



“Global Brotherhood: Freemasonry, Empires, and Globalization”

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Abstract

Both scholars of globalization and scholars of Freemasonry (bound by nation-based frameworks of analysis) have insufficiently examined the relationship between the fraternity and globalization. This article uses Manfred Steger's definition of the four characteristics of globalization to argue that Freemasonry made a multifaceted contribution to the history of globalization during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It furthered the process by which the world became more interconnected by creating a global network that transcended traditional boundaries, by expanding and stretching social relations (both among its members and between Europe and the wider world), by accelerating and intensifying social exchanges and activities, and by fostering global awareness. In the process, this ultimate global brotherhood also played a role in the extension and functioning of modern European empires, especially the British Empire, which were in and of themselves agents of globalization.

Resumen

Los académicos que estudian la globalización y los historiadores de la masonería (sujetos a marcos de análisis basados en la nación) no han estudiado suficiente la relación entre fraternidad y globalización. En este artículo se emplean cuatro características de la definición de globalización de Manfred Steger para sostener que la masonería realizó una contribución multifacética a la historia de la globalización durante los siglos XVIII y XIX.

La masonería promovió el proceso por el cual el mundo se volvió más interconectado, al crear una red global que trascendió las fronteras nacionales, al expandir y estirar las relaciones sociales (tanto entre los miembros como entre Europa y el resto del mundo), al acelerar e intensificar las actividades e intercambios sociales, y al fomentar la conciencia global. En el proceso, esta decisiva hermandad global también desempeñó un papel en la extensión y el funcionamiento de los imperios europeos modernos, especialmente el británico, que eran en sí mismos agentes de globalización.

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Introduction

In 1786 the Modern Grand Lodge of England printed and distributed a circular warning its subordinate lodges about a widespread problem affecting the fraternity. Grand Lodge officials cautioned that "many idle persons" were traveling "about the country, (some particularly in the dress of Turks or Moors)." The circular explained that "under the sanction of certificates" and "pretending to be distressed Masons, "these suspicious persons were imposing upon "the benevolence of many lodges and brethren²." Remarkably, by the 1780s, Freemasonry's reputation for mutual assistance and benevolence had become so well known that it attracted crafty impostors seeking to gain access to membership benefits. And Freemasonry's network of lodges stretched so far and wide by this point that it made sense for these English impostors to pose *as Muslims* in their attempts to infiltrate lodges and "impose on their benevolence."

To explore and explain how such a state of affairs came about, this article poses several interrelated questions: how, during the eighteenth century, did Freemasonry become an institution with global reach? In what ways did Freemasons come to develop a global frame of reference for thinking about their brotherhood and the rest of mankind? What were the functions of the global network they built? It addresses these questions by relating the history of eighteenth-century Freemasonry to two historical developments with continued relevance to our own time: empire and globalization. I argue that the history of Freemasonry, though neglected by both historians of empire and scholars of globalization, played a significant and fascinating role in both the building of empires and the processes of globalization.

Globalization

The literature on globalization is by now almost as vast as the phenomenon itself. Yet despite being examined from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives, globalization is defined along fairly standard lines. Political theorist David Held defines globalization "as a widening, deepening, and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life." According to historian Dorinda Outram, it is "the history of the factors which, with accelerating speed since the Enlightenment, have come together to make the world a single system." Finally, representing sociology, Roland Robertson observes that "globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification

¹ I want to thank Laura Normand for revising this paper.

² Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), Proceedings, 23 November 1786.

of consciousness of the world as a whole³." So, defined in basic terms, globalization is the process by which the world has become increasingly interconnected and interdependent over time. It is connectivity on a global scale.

Not surprisingly, scholars, commentators, and informed citizens tend to have very strong opinions about globalization. Some argue that it is a good thing: advocates of free trade, for example, see globalization as a positive, "progressive force generating employment and ultimately raising living standards throughout the world⁴." In his critique of globalization as an analytic concept, historian Frederick Cooper refers to this position as "the Banker's Boast"—lifting national barriers to the movement of capital and allowing investment to flow freely will strengthen the globalized economy and bring widespread prosperity⁵. Others argue that globalization is a bad thing. They see it as a "means of expropriating the resources of poor countries by drawing them into debt, encouraging the use of sweated labor, and accelerating environmental degradation⁶. One version of this critique Cooper describes as the "Social Democrat's Lament"—globalization has undermined the nation state, and with it, "the institutional basis for enforcing social and civic rights⁷."

While people can have very different opinions about whether globalization is a positive or a negative development, most of us can agree that it is a reality of our contemporary world⁸. It is hard to deny the fact that something has happened to make the world seem like a smaller place. Diverse technologies are connecting people in ways previously unimagined. Thanks to ATMs, Google, Vonage, and KFC, we live in a world that is relatively easy to negotiate. In fact, due to all these technologies, we tend to think of globalization as a phenomenon of our times, that we are experiencing something unprecedented; that it is a recent, and fairly drastic, development.

But globalization is not a new thing. It has a history. The extraordinary interconnectivity we are experiencing today represents the elaboration and intensification of movements that have been at work for hundreds of years. To get at this history, it is important to conceptualize globalization not as a static condition but rather as a dynamic process. In so doing, we can account for both periods of intensification and periods of reversal, as well as the unevenness and limits of globalizing trends⁹.

This process of globalization has of course been multifaceted. It has economic dimensions, as both economists and economic historians have demonstrated in their studies of

³ David Held, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 16. Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8. Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), 8. Another historian, A. G. Hopkins, notes that globalization "is widely agreed to be a process that transforms economic, political, social, and cultural relationships across countries, regions, and continents by spreading them more broadly, making them more intense, and increasing their velocity." A. G. Hopkins ed., *Globalization in World History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 19.

⁴ Hopkins, *Globalization in World History*, 11.

⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 93.

⁶ Hopkins, *Globalization in World History*, 11.

⁷ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 93-94.

⁸ Cooper does question its usefulness as an analytic concept.

⁹ Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 9.

merchants and markets, commodity flows, and multinational corporations. It is a political phenomenon, as discussed in the works of political scientists and intellectual and political historians who look at international organizations, international relations, and ideas such as cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. It is a social phenomenon, as sociologists and social historians investigating migration, diasporas, and social relations writ large have observed.

Yet few scholars have taken into consideration the role of fraternities and fraternalism, and specifically Freemasonry, in the history of globalization. While some have worked on global organizations such as Rotary International in the twentieth century¹⁰, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—the great age of fraternalism—has received little, if any, attention. Take for example, Nayan Chanda's *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization*, published by Yale for both academic and popular audiences in 2007. Chanda explores the economic and technological forces that have brought about the interconnectedness and interdependence of the world over time¹¹. The book includes not one mention of Freemasonry, even though the groups Chanda studies—traders, adventurers, and warriors—were just the kind of men for whom Freemasonry was so appealing and important.

Freemasonry

Despite being neglected by academics representing wide-ranging disciplines, Masonry made a significant contribution to the history of globalization. By studying Freemasonry, we can learn a lot about globalization. In particular, it offers an ideal way to study the intersection of the global and the local, to see how globalization actually played out on the ground, to think historically about a somewhat unwieldy and amorphous concept. In the discussion that follows, I will build on the work of globalization scholar Manfred Steger. Synthesizing a great deal of scholarship from multiple disciplines, Steger has identified four "qualities or characteristics at the core of the phenomenon" of globalization¹².

Network creation

Steger's first characteristic of globalization concerns network creation and the stretching of social relations. Globalization, Steger argues, involves "the creation of new, and the multiplication of existing social networks and activities." These networks "cut across traditional political, economic, cultural, and geographic boundaries¹³." How did Masonry's network become established, stretch, and, in the process, cut across traditional boundaries? From very early on, speculative Freemasonry was organized and administered as a network. A network is an interconnected system, an interrelated group of people who share interests and

¹⁰ Brendan M. Goff, *The heartland abroad: The Rotary Club's mission of civic internationalism* (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008).

¹¹ Nayan Chanda, *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

¹² Steger, *Globalization*, 14.

¹³ Steger, *Globalization*, 14.

concerns and interact for mutual assistance. Networks are composed of nodes, hubs, and linkages. Nodes are the network's most basic members; they can be human beings, commodities, ideas, etc. Linkages are the relationships that connect the nodes. A concentration of nodes and linkages constitutes a hub. Recently, there has been an explosion of interest and scholarship on networks on the part of historians of empires, trade, migration, diasporas, religion, and science.¹⁴ Yet, as with the case of globalization literature, scholars of networks have largely overlooked fraternalism generally and Freemasonry specifically, which is perplexing given that the primary purpose of fraternalism is to provide a social network¹⁵.

The most basic unit of Freemasonry's network is the local lodge¹⁶. Individual lodges of speculative Freemasons began appearing in the British Isles during the early modern period. But then, in the early eighteenth century, some lodges began coming together to form grand lodges¹⁷. These quickly emerged as the network's central hubs. Eventually, provincial grand lodges—which became the network's coordinated regional nodes—also added to the network's development. What do networks do? They bring people into contact and association with one another—brothers getting to know brothers, lodges interacting with lodges, grand lodges communicating with lodges and with each other. They provide a structure for social interaction and mutual assistance. Such networks can be an effective and powerful means of association as all of us realize, whether we belong to academic networks or Masonic networks (or perhaps both).

During the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the growth of this nascent Masonic network and the activities of these grand lodges turned speculative Freemasonry into a readily identifiable institution with standardized policies and procedures, as outlined for the first time in Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723. When a new lodge emerged, it became a part of an ever-growing network that contemporaries readily recognized as Masonic. Basically, British Freemasonry underwent institutionalization—it emerged as a discrete, public institution with a centralized administration.

Expansion and stretching of social relations

According to Steger, the second characteristic of globalization is "the expansion and stretching of social relations [and] activities." So how did this network, which was established in Britain and Ireland during the early eighteenth century, come to be *stretched*, as Steger puts it? How did Freemasonry achieve what another globalization scholar, David Held, calls "global extensity" (nodes in more places)?¹⁸

¹⁴ See, for example, the *Atlantic History Bibliographies in Oxford Bibliographies Online*, ed. Trevor Burnard, especially Jessica Harland-Jacobs, "Networks for Migrations and Mobility." [cited June 15th, 2013]: available <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0191.xml>

¹⁵ See Harland-Jacobs, "Worlds of Brothers," in: *Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism* 2, no. 1 (2011): 10-37.

¹⁶ The following discussion is drawn from Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire: Freemasons and British Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of Chapel Hill Press, 2007), Chapter 1.

¹⁷ The Grand Lodge of England was founded in 1717, the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1725, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736.

¹⁸ Steger, *Globalization*, 17. Held, *Global Transformations*, 15-19.

From the outset, Freemasonry's metropolitan administration proved quite adaptable and responsive to opportunities for growth, not only throughout the British Isles and Europe but the wider world as well. Starting in the 1720s, the British grand lodges developed several administrative mechanisms that enabled the network to proliferate. It is here we begin to see not only Freemasonry's role in the history of globalization, but its very close relationship to the history of European empire building. The first mechanism was certificates. As we have already seen, as the brotherhood grew in popularity, it became vulnerable to impostors. To address this problem, the Grand Lodge of Ireland began issuing certificates to individual brethren¹⁹. A stranger could prove his membership in the brotherhood by producing a certificate and demonstrating his knowledge of Masonic passwords, handgrips, and rituals. William Forman, member of Lodge No. 195 in the Royal Highlanders Regiment, possessed a certificate that stated he "may be legally admitted into any Assembly of Masons wherever held or congregated." The membership of a brother, Charles Wallington, in the Lodge of True Friendship, Calcutta, was authenticated by a certificate that "recommend [ed] him to all men enlightened whenever spread on the face of the globe²⁰." The Grand Lodge of Ireland developed this administrative mechanism as a response to the fact that many of its members were on the move, and they were moving at great distances, not just across the British Isles and Europe, but throughout the empire and the world. The certificates thus essentially functioned as passports in the increasingly global world of Freemasonry.

Masonic certificates were a significant development, but by far the most important administrative mechanism that allowed Freemasonry to spread worldwide was the military lodge. The very first traveling warrant was issued by the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1732 to the First Battalion, Royal Scots in 1732. The warrant gave members of the lodge the authority to meet anywhere they were stationed. Between 1732 and 1813 the Irish warranted nearly 200 such lodges; the Ancient Grand Lodge of England was next with 108²¹. Nearly every regiment in the British Army eventually had at least one lodge in its ranks; many had several. Four regiments (the 1st, 17th, 23rd, and 51st Foot) had at least one Irish, Scottish, and English lodges. The Royal Artillery had twenty-eight Ancient lodges! The estimate for the total number of regimental lodges is around 500. Irish Masonic historian Chetwode Crawley concludes: "These lodges permeated everywhere; everywhere they left behind the germs of Freemasonry²²."

Indeed, the traveling lodges not only allowed Freemasons to meet anywhere in the world; they planted Freemasonry abroad. When a regiment departed a garrison town or colony, civilians who had participated in the military lodge would continue working and eventually receive their own warrant. For example, Irish Lodge No. 74 (in the Second

¹⁹ While all three grand lodges adopted these mechanisms, the Grand Lodge of Ireland was the most responsive and innovative. It had been the first grand lodge to issue warrants in 1731.

²⁰ Certificate of William Forman, Lodge No. 195 (Irish Registry), Royal Highlanders Regiment, 1761, Grand Lodge of Ireland Archives; certificate of Charles Wallington, Lodge of True Friendship No. 315, Calcutta, Bengal, 1813, United Grand Lodge Archives.

²¹ The Ancients had emerged in the 1750s as a rival to the original Grand Lodge of England, thereafter known as the Moderns. See Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 26-31.

²² Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 37.

Battalion Royal) was active in Albany, New York during the 1750s. The lodge initiated several townsmen into Masonry. Upon the regiment's transfer in 1759 (in the midst of the French and Indian War), the lodge informed Irish authorities that it had decided to copy its warrant in order to set up a new lodge: "Our body is very numerous by the addition of many new members, merchants, and inhabitants of the City of Albany, they having earnestly requested and besought us to enable them to hold a Lodge during our absence from them." Of course, copying a warrant was highly irregular; the Grand Lodge of Ireland nonetheless authorized the provincial grand master of New York to grant the lodge its own warrant. Irish Lodge No. 227 in the 46th Regiment of Foot is another well-known example of a military lodge that helped spread Freemasonry throughout the empire. From the warranting of the lodge in 1752, No. 227 crisscrossed the globe with its regiment in North America, the Caribbean, Ireland, Gibraltar, New South Wales, and India. To be sure, it flourished at times and languished at others, yet for almost a century it provided Masonic services for hundreds of members across the world²³.

The next administrative mechanism that helped Freemasonry become a global brotherhood was the provincial grand lodge. Grand lodges established provincial grand lodges wherever a strong Masonic presence had emerged or wherever they anticipated Freemasonry would take off. The provincial grand master served as the grand master's representative in a locality and had the authority to warrant new lodges. The office was often held by a colony's most prominent citizen, such as Governors Edward Cornwallis, Charles Lawrence, and John Wentworth in Nova Scotia. The provincial grand master was responsible for collecting fees, keeping registers, corresponding with the grand lodge in London, and keeping lodges and brethren in line—basically ensuring the network was functioning smoothly. Most important for Freemasonry's ability to achieve global extensity, the provincial grand master had the authority to warrant new lodges. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts had established 50 lodges, including six in territories that would eventually become part of Canada, before the American War of Independence. On the other side of the empire, the provincial grand master of Bengal, Samuel Middleton, oversaw the activities of twelve lodges during the early 1770s²⁴.

The founding of new lodges throughout the empire was not just due to the activities of military lodges. Settlers who migrated to the colonies were also instrumental in the process, and the metropolitan grand lodges were generally responsive to their petitions. If a settler arrived at a destination and found no Masonic lodge or determined that existing lodges were too crowded, he could petition a grand lodge in the British Isles to send a warrant for a new lodge. In 1787 the Grand Lodge of Ireland received such a request from three brethren "praying for [a warrant] to hold a lodge in the town of Kingston in Jamaica." The Irish Grand Lodge readily agreed to this and other requests for warrants from settlers, not only in the

²³ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 34-36. It was the chest of Lodge No. 227 that George Washington famously returned, under a guard of honor, to the regiment during the American Revolution.

²⁴ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 167-8, 38-44.

Caribbean and North America, but also, eventually, in the new colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The English and Scottish lodges followed suit²⁵.

Thus, via the mechanisms of the certificate, the military lodge, and the provincial grand lodge system, and the processes of migration and settlement, British Freemasonry began to achieve global extensity. It was one of the first sociocultural institutions to operate on a global scale. But why was Freemasonry expanding, and just how far did Masonry's network stretch? This brings us to Steger's third characteristic of globalization, the "intensification and acceleration of social exchanges and activities"²⁶.

Social exchanges and activities

Freemasonry expanded not just because the grand lodges had developed a well-organized, responsive administration but also because its emergence coincided with a period of remarkable growth in the British Empire. With each colony added to the empire, the social exchanges and activities facilitated by the Masonic network were intensified and accelerated.

The second half of the eighteenth century was an era of aggressive imperialism, driven forward by commercial expansion, migration and settlement, and scientific exploration. But the biggest single factor responsible for the growth of the British Empire was international rivalry and warfare. The century witnessed a series of European wars that became increasingly colonial wars over time. Britain did well in these wars, and, as a result, took over the colonies of its rivals, France and Spain. For example, the first world war—the Seven Years' War (1756–1763)—was a colonial struggle between France and Britain in North America that escalated into a major European and then global war.

"For the first time in history a war was fought simultaneously across many hemispheric fronts" in Europe, the Americas, and Asia²⁷. What is important for present purposes is not the causes of the war or the course of the war, but rather its outcome. After some initial setbacks, the British and their Prussian allies were victorious. There were minimal territorial shifts on the European continent, but dramatic changes overseas as Britain emerged as the dominant naval and colonial power. When they signed the Treaty of Paris to end the conflict in 1763, the British took over Minorca in the Mediterranean; four French colonies in the Caribbean (Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago); almost all of North America, including New France; Florida and territories east of the Miss; and Senegal in Africa. Within two years, Britain would also succeed in chasing the French out of Bengal and establishing the foundations of territorial empire in India.

The expanding British Empire provided remarkably fertile ground for Freemasonry. By mid-century, the brotherhood had already taken root in the empire, as we have seen. The first overseas lodges had emerged in Gibraltar and Calcutta in 1728/9. By 1752, the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, and Scotland had warranted lodges in the Caribbean and in ten North American colonies. Provincial grand masters had been appointed in these regions as

²⁵ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 41.

²⁶ Steger, *Globalization*, 14-15.

²⁷ Robert Tignor, *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* (New York: Norton, 2002), 159.

well. But the 1760s, which historian Tony Ballantyne describes as a "globalizing decade," marked the beginning of a period of remarkable growth, and a resulting intensification and acceleration of the kinds of social exchanges Freemasonry facilitated. Dozens of British regiments were active around the world in this period, and most of these regiments had at least one Masonic lodge. More than ever before, Britons were on the move: East India Company servants journeyed out to Bengal, Scots and Irish settlers crossed the Atlantic, colonial governors moved from one colony to the next (especially Scots like the first governor of British East Florida, James Grant, whom the Grand Lodge of Scotland appointed "Provincial Grand Master over the Lodges in the southern district of North America"). Thousands among them were Freemasons, and they planted Freemasonry wherever they went. Ballantyne observes that "while many lands remained beyond British commercial influence or military power, by the 1780s British commercial factories, naval bases, and missionary stations encircled the world²⁸." To that list, Masonic lodges must be added. Indeed, between the 1750s and the turn of the century, the British set up lodges in Madras and Bombay; several additional British North American colonies (including New France); the Caribbean; and New South Wales. Notably, this period also witnessed British Freemasonry's export to areas outside the formal empire such as China, South Africa, and Argentina²⁹.

The British were not alone in globalizing the Masonic network. The other imperial powers of the day—the Spanish and Portuguese, the French, and the Dutch—were also contributing to the intensification and acceleration of social relations via Masonry.

While French lodges had emerged on Martinique³⁰ before the Seven Years War, it was during the last third of the century that lodges began proliferating throughout the French Caribbean, on Cayenne (French Guiana), Guadeloupe, Saint Lucia, and Saint Domingue. The sizeable settler population of Saint Domingue—which numbered 40,000 by the 1780s—gave rise to dozens of lodges and chapters in the period before the Revolution. James McClellan states that the colony was home to more than a thousand Masons in that decade. According to David Nicholls, "Masonic lodges... were a familiar feature of colonial Saint Domingue³¹." By the 1780s, French lodges were at work in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean island colonies of Reunion and Mauritius. French Freemasons also operated lodges in Senegambia and Egypt³².

²⁸ Tony Ballantyne, "Empire, Knowledge, and Culture: From Proto-Globalization to Modern Globalization," in: *Globalization in World History*, 119.

²⁹ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, Chapter 1.

³⁰ Gould reports that 'La Parfaite Union' was the first French lodge in the Caribbean; it was founded on Martinique in 1738. Before 1794, seven other lodges were established. The Grand Orient issued warrants for additional French lodges on Martinique in the early nineteenth century. Robert F. Gould, *The History of Freemasonry: Its Antiquities, Symbols, Constitutions, etc.* (London: Caxton Publishing Company, 1886), vol. V, 365-67.

³¹ James E. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue and the Old Regime* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 187. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour, and National Independence in Haiti* (Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 23.

³² Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 85-86. Gould, *The History of Freemasonry*, 343, 341-342. Claude Wauthier, "A Strange Inheritance: Africa's Freemasons", *Le Monde Diplomatique* (September 1997) [cited June 15th, 2013]: available <http://mondediplo.com/1997/09/masons>

This "age of global imperialism" also marked the moment when Dutch Freemasonry spread overseas to colonies in South America, the Caribbean, the East Indies, and the Cape. The Dutch grand master warranted the first lodge in Surinam (Lodge Concordia) in 1761. By the 1770s, five additional lodges had been founded and, by century's end, over 200 Dutch Freemasons were active in the colony. Meanwhile, lodges began to emerge in the East Indies. J.C.M. Rademacher, a Chief Merchant in the Dutch East Indies Company and son of a Dutch Past Grand Master, set up the first lodge, "La Choisie," in Batavia in 1762³³. Lodges for sailors and prominent colonists and Company officials emerged in the late 1760s. So successful was Dutch Masonry by 1786 that local Masons were able to build a dedicated temple. The Dutch Grand Lodge, recognizing the fraternity's success in both Batavia and Java, appointed a deputy grand master for the Indies in 1798. Across the ocean in the Cape Colony, the first Freemasons and lodges were established in this era. Returning home from Java in 1764, Rademacher disembarked at the Cape. His observations convinced him that the brotherhood would find fertile ground among the Afrikaners of the Cape. On Rademacher's urging, the Dutch Grand Lodge appointed a deputy grand master, Abraham van der Weijde. As soon as he arrived at the Cape in 1772, van der Weijde warranted the colony's first lodge, "De Goede Hoop"³⁴.

Of course, the world of eighteenth-century Masonry, as with all subsequent eras of Masonic history, was characterized by internal differences and divisions. Masonry differed depending on the national origin of members and even within national jurisdictions, as was the case with the English. That said, the Masonic ideal certainly was to achieve a single, unified brotherhood, and, as we will see, at times Masonry was able to transcend the intense, frequently violent national rivalries of the eighteenth century. Thus, through the activities of Dutch, French, Iberian, and especially British Masons, the fraternity, as one early nineteenth-century Mason put it, had become a "vast chain extending round the whole globe"³⁵. As it achieved global extensity Freemasonry also gave its members a way to conceptualize this world. Thinking in global terms is, according to Steger, the fourth characteristic of globalization.

Global awareness

"The compression of the world into a single place," Steger observes, "increasingly makes global the frame of reference for human thought and action"³⁶. Awareness of the world in all its diversity was a key preoccupation of the Enlightenment era during which empires were expanding and Masonry's network was stretching. While we can trace Freemasonry's origins to an earlier period, it was really during the Enlightenment that Freemasonry, as we know it today, came into being and began to flourish. Historians traditionally described the

³³ Paul Van der Veur, *Freemasonry in Indonesia from Rademacher to Soekanto, 1762-1961* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1976), 5. Rademacher was a Chief Merchant in the VOC and a naturalist.

³⁴ A. A. Cooper, *The Freemasons of South Africa* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau 1986), 16-17.

³⁵ *Freemasons' Quarterly Review* (September 1841), 360.

³⁶ Steger, *Globalization*, 15.

Enlightenment as an intellectual movement of prominent philosophes who gathered knowledge and developed and championed core ideas: reason, liberty, anticlericalism, and progress. More recently, historians have analyzed the Enlightenment as a cultural movement involving not only the great thinkers but also an engaged public—women as well as men who socialized in salons; who wrote great quantities of pamphlets and books; who gathered in coffeehouses and Masonic lodges; and who read everything they could get their hands on³⁷. They consumed a steady diet of travel literature and eagerly absorbed explorers' accounts that told of extraordinary geographical discoveries (the first edition of Cook's voyage of 1776–9 sold out in three days). In the process, they developed "a much fuller, and increasingly theorized, picture of the world and human variety"³⁸. Freemasonry gave eighteenth-century Europeans a way to think about the world as it came into focus. It did so by promoting a globalizing ideology of cosmopolitan brotherhood, which had four main components.

Freemasonry urged its members to practice toleration and inclusiveness, thus the ban on discussing politics and religion in the lodge. As English Freemasons explained to King George in the turbulent 1790s, their rules forbade religious and political discussions because they "sharpen the mind of man against his brother." Their brotherhood was composed "of men of various nations, professing different rites of faith, and attached to opposite systems of government," and they diligently observed the rule to keep "Quarrel about Religion or Nations, or State policy" outside the lodge³⁹.

During the eighteenth century, we have evidence of British Masonic lodges being relatively inclusive. Men of various religious, social, and political backgrounds sought, and won, admission into the brotherhood. Here we come back to Steger's first point in which he specifies that globalizing networks "cut across traditional political, economic, cultural, and geographic boundaries." Eighteenth-century Freemasonry included in its ranks not only Protestants but also Catholics, Jews, and even some Muslims. Lodges were dominated by white Europeans, to be sure, but one occasionally finds Africans and Asians undergoing initiation. Joseph Brant, an Iroquois leader and ally of the British, was initiated into Freemasonry in London in 1776. That same year, across the world in southern India, a Muslim prince, the future Nawab of Arcot, became a Mason. Addressing the prince, the Grand Lodge of England observed that "the good moral Man of every country or denomination is qualified to participate" in Masonry. Even some among the growing numbers of free blacks in North America were admitted to the brotherhood; this was the moment when Prince Hall and several other prominent African Americans in Boston were initiated by an Irish military lodge and subsequently recognized by the Grand Lodge of England as a legitimate lodge⁴⁰. Freemasonry's inclusiveness extended beyond religion and race to politics as well. Eighteenth-century lodges included men from across the political spectrum, from

³⁷ Margaret Jacob has written several pioneering works on the lived enlightenment. See *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

³⁸ Ballantyne, "Empire, Knowledge, and Culture", 119.

³⁹ Grand Lodge of England (Ancients), Address to the King, *The Times*, 7 March 1793.

⁴⁰ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 73-83.

conservative loyalists like the men in charge of the British grand lodges to radicals like French Jacobins and United Irishmen (who rebelled against the British in 1798)⁴¹.

Freemasons were instructed to be tolerant because all mankind belonged, the institution claimed, to a universal family. This is the next aspect of Masonic ideology that fostered global awareness. Like many in the Enlightenment, Freemasons believed in the fundamental unity of mankind (though of course they accepted the idea that the family of mankind was inherently hierarchical). One Masonic handbook from 1798 reminded its readers: "By the Exercise of Brotherly Love, we are taught to regard the whole human Species as one Family, the High, Low, Rich and Poor; all created by one Almighty Being, and sent into the World for the Aid, Support, and Protection of each other. On this grand Principle, Masonry unites Men of every Country, Sect and Opinion"⁴².

With an open mind and an awareness that he was always among his brothers, the Mason was expected to feel at home in any part of the world. He was a *cosmopolite*, a citizen of the world. William Preston, whose *Illustrations of Freemasonry* became a bestseller in England during the eighteenth century and continues, to this day, to come out in new editions, explained that Masonry "unites men of the most opposite religions, of the most distant countries, and of the most contradictory opinions, in one indissoluble bond of unfeigned affection. . . . Thus, in every nation a mason may find a friend, and in every climate he may find a home"⁴³.

The final component of Freemasonry's cosmopolitan fraternalism was the injunction to feel love and practice benevolence. According to eighteenth-century Masonic texts, the Mason should express love and offer assistance to all his brethren and indeed to mankind in general. Brotherly love was a favorite topic of eighteenth-century Masonic sermons, as Steve Bullock demonstrates in *Revolutionary Brotherhood*.⁴⁴ Most Masonic pamphlets and tracts—and there were a lot of these published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—also either touched on or alluded to the theme of brotherly love. *A Dissertation on Free-masonry* explained: "United by the endearing name of brother, Free-Masons live in an affection and friendship rarely to be met with even among those whom the ties of [blood] ought to bind in the firmest manner"⁴⁵. Practicing brotherly love meant acting charitably, not only toward members of the brotherhood, but also toward the wider community. Indeed, benevolence has since the beginning been a central plank of Masonic ideology, encapsulated by the mantra "brotherly love, relief, and truth."

The examples of Freemasons' extending relief to those in need, both inside and outside the brotherhood, abound. To cite just one: in October 1789, a hurricane ripped through Barbados. It left the hall of the prominent St. Michael's Lodge in "a heap of ruins." Members of the lodge helped one another build temporary habitations, assisted one member

⁴¹ See Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, Chapter 3.

⁴² J. Browne, *The Master Key through all the Degrees of a Freemason's Lodge* (London, 1798), 28.

⁴³ William Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry* (London, 1772), 14-15.

⁴⁴ Steven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood. Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 56-57.

⁴⁵ A Free and Accepted Mason, "A Dissertation on Free-Masonry, addressed to HRE George Pow, Grand Master of England," in: *Attic Miscellany* 2 (1790), 78.

who had been completely reduced to want, and then directed the rest of their charity toward other "poor Masons: on the island"⁴⁶.

These four strands—being tolerant, believing in a universal family, feeling at home anywhere in the world, and practicing brotherly love and benevolence—constituted the ideology of fraternal cosmopolitanism; we might also describe it as global fraternalism. In fact, fraternalism was really the key to Freemasonry's extensivity, its ideology, and the functioning of its network. Fraternalism is "the process by which biologically unrelated men undergo a shared ritual experience designed to create the bonds and obligations that supposedly characterize the relationship between actual brothers." Fraternalism is "symbolic kinship"⁴⁷. Members viewed one another as brothers, connected by shared ritual experiences and pledges of mutual obligation.

To be sure, Freemasonry's cosmopolitan ideology was marked by limitations and tensions. Europeans, usually of the middle and upper classes, dominated lodge memberships, and they could blackball a candidate they deemed unfit for whatever reason. The Masonic family was not really universal: it did not include women. During the nineteenth century, excluded groups—African-Americans, Hindus and Parsis, even women—would begin calling on Freemasonry to live up to its claims to universal brotherhood. They would challenge Masons to see the contradiction between their inclusive ideas and their exclusive practices, and the brotherhood would be forced to respond. Nevertheless, in both eras, Masonic ideology did encourage members to think beyond the local and the national to the global and to embrace "others" as their brothers. It was celebrated for its ability to transcend the boundaries that divided men, for providing a globalized frame of reference.

Global networking

Freemasonry thus helped make the world a more interconnected and interdependent place by creating a network that stretched across the world, that cut across traditional boundaries, and that encouraged members to adopt a global frame of reference, which I have characterized as cosmopolitan brotherhood. Why was it so extensive and so popular? Because, as it did all this, the brotherhood helped members negotiate the world.

In 1785 (the same year the Grand Lodge of England sent out the circular warning of impostors dressing as Turks and Moors), the Reverend Joshua Weeks explained to Masons gathered in Halifax, Nova Scotia that they possessed a "key" that would give them "admittance to the brotherhood" anywhere in the world. "Were the providence of God to cast you on an unknown shore; were you to travel through any distant country, though ignorant of its language, ignorant of its inhabitants, ignorant of its customs," he assured his listeners, the

⁴⁶ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 59.

⁴⁷ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 17. For fraternalism, see also Nicholas Terpstra, "De-institutionalizing Confraternity Studies: Fraternalism and Social Capital in Cross-Cultural Contexts," in: *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock, eds (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 15. Bullock identifies the Freemasons as forming a "fictive family." Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 39.

key would "open the treasures of their charity"⁴⁸. Indeed, as Freemasons crossed oceans and landed "on unknown shores," as they "travelled through distant countries" and encountered and interacted with various "others" (be the other Europeans or indigenous people), they could call on their brotherhood to meet wide-ranging social, emotional, spiritual, and material needs. These needs were particularly acute for men involved in colonization—traders, soldiers, sailors, and officers, explorers, colonial administrators, and settlers of all kinds—and Freemasonry was particularly well suited to assist them. It provided opportunities for spiritual and intellectual growth and fellowship. For soldiers and officers, it helped to relieve the tedium and monotony of garrison life. Its balls offered recreational outlets for the brethren and for colonial women. It played a crucial, and largely unappreciated, role in the ceremonial life of the empire. In every colony, Masons laid the foundation stones of both Masonic and public buildings. They marched in procession on St. John's Day, usually to the local Anglican Church to hear a service.

The network helped men negotiate their professional as well as their personal lives, as evidenced by the circulation of recommendation letters through the Masonic world. In 1793 Charles Stuart returned to England from India; the officers of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal sent a letter recommending him to the English grand master as "a very Worthy and Benevolent Man, and as a faithful and zealous Mason"⁴⁹. And, as we have seen, Masons were known for their charity. They helped members who had fallen on hard times, funded the passages of needy brethren and their families from one part of the empire to another, provided for deceased brothers' widows and orphans, and assisted victims of natural disaster and war. By fulfilling a variety of needs—ranging from convivial association to easing men's transition from one colonial society to another to providing a safety net for members and their families—belonging to the fraternity made life easier for Britons who ran, defended, and lived in the empire.

While Freemasonry was thus incredibly useful for negotiating life within the British Empire, it also had the ability to bring men of competing empires together, thereby cutting across traditional boundaries and transcending the intense national/imperial rivalries of the age. In Bengal during the 1770s, English and Dutch Freemasons visited one another's lodges and marched together in public processions. In 1789 British Masons in Calcutta put on a ball to which they invited Masons from neighboring Dutch, French, and Danish settlements.⁵⁰ Across the ocean, the Cape colony was the site of a great degree of interaction between British and Dutch Freemasons and is thus an interesting place to examine the ways Freemasonry operated at the intersection of competing empires⁵¹.

Freemasonry's ability to cut across national/imperial boundaries during wartime was well known and cited as a reason for the growing popularity of the brotherhood among Britons in India at the end of the eighteenth century. In the mid-1780s, the provincial grand

⁴⁸ Jonathan Wingate Weeks, *Sermon presented at St. Paul's Church in Halifax being the Festival of St. John*, (Halifax: John Howe, 1785), 23.

⁴⁹ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 50-60.

⁵⁰ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 85-86. Danish merchants were active members of Lodge Industry and Perseverance at Calcutta.

⁵¹ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 193-201.

master of Madras reported to the Ancient Grand Lodge that membership in the brotherhood was growing dramatically because "fame of [French Freemasons'] benevolence and fraternal affection to our unfortunate Brothers has reached the remotest parts of India⁵²." In 1785 Brigadier General Matthew Horne was being held as a prisoner of war by the French on an island in the Indian Ocean. He reported that he and his fellow British Freemasons received "very handsome relief and assistance" from their French brethren. Invited to participate in lodge meetings, he noted that although the rules and rituals varied, the "true principle of Masonry" was at work⁵³. It is not surprising, therefore, that Masonic certificates were at times printed in both English and French⁵⁴.

Conclusion

Freemasonry thus made a multifaceted, if understudied, contribution to the history of globalization. It was one of the first cultural institutions to build a network that extended its reach across the world. It contributed to the intensification and acceleration of social exchanges, often in ways that cut across well-established boundaries. It promoted an ideology of cosmopolitan brotherhood that taught members a particular way of thinking about the world. It facilitated men's ability to negotiate strange and difficult worlds. In the process, Freemasonry helped lubricate several other agents of globalization, including trading networks, migration flows, and empires. And it started doing all this well before the days of telegraphs, steamships, and passports, let alone jet planes and the Internet.

Masons of today actually have a lot in common with their eighteenth-century brethren. They commit themselves to the practice of brotherly love, relief, and truth. They turn to their brotherhood to meet wide-ranging needs. And, perhaps most significantly, their membership in Masonry conditions them to develop global frames of reference. Twenty-first-century Masons, if they absorb the true meaning of fraternalism, are cosmopolites. Like the Masons I've been discussing in this talk and perhaps more than most people in the world today, they are squarely situated at the intersection of the local and the global.

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⁵² Officers of Provincial Grand Lodge of Madras to Earl of Antrim, 7 July 1785, UGL Historic Correspondence 19/A/23, UGL Archives.

⁵³ Harland Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 87.

⁵⁴ See Wallington certificate, cited above.

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