The Universal Republic of the Freemasons and the Culture of Mobility in the Enlightenment

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In France, Masonic history remains a peripheral field of study, excluded from mainstream social and cultural history.\(^1\) For the most part its practitioners are not at universities at all, and refer to themselves as “Masonologists.” They study French Masonry in isolation, avoiding historical context. Paradoxically, despite their use of the term sociability, they continue to give priority to the Masonic order’s own chronicle, which at best amounts to a static and internal sociography. But what about the work of Georg Simmel? Jürgen Habermas? Maurice Agulhon? Daniel Roche? Margaret C. Jacob? How can one forget that these scholars placed the Masonic lodges of the Old Regime at the heart of their studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sociability: Simmel’s *Secret et sociétés secrètes*; Agulhon’s *Pénitents et francs-maçons* and *Le cercle dans la France bourgeoise*; Roche’s *Le siècle des Lumières en province*; Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, the Bad Homburg colloquium titled *Sociabilité et société bourgeoise*; or Jacob’s *Living the Enlightenment*, which is finally to appear in French?\(^2\) To my

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1. This problem does not characterize research on masonry in Germany, Italy, Spain, or the United States. See Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, *L’Europe des francs-maçons, XVIIIe–XXe siècle* (Rennes, 2003), 13–37.

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mind there is no contradiction, only a paradox: the history of Freemasonry between 1740 and 1830, when it was a true laboratory of sociability in transition, has not yet fully benefited from this scholarly attention.

The pioneering works mentioned above were either undertaken by scholars outside the milieu of Masonic studies or consider Freemasonry as one element in a broader research framework. These scholars have dipped into the archives of the lodges, guided by their own research aims and programs. They have not taken up the administrative history of the order, any more than they have broken free of the Masonological deadlock. To the contrary: they have convincingly returned Masonic ties, protagonists, strategies, discourses, and representations to their social, cultural, familial, confessional, and political environment. In doing so, these works have had a very limited impact on the field of Masonic studies itself. They have not significantly modified the understanding of Masonic sociability and its stakes among “Masonologists” themselves.

Yet research into social networks, and more recently into relational space, has shown another possible approach to Masonic sociability, that focusing on individual trajectories and arrangements inscribed into the field of sociability. One can grasp interpersonal relations most fruitfully, not in isolation, but as strands in a web of relations, the framework for which reveals a range of possible behaviors. Similarly, the study of Masonic sociability is renewed by work on circulation (Henriette Asseo) and the culture of mobility (Roche) that allows it to be placed not only in the context of an emerging, autonomous public sphere, but also within the European space of the emergent Enlightenment that was partly organized by Masonic networks of correspondence and lodges and their modalities of hospitality.

Mobility, simultaneously regulated and intense, and harmonious circulation were at the heart of the Masons’ project and practices. At the end of each lodge meeting, the brotherhood symbolically paid homage to the strength of the bonds that united “Freemasons dispersed throughout the two hemispheres.” The feeling of belonging to a diaspora, essential to Masonic identity, was intensified by the fact that sev-

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eral of the founding fathers of the order were Huguenot or Jacobite refugees. The diasporic character of the Masons explains the acute attention to networks of long-range communication between the members and the representation of the Masonic cosmos as a territory organized as networks, where the rapidity of exchange and the separation from the profane environment needed to be assured.

Masonic sociability was not restricted to the confines of the fraternal sanctuary. It aimed to push the boundaries of the temple to the outer limits of the universe, to establish the Universal Republic of the Freemasons as a space of free, harmonious, and fraternal circulation, beyond all geographic, political, religious, and linguistic obstacles. This article considers how the French Freemasons of the eighteenth century tried to ground in practice their cosmopolitan faith, how the Masonic cosmos became embodied, and how its nervous system and exchange channels valorized the culture of mobility in the Enlightenment.

The Profession of Cosmopolitan Faith among Enlightenment Freemasons

The Freemasons of the Enlightenment had already placed their order and their project under the banner of “politically neutral” cosmopolitanism from which militant universalism had yet to emerge. When the Cévenol Laurent Angliviel de La Beaumelle, admitted to the Masonic lodge of Geneva, wrote enthusiastically, “I am no longer a foreigner!” his sentiment was consonant with the self-satisfaction of the Prince de Ligne: “I have six or seven homelands: the Empire, Flanders, France, Austria, Poland, Russia, and Hungary, almost... I love being a foreigner everywhere.” A Huguenot refugee, Angliviel de La Beaumelle found consolation in the warm and fraternal community of the Masonic order, whereas the brilliant aristocrat proudly proclaimed his membership in the Société des Princes. Masonic cosmopolitanism was part and parcel of this quest for identity that was basic to Masonic engagement. It permitted members of the brotherhood to dissolve and rediscover themselves in two separate and linked worlds: the profane world into which they were born, and where they aspired to be model subjects, and the world they had built and chosen, where they aspired to be exemplary citizens.

5 Private archives of the Angliviel de La Beaumelle family, document dated June 24, 1746, kindly made available by Hubert Bost, who is preparing an edition of the correspondence of Laurent Angliviel de La Beaumelle to be published by the Voltaire Foundation in Oxford.


7 Lucien Bély, La Société des princes (Paris, 2000).
If cosmopolitanism was at the heart of Masonic thought during the Enlightenment, it was because the foundational myth of the Freemasons was the construction not of Solomon’s temple, as is often thought, but of the Tower of Babel. The loss of meaning and of speech, the impossibility of communicating, of exchanging and transmitting one’s knowledge—these fears haunted the brotherhood. The enduring force of the foundational myth is found in the legend of Hiram and in the mythic quests in Egypt and China in pursuit of the vestiges of the Royal Art—the term then meant Freemasonry—and the archaeology of Masonic memory to which the antiquarians among the Freemasons of the Great Lodge of London committed themselves during the first decades of the century.\(^8\) The temple of the Great Architect of the Universe was Babel, but a Babel rebuilt. Although the hubris of men had precipitated its fall, dividing the workers henceforth incapable of communicating with each other and reaching an accord, the workers of the Royal Art hoped to build a new Babel, a temple to concord and harmony, where the workers could talk to each other again by the practice of a true koine, that language of Masonic signs and touching—the “universal language” that the abbé Prévost had already evoked in 1737—that permitted two Freemasons to recognize each other as brothers.

“The universal Mason, citizen of the entire world, is not a foreigner in any land; without using his voice, he speaks and he is understood; without using his eyes, he sees and his infallible marks are recognized,” proclaimed the École des Francs-Maçons.\(^9\) Like every planetary utopia, the Universal Republic of the Freemasons aimed to establish universal communication.\(^10\) It can be linked to the civil society of nations and to a “cosmopolitics of international law.”\(^11\) For the marquis de Chefdebien, the Masonic order, by virtue of its extension across boundaries, brought men and nations closer together and permitted the circumvention of barriers and prejudices hindering open dialogue and recognition:

A real value of the Masonic Institute, though perhaps unintended and unforeseen, is that having served as motive for and occasion of bringing nations and individuals closer together, it has contributed more than anything else to the propagation of enlightenment, knowledge, and healthy reason. Languages became more cultivated,

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and the French began to discover the English language in the same era when they discovered Masonry. By the spirit of unity and fraternity that it introduced among all men of diverse nations and conditions, Masonry weakened and destroyed many state restrictions, general prejudices, and national animosities that divided men and peoples. Finally, having grown accustomed to considering themselves as members of the same brotherhood, it was easy for the Masons to forget the great distances that separated them, to take interest in the fortunes and well-being of the others, for they were tied by a sentiment as dignified as it was noble to a mutual and common consideration, and in the end they are reminded that they are all members of the same family.  

The Role of Correspondence in the Masonic Grid of European Space

A nebula of Masonic lodges spread out across Europe at the whim of individual initiatives. The displacement of tourists, soldiers, diplomats, and merchants was the source of great potential power for the Universal Republic, but this diaspora was very fragile, since a vast, profane night cut its temples off from one another. The grid could easily have split into a myriad of lodges withdrawn into themselves. But like participants in other religious or intellectual diasporas, such as the Republic of Letters, Freemasons quickly understood the vital role of communication and the establishment of autonomous networks for the exchange of information, recommendations, and support, including the expression of solidarity and fraternity in good times and bad. As I have noted, many of the pioneers of the Universal Republic were also Jacobites or Huguenots (Vincent La Chapelle, Jacques Uriot, Louis-François de La Tierce) and thus members of other diasporas, exiles who participated in other networks of solidarity but were also open to their host societies.

To achieve this autonomous circulation of information and create a network of interlocking Masonic societies, the Freemasons combined correspondence and its various institutional, jurisdictional, and individual networks.  

This was an explicit attempt to organize the European space of the Enlightenment—along with its colonial extension—that was conflated in fact with the Universal Republic. The efforts of Antoine Meunier de Précourt (1724–77) were exemplary. Moreover, they attest to the capacity of the pioneers of the order to integrate Masonic mobility with secular mobility, to extend and reconfigure the


relational space in which the Masonic brothers moved. Meunier de Précourt, master of the lodge of Saint-Jean-des-Parfaits-Amis in Metz, began in 1755 to sketch a project of universal Masonic correspondence. In 1760 he presented it to the Grand Lodge, where he had become an officer: “[I ask you, dear brothers, for] a list of all the lodges that have originated, like ours, from yours, in order to establish a general correspondence among all our brotherhoods, from the Orient to the Occident and from the north to the equator.”

The network proposed by Meunier de Précourt resembled that of Jean-Baptiste Willermoz of Lyon, coinciding with and reviving a network of commercial correspondents. It became one of the densest in Europe: Metz was linked not only to Frankfurt, Koblenz, Mainz, and Hanover, but also to Alost in the Austrian Low Countries, and even to a lodge in Palermo that benefited from the savoir faire of a consul of the Swiss cantons when it implemented a durable network of correspondence that allowed it to integrate into Continental Masonry. Above all, the Freemasons of Metz knew how to take advantage of the opportunities open to them, how to expand their networks, and how to cultivate new contacts. Meunier de Précourt thus convinced the lodge of the Triple Union of Reims to take advantage of the city’s position at a commercial crossroads, giving birth to a network of correspondence that reinforced the coverage of a Masonic European space primed by the Masons of Metz. That many traveling Freemasons passed through Metz greatly enhanced its importance: English soldiers came to negotiate the liberation of the last prisoners of the Seven Years’ War and were warmly welcomed at the lodge. Both parties promised to participate in an exchange of letters in hopes of mutual enrichment.

Ten years later Meunier de Précourt was living in Hamburg, where, as Direktor der russischen Kolonisten (director of the Russian colonists), he became affiliated with the oldest lodge in Germany, Absalom. He was among the first to be knighted by the founder of the Rite of the Strict Observance, Baron Karl Gotthelf von Hund und Altgrotkau, near the Altenberg convent in 1764. In 1766 Meunier de Précourt was in Saint Petersburg, where he remarried on October 10. He died there

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14 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des manuscrits, Fonds maçonnique (hereafter BNF, Cab MSS, FM), FM 111, collection Chapelle, vol. 6, fols. 116, 125.
17 During this period, the Strict Observance had only about twenty members. Fifteen years later its membership would rise to more than thirteen hundred. See Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, L’Europe des francs-maçons, XVIIIe–XXIe siècle (Paris, 2002), 71–81.
in 1777. As an associate of Jean de Bosse and Couliette d’Hauterive, he actively recruited French colonists for Russia.\textsuperscript{18} This project of the leaders of the Rite of the Strict Observance resembled that of A. I. Musin-Pushkin, a Freemason diplomat in Hamburg—the site of Meunier de Précourt’s business—to establish a Masonic colony in the province of Saratov.\textsuperscript{19} At every level of this “European mobility,” Meunier de Précourt extended its relational space, wove new epistolary exchanges, spread the notebooks and rituals of the essentially chivalrous and Christian values of the Masonic order, and encouraged their cultural and symbolic appropriation.

This attempt to establish a universal correspondence was one of the Enlightenment’s great dreams of integrating European space. One can scarcely help but compare it to the efforts to create a general bureau of correspondence for the Republic of Letters and, in a technical register of the Enlightenment, with the 1792 \textit{Instruction pour les Directeurs des Postes}, which stated as an act of faith that “by this act are supported all civil, moral, and political relations. . . . Thanks to these exchanges the progress of the Enlightenment spreads and increases.”\textsuperscript{20} For correspondence was indeed the backbone of the Masonic cosmos; without it, the “meeting of brothers dispersed around the globe” would have been a chimera. As the marquis de Chefdebien declared at the European conference of Philalèthes (“friends of truth”) held in Paris in 1785: “A steady and confident correspondence will carry the circumference of our fraternal union to the limits of the universe.”\textsuperscript{21} For his part, Joseph de Maistre underscored the importance of adopting protocols for the recognition of members to facilitate exchanges and limit the danger of parasites—Enlightenment adventurers and soldiers of fortune, those “managers of mobility”\textsuperscript{22} who quickly learned of the advantages accruing to “members” and infiltrated Masonic circuits at the heart of the kingdom of civility and good taste.\textsuperscript{23}

Convinced of the centrality of epistolary commerce in the economy of European freemasonry, Masonic brothers thus conceived, drafted, and then widened networks, which grew increasingly numer-

\textsuperscript{18} Information received from Vladislav Rzeuckij, who is preparing with Anne de Mézin a \textit{Dictionnaire des Français, Suisses et Wallons francophones en Russie au XVIIIe siècle.}


\textsuperscript{22} On this topic, see Roche, \textit{Humeurs vagabondes}.

ous and complex. Beginning in the 1760s, veritable central bureaus of correspondence were established, like that of Willermoz in Lyon or Charles Pierre Paul Savalette de Langes in Paris. They implemented a complex strategy, which relied both on branches made up of a parent lodge or a nucleus surrounded by affiliated lodges on the model of monastic orders, and on conglomerates, formed by a web of societies, groups, and antennae. The latter included societies like the Philalèthes, the theurgical order of the Coens Elect, the Harmony Society of Mesmer, the secret lodge of the Philadelphes (a cell of the Illuminaten in France), and so forth. Some were organized around a single central lodge, like the Bienfaisance at Lyon for Willermoz or the Amis Réunis in Paris for Savalette de Langes. Others were arranged around a Masonic order, like the Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte for the master of Lyon or the order of the Philalèthes for his rival. These strategies of network deployment were clearly aimed at mastering a space of circulation and especially its nodal centers, crossroads and urban capitals, particularly in frontier regions. Strasbourg was thus embroiled in a constant rivalry between Willermoz and Savalette de Langes. These strategies included the creation of connections ex nihilo, when a network failed to cover an important zone and it became necessary to establish a base, and ex alio, that is, by the incorporation of preexisting networks of correspondence. Sometimes this meant taking advantage of the death of a founder to capitalize on his alliances; in other cases, it meant engaging in a takeover by planting agents, active or passive, in a rival network. Two secret societies in Germany employed these strategies in the years 1770–80 to the point that they are still often identified as Masonic societies: the Illuminaten, partisans of the radical Enlightenment supporting fundamental changes in the state and society; and the Golden Rosicrucians, a nucleus of the conservative Enlightenment. Each strove to bring the dozens of Masonic lodges into their sphere of influence and thus to gain the upper hand in a battle over the centering of power.

To understand Willermoz’s and Savalette de Langes’s development and mastery of networks at the margins of the order, which were undoubtedly among the most overlapping, one must see how Willermoz, a merchant, like Savalette de Langes, a former counselor to the Parle-

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24 The Illuminaten, called Illuminati in Great Britain, or Illuminés de Bavière by the abbé Barruel, constituted one of the essential elements of the radical Enlightenment in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

ment of Paris who became keeper of the Royal Treasury, drew the better part of their secular activities and intimate acquaintances from the “culture of mobility.” Thus Willermoz compensated for his social inferiority to Savalette de Langes, the son of an intendant and the grandson of a farmer-general, by taking advantage of the convergence of trade routes in Lyon to welcome princes (the brother of George III, William Henry the Duke of Gloucester, and the Duke of Sudermanie), diplomats (the Danish and Swedish envoys Karl-Heinrich von Plessen and Eric Magnus, Count Staël-Holstein), and other noble travelers, whom he made contribute to his project of constituting the chivalrous and Christian order of the Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte. For his part, Savalette de Langes united in the Amis-Réunis, his Parisian lodge, farmers-general as well as representatives of state finance and the Protestant bank of Europe. These rival networks competed for new members capable of providing long lists of contacts, a veritable “address book” and thus a decisive advantage. The networks also relayed Masonic models, transporting new rituals like so many agents of acculturation, and thus encouraged the spread of parallel Masonic reforms.

Although these networks expanded to encompass the entire continent in the final quarter of the eighteenth century, the first initiatives in France came earlier, from Freemasons living on peripheries of the kingdom and thereby aware of the strategic importance of correspondence. The exchange of letters substantiated their status as cultural intermediaries between French Freemasons and their foreign counterparts. In addition, this reticular strategy mitigated the handicap of distance and marginality from Paris, the seat of the order and thus the “center of the chain of union.” After a while, the strategy influenced not only the games of exchange but also the production of space and identity. This was a space of communication with moving and fluid contours, susceptible to abrupt expansion and contraction, and free from central control. When the center revealed its weaknesses, as did the Grand Lodge of France, paralyzed by internal dissension, in the mid-1760s, the new space of communication folded back and was redeployed by new alliances with new objectives.

Mobility and Independence

In Marseille, the powerful mother lodge Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse was in open conflict with the Parisian order (the Grand Lodge, later the Grand Orient of France). Controlling an extensive web in Mediterranean space, it could offer its members and visitors a means of managing their exceptional mobility. At the same time, it laid claim to its
own independence while affirming loudly that the Masonic order was “cosmopolitan and free.” In this case, fraternal mobility, the circulation of merchants, and Masonic ambitions were tightly intertwined. It is common knowledge that in the eighteenth century Marseille nourished great commercial ambitions. In opening itself to commerce with the “Islands,” the city became a global port. Its merchants, both French and foreign, led the trade in colonial goods, notably sugar and coffee. With comparable dynamism, the merchants also participated in the rapid spread of Freemasonry, evidenced by the growth of Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse as a European Masonic power, an ambitious rival of the Grand Orient of France. Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse became the premier lodge of international trade, a meeting point for the most powerful men of Marseille’s Chamber of Commerce. Under their leadership, Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse orchestrated its program, its networks, and those of the port city. Just as the Chamber of Commerce had implanted its representatives (consuls) across the Mediterranean basin, the mother lodge deployed its daughter lodges as so many branches along the borders of the sea. It spread along the axis of the Rhone establishments that it guarded jealously before sending offshoots to the “Islands.” The expansion of commerce and of Masonry were perfectly synchronized (see table 1).

Some of these outposts warrant closer inspection. Palermo, whose Masons were very active, maintained close ties to the kingdom of Naples where, as Carlo Francovich has shown, “Neopolitan Freemasons worked under the direction of a lodge in Marseille toward the end of 1754.” In commerce and trade between 1760 and 1790, ships coming from Naples and Sicily were among the most numerous in the port of Marseille. In Sicily the influence of Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse was not restricted to Palermo. On February 28, 1784, the lodge normalized the work of a society of Freemasons situated in Tropica, Paralia, and Catanzaro, and gave it a regular constitution.

Through its daughter lodge of Malta, the Marseille lodge also mediated between the western and eastern Mediterranean and had a bridgehead to the Barbary Coast. Among the merchants and ship captains welcomed at the subsidiary lodge of Malta and its mother lodge in Marseille were some Catholic knights of the Order of Malta, even though Protestant traders figured prominently in the rank and file of Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse. In March 1766, in Malta itself, the Freemasons ini-

Table 1 The foreign and colonial establishments of Saint-Jean-d’Écosse of Marseille, 1760–80

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orient (Locality)</th>
<th>Lodge</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avignon</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-de-La-Vertu-Persécutée</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cap Français</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-des-Sept-Frères-Réunis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constantinople</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-de-La-Parfaite-Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genova</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-des-Vrais-Amis-Réunis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ile-de-France</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-du-Secret-et-de-L’Harmonie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palermo</td>
<td>Marie-au-Temple-de-La-Concorde then Saint-Jean-d’Écosse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Pierre-de-La-Martinique</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-de-La-Parfaite-Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salonika (Thessaloniki)</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-de-l’Amitié</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyrna (Izmir)</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-d’Écosse-des-Nations-Réunies</td>
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Initiated the high Austrian bureaucrat Karl von Zinzendorf, “Chamberlain of his Imperial Majesty and member of the Aulic Council of Commerce.” At each subsequent stop on his European tour, as his travel journals attest, von Zinzendorf visited the lodges.28

It should also be stressed that each daughter lodge of Marseille had its own network of correspondence, indeed its own established outposts, thereby increasing the density of businessmen who were Freemasons in the ports of the Mediterranean. The proceedings of the sessions of Saint-Jean-d’Écosse even suggest the existence of Masonic nuclei in Algiers and in Alexandria, where “free” merchants engaged in trade. A comment in the register of the proceedings, unfortunately vague, notes that at the end of the Old Regime the lodge refused to take a stand on “dissension reported at the lodge [atelier] of Algiers,” implying that Algiers knew, in one form or another, the light of the Masonic initiation, and this at a time when Algerian brothers were paying a fraternal visit in France. And the Marseille lodge was in direct contact with the English lodges of the Levant.29

But the Mediterranean spread of a mother lodge like Saint-Jean-d’Écosse was not merely an institutional phenomenon, consisting of

28 With respect to Malta, information kindly communicated by Helmut Watzlawick, who is participating in the publication of von Zinzendorf’s travel notebooks. For the continuation of von Zinzendorf’s tour of Europe, see Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire de Strasbourg (hereafter BNUS), MS 3457, Registre des procès-verbaux de la loge de la Candeur de Strasbourg, fol. 176.

official correspondence between lodges and pledges of allegiance, more or less respected, by daughter lodges. Merchants were well aware of the importance of interpersonal relations and individual initiatives. Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse was thus at the confluence of the economic, social, and Masonic ambitions of the merchants of Marseille. Jacques Seymandi embodied the great aims of Marseille, simultaneously Masonic and commercial. Indeed, the same spirit that infused the Chamber of Commerce also animated Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse, to which Seymandi was reelected by his brothers as a “Worshipful Master” (president of the lodge) in the 1780s. Having established his business in Cairo and Aleppo, Jacques Seymandi set his sights on more distant horizons: the markets of the East Indies, which had opened up after 1769 with the suppression of the monopoly of the Compagnie des Indes, based in Lorient. Judging the English route to the Indies around the Cape to be too long, Seymandi launched a campaign to find a shorter route, either through the Red Sea or via Mesopotamia. The project failed despite the support of Marie-Gabriel de Choiseul-Gouffier, the remarkable and cultured ambassador posted at the Ottoman court, because Charles-Alexandre de Calonne reestablished the Compagnie des Indes in 1785 with its privileges to the Red Sea. Seymandi reconciled himself to his second option and founded the Compagnie du Golfe Persique in 1787 with Louis Tarteiron and Samatan Aîné, two “Worshipful Masters” of Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse, as his principal associates. Under their leadership, the lodge in Marseille was exceptionally dynamic in this period. The founding of lodges in Constantinople and in Smyrna revealed the ambitions of Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse most clearly: whereas Constantinople was the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Smyrna was the nerve center for exchange with the Middle East. The very name of the latter lodge, Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse-des-Nations-Réunies, spoke to its universal identity. Not just a sanctuary for elite members of the parental institution in Marseille, it was open to all Freemasons, from Levantines to Armenians.

Here it is worth calling attention to the role of consuls in establishing Masonic lodges in the Mediterranean basin. A number of British as well as French consuls, who led their respective “nations” in the Levant, were Freemasons. The example of Pierre de Sicard is illuminating. He was a consul at Saida, formerly known as Sidon, a center of the French presence in southern Syria and a rival of Saint-Jean-d’Acre, where the English and the Dutch had established themselves. Sicard was initiated

into the lodge of Saint-Jean-d’Acre by an English consul named French. He also founded lodges in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Alsace, and even the Austrian Low Countries.\textsuperscript{31}

The case of Marseille reveals that correspondence became a political and geopolitical stake at the heart of the Freemasons’ Universal Republic. The Masonic order recognized both the dangers of communication freed from all constraints and the advantages of controlled circulation and ordered flux. To let correspondence networks proliferate uncontrolled was to risk losing authority and credibility at the European level in the difficult negotiations that organizing the Universal Republic and delimiting various zones of influence would require. A framed and instrumentalized correspondence that channeled epistolary flux would be the best conduit between the center, whose few officers could scarcely have performed all the necessary inspections, and the local lodges. Besides, did not the Grand Orient designate lodges answerable to its authority by calling them “lodges of its correspondence”? Thanks to correspondence, wrote the leaders of the Grand Orient, “Enlightenment spread rapidly, and the spirit that guides the order being more often revived, it fortified itself, spread, and strengthened the edifice down to its foundations; all the lodges of a kingdom were equally illuminated, did the same things, and at the same time that they received the instructions, they competed in their meetings for the attention of the common center that sustained them. The more lodges that the center assembled, the more powerful and useful it was.”\textsuperscript{32}

The Grand Orient of France already presented itself as a “national” order and resisted all foreign intrusion—particularly British—into French space, laying claim to the de jure exclusivity of foreign correspondence. And it did not miss the chance to advise foreign lodges that sought affiliation with it to limit their correspondence to an exclusive dialogue with their national order: “Foreign correspondence always entails grave inconveniences. The distance between places causes dangerous delays. What [would happen] if all communication were cut off? A lodge could remain isolated and languish, deprived of the opinion and support it needs. On the contrary, a correspondence with a national Grand Orient does not face any danger and is open to great advantages.”\textsuperscript{33}

The Grand Orient opposed those committed to a complete Masonic cosmopolitanism that rejected Europe’s organization into nations

\textsuperscript{31} G. de Froidcourt, François-Charles, comte de Velbruck prince évêque de Liège franc-maçon: Con-tribution à l’histoire du XVIIIe siècle au pays de Liège (Liège, 1936), 52–54, 74–79.
\textsuperscript{32} BNF, Cab MSS, FM, FM\textsuperscript{1} 118, Commission pour les Grands Orients étrangers, fol. 455r.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., fol. 454v, letter of Mar. 8, 1785.
and believed, like the members of Saint-Jean-d’Ecosse in Marseille, that in a “cosmopolitan and liberal” body like Freemasonry, each element ought to be free to ask for its constitutions from a foreign power and to correspond freely. But in adopting this position, the Grand Orient created strife within the lodges that accepted the centralizing model but remained loyal to the cosmopolitan spirit of the Masonic order:

We are convinced that good order requires that each Grand Orient be a central reference point in a national sphere. Each people in the Masonic body forms a unique circle that, like the world machine, operates according to its own laws, but all of which are derived from a general order that, far from troubling the harmony, makes it even more admirable. Enclosed in the orbit of the French star, we cannot resist its attraction; its laws will be our future, and we conform to them easily. All foreign correspondence would be forbidden to us? The portrait that we have provided does not contain any that would tend to make us suspect; our Respectable Mother Lodge, the Anglaise de Bordeaux, was the only lodge with a foreign constitution with which we corresponded—scarcely a subordination to a foreign power. This expression has always seemed incompatible with Masonic liberty; we live freely.34

At stake, beyond the control of networks of correspondence, was the very organization of the Masonic cosmos. There were two competing conceptions, one that protested against the infusion of secular politics and principles into the sphere of Masonic relations, and another that hoped to organize the Masonic body according to national sovereign orders, whose frontiers would conform to political boundaries. The emergence of nationalism would radicalize still more these positions at the turn of the nineteenth century. But for the time being, high-society Masonry and the upscale cosmopolitanism that spread throughout the brilliant lodges of the Freemasons’ Universal Republic still had life in them, since they were perfectly in phase with the “culture of mobility” among European elites.35 The nebula of Masonic lodges “dispersed across two hemispheres,” the network of fraternal correspondence, the annual directories of the order, and other, secular guide books that list the addresses of the lodges—all these worked to inscribe Masonic sociability into the broader modalities of movement among European travelers.

34 BNF, Cab MSS, FM, FM 344, dossier of the lodge Anglaise de l’Amitié, Orient of Périgueux, fols. 9–10, letter of Aug. 9, 1774.
The Promotion and Management of Masonic Mobility

If correspondence integrated space, traveling mobilized and animated it. The exchange of information prepared, accompanied, and prolonged the encounter born of traveling but did not replace it. Furthermore, in grounding the project of the founding fathers of 1717–23—that is, “to permit men who would otherwise remain at a perpetual distance from one another” (according to the expression of the so-called Anderson Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of London in 1723), to discover and recognize each other as brothers—the reception of visiting brothers, and particularly foreign brothers at various lodges, was of capital importance. The Freemasons were clearly conscious that the challenge of the foreigner was essential: it tested the cohesion and the harmony of the fraternal microsociety of the lodge, which was, after all, constituted as a circle of the elect, of chosen friends, adopted intimates. They shared, in addition, close familial, professional, and geographic ties. But the foreign Freemason, who solicited the hospitality of his “brothers,” came from nowhere. He represented this diaspora of “Freemasons dispersed around the globe” who were honored at the conclusion of each meeting, but who confronted the lodge brutally with the paradox of Masonic sociability. Reveling in local affinities and friendships, Freemasonry projected its values through the chain of union to the ends of the earth without presuming to weaken the intensity or density of its own sociability. The reception reserved for foreign brothers valorized the lodge from the point of view of its internal cohesion as of its cosmopolitan faith. The secretary of the lodge Saint-Louis-des-Amis-Réunis, Orient of Calais, clearly affirmed this point: “You will not be strangers in any place; everywhere you will find brothers and friends; you are citizens of the entire world!” an exclamation that echoed Angliviel de La Beaumelle’s cry: “I am no longer a foreigner!”

The case of Angliviel de La Beaumelle reveals an important component in the institutional apparatus of Masonic hospitality by host lodges along the route of a traveling brother. Masons carried an extraordinary document that served at once as a certification of their Masonic identity and a passport—that which Joseph de Maistre would invoke in his vows thirty years later, whereby the master in chair of the lodge Saint-Jean-des-Trois-Mortiers of Geneva called for Masons to welcome the bearer of the document and treat him as a brother:

Greetings, Most venerable First and Second Surveyors, Masters, journeymen, and Apprentices:

We the Worshipful Master and the Officers of the honorable lodge of Saint-Jean-des-Trois-Mortiers of Geneva, certify and attest to all those in attendance that brother Laurent Angliviel de La Beaumelle, twenty-two years old, five feet two inches tall, dark hair, an oval face, and dark eyes, has been received as an apprentice and journeyman in our Honorable Lodge. We request that all the Honorable Lodges, spread out across the surface of the earth, where our dear brother may make an appearance, receive him as such, rendering him all the good services and kindnesses that he will require, and we for our part offer to do the same for any brother who might present himself at our Honorable Lodge with a similar certificate. Given on the borders of Geneva this day, March 14, 1747.

Signed Albrecht, Master of the Lodge
Daniel Argand, secretary

The volume of Masonic certificates in circulation only grew during the century as Masonic outposts multiplied and the density of the fraternal correspondence of networks grew. In certain lodges that served as way stations, like Saint-Louis-des-Amis-Réunis, of the Orient of Calais, or Amitié et Fraternité, of the Orient of Dunkerke, the secretaries were swamped by requests for the certification of visiting brothers who hoped to tour France with the pass. Although the volume of secular letters of recommendation, with which travelers were provided before their departure, grew at an uncontrolled rate, bringing on their relative discredit and sometimes real disappointment, the Masonic certificate kept its value: it called on the fraternity of the one who accepted and examined it; it solicited the ties of shared initiation. Understandably under these conditions, abuses were frequent. Some brothers in distress or adroit adventurers lived off of the lodges’ aid. Certain candidates for initiation, true shooting stars beneath the vault of the temple, only remained among the rank and file long enough to obtain the precious certificate: thus Auguste de Giech, comte du Saint-Empire, a native of Thurnau in Franconia, who registered at the lodge of Candeur, Orient of Strasbourg, came to France “for his pleasure”: he did not reappear at the lodge after being initiated and receiving his certificate. The wave of visitors could even thwart the material functioning and linguistic order of a lodge. For each brother had to be able to find his place among the columns of the temple and around the table during meals.

37 Private archives of the Angliviel de La Beaumelle family, document kindly communicated by Hubert Bost.
38 BNUS, MS 5437, Registre des procès-verbaux de la loge de la Candeur de Strasbourg, fol. 339, meeting of Feb. 28, 1776.
In return for the hospitality offered, the lodge sometimes required that a foreign visitor sign the architectural register—the lodge’s record of official assemblies—unless it kept a “guest book” or “visitors’ book,” in imitation of the notables of the provincial Enlightenment. The lodge thus registered its extension as well as the witnesses of its cosmopolitan faith. The case of the Bien Aimée, an Amsterdam lodge frequented by the French, reveals precisely the importance accorded to the visits that marked lodge life and illustrated the integration of the Atlantic Masonic community. For three decades after December 11, 1754, when “the undersigned foreign Masonic brothers had wished to honor our lodge with their presence,” the Bien Aimée maintained a Visiteurenboek, a registry in which the guests left “a souvenir in the form of their signature.” The Bien Aimée received Giacomo Casanova in 1759, who as an adventurer knew the marvelous way to cash in his Masonic capital, but who was no less a sincere Freemason for doing so. Casanova signed the Visiteurenboek “Giacomo Casanova of the lodge Saint-André, Grand Inspector of all the lodges of France in Paris,” a title that, naturally, was invented. But he gave us in his Histoire de ma vie an interesting testimony that reveals the importance of these visits:

It was a distinguished favor, which violated all the ordinary rules of Freemasonry, since only the twenty-four members who composed the brotherhood were supposed to be admitted. They were the richest millionaires of the stock market. [The brother who invited Casanova to join them at the lodge] told me that he had announced me, and that owing to my presence the session of the lodge would be conducted in French. I made such a good impression that I was declared a supernumerary for all the time that I was in Amsterdam.

On October 10, 1774, it was Jean-Paul Marat’s turn, holding a certificate from the London lodge Miséricorde, to sign the visitors’ book of the Amsterdam lodge during his stay in the United Provinces. The use of the Masonic certificate as a passport and a lifeline in travels through Europe was widespread.

Take for example the voluminous dossier of Masonic certificates that the police of Parma found among the papers of the adventurer

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40 The Hague, Orde van Vrijmetslaren onder Het Grootoosten der Nederlanden, Archief, carton 4337, 41: Visiteurenboek van de loge La Bien Aimée, Orient of Amsterdam, 1754–93 (3 registers).
41 Ibid.
Antonio Pocchini de La Riva, originally from Padua, after his arrest.\footnote{Archivio di Stato di Parma, Archivio Du Tillot, A 11, 49 items.} Here too the “management of mobility” proved the efficacy of the Masonic apparatus. In doing research for the book \textit{L’autre et le frère},\footnote{Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, \textit{L’autre et le frère: L’étranger et la Franc-maçonnerie en France au XVIIIe siècle} (Paris, 1998).} I discovered that Count Pocchini de La Riva was in Orléans on May 26, 1766, where he had stamped the certificate that the lodge of Toulon had given him.\footnote{BNF, Cab MSS, FM, FM 111, collection Chapelle, vol. 6, fol. 359.} His documents affirmed that he was from Lausanne and belonged to the city’s “lodge of the White Cross, Faubourg Saint-Martin,” unknown to historians of Swiss Freemasonry.\footnote{Sec esp. Alain Bernheim, \textit{Les débuts de la Franc-maçonnerie en Suisse, avec un essai de répertoire et de généalogie des loges de Genève (1736–1994)} (Geneva, 1994).} Wishing to set out for Flanders, Pocchini de La Riva solicited and obtained a letter of recommendation to the lodges of Lille, near the border.\footnote{BNF, Cab MSS, FM, FM 111, collection Chapelle, vol. 6, fol. 359.} After that, I found him again in Leiden, in the \textit{Visiteurenboek} of Vertu—the university lodge—where he signed as Count Pocchini della Riva on October 21, 1769, presenting himself as a member of the Strasbourg lodge, Distinction.\footnote{The Hague, Orde van Vrijmetselaren onder Het Grootoosten der Nederlanden, Archief, carton 4712, \textit{Visiteurenboek van de loge La Vertu}, Leiden, Oct. 21, 1769.} Finally, fortuitously, I discovered in a recent scholarly article by Gerardo Tocchini that Pocchini de La Riva was in fact not only a Freemason but also an adventurer.\footnote{Gerardo Tocchini, “Frugoni e la Francia: Opere masoniche per Parma,” in \textit{Le muse in loggia: Masoneria e letteratura nel Settecento}, by Gian Mario Cazzaniga, Gerardo Tocchini, and Roberta Tarchi (Milan, 2002), 36.} Arrested in Parma in 1772, he had his papers seized and was chased from the duchy. Documents in the Tillot section of Parma’s state archives permit a partial reconstitution of his relational network and his itinerary.\footnote{Archivio di Stato di Parma, Archivio Du Tillot, A 11, 49 items; most of these documents are reproduced in Beaurepaire, \textit{Espace des francs-maçons}, 207–11.} They are made up of a Masonic address book of twenty-nine folios, followed by a series of certificates, visas, and Masonic catechisms. Pocchini de La Riva had visited the Concorde lodge, in the Orient of Beaucaire, on October 15, 1765; the lodges of Bordeaux—Amitié, Anglaise, and Française—in April 1766; and La Rochelle’s Union Parfaite the same month. He received the rank of master in the Strasbourg temple Distinction on November 15, 1766, and then obtained the support of the military lodge of the Amis Réunis of the Lyon regiment in garrison at Cambrai on June 14, 1767. Pocchini de La Riva was thus not a Masonic traveler but one of the clever swindlers capable of exploiting circuits of Masonic exchange for their own social advancement. The very presence of adventurers attests to the efficacy of Masonic networks in covering European space and allows us to
study this space, its organization, its representation, and the strategies that made it operate.\textsuperscript{52}

The reception of thousands of foreigners—at least two or three thousand in the kingdom of France\textsuperscript{53}—led individual Freemasons to create structures of reception adapted to the expectations of multiple travelers. These were not institutional initiatives of the Grand Lodge or the Grand Orient but projects of specific Masons, as for example in the Parisian case of Réunion des Etrangers, a lodge founded in 1784 by French and Danish residents of the city. There is evidence of similar projects in all the European capitals: at Neuf Muses in London or Réunion des Elus du Nord, in the Orient of Saint Petersburg, to cite only two examples. These even figured in the travel guides written for well-to-do foreigners.\textsuperscript{54} In Paris, the founders of Réunion des Etrangers insisted on their lodge’s functions of fraternal hospitality and cultural mediation:

It is not only in traveling abroad, and in comparing the diverse acquaintances, that an active and intelligent worker succeeds in giving his oeuvre a regularity, a polished and finished beauty, that heralds its perfection and brings the respect of his companions, the esteem and love of his kind. Our civil world of work leaves us no resources to travel, but it would be possible, we believe, to unite in a single workshop in Paris, under the distinctive title of the Réunion des Frères Etrangers, a concentration, through a developed correspondence, of all the enlightenment spread in the foreign cities. We dare to believe that only good Masons could conceive such a project.\textsuperscript{55}

The Réunion des Etrangers welcomed young aristocrats on the Grand Tour such as Frederick von Moltke, who visited the lodge less than two weeks after it was founded. Von Moltke showed the Masonic certificate from his initiation at Triple Lumière of Göttingen, where he entered as the scion of European aristocracy during his university studies. Introduced to the lodge, he sought the initiation of his tutor. Each step of his educational and qualifying tour was marked by a visit

\textsuperscript{52} The study of these documents eventually will yield a panoramic understanding of Masonic elites in Europe during the 1760s. The creation of an online European database will allow identifications on the basis of evidence that would otherwise surface only by happenstance.
\textsuperscript{53} Beaurepaire, \textit{Autre et le frère}, 23.
\textsuperscript{55} Den Danske Frimurerordern, Ordensarkivet, Copenhagen, F II 12 a 1, folio dated Jan. 5, 1784, addressed to brother Walterstoff and signed by the members of the lodge.
to the local lodge; he was at Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem, the Orient of Toulon, for example, just before embarking for Italy. One might also think of Philippe-Goswyn de Neny, son of Patrice-François de Neny, chief and president of the Council of the queen empress Maria Theresa, who after having secretly left the Austrian Low Countries to escape a career traced by his father, cut a path that led through Liège, Paris, and Geneva to Italy, Greece, and all the way to Constantinople. During this trip he wrote to Marie-Caroline Murray: “I have spent some time (during the winter of 1764–65) in Toulon, where some letters of recommendation and honest masonry soon put me in contact with the entire corps of naval officers.”

Some lodges welcomed foreign students, like Candeur, Orient of Strasbourg, for the students of the Lutheran University; Irlandaise du Soleil Levant, Orient of Paris, for Irish medical students in Paris; or Vertu, Orient of Leiden, where Prince Youssoupoff, its deputy master, received in 1776 two other Russian aristocrats who came to study in the United Provinces, Prince Kourakin and Count Apraxin. These cases suggest the differentiation and specialization of Masonic offerings for a peripatetic society. In these lodges, frequented by foreign teachers and students of certain social standing and their tutors, the educational tour prolonged itself and became an initiation, even a validation. This was clearly about making one’s entry into the world, taking up the first armaments in the kingdom of civility and good taste, in which high-society masonry figured centrally.

To favor the reception of foreign merchants, the lodges of the European seaboard and its colonies employed the same modalities of reception. Amitié of Bordeaux, formerly Amitié Allemande, translated on the Masonic map the importance of the Baltic horizon for the Atlantic port on the Gironde. Here merchants from the Baltic joined their French counterparts in networks of family, business, and religion. The lodge kept up an impressive web of correspondence that complemented the individual relations among its members and with the German diplomatic consuls who kept in assiduous contact, evidence of the strong sociability of the German communities abroad. Anxious about its status, the lodge recognized the authority of the Grand Orient, but as pragmatic traders and good managers of mobility, its members were wary of the Parisian center: “Your works are immense, Very Respect-

56 BNF, Cab MSS, FM, FM² 441, Orient of Toulon, dossier of Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem of Toulon, fol. 6, table of Feb. 20, 1785.
able Brothers, but we believe that instead of simplifying the machine, you are multiplying its circuits.”

In truth, the scaffold of a complex administrative organigram constructed by the lodge of the Grand Orient changed nothing. The extraordinary success of Freemasonry was due, despite the resistance of high ranking masons and rival Masonic systems, to the general recognition across the European continent of the three grades of apprentice, journeyman, and master, which opened the doors of the temple where Freemasons cultivated the virtues of fraternal love, concord, charity, loyalty to the prince, and self-control. These were the same from Edinburgh to Perm, and from Palermo to Stockholm, creating an authentic Masonic habitus. Casanova insisted on the importance of this common pillar, the three grades: “I became an apprentice Freemason. Two months thereafter, I received in Paris the second rank, and a few months later the third, when I became a master. That was the pinnacle of my achievement. All the titles I received thereafter were little more than nice baubles, which whatever they were supposed to mean, seemed comparatively meaningless next to the dignity afforded by the rank of Master.”

Ego-Documents and Mobility: The Journal of Marie-Daniel Bourrée de Corberon

The case of Marie-Daniel, chevalier then comte de Bourrée de Corberon (1748–1810), illustrates the central role of a cultural and Masonic intermediary among diplomats in the eighteenth century. The distant and protected kinsman of the comte de Vergennes, and an active Freemason in France but also in Poland and Russia, Bourrée de Corberon was inspired by an esoteric and alchemic passion and became a member of the Illuminati of Avignon, of the Philalèthe,60 and a propagator of mesmerism in France. He was the husband of Charlotte von Behmer, from a Berlin family established in Saint Petersburg. His journal—recently published in online edition—is kept at the media library Cécanno, of Avignon, and contains a goldmine of information on society life in Paris and Saint Petersburg, the market of high Masonic grades, and even Franco-Russian relations.61 In 1775, as he prepared to accom-

58 BNF, Cab MSS, FM, FM 2 169 bis, dossier of the Amitié lodge of Bordeaux, fol. 48v.
59 Casanova, Histoire de ma vie, 1:553.
60 Literally, “friend of truth.” The Philalèthes was an academy of Masonic and esoteric research, associated with the prestigious Parisian lodge Amis-Réunis and founded by the guard of the Royal Treasury, Charles Pierre Paul Savalette de Langes.
pany the new ambassador of France to Russia, the marquis de Juigné, Bourrée de Corberon confided his Masonic preparations in his diary.

The study of Masonic certificates and letters of recommendation can certainly demonstrate the importance of Masonic tools and techniques in the baggage of the eighteenth-century European traveler. But in the absence of direct witnesses, of ego-documents, it is often difficult to gather more than traces, and to offer material proof of that moment of reception in the order that occurred in the travels of diplomats, students, or merchant Freemasons. Reception was the object of a minute Masonic training that ran parallel to “profane” preparations. Bourrée de Corberon’s journal, different from the Scot James Boswell’s, makes it possible to follow this training in detail. Bourrée de Corberon appears to have been received at Saint-Louis-de-La-Martinique-des-Frères-Réunis in Paris, since he spoke of Louis Antoine Poupar—who had presided over the atelier since 1768—as “the Worshipful Master of the Lodge who received me” on February 16, 1775. But he was already affiliated, through its founder the comte de Buzançais’s recommendation, with a prestigious lodge, “composed with care,” Egalité et Parfaite Sincerité. On February 6, 1775, the lodge received a license from the Grand Orient. Clearly a lodge of the sword nobility (it even called itself a military lodge), its modes of recruitment had little to do with the workshop of the master carpenter Poupar. But Bourrée de Corberon did not choose this lodge by chance at the heart of the nebulous aristocracy that directed the Grand Orient. No sooner had it been founded in February 1775 than Polish and Russian visitors of quality arrived: Prince Casimir Sapieha, the grand master of the artillery of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; and the counts Michael Brzostowski, colonel of the guards of Lithuania, and Adam Moszczenski, chamberlain of the king of Poland. With Brzostowski came Count Pochtoki, and with Moszczenski came Etienne Kalitschoff, counselor to the ambassador of Russia, along with Prince Theodor Golytsin. Owing to their visits, Bourrée de Corberon pulled several tricks that opened not only the doors of the temples of...
Warsaw and Saint Petersburg but also those of high aristocratic society to which he hoped to gain access.

As he prepared to leave, Bourrée de Corberon also requested, without shocking anyone, a certificate of Master of the Grand Orient: “M. Poupar visited me this morning. He promised to give me a Masonic certificate stamped by the Grand Orient.” But he did not stop there. Though a young Mason, he knew that the value of the symbolic grades was entirely relative, even though the highest ranks of the French (called Scottish) rites held great credit throughout Europe. Besides, Poupar did not hide the fact that to be “decorated” by the lodge—that is, to receive its jewels—one had to be of the Scottish rite. Poupar proposed moreover to “pass on the booklet of ranks.” Intelligently, Bourrée de Corberon sought not only to obtain for himself an “increase in salary” (that is to say, a superior rank), but also to gather the materials that would serve him as so much money of exchange in Poland and Russia—the booklets of ranks, catechisms, and Masonic decorations. “As for the jewelry, I can get it at the hardware dealer Hauranne near the cloisters of Saint-Jacques,” he wrote on February 17.

There was in effect a veritable market of ranks: grades were exchanged, existing orders were devalued by proposals of the latest novelties, and honors (previously purchased at a high price) were commonly resold. By April 1775 Bourrée de Corberon became interested in the rank of the Knight Kadosh, a rank strongly marked by the Templar legend. In the 1760s this rank had become a nec plus ultra. New ranks had appeared, but the reputation of Kadosh remained high in France and especially so in Germany, Poland, Russia, and Scandinavia. It was not by chance that Bourrée de Corberon sought the rank of Knight Kadosh. Three months later, on June 20, he received it from the comte de Milleville, sublieutenant of the Royal-Roussillon regiment: “I arrived at Milleville’s residence before six in the morning, where he gave to me the last rank of Mason, the Great K. S. [Kadosh] for which the word is Adonai and the [physical] sign is a fist over the heart with the right hand, then the right knee. He promised me the key again, having given me his word of honor to that effect, but said he wanted to wait until I leave.”

The Journal reveals an essential feature of Masonic exchanges and the acquisition of ranks. Bourrée de Corberon was not elevated in the lodge to the rank of Knight Kadosh after a ceremony of reception, tests, and initiations. The rank was instead “communicated” by a brother who himself held it. Bourrée de Corberon received the word of recognition,

66 Journal de Corberon, Feb. 17, 1775.
67 Ibid.
the signs and paraphernalia of the rank, and probably a copy of the list of the ranks. On November 14, 1775, the *Journal* reveals that Bourrée de Corberon had already obtained by the same process the grade of Scotsman: “I was not too happy about it, having only obtained this rank by communication, but I did get to see a reception for the first time. Our password was *alpha and omega*.”68 This poorly known practice of communication explains the rapidity with which ranks were created, obtained, and circulated. It also shows that the Masonic practices were not limited to the temple’s seat.

During the voyage that brought him to Saint Petersburg, Bourrée de Corberon gauged the value of his Parisian acquisitions before using them in Russia. In Warsaw, he met Karl-Heinrich von Heyking,69 the aide-de-camp of the Grand Hetman of Lithuania, Count Oginski.70 The two men, soon to be linked by a solid friendship, displayed and compared their respective ranks. Bourrée de Corberon sized up the competition reigning among the Scottish ranks:

Baron Heyking had already mentioned that he was a Mason and that he would have a conversation with me about that, which we had this morning. I told him that I was a Templar Knight. We talked a bit about the aims of this order, and he told me that he wanted to associate me with a still higher order, that he had written to get permission, and that he expected to obtain it.71 Next we talked politics. He told me that he had worked under his uncle the Count of Sacken or Sagen, the foreign minister of the Elector of Saxony. Concerning politics and business, he gave me a note, inviting me to make use of it at the appropriate time.71

The *Journal* of Bourrée de Corberon, like other ego-documents of the Freemasons, is a precious testimony to the utility of “a mystical wallet”72 so well designed for the mobility of eighteenth-century elites.

**Conclusion**

In this article I have tried to show the importance of mobility among French Freemasons in the eighteenth century as much from a secular point of view as from a strictly Masonic one. Such mobility upheld

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68 *Journal de Corberon*, Nov. 14, 1775.
70 Oginski was himself a famous Freemason. He traveled across Europe on an esoteric and alchemical quest in the company of the adventurer Stefano Zannowich, “prince of Montenegro.”
71 *Journal de Corberon*, July 24, 1775.
72 This expression derives from Karl Heinrich von Heyking, *Mes réminiscences*, chap. 3, Warsaw University Library, BUW 360.
the feeling of belonging to a diaspora and the aspiration to reunite a brotherhood dispersed around the world. I have sought to reveal the complexity and the elaborate character of the management tools of mobility available to and deployed by members of the Masonic order who made up an important segment of the French, European, and colonial elites. The availability of certificates for traveling brothers or candidates for initiation, the “passports to Enlightenment” vaunted by Joseph de Maistre, deserve our attention, as do the maps of the lodges’ locations, including the polychromatic atlas found in the Brifaut Collection of the Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) University Library. It is clear that no study of the mobility of European elites can ignore this framing of space by networks of lodges and fraternal correspondence. A more detailed study of this mobility and its articulation in a culture of secular mobility will require the systematic study of requests deposited in the archives of the lodges alongside the finding and study of ego-documents from the Freemasons, like those of Marie-Daniel Bourrée de Corberon and his friend Karl-Heinrich von Heyking. Together these might produce a dynamic cartography of individual trajectories contextualized in their milieus. The creation of a database of relations among eighteenth-century European Freemasons, announced in my *L’espace des francs-macons*, was begun in Lund, Sweden, and in Nice in 2005. It will eventually allow scholars to make significant contributions to the study of the techniques and tools that managed mobility in the Enlightenment, as well as of those who put them to work.

Translated by David Beecher and Peter Sahlins