

Medieval Brotherhoods - Membership, Values, Beliefs And Certainties. Perceptions, The Importance Of Communication, The Social Function - Similarities With Freemasonry

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ABSTRACT :- This research project focused on medieval Confraternities (Brotherhoods) and Freemasonry. What were medieval brotherhoods? Are there any similarities between the two? What were their distinctive features? Before we can answer these questions, this work also looks at the importance of social function in human groups, attempting to highlight salient elements that can serve as a tool for approaching research into Confraternities and Freemasonry.

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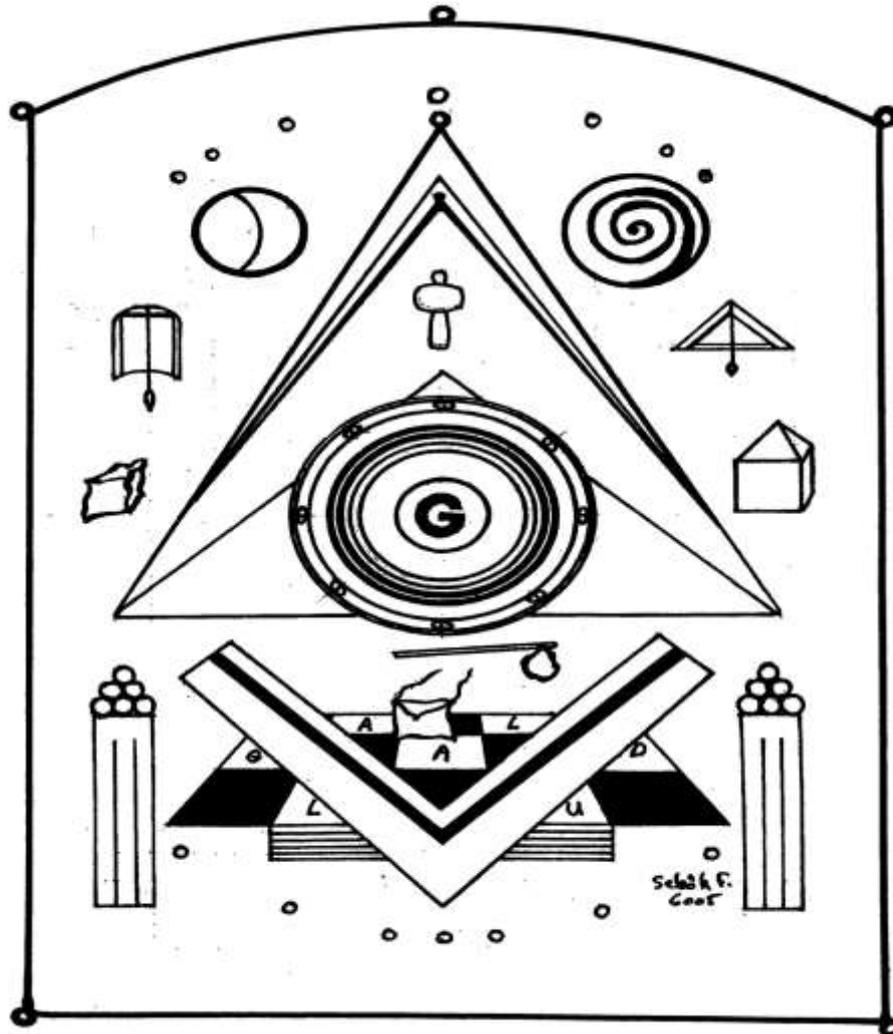
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Four artworks, ink on cardboard of Ferenc Sebök.



Follow craft degree, 30x21, ink, 2005, Ferenc Sebök

I. GROUPS, BELONGING, BELIEFS, PERCEPTIONS, COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL FUNCTION

Before talking about medieval brotherhoods, it's important to recall a number of basic elements concerning the group, the tribe, the sense of belonging, the importance of communication in a social group, the transmission of language, knowledge, beliefs and culture. Indeed, this brief reminder will make it easier to understand the candidates' motivation to join a social group of brothers, in the form of an association: the medieval confraternities.

From time immemorial, man has lived in groups: a way of protecting himself from danger, a way of being "in strength", a possibility of conquering, a way of lightening the burden of tasks to be shared or done together, a way of creating the group's identity, a way of responding to the instinct for preservation, conservation and even reproduction. The group made it possible to speed up tool production, take care of harvests, barter or sale.

To this must be added the important function of communication, enabling dialogue between individuals, codifying language sufficiently to create a standard that can be understood by all group members, thus reinforcing the group's uniqueness and its members' sense of belonging to the group.

The development of oral and later written language enabled people to broaden their horizons and, by learning the language of another group, which became a tribe, to establish ties of friendship, trade and so on.

We can postulate that the considerably enlarged group of individuals will generate specificities such as the emergence of habits and customs, culture and beliefs, as well as increasingly structured hierarchies, which can lead to City-cities as in Ancient Greece, small kingdoms no bigger than a town.

The group can generate a sense of identity, of belonging to a specific group, a community, a city, a kingdom, a people, a nation.

It's thanks to the tool of communication that man has imposed himself and, without a doubt, developed his intelligence. This is how man went from being a "hunter-gatherer" to a "farmer", requiring more interaction and group work. The construction of habitats was also a determining factor in the transition from nomadism to a sedentary lifestyle.

The search for "beauty" through painting, music, oral and written texts, and the idea of transmitting knowledge, have also been elements of identification reinforcing the bonds of belonging to a group, tribe, people or culture. This can be seen in archaeological research, which highlights the specific features of different cultures over the centuries.

But at times, a language, a culture, a set of beliefs may have been perceived as a danger to another group or a dominant tribe, subjugating the first group. This is why there have been pogroms, the destruction of civilizations, architecture, culture, language and the beliefs of the subjugated people.

However, there are a number of exceptions to this rule, which can be seen in the aftermath of conquest: beliefs can be preserved provided certain aspects are copied. A case in point is the belief in Roman divinities borrowed from Greek civilization. Symbolism and the imaginary have often been the driving force behind the creation of values and beliefs.

As a result, the group will have different perceptions of life, of the order of things, of material or spiritual, ideological, philosophical or religious needs, compared to other groups.

From there, the outcome may be a common written codification, defining what is permitted or forbidden, hierarchy, dominant or recessive position. In religious circles, we might talk about self-denial, self-surrender, devotion, giving thanks, etc.

This also applies to the use of tools and combat engineering, which we then try to improve. It's also the case with construction methods, such as the use of architectural knowledge to build an arched stone portal.

Finally, a social function that is important in a group, because this function has various advantages, such as :

- Mutual aid in the event of illness or injury, to ensure the survival of members. Helping those in need, caring for the elderly, etc. Henri Wallon described man as a social being. Many therapists can testify to the fact that isolated elderly people wither away more quickly; human beings have a vital need to turn to others for their vital impetus, their curiosity, their quest to share, their security, to break the solitude that can slowly kill.
- The possibility of living in a group includes a large family whose members divide up tasks and can strengthen bonds and generate ideas and solutions. D, Anzieu & J-Y Martin list five categories of group: the crowd, the band, the grouping, the secondary organizing group and the primary group.
- If the social function of coexistence is primordial for individuals, business relationships, sentimental relationships, philosophical and political outlooks, etc. will necessarily generate different or similar perceptions. This can lead to agreement and sympathy, or disagreement and antipathy.
- On the other hand, a group can be oppressive for a member, toxic and dangerous if it has unhealthy objectives, such as subjugating others. A group can be fulfilling or destructive, like a sect for example, which by definition tends to take away other people's freedom of thought in order to adhere to a dogma, a fixed, extremist conception.
- The possibility of increasing the group's or tribe's assets; just think of the herds of cattle that still today, in certain regions of Africa, are proof of wealth, notoriety and economic and social influence, not to mention the alliances between groups and tribes through marriage.

- The social function generates a form of security, of possible fulfilment within the group. Belonging reassures and generates identity value.
- The social function means that things become predictable in terms of attitudes and behaviour. The social function favours codification, including in terms of dress.
- Social relationships can be conflictual or reassuring; they can often be measurable. It is within social relationships that enmity, friendship and fraternal affection are born, but also doubt, which can be contagious.
- If the past teaches us that beliefs were imposed by fire and blood to impose a doctrine, a religion (Conquistadors in South America, Islam in North Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere, or Calvinism in Europe and elsewhere), the social function has reinforced the bonds of belonging to one or more beliefs. Today, there are sects, religious communities, ideological groups, political groups, or simply membership of a sports club, shooting club, leisure club, philosophical circles...

Everything is good for a single centripetal force: social ties, belonging, a sense of identity, the same beliefs, the same values, the same perceptions, the same opinions. In linguistic programming, we speak of searching for similarities.

- The social function has at least three dimensions: the first is transmission through initiation, which most often involves a hierarchical approach to the transmission of knowledge. The second dimension is pedagogical, in the sense that initiation is programmed; it is progressive, marked by tests to evaluate what has been learned. The third dimension is the preservation, cultivation and transmission of memory. This memory concerns the ancients, techniques and, ultimately, the seven liberal arts.
- The social function is a facilitator of encounters with others, and particularly with sexuality. Isn't it said that "like attracts like"? Neuro-linguistic programming teaches us, for example, the importance of beliefs, values and certainties (Dilts's pyramid or logical levels) in individuals, but also in groups. Beliefs generate shared values, and vice versa. Values and beliefs are generators of certainties, which can undermine people who are stuck in their certainties.
- Finally, the social group can be a vector for upward or downward mobility. In fact, a group can tend to hinder new ideas and innovation, or on the contrary be a springboard for progress and evolution.
- By the very fact that social relationships forge bonds that either fulfil the being or the opposite, the social function creates well-being or ill-being. According to D. Anzieu (1975), "The group is an envelope that holds individuals together... All the life of a group is caught up in a symbolic weave, which is what makes it last".
- In this way, the social function in a group enables the emergence of a group Self. D. Anzieu speaks of "a transindividual psychic state that proposes to call forth a group Self... The group becomes a common libidinal object".

The human group tends to create a shared vision of things, imaginations and desires, of which codification represents the apotheosis. The dark side of belonging to a group can therefore suffocate the individual and his or her freedom of mind, his or her freedom to think differently. This type of danger can be found in totalitarianism, extremism and sects.

- We can also postulate a certain universality of social function, as well as of the ideas and aspirations of human groups. These aspirations can be seen in social mimicry (learning, transmission of language, culture, etc.). This universality also extends to the legal sphere.

This universality seems to exist because, without populations necessarily having been in contact, we can find similarities in beliefs and laws.

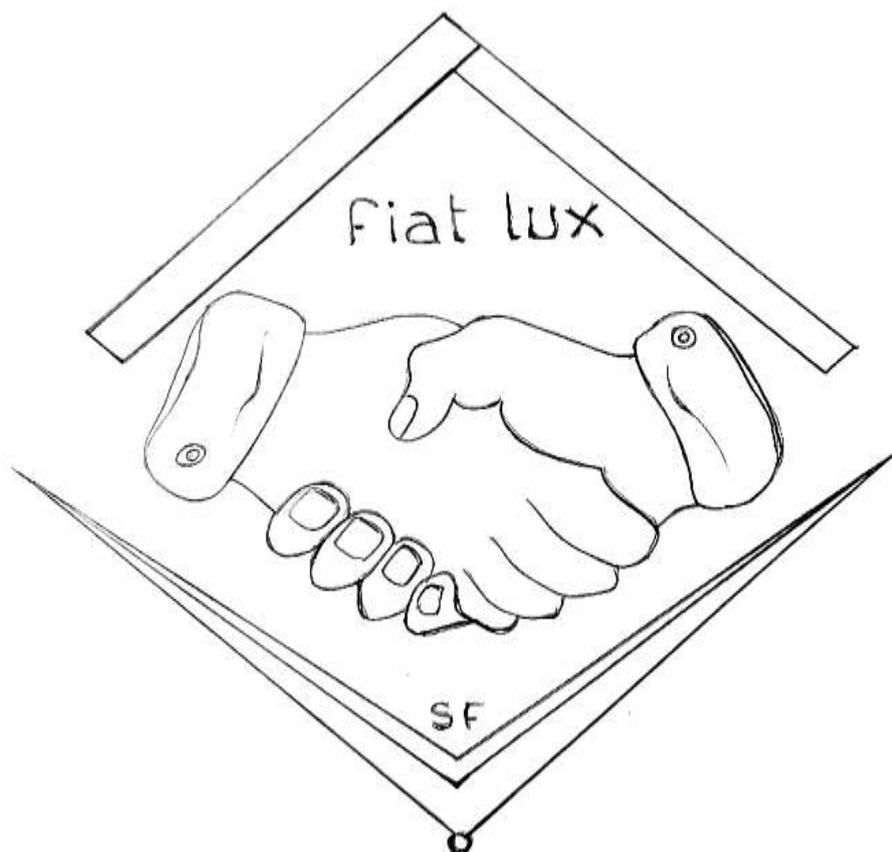
Indeed, there are similarities in content between the Tables of the Law of Moses (later to become one of the symbols of Judaism), and Hammurabi's Code of 282 laws (First Dynasty of Babylon under the reign of Hammurabi, 1792-1750 BC). Of course, according to Jewish Midrashim tradition, the Ten

Commandments were created during the first days of creation. Both Hammurabi's Code and the Ten Commandments were created to preserve social order.

Similarly, if there are pyramids in ancient Egypt, as in Giza, there are also in Latin America, among the Mayans and Aztecs, even though these populations and cultures were not in contact. The Teotihuacan pyramids in Mexico is a striking example. For the Egyptians, Ra was the sun god, light, and the pyramids' tops pointed skywards. Likewise, the pyramids of Teotihuacan are part of the "City of the Gods".

Animal or human offerings created links between men and gods. In the case of human offerings, often of prisoners of war and slaves, the bodies were thrown from the top of the pyramid and the bones used to make musical instruments, utensils or ornaments. Both indigenous and conquistador documents attest to these rituals.

According to Michel Graulich (2005), in Latin America, in the City of the Gods, self-sacrifice was not uncommon; it consisted in offering part of one's body to a god. This was usually done by extracting blood from a limb or even the tongue.



Fraternity, 2022, ink on cardboard, 21x30, Ferenc Sebök (SF)

II. MEDIEVAL BROTHERHOODS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the Middle Ages, brotherhoods were not intended to promote Christian worship; however, the "brothers" practiced the Christian religion with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The aim of the practice was to obtain the intercession of the brotherhood's patron saint. It was much later that the promotion of the mass would be carried out more rigorously.

Confraternities (Brotherhoods) have Roman origins. Indeed, under Emperor Justinian, laws mention the fact that brotherhoods were essentially intended to practise religious principles and care for the poor through charity.

Later, in the Middle Ages, confraternities brought together tradespeople and were charitable organizations. They were not priests, but tradesmen such as shoemakers, weavers, carpenters, masons and so on. Even if they were "religious" mutual aid associations, their main aim was to help the poor, orphans, widows, the sick...

They kept a record of receipts and disbursements. The funds came from entry fees, penalties or fines, the cost of apprenticeships, but there were also donations that the brotherhood kept track of. At the end of the Middle Ages, the religious character of the confraternities became increasingly important, setting them apart from guilds and the secular world.

Each trade was grouped together and assigned a patron saint. The spiritual goal became a credo, not an economic or political one. Unlike guilds, whose members all had the same trade, these brotherhoods accepted other people into their ranks, not necessarily men with the same trade. In the case of the guilds, which were secular in essence, their aims were political and economic.

Even if they weren't priests, the religious essence was evident in their communal prayer, which was intended to generate more "prayer power" for the benefit of each member. Thus, members of a confraternity would pray to their patron saint to obtain his intercession.

Catholic Christian brotherhoods spread after the Council of Trent, the nineteenth ecumenical council recognized by the Catholic Church. The first historical figure to call for a 19th Council was Luther, in 1518 and 1520. At the time, Charles V thought that a Council might restore Christian unity between Catholics and Reformed.

On June 2, 1536, the Bull of Indiction "Ad Dominici gregis curam" was published, setting the date for the opening of the Council in Mantua on May 22, 1537. But the war between Francis I and Charles V resumed, and it was finally Pope Paul III who published a new Bull of Indiction, which finally led to the opening of the Council of Trent on December 13, 1545. All confraternities were abolished in France by decree on August 18, 1792, following the French Revolution of 1789.

Elsewhere, this was not the case, as in Spain or even Belgium, where the religious tradition of confraternities survived. In Bruges, for example, the "Edele Confrerie van het Heilig Bloed" was founded in 1400 and still exists today. The Confrérie organizes the "Heilig Bloed" (Holy Blood) procession, commemorating the return of Thierry of Alsace from the Second Crusade (1146-1149).

III. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN MEDIEVAL BROTHERHOODS AND FREEMASONRY

The importance of being included - Signs of recognition - Confraternity agape - Distinctive signs - Colours - Codes of conduct and walking - Hope, Faith, Charity - Help for the poor and sick - Funeral vigil on the death of a brother - Beliefs

3.1 Medieval brotherhoods

We can easily identify an important social function described above, which we find in medieval confraternities.

If guilds attracted tradespeople, according to their specialties, to come under the banner of a powerful guild, enabling them to defend their trade, use their power of representation, and enjoy economic and political power, guilds also had a social role of mutual aid and initiation into the trade, but each guild strictly accepted the same tradespeople as members.

Confraternities opened their doors more widely, in the sense that they were not guilds. Faith, hope and charity were to take precedence, with a religious side where a patron saint could intercede; hence the prayers, but not only.

More concretely, the brotherhoods were attractive for several reasons and had different characteristics:

- Members of a brotherhood were recognizable. Indeed, clothing represented a distinctive sign of allegiance or belonging. According to Catherine Vincent (1994), in the Compagnies de Saint Jacques, "... former pilgrims reverted to their travel accoutrement for the occasion, on the express condition that they had personally been to Galicia: cape, hat trimmed with shells and insignia, bumblebees..."

- The banner, representing the patron saint, could also be found on the costumes. The banner was proudly displayed as a sign of belonging and inclusion. This inclusion not only provided protection, but also had a social role, fostering a spirit of brotherhood.
- Hairdressing also played a role in recognition and status. According to Catherine Vincent (1994), "Brothers put on the livery of their master of the day, which was completed by a hairstyle described in numerous sources."
- Colours played a dominant role in clothing. For example, in the "Confrérie de Saint Jean de Saint-Lô", the hat on the head had a plural connotation: nobility, dignity, honour, joy, beauty, jubilation, prowess, virtues, charity, love, strength, vigour. For the event, the flowers were of three colours, "...in memory of the Trinity, of the three dignity of Saint John, who was patriarchs, prophets and flowers of baptism".

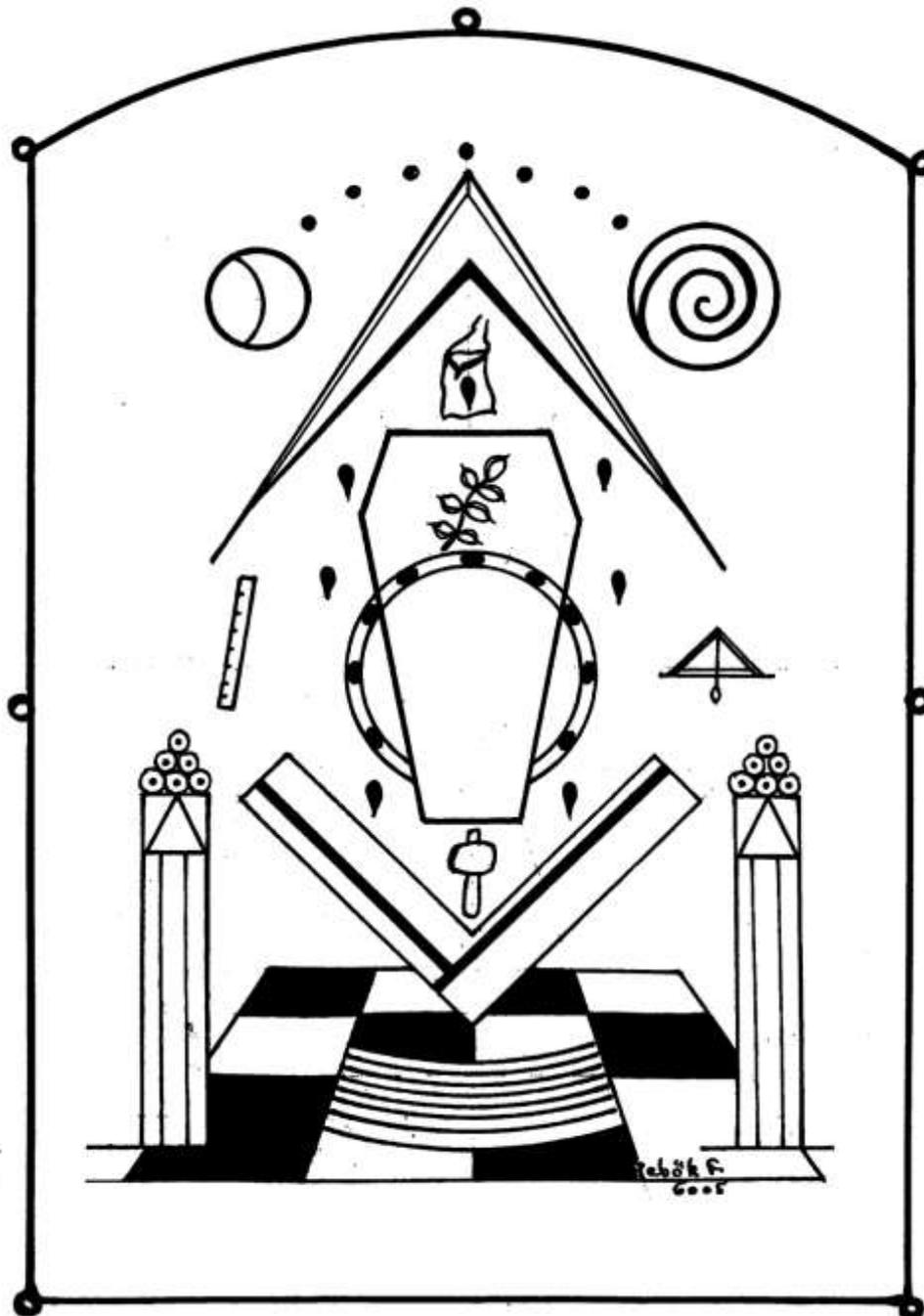
The three colours were also intended to recall Christ's three vestments, including the purple cloak used by Pilate to ridicule Christ. The three colours recall Christ's Passion: white for the shroud and gold for the glory of the Resurrection.

- The code of conduct and marching order: during ceremonies, parades were held in silence, with brothers marching in pairs. However, different brotherhoods had different characteristics.
- There was mass and fraternal agape. The banquet was the high point of confraternity activities, weaving and strengthening the bonds between brothers. The communal meal was also a time for rejoicing.
- There were two aspects to fraternal communion: one was religious (prayers, mass) and the other was the banquet, which was intended to bring brothers closer together. Thus, banquets were a material opportunity to forge bonds that went beyond the spiritual.
- New members were warmly welcomed, but to become a member, it was necessary to ensure that the candidate expressed the same values shared by the brotherhood. The reading of the statutes was public.
- Common values are regularly expressed through preaching, mass and prayer.
- Brotherhood was a powerful driving force, fuelling motivation, loyalty and "esprit de corps".
- In medieval times, confraternities took care of pilgrims and the sick, even contributing financially to the upkeep of hospitals. The brotherhood could also help the poor on an ad hoc basis (feed and clothe them).

They also took care of the deceased. "At the moment of death, the confraternal presence is felt from the very first hours of the dying person's life... It ensures that he or she leaves the church in good standing" (Catherine Vincent, 1994).

The Brotherhood could also take on the financial responsibility of redeeming an excommunication. The Brotherhood's Chaplain gave the last rites. The confraternity also organized a funeral wake with "the confraternity ornaments (funeral sheet, cross and banner) and the luminary provided for this purpose. For the poorest, the brotherhood also provides a shroud". (Catherine Vincent, 1994)

- It's easy to understand that in medieval times, when poverty was rife and insecurity reigned, Confraternities attracted people, because they represented protection, enabling a secure social life.
- At the end of the Middle Ages, moral requirements were increasingly emphasized, with a strong pastoral focus. The Brother became a kind of social mirror, with a tendency to advocate irreproachable morality and peaceful, confraternal behaviour, avoiding physical or verbal violence.



Master degree, 2005, Ink on cardboard, 30x21, Ferenc Sebök

3.2 Freemasonry

In regular masonry, however, dress is also important (black suit, black tie, and in some rites, the wearing of a hat (French rite) or top hat and tailcoat (English). As for the "regalia", there are all the trimmings: aprons according to rank, white gloves, jewellery. The traditional dress code is not always respected in so-called "irregular" lodges, as they are not recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England, also known as the "Mother Lodge".

In certain grades, the bawdier is worn, with or without gloves, depending on the degree, as well as other jewels and decorations (e.g., in the Scottish High Grades). Banners are also worn, as in the French Rite and English lodges. Hairdressing, on the other hand, has no special place. Colours are important and have symbolic significance.

In addition, there are the so-called blue lodges (the "first degrees" of Masonry), headed by a Worshipful Master for each lodge. In the High Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, there is the Lodge of Perfection, also known as the "Green Lodge", from the 4th degree to the 14th degree. The green lodge is headed by the Three-Fold Mighty Master (TFPM).

Then there are the Chapter degrees, from the 15th degree to the 18th degree (Knight or Prince Rosicrucian degree), which take place in the Chapter or "Red Lodge". The person who directs the work of the Chapter is called "Très Sage"(the very wise). Finally, there are the Areopagus degrees, from the 19th degree to the 30th degree. At the 30th degree, the Brother candidate is made a Knight Kadosh. The Areopagus is also called "Black". The colour white will also be present in the so-called "administrative" grades from 31st degree to 33rd degree.

Colours also play a distinguishing role; for example, in the French Rite, the Master's apron is blue, whereas in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the apron is red. An important particularity is when, in the 3rd degree, the Worshipful Master called "Très Respectable" (Right worshipful master) asks that the "Respectable Brothers" turn their aprons inside out.

The reverse side is black, to set the scene for the death of Hiram, King Solomon's architect. The colours are therefore of symbolic importance, since the Lodge represents Solomon's Temple, with columns of bronze topped with pomegranates.

Symbolically, Solomon's temple was divided into three parts, just as the Masonic lodge is divided into three parts: Ulam, or the first space before the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, then the Hekal, which was oblong or "long square" for the Masons (the Holy Place) had the following dimensions: 20 cubits x 40 cubits, i.e., 10.5 m x 21 m. Then the Debir, which was 20 square cubits x 40 cubits, i.e., 10.5 m x 10.5 m (the Holy of Holies). Next came the Debir, which was 20 cubits x 20 cubits square, i.e. a surface area of 10.5 m x 10.5 m (the Holy of Holies)

Readers are well advised to deepen their knowledge of Solomon's Temple by reading the Book of Kings, as well as the Second Book of Samuel (Jerusalem Bible).

In masonry, the three-term Ulam, Hekal and Debir are rarely used, even though the lodge is built in a similar way, with the Parvis (the forecourt), then the entrance to the lodge, with the two bronze columns "Jakin" and "Boaz", and the space where the brothers are seated, to the north and south. The third space is the East, where the Worshipful Master sits, with his Brother Secretary and the Brother Orator.

King Solomon reigned from 970 to 931 BC, succeeding his father King David, victor over Goliath. His successors: his son Roboam (king of Judah) and Jeroboam I (king of Israel).

When it comes to the code of conduct and walking, there are also similarities if you pay attention. For example, in Frankfurt/am Main, in the "Zur Einigkeit" lodge, the Brethren enter the lodge two by two, holding hands under the direction of the Master of Ceremonies, who carries a baton, marking each second step with a stroke of his baton.

In other lodges or rites, there is a precedence: the apprentices enter, then the journeymen, then the masters, followed after a set time by the Commission of Dignitary Officers. The Worshipful Master enters last. On the two Columns "J" and "B", the Brothers stand at the sign of the order, until the Worshipful Master takes his place in the "Chair of Solomon", in the East. He says to the Brothers, "Brothers, take your places.

There are other signs, such as the sign of fidelity (right hand, fingers joined over the heart), which vary according to the degree of openness of the blue lodge: Apprentice, Companion or Master. Signs, words and touches are used to recognize each other, depending on the degree. In the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the signs, passwords and touches also vary according to degree.

Even if the signs, words and touching are different, there are indeed similarities between medieval brotherhoods and today's Masonic lodges. The sense of belonging also exists among Freemasons, who are distinguished by the way they wear their jewellery when visiting other lodges.

Fraternal Agapes (table lodge for freemasonry), whether ritualistic or not, are important times for discussion, bonding and belonging. After spiritual work, from "Noon to Midnight" symbolically speaking, fraternal "Agapes", also known as "Banquets", are a place called the "Wet Room" (in France) where brothers sing, toasts and bonds.

Similar to brotherhoods, in masonry too, there are "investigations" and "attaches" (Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite) to assess a candidate called "Profane", to check that he is "free, honest and of good character". A number of criteria and qualities had to be verified before he could be initiated. In the 14th and 15th centuries, irreproachable morality was also required, as was peaceful behaviour avoiding violence.

In some lodges in Belgium, in especially, the fundamental question is: "Will he be with us and we with him?" (Modern Belgian Rite, Regular Grand Lodge of Belgium). The question is whether he can be included in the lodge as a Brother.

In contrast to medieval brotherhoods, speculative Freemasonry (1717, foundation of Speculative Freemasonry in London) has over the years created different initiation rituals, depending on the rites involved. The symbolic nature of the initiation, with its alchemical and esoteric elements, makes it an emotionally charged experience for the candidate.

As in medieval brotherhoods, values are often recalled in Freemasonry, in especially the theological virtues "Faith - Hope - Charity" and the cardinal virtues, oaths: "I swear to love my Brothers, to help them...", attitudes to be adopted: "Silence - Obedience - Fidelity", etc.

In Freemasonry, particularly in Anglo-Saxon Lodges, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and the Rectified Scottish Rite, the theological virtues Faith - Hope - Charity, both are an integral part of the ritual, and often of lodge work. Charity is exercised in particular by the Brother "Chaplain-hospitaller", also known as "élémosinaire" in the French the Rectified Scottish Rite.

The Brother Hospitaller (commonly referred to as such) is part of one of the triangles operating in the lodge. This triangle is: Venerable Master - Brother Hospitaller - Brother Treasurer. The Brother Treasurer enquires about the health of Brothers who are ill or in serious material difficulty.

The triangle usually works as follows: the Brother Hospitaller reports the financial problem of a sick Brother who needs care he can't afford, and informs the Venerable Master. The Venerable Master listens and decides to contact the Brother Treasurer to find out what possibilities there are for helping the Brother in difficulty. The problem is presented to the Lodge of Master Masons, also known as the "Middle Chamber". There are three possibilities:

- Either there is a rejection by the vote of the Brothers
- Either the vote is positive and the Brother Treasurer gives details of the possible financial aid, and the Brothers vote in favour of the amount allocated.
- Either the vote is positive, but the Venerable Master proposes that the "Tronc de bienfaisance", also known as the "Tronc de la Veuve" (Old and Accepted Scottish Rite) be used to bring relief to the brother in distress.

The Worshipful Master can encourage the Brothers to show their generosity and their charity for the cause. After each outfit, two bags are presented to each Brother: the Charity Trunk and the Proposal Bag (a piece of writing slipped into the bag).

This approach to charity is linked to each Brother's Oath to love his Brothers and "help them in distress, whether on land, sea or in the air". These words are read during the Agapes, but the ritual also reminds the Brothers of their loyalty to the oaths they have sworn.

As far as the death of a Brother is concerned, there are also similarities with the medieval confraternity; however, in Freemasonry, a funeral ritual exists for the Brother who has "passed on to the eternal East" (deceased). This ritual is performed in the Lodge without the family of the deceased.

However, it is not uncommon for the lodge to give a funeral address at a cremation, for example, with the agreement of the deceased's family, mentioning the quality of the Brother who has passed on to the Eternal Orient. Sometimes, the apron and gloves are placed on the coffin. Unlike medieval brotherhoods, Freemasonry does not hold a wake or give last rites.

If in medieval times superstition was commonplace, giving rise to truncated perceptions, beliefs and certainties, in modern times, while superstition seems to have diminished in large parts of the globe, the world of impressions and perceptions can often give rise to beliefs and certainties that can distort reality.

This is why, in Freemasonry, we ask:

"What do you come to Freemasonry for?"

"Overcoming my passions and making progress in Freemasonry".

Finally, while in medieval times brotherhoods offered security, social fabric and shelter when needed, in today's Freemasonry it's more the search for spirituality that motivates candidates to join, but we mustn't forget the social function of a lodge: identity, "esprit de corps", the search for differences and similarities. As in secular life, lodge relations can be harmonious, but also conflictual.

Communication is an important tool in the lodge, as rituals remind us of a mason's duties. As in secular life, the group of individuals, the members of a lodge, can enter into conflict. So there are lodges where peace reigns, and others that are in a period of turbulence.

Freemasonry is an ideal of peace and fraternal affection, where brothers normally meet to progress, share and transmit knowledge. The Masonic ideal cannot be bad; it is the components of a lodge that will create harmony or disorder in the lodge.

Conflicts are often based on passion, the quest for power and honour, or worse, the pursuit of interests as in a service club. The fundamental question that Masons must ask themselves is: am I worthy of being a Freemason? This calls for introspection, self-criticism, and stepping outside our certainties and beliefs.

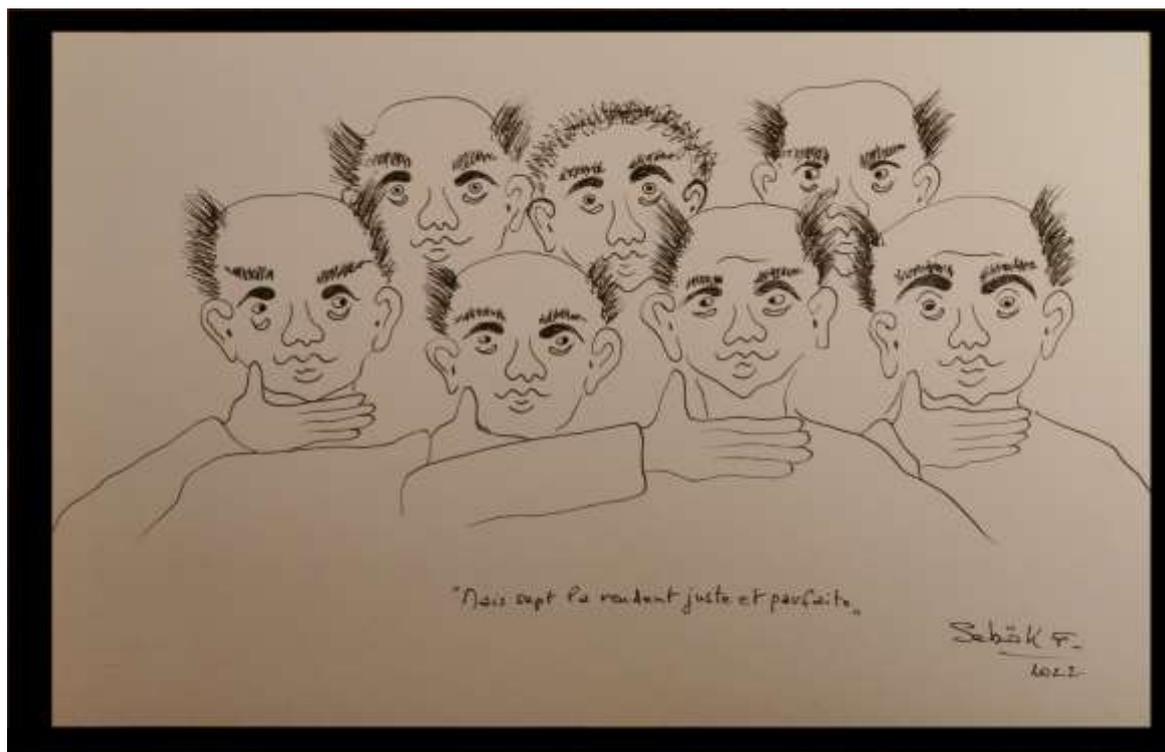
IV. CONCLUSIONS

This work has enabled us to analyse the notion of the group, certain characteristics, and the important social function in a group of men or women. After analysing certain characteristics of medieval brotherhoods and the life of a lodge, there are clear similarities between the two.

It's only a short step from there to the influence of medieval brotherhoods on operative Freemasonry from the 15th century onwards. In addition, trade guilds existed, notably for carpenters, masons, etc., who were part of the cathedral builders, where Apprentices and Follow crafts worked under the guidance of a master.

If there is little or no written evidence of possible filiations, we cannot reject the idea of possible filiation. This is where the researcher can depart from a certainty without verification. Historians, on the other hand, are solely concerned with the "factual" in their research.

To put it plainly, just because there is no written evidence of a parentage does not mean that it does not exist. What is certain, on the other hand, is the existence of similarities that invite further research and the search for factual elements, even if none exist at the present time.



Mais sept la rendent juste et parfaite, 2022, Ink on cardboard, Ferenc Sebök

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