

Reflections on 300 Years of Freemasonry

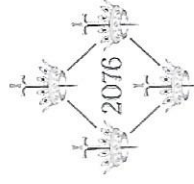
Papers Delivered to the Quatuor Coronati Lodge
Tercentenary Conference on the History of Freemasonry

Queens' College, Cambridge

9–11 September 2016

Dr James W. P. Campbell, Master

Professor Aubrey N. Newman, Conference Chairman



Edited by Dr John S. Wade

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 **Lewis Masonic**

Foreword

The Tercentenary is an exciting year for the United Grand Lodge of England and being marked accordingly by a series of events at home and abroad. The Tercentenary Conference was one of the very first of those official events and one I had great pleasure in attending. It seemed fitting that we should begin the Tercentenary Year with a celebration of history and Quatuor Coronati Lodge has since its foundation been at the forefront of historical debate. As this volume shows Masonic research is attracting increasing interest from professional academics. We are immensely proud of the facilities provided in the Library and Museum in Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street which are being notably expanded during this celebration year.

The papers in this book show the great variety of topics currently interesting Masonic researchers. I am sure that the book will appeal to and be enjoyed by not just members of the Craft but anyone interested in Masonic history.

I congratulate the authors on their enterprise and commend their work.



Jonathan Spence
Deputy Grand Master

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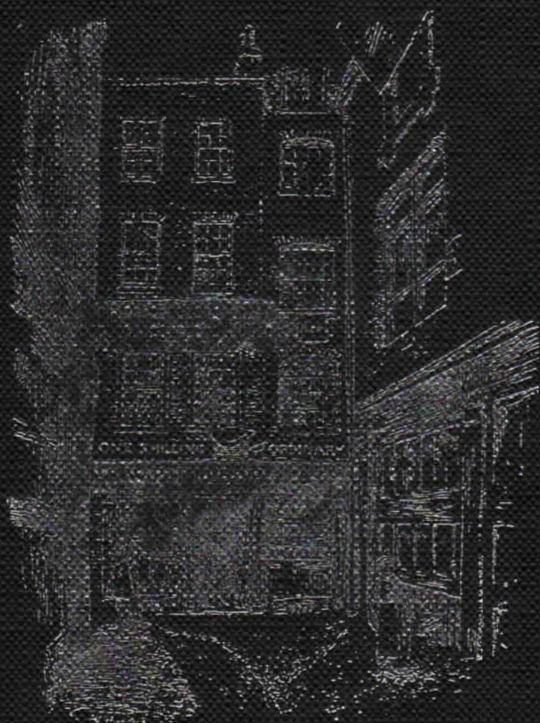
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The First English Lodge in the Ottoman Empire: Oriental Lodge, 1856–1909

Emanuela Locci

SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY WAS OFFICIALLY BORN IN ENGLAND. INITIALLY represented by the Grand Lodge of England, this Masonry proposed itself as a formative institution, based on symbolism, philanthropy, and on people's education. It came directly from the building guilds and it assumed new purposes connected with the culture of the age of Enlightenment. Therefore, it characterizes itself as a cosmopolitan association, aimed at the promotion of individuals' and society's well-being, through a continuous educational training which was independent from language, religion, ethnic group, and country. The development of Enlightenment Freemasonry was very fast and at the beginning it interested European countries and immediately after that all countries overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. The appearance of Masonic institutions in the Ottoman Empire dates back to 1738, but it was a short experience carried out by Frenchmen about whom we only have few items of documented information. The first lodges were founded by European residents in Ottoman territory. They were merchants, artisans, soldiers, and diplomats, who were often introduced to Masonry in their native countries and they continued their Masonry experience afterwards in the host nation.

At the beginning, lodges which were founded on a national and community basis represented an aggregation centre which was specific for each country. Instead, in observance with Masonry's universality principle, lodges started to meet in new national lodges consisting of different nationalities. The Ottoman Empire Masonry, which was the expression of a European presence and a significant phenomenon, affected different categories of the population and it played an essential role in many historical events concerning Ottoman national entity.

It is necessary to wait for the second half of eighteenth century to witness the great development of Masonry, even if it is difficult to identify a particular historical event that could be defined as essential for the diffusion of liberal and Masonic ideas in the Ottoman Empire.¹ Perhaps the Crimean war, dated 1854–55, could have hastened the pressure for reforms, along with the influence of the European powers, France and England, that had supported the Ottoman Empire during the war against Russia. 1856 was a very important year, both for the extent of reforms introduced by imperial decree, and because a Masonic lodge started its activities in Constantinople. In 1856 there were already eight lodges, each one with a different Obedience, and some years later in 1869 twelve were to be found. In 1874 three hundred and seventy Freemasons were registered in the capital alone. The European nations which had the greatest presence in the Masonic environment were England, France, and Italy, even though Russia had intruded itself into the Masonic system which England and France had already tested. There was also a minor presence of members from Greece, Germany and Spain.

In a sense, Masonry characterising the Empire in this period can be defined as colonial² Masonry, because the lodges were founded by foreign Obediences which had established lodges beyond their national borders. In fact an Ottoman national Obedience did not exist at that time. However, a kind of association that shared philosophical points in common with Freemasonry was present. In effect, in Ottoman social context there were Sufi confraternities which represented an important tradition that would pass almost unscathed through some hundred years of Ottoman history. These confraternities have endured up to the present with renewed vigour. So Freemasonry was considerably part of the Ottoman population as a sort of Western confraternity. European Masonry

¹ There is very little information about European Masonic activities in the Empire from the seventeenth century and, in order to have new reliable data, we need to wait until 1804, when the first lodge was constituted in Syria, precisely in Aleppo. This lodge, which was founded by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, was created by the British Consul, Alexander Drummond. This Masonic experience was very brief and unfortunately, unfortunately don't have enough documents to carry out an effective and precise historic reconstruction of its activities.

² P. Dumont, 'La Franc-maçonnerie Ottoman et les Idées Françaises à l'époque des Turcs', *Revue de la Méditerranée et du monde Méditerranéen*, 2–3 (1989), 151.

³ A. Iacovella, *Il triangolo e la Mezzaluna*, (Istanbul: I.I.C.I., 1997).

⁴ 'Turkey', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (1 May 1885), 328.

noticed this situation and in turn they considered confraternities as social structures which were very similar to Freemasonry. Nevertheless, there was a difference between these two structures: confraternities were composed only of Muslims,⁵ whereas men who were part of Freemasonry followed all different religions. The members of the lodge talked about affinities between these two kinds of sociality and they concluded that there was not a direct connection, given that Freemasonry was not present in all the states in which confraternities flourished. But they identified common roots with Greek culture, mystical rituals, distinctive signs, etc.

This research retraces all events that have characterized the history of the Oriental Lodge, the oldest English lodge founded in the Ottoman Empire. The sources used for the historical reconstruction are, in most cases archives found in the United Grand Lodge of England, the United Grand Lodge of Turkey, and in the Grand Orient of Italy.

The Oriental Lodge

The Masonic Oriental Lodge dependant on the Grand Lodge of England was founded on 7 August 1857 in Constantinople, the Empire's capital at that time. It had been consecrated with a permit of establishment dated 25 November 1856 and with matriculation number 988. This number was to be replaced by 687 in 1863, the year when it began to found a Royal Arch chapter.

Over the years it changed location many times, but each one was on the European side of the town.⁶ The Masonic founders were sixteen and their first meeting took place in the area of Pera. Later on, Masons met seven other times before presenting their request for its confirmation by the Grand Lodge of England.⁷ The lodge was legitimized by his first Worshipful Master Edward Silly, in the presence of twenty-seven Masons.⁸ It based its structure on a guideline composed of thirty-three articles which regulated life inside the lodge.

Among Masons there were people of importance in their respective communities and because of their relationship with the Ottoman government. These included John Porter Brown, an American citizen who was also the secretary of the American legation and dragoman of the Sublime Porte. Furthermore, he was an enthusiastic researcher in oriental matters and since 1859 he had taken part in Masonic activities.

⁵ 'Turkey', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (11 February 1860), 18.

⁶ Baitzer's Hotel, No. 373 Grand Rue, Pera, Constantinople from 1857, 4 Rue Tepe, Bashi, Constantinople from 1869, Masonic Temple, Place Comondo, Pera, Constantinople from 1872 and finally Freemasons' Hall, Banca Memorial, Galata, Constantinople from 1879.

⁷ 'Turkey', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (1 February 1858), 237.

⁸ Among them were Evans, Cipriotti, Warren, Aznavour, Mountain, Pulman and Hamilton, as it is shown in the lodge's matriculation register found in Historical Archive of United Grand Lodge of England, 1.

In 1858 F. Edward Silly was re-elected Worshipful Master. He introduced his officers: S. Aznavour, evidently coming from Armenia, was elected SW, D. Galetly JW; Matthew Hooper SD; Alfred Hitchmough JD; Theodore Kinzlebach IG, and W. Evans was elected Secretary.⁹

Who were its affiliates? The analysis of the matriculation register reveals that all of them came from the English community. In most cases they were naval engineers, navy officers, merchants and traders, editors and teachers.

Therefore Masons who took part in the Oriental Lodge's work were mostly English and members of the community settled in the town. However there were a few initiations of locals: Ibrahim Edhem was the first Muslim to be initiated to the English Lodge (1866), but two years later he moved to a French Lodge called *L'Union d'Orient*. At the beginning of its activities there were only four Muslims in the lodge who had been initiated and who participated actively. They were religious men (Aziz Bey, 1861) or public officials, including the police chief (Said Muhammad Zahir, 1869) and a deputy (Yusuf Ziya El-Halidi, 1899).¹⁰

According to our sources, in 1860, that is three years after its foundation, the lodge could count on the active presence of seventy Masons.¹¹

As the mother lodge of the Ottoman Empire, this lodge facilitated the birth of many lodges belonging to the Grand Lodge of England. One of the most important was the Bulwer, founded by Henry Bulwer and which could boast members like Hyde Clark (1815–95), Worshipful Master of the Homer, George Laurie, as Past Master of the Oriental; Henry Pulman,¹² Worshipful Master of the Oriental, John Porter Brown, secretary of the American legation and already mentioned as affiliated to the Oriental, and C. Thompson, American Deputy General Consul.¹³

The Oriental also took part in the creation of an important lodge in Smyrna, the Homer Lodge No. 1108, which was founded to host all Masons that had been initiated in spurious lodges which later requested to be inserted into the regular English Masonic system. These two lodges collaborated for a long time, both for Masonic matters and for profane issues.¹⁴

It was a very important lodge for the whole European Masonic system in Ottoman territory. It was indeed the first Masonic centre to give French and Italian Masons the first elements to allow them to create their own lodges.

⁹ 'Turkey', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror*, (1 March 1858), 425.

¹⁰ T. Zarcone, *Mistiques, Philosophes et Franc-maçons en Islam* (Paris: Jean Maisonneuve, 1949), 207.

¹¹ 'Turkey', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (11 February 1860), 18.

¹² Henry Pulman died in 1869 in Teheran, when he was just 35 years of age. The lodge commended him as a respectable and esteemed Mason, very cooperative, and extremely reliable.

¹³ 'The Masonic Mirror, Masonic Memos', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (11 June 1861), 18.

¹⁴ 'Turkey', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (16 March 1861), 18.

One may consider under this perspective the English participation in the creation of an Italian lodge, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Orient of Italy. This collaboration lasted for a long time, and for example in 1866, upon retirement of E. Veneziani, the Worshipful Master of the Italian lodge and also co-founder of the organization, he nominated his successor, Nissim Camondo (1830–89). He was a descendant of the famous and powerful banking family belonging to the Jewish community in Constantinople.¹⁵

In an environment like Constantinople, where lodges were founded by foreigners, the founding of a new lodge was a case of national pride, because inside the lodge people used the language of the promoting country, and moved forward instances of their own national Freemasonry and of their own nation.

English Masons in the Ottoman Empire had a priority: constituting as many lodges as possible, in order to proceed to the creation of a provincial institution gathering together all the English lodges of the jurisdiction, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Turkey.¹⁶ The Oriental and the Bulwer took part in the constitution of the Provincial Grand Lodge.

Over the years, the Oriental Lodge did not have the inconvenience of the sultan's police supervision, firstly because of sultan Abdulaziz's order and then that of his successor, Abdulhamid.¹⁷ This was different to what happened in the French and especially in the Italian lodges, which were considered as hideouts for revolutionaries.¹⁸

So, why was that lodge historically so important? First of all it was the first foreign lodge founded in the Ottoman Empire, and therefore the first Masonic experience in this territory. This lodge was an aggregation centre for Masons who were members of the English community. It was also the starting point for other Masonic experiences both English, like the Bulwer No. 891, the Homer No. 1108,¹⁹ and for the genesis of other lodges which did not belong to the English Obedience and that often recruited some of their affiliates from the ranks of English Masons.

¹⁵ Nissim Camondo's intallation speech was based on the defence of Jewish Masons because they were often the target of social persecution.

¹⁶ One of specific characteristics of English lodges outside national borders was the creation of an entity overseeing the activities of lodges in that area. That entity would verify at all times that every lodge respected the laws and precepts of the obedience that they belonged to. So, in 1860 the birth of District Grand Lodge was better known as Provincial Grand Lodge of Turkey. This authority had jurisdiction over all English lodges in the Empire. Historical Archive Grand Lodge of Turkey, Hyde Clarke, '15.12.1865, Günü İzmir'de Yapılmış olan Türkiye Provensiyal Büyük Locası', *Mimar Sinan* (Istanbul, 1966), 74.

¹⁷ Murad V's reign was too short to be taken into account. Moreover, the sultan was a Mason, so obviously he was favourable to Freemasonry.

¹⁸ Larcone, *Mistiques*, 217.

¹⁹ There were also other lodges, for example in the town of Smirne (now Izmir): *Lodge La Victoire*, operating between 1862 and 1894, St John Lodge No. 952, operating between 1863 and 1894 and whose followers were mostly English; and Dekran Lodge No. 1014, operating from 1864 until 1895, composed of sixty Armenian members. Finally, also St George's Lodge, operating from 1863 to 1894, Zion Lodge, operating between 1870 and 1894, whose affiliates were only Jewish, and Eleusinian Lodge No. 987, operating from 1863 to 1894.

As regards the Masonic environment, in 1863 the Oriental requested the Committee of General Purposes which was in overall charge to create a chapter connected to the Oriental that should be called Oriental Chapter. The petition duly presented, was signed by only four Masons belonging to the Royal Arch and so it was not approved. It was established at a later time with the number 687.

The Oriental was a very important Masonic centre. This was not only because it was the first, but also because of its continuous and uninterrupted Masonic activity, even during the most critical periods,²⁰ for example during the reign of Abdülhamid II who hit out in particular at the Italian and French Masonic lodges, because they were often the meeting point for revolutionaries of the Young Turkish movement.

English Masons had a good relationship with Italian lodges and often brothers exchanged mutual visits, just as in 1872, during celebrations for the end of the year when the brothers of the Leicester Lodge met up with those of the *Union d' Orient and Italia Risorta*.²¹ Also the following year Antonio Barbagallo, an influential Italian Mason belonging to the *Italia Risorta* Lodge, paid a visit to the English lodge in view of the building of a Masonic temple that could host both lodges.²² It was rather frequent that Italian Masons participated in English Lodge activities, such as Bros Liberalli and Magnani in 1874. According to documents found about this lodge, an Italian citizen also requested to be affiliated to that lodge. The young man asking to be affiliated was Gaetano Cogna, an engineer residing in Pera, the European area of Constantinople. On that occasion dignitaries of the Oriental decided to direct the young aspirant to the relevant Italian Lodge, *Italia Risorta*, to which they sent a missive explaining the situation. The Italian Lodge answered by saying that nothing prevented Mr Cogna from joining the English lodge. Shortly afterwards he was accepted into the Oriental. Over the years other Italians joined the English lodge and participated actively in its activities. Among them we can mention Antonio Geraci, who had been one of the most important exponents of Italian Freemasonry and of the whole community since 1892.²³ In fact he was a judge in the Italian court established in the Italian consulate. Thus, the English lodge worked actively together with the Italians, but not only concerning the lodge. In effect English Masons contributed to the maintenance and to the organisation of the Italian hospital in Istanbul, keeping in continual contact with Mr Salvatori, a doctor at the hospital.

In spite of assiduous attendances from both sides, the relationship between English and French Masonry was not always good. Several members, especially inside the Muslim minority, had a double affiliation but conflicts were rather recurrent. The Grand

²⁰ Activities were stopped only during the First World War, as it will be explained later.

²¹ Historical Archive United Grand Lodge of England, 'Minute book', GBR A 9508, 7.

²² Ivi, 20.

²³ HAUGLE, 'Minute book', GBR A 9508, loose papers.

Lodge of England represented orthodox Freemasonry and it did not look kindly upon the various activities of French Freemasonry, which had quickly established a stable relationship with the elite of the Ottoman society. On the English side, they spoke of a territorial invasion on the part of French Masonry in an area of English influence. However, the English were not always collaborative either. The criticism between the English and French Obediences increased, since the English considered the French as second-rate Masons because they did not follow the order's dogmas and they were too libertarian. From their point of view, the French believed that English Masons had a religious and patriotic character that ignored the cosmopolitan principle of Freemasonry. They also accused the English of conducting work in their mother tongue only to highlight their origins and distancing in this way Muslim followers. That attitude produced an isolation of the lodges from their original environment, preventing the realization of a merging between Masons of different countries, even though Freemasonry considered itself as supranational.

Reacting to this accusation in 1861 the Grand Lodge of England established a lodge called *Deutsch Allianz* which carried out rites and rituals in the German language. That lodge closed down in 1884, but the Grand Lodge of England made an effort to create a new lodge, *Areta* ('Virtue') No. 1041, which used the Greek language. This lodge was founded in 1864, but it interrupted its activities in 1890 and was erased.

The relationship between the English and German communities was good. For example, in 1859 English Masons attended the ball that was organized to celebrate the first anniversary of the Teutonic Society. The ultimate purpose of that party was to collect money.²⁴

Interrelations between the French and English relaxed once in a while and this event permitted the two nations to reconcile themselves. Nicolas Bordéano, the Worshipful Master of the *Etoile du Bosphore* Lodge, but also a very influential member of the French community and owner of the French newspaper *La Turquie*, officially visited the English lodge on New Year's Day 1875. There was a split between France and Great Britain in 1875. As a result Masons of French nationality could not be accepted in the lodge.

Besides relationships held with Masons in the Ottoman domain, Oriental Lodge was also in contact with the brothers who were in Malta. These brothers were English and they had founded different and flourishing lodges on the Mediterranean island, which in that period was characterized by a remarkable English presence. Obviously the connection with the mother country was very strong, not only from a Masonic point of view. In fact in 1887 an important celebration was organized on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

²⁴ 'Turkey', *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (April 27, 1859), 42.

The lodge was always there when it was about to collect funds for facing natural disasters, in order to help all those who had lost their homes, or it assisted families of Masons who had died and who had remained without maintenance, as in 1892 for Mason David Cook's family. Although the financial situation of the lodge often faced problems, the lodge always carried out its activities for helping people in need. This occurred both in case of problems concerning its own community and in the case of adversities and misfortunes affecting the Ottoman population, such as for example concerning fires that often destroyed entire districts. The lodge was particularly active, so much so that since 1873 it had foreseen the possibility of creating a lodge devoted to research.

The lodge received a visit from some members of the imperial family and in 1908 Prince Aziz and Osman Fehmi paid a visit to the English Masons. Also in 1909 the Ottoman Grand Orient was established. Contrary to other foreign obediences which closed their lodges or let their lodges merge into the new born Ottoman Orient, the English continued Masonic activities independently.

The lodge had problems only at the beginning of the First World War. Masons met for the last time on 2 October 1914, after their furniture and equipment was confiscated by the Turkish government. Thus, all activities were suspended during the world conflict. Activities recommenced on 1 October 1920 after the armistice in the Freemasons' Hall, which was in the area of Pera, thanks to the kind concession of Great Orient of Turkey. From this it can easily be deduced that the relationship between the two Obediences was based on the widest possible collaboration.

The lodge went through highs and lows, and continued operating until 31 December 1936, when it had its last meeting. It was cancelled from the English Obediences list only many years later, exactly on 2 March 1949.²⁵

When the lodge closed in 1949, a unique Masonic experience was brought to an end. An old tradition of Western confraternity drew to a close.

²⁵ Zarcone, *Mistiques*, 266.