sup>, took the complete supervision. In the competition opposing Morin and Lamolère de Feuillas, *Saint Jean de Jérusalem Ecossaise* evidently chose their party. There was indeed another break of the activities and another purge, but in 1759 Chapon and Dumoulin wrote <sup>7</sup> :

*"You were informed of the interruption of our work. The bad nature of certain members and especially of Bro.Morin (if one still can give him this name) have caused it. The true Masons suffered from it, but they did not cease to be masons and have taken the first occasion to re-start the society to which they belonged. This moment has now come and our*

<sup>1</sup> The patent of Lamolère de Feuillas was edited 24 December 1752. It was published as SHARP document 45 in Latomia 128.

<sup>2</sup> SHARP document 106, dated 24 August 1753, published on Latomia 128.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to *Saint Jean de Jérusalem Ecossaise*.

<sup>4</sup> SHARP document 44, dated 25 July 1753, published in Latomia 128.

<sup>5</sup> SHARP document 109, dated 27 February 1755, published in Latomia 128.

<sup>6</sup> We may note that this changes the truth to some extent making us believe that he did use his patent only very recently; after his arrival, he had practically charged Berthomieu to replace him at the installation of the Parfaite Loge d'Ecose at Saint-Marc in December 1753. It is exactly in the minutes of that installation that we find a copy of his patent.

<sup>7</sup> SHARP document 59, dated 7 August 1759, published in Latomia 128.

*assemblies, though very seldom, are revived. Our Wor.Lodge was re-installed and the members who compose it cause us to hope that it will keep going on and it will merit, from your side, the feelings which you have already shown to us."*

Lamolère de Feuillas agreed on 11 April 1759 to a kind of reconstitution of *Saint Jean de Jérusalem Ecossaise* and much later Moreau de Saint-Méry, who was then Grand Orator of the *Perfect Ecossais Lodge* at Cap-Français, made a copy of this agreement for the Grand Orient at Paris.

So the story of *Saint Jean de Jérusalem Ecossaise* was at least between 1753 and 1759 marked by a struggle of clans and by exclusions, rightly or not. But what may be more interesting in this respect is that the Grand Secretary elected for 1753 was a certain Penette <sup>1</sup>. Seeing as the document was written by Rivière and that family names, certainly in that period, had a rather changing orthography, it seems evident that this Penette must have had some relation with the Painette who authenticated the documents.

We have no more allusion in the SHARP documents to Penette nor to Painette. He is not found in the publication of Moreau de Saint-Méry and he is neither mentioned anywhere in those of Alain Le Bihan, who moreover does not mention the lodge at Port-de-Paix.

In short, we know that the documents were copied after 1785, that three copyists worked on them and that their work was authenticated by a certain Painette, that the documents were once in the possession of J.Bonseigneur whose signature, completely encircled, makes us think that he had the degree of Supreme Elect <sup>2</sup>, that they were found at New Orleans, where from 1792 to about 1810 a lodge *La Parfaite Union* worked in the French language. So there are many reasons to suppose that this J.Bonseigneur is identical with Jean Bonseigneur, who died on 18 April 1875. We may add that the rituals beyond the Craft degrees show an archaic structure and seem to be copies from originals which are mostly earlier than 1760. We may finally add that the lodges of Tiphaine, which disappeared around 1769 worked the "*Ancienne Maîtrise*" (Ancient Freemasonry) of Bordeaux, well-known <sup>3</sup> and completely different from the degrees reproduced here. These are the certainties.

*About what seems probable.*

Starting from these certainties it is possible to set up a series suppositions of what happened.

In the first place, we shall have to identify Painette who authenticated the rituals and Penette who was Grand Secretary of *Saint Jean de Jérusalem* in 1753. When Rivière and his clan simulated an interruption of the activities in order to eliminate their opponents and especially those who did not live at Cap-Français and its surroundings, Painette, as Grand secretary, had to possess the "*lodge papers*", which means rituals and especially those which were no more in use since 1749 and the adoption of the Ancient Freemasonry of Bordeaux.

The disrupting factor of the crisis was the attempt to create an Ecossais lodge under the influence of Morin at Port-de-Paix. It may be supposed that the brethren in that place persisted in their plan and associated their Craft lodge with a lodge of the high degrees. That was usual in the Antilles at that time as is shown by the letter addressed to Les Elus Parfaits by the brethren of Saint Pierre de la Martinique.

The fact is that we find in the documents, apart from an Ecossais system of seven degrees crowned by an English Master degree which is largely evolved in Ecossisme, Elect rituals, a Knight or the East and a series of different degrees of which some were rather quickly abandoned in France.

We think, therefore, that Painette integrated into the lodge at Port-de-Paix after the events of 1753 and that this lodge, probably as a consequence of the local particularity mentioned above, was continued. A Bonseigneur, probably Jean-Baptiste, the father or his eldest son was a member of that lodge.

We know that after the revolt of 1791, the brethren fled to New Orleans and founded a lodge there. It is then probable that between 1791 and 1794 these brethren, among whom we know that there were sons of Bonseigneur, tried to procure rituals. In our opinion, they charged Painette, who disposed over a recent copy from Paris of the Craft rituals to have them copied by three different copyists, time being urgent, of all the material he had, inclusive the oldest rituals.

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<sup>1</sup> SHARP document, already mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> See Bonseigneur rituals, Volume II, page 111.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Latomia 101.

We know that *La Parfaite Union* at New Orleans was installed for using the York Rite. But we also know that it worked in the French language and that it is logical to think that this was done with rituals authenticated by Painette. We also know that after the relinquishment of Louisiana to the United States in 1800 the English speaking people in the lodge became more important than the French speaking group and that in 1807 the Grand Lodge of New York delivered a patent to Lodge *Louisiana* Nr.2 which worked in English from the beginning and with the York Rite, the three Craft degrees and for certain brethren the Mark degree or the Royal Arch. This means that the old rituals in French dealing with the Craft degrees and the superior degrees then became completely obsolete. Even the words changed, passing from Jakin, Booz, Macbenald to Boaz, Jakin, Moabon, like the rituals of the Antients.

As the documents had no more use, they may have been left in drawers... That was when certain brethren used them without respect, covering the pages with graffiti, tearing out pages for any use. Duncan, who was English speaking, may have been one of those...

But the brethren often had a deep respect for the ancient Masonic documents. One among them, probably Jean Bonseigneur, saved them from destruction. They were preserved in the Longe collection and finally deposited in the Tulane University. That gesture of Masonic piety made them accessible to us today.

### *Our presentation*

The reader will find on the left-hand page a restored facsimile of the original document. That restoration was necessary because of the rather poor state in which the originals were. On the right-hand page are a French transcription and an English translation for those who have some trouble with reading French.

As we have done before, the French transcription does not contain the abbreviations. For example we wrote "*Respectable Maître*" instead of R<sup>bic</sup> M. We also corrected the orthography, writing "*profane*" instead of "*prophane*" as the manuscript shows. The punctuation was also modernized, which sometimes was extremely strange. Finally inasmuch as it was possible the many mistakes in the syntax were corrected and brought in accordance with the today's grammatical usage. Still, many errors of the copyists remained and as well we the countless pronouns marking the text. We mentioned the first and indicated often in notes the sense to be given to the second. In order to make the text understandable it sometimes was necessary to add words, placed between square brackets and printed in a different type, or to suppress some, placing them between brackets.

The English translation was prepared on the basis of the transcription and thus a corrected version. We hope that this work, long and sometimes longwinded, will prove to be an aid to the reader.

We address our gratitude to all of those, known and unknown, who preserved these documents. Thanks to them it was possible for us to find very old forms of Masonic degrees sometimes forgotten, such as the Sublime degree of the Choice.

In the first place we are grateful to Michael R.Poll, who after finding the Bonseigneur Rituals, proposed to have them published and supplied us with historical information. We also want to thank the management of the Amistad Research Center authorizing us to publish these rituals. We are grateful to Mrs. Rebecca Hankins, who supported us with the answer to many questions. Finally we want to express our gratitude to all our friends, who gave us their assistance by collecting information, checking the translations, and understanding the meaning of the texts. It is true that all this work serves only a small group of researchers, who are interested in the history and consequently in the esoteric value of Freemasonry. But our predecessors, to whom we are indebted so much, shall not fade away in oblivion.

The Editors.



he first volume of the Bonseigneur Documents is comprised of two parts, definitely written after 1785. The first part contains the three Craft degrees, which were copied at Paris, or copied in Santo Domingo from a Parisian

copy.

The second part of the first volume is devoted to the superior degrees. First we find a system of seven degrees, from Apprentice to English Master. After the Knight of the Temple which is very archaic in its form, there follows a series of rituals of Elect, comprising all the revenge degrees without any connection to be found between these degrees and those of the first system.

It is generally accepted that all of the copies date from after 1785, but it is evident that the originals serving as the source are far older. We shall try, when it is possible, to compare these rituals with other Masonic documents, rituals or drawings from the collection Von Löwen.

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### *The Craft degrees*

Following the usage of that age, the Parisian copyist updated the rituals at hand. It is possible to confirm this by three remarks :

- the Apprentice degree is said to have been adopted by the "*Respectable Loge du Prince de Clermont*"<sup>1</sup>, which does not indicate the Grande Loge des Maîtres de Paris as being well-known, but instead the Respectable Loge *Saint Jean de Jérusalem*. This permits us to date the first version at the end of the years 1740;
- when the gloves are handed to the candidate<sup>2</sup> a saying is : "*A pair of ladies gloves is given for a Maçonne*", which indicates an update of the document to the years 1774, because it was only on the 10th of June 1774 that the Grand Orient decided to take the adoption lodges under its protection and to consequently modify some of their rituals;
- after the Oath the Worshipful Master proclaims : "*By the authority I received from this respectable lodge, under the auspices of our Respectable Grand Master the Duke of Orleans, I receive you as an Entered Apprentice*". This implies necessarily that the copy dates from after December 1785 when Philippe de Chartres became Duke of Orleans.

But it should be remembered that on the 17th of January 1786, most probably in the period in which this copy from Paris was made, the Grand Orient adopted the rituals of the *Rite Français Moderne*<sup>3</sup>. Even a superficial examination permits us to state that the documents differ fundamentally from the rituals of 1786. In fact the documents are generally rather similar to those which were in use at Mirecourt in the years 1760, dating from the years 1750.

It is interesting to note that the perambulations of the candidate, which in this case have no relation to the four elements, are contrary to the modern usage of increasing difficulty. Two indications permit us to date the original of the Apprentice ritual at the end of the years 1740 :

- it is apparently contemporary with the Masonry of Saint John the Baptist, which, with the first Ecossais degrees as the Parisian Ecossais or the first Trinitarian system, settled in France at the end of the years 1740, as is proved by the questions and answers<sup>4</sup> :

Q. *To whom is your lodge dedicated ?*

A. *To Saint John.*

Q. *Why ?*

A. *Because Saint John was the first predecessor of the light of faith, by the baptism of the Lord; he was chosen as patron.*

<sup>1</sup> Bonseigneur, Vol.I page 1.

<sup>2</sup> Bonseigneur, Vol.I page 10.

<sup>3</sup> The texts of these rituals are found, although quite different from these, in Daniel Ligou and Guy Verval, *Rituel du Rite Français Moderne 1786*, Champion Slatkine, Paris-Genève, (1991).

<sup>4</sup> Bonseigneur, Vol.I, page 17

- it closely follows the English sources, as is shown by the answers:

**Bonseigneur ritual**  
(page 19)

Q. *What is your age ?*

A. *Over seven years, or three years more.*

**Masonry Dissected**

Q. *What is your age ?*

A. *Less than seven years.*

According to a rather widespread usage at that time the different words were left open. The brethren using them completed the rituals by writing the words in the blank spaces or on blank spots on the page.

The Master ritual is unfortunately incomplete, the pages 39 and 40 being torn out and the reception ritual is abruptly interrupted after the assassination of Hiram, beginning again with the lecture of the Master, inconceivably followed by the obligation formula for the Master. We may note that :

<i>grade</i>	<i>password</i>	<i>sacred word</i>
Apprentice	Tubalcain	Jakin
Fellow Craft	Shibolet	Booz
Master	Jéhova (Gibelin)	Mac-bé-nald

- the password of the Master is Jehova according to the announcement on page 32, but becomes *Gibelin* at the end of the lecture, page 49;
- the Master ritual contains curious signs that we have marked with  $\Im$  and which seem to be interpreted as written sighs similar to old musical notes;
- the Architect is called or Hiram, or Adonhiram, the tools of the murder being a triangle, a pointed hammer and a compass;
- the Master oath-formula, said to be on one of the torn-out pages, is found isolated, after the lecture and after the authenticating signature of Painette;
- this oath refers only to the secret and the Great Architect is not invoked as a witness;
- the signatures of Painette differ according to the degree : simple for the Apprentice, accompanied by three Masonic points for the Fellow Craft and by nine in three groups of three for the Master degree.

All this confirms our opinion that we have here updated copies of older rituals, similar to those in use at Mirecourt about 1750 <sup>1</sup>. But at the same time, it becomes more peculiar considering the corruption of the Master words : Mac-be-nald is not Macbenak, Gibelin is not Giblim nor Guiblim. A brother using these words would not have satisfied the inspector and would not have been able to enter the Middle Chamber in any other lodge but his own. All this seems to us to prove our supposition of an isolated lodge at Port de Paix, without relation with the other lodges of Santo Domingo and in which in the course of time the pronunciation of the words progressively degenerated.

**The high degrees**

The rituals of the high degrees in Volume I were copied at the same time. It is evident, because of their place, that these copies were made after those of the Craft degrees. However, we shall see that the documents which served as their source were much older than 1786, for in that period the degrees we find here were far more developed and presented themselves under fairly different forms. Some of them were even practically forgotten and abandoned.

We first see here a kind of Ecossisme in seven degrees, Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master, Secret Master, Perfect, Perfect Irish Master, English Master. The last one is in fact a Master in Israel which was considered as a kind of Ecossisme before 1761, but which in these documents is enriched with a ceremonial projected on the degree of perfection of the "Rite de Perfection" and a History of Freemasonry.

Then come the Knight of the Temple and three revenge degrees, without any relation to the system of seven degrees. This is a kind of compilation of rituals of various origin, but which is very archaic.

**The Secret Master**

The ritual is very short and does not contain more than a reception, without perambulation or oath, and a short lecture. The signature of Painette for authentication is missing. It seems that this degree, conceived as a simple introduction to the high degrees, was worked out from a more complete ritual similar to, for example, the Secret Master as it is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale <sup>2</sup>. But contrary to that ritual of Secret Master which contains a complete ritual with opening, reception, lecture, sign, grip and words, this one only contains a lecture given by the Worshipful Master to the candidate and this address is clearly an extract from the ritual of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

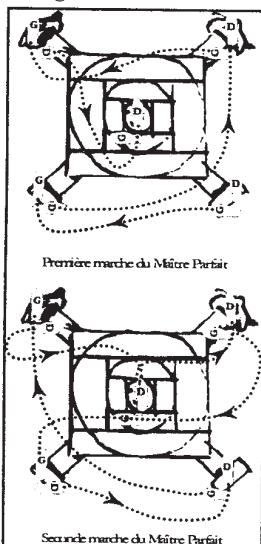
<sup>1</sup> See Latomia 35 and 38

<sup>2</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale FM4 367. This ritual belonged to the old collection of Bro. Lerouge; the writing of the copyist is similar to that of Maçonnerie des Hommes.

**Bonseigneur**  
(pages 51 and 52)

"The zeal and the modesty we discerned in you, my brother, led us to deem you worthy of higher degrees and we would in this respect confer upon you the degree of Secret Master. You will not have to pass heavier tests, because we believe that you do not need them. Finally, do not let yourself be seduced by what is shown and do not judge the importance of the degree by the few formalities which are necessary, and by the relation you will find there with that of the Master's degree, consider on the contrary that no degree is contemptuous and this one even less so, as you have to regard it as the key to the higher degrees, just as the Apprentice is of all Freemasonry. The way in which you have regarded the first degrees brought us to the decision to confer this upon you. It will be the use you make of it, which determines whether we let you stay in it for ever, or to grant you the highest degrees."

A similar parallelism is found in the lecture which permits us to learn that the candidate received a sign and a word. These are not mentioned in the document, but referring to the rituals of the Bibliothèque Nationale, we may conclude that the sign was made in two steps. It required that the eyes were turned to heaven and the left hand was stretched, the fingers closed, on the heart. In reply, the left hand stretched and the fingers closed was brought to the lips, as a sign of secret. The word could have been "Hadino", which is excellent Hebrew. This refers to *הַדִּינָה* [baddino], which can be translated by "his judgement" and reminds us of the column of strength in the Tree of the Sephiroth.



*The walking of the Perfect Master*

This Secret Master has only the key placed within a triangle and a circle in common with the Rite of Perfection. Referring to the ritual in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the apron, gloves and collar are those of the Craft Master and the jewel is a key of gold and not of ivory as in the Rite of Perfection.

**The Perfect**

This ritual is nearly complete, except for those elements which are often lacking in this collection : the important parts such as the opening and the closing which are represented in a single phrase or reminder. So, after a meticulous description of the decoration of the lodge and the brethren, the manuscript only says :

"When the lodge is opened by the questions of Apprentice, Fellow craft and Master, then by those of Perfect giving the Order and the signs of each degree, the Junior Warden goes to see the candidate."

The Von Hahn-Löwen<sup>1</sup> collection contains a tracing board of the Perfect Master which exactly fits the description given except that only the South porch is mentioned. All of the other items can be found, even the "mysterious path" which the candidate has to search for.

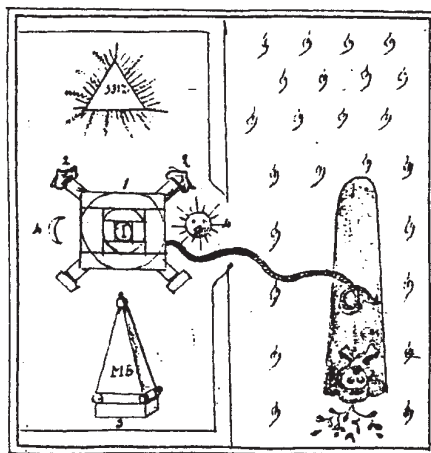
The manuscript approaches that of the Mirecourt collection<sup>2</sup> very well. In this the opening of the lodge

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich von Hahn was a German general in French service. As Sovereign Prince of Rose Croix in 1762, he was raised to Eque de Bona Spe in the Strict Observance on 9 March 1764. He assembled an important collection of ritual manuscripts and pen drawings. The drawings of this collection came to the hands of Bro. Lerouge before passing into the hands of Bro. Kloss. The author of the drawings was Bro. Baron von Löwen, who is not mentioned. The collection comprises nearly 80 pen drawings. The cover bears the date 1784, but the subjects can be dated much earlier. They are now available under Latomia 157.

<sup>2</sup> Latomia 79.

**Document FM4 367**

My dear brother, the zeal and the restraint we recognized in you bring us to deem that you are worthy to receive the most high degrees. It is therefore that we believe we have to confer to you that of Secret Master. You will not have to pass severe tests, as we are convinced that you do not need them. Do not, at least, let yourself be seduced by appearances and do not judge the importance of this degree by the few formalities required and by the relation you will find there with that of the Master. On the contrary, think of the fact that no degree whatsoever can be despised of and that this one is so even less than you may regard it as the key to the higher degrees, just as the Apprentice degree is so to all Freemasonry. The way you regarded the three first degrees made us decide to confer this one upon you. It will be the usage you will make of it that will determine whether we shall ban you forever or finally grant higher ones to you.



*The tracing board of the Perfect Master (collection Hahn-Löwen)*

is described in a practically identical way. As in this ritual, the temple is decorated in green, the password is "Mount Lebanon" and the sacred word left open in this ritual, but defined as "the name of the Great Architect in Hebrew", that being "Jehova" in the Mirecourt ritual. In the same way, the walking of the Perfect Master are rather complex, but identical in this ritual and the Mirecourt ritual.

It should be observed that the lecture opens here with :

Q. *Are you a Perfect ?*

A. *I have seen the circle and its quadrature.*

This goes on with questions referring to the reception ceremonial and as in the Craft degrees there is an interrogation on the respective positions of the president, called Most Respectable, the Wardens and the brethren. The tomb of Hiram, in practice the tracing board of the Master degree is represented here and there is no mention of a mausoleum.

A reference to the ritual of Perfect Master of the Rite of Perfection, of the Ancient Mastership of Bordeaux or of the Grand Elu de Londres, there is a significant difference of the signs, having no relation to those of this ritual and the presence of a "legend of the degree" showing the Solomonic connection. As the Ancient Mastership of Bordeaux is largely prior to 1750, it seems that this ritual is a close copy of a first original prior to that date.

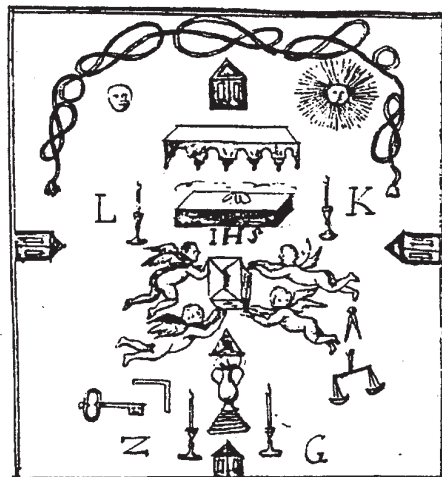
The problem of the quadrature of the circle is interesting. It is known that the surface of the circle measures  $\pi r^2$ ,  $r$  being the radius. The surface of the square is  $a^2$ ,  $a$  being the side. The squaring of the circle means the search of a square of which the surface is exactly equal to that of the given circle. It turns out to determine the value  $\pi$ . It shows that this number is a transcendant number, id est, that the sequence of the decimals is infinite. So the transcendant numbers were only defined in 1844 by Liouville and this quality was only given to  $\pi$  in 1882 by Lindemann. Before that time, it was thought that the number of decimals of  $\pi$  was finite, so that it would be possible to represent it by a certain figure. From the 17th century on, the problem of the "squaring the circle" was en vogue, even into the cabinets of the ladies<sup>1</sup>.

But the quadrature of the circle is not merely a mathematic pastime for idle rich people. It is also and certainly in Freemasonry an esoteric problem. The square represents, this ritual confirming it, the manifested world, the Creation. The circle "which has no beginning nor end" represents God, the Creator. The search for the quadrature of the circle is therefore the search for the relation between the Creator and Creation. Well, since Antiquity it is known that  $\pi$  begins with 3,14, so in esoteric sense 314 or the Hebrew word  $\text{שׁדַּי}$  [Shaddai], which is the divine name, the Almighty, which expresses exactly the creative action of God. Besides, the relation between the radius of a circle with the side of a square of the same surface is  $\sqrt{\pi}$  or 1,77 with the same precision. Now 177 is the value of  $\text{רעף}$  [ra'af], a verb which signifies cry, invoke, implore. The search for the quadrature of the circle is, therefore, in esoteric sense, a form of prayer. By discovering the numbers of three sequential ciphers, an attempt is made to decipher something, perhaps the divine Great Name, perhaps a kind of message... The sequential decimals, 159, supply the word  $\text{מִפְּלֵאָה}$  [miphela], which signifies refuge, asylum... And so one may go on until the known decimals are exhausted.

This is a good example of what was represented by the Ecossais Masonry in the years 1750 : under the aspect of a problem which was "en vogue" in the profane world, an esoteric search was carried out, understood only by those who were initiated. Many other examples of such endeavours could be given. When during the years around 1750, the Grand Council of Chaillon de Jonville worked on the "Ecossais synthesis" which led to the Ancient Mastership of Paris without abandoning anything of the esoterism which was kept secret by the first forms of the rituals, this was all concentrated around the legend of Hiram and this took on (with the introduction in the Royal Arch of the Henoah myth) an extraordinary dimension. The ritual of this collection seems to reflect a state of development of the degree of Perfect Master which is by far prior to the Parisian synthesis.

### *The Perfect Irish Master*

This time the ritual is complete and has an opening, a reception and a lecture. The text shows that the degree was already developed, as it calls for the Provost and Judge. We know that this degree was known and practised at Metz in 1761 and appeared in the Ancient Mastership of Bordeaux in 1750. Besides, it is found in the Rite of Perfection and the Grand Elu de Londres. Its ancientness is again confirmed by a drawing reproduced here, in the collection Von Hahn-Löwen.



*The tracing board of the Irish Master  
(collection Hahn-Löwen)*

<sup>1</sup> Paul Hasard, *The crisis of the European conscience*, Fayard, Paris (1961), page 29.

This drawing shows well the “four porches of the Temple” and all symbols mentioned in the manuscript are present, except the X, the initial of Xainchen, the “seat of the soul”. This translation confirms, in our opinion, the thesis of René Désaguliers and Roger Dachez <sup>1</sup> who state that the Chinese word *xinchen*, signifying “residence of the soul” must be at the origin of several forms which we see in the various versions of the Provost and Judge. The fact that the translation proposed here is perfectly correct, tending to prove the ancientness of the original of this copy.

But there is more : the drawing in the collection Von Hahn-Löwen does not know the word, but shows four angels of which there is no more mention later on. We may therefore admit that the original of the manuscript is later than the drawing and should date at the end of the years 1750.

The apron described in the ritual corresponds perfectly with drawing in the collection Von Hahn-Löwen. The step is rather surprising because one has to place the left leg behind the right knee and then jump like in hopscotch from one porch to the tracing board to the other.

Another proof of the archaic character of this manuscript is that the “Master who found the corpse of Hiram” still is Stokin, the *silent*, whereas later rituals usually call him Stolkin.

Finally here we encounter the essence of the symbolism we see in this degree in the Rite of Perfection.

- the hour of opening and closing “the beginning of the day” eight o'clock, two o'clock and seven o'clock which produces in the ciphers, eight two and seven, the word  $\text{תשבע}$  [*zévaß*], in fact the “hour of sacrifice”;
- the word Tito, which is not yet that of prince of the Herodim, but which still is correct Hebrew  $\text{טִּיטוֹ}$  [*tito*] signifying “his clay”;
- the two words Civi and Ki, of which the origin remains hypothetic.

Once more, this degree was not in its origin incorporated in the Hiramic legend. The Rite of Perfection, having it taken up, was content to have it based in an answer of the lecture.

One could, to finish with this degree, ask why the qualification Irish was used. During the years around 1740, Freemasonry of the Grand Lodge of the Moderns was in a crisis. Numerous were those who thought that the innovations it introduced : the change of the columns and the words of an Apprentice and Fellow Craft, for example, had degenerated the old Masonry and that it was in Ireland with the Irish brethren that we have to look for the true sources. This would result in 1751 in the foundation of the Grand Lodge of the Antients. These problems and this crisis could not be ignored in France and the degree of Provost and Judge was included in the attempt “to put an end to the differences” which had arisen between the brethren. This had, in our opinion, an interest in referring to what seemed then to be the most pure source of Masonry.

### English Master

It is astonishing here to find three associated rituals. The first, called “English Master, seventh degree” consists only of a simple resume of the reception and a rather detailed lecture. The second called “Lodge of English Master” demonstrates in detail the opening and closing of the lodge, but comes to a kind of very original reception of which is said that it does not refer to a eighth degree. The third is a “History of Freemasonry” which presents itself as a parallel to the Hiramic legend. It will be observed that the signature of Painette, placed at the end of the first and third part does not appear in the second.

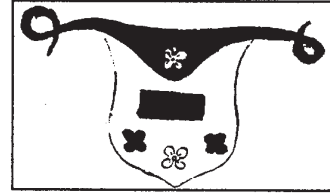
### The English Master

The origin of the ritual should be looked for in the Master in Israel which became rather quickly English Master. In their 1761 letter to the brethren of Lyon <sup>2</sup>, the brethren of Metz say about one of the English Master degrees they know :

“It is a kind of Ecossism, it has as a jewel an equilateral triangle on which the words are written : on the front, Benchorim, Irachin, Aiad; on the back, Judea, Ka, Jea. The tracing board represents the star of the magi, the candlestick with seven branches, a pointed square altar, three vases for purification, the large Brazen Sea, words Jiachin, Jehova; three figures : surprise, admiration and sadness.”

Well, the way the Metz brethren talk about the degree, which seems to them rather unimportant and not to be mentioned separately, leads us to think that it is a rather old ritual, practically obsolete as new degrees came to replace it. The similarities with this text are sufficient to permit an identification of the Metz ritual with this.

But there is more. In the Kloss collection there is an “English Master” or “Master in Israel” <sup>3</sup>, found by Lerouge in the archives of the Respectable Lodge *Saint Louis des Amis Réunis* at Calais. This manuscript is certainly much older and the lecture in it is practically identical with the one in this document.



The apron of the Irish Master  
(collection Hahn-Löwen)

<sup>1</sup> René Désaguliers and Roger Dachez, *Chinese thought in Freemasonry during the 18th century*, Renaissance Traditionnelle 96, (1993), page 238 - 258.

<sup>2</sup> Reproduced in Latomia 94 and other publications.

<sup>3</sup> Kloss XXV - 6