

Series of talks on Masonism by the late father Mytilenaeus of Larissa

Translated and adapted by J.F.

Part I

If Masonism was some philanthropic union (as its members allege), some charity, then of course there would be little point in dealing with it here for there are many philanthropic institutions. If on the other hand Masonism were an international mutual aid organisation (e.g. a mutual trust) that supports its members on a global scale (as its members also allege), then the subject would still not be of interest to us since they could be considered as a singular form of an insurance company that in a certain way insures its associates and helps its members in their needs. No, dear readers: if Masonism were any of these things then we would not bother to deal with them here.

Masonism is something deeper – something far deeper. As we shall see later on, Masonism historically ended up as a sacramental religion. Or (as the Masons themselves say) “*masonry is a direct descendant of the Egyptian mysteries*” (according to Mason Lebitter). Or, as one of our own Masons, George Sokos, says: “*the meagre laboratory of the Masonic lodge is nothing else but the caves and the shadows of the oak trees and of the cedar trees themselves and the unknown depths of the pyramids and the crypts of the majestic temples of Isis*”.

Isis had been an Egyptian goddess corresponding to our own Greek Dimitra, a deity of the Earth; the deification of the Earth. In other words, Masonism is something far more than a mere philanthropic union. In fact, in order for the theoreticians of Masonry to lend more authority and more prestige to Masonry they claim that it goes back *ab aeterno* and that the first Mason had been Adam (!). That is what they say. And that he had been initiated to Masonry by God the Father in the Orient (East) of Paradise. For this reason their Lodges are called Orients. They say “the Orient so and so”. Thus they claim that Adam had been the first Mason who had been initiated in Masonry’s mysteries by God Himself ... Where? Inside the Orient of Paradise, for Paradise had been built in the East! Do you see with what ... ease they claim these things! They also claim that Masonry has been transmitted from Enoch to Noah and from Noah to Abraham and from him to Moses all the way to Solomon. And of course from Solomon to us today, but Solomon is considered by them to be a beacon in the history of Masonry. We will specifically talk about this when we examine Masonic initiation, where we shall learn that, according to them, Solomon had been a very important person.

Of course, all these things are nothing but idle fancies taken straight from their imagination. These people simply seek roots; they seek patrons, because Masonism is of course an affair a little over 250 years old. It is something far more modern than they care to admit and in fact it is the result of another piece of history which is older than that but which has no connection to present-day Masonism in the way it has evolved (in its theoretical form). Masonism is little older than 250 years old. Thus we note that whatever is new and modern always seeks to prove that it has deep roots, in

other words antiquity. Thus they look for great names through history in order to create prestige and be in a position to stand on their legacy.

So what is the history of Masonism? Let us examine it. At first, we should note that it is well known that the term Mason stems from the French *maçon* which means builder. And *maçonnerie* is a building, masonry. They used to be masonic unions during the (Western) middle ages that had been responsible for rebuilding the grand cathedrals and the great public buildings in the capitals and the great cities of (Western) Europe. In other words, we would say that they had been either those people dealing with the architectural designs and blueprints, the architects, or those who would carry out the designs, namely the craftsmen. What we call in the Modern Greek (Neo-Roman) tongue as *maestoros*, *mastoras* in demotic, which stems from the term *master* and means lord, boss, or contractor (in this sense); more generally, the expert (master) of a particular piece of work. We are going to need this term later on, **master** and *maestoros*, as it used to be translated in the old days, or *mastoras* in Modern Greek: artisan; craftsman; skilled workman.

So precisely because these professional unions – I underline the word *professional* – of the masons, had chiefly been engaged in building (or renovating) large cathedrals whose construction had demanded thousands of workers and often many years to complete, they were placed under the protection of the Western Church (Papism). In fact, in the 13th century (AD 1277) Pope Nicolas III (for in those days the Popes had some influence on matters in Europe) relieved all these masons from taxation, who thus began to enjoy a form of financial immunity from taxation. In other words, they were free from paying taxes – they would not pay taxes. For this reason, these professional masons were named **free** masons. (Pay attention to these terms for they will later on be transferred to a theoretical Masonism). You will find this term widely in use today (for that is how they are known as); and Masonism is called **freemasonry**; a name deriving from the aforementioned unions (who had been of a *purely professional nature*) that were free from paying taxes.

During the course of these big and long-lasting projects, it was very natural for the masons to have a small cabin made at the place where they would work, a makeshift or crude shelter of similar habitation, like workers still keep today when they have to do a lot of work for a project that is likely to last for a long time; a cabin or a hut that of course they would destroy when the work would be completed. In this shack they would gather, eat and occasionally also sleep (stay overnight and not go to their homes), and would also discuss various matters concerning their profession. They would call this shack a **lodge** (Gk *stoa*). It is well known what a lodge is. As a term, *stoa* also signifies a pass through a solid area, e.g. a mountain, like a tunnel. Also, *stoa* signifies (in fact in English this is its chief meaning) a portico, usually a detached portico of considerable length, that is used as a promenade or meeting place; also that arc that rests on two columns. We also use the term *stoa* to indicate the collection of such arcs running along a line of columns (*κίον*). In other words, what we normally call a *peristyle* (or a **chapter**) we also call it a *stoa* (a lodge).

Whichever way we look at it, a Lodge indicates an impromptu area, a hutment if you will, usually open – at least open on one of its sides, for the lodges and the chapters are open – that protects us chiefly from the rain and the sun; a lodgement,

often arc-shaped (in the above sense). Please also make note of these terms too (lodge, chapter) for they too carried over to theoretical Masonism.

It was also natural for a lot of the professional topics that these people would discuss to be of a purely technical character, for they had to deal with many construction problems. It was therefore expected of them to face and solve these problems. It was also natural for them not to release the solutions to these technical problems to the public but to keep them secret. We witness the same idea in business till our days. The plasterer goes to a home in order to whitewash some surfaces. He adds lime, slush, whatever; he then adds something else which remains unidentified (what is that?) and then something else which is also impossible to identify (what is that?) while the home owner pays careful attention. He mixes everything together (the home owner is still paying attention; he would prefer not to have to call this guy in future but to attempt to whitewash the surfaces himself). So he places an innocent question to the worker: “*mastora*, what is it that you put in there?” The *mastoras* will either not reply or say something erroneous (i.e. lie). But why does he not speak openly? It is of course the professional secret. If everyone knew his professional secret than how would he make a living? This way the so-called – pay attention here – **Masonic Secret** was developed. This term will also pass on to theoretical Masonism. What is the secret of the masons? But it will not be something technical any more, as we shall see, but something very different.

So far we can see that the professional dimension of masonry did not even have a soupçon of sacramental undertones. There was neither anything mysterious about it (in the general sense) nor something mysterious in the sacramental sense, i.e. dealing with matters of religion and in fact of a pagan religion. There was absolutely nothing of the sort. There were no metaphysical speculations, no philosophical foundations; nothing, absolutely nothing like that. The masons used to be professional unions, one hundred percent professional syndicates. The masons – the members of these unions – were Christians (Papist), they believed in the Holy Triune God and were on excellent terms with the Papal Church, since it would protect them.

But from the time of the Reformation things began to gradually change. After having talked about the professional masonry we shall now see what these large European unions started to become.

With the Reformation, this intense construction activity began to set back for two main reasons: a) the completion of the public constructions (the big churches were built, the great public buildings were renovated) and b) the gothic rhythm began to be put aside. Indeed, it is well-known that the Reformation brought Neo-classicism. The Reformation was a lover of the ancient Hellenic spirit (at times to the point of idolatry) and thus they began to even borrow architectural elements from ancient Greece. For this reason the gothic rhythm began to be put aside and as a result the so-called Masonic professional bodies began to decline.

It was to be expected that in order for them to survive they had to look for patrons that would have a certain influence on things and who could protect them. These patrons became members of these unions without having been masons themselves. They were various politicians, scholars, more generally intellectuals, who were not masons (i.e. craftsmen masters). So they became accepted as members and

for this reason they became known as **Accepted Masons**, in other words ‘those that we accept in our Masonic unions’. Some sort of ‘honorary members’, except that they were not honorary members *per se*. They were full members who exercised influence without however being professional masons. These so-called accepted masons would prove to be those who would contribute to a truly radical transformation of these syndicates that would give birth to the present-day form of Masonism as we know it. Because however these unions had thousands of members, political parties (particularly in England) sought to win them over, adopt them, approach them; and all this for reasons of mere political expedience. The politicians would naturally think that “what we have here is thousands of members, each with a family behind them; this is not a small thing! Thus, if a political party wins over these unions it is very natural for them to end up voting for that party”.

This way we have men of politics entering these syndicates as accepted masons. Furthermore, in the 17th century we find people entering the ranks of the masons (always under this status of an accepted mason) who exercised philosophical mysticism. Two elements began to gradually make themselves felt in these syndicates. The first element was politics and the second element was philosophical speculation of a mystical character. We thus have these two currents enter these syndicates and to begin to exert influence on them. This philosophical mysticism was Gnostic-like (i.e. it had Gnostic dimensions – we will see how often the element of Gnosticism enters here). Also, these Neo-Gnostics would believe in pantheism, the deification of the human logos with a small l (human reason), and furthermore they would seek independent ethics (morality); things totally alien to the Gospel, to the Church and to Christianity.